Maryland Green Registry MEMBER

The Maryland Green Registry promotes and recognizes sustainable practices at organizations of all types and sizes. Members agree to share at least five environmental practices and one measurable result while striving to continually improve their environmental performance.

Brookside Gardens

1800 Glenallan Avenue
Wheaton, MD 20902
301-962-1402
www.brooksidegardens.org
Public Garden
Member since October 2009

Management and Leadership

☑ **Environmental Team**

The Brookside Gardens Green Committee is comprised of at least one staff member from each section within the Gardens (12 members total). The mission of the committee is to work toward making the Gardens as sustainable as possible while continuing to serve our customers with high quality programming and beautiful gardens. The committee meets on a quarterly basis.

☑ **Environmentally Preferable Procurement**

Brookside Gardens gives preference to vendors that follow sustainable practices. We developed an internal sustainable purchasing policy using the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmentally Preferred Purchasing (EPP) policies as a guide.

☑ **Environmentally Preferable Products and Services**

Brookside Gardens provides educational programming that offers valuable information to the public on sustainable practices both in the landscape and the home. We also strive to be a good example for our visitors by using green cleaning products, taking energy saving measures (use of LED lighting, efficient hand driers, etc.), use of compostable tableware at events, low VOC paint, recycled carpet, among others. We strive to use the most sustainable products and materials in all construction and renovation projects.

☑ **Environmental Restoration or Community Environmental Projects**

Brookside Gardens' Green Matters Symposium is an annual event that provides to the community important information on a variety of environmental and sustainable topics. Speakers of regional and national repute present to our audience. We have also installed a demonstration rain garden, providing for the public an example of successful and attractive stormwater management. Our Green Thumbs Up *interpretive panels highlight sustainable products and practices throughout the Gardens, explaining their benefits to the environment. Brookside Gardens' new parking garden incorporates sustainable features, offering a demonstration for visitors, including pervious paving, reclaimed and repurposed materials, and attractive stormwater management areas.*

Waste

☑ **Recycling**

Brookside Gardens has an extensive recycling program, recycling paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, aluminum, batteries and scrap metal. Most plant containers are cleaned and re-used on-site. Excess plant containers that are eligible are recycled. We make every effort to recycle electronic equipment that is no longer of use to the organization. In 2017, Brookside Gardens contributed to Montgomery Parks' (our parent organization) recycling totals of 2,253,976 lbs of paper and 996,900 lbs of comingled materials.

In an effort to divert plastic from landfill, Brookside Gardens installed water bottle fillers at drinking fountain locations. More than 66,000 water bottles have been diverted since July 2017.

☑ **Composting**

Brookside Gardens maintains a very successful composting program. All garden wastes are composted, and then used in the Gardens. Tree limbs and stumps are chipped and used on Gardens paths. Two hundred cubic yards of green waste was composting in 2017-2018, and 125 cubic yards of finished compost was generated for use in the Gardens.

☑ **Hazardous Waste/Toxic Use Reduction**

Brookside Gardens makes extensive use of IPM (Integrated Pest Management) to minimize pesticide use in the gardens and greenhouses. In the greenhouses alone, pesticide use has decreased by 81% since 1990. Spill containment kits are available on-site. In an effort to improve indoor air quality

for our visitors and staff, we use all green cleaning products. In the past, our Live Butterfly Exhibit was required to treat all butterfly waste with chlorine bleach to kill any pathogens that might be present; we no longer use bleach (a toxic chemical) for this purpose, but utilize a sub-zero freezer, instead.

Energy

☑ **Energy Efficiency**

Brookside Gardens is in the process of replacing incandescent light bulbs with CFLs and LED lights throughout our facilities. For our Garden of Lights show, 100% of the lights used in the show are LED (saving 60-70% energy as compared to incandescent lights used in the past). As appliances and machines are replaced, we opt for Energy Star rated models. A majority of rooms in Brookside Gardens facilities have windows for daylighting, and 11 workstations have installed task lighting. Occupancy sensors, where possible in the Visitor Center, further reduce unnecessary use of energy.

The new production greenhouse features a state-of-the-art roof ventilation system, reducing the amount of energy required to heat and cool the structure year-round.

☑ **Renewable Energy**

Brookside Gardens, through our parent organization Montgomery Parks, purchases renewable energy credits.

Transportation

☑ **Employee Commute/Customer Travel**

Four percent of Gardens staff walk or take public transportation to reach their work locations.

☑ **Efficient Business Travel**

Brookside Gardens encourages staff telecommuting, carpooling, and online meetings or conference calls.

☑ **Fleet Vehicles**

Brookside Gardens has purchased six electric garden carts replacing gas-powered carts and reducing fuel consumption and air pollution in the Gardens.

Staff makes every effort to drive the most efficient vehicle when traveling outside the Gardens. We will continue to replace gas-powered garden vehicles with electric, as budget allows. Brookside Gardens uses a biofuel mix for all fleet vehicles.

Water

☑ **Water Conservation**

Brookside Gardens has installed a 620-gallon cistern to collect rainwater from part of the Conservatory roof; this water is used to water plants in containers outside the Conservatory, reducing the amount of potable water that might otherwise be used. An efficient irrigation system has been installed throughout the Gardens, delivering water in a very effective manner. This is a "smart" system, able override a scheduled watering if rainwater is detected. The Gardens' new production greenhouse incorporates a 20,000-gallon cistern, which collects water from the greenhouse roof and stores it for later use in watering greenhouse crops.

☑ **Stormwater Management and Site Design**

Brookside Gardens has installed a rain garden in a section of the garden where a great deal of rainwater runoff caused problems with erosion and pollution in the stream surrounding the property. The rain garden captures rainwater and filters it through the soil. Pervious paving surrounding the rain garden also captures rainwater and filters it on site. Pervious paving and stormwater management areas planted with attractive plants in the new parking garden have the capacity to capture and filter on-site 10,000 cubic feet of stormwater per rain event.

Environmental Certification Programs, Awards, and Other Activities

☑ *Brookside Gardens is recognized as a Green Center through the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE).*

In 2017, Brookside Gardens' director, Stephanie Oberle, received a Governor's Citation recognizing service to promote outdoor experiential activities and environmental education for Maryland's youth and families as part of Project Green Classrooms.

Profile Updated July 2018