

askHRgreen.org Water Awareness Subcommittee**Summary & Results for askHRgreen Mini-Grants Awarded in FY15**

Total Projects Funded – 7

FY 15 Mini Grant Budget - \$3,500

Total Funds Awarded - \$2,749.35

Name of Project	School/facility	City/County	Awarded	# of Children
SpEd WIN Growing Project	Hampton Grows, Inc. & Hampton High School	Hampton	\$500	40
Teaching Children about Plant Diversity & Horticulture	Hines Middle School	Newport News	\$250	75
Newport News YMCA Habitat Project	Newport News Family YMCA	Newport News	\$250	275
Community Garden	An Achievable Dream Middle & High School	Newport News	\$375	30
Park Ambassadors After School Program	Elizabeth River Project	Portsmouth	\$400	15
How Does Your Garden Grow	Newtown Elementary School	Virginia Beach	\$474.35	530
Wild About Birds	Virginia Cooperative Extension – York/Poquoson	York/Poquoson	\$500	400
Total Funds Awarded FY15			\$2,749.35	1,365

SpEd WIN Growing Project – Hampton Grows, Inc./Hampton High School, Hampton – \$500

Project Description: To teach special education students through nature based learning. To enhance the opportunity for experiential learning in environmental science, math and language arts. The students will also learn skills in organizing and publicizing their plant sale fundraiser, as well as coaching in agricultural practices to develop job skills for potential future employment. The students will grow a variety of plants, of which, approximately 75% will be edibles. These will include perennial herbs and fruits. Rosemary, Thyme, Sage and Oregano are very hardy, drought tolerant herbs. Lavender, Borage and Echinacea qualify as perennial herbs, flowers and pollinators. The students will learn about

growing via seed starting and propagation. The remainder will be divided into annual flowers (mostly edible) and pollinators. Milkweed will be a main feature to develop interest in Monarchs. One of our classes focuses on insect pollinators. We will be hand watering for the first season. We will have catch pans under the plants and will recycle the water used. This teaches conservancy and utilization of resources. Our program integrates natural pest management and does not use chemicals or pesticides. We will also be landscaping the area surrounding the greenhouse, which is in an enclosed courtyard. Plantings will be mulched to conserve water. We will implement soaker hoses in appropriate areas. Hampton Grows' main focus is on growing food to provide for yourself and your family. This project is multi-faceted in that we are teaching these students not only what and how to grow, but also developing marketable life skills for future employment.





Mini Grant Project Summary Form

Project title: Hampton High School SpEd Greenhouse Project

Teacher or Leader's Name: Wendy Iles

Project Outcome: (Successes, results, how the project met SOL requirements, etc.)

Due to weather, contractor (mowing and wasp issue) and scheduling conflicts (planned activities), the greenhouse wasn't completed in time to be beneficial for this school year, so we will be returning in August to ready it for the students. Shelves have been installed along with supplies for starting seeds. The courtyard will be planted with mature milkweed for students to learn about Monarchs and seed saving. Once the program is implemented, I will send an updated report.

The teacher is integrating the greenhouse lessons into her SOLs for 2015-16!

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?

We created salad bowls using colanders for their Mother's day gifts. The students enjoyed the hands on activity, but most of all, watering and seeing the plants grow. They had the responsibility of watering the bowls. They were excited to share their progress each time I visited.

How could a similar project be improved? (Lessons learned, etc.)

Create a schedule with all activite adult participants. Develop alternative strategies when necessary. It was challenging to get the courtyard mowed and bushes taken down in a timely manner. Weather and wasps were huge factors! Access to an interior courtyard during non-school hours became a factor in the project not being completed on time.

Please check off that you have included the following with your submission:

- Copy of receipt(s)
- Digital photos of youth engaged in the project
- Completed summary form

**Please email copy of receipts, digital photos and completed summary form to
HRGreen@hrpdcva.gov or mail to Attention: askHRgreen.org Mini Grant Program,
723 Woodlake Drive, Chesapeake VA, 23320.**

Teaching Children about Plant Diversity & Horticulture – Hines Middle School, Newport News – \$250 (split with Recycling & Beautification)

Project Description: To broaden student's understanding of plant diversity through field trips and hands-on experiences. They will study different types of plants and plant adaptations to different biomes through plant posters, plant activities in class, and field trip to a plant nursery. March - start unit on genetic engineering and it's applications to horticulture (SOL LS12), April - field trip to Andersons, unit on living and nonliving factors in ecosystems (SOL 10), May/June - continue growing plants - unit on energy cycles and biomes (SOL LS 9)



Mini Grant Project Summary Form Project title: Teaching Children about the Diversity of Plants and Horticulture

Teacher or Leader's Name: Regina Bundy, Hines Middle School

Project Outcome: (Successes, results, how the project met SOL requirements, etc.)

Our project teaching about plants was a success! The students, teachers, and even the community have learned about plants diversity, types of plants in different biomes, soil, experimental design and vermicomposting systems. We worked in partnership with Anderson's Home and Garden Center who provided advice and support as needed. The project touched on many subjects being taught throughout the life science curriculum and culminated in beautiful flower and vegetable boxes that beautified our school entrance.

The project began by introducing students and teachers to a diversity of plants - tropical, annual and herb plants to select flowers and arrangements that would be suitable for full sun outdoor plants. Later in the year, Anderson's lent us plants to introduce various plants grown in various biomes bringing in topics of climate (rainfall and temperature) in terms of plant needs.

As students waited for our equipment to arrive (self-watering Earthboxes, seed starter kits and soil), they were introduced to worm composting as way to create soil. They compared sidewalk dirt with worm castings. They probed the compost to determine what food was composted. With the composter being in the classroom, we discussed the worm life cycle, soil organisms, waste reduction, and organic farming.

In the worm bin experiment, students have learned how to develop an experiment, differences between qualitative and quantitative data, identify independent and dependent variables and record the data. Students voted on which food to study and chose four types: ghost peppers, fried snap peas, twizzlers and melons. In the process, they learned how to turn their kitchen scraps into usable compost for our garden. The worm composter is in our classroom for every student to enjoy. We were surprised that ghost peppers were eaten so quickly and so were the fried sweet peas.

Students were given opportunities to grow plants in two different ways. The first phase was by designing a school garden out of recycled milk cartons as part of a STEM project. Approximately 10 students participated in this exciting activity and their design was displayed as part of recognizing Earth Day. These plants were later reused in our garden planters with our seed plants to beautify our school entrance as well as educate students about plants (vegetables) who could watch them grow.

The second opportunity was to watch and grow plants by seed. To begin, they prepared peat pots from the Grow-ems plant kits and each class chose a different garden theme – Taco, Ratatouille and Stir-Fry. Each class later had an opportunity to watch the peat pots from the seed kits to expand. This led to a discussion of the ability of some soils to hold water and wetlands.

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?

- Of course our students enjoyed feeding the worms and observing the worms.
- They loved playing with the soil, building the boxes and designing the garden.
- Our Hines community loved the flower boxes! Teachers, staff and parents all commented.
- Our milk carton garden with our students was featured in the newspaper. This was very exciting.
- Students wanted to establish a garden club next year. Two students and two teachers each adopted a Earthbox planter to use over the summer.
- Now that our students have vermicomposting experience, they really take pleasure in talking about it and teaching others.

How could a similar project be improved? (Lessons learned, etc.)

Scheduling a field trip was very difficult given the overlap of our SOL testing schedule, bus availability, and Anderson's biggest sales season. Anderson's lacked the manpower and time to plan it with us. Although we can up with a great option (using local extension office/master gardeners), it was too difficult to schedule. After a discussion with our SOL testing coordinator, I have learned that scheduling was further complicated by the new state option of SOL expedited retakes. Our project could be improved by incorporating students from the garden club next year and early scheduling of the field trip.

Please check off that you have included the following with your submission:

X Copy of receipt(s)

Digital photos of youth engaged in the project

Completed summary form Please email copy of receipts, digital photos and completed summary form to HRGreen@hrpdca.gov or mail to Attention: askHRgreen.org Mini Grant Program, 723 Woodlake Drive Chesapeake VA, 23320.

Park Ambassadors After School Program – Elizabeth River Project/Craddock Middle School, Portsmouth - \$400 (split with Stormwater Education)

Project Description: This project will provide Craddock middle school students with a place-based education opportunity through a 7-week after school program at Paradise Creek Nature Park through The Elizabeth River Project and Norfolk Multicultural and Hampton Roads Area Young Life. Local middle school students show low Standards of Learning science scores, have limited access to public green space, and are primarily limited to science education in a restricted classroom setting. This transformative after school program will connect middle school students to the outdoors and their home river while engaging them in civic action beneficial to their community. Students will:

- Learn valuable information about their watershed, the environment and the health of their home river, the Elizabeth. They will learn key stewardship actions including scooping the poop, keeping storm drains clear, and not pouring grease down sinks. Students will also learn important local native and invasive plants and obtain a better understanding of our regions natural resources and SOL science curriculum (SOL's covered: BIO 8, LS 6, 7, 8, 9, 11) .
- Become engaged as active community volunteers by imagining, designing, and creating a discovery zone for the park. Discovery zones initiate a free form of play and exploration in a natural environment. This student designed discovery zone will be used during Ranger led education programs at the park and by park visitors looking for interactive ways to explore when no guide is present. Over 5,000 park visitors are estimated to experience this zone per year!
- Make friends while becoming environmental stewards, gaining hands on experiences, and improving their resume as Park Ambassadors.
- Learn from Paradise Creek Nature Park's Urban Park Ranger, and connect with Hampton Road's area Young Life introducing them to mentors and prominent role models in the community.

Project Outcome: Successes, results, how the project met SOL requirements, ETC.)

With HR Green's support 12 students from Cradock Middle School were able to participate in a 6-week after school program introducing students first hand to nature and The Elizabeth River while creating an outdoor discovery zone at Paradise Creek Nature Park. Upon first visiting the park, students learned about the habitat found along Paradise Creek, investigated the woods that a fox calls home, and learned about The Elizabeth River and wetland health while testing the water quality of Paradise Creek Nature Park's Wetland. Students also brainstormed ideas to incorporate into their very own Discovery Zone. The following after school meetings brought students closer together while they worked to design and create signs to hang in the park prompting visitors to complete a scavenger hunt in nature, and continued hands on exploration by learning about native and invasive plants and important stewardship actions to keep our river clean. The afterschool students also grew in their understanding, comfort and appreciation of nature, with pre/post scores improving across the board. Highlights include: over 25% gains in knowledge on facts about the Elizabeth River, definition and purpose of a watershed, and understanding of where within the watershed they live; 80% increase in students understanding of what 4 cities the Elizabeth River runs through.

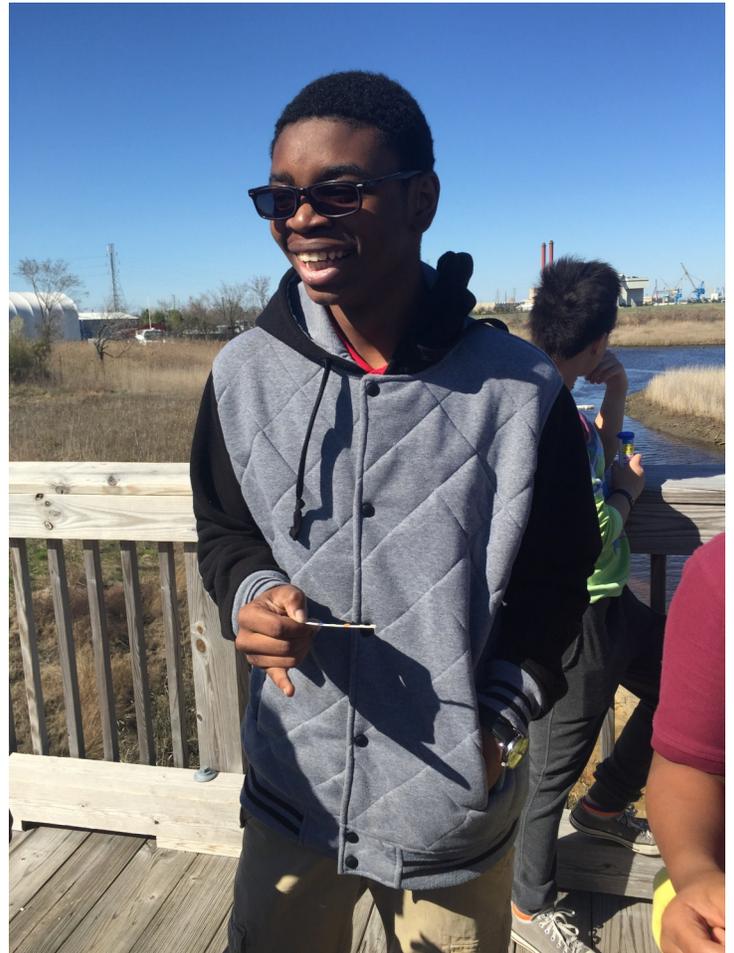
What did the students enjoy most about this project?

Nearly all of the students that participated in this program had never been to Paradise Creek Nature Park despite going to school less than a mile away. Additionally, most students were fearful and uncomfortable in the park during their first visit. By the end of the program all students expressed their comfort and joy with the outdoors, improved knowledge with the Elizabeth River, and better confidence in their ability to reach a final goal. Xyisha Cox stated in her nature journal, "The biggest change to me was getting to be outdoors. Before I came here I would always be indoors".

How could a similar project be improved (Lessons learned, etc.)

The biggest constraint in this project was time. The proposed 7-week program was cut a week short due to SOL testing, and many students had conflicts with other after-school extracurricular activities. The students were engaged and excited throughout the duration of this program and expressed sincere disappointment when their other activities interfered with this after school program.

First Visit to Paradise Creek Nature Park



Students test the water quality of Paradise Creek while learning the about the importance of wetlands for river health.

Second Visit to Paradise Creek Nature Park



Students work to complete a scavenger hunt at the park to introduce them to their Discovery Zone project.

Students begin sketching designs on tree slices which will become the Scavenger Hunt themed discovery zone.

In the Classroom



Students begin painting their tree slices which will become Paradise Creek Nature Park's newest Discovery Zone.

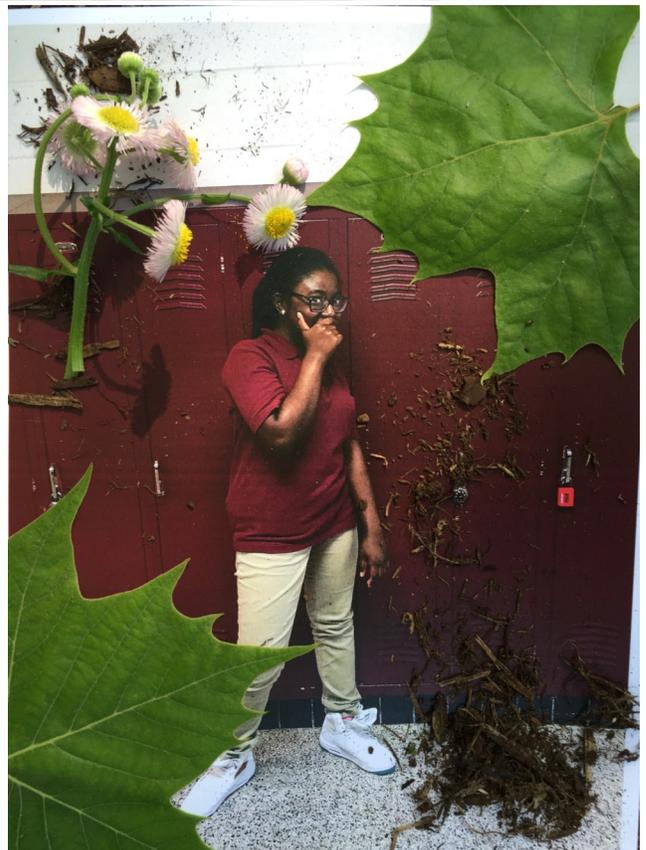
Xyisha Cox marvels at the difference in spring growth between the first and second visit to Paradise Creek Nature Park



Completed Discovery Zone with signs ready to hang!



Additional Fun with Nature



Nature Journal Submissions

Yolanda Moody

5-5-15

1. My biggest change is that I'm not as afraid of the woods as I was before.

2. And my favorite part is when we all stood on the bridge and Sarah brought water with algae and we tested it.

3. One experience was that I got to see a fox hole and stand on a bridge.

4. That the Elizabeth River is one of the dirtiest rivers.

4-14-15

Xyisha Cox

5-5-15

I like to listen to the birds

I'm scared of the animals when I'm too close.

Birds, and animals that I don't see often

raccoon

1) The biggest change to me was getting to be outdoors. Before I came here I would always be indoors.

2) What I liked most was the snacks, getting to know more people, and enjoying the outdoors.

3) One thing that was new was learning about the wild plants that surround you.

4) One thing I learned about the park was the wet lands and the burrows where the foxes live.

Newport News YMCA Habitat Project –Newport News Family YMCA, Newport News - \$250 (split with Stormwater Education)

Project Description: Working with several community partners including Virginia Master Naturalist, Girl Scout Troop #1539 and future Eagle Scout, David Wells the YMCA is building a habitat around the new spray park. The habitat will provide a natural buffer to filter water before it proceeds to into our watershed. Equally important, the habitat will provide endless educational opportunities for youth and families while creating a community space for all to enjoy. Several Standards of Learning apply and the educational opportunities are endless. A few of the standards covered are listed below. Additional standards are met in the areas of Math, History, and Social Science.





Mini Grant Project Summary Form

Project title:

Teacher or Leader's Name:

Project Outcome: (Successes, results, how the project met SOL requirements, etc.)

What did the students enjoy the most about this project?

How could a similar project be improved? (Lessons learned, etc.)

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Wild About Birds at School – Virginia Cooperative Extension, York/Poquoson – \$500

Project Description: Since 2012, VCE-York/Poquoson has actively been providing nature education resources and outreach to twelve public schools (ten elementary schools, two high schools) in York County and the City of Poquoson as they have built or improved schoolyard habitats both for monarch butterflies and for K-12 education. Our goal in 2015 is a dual expansion--reaching out to additional schools in these two school divisions while broadening our habitat focus to attract and support wild birds. While monarchs may be observed and studied in our area during the summer and fall, a variety of birds may be observed here every day of the year. As a result, studying birds opens up additional opportunities for teachers to incorporate environmental education during class throughout the school year. Adding bird-friendly plants and amenities on school grounds is a cost-efficient way to entice the five newest schools in the program to explore and expand environmental education while offering something new to the twelve schools that have been diligently focusing on monarch conservation. Instead of simply providing habitat and educational materials to all 23 schools, we assessed interest levels via a survey. For the first part of the survey, students had to inventory bird-friendly features currently in existence on school grounds. Next, they rank-ordered a school wishlist of bird-friendly amenities for habitat improvement. Our volunteer outreach partner network, consisting of Master Gardeners and Virginia Master Naturalists, provided nature-based consultation and assistance when requested. Eighteen school communities expressed interest. Our objective is to provide each of these interested schools with two or more items from their wishlist this school year so they may make an immediate impact in support of wild birds. Along with one or more free habitat amenities, we will provide teachers with sample lesson plans and educational materials that relate directly to birds. The greatest impact to classroom education will come in future school years as the outreach partners continue to mentor teachers who will eventually become more familiar and comfortable with teaching outdoors. To stretch our funding, we are working with the woodworking department from New Horizons Regional Education Center. Students there will build items to our specifications, e.g. birdhouses, bird feeders, and insect homes, so long as we provide the raw materials. One of our top goals is for students, teachers, and administrators to appreciate that nature is all around us, not just tucked away in tropical rainforests and parks. We live in a truly amazing region! With this understanding, our next goal is to empower school communities to take positive actions at the local level, and collectively on a regional level, towards a better environment for our local native wildlife as well as the people who live here. Standards of Learning (SOLs) that this project addresses may be found in nearly all subjects.



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Teacher or Leader's Name:

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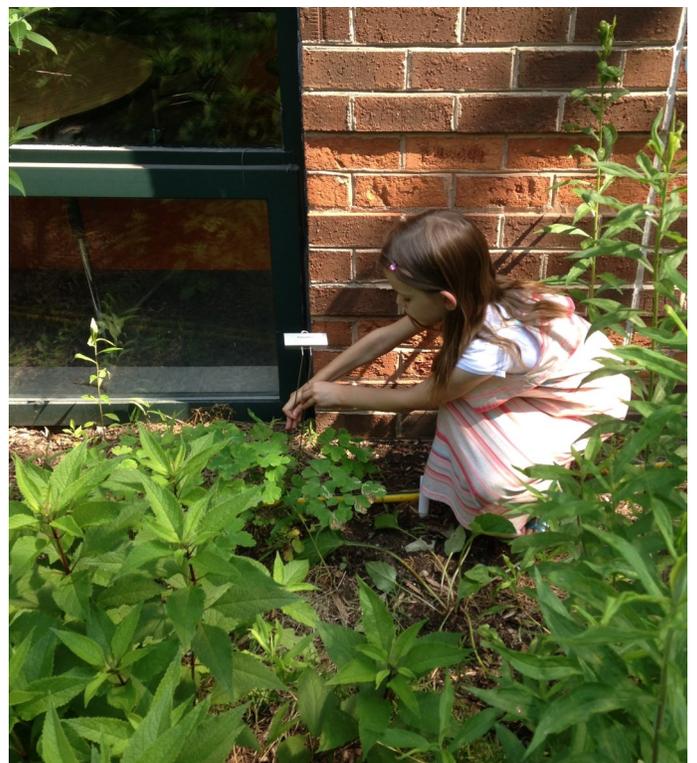
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4-H Schoolyard Habitats Outreach A Youth Environmental Program of VCE-York/Poquoson Introduces “Wild About Birds At School”

Funding from  askHRgreen.org



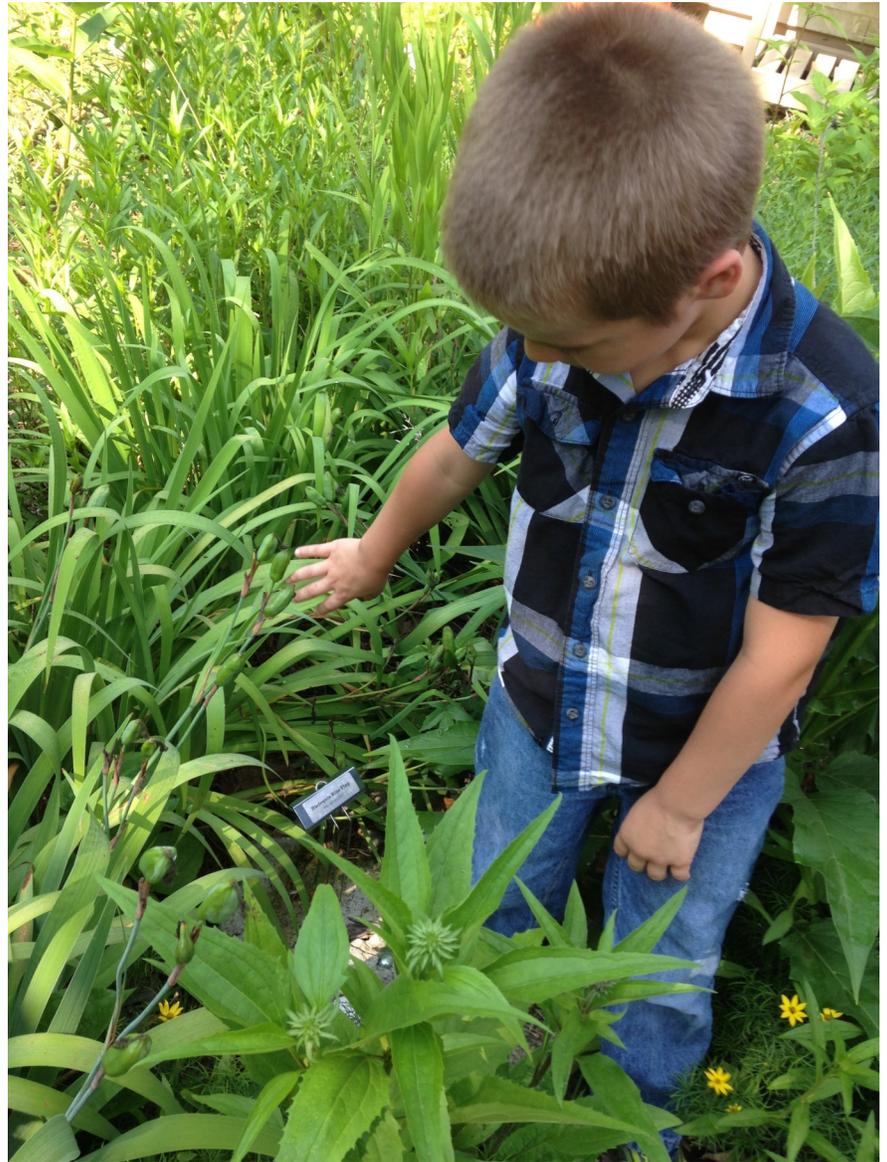
First Graders label native plants
in the schoolyard habitat at Tabb
Elementary School in York County, VA.

June 2015

4-H Schoolyard Habitats Outreach

A Youth Environmental Program of VCE-York/Poquoson
Introduces “Wild About Birds At School”

Funding from  askHRgreen.org



Adding new native plant labels
to the schoolyard habitat at Tabb ES, a
K-5 public school in York County, VA.

June 2015

4-H Schoolyard Habitats Outreach *A Youth Environmental Program of VCE-York/Poquoson* Introduces “Wild About Birds At School”

Funding from  **askHRgreen.org**



Pam Gaspard’s First Graders are happy to show off their school’s new bird waterer!

Here’s a closer look of the bird waterer just after the product label was removed. One of the school’s two compost bins is visible in the background.

June 2015



Community Garden – An Achievable Dream Middle & High School, Newport News – \$375

Project Description: The students will work with Master Gardeners from the Virginia Cooperative Extension to construct a community garden and get training on educating the community about acquiring healthier eating habits, maintaining a personal garden, efficient methods of water conservation, and the identification of common native and non-native plants.

Summary not yet received.

How Does Your Garden Grow Newtown Elementary School, Virginia Beach – \$474.35

Project Description: The gardens are being sectioned off so that different classes can “adopt a bed” and manage that portion of the garden, from the planting to the weeding and for the vegetables and herd, harvesting. We want to create a learning environment in our enclosed courtyard where students can learn about the lifecycles in a “natural” setting. A large butterfly garden is under construction and will be planted with both nectar plants (for the adults) and host plants (where the eggs are laid and caterpillars live). The ladybug house is to encourage the retention of ladybugs as a natural form of pest control and the wood bee house is to encourage pollinators for the gardens, but in a visible way for the student’s benefit. The rain barrels and composter are to include resource conservation lessons into the learning gardens as well. This is a Title I school with 80 percent of the students on free or reduced lunches. Numerous SOLs can be addressed in a series of lessons that span the entire school year for all 530 of our second and third graders. Beyond that, reading and writing objectives can be met through incorporation into the lessons as well.

Summary not yet received.