



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY



12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 927 • Fairfax, VA 22035-1118
703-324-8700 • Fax: 703-324-3974 • www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks

For Immediate Release

Judy Pedersen, PIO

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E-mail: parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov

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Press Inquiries: 703-324-8662

New Workshop at Riverbend Teaches Benefits of Going Native

Ornamental plants with colorful blooms and other desirable characteristics have been planted for generations. Now many of these non-native plant species are considered invasive and detrimental to the overall health of local ecosystems.

A new workshop held at Riverbend Park in Great Falls, Va., will teach participants the benefits of planting native plant species in their yards and gardens. The five-session series meets on Sundays at 1 p.m. starting March 30, 2014. Topics discussed in the workshops include choosing plants that provide habitat for native birds and butterflies, learning to identify and remove invasive plants, and designing a home garden plan.

The workshop will be taught by Rita Peralta, a naturalist at the park and microbial ecologist by training. Peralta holds a M.S. in Environmental Science and Policy and a B.A. in Biology from George Mason University. She interned with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District helping with their environmental outreach efforts. Additionally, she has lectured on environmental science as an adjunct at George Mason University and, more recently, she lectured on wetland ecology to Master Naturalists. “I’m excited for the opportunity to offer this program and hope that the response will be positive,” Peralta said.

Workshop participants must be at least age 15. The cost is \$93 for county residents and \$108 for out-of-county visitors. Registration is available online at <http://1.usa.gov/110tHu3> or by calling 703-222-4664.

Riverbend Park is located at 8700 Potomac Hills St. in Great Falls, Va. For more information, call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park.

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If accommodations and/or alternative formats are needed, please call (703) 324-8563, at least 10 working days in advance of the registration deadline or event. TTY (703) 803-3354.