

1997 Common Wealth Recipient

— An Update —

by Mary Bentley, Rivanna Garden Club

Rivanna Garden Club was awarded the Common Wealth Award in 1997 for its proposal to landscape the new Education Building at the Ivy Creek Natural Area in Albemarle County in a manner to “demonstrate the use of native plants as a component in passive heating and cooling and as a means to attract wildlife.” The project has educational goals as well, but the landscaping effort was to be the first step.

In its efforts to stretch the money awarded by The Garden Club of Virginia, Rivanna Garden Club members sought donations of plant material. On the morning of November 10, 1998, 27 Master Gardeners and Ivy Creek Foundation board members Fran Boninti (Rivanna member as well) and Bob Hammond, gathered to plant more than 120 trees and shrubs which had been provided. The landscape plan also was donated.

Tall deciduous trees were planted along the southern exposure of the building to provide shade in the summer and allow the sun to shine through in winter after leaves are shed. Eastern red cedars situated along the side of the building facing a busy roadway will shield the site from wind and noise and also will give a venue for birds to

nest protected from the rain and snow. Shrubs such as itea, clethra, and hydrangea were chosen to provide a web of branches which will provide birds and small mammals places to hide and rest. Red and



Ivy Creek Natural Area Educational Building landscaping project.

Ohio buckeye trees will attract hummingbirds; magnolia varieties will attract insects to their beautiful flowers; American

holly will provide berries for birds. The shrubs chosen will ensure a long blooming season to attract insects to serve as pollinators and as a food source for birds. Some examples are: early blooming spicebush, Carolina allspice which blooms in the spring, summer blooming oak leaf hydrangea, and evergreen mountain laurel. All of the plants were planted and mulched.

Because so much of the plant material and labor were donated, the Ivy Creek Foundation can use part of the award of \$5,000 to build a stone wall along the front of the building. The remainder of the award is to be used for educational tools and audiovisual equipment.

The photo was taken on November 10, 1998, during the “Grand Planting.”