

THE MESSAGE

The Newsletter of the City of Mount Rainier
El boletín informativo de la Ciudad de Mount Rainier

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U.S. Congress

Rep. Anthony Brown 202-225-8699
Sen. Chris Van Hollen 301-322-6560
Sen. Ben Cardin 301-860-0414

Exceptional Trees

By Brad Ball, Mount Rainier Tree Commissioner

What makes a particular tree exceptional? It is a question that will have as many answers as there are trees in Mount Rainier’s urban forest, but did you know that our City Code includes an entire section dedicated to it? Section 12B-4 states that anyone in the city (including you!) may nominate any tree as exceptional “because of its size, age, historic association, or ecological value.” Once a tree is nominated, the city will begin a process to evaluate and possibly declare the tree as exceptional by resolution of the Mayor and Council. This will confer special recognition and protections onto the tree to uphold its long-term health and enjoyment by all the community.

On January 14th of 2020, the Mayor and City Council voted to declare our city’s first Exceptional Tree at 3209 Shepherd Street. It is a majestic eastern hemlock located on private property, with a placard calling it to your attention. If you did not know what to look for, you might just see another tree among trees, so what makes this tree exceptional? It is lusciously evergreen and perhaps a century or more old, but the fact that it is a mature hemlock here in Maryland secures its status.

The hemlock’s native range once stretched from the Appalachian Mountains of northern Georgia to the maritime provinces of Canada, and from the shores of Delaware across the Great Lakes states. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find a thriving hemlock in Maryland, or for that matter anywhere outside of the highest altitudes or most northern limits of its once expansive range. We owe this sad reality to a tiny insect called the hemlock woolly adelgid.

Scientists believe this deadly invader arrived on a shipment of nursery trees from Japan in the early 20th century. Producing two generations per year and hundreds of offspring per adelgid, it has spread exponentially since then, draining the sap from the hemlocks it infests and eventually killing them.

Because the adelgid is spread by wind and wildlife from one hemlock to the next, where clusters of the ancient trees once flourished, now only woody skeletons decay into the forest. Much like the coronavirus pandemic we are experiencing, the more distance between the trees, the less likely it is for the infection to spread. Fortunately for this exceptional tree, there are very few other hemlocks throughout the region. No infection has yet to reach it, allowing it to potentially grow for decades to come.

The next time you are strolling through your neighborhood, look around at the trees. Are there any that stand out to you for some reason? Do you know something special about a particular tree? If so, send us a note at the Tree Commission. Maybe that tree will be the next Exceptional Tree.



The City of Mount Rainier’s first Exceptional Tree

Event Calendar

March 2, 2021 @ 7pm

Mayor and City Council
Legislative Meeting
Location: Virtual

March 16, 2021 @ 7pm

Mayor and City Council
Work Session
Location: Virtual

Our New Native Plant Network

By the Mount Rainier Green Team

“ Our challenge is to take bold action and turn the tide on biodiversity loss, preventing a diminished future with a scarcity of wild animals, plants and pollinators. ”

This past winter, the Mayor and Council passed legislation drafted by Councilman Chesek to create the Mount Rainier Native Plant Network. This is a new idea and probably easiest to explain by first talking a bit about biodiversity.

Biodiversity is the enormous variety of plants, bugs, bees, birds, bears, humans, and everything in between that makes our planet so wonderfully alive and habitable. The services provided by biodiversity, such as pollination, are crucial to our planet and human existence. Unfortunately, misguided human development is accelerating climate change and habitat loss, and our planet is losing biodiversity at increasingly alarming rates.

Our response to this threat will determine the kind of planet future generations get to enjoy. Our challenge is to take bold action and turn the tide on biodiversity loss, preventing a diminished future with a scarcity of wild animals, plants and pollinators.

To address this crisis, leading environmental groups are campaigning to preserve 30% of the planet as nature preserves, but unfortunately, creating islands of biodiversity in our state and national parks is not enough. Incorporating native plants into the local landscape – yards, businesses and public spaces – and connecting biodiversity across the state is critical.

Here's the idea

To restore biodiversity to our community, volunteers are setting up the Mount Rainier Native Plant Network. The volunteers will educate, encourage, and assist residents, apartment owners, businesses and our local governments with planting and documenting native plants on their properties.

How do I get involved?

Anyone can sign up as a participating home or business or volunteer in the Mount Rainier Native Plant Network. As a participant you will plant or maintain native plants in your yard with the goal of having at least 25 different native plant species in your yard, or 10% of your yard planted with natives. This fall a volunteer will come by to verify and officially count you as a certified yard in the Mount Rainier Native Plant Network.

Are there incentives?

Certified yards will receive a beautiful and artistic small yard sign (designed by our very own Torie Partridge) to show off their membership. Your certified yard will also be included on an online map, providing a virtual representation of the native plant ecosystem in our city.

Is help available? Yes!

If you don't know how to get started you can request a no-cost consultation from volunteers trained by the Prince George's County Audubon Society Wildlife Habitat Program. Contact Kathy Shollenberger via email (kathyk9@gmail.com) to set up a time for a local volunteer to visit your property, and lend their expertise and guidance at helping you create a beautiful native landscape that is both better for the environment and often easier to maintain than a traditional grass lawn.

Our New Native Plant Network (cont'd)

By the Mount Rainier Green Team

Additionally, native pollinator seeds and soil are being provided through the Anacostia Watershed Society's Watershed Stewards Class for citizens who are volunteering to plant native yards this growing season. If you are interested, please email Dave Epley at dmepley@gmail.com. Supplies are limited!

This is just the start

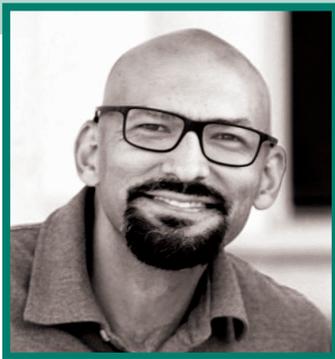
The Sierra Club's Maryland Chapter has the goal of creating a Native Plant Corridor across the state of Maryland. Mount Rainier can lead the way as a shining example. With so much outside of our sphere of influence in the fight to save our planet, it is heartening to know that there is something we can start right here, right now, to help save our planet.

Learn more

The Mount Rainier Native Plant Network will be holding a Zoom meeting on March 30th at 7pm to help kick off this movement. You can sign up at <http://bit.ly/3aaCZEN> or email mtrainiergreenteam@gmail.com. If you can't make it but want to find out how you can join the Network and get involved, email Dave Epley or Kathy Shollenberger (contact above).

The Mount Rainier Green Team meets on the second Monday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Currently, our meetings are held virtually via Zoom. All interested citizens are invited to attend and can email us for the meeting connection information. For more information, meeting agendas and minutes, and an up-to-date calendar please visit <https://mountrainiergreenteam.org>.

Meet The Team



Aaron K. Ginoza
Communications & Community
Events Coordinator

We're excited to welcome Aaron K. Ginoza to the team.

As the city's Communications and Community Events Coordinator, Aaron will help publicize city programs and services through social media and the City of Mount Rainier website and newsletter.

Before joining us, Aaron worked for the University of Maryland, College Park managing community outreach and engagement for the university's library system.

Connect on social media and sign up for e-notifications to receive up-to-date information about city programs and services.

Connect on social media!



@CityofMountRainier



@CityofMtRainier

WSSC Water Financial Assistance Programs

Do you know someone in Mount Rainier who is having trouble paying their water bill? **WSSC Water's financial assistance programs** might be able to help...

WSSC Water's financial assistance programs include:

Bill Adjustments: Available to residential customers once every three years under certain circumstances.

Flexible Payment Options: Extended due dates and pay plans can help when customers have an unexpected financial hardship.

The Water Fund: Customers can make multiple requests for assistance with water and sewer bills, up to \$500 per year.

Customer Assistance Program (CAP): Provides residential customers with a credit for WSSC Water's fixed fees on water and sewer bills of up to \$28 per quarterly bill or up to \$112 annually.

Bay Restoration Fund Exemption: Waives the state-mandated Bay Restoration Fund fee of up to \$15 per quarterly bill or up to \$60 per year.

PipeER: Provides loans to finance the replacement of leaking pipes located on your residential property.

To learn more, call WSSC Water at **301-206-4001** or visit their financial assistance website:

<https://www.wsscwater.com/assistance>

Help us continue to crush COVID

Wear a mask, watch
your distance, be
smart, and stay safe



Árboles Excepcionales

Por Brad Ball, comisionado de árboles

¿Qué es lo que hace que un árbol en particular sea excepcional? Esta es una pregunta que puede tener tantas respuestas como la cantidad de árboles que hay en el bosque urbano de Mount Rainier. Pero, ¿sabía que en el Código de nuestra ciudad hay una sección completa dedicada a este tema? La Sección 12B-4 establece que cualquier persona de la ciudad (¡incluido usted!) puede nominar un árbol como excepcional «por su tamaño, su edad, su valor histórico o su importancia ecológica». Una vez que se nombra un árbol, la ciudad inicia un proceso para evaluar y posiblemente declarar dicho árbol como excepcional mediante una resolución del Alcalde y el Ayuntamiento. De esta forma, el árbol gozará de un reconocimiento y una protección preferentes para mantener su salud a largo plazo y su disfrute por parte de toda la comunidad.

El 14 de enero de 2020, el Alcalde y el Ayuntamiento votaron para declarar el primer árbol excepcional de nuestra ciudad en el 3209 de la calle Shepherd. Es una majestuosa cicuta oriental ubicada en una propiedad privada, con un cartel para llamar su atención. Si no sabe en qué fijarse, es posible que vea simplemente un árbol más entre tantos. Por eso nos preguntamos, ¿qué es lo que hace excepcional a este árbol? Es un árbol frondoso, de hoja perenne y quizás tenga un siglo o más de antigüedad, pero el hecho de que sea una cicuta madura aquí en Maryland es lo que asegura su estatus.

El área nativa de la cicuta antiguamente se extendía desde las montañas Apalaches del norte de Georgia hasta las provincias marítimas de Canadá, y desde las costas de Delaware hasta la región de los Grandes Lagos. Sin embargo, es cada vez más difícil encontrar una cicuta floreciente en Maryland o en cualquier otro lugar más allá de las altitudes más elevadas o de los límites más septentrionales de su otrora extensa área de distribución. Le debemos esta triste realidad a un pequeño insecto llamado adelgido lanudo de cicuta. Los científicos creen que este letal invasor llegó en un cargamento de árboles de vivero proveniente de Japón, a principios del siglo XX. Desde ese momento se ha extendido exponencialmente, ya que produce dos generaciones anuales de cientos de crías por cada adelgido, que atacan las cicutas drenando su savia, lo que finalmente acaba con ellas.

Debido que el adelgido se propaga de una a otra cicuta a través del viento y los animales, donde antes florecían grupos de árboles, ahora solo se ven esqueletos leñosos descomponiéndose en el bosque. Al igual que sucede en la pandemia de coronavirus que estamos viviendo, cuanto más distancia haya entre los árboles, menos probable será la propagación de la infección. Afortunadamente para este árbol excepcional, no hay muchas más cicutas en la región. Hasta el momento no ha tenido ninguna infección, lo que le permitirá crecer durante décadas.

La próxima vez que salga a pasear por su vecindario, observe los árboles. ¿Alguno le llama la atención por algún motivo? ¿Conoce algún dato especial sobre un árbol en particular? Si es así, envíenos una nota a la Comisión de Árboles. Quizás ese sea el próximo Árbol Excepcional.



El primer árbol excepcional de nuestra ciudad

WSSC Water

Financial Assistance Programs

¿Conoce a alguien en Mount Rainier que esté teniendo dificultades para pagar la factura del agua? **Los programas de asistencia financiera de WSSC Water podrían ayudar...**

Los programas de asistencia financiera de WSSC Water incluyen:

Ajustes de factura: Disponible a clientes residenciales una vez cada tres años bajo ciertas circunstancias.

Opciones de pagos flexibles: Ofrecemos plan de pagos u opción de extender su fecha de vencimiento de su factura.

The Water Fund: Si califica, este fondo le puede ayudar con hasta \$500 por año para pagar su factura de agua.

Programa de Asistencia para el Cliente (CAP por sus siglas en inglés): Ofrece crédito para las cuotas fijas de hasta \$28 por trimestre.

Programa de exención del fondo de restauración de la bahía: Este programa le cubre hasta \$15 por trimestre del pago mandado por el estado de Maryland para la restauración de la bahía Chesapeake.

PipeER: Si la tubería en su propiedad la cual conecta su casa al sistema de agua tiene una fuga o esta rota, hay programa de prestamos para ayudarle a reemplazarla.

Forma de autorización del dueño: Si usted renta, se requiere esta forma firmada por el dueño de la propiedad para poder establecer un plan de pago.

Para obtener más información, llame a WSSC Water al 301-206-4001 o visite el sitio web de asistencia financiera:

<https://www.wsscwater.com/asistencia>



Angela D. Alsobrooks
County Executive

MITO *VS* REALIDAD

CONOZCA LOS HECHOS SOBRE LAS VACUNAS CONTRA EL COVID-19



MITO:

Las vacunas contra el COVID-19 pueden contagiarle el virus.

REALIDAD:

No. Las vacunas contra el COVID-19 brindan información crítica a las células de nuestro cuerpo para ayudar a combatir el virus y desarrollar resistencia si se expone al virus en el futuro. Las vacunas contra el COVID-19 no le transmiten el virus y no contienen el virus.

MITO:

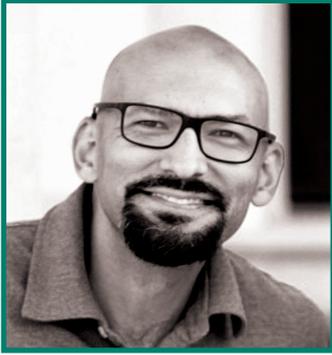
Soy joven y saludable, no me enfermaré con el COVID-19.

REALIDAD:

Si bien el COVID-19 afecta de manera desproporcionada a las minorías, las personas mayores y las personas que tienen condiciones médicas, puede enfermarlo independientemente de su edad, etnia / raza o nivel de condición física. La vacuna ayudará a fortalecer la capacidad de su cuerpo para resistir infecciones.

APRENDE MÁS: mypgc.us/COVIDVaccine

Conozca Al Equipo



Aaron K. Ginoza
Coordinador de Comunicaciones
y Eventos Comunitarios

Nos complace darle la bienvenida al equipo a Aaron K. Ginoza.

Como coordinador de comunicaciones y eventos comunitarios de la ciudad, Aaron dará a conocer los programas y servicios de la ciudad a través de las redes sociales, el sitio web y el boletín de noticias de Mount Rainier.

Antes de unirse a nosotros, Aaron trabajó para la Universidad de Maryland, en College Park, gestionando actividades de extensión y participación comunitaria en el sistema de bibliotecas de la universidad.

Conéctese con nosotros en las redes sociales y suscríbase a las notificaciones electrónicas para recibir información actualizada sobre los programas y servicios de la ciudad.

Conéctese con nosotros en las redes sociales



@CityofMountRainier



@CityofMtRainier

Ayúdenos a seguir combatiendo COVID-19



Use una máscara, observe su distancia,
sea inteligente y manténgase a salvo

Community Contacts

**Interim City Manager/
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lgatling@mountrainiermd.org

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**Code Enforcement/
Cumplimiento del Codigo**
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**Social Services Coordinator/
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& MRTV/ Comunicaciones y Eventos
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