

Public invited to view demonstration gardens in Brevard

The Transylvania Master Gardeners invite the community to view their demonstration gardens at Silvermont and the library Saturday, June 6.

The gardens featured will include vegetable, pollinator, woodland and rain gardens.

The tours are free and open to all members of the public.

The Transylvania County Public Library rain garden's primary function is to capture and filter stormwater runoff from "impervious" surfaces, according to a news release. Without these gardens, heavy rain would rush directly into storm drains, carrying pollutants like oil, sediment and fertilizers into local waterways.

A small rain garden located between the building entrance and the main parking lot uses mostly native shrubs and flower-

ing plants that can thrive in this heat. Shrubs like fothergilla and oakleaf hydrangea can be used. Interspersed are some small trees and flowering plants.

The larger rain garden sits between the parking lot and the street.

It manages more water and offers a more varied landscape of sun and shade. This garden includes a wider diversity of plants, set into a less formal design. Flowers in the garden include phlox, celandine poppies and black-eyed Susan. There are a wide variety of shrubs such as St. John's wort, witch hazel and hydrangeas.

The Silvermont Park and Mansion property hosts several gardens and a compost demonstration area all located adjacent to each other at the back of the property.

The Pollinator Garden

showcases an array of native perennial plants specifically chosen to attract bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Revamped in 2019 the garden now boasts an increased variety of native plants, a pathway and a spiral stone "puddling" area for insects to drink. Mouse-eared coreopsis and Golden Alexander kick off the bloom season in early May, and other perennials take over from there, followed by aster and goldenrod in the autumn. The garden employs a winter management strategy by leaving plant stems to overwinter to support nesting solitary bees and provide food for birds.

Adjacent are the vegetable raised beds. The purpose of this garden is to demonstrate vegetable gardening, and it highlights how vegetables, herbs, and small fruits

can thrive in raised beds, a particularly beneficial gardening style for Transylvania County. Most vegetables are grown from seed. Sustainable practices such as crop rotation and companion planting are implemented to minimize disease, reduce pests, attract beneficial insects, and improve soil fertility. Produce harvested from this garden is donated to The Haven.

The "Plant This, Not That" garden uses one of the raised beds and was created to guide gardeners in choosing native plants rather than non-native invasive plants. Examples include planting ninebark instead of Japanese barberry for vibrant fall foliage and winterberry holly rather than nandina to provide birds with nutritious berries.

Along the back property line is the Rock Garden, revitalized in 2023. The

vision was to create a welcoming, low-maintenance community garden where visitors could sit and relax. Some old planters from behind the Carriage House now contain colorful annuals. Stones were used to create a sundial and the dry creek bed is planned to extend into a decorative stone stream.

Lastly, the Woodland Garden showcases native plants that flourish in partial and full shade. This space was transformed to demonstrate how groundcovers, herbaceous plants, shrubs, and canopy trees can replicate a natural forest environment. Visitors can observe spring ephemerals that bloom before the trees fully leaf out, and summer-flowering plants that thrive in the cool shade. In the center is a collection of mosses and ferns.

The Library Rain Garden can be viewed at 212

S. Gaston St. The Silvermont gardens are located behind the mansion at 364 E Main St, Brevard. Master Gardeners will be available to answer any questions between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., June 6. Informational signs with QR codes will be placed near each plant, giving gardeners access to additional details and planting recommendations. Activities for children, water and snacks will be available.

The next Master Gardener Demonstration Garden Open Houses will be held at the Pisgah National Forest Ranger Station and the Allison Deaver House Saturday, June 20 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

For more information on these programs, please contact the NC Cooperative Extension at (828) 884-3109 or visit the office at 106 E. Morgan Street in Brevard.