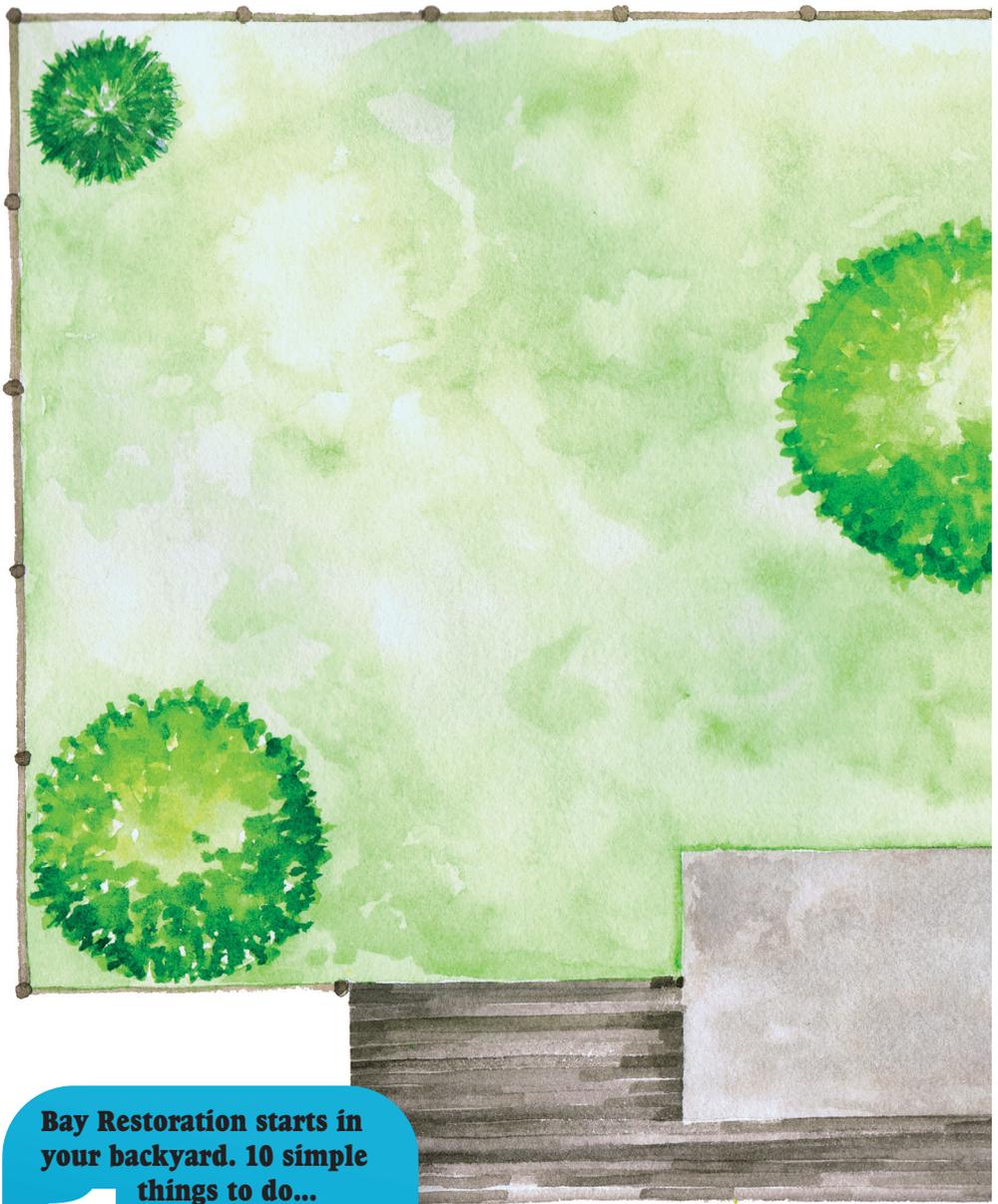




# Backyard Makeover

Make your basic backyard a “Bay Smart” backyard and benefit Maryland’s streams, rivers, and bays.





**Bay Restoration starts in your backyard. 10 simple things to do...**

**1**

**Use fertilizer sparingly**



## Basic Backyard

Whether you live on or near Maryland's waterways or simply enjoy fishing, swimming, or kayaking, what you do in your backyard can be important. Maryland's waterways are a network of connected streams, wetlands, creeks and rivers. They are affected by everything that takes place on the land around them. Your backyard may be miles away from the closest river, but runoff from your house, driveway, and yard drains into a ditch, that leads to a stream, that empties into one of Maryland's rivers or bays.

Improving Maryland's waterways by reducing pollution and increasing habitat starts at home—in your own backyard. If your backyard is pretty basic, mostly grass with a few trees or shrubs, it could use a makeover! It's easy and fun to improve your backyard. The benefits include less maintenance, more wildlife, a more attractive landscape, and cleaner water!

**10 simple things to do...**

**2** Use a mulching mower



10 simple things to do...

**3** Wash your car at the carwash, not in your driveway



**Materials**

## “Bay Smart” Yard

Giving your backyard a “Bay Smart” makeover can start with eliminating areas of lawn and planting trees and shrubs instead. It is best to use plants that grow naturally in Maryland. These plants attract wildlife, survive well, and add beauty to your yard. Less lawn means less lawn mowing and more time to relax on your deck or patio. Decks and patios can be “Bay Smart” too! Using pervious pavers and spaced decking reduces water pollution and maintains natural drainage.

Your backyard makeover can include other ideas that promote healthy waterways. Collecting runoff in rain barrels provides water for landscaping. Installing a “rain garden” helps runoff seep slowly into the soil rather than running off into a ditch or gutter that leads to a stream. The following pages include a variety of ideas that can be part of your “Bay Smart” makeover.

**10 simple things to do...**

**4** **Plant a tree  
(or several trees)**

# Rain Gardens



Rain gardens are shallow depressions planted with a variety of plants that soak up rainwater and runoff from houses, roads, and walkways. The plants and soil in rain gardens keep polluted runoff from draining into waterways and let it seep slowly into the soil.

- Provide storage and treatment of stormwater runoff keeping it out of waterways
- Include trees, shrubs, and plants that take up nutrients
- Designed to infiltrate water within 24 hours
- Provide habitat for birds, butterflies, and amphibians

**10 simple things to do...**

**5** Conserve water



# Rain Barrels



- Available in many designs and styles
- Keep stormwater runoff on site and out of waterways
- Store water that can be used for watering trees, shrubs, and landscape plants
- Designed with overflow valves for heavy rains

Rain barrels are large containers placed under downspouts to collect runoff when it rains. Rain barrels can be both beautiful and functional. You can buy them at your local garden shop or building store. A hose connection on the rain barrel makes it easy to use the stored water.

## 10 simple things to do...

**6** Recycle  
(everything)

# Pervious Materials



Building materials like porous pavers and spaced wood decking are great for outdoor spaces. They allow rain to pass through them and soak into the soil. This means less water running off the land, which can cause erosion and carry pollutants to creeks and rivers.

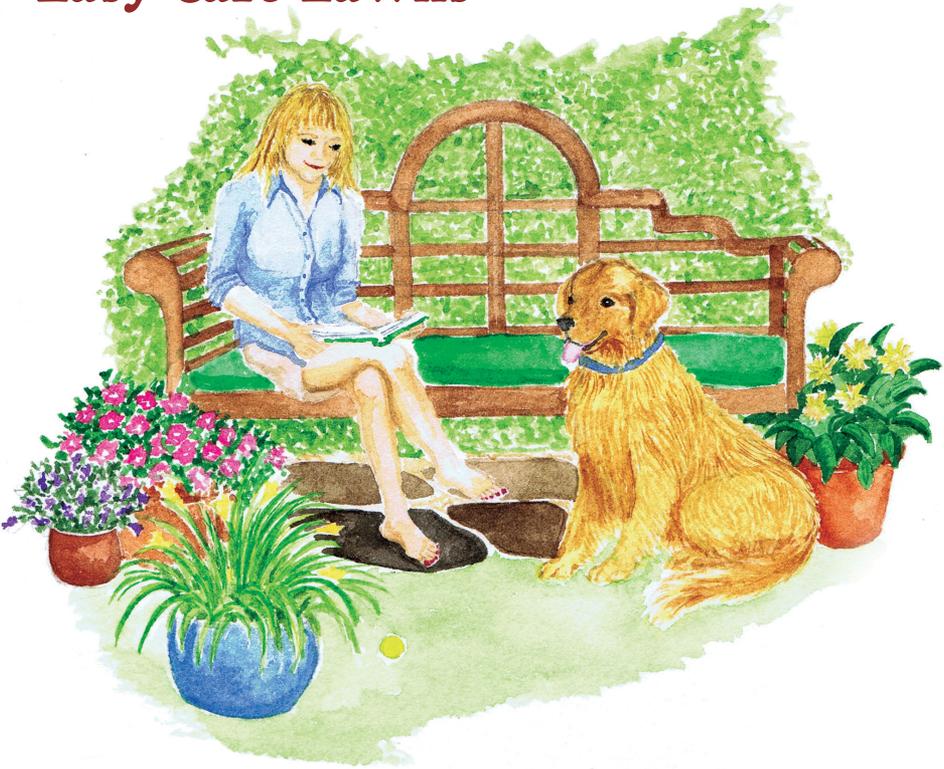
- Pavers sold in a variety of shapes, sizes, colors, and designs
- Allow water to infiltrate, reducing runoff
- Water permeates the soil and contributes to groundwater recharge
- Easy to install and replace

**10 simple things to do...**

**7**

**Save energy**

# Easy Care Lawns



- Small lawn areas minimize mowing and maintenance
- Mulching mowers use grass clippings to retain moisture and provide nutrients
- Soil testing targets fertilization
- Native grass and wildflower areas enhance habitat

Keeping your lawn small means more space for natural areas in your backyard. This provides habitat for a variety of species and helps them stay healthy. Small lawns require less fertilizer and chemicals. This means fewer pollutants ending up in Maryland's waterways and cleaner water for fishing and swimming.



**10 simple things to do...**

**8** Put up a bluebird box

# Wildlife Habitat



It's easy and fun to make your backyard a great home for wildlife. Providing food, water, and cover will encourage squirrels, rabbits, birds, butterflies, frogs, and turtles to use your backyard. Dead trees, piles of brush, and seed-heads are important to wildlife, so it is good to leave them.

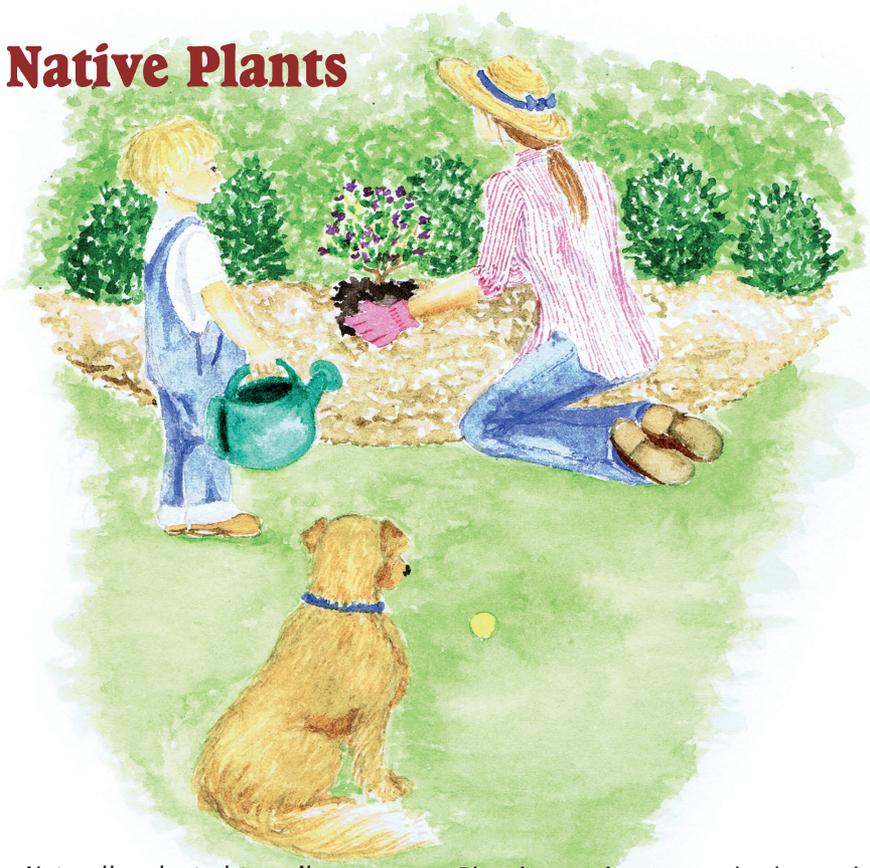
- Birdhouses and feeders bring birds to your yard
- Leaving areas "natural" provides habitat
- Downed woody debris provides cover for small animals
- Wildlife use native plant communities for food, cover, and rearing young

## 10 simple things to do...

**9** Pick up trash in your neighborhood



# Native Plants



- Naturally adapted to soil and climate conditions of the Coastal Plain
- Generally pest and disease resistant
- Can be aesthetically pleasing and provide structural diversity
- Many perennial species spread easily, but are not invasive

Planting native trees, shrubs, and flowers can put the finishing touch on your backyard. Native plants grow naturally in Maryland, so they are hardy and easy to grow. There are many species to choose from, so it is easy to find the size, structure, texture, and color that will make your backyard beautiful!

## 10 simple things to do...

**10** Talk to your family, friends, and neighbors about being Bay Smart.



### Message from the Governor

The Bay's problems are manmade, and so too are the solutions. Every Marylander, even those who do not live within the watershed, benefit from what the Chesapeake brings to our great State. And everything we do, from planting trees and conserving energy, to recycling and picking up after pets, is part of the solution to improving the health of the Bay.

Working together as One Maryland we can create a smarter, greener more sustainable future for Maryland families and our treasured Chesapeake Bay. And there is no better place to start than in our own backyards.

Martin O'Malley  
Governor

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**Citizens can track Maryland's  
Bay restoration progress at  
[www.green.maryland.gov](http://www.green.maryland.gov)**

