

Rockville Weed Warrior Program
Innovative Programs – Natural Resources

Starting in 2019, the City of Rockville partnered with Montgomery County-certified Weed Warriors and local volunteers to pilot the Rockville Weed Warrior Program. Through the program, Montgomery County certified Weed Warriors lead local volunteers in safely and properly removing non-native invasive (NNI) plants that are spreading in local parks and outcompeting native plant species and reducing native biodiversity. To date, over 500 volunteers have dedicated nearly 1,300 hours of their weekends and holidays to removing NNIs and restoring native plants to nearly a dozen city parks.

The Weed Warrior workdays, with support from City Environmental Management and Recreation and Parks staff, are entirely volunteer run, and are significantly increasing public awareness of opportunities for environmental stewardship, improving both the City's human and environmental health, and restoring native species to parks, residential yards, and Rockville communities. The workdays have provided safe, socially distant volunteer opportunities during the COVID pandemic and attract diverse groups of people including families who become regular volunteers and students earning Student Service Learning hours (over 200 hours in FY21). To date, the RWW program has 10 certified Weed Warriors serving as captains of a city park. These captains are responsible for identifying NNI removal needs and assisting in the coordination of NNI removal and planting events.

Weed Warriors and volunteers target non-native invasive vine species such as English ivy, Winter creeper, Porcelain berry, Japanese honeysuckle, and Oriental bittersweet Bush honeysuckle, Burning bush, and Japanese barberry. Since the start of 2021, over 400 native trees have been freed of NNI vines in seven city parks. In Twinbrook Park, over 200 native pawpaw trees were uncovered after the removal of an understory dominated by non-native invasive bush honeysuckle trees and NNI vines.

In addition to public workdays, certified Weed Warriors are tackling special projects to restore park biodiversity. In 2019, Certified Weed Warriors and volunteers from the Twinbrook neighborhood, led by Anne Goodman, Sarah Salazar and Chuck Woolery, coordinated with City of Rockville staff to spend a total of 118 hours removing hundreds of non-native invasive plants throughout nearly two acres of park land in the Twinbrook neighborhood. In 2020, volunteers partnered with Pope Farm Nursery and the city to plant 649 locally grown native plants to revegetate the areas. Weed Warriors have also spearheaded the creation of a native plant rescue program that will harvest and relocate native plants from designated city infrastructure improvements and development projects into city parks.



WEED WARRIORS

Weed warrior volunteers help the city by removing invasive species from park land, wooded and open space areas that can take over native plants and trees.

Qualifies for SSL hours

Still have questions? Contact:
ENVIRONMENT SPECIALIST



240-314-8877



environment@rockvillemd.gov

Upcoming Workdays

Join Rockville Weed Warrior Leaders for a non-native, invasive plant removal workday. MCPS SSL hours available. Space is limited and online registration is required.

Register for:

- [Sun., May 30 at Mt. Vernon Park \(10 a.m. to Noon\)](#)
- [Sat. June 12 at Rockcrest Park \(10 a.m. to Noon\)](#)
- [Sun., June 27 at Dawson Farm Park \(10 a.m. to Noon\)](#)
- [Sat., July 11 at Wootton's Mill Park \(10 a.m. to Noon\)](#)
- [Sat. July 24 at Rockcrest Park \(10 a.m. to Noon\)](#)

Duties to be Expected

- Volunteer can expect to spend several hours at appointed times removing invasive species at the direction of a team leader.
- Wear long pants that cover your ankles, long sleeves, and sturdy, closed-toed shoes. Bring gloves, pruners, and loppers if you have them. Gloves and tools are available to borrow if you don't have your own. No power tools or machetes allowed. Please bring plenty of water to drink. Volunteers under 14 must be accompanied by an adult. Volunteer under 16 may only use tools if their parent/guardian is present and at the parent/guardian's discretion.
- *Special COVID-19 Guidelines: Volunteers must supply and wear a face covering and practice physical distancing of at least 6 feet from others. Face coverings may be removed while working outdoors and maintaining physical distancing of at least 6 feet from others. Volunteer must avoid sharing tools and equipment.*

Qualifications

You must be a [certified Weed Warrior through Montgomery Parks](#) or working under the supervision of a certified Weed Warrior to remove invasive species from City of Rockville parks. *Important Note: The Montgomery Parks Weed Warrior training and certification requires that you commit to removing invasive species in Montgomery Parks, not just the City of Rockville.*

You must be physically able to move through wooded and open space areas pulling out invasive species.

Application Process

If you are interested in attending a workday, click the event links above to register.

If you are a certified Weed Warrior interested in working individually to remove non-native invasive plants from a Rockville park, [fill out this application](#).

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