

use them at more than 80 participating nurseries across the State; at least one nursery in each county and Baltimore City participates. Each tree must be worth \$50 or more and must be listed on the tree list approved by DNR.

"The Marylanders Plant Trees program has been a wildly successful promotion at our garden center," says Tim Hamilton, marketing director at Homestead Gardens, Inc. "It started off strong and the popularity of the program never ebbed. In fact, we have had customers coming in looking for native trees in the dead of winter."

The Marylanders Plant Trees website can help citizens decide what to plant and where to plant it, as well as calculate the environmental benefit of the tree(s) planted. When registering a tree on the website, participants are eligible to win prizes such as gift cards, rain barrels and a yacht tour.

In the first drawing of 2011, Janet Sanford of Lutherville won a \$200 gift card to Valley View Farms in Cockeysville.

"Healthy trees improve our environment, beautify our landscape

and uplift our spirits," says Sanford. "I encourage all Marylanders to plant one, perhaps with a child, as a learning experience. I will be adding several trees and under plantings to my property for the enjoyment of all who will see them. I'd like to thank DNR and Valley View Farms for this much appreciated opportunity."

Take the school challenge

DNR staff began the Marylanders Plant Trees School Challenge in February 2010, distributing materials to more than 2,200 Maryland teachers to help them include the program and its earthly benefits into lesson plans. Trees planted between April 1, 2009 and April 30, 2010 were counted toward a school's goal.

The school challenge encourages all Maryland elementary, middle and high school students to reach out to family, friends and neighbors and encourage them to plant native trees on their school's behalf. Students may also collaborate with community, watershed and service organizations to plant trees.

The Lucy School of Middletown was

the grand prize winner for 2010, planting 207 trees during the 2009-2010 school year, with many on the school grounds. In all, 82 schools participated by planting trees to win prizes, save energy, help reduce air and water pollution and beautify their communities.

"This has been such a wonderfully enriching and enjoyable learning opportunity for our students. We were particularly pleased with the expertise of the DNR staff in preparing and leading age-appropriate and engaging activities," says Lucy School Director Dr. Victoria Brown of their prize, a field day with DNR. "The lessons they learned support Lucy School's own environmental curriculum and our mission to help each student appreciate the delicate balance of nature and grow to become stewards of the environment."

DNR is continuing the Marylanders Plant Trees School Challenge for a second year. Schools will compete by planting trees and registering them on the Marylanders Plant Trees website. The grand prize for the school that plants and registers the most trees is a visit from the Maryland Park Service's popular Scales & Tales program. This year's challenge includes all trees planted from May 1, 2010 to April 30, 2011.

To help schools with the challenge, the Marylanders Plant Trees website contains location specific guidance for selecting, purchasing and planting trees, as well as a tool to calculate the benefit of the trees planted. Eligible trees planted for the challenge can be registered by the students and parents online in the name of their school.

Marylanders have many ways in which to help preserve our natural resources and create a better life for all. Planting a tree may seem a small step in creating a sustainable future, but from tiny acorns grow mighty oaks. ■

trees.maryland.gov/

Lindsay Major directs the TREE-MENDOUS MARYLAND with DNR's Forest Service.



Lindsay Major