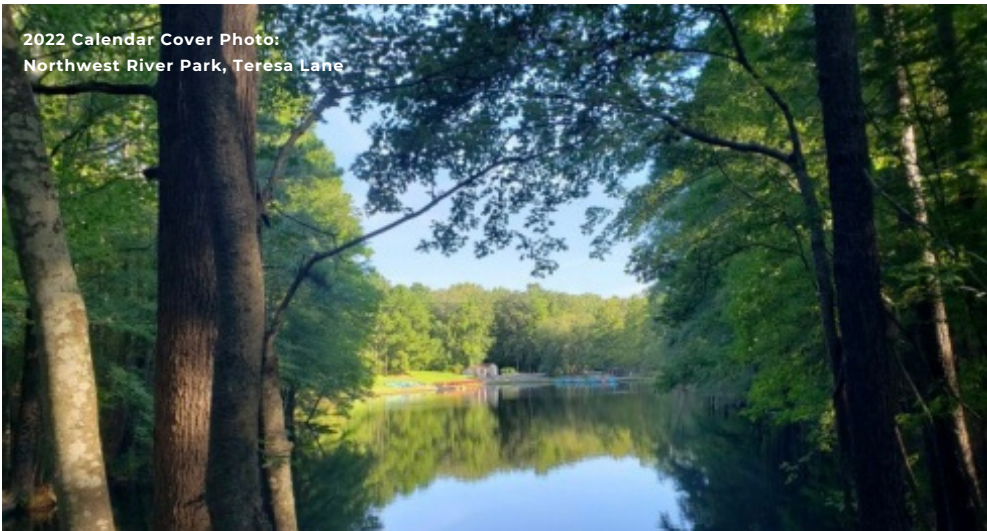




THE HERON CHRONICLE

2022 Calendar Cover Photo:
Northwest River Park, Teresa Lane



WELCOME

Welcome to the Fall newsletter from the Chesapeake Environmental Improvement Council (CEIC)! We are an eighteen-member, mayor-appointed advisory group formed in 1983. Our purpose is to promote interest in improving Chesapeake’s environment, thereby making Chesapeake a greener, cleaner and healthier city in which to live, learn, work, farm, and play. We accomplish this purpose through outreach, education, and volunteer efforts. Our key focus areas include litter and pollution prevention, waste reduction and recycling, beautification, and conservation landscaping. We are an active group and generally meet monthly.

CONNECT WITH THE CEIC

Phone: 757-382-6411

Email: SpecialPrograms@CityOfChesapeake.net

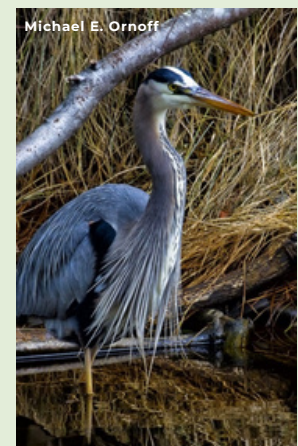
Address: 1224 Progressive Drive | Chesapeake, VA 23320

Website: CityOfChesapeake.net/CEIC

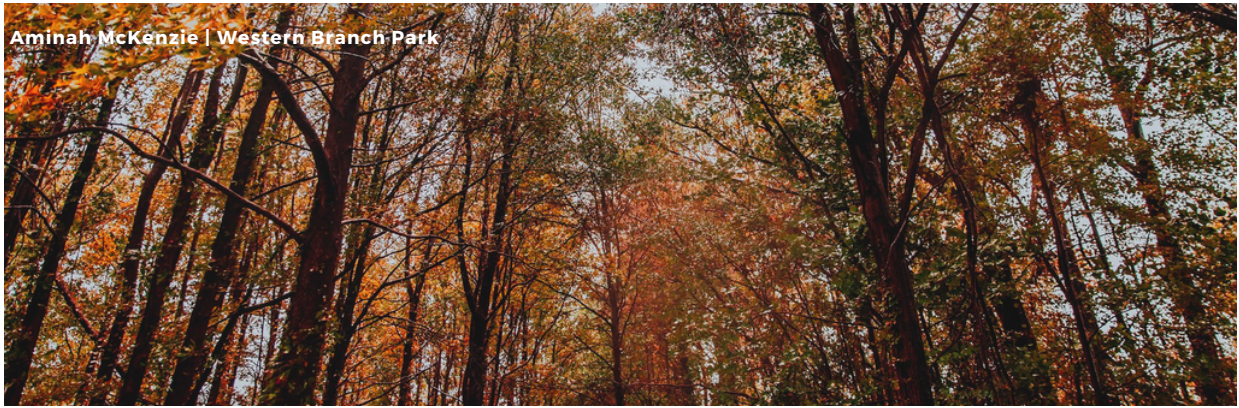
Facebook: [@ChesapeakeEnvironmentalImprovementCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/ChesapeakeEnvironmentalImprovementCouncil)

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Aminah McKenzie | Western Branch Park



A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

Amy Weber, CEIC Chair

**OUR THEME FOR THIS EDITION IS
FALL-ING IN LOVE WITH CHESAPEAKE!**

Fall is a great time to get outside and explore all that Chesapeake has to offer!

Beauty can be found in nature in any season, but our city parks and trails are particularly beautiful this time of year. When I semi-retired in 2012, I became more involved in several community and environmental groups. In doing so, I discovered all that our parks have to offer. In the last few years, I've been working to improve my physical and emotional well-being. Exploring our many trails has helped me do just that! Time spent in nature is good for the body and soul. I've always appreciated our city, but now I see it in a new light. I have FALL-en in love with Chesapeake all over again. Get out and enjoy our parks and trails and we think you will FALL in love, too! For a full list of Chesapeake Parks, trails, and other amenities, visit:

<https://www.cityofchesapeake.net/451/Parks-Trails>

Amy Weber, CEIC Chair

SAVE THE DATE! UPCOMING EVENTS

- Saturday, September 9 - Paddle Your Way
- Friday, September 22 - Night Hike
- Saturday, September 23 - Kayak Paddle
- Friday, September 29 - Harvest Moon Paddle
- Saturday, October 7- International Coastal Clean Up
 - Time: 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. | Cleanup locations [here](#).
- Saturday, October 7 - Chesapeake Celebrates Trees



**International Coastal Cleanup 2022
Newton Neck Park**

LEAVE THE LEAVES

By Rogard Ross, CEIC Associate Member



Each autumn the City deploys extra trucks and extra workers to collect tens of thousands of bags of leaves from homes around the City. Homeowners dutifully bag the leaves in the required clear 35-gallon plastic bags so that the workers can see that it is "light yard waste". In November and December, City trucks will collect up a maximum of 50 bags per home per week. Tax dollars pay for the trucks, fuel, and thousands of staff hours required to collect all these leaves. The City then pays again to haul and dump the leaves into the landfill. Despite what some may think, there is no local market to commercially compost so many leaves. And for the most part, this is all unnecessary. Leaves have been "God's mulch" since the first trees sprouted. Leaves provide a cover for gardens that conserves moisture, keeps the ground warmer during the winter, and reduces soil erosion. The fallen leaves also hide countless butterfly and moth eggs, caterpillars, and chrysalises; over the winter the leaves provide vital habitat for these over-wintering pollinators, native bees, and other beneficial insects. By spring, bacteria, fungi, and other naturally occurring organisms compost the leaves to enrich the soil and provide plants with valuable nutrients. Besides all these benefits for both your yard and the local ecosystem, leaving the leaves can also greatly reduce the need for buying and hauling commercial mulch to your yard.

TIPS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NATURAL LEAF MULCH:

- Mulch mow the leaves on your lawn. Mow a light covering of leaves right on your lawn and leave the shredded leaves in place. Most lawnmowers today include a mulching option. Mulch mowing your leaves builds soil health and provides nutrients for the lawn; it's easier than raking and a lot quieter than leaf blowing.
- Leave the leaves and add leaves, mulched mowed or not, around your trees and perennial plants. They'll protect your plants in the same way as store-bought bagged mulch. Don't pile the leaves too high. Like with wood chip mulch, don't let the leaf mulch pile against the trunks of trees and shrubs. Put a 3 to 6-inch layer of leaves around the base of trees and shrubs. A 2 to 3-inch mulch of shredded leaves is ideal for perennial flower beds ([source](#)). For vegetable gardens, a thick layer of leaves placed between the rows functions as a mulch and an all-weather walkway that will allow you to work in your garden during wet periods.
- Add leaves to an existing or new compost pile. Mulched leaves will decompose faster in a compost pile. If you're new to composting, remember you want to mix equal volumes of carbon-rich, naturally dry plant material such as fallen leaves, with nitrogen-rich green plant material such as green yard clippings, fruit and vegetable kitchen waste, etc.



NEIGHBORHOOD TREE PLANTING SUGGESTIONS

By Dr. James Haluska, CEIC Member

For a variety of homeowner concerns and misconceptions, the number of neighborhood trees in some Chesapeake neighborhoods are declining. Part of the problem is the planting of both small and large trees too close to houses, power lines, and where present, sidewalks. However, there are alternatives for a homeowner that provide the benefits of trees without causing concerns and problems as the tree gets larger. Proper site selection for a tree can provide afternoon shade to a house that may reduce air conditioning bills. Planting a tree not only benefits the tree owner but is an asset to the community by adding to the city tree coverage. The following recommendations are for trees that are compatible with the lot sizes in many neighborhoods:

The basic solution to the problem is planting the right size tree in the right location. To do this, the planting location needs to be far enough from houses and roads and not under power lines or on top of underground utilities.

Planting recommended trees at least 45 feet from houses and 10 feet from roads is a good start. Trees should be planted 3 to 5 feet from sidewalks as well if you are lucky enough to have a sidewalk in front of your home. Most lots in the city are not large enough for the planting of a large tree such as a white oak or a sycamore, which can get very large.



The problem started over 20 years ago when the trees were planted. Don't plant large trees under power lines.

Planting a large tree under a power line is also a mistake, but there are plenty of examples of where this has been done. This results in some strange looking trees after the power company has done pruning to clear power lines. This pruning is necessary because branches from large trees can cause power outages during storms. The power company must remove these branches to maintain proper clearance.

CONTINUED: NEIGHBORHOOD TREE PLANTING SUGGESTIONS

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Small canopy trees in many cases are the best choice for the residential lots we have in Chesapeake. There are several choices of native small canopy tree species in this size range. The trees are listed in alphabetical order by scientific name and not by preference.

A mature height of 15 to 60 feet is the height range of small canopy trees. At the low end of the range, the red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*) with a maximum height and spread of 25 feet is a good local tree. The American hornbeam or ironwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*) with a maximum height and spread of 35 feet is also recommended for consideration. Another native tree, the Kousa dogwood (*Cornus kousa*) with a maximum height and spread of 30 feet, would add interest to a front yard when it blooms later than the flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*). Trees that are taller in the small canopy classification are the Yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*), which has a narrow maximum spread of 12 feet and a 40-foot mature height, and the sweet bay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*) with a maximum spread of 30 feet and a maximum height of 40 feet. The Carolina cherry laurel (*Prunus caroliniana*) has a maximum height of 35 feet and a maximum spread of 15 feet. If an oak tree is what you want, the blackjack oak (*Quercus marilandica*) is a smaller native oak that won't overwhelm your lot like one of the larger oaks and possibly become a cause for concern. The tree has a maximum spread and height of 35 feet. The largest small canopy tree is the arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*) with a maximum spread of 15 feet and a maximum height of 60 feet.

In addition to the trees recommended above, there are many other non-native small canopy trees that do well in this area. While non-native trees are sometimes not recommended, they have wildlife value and add to the neighborhood tree canopy.

For more information on these trees, consult "The Chesapeake Tree List." The list is an on-line publication of Chesapeake Parks, Recreation and Tourism and can be viewed [here](#). The list gives important information that is tree-specific including the growth rate, light requirements, wildlife value, pollution tolerance, heat and drought tolerance, salt tolerance, and wet soil tolerance. These factors are all important in choosing and siting trees in Chesapeake. The on-line publication also has a picture and description of each tree in the list.

Planting these trees can add to the beauty of your home and neighborhood while adding to the overall city tree canopy, and if enough trees are planted, reducing neighborhood temperatures.





BAGGED LEAVES REMINDERS

By Allison Harper, City of Chesapeake Public Information Coordinator

Never rake leaves or grass clippings into storm drains or ditches. This will create blockages and lead to flooding in your neighborhood. It can also cause environmental issues as the leaves and grass clippings make their way to local waterways and cause algae blooms, killing off aquatic life. The best way to handle leaves and grass clippings is to just mulch them into the lawn using your mower. As the pieces break down, they release water and much-needed nutrients to naturally fertilize your lawn.

If you must bag your leaves and grass clippings, place them in clear 35-gallon plastic bags and put them at the curb on your regular garbage day. Residents do not need to call and request collection of bagged yard waste. The limit is 30 clear plastic 35-gallon bags each week, except in November and December when you may put out 50 each week. Please do not include dirt, rock, sod, soil, clay, compacted earth, or mulch in these bags, as the weight of these bags pose danger to workers attempting to pick up and place them into trucks, and are prone to tearing and spilling contents. Bags found to contain these heavy materials will not be collected. Public Works will only collect 50 bags per household per week - please do not place more than 50 bags curbside for pickup.

**CHESAPEAKE
RECYCLES DAY**



UPCOMING EVENTS

October 14 | 9 a.m. - noon | Greenbrier Sentara College of Health Sciences
November 4 | 9 a.m. - noon | Tidewater Community College Chesapeake Campus

FOR A LIST OF ELIGIBLE ITEMS, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE [HERE](#).

CITYWIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR INPUT: GREENBRIER AREA PLAN

CHESAPEAKE NEEDS YOUR INPUT FOR THE FUTURE OF GREENBRIER!

By Susan Lang, CEIC Member

A Community Input meeting was held in June 2023 for the Greenbrier Area Plan. It was an open format with informational displays and an opportunity to interact with the City Planning project team. The Next Community Input Meeting will be held in the Fall of 2023. Watch for meeting updates on the CEIC Facebook page and the website noted below.

The Greenbrier Area Plan will be integrated with other current plans such as the city's Moving Forward Chesapeake 2035 Comprehensive Plan and will include both short-term and long-term recommendations. The purpose of the Greenbrier Area Plan is to develop strategies to guide future development, maintain Greenbrier's economic advantage in the marketplace and attract new businesses and residents by improving the qualities that make Greenbrier a unique place in the city ([City of Chesapeake](#)). The boundaries of the Greenbrier Area Plan extend beyond the commercial and industrial core to include a variety of adjacent neighborhoods, and the City is interested in receiving input from the many different stakeholders in this area. There will be regular opportunities for community input during the 16-month course of this project, but we welcome your comments at any time and thank you for your interest in helping Chesapeake remain an exceptional place to live, learn, work, farm, and play.

Specific study components of the Greenbrier Area Plan include, (but not limited to):

- Open Space
- Infrastructure
- Resilience
- Urban Design

For more information about the Greenbrier Area Plan, please contact project manager Nat McCormick by email at planning@cityofchesapeake.net or call 757-382-6176.

Photo credit and the full plan, visit the website [here!](#)



CITYWIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR INPUT: GREENBRIER AREA PLAN

Chesapeake needs your input for the future of Greenbrier!
Continued from page 7



THE CEIC ENCOURAGES YOU TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE OF GREENBRIER.

The CEIC encourages you to share your thoughts for the future of Greenbrier. Please consider these topics and the above study components for input on the Greenbrier Area Plan:

- **Green Infrastructure Network:** Emphasis on environmentally sensitive planning would include a robust Green Infrastructure Network (GIN) throughout Greenbrier, as well as the entire City of Chesapeake. To paraphrase the definition ([source](#)): Green Infrastructure is interconnected natural systems and ecological processes that provide benefits of clean water, air quality, stormwater management, and wildlife habitat. Trees within a Green Infrastructure Network reduce the heat island effect of asphalt and concrete. It sustains a community's social, economic, and environmental health. <https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/what-green-infrastructure>
- **Native Plants:** Within the greenways of the Greenbrier area, and throughout other public and privately owned land within Chesapeake, the CEIC recommends the City and residents to include plants native to Coastal Virginia and appropriate to the space. Invasive plants, such as lirioppe, ligustrum (aka privet), nandina, and English ivy have had very negative impacts on local parks, such as the Chesapeake Arboretum located at 624 Oak Grove Road. Invasive, non-native plants spread quickly and are difficult to remove once established. Actions have been taken at the Arboretum and other Chesapeake Parks to control invasives ([source](#)).

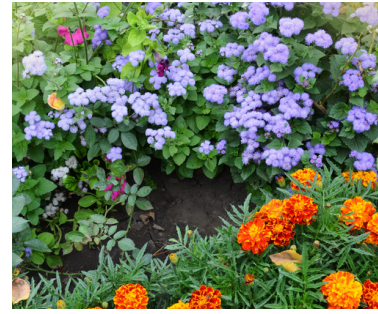
Additional benefits of a well-planned GIN include reduced maintenance costs for stormwater management and mowing, particularly when low meadow replaces high maintenance turf on hard-to-reach places. Perhaps you've seen roadside wildflower meadows inspired by Lady Bird Johnson along highways traveled. This vibrant vegetation prevents erosion while reducing maintenance costs and contributes to a healthy ecosystem ([source](#)).

Your input will help to create a plan that strengthens the appeal and livability of the Greenbrier area, as well as ensure the health and safety of nearby neighborhoods from both a physical and social standpoint.

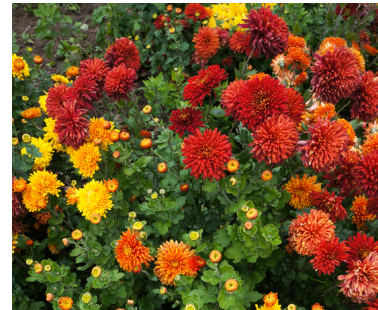
FALL IS THE TIME FOR PLANTING!

By Amy Weber, CEIC Chair and Chesapeake Master Gardener

Fall might not be the ideal time to find perennials, shrubs, and trees blooming or looking their best. However, it IS the best time for planting. As the days get cooler and plants enter a dormant phase, they require less water. The plant now spends its energy on root growth rather than foliage. Though the air temperatures are lower, the soil stays warm, which also encourages root growth. Planting now will help plants develop a strong root system and be better able to take up moisture and nutrients from the soil next growing season.



Another bonus to fall planting is finding plants on sale at some garden centers. You might also find great plants at Fall festivals and Master Gardener sales. If these plants have been in their pots for a while, you might find them “root bound” and you will need to pull the roots apart a bit when planting.



Plant as you would in the spring, but avoid high nitrogen fertilizers, which will stimulate foliage growth. If you think your soil needs amending, add a top dressing of compost. Water deeply about once a week through the fall. Rainfall should be sufficient through the winter months. When searching for plants, look for those native to Southeastern Virginia as noted in the online publication [here](#). Happy Planting!

ECO-FRIENDLY TIPS TO REDUCE WASTE THIS FOOTBALL SEASON

By Lacie Wever, CEIC Member

Football season is here! It's the time for Sunday games, end-of-the-summer barbeques, and football-related gatherings. While you're watching your favorite team run their ball into the endzone, here's how you can remain a winner at your next football gathering.

- Instead of disposables, choose reusable plates and utensils
- Swap paper napkins/paper towels for reusable cloth towels
- Plan meals ahead to cut down on waste
- Choose food items with less packaging
- Choose edible decor instead of single-use decor or use decorations you already have at home
- Skip the single-use plastic bottles
- Recycle right. Learn more about recycling in Chesapeake [here](#).



I hope you keep these eco-friendly tips in mind this season as you're enjoying the games with family and friends!



CHAMPION ELM IN DEEP CREEK

By Rebecca Greenwald, CEIC Vice Chair

Chesapeake is fortunate to have a national champion tree on city property just off George Washington Highway in Deep Creek! This impressive American elm tree (*Ulmus americana*), a Virginia native estimated to be 100 years old, was declared national co-champion in 2020 with a tree in Maryland. This tree was originally nominated circa 1980s, when it was a state co-champion. In 2018, when it was last measured, its trunk circumference was 21 feet and its height was 110 feet. Recently, a group of volunteers cleared vines and other vegetation from around the tree, and the city provided mulch and a sign. Check it out at 200 N. George Washington Hwy.

CHESAPEAKE CELEBRATES TREES!

Saturday, October 7, Noon – 4 p.m.

Join us for a brand-new event! Chesapeake Celebrates Trees is an Arbor Day celebration for the Chesapeake community to enjoy the incredible benefits of trees! Come out and enjoy tree giveaways, music, vendors, demonstrations and more. This event is for all ages and abilities. Head to the Arboretum grounds from noon - 4 p.m. to enjoy tree climbing demonstrations, portable wood sawmill exhibitions, and tree care tutorials. Learn more about edible tree fruits and nuts at our “charcuterTREE” station, try out forest bathing, and learn more about trees from our numerous experts, vendors, and organizations!



Prior to the celebration, we will be hosting two volunteer events from 10 a.m. - noon. One will be an invasive species removal on the Arboretum trails where volunteers will be taught proper invasive plant removal techniques. The second event will be a tree planting project at Oak Grove Meadows (meet at the Arboretum). To RSVP for the volunteer events, please sign up [here](#).

STAY IN THE KNOW: HAPPENINGS IN CHESAPEAKE



CLEAN THE BAY DAY RECAP

Each year, on the first Saturday of June, thousands of Virginians simultaneously clean in and around the Chesapeake Bay watershed to remove litter and debris. Here are the results for this three-hour cleanup in the City of Chesapeake this summer: **200 volunteers removed 2,328 lbs of trash from 7 Chesapeake areas.**

EMPTY PILL BOTTLES WANTED

519 Las Gaviotas Blvd.

Wondering what to do with your prescription pill bottles once they're empty? Many of them have a #5 recycle symbol, which in Chesapeake cannot be recycled. Fortunately, the Great Bridge Women's Club collects and donates empty prescription pill bottles to the SPCA in Norfolk & Hampton. They use the bottles for animal prescriptions & urine samples. You can drop off your clean, empty bottles at 519 Las Gaviotas Blvd. so they can be reused instead of being added to the waste stream.



CHESAPEAKE FARMERS' MARKET

900 City Park Drive, Chesapeake, VA 23320

The Chesapeake Farmers' Market is open 6/3 - 11/18 on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 8 a.m. – noon at Chesapeake City Park.



LICENSE PLATE FUND PROGRAM

You can help beautify Chesapeake without getting dirty! For every "Chesapeake City" license plate sold, \$15 annually goes into the License Plate Fund, which City Council has earmarked for beautification and conservation projects. To order the plate, just go to dmv.virginia.gov and select "Chesapeake City" under the special interest license plate tab.