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Lehigh Valley Master Watershed Steward Program Receives Healing the Planet Grant

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Photo provided by Jodi Sulpizio

LEHIGH VALLEY, Pa. — The Penn State Extension Lehigh Valley master watershed steward program received a \$10,000 Healing the Planet Grant from Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful to help build environmental stewardship by connecting families with community green spaces.



The grant will fund the installation of 30 demonstration downspout planters across the state, two stormwater basin naturalization projects and one live stake nursery installation. The funding was supported by the Giant Corporation.

The Lehigh Valley master watershed steward program, included in this grant, was able to install four downspout demonstration planters across Lehigh County and Northampton County.

Downspout planters are decorative landscaped planters specially designed to absorb and filter stormwater before it enters stormwater management or sewer systems. Downspout planters are filled with a base layer of gravel, which allows for drainage, a stormwater-friendly soil mix, and native perennial vegetation that comes back every spring.

During storm events, water captured from the roof flows into the planter. If the volume of water is greater than the capacity of the planter, it exits the planter through an overflow outlet. The planters, filled with native plants, supply pollinators with habitat and beautification for homeowners.

In June and July, master watershed steward volunteers installed these demonstration watershed planters at the Lehigh County Extension Office in Allentown, Northampton County Extension Office in Nazareth, Osprey House at Lehigh Gap Nature Center in Slatington, and with other stormwater infrastructure at Nurture Nature Center in Easton. Both master watershed stewards and partner organizations will use these planters as teaching tools.

For more information about the master watershed steward program, contact Brad Kunsman, Extension educator, at 610-813-6613 or bjk21@psu.edu.

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