

Nourishing Gardens



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

TRANSFORMING LAWNS INTO
ECOLOGICALLY BENEFICIAL
GARDENS THAT NOURISH
OURSELVES, OUR COMMUNITIES,
AND THE ENVIRONMENT





TRAINING

CEI engaged 32 trainees in the 2023 spring and fall Nourishing Gardens training programs. Together they completed 13 weeks of training in garden planning, design, and installation.

OUTPUTS

Since April 2023, the Nourishing Gardens program:

- Provided more than 65 hours of training both hands-on and virtual to 32 trainees, a combined total of 860 community training hours.
- Contributed more than 1,000 combined hours of service to our community installing and providing maintenance to gardens at schools and in open spaces.

OUTCOMES

Trainees were asked to complete a pre- and post-experience survey about the Nourishing Gardens training. Here are highlights from the survey results:

- On average, trainees rated themselves as 36% more experienced in gardening.
- When trainees were asked to what extent they were able to determine the "best fit" location for a garden, trainees reported a 85% increase in their confidence in doing so after taking the training.
- The survey registered a 70% increase in trainees' confidence in designing and installing a garden independently.
- Survey respondents reported a 52% increase in their knowledge about local food systems and how gardens and urban farms contribute to them.
- There was a 59% increase in trainees' confidence related to the extent to which they are able to share/teach what they know about gardening to others.
- Trainees reported that they were 12% more likely to incorporate fresh, local produce into their diet after completing the training.
- Trainees rated their overall sense of wellbeing 26% higher after completing the training.
- Trainees reported a 23% increase in the rating they would give their leadership and problem solving skills post-training.

TESTIMONIAL FROM A 2023 TRAINEE

"I loved absolutely EVERYTHING about this program. Our trip to ARC to build the garden area was definitely a highlight. To be able to help others and teach through gardening is priceless."



CELEBRATING SUCCESS

CEI was able to employ two Nourishing Gardens alumni on private garden installations this summer and another joined CEI permanent staff this year. This demonstrates our commitment to increase green infrastructure job opportunities in our community.



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GARDEN INSTALLATIONS

In 2023, CEI's Nourishing Gardens program installed or maintained gardens in 25 locations, including schools, public open spaces, and in collaboration with local nonprofits.



OUTPUTS

- Provided 8 new garden spaces replacing previously underutilized grass lawns.
- Expanded, replanted, and maintained 17 gardens that were otherwise underutilized or in need of revitalization.
- Planted approximately 2,100 food, pollinator, and native plants across 23 garden locations.
- Transformed and maintained more than 9,900 square feet of ecologically beneficial garden space.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

In addition to garden installation and maintenance, the Nourishing Gardens program provided 8 schools and community organizations with classroom workshops on topics such as garden design, maintenance, and pollinators, in addition to programming for special events and STEM nights.

TO DATE, THE GARDEN INSTALLATIONS HAVE SERVED MORE THAN

- 4,745 pre-k and elementary school students and their families
- 976 middle school students and their families
- 3,010 high school students and their families
- 29,894 college students and their families

Making a grand total of 38,625 students and their families in Howard County that have access to pollinator and food growing gardens, who may not have if it were not for the installation of Nourishing Gardens on school properties.

TESTIMONIAL FROM A LOCAL SCHOOL

"Thank you so much for your time and support today! ...the kids loved it and got so much from the experience. They were very excited about what they learned about seeds and pollinators and really enjoyed working in the garden. They were THRILLED to take home the tomato plants! I saw several of them at dismissal running to their parents/siblings to show them. I am so grateful for our garden and all it provides for our students and families."
- Cradlerock Elementary

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IMPACT

Since 2022, Nourishing Gardens has installed 39 gardens in the community, 16 of which are at Howard County's Public Schools.



INSTALLATION LOCATIONS

1. Atholton Adventist Academy Installation 1*
2. Atholton Adventist Academy Installation 2*
3. Aya Montessori School+
4. Brightview Senior Center
5. Clemens Crossing Elementary School+
6. Columbia Community Care
7. Cradlerock Elementary School+
8. Emerson Community's Bradwell Park
9. Gorman Crossing Elementary School+
10. Hanover Hills Elementary School+
11. Howard Community College+
12. Howard County Conservancy+
13. Longfellow Elementary School+
14. M.O.R.E of Baltimore Homeschool Co-op
15. Oakland Mills High School+
16. Oakland Mills Middle School+
17. Owen Brown Interfaith Center+
18. Phelps Luck Elementary School Installation 1*
19. Phelps Luck Elementary School Installation 2*+
20. Richcroft Adult Group Home
21. Running Brook Elementary School+
22. St. Paul Resurrection School
23. Stevens Forest Village Center (complete revamp)
24. Swansfield Elementary School+
25. United Way Family Center+

2023 INSTALLATION LOCATIONS

26. Allview Neighborhood Garden
27. ARC of Howard County
28. Atholton Swim Club
29. Bryant Woods Elementary School Food*
30. Bryant Woods Elementary School Pollinator*
31. Columbia Community Care
32. Harper's Choice Middle School
33. Howard Community College Culinary Arts
34. Howard High School+
35. Talbott Springs Elementary School
36. The Mall in Columbia
37. Thunder Hill Elementary School
38. Ellicott City Home Installation
39. Columbia Home Installation

*These locations had two installs per location
+These locations received a bench or garden bed made from durable wood alternative from Upcycled.

TESTIMONIAL FROM A LOCAL SCHOOL

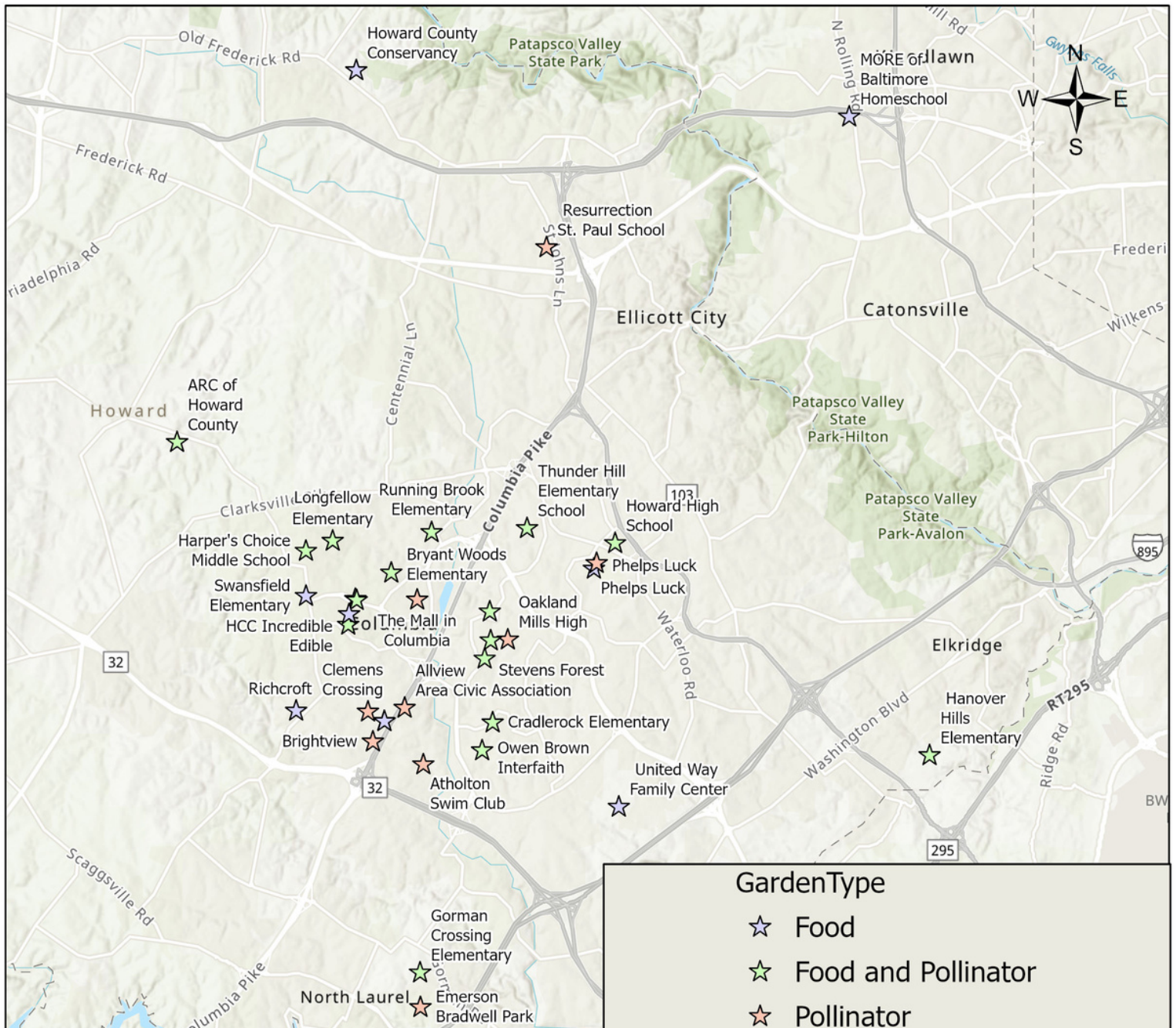
Since the installation of our school garden, students are more passionate about taking care of the garden and the environment. Many students are also very interested in learning all about the crops being harvested and tasting them. – Gorman Crossing Elementary School

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CONTINUED PARTNERSHIPS

The following is a map of the installations CEI completed in 2022 and 2023. When possible, installations were prioritized in areas with geographic proximity to support a more continuous native habitat for pollinators.





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CONTINUED IMPACT

"The Nourishing Gardens Program had a profound impact in my life. I have met amazing people at Freetown Farm and am very grateful to be a part of such a dynamic organization." – Nourishing Gardens trainee



A GROWING IMPACT

Since Nourishing Gardens program was established in 2021:

- 72 people have been engaged in the Nourishing Gardens training, learning the skills to transform lawns into ecologically beneficial growing spaces.
- Nourishing Gardens has replaced approximately 16,757 square feet of underutilized areas with ecologically beneficial growing space.
- Over 3,067 native pollinator, fruit, and vegetable plants have been planted.
- CEI has cultivated relationships with 39 different schools, community centers, and neighborhoods where community, education, and environmental conservation can thrive.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Nourishing Gardens trainees continue to identify CEI as a resource for ongoing education and home garden support. CEI has developed a number of avenues to provide additional information and services for homeowners, including workshops and home consultation services.
- Schools continue to identify CEI's leadership in the installation itself as one of the key drivers of their program's success. As such, we foresee continuing to support community-based installations as an integral program service.
- Schools and community continue to request our support through garden coaching, maintenance, and student workshops to maintain the gardens' sustainability. We saw great success in these areas this year and foresee continuing these relationships and supports in the coming year.

TESTIMONIAL FROM A LOCAL SCHOOL

"Being able to have their own special job, it gives [students] purpose, they feel like they are part of something bigger than just the school, they are part of helping the community, so they are very proud." – Bryant Woods Elementary School

INSTALLATIONS IN PROGRESS

CEI is awaiting approval to install these 9 additional gardens in 2024:

1. Lisbon Elementary School
2. Northfield Elementary School
3. Tridelphia Ridge Elementary School
4. St. Johns Lane Elementary School
5. Hammond Elementary School
6. Swansfield Elementary School
7. Wilde Lake Middle School
8. The Homewood Center
9. River Hill High School



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INSTALLATIONS

Pictures of the 2023 Nourishing Gardens Installations





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THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS



**The Jain Family
Foundation**



Without your generous support
and partnership, none of this
would be possible.

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