

# North Jefferson Elementary



## Tree Seedlings Planted for Future Community Plantings



The 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at North Jefferson Elementary, WV, participated in the Growing Native program this spring. Students spent four classroom hours learning about their local watershed and the Chesapeake Bay watershed, stormwater runoff pollution and erosion, and the important role trees play within our environment. Education sessions were led by Potomac Valley Audubon Society.

Following the classroom education,



the thirty-five students planted twenty tree seedlings (whips) in five gallon pots.

Prior to planting their tree whips, students reviewed the parts of a tree and became trees themselves by “planting” their feet as roots and using their body as the trunk, their arms as branches, and their fingers as leaves. Students identified the root collar on their two- to three-year-old tree seedling—the vital part of a tree for planting. The root collar is where the trunk of the tree transitions into the roots; if this is planted too low in the ground, the trunk will begin to rot and the tree will eventually die. We encouraged students to plant the root collar one inch above the dirt level. The students were dedicated to checking the root collar to ensure their tree had the best chance for survival and growth.

Because of the young age of the trees, the students planted them in five-gallon pots rather than in the ground. Tree seedlings have a hard time surviving to maturity in nature because of their high water needs and damage caused by animals and

humans. These trees were transferred to a caged grow-out station at Eagle Intermediate School where they will continue to grow to a mature level to be planted out in the community.

Once these trees are planted in the community they will aid in reducing erosion and stormwater runoff pollution and will increase wildlife habitat.



Growing Native is a program of the Potomac Watershed Partnership funded by the USDA Forest Service.

