

Shepherdstown Elementary



Students Recycle and Plant Redbud Trees to Help the Environment



The 4th grade students at Shepherdstown Elementary School, WV, participated in Growing Native this spring. Students engaged in four hours of classroom education learning about their local watershed, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, stormwater runoff pollution, erosion, and the role trees play in keeping our rivers healthy.



Following the education sessions led by Potomac Valley Audubon, students planted their own eastern redbud tree with Cacapon Institute. Community members helped to collect used orange juice and milk cartons that were converted into planting containers. The top pour spout section was removed and a hole was cut in the bottom to allow for water drainage. Students helped to upcycle and reuse a product that is commonly thrown away weekly.

The students planted young three-year-old trees commonly called seedlings or whips. These whips will continue to grow under the care of the students until they are planted at their house. Though these trees look like sticks, they will leaf and flower in the spring adding ascetics to the community. They also provide habitat for wildlife, increase the urban tree canopy, and reduce stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces.

Eighty-four students participated in

the planting and took home their own tree at the conclusion of the day. Proper care directions and a “how to plant” resource was sent home to the parents. Students were very excited to take care of their tree and could not wait for it to leaf and bloom.

It is our hope that these students will be reminded of the important role trees play in our environment when they see their tree each day.



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

