



RIVER HERO HOMES

FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER

Dear River Hero Homes Member:

October is River Hero Homes Month and we are grateful for residents of the James River watershed, like yourself, who are taking action to improve the health of the James at home. River-friendly conservation actions that reduce stormwater runoff and pollution, like the actions listed below, have a positive impact on the health of the James.

- **Scoop the poop.** Pick up pet waste to prevent bacteria pollution.
- **Use native plants.** Use regionally native plants and remove invasive plants in gardens and landscapes.
- **Reduce herbicide and pesticide use.** Reduce or eliminate herbicide and pesticide use to promote a healthy ecosystem.
- **Reduce fertilizer use.** Reduce or eliminate fertilizer use to reduce nutrient pollution entering our waterways and encourage healthy soil by using compost.
- **Conserve water.** Reduce household water use and install a rain barrel to harvest rainwater for watering needs if possible.

As our community of River Hero Homes grows, so does our collective impact. Please encourage neighbors, friends, and family to join our River Hero Homes program and adopt river-friendly conservation practices at home. Together, we can all be James Changers!

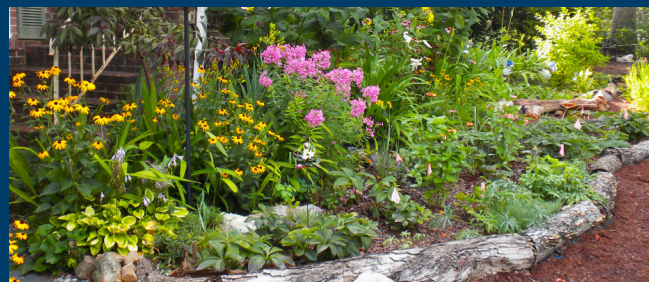
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Doyle".

Justin Doyle
Director of Community Conservation



HERO SPOTLIGHT



In the spring of 2022, Diane Moxley began transforming her front yard from a grassy lawn to a habitat for wildlife. "I simply wanted the wildlife more than I wanted the grass," says Diane. After removing grass and weeds by solarizing them with black plastic, she created planter beds using logs. The beds were planted with a variety of plants and mulched with chopped leaves from her yard. In addition to practicing conservation landscaping, Diane conserves water by using rain barrels purchased from the James River Association, composts plant materials in a composter, and installed a rain garden to manage stormwater. Native plants including Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), Northern spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), and Winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*) are thriving in the rain garden, which manages stormwater generated by impervious surfaces and reduces stormwater runoff leaving her yard. This fall she plans to remove the grass in her backyard and complete her "nature oasis." Diane was awarded a 2023 Land Lover Award by Henrico County's Keep Henrico Beautiful program for her efforts.

**THANK YOU FOR BEING A
JAMES CHANGER, DIANE!**

CONSERVATION TIPS: TREE PLANTING & CARE



We love trees at the James River Association!

Trees intercept rainwater and reduce stormwater runoff, add shade to our built environment and help cool communities, improve air quality, and sequester carbon from our atmosphere. Planting trees is one way to fight climate change locally and fall is the best time of year to plant them. In fact, planting trees during the fall months gives them more time to begin establishing their roots in advance of hot, sometimes dry, weather conditions typical of summer months in Virginia. If you are thinking about adding a tree to your landscape, now is the time to begin planning.



Here are a few tips to help with planning:

- **Right tree, right place.**
Before planting a tree, identify a suitable location in which to plant it and select a species. Consider soil, light, and moisture conditions and select a species, preferably native, that will grow well in the location. Before finalizing your selection, consider the size the tree will be when it reaches maturity. Will it fit in the space in a few decades?



- **Proper planting yields healthy trees.**
Trees that live long, healthy lives are properly planted. The width of the hole a tree is planted in should be twice the width of the tree's root ball and only deep enough so that the tree's root flare sits at ground level. The root flare should not be below ground level. Before placing the tree in the hole and backfilling the hole with soil, be sure to remove circling roots by pruning them.

- **Planting a tree is the beginning of a long-term relationship.**

Selecting a tree and planting it is just the beginning of your relationship with it. Caring for the tree in the years after it is planted will ensure it lives a long, healthy life. Properly mulching around the base of trees after they are planted conserves soil moisture, reduces the growth of weeds, and adds nutrients to the soil. Young trees should be watered on a weekly basis and pruned every few years to encourage desired growth.

- **Give your rake a break.**

As peak foliage approaches and trees begin to lose their leaves, consider leaving leaves in place or using them as mulch and compost in gardens and landscapes. Leaves are a natural source of fertilizer. As leaves decompose, nutrients including carbon, nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium are released into the soil thereby reducing the need for store-bought chemical fertilizers.



River Hero Homes is generously supported by Altria and DuPont Clear into the Future.

PLANT THIS, NOT THAT!

Mums are flowering plants in the genus *Chrysanthemum* and are very popular this time of year. While mums add color to our yards, they are not native to our region of the world and do little to benefit pollinators. Asters are a native alternative that add color to gardens and landscapes when they bloom at the end of summer and into fall.



Pollinators love asters and depend on them as a source of late season nectar. Consider planting Blue wood aster (*Symphyotrichum cordifolium*), Eastern silvery aster (*Symphyotrichum concolor*), Large-flowered aster (*Symphyotrichum grandiflorum*), New England aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*), and New York aster (*Symphyotrichum novi-belgii*) in your yard this fall.

VISIT
PLANTVIRGINIANATIVES.ORG
FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT NATIVE PLANTS.

REGISTER FOR A RAIN BARREL WORKSHOP THIS FALL!

Rain barrels are a great way to conserve water at home. A single rain barrel is capable of harvesting over 2,500 gallons of rainwater every year!

We are offering rain barrel workshops during River Hero Homes Month to empower residents to conserve water at home.

- October 11 - Lynchburg
- October 19 - Scottsville
- October 21 - Glen Allen
- October 25 - Richmond
- October 28 - Richmond

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER
AT [JAMESRIVERHERO.ORG](https://jamesriverhero.org)

RAIN BARREL WINTERIZATION

Rain barrels are subject to harsh weather conditions during the winter months. Disconnecting and storing them when temperatures begin dipping below freezing (32°F) can increase their longevity. Follow these three easy steps to prevent wear and tear caused by freezing temperatures.

1. Drain it. Completely drain harvested rainwater from your rain barrel.

✓ *Tip: After your rain barrel is completely drained, consider cleaning interior and exterior surfaces. Be sure to remove sediment and debris from inside the rain barrel.*

2. Disconnect it. Disconnect your rain barrel from the downspout it's connected to.

✓ *Tip: If your rain barrel is assembled with a RainRecycle Rain Barrel Kit, you can order a RainRecycle Downspout Cover from The Rain Barrel Depot.*

3. Store it. Store your rain barrel and its components in a dry location such as a garage, shed, or basement during the winter months. Rain barrels can be stored outdoors, just be sure they are stored in a place or manner in which they do not collect water.

✓ *Tip: If you need to store your rain barrel outdoors, store it upside down to prevent rainwater and snowmelt from getting inside it.*

Celebrating the James at Hardywood!
October 23, 2023, 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Hardywood Park Craft Brewery at West Creek
820 Sanctuary Trail Drive
Richmond, Virginia

Join fellow James Changers as we celebrate our beloved James River and everyone who has worked to protect and restore it. We will also recognize our 2023 James Changers and release our 2023 State of the James report.

Visit thejamesriverhero.org/whats-happening/celebrating-the-james to purchase tickets.

SAVE THE DATE: