



GRANT REPORT FROM AUDUBON NATURALIST SOCIETY

ON THE DISCOVERY ORCHARD GRANT, 3/28/2022

Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS) received a generous grant for \$4,749 from the Society for Biodiversity Preservation on April 19, 2021 for restoration of our Discovery Orchard.

Before: Prior to receipt of the SBP grant, the ANS Discovery Orchard was overgrown and difficult to access due to its steep incline. The area had been planted with several native fruit and nuts trees four years earlier with the help of Rock Creek Conservancy Conservation Corps students. However, it needed the removal of invasive plants and installation of more useable pathways.

During: The new path was completed on September 18, 2021 by digging a more gradually sloping pathway and installing large, flat stones. SBP funding, along with a \$3,000 Whole Kids Foundation grant received in August 2021, paid for materials and installation. The grant also supported the purchase of 14 additional straight species and cultivar fruit trees and shrubs. We invited members of our partner organization, Community Health and Empowerment through Education and Research (CHEER), and ANS volunteers to plant them, as illustrated in the photos below.

The following shrubs and trees were planted on October 14, 2021: 1 *Amelanchier laevis* (serviceberry), 1 *Diospyros virginiana* (persimmon), 1 *Ceanothus americanus* (New Jersey Tea), 1 *Lindera benzoin* (spicebush), 2 *Vaccinium angustifolium* (low bush blueberry), 3 *Vaccinium corymbosum* (straight species blueberry), 1 *Vaccinium corymbosum* 'Blue jay' (blueberry cultivar), 1 *Vaccinium corymbosum* 'Blue Crop' (blueberry cultivar), 1 *Vaccinium corymbosum* 'Bluetta' (blueberry cultivar), 1 *Viburnum dentatum* (arrowwood viburnum), and 1 *Viburnum prunifolium* (black haw viburnum). These new plants join: 3 Asian American cross persimmon, numerous pawpaw trees, several elderberry shrubs, 3 hazelnut, 1 Nanking Cherry, as well as gooseberry, blackberry, raspberry and currant bushes.

The above work cost \$6,454 and the remaining \$1,295 was used to treat the ground in this area to remove lesser celandine, an invasive plant that suppresses native ground cover. This required multiple treatments to be effective and these were completed in January and February 2022.

After: The stone path serves as a much safer trail for visitors, including our onsite nature preschool students and summer campers. Our onsite preschool regularly uses this path during visits to the Learning Garden and in returning to their building because they can now avoid walking on or next to our entryway drive.

Outcomes: Summer campers will often use the Discovery Orchard as it is next to the Learning Garden where they take part in growing fruits and vegetables, and the outdoor education area which has picnic tables, a water supply, electricity and cover from the sun and rain. Our summer camp is expected to return to near pre-pandemic numbers of over 600 campers in the summer of 2022.

The added and existing vegetation attract pollinators and wildlife to the area, providing a zone where visitors experience wildlife feeding and nesting. The children will also be invited to harvest and taste the fruits, nuts and edible leaves in the Discovery Orchard, and to explore how humans have used plants throughout human history in ethnobotany. Thank you again for your support!





