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GREATER PATAPSCO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC

Issue # 420.

GPCA Newsletter

October 2022



GPCA General Meeting

Monday, October 10, 7:00 PM

@

Social Hall, Granite Presbyterian Church
10637 Old Court Road



How to plant a pollinator garden, Q&A

Speakers: **Betty Walke**, Baltimore City Master Gardener

Peggy Cummings, Baltimore City Master Gardener

Designing a pollinator garden doesn't have to be a daunting task! Betty and Peggy will show you how to create a habitat for protecting and providing pollinators and beneficial insects what they need not just in the summer but all year round.



GPCA Picnic

October 15, 2022, 1:30 – 5:30 PM
@ the Skullney Residence, 10813 Davis Ave.

We're Back!! (After 3 years...) Just bring yourselves, a dish or dessert to share, BYOB, and a lawn chair if desired – GPCA provides everything else. Parking will be next door, courtesy of the GHC Chinese Bible Church. As always, weather permitting! Look for more information on the GPCA website and email announcement.

From the Editors' Desk



Now that summer is done and dusted, we are getting our vegetable gardens ready for winter. Don't forget to come to the GPCA

General Meeting on Monday October 10th and learn how to plant a pollinator garden on your property for next Spring. In this issue of the Newsletter, we continue to learn how important it is to keep our streams healthy by [reducing animal waste](#) from our property flowing into our rivers. We are privileged to be immersed in Nature around our neighborhood. How about a [cell phone app](#) that helps us to record what, when, and where we encounter a new plant or critters in our garden, streams or in the Park, and that further deepens our understanding of all creatures in our daily lives? Let us know what is your favorite cell phone app. You may have noticed that we have redesigned the [GPCA web page](#) and will start to archive some of the articles published in the GPCA Newsletter, such as the report and data collected by the Small Watershed Conservation Committee (SWCC) and some of the zoning and development information related to our community. As we continue to make community-related information readily available on the website, we would love to hear back from you. You could let us know how you like it when you come to the [GPCA picnic on the afternoon of October 15th, Saturday.](#)

We looking forward to seeing you at the picnic.

~ Your Editorial Team

President's Note



Our home has been sheltered by a single white oak tree since it was built sometime in the 1850s. It still stands, but due to its estimated age of 200 years it loses a limb now and then and some are suspended by cables to provide space to walk under them. In 2005 it measured about 90' tall and spread about 120' leaf tip to leaf tip wide. My personal horror fantasy was of a house fire that

would claim the tree. In 2013 the fire did happen but the tree suffered no damage. The reality is the real threats are Oak Anthracnose and Bacterial Leaf Scorch known collectively, along with a few other threats as Oak Decline. If you've driven through Hernwood Heights lately that evidence is clear. What used to be a shady neighborhood is now drenched in sunshine and many homes are threatened by standing deadwood. According to the [University of MD Extension Service](#), Oak Anthracnose is caused by a fungal pathogen and is typically a cool, wet weather springtime disease. Throughout the canopy, leaves will exhibit small brown spots and or twig death that results in clumps of shriveled leaves. Bacterial Leaf Scorch is a bacterial disease that appears predominantly in late summer and the fall. The bacterium blocks water from moving from the roots to the leaves and is evidenced by the yellowing and browning of the leaves throughout the canopy. According to the [National Park Service](#), climate, tree age, and site conditions are resulting in a "death by a thousand cuts" to Eastern oaks. These factors combine to weaken the trees and increase their susceptibility to anthracnose and bacterial borne diseases. What can we do? Good stewardship, which includes removing vines from trees, avoiding damage to limbs, trunks and roots (stop weedeating and mowing so close!), watering in dry spells and mulching to protect roots and preserve moisture. If all efforts fail and you do lose an oak, or any tree of size for that matter be to hire a [licensed tree expert](#). They must carry liability and property damage insurance, but of these are a reality in this highly dangerous field. Tragedy enough to lose a tree, no need to damage your home!

Hope you can join us and meet us at the revival of GPCA's annual picnic. This is our first event since 2018 so please plan to come on **Saturday, October 15 from 1:30 to 5:30 PM** and make it the reunion of our community it's meant to be. Thanks to Kathy and Bill Skullney for providing the venue. More details inside this issue.

Thanks to our editors Ru-Ching Hsia and Patrik Bavoil for producing this newsletter. Ru-Ching has accepted our appointment as Communications Chairperson and has put in overtime tuning up the website, making it possible to pay dues online and streamlining our email lists. Bob Teller, outgoing Chair will continue to send out our email blasts. Bob will still have his hands full chairing our Small Watershed Conservation Committee and testing the monthly stream samples collected by his dedicated team.

~ Cathy Wolfson, President

About Our Neighborhood



Community Leaders' Summit

- Community Concerns

GPCA participated in an important event hosted by the County Executive's

Office of Community Engagement along with the Administration. All County departments (except Planning) made presentations and had small group sessions offering excellent opportunities for individual interactions. In addition, the Outreach Coordinators with the Executive's Office for each district were directly engaged with attendees.

Of particular importance to the GPCA community were Code Enforcement efforts through "sweeps" in each district, and the community programs offered by BGE (Constellation). GPCA was able to convey enforcement concerns related to significant unpermitted business and other activities in GPCA rural areas to the Enforcement chief officer. He has committed to further specific efforts based on information GPCA can supply.

In discussions with the BGE liaison to Baltimore County, he acknowledged the "shared solar power" program, but he was not aware of contracts for it being sold (door-to-door, etc.) directly in communities. He, too, committed to further actions based on the specific information GPCA can share. Both of these topics were emphasized with the District 4 Outreach Coordinator (Johnny O's office.)

A final note – when confronted with concerns for GPCA's Community Plan update, the Planning Department acknowledged that the Master Plan is behind schedule, but said they are working expeditiously to have the draft for public viewing ready as soon as possible.

~ Kathy Skullney, Zoning Chair



As previously reported in the September issue of GPCA Newsletter, the property at 3001 Ridge Road was cited and fined \$10,000 for multiple code violations. The property was inspected on 9/23/22 for compliance, but was still in violation. The Administrative Court Order and fine are now final. A second citation and \$19,000 fine for unpermitted construction became final on 9/08/2022. Maryland Department of the Environment has opened a formal investigation into the streambed excavation and damage at the rear of the property, which has been confirmed, and is expected to result in required restoration.

~ Kathy Skullney, Zoning Chair

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Measuring Bacteria in our Streams

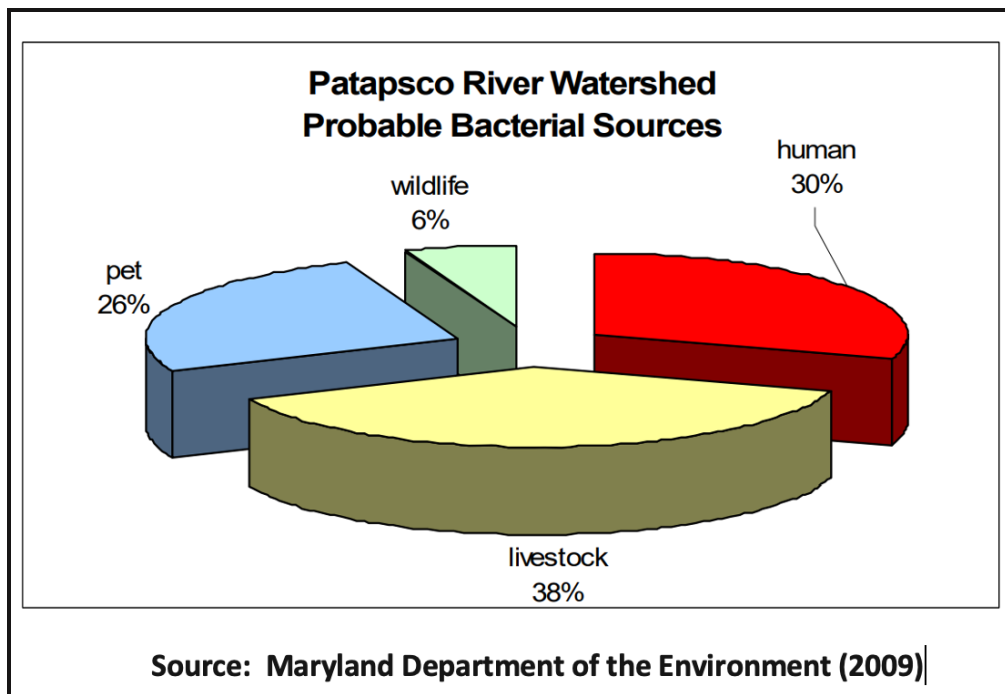
Water, like everything else on Earth, including you, is full of bacteria. Bacteria are common single-celled organisms and are a natural component of [lakes, rivers, and streams](#). Most of these bacteria are harmless to humans; however, certain bacteria, some of which normally inhabit the intestinal tract of warm-blooded animals, have the potential to cause sickness and disease in humans. *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) bacteria, found in the digestive tract of animals, can get into the environment, and if contacted by people, can cause health problems and sickness.

The EPA recommends measuring *E. coli* as the best indicator of health risk from water contact in recreational waters.

This summer, the GPCA SWCC started measuring *E Coli* in our streams once a month. We also plan to measure after heavy rains, since there has been found to be a pronounced increase in bacteria levels following any rainfall significant enough to cause run-off. We are using the Coliscan method to measure E Coli, which is the method used by [Patapsco Heritage Greenway](#) and accepted by the [Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative](#).

Where does the bacteria come from?

Sources of fecal contamination to surface waters include wastewater treatment plants, on-site septic systems, domestic and wild animal manure, and storm runoff. Most likely, bacteria enter the streams from animal waste carried by surface water, especially in places with large areas of impervious surface which can include paved driveways, the roofs of buildings, and repeatedly mowed lawns.



What can we do to reduce bacteria in our waters?

If you have a septic system, be sure to perform regular maintenance on it to ensure that it is working properly.

Another way to reduce *E. coli* levels in local streams is always to pick up after your dog, even in your yard. Remember stormwater runoff flowing from your yard eventually winds up in a water body. Check out [the article below](#) on how to build a simple [poop composter](#).

~ Laurie Donnelly, Small Watershed Conservation Committee



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Water-Doctor.com or call today at 410-792-0327 for your free water quality analysis!

How To Dispose of Doggie Doo the Green Way

1. Find a spot in your garden that you can access easily.
2. Using a post-digger, dig down three feet and carve out the bottom third of the post hole to accommodate the poo.
3. Get creative and find or fashion edging to protect the rim of the opening.
4. Place a birdbath, garden ornament or planter over the hole.

That's it! This is a simple, cheap solution to eliminate the use of plastic bags and a trash can full of plastic-encased poo. You can also feel good knowing you're no longer contributing a source of methane gas to landfills.

The size of your dog or the amount of dogs you have will determine how long you can use your hole to compost the poo back into the earth. A sprinkle of white vinegar now and then will help with breakdown. Typically a poo composter lasts for years.

~ Debbie Swartz, VP, UME Baltimore City Master Gardener

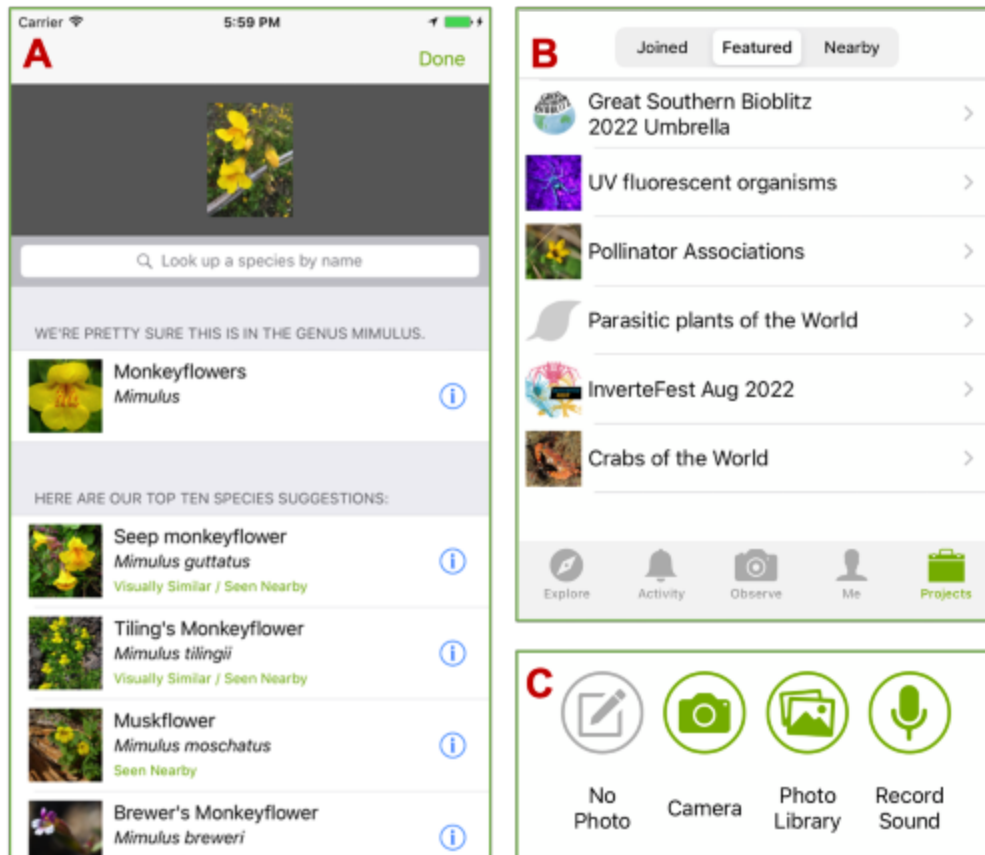


What is Your Favorite Mobile App?

Have you ever wondered what is the name of the purple flower that popped up on your lawn? Are the enticing red berries on the bush you encountered during a hike edible or poisonous? Is the weird-looking insect crawling on your tomatoes a beneficial insect? [iNaturalist](#) is one of several mobile apps that match visual images to help you identify and learn more about the plants, insects or animals around you.

iNaturalist is also a social network app. It connects you to millions of observers in the iNaturalist community. Take or import a photo and view the top 10 most visually similar species matches and tap through to get more information. Figure A below illustrates an observation and the identification of the species using the **iNaturalist** mobile app. By recording and sharing your observations, the information you collected is shared with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility and used to advance scientific

understanding of biodiversity through open data and open science. Furthermore, you can also join any of the tens of thousands of citizen projects and help to collect data about particular species or places. See an example of featured citizen projects in **iNaturalist** in Figure B below. I joined a [Ask a Bumble Bee Project](#) this summer using iNaturalist to identify the species of bumble bees around our neighborhood and the type of plants they collect pollen from.



A: A screenshot of the observation and identification of Monkeyflowers using **iNaturalist**. **B:** A list of featured citizen projects in the **iNaturalist** app **C:** **iNaturalist** Observation Menu.

iNaturalist is truly a FREE app. It is a joint initiative by the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society. It has been translated into more than 35 languages and you can use it anywhere around the world to help you explore nature and connect to the local iNaturalist network.

Go ahead, download the app and start exploring and enjoying Nature.

~ **Ru-ching Hsia**

Learn More about iNaturalist

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Reopening of the Granite Rose Tea Parlour

Hello all! After some consideration and given that apparently, the COVID pandemic is under control, the [Granite Rose Tea Parlour](#) is looking to reopen soon! Thus, we are now hoping to re-open the Tea Parlour in mid-November 2022. We will initially scale back the days we will be open, opening only for the 2nd and 3rd week of each month on Fridays and Saturdays from 11:30am – 4:30pm. **We will start accepting reservations on October 17th.** As before, two seating times are available: the first at 11:30 or 12:00 and the second at 2:00 or 2:30. As we all know, costs have increased and we must increase our prices as well. New pricing for service will be posted on the website by October 17th.

In addition to a County Health Department inspection, the re-opening of the Tea Parlour will depend on our ability to hire sufficient staff. Specifically, we need part-time staff to assist in food preparation, provide tea/table service, and help with dishwashing/cleanup. Anyone interested in applying should

call 410-465-9116 and leave a message or send an email to graniterosetea@verizon.net.

For further information see the [Reservations/Events_page](#) on our [website](#). We thank all who have continued to express interest in the Tea Parlour and hope to see you soon.

~ Bill & Kathy Skullney

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**ANNUAL GPCA
COMMUNITY PICNIC**

Saturday October 15, 2022

WEATHER PERMITTING!

Skullneys' – 10813 Davis Avenue

1:30 - 5:30 PM

Join your friends and neighbors
for an afternoon of food and fun.

GPCA will supply:

Burgers, hot dogs, rolls, ice, condiments, iced tea/lemonade/coffee,
paper products and utensils.

Games and music.

You bring:

A potluck dish or a dessert to share.

Lawn chair if desired.

BYOB

More info: contact Kathy Skullney

ksskullney@verizon.net 443-838-0861



Contact Us

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gpc21163@gmail.com

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