

# Neighborhood NEWS

FALL • 2013

RUXTON-RIDERWOOD-LAKE ROLAND AREA IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

## Ruxton Tops the Recycling Heap

by Barbara Guarnieri

Pat yourselves on the can, Ruxton – the recycling can that is! According to the County's website ([www.bcrecycles.com](http://www.bcrecycles.com)) the Brooklandville/Ruxton area has one of the highest rates of recycled household waste in Baltimore County. On average this area recycled 30.1% of their trash in 2012, which exceeds the nearest community (Catonsville) by 6%! But don't rest on your eco-laurels for too long. Michael Beichler, Chief of the Solid Waste Management Bureau, thinks we can do even better. He is challenging our neighborhoods to lead the charge toward the County's goal of achieving a 50% recycled household waste rate. Are we up to it?

In order to figure this out I decide that I will have to air my dirty trash in public.

I empty several household trash cans on my deck to get a clearer picture of what is in them. The largest percentage, by both volume and size, is plastic goods. Coming in a close second is paper products and the aluminum pile is third. Finally, there is a miscellany of stuff that includes several batteries, wine corks, a toothbrush, a tube of toothpaste, light bulbs, a pair of nylons, an old pen, an old cell phone, several scratched CDs, a computer mouse, meat bones, asparagus stems, moldy green beans, several mesh bags from fruit and potatoes, some cheese waxes and several balls of dryer lint... you get the picture. Once I make the trash visible I begin to mentally divide it into potential piles. There are several categories into which I could sort these offenders, but I choose the following options:

rethink/recycle, reuse/repurpose, collect/compost and re-fuse/ref-use. I then begin an Internet search to see how I might work on improving our household recycling habits and thus lessen what is headed to a landfill.

### Rethink/Recycle

This category involves all items in my trash that I was too lazy to put in recycling or about which I had a question, so it was simpler to toss it. Most prominent are the plastic, metal and paper goods from the second floor of our house, an area in which I don't currently have a recycling bin. The **toilet paper rolls, toothpaste and soap boxes, empty toothpaste**

**tubes, shampoo bottles, prescription and other medicine bottles, glass and plastic makeup containers** – these end up in the trash because I don't take them to the kitchen recycling bin. I decide to keep a large shopping bag with a sturdy handle on the back door of our medicine closet to collect recycling. I also look through the other upstairs waste and pull lots of **paper sheets** from the computer area trash and **magazines and shirt cardboards** from our bedroom waste basket. I need to keep a box for paper recyclables upstairs and be more aware. Always being conscious of the choice is important; being conscientious is even more so!

Next I reread the [www.bcrecycles.com](http://www.bcrecycles.com), [www.md.recycles.org](http://www.md.recycles.org) and [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org) websites for suggestions. I see that some of my **plastic**



Barbara ponders the mysteries of clamshells and other potential recyclables  
Photo courtesy Tom Guarnieri

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# Baltimore Checkerspot Recovery Project

by Nancy Worden Horst

The spectacular Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas phaeton Drury*) is an increasingly rare butterfly inhabiting marshy areas in the eastern United States. This butterfly, the Maryland State insect, is responsible for pollinating a variety of local plants. There are several factors responsible for the decline of the Checkerspot, but chief among them is habitat degradation caused largely by the draining of wetlands and the over-browsing of deer.

To promote a greater public awareness of the threats to this butterfly, several local organizations have begun programs for captive breeding and release of the Checkerspot as well as wetland restoration. Others have begun to monitor the population of Checkerspots in the wild to ascertain their health and their relationship to their habitat.

Since 2012, lepidopterists (scientists who study moths and butterflies), naturalists and volunteers throughout the State have banded together under the aegis of Maryland's Natural Heritage Program to develop a practical, scientifically sound and collaborative conservation strategy to protect and sustain the butterfly. (See [http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/plants\\_wildlife/baltimorecheckerspot.asp](http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/plants_wildlife/baltimorecheckerspot.asp).)

## Baltimore Checkerspot Life Cycle

After mating in June, Baltimore Checkerspot females deposit eggs,

in clusters, on the undersides of the leaves of white turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*). During her one- to three-week lifetime (males don't live much longer), a female Baltimore Checkerspot may lay multiple egg clusters, each containing hundreds of eggs.



Photos courtesy Ranger Bart Viguers

The eggs develop during the next 20 days before hatching into caterpillars (larvae). These larvae begin feeding and build a communal web (which provides protection from predators), often at the end of a turtlehead leaf. Caterpillars stop feeding in August and enter diapause (a slow-down of the metabolism). At the end of October, the larvae move out of the web and descend to the leaf litter below (dead plant material such as leaves, bark and twigs that has fallen to the ground) where they overwinter. As the weather warms in early Spring, the larvae move from their nest in the leaf litter or mulch to the plants to begin eating

again. Well-fed caterpillars enter the chrysalis stage in May, develop into butterflies and the entire cycle begins again. Adult Checkerspots feed on a variety of plants including common milkweed,



dogbane, oxeye, and penstemons. (For a more complete list, see page 15.)

## Checkerspot Recovery Project

The Checkerspot Recovery Project involves ecologists, naturalists and volunteers throughout Maryland. With The Baltimore Checkerspot Recovery Team and other State and County agencies, participants conduct surveys of wild colonies of the butterflies and their habitat, evaluate the landscape of potential reintroduction sites, and determine the most effective methods of reintroduction. Sites able to sustain turtlehead as well as other nectar plants are the most suitable but only if invasive species can be controlled and browsing deer can be restricted.



## Checkerspot Recovery Project at Robert E. Lee Park

This past winter, volunteer Howdy Knipp and park rangers built a wood-and-wire cage to safely house both the Checkerspot larvae and the plants that sustain them: turtlehead and penstemons for the caterpillars and fleabane,

blackberry and milkweed for the adults.

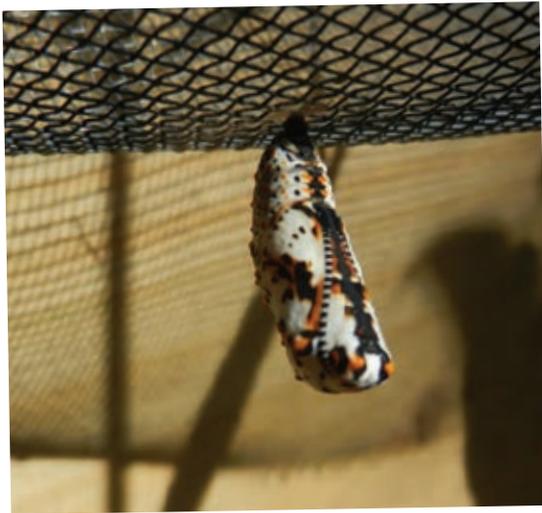
Park rangers raised the Checkerspots for education and for future release into the Park and surrounding communities.

In addition to the hatching cage, rangers and volunteers planted turtlehead in several areas throughout the Park to support the butterfly population once they were released; these plantings were enclosed to keep out the deer.

Long-range plans include organizing a 'Turtlehead Trail Group' of interested neighbors, garden clubs and nature lovers who will volunteer to plant turtlehead in yards and gardens radiating outward from the Park to expand the surrounding habitat and further ensure the life cycle of the released Checkerspots.

### Checkerspot Recovery Project in Your Backyard

You, too, can contribute to this effort by planting some of the species listed at the end of this article. While this sounds simple,



beware! *Because the caterpillars will die if they feed on treated plants, you must confirm that the cultivars you purchase have been grown without pesticides.* It is difficult to find untreated plants as many nurseries, even those specializing in native species, treat their plants with pesticides. Look for the plant sale at Robert E. Lee Park this autumn for butterfly-friendly, untreated plants. Or, check out the Maryland Native Plant Society website <http://mdflora.org/publications/nurseries.html> for a list of nurseries that specialize in native plants. *However, always call and check with the nursery before you order.*

#### Native plants that sustain Checkerspot butterflies:

- Common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)
- Dogbane (*Apocynum spp.*)
- Oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)
- Penstemons, viburnums (*Viburnum recognitum Fernald and Viburnum acerifolium*)
- White ash (*Fraxinus americana*)
- Lousewort (*Pedicularis spp.*)
- Honeysuckle (*Lonicera spp.*)
- Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) – not butterfly bush
- Daisy fleabane (*Erigeron annuus Pers.*)
- Hoary mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum incanum Michx.*)
- Short-toothed mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum (Michx.) Pers.*)
- Virginia mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum virginianum*)
- Wild blackberry (*Rubus spp.*)

For further information, contact [community@relpnc.org](mailto:community@relpnc.org).

## Autumn Leaves at Robert E. Lee Park

With cooler weather on its way, activities ramp up at Robert E. Lee Park. Park rangers and volunteers have planned programs for all ages and interests to enjoy. Planned activities include a history walk, a fall campfire, bird walks with the Baltimore Bird Club, senior activities including 'senior strolls', the Halloween Hike and a 'pioneer life' program featuring candle dipping, log cabin building and corn husk doll making.

The popular County Parks' program, "Nature Quest", is in full swing. Start your quest by picking up a Nature Quest Passport at participating parks, your local Wegmans grocery store, or online at [www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/recreation/programdivision/naturearea/index.html](http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/recreation/programdivision/naturearea/index.html). The Passport

directs participants to various outdoor

opportunities available at five of the County's parks. Travel the trails at Robert E. Lee and Cromwell Valley Parks, Marshy Point and Oregon Ridge Nature Centers and Benjamin Banneker Historical Park. After venturing on one of the suggested hiking, biking or canoeing quests, participants record adventures in the Passport. Two such adventures, hiking the Railroad Trail and canoeing the Willow Island Trail, take place in Robert E. Lee Park.

After completing five quests, participants get free admission to Nature Quest Fest on November 2, 2013 at Robert E. Lee Park and become eligible to win prizes. Check the County website for more details and launch your own family's quest for nature's riches right here in our own treasure-filled neighborhood park. For more information about adventures or programs at Robert E. Lee Park, please visit the Park's new website, [www.relpnc.org](http://www.relpnc.org).

