

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY [TBD]

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The mission of the new GHI Yard Solutions for a 21st Century Garden City Task Force is:

- To help members enjoy their yards more and in new ways – for seating, play areas, pollinator gardens – you tell us!
- To explore ways of becoming a greener community.
- To propose changes to GHI rules that provide for more options in screening and other yard improvements that complement our architecture while maintaining Greenbelt's historic openness.
- To ensure that GHI rules pertaining to members' yards are easy to understand and procedures for GHI approval, where necessary, are easy to follow.
- To compile examples of garden styles, features and plants that work in GHI yards and provide other forms of guidance.

To help accomplish this mission, the Task Force conducted a voluntary member survey of members' needs, wants, and concerns regarding their own yards and GHI common areas.

Methodology

The survey was available online (via GHI website using SurveyMonkey) and on paper (through GHI office). The questionnaire had both closed- and open-ended questions, and responses were anonymous. [Survey to be attached as annex.] It was available during the period January 17 – April 7, 2017. Responding was voluntary, so the sample was self-selected and does not necessarily represent the population of GHI members.

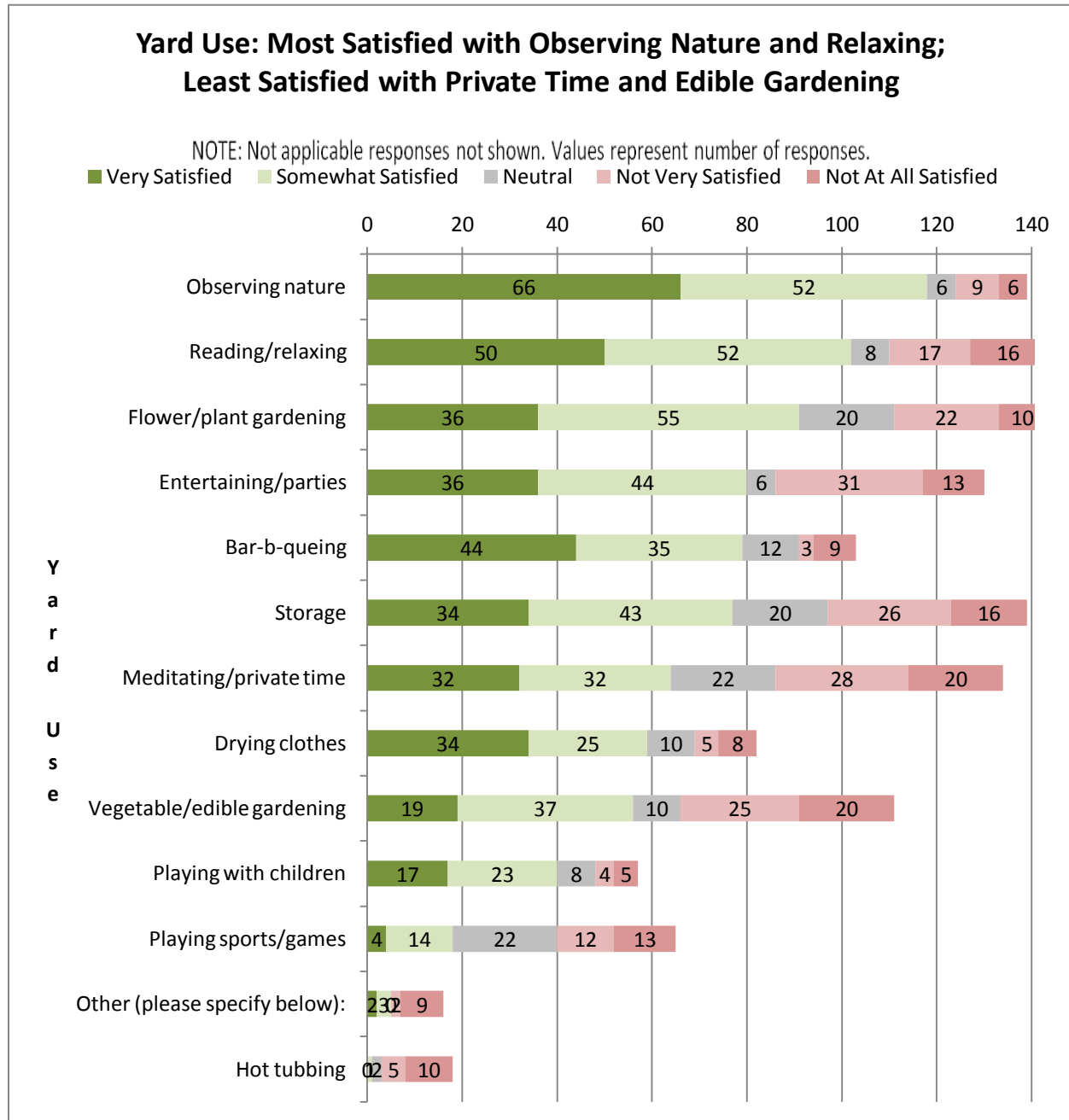
Respondents

- Total = 175 (172 online, 3 on paper)
- 108 (62%) respondents provided their court name and number.
- 71 courts are represented among respondents (about one half of the courts in GHI)WINNERS
- 95 (54%) respondents entered the raffle for one of 3 free garden consultations. Winners, selected randomly, were: [TBD]. Four Task Force members provided the consults on Sunday, April 30

FINDINGS

OWN YARDS

Satisfaction with ability to use yard for various activities



Comments on ability to use own yard

General yard use

- barking and aggressive dog neighbors make using GS yard not as pleasant
- I am very frustrated how hard it has been to enjoy my yard because of my neighbor's 6 cats that now run wild. It smells bad
- It's not all that important that I have a yard that children can't play in since the playground is very close, but I do worry about the many tripping hazards in my yard (large rocks and bamboo roots).
- Having to cut weed overgrowth from neighboring yards that affect my yard.
- In general our yards are too cluttered.
- Drainage after a rain turns my yard into a swamp.
- I would be more satisfied with my yard experience if my neighbors attempted to be neighborly and at least speak or acknowledge basic greetings. They also have an unsightly makeshift compost bin in their back yard made from a rubber mat. Don't we have guidelines for compost bins?
- This is tangential: constant barking of neighbor's dogs RUINS my ability to relax in my backyard. Calls from GHI to them do nothing. What can be done about that?
- Main problem for enjoying garden side in the summer is Chiggers.
- Our main problem is mosquitoes. Despite eliminating our pond, our neighbor finally getting proper drains, and not leaving standing water around, we still get a lot of mosquitoes. Advice on environmentally safe and effective mosquito deterrents would be welcome (I wear permethrin-treated clothes for gardening, but that doesn't allow for friends to enjoy the backyard with me)
- Too many mosquitoes and ticks to enjoy outside use.
- When I purchased my GHI unit, my yard provided a very enjoyable area to use. Recently, a new neighbor arrived with two very aggressive dogs. On the day the neighbor moved in, I introduced myself with "Hi, my name is . . . I live next door. Welcome to the neighborhood." Her only response was "Don't try to pet the dogs. They bite. One is dangerous." The dogs engage in barking continuously throughout the day and night. They growl, bare their teeth, bite at the fencing and screening between the units and lunge at the throats of me and visitors trying to walk the path to my unit.
- I would like to see a stricter vetting of new members. Those with loud, aggressive dogs should not be part of GHI.
- Mosquitoes are the biggest barrier to enjoying the yard space. They are horrible.
- Mosquitoes in my yard. I had Lyme disease from ticks in my yard. My neighbors also had Lyme disease.
- Both the garden side and service side have too much shade for many flowers and vegetables. There is a very large oak tree on the border of my yard and my neighbor of which the trunk is now about 8 inches away from her addition. In the late summer and fall this tree makes it impossible for us to enjoy our decks because of the acorn bombardment. It also prevents us from installing solar panels. The worst problem is that our units were built in a bowl. When it rains the front floods and you have to jump over standing water. I will begin phase 5 in the back this year and it has eliminated most of the flooding that occurred when I first moved in. During the residence of 2 prior members, a drain was installed to try and get rid of the problem. If the terrain had just been improved this expense would not have been warranted. The existence of that oak tree and the drain has shackled me on what I wanted to do in the

garden. Letting that tree remain is extremely short sighted as it is a nuisance and the limbs have fallen and damage the gutter. It is only a matter of time before the roof will be damaged. During high winds, I sleep downstairs because I am afraid of that tree.

- Too many mosquitoes to enjoy the yard at all in warm weather.
- When the weather is accommodating and the mosquitoes aren't too bad, my backyard is great for hanging out and relaxing. Works great for storage and some gardening but doesn't get enough sun to really be effective for vegetables. Unless there is a treatment to prevent mosquitoes, I think the yards are great as they are :)
- Review regulations for screened porches and enclosures. I believe more of us would like to have a screened enclosure for sitting outside but current regulations make the cost high and rules are restrictive.
- The mosquitoes make it impossible to be outside long when the weather is nice enough to be outside.
- I need to give some context to my answers- the issues with relaxing is not because of my yard itself. It is because of my neighbors. They leave their dog out who will bark at me every second that I'm outside. The neighbors don't care, and will let the dog bark until I either scream, or go back inside. They also have the brightest porch light known to man- so we are unable to enjoy a fire outside or looking at the stars. I've asked them to either turn it off when they go to bed, or get a dimmer bulb. They won't do either.
- Mosquitoes tend to be a problem.
- The small size of our yard puts a number of constraints on these activities, which obviously isn't something that anyone can do much about.
- We would very much like to have a patio or screened porch so we could eat outdoors without mosquitoes. This would also make it easier to entertain and have our yard function better as an outdoor room.
- I live here because I like having a small yard but access to larger common areas, playgrounds and parks.
- [Enjoy] Interacting with passersby while working in our yard.

Flower/plant/edible gardening

- I live on an end unit near a parking lot and the grass cutters/blowers ruin my garden with weeds. I have a huge perennial garden in 14 court and it is greatly disrespected. Dog pooh, trash, people walk in my outside fence garden, neighbors pull on my clematis vine, and they blow leaves and debris from parking lot into my flower beds.
- I don't have a place to store my garden tools. I have a snow shovel, 2 regular shovels, a rake, pruning shears, etc., and there is no place to put them.
- The ability to plant and garden is lessened by the orientation of our house, which only allows a very small amount of full sun.
- There is too much tree cover to grow any edibles.
- Our main problems are moles or groundhogs or some kind of rodent that digs up vegetables and flower bulbs, and the clayish dirt. We just moved into GHI 6months ago and are working to improve our yard -- flowerbeds, trimming overgrown shrubs etc. We're not sure about how to keep the moles away.
- Large learning curve in how to plant vegetables and flowers with a very shady backyard.

- Inability to thin out the number of trees causes too much shade leading to damp, muddy yards. Trees are beautiful, but moss and ticks that thrive in leaf litter and mulch in shady conditions are not and prevent the enjoyment of our yards. There's not enough sunlight to grow vegetables or to have a nice lawn
- The soil is so woody with the trees around that I cannot do much...
- Deer and wild animals (rabbit and hedge hog, raccoon ...) are preventing me from investing in gardening...
- Front yard is beyond hope of ever growing grass! Have lived here for over 40 years and never had grass. Nothing but mud when it rains. Drain in front yard constantly backed up with heavy rains and need a canoe to get into front door!
- Soil is just awful in backyard
- Vegetable gardening - soil is so rooty I can't plant vegetables. Flowers - I do container gardening. Works well.
- My yard is very shady, so I can't grow any food; some herbs I can.
- The root system makes it impossible to dig into the ground. Container gardening is all I can do. Also, there is a big problem with cats coming into my yard and using my small flower garden as a latrine.
- My downstairs neighbor was not happy about my creating a garden space, but I'm planning to have flowers on the side that she'll see.
- For gardening, I am satisfied with my efforts but wish I knew more on how to be more successful in these endeavors.
- This year we had a mole infestation that GHI would not assist in exterminating. The moles ruined several plants and tunneled throughout the yard!
- We inherited a lot of plants that we really don't know how to maintain, and could use some guidance.

Private time

- Our yard faces a very public playground and walking path. It gets a lot of traffic. Not to sound negative but the people who travel the path and play at the playground are often from the apartments by Roosevelt and can be unkind to people they see outside in their yards. We would like options for more privacy
- Not much privacy
- With a corner yard, it is great in that it is very open, but no privacy. I would like to have some GHI-appropriate resources to help me with landscaping and gardening options for this big corner yard.
- I would prefer the option to have taller hedges that allow greater privacy.
- I lost privacy with the removal of the honeysuckle shrubs by GHI. It was not harmful ...
- Current rules do not allow enough privacy screening to separate my outdoor living area (and porch) from my next-door neighbors'. As they are chatty, I can't spend private time on my patio or my screened-in porch if they're in their yard. Same problem if I'm entertaining on my porch or patio - the neighbors will join in.
- Previous owners planted enough shrubbery that yard feels very private from people walking on garden pathways. However this means there isn't actually much space that isn't shrubbery.
- There is a bus stop on my property, so it doesn't feel very private.
- It would be very nice to have the ability to erect a privacy fence along the common sidewalk on the garden-side walkways. We are currently limited by the fencing rules.

- My next door neighbors have 3 dogs and the owners very seldom pickup the waste. Sometimes when I want to read/relax or meditate in my yard, I can't, because wafts of poop odor come my way from their yard. Also when the dogs are let out they bark menacingly at me.
- I personally think that GHI should reconsider allowing members to have a 6' fence for at least 75% to 80% of their yard line so that we can enjoy such activities as above.
- I do not meditate outside because I am in a busy, walking neighborhood. This is fine

Storage

- We are trying to get a shed approved so we could use it to better store gardening equipment & bikes.
- I would also prefer a slightly larger shed size.
- Eventually, I would like to have a shed installed maybe in 2018 after rehab is completed. I will call GHI office before proceeding.
- I am somewhat dissatisfied with storage options, because I have to use up most of my shed space to store my bicycles. I would prefer to store my bicycle in a covered area close to the parking lot/roads.
- The previous owners didn't adequately clean out their shed; many of their things are still there over a year later, and it's difficult to find a way to get rid of them.
- Would like to see more flexibility in where storage can be placed. Currently ours is right next to the house (we are on an end unit). If I read the rules correctly that would not be an acceptable place if we wanted to upgrade the unit. However it is one of the few level places in our yard where one could be placed
- The small trash closet on the service side only allows for very small trashcans, which are impossible to find. Recycling has to be kept on the porch which is already small. You have to give up your flower beds to for a surround.
- We've talking about a bigger storage but haven't done one.

Drying clothes

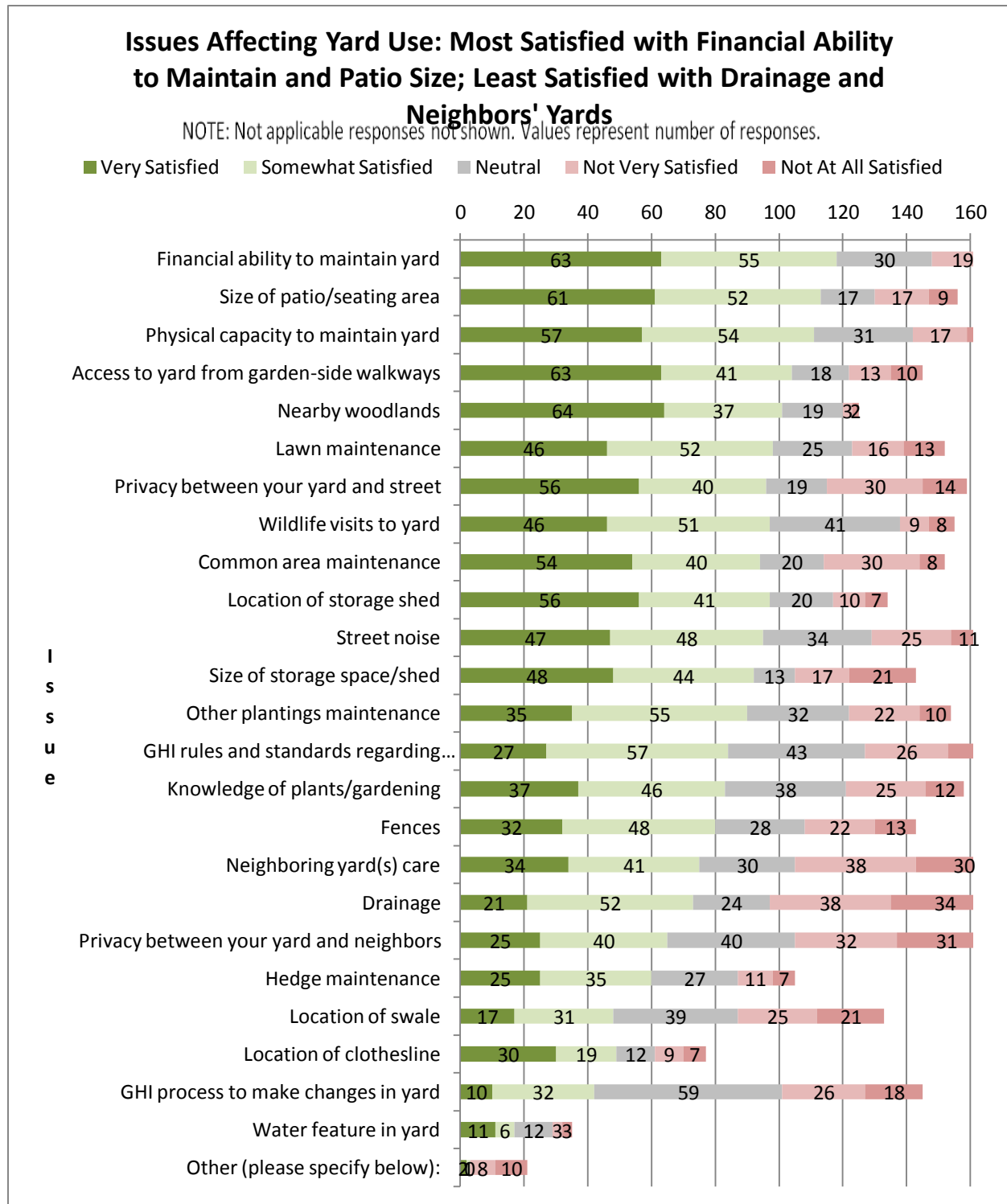
- I'd love to be able to hang laundry but the service side of my court a) has no other people hanging laundry and b) is used by most homeowners for really pretty gardens, a laundry line would not fit in. Nobody sees our garden side yards but we are not permitted to put a laundry line there.
- Shade and orientation negatively affect clothes drying and vegetable gardening. The best clothes drying are on my garden side, but a permanent line there would be contrary to GHI policy.
- We can't use our garden side yard to dry clothes due to GHI rules, but there's no room to do it in our service side yard.

Other

- Wasn't here last spring so some of my answers will be better after this year
- I just moved in and I haven't had a chance to think about gardening, but there is a lot of room for anything I might want to grow.
- We haven't lived here very long and haven't used the yard nearly enoughyet.
- It would be nice if we could add natural gas
- With all the trek like products out there it would be nice to see GHI using that material for frame steps rather than what is currently used. Might be more expensive at first but should

- last a lot longer.
- Satisfied with fire pit.

Satisfaction with yard issues that may affect ability to use and enjoy yard



Comments on issues that affect ability to use own yard

Knowledge of gardening/yard care

- Would like to know more about grass that is durable in shade. My yard is in a shady area that gets little sun and there is little grass in the garden side.
- We do not know what kinds of plants the previous owners planted or how to care for them - we need a gardening education.
- I am generally satisfied with my yard but feel it could be much more beautiful through the seasons of the year. I don't know a lot about successful plants to grow, and I don't have a lot of success with anything other than some perennials and azaleas. I also don't have a lot of time to spend on the yard, and that is mostly taken up with mowing and hedges.

Neighbors' yards

- The neighbors are nice but they have a lot of junk in their front yard. It doesn't look bad from their side, but it looks terrible from my side.
- We feel there should be a higher standard for trash in yards; this would greatly enhance the beauty of the neighborhood.
- We also feel that trash and recycling container should be kept either in the front closets or enclosures except for pick up days.
- A particular neighbor's yard is a pig sty and has been through 2 "beautification" seasons. I find it infuriating that I comply with the note left for me to trim this or that, or wash my siding while these people just scatter trash around their yard.
- Our yard is large and my husband is 70. He rakes and takes care of removing the leaves from our yard every year (we've been here 40 years). This year a couple of the neighbors facing our side yard have decided "apparently" not to remove their leaves and they blow into our freshly cleaned yard. So my husband has to actually rake some of the neighbor's leaves so they don't blow into our yard. He shouldn't have to do this.
- Some members do not keep their yard clean and the Beautification Team does not enforce this.
- Several yards are not being kept up with hence not following GHI requirements but nothing is done about it! For example ugly vines, weeds, leaves left in yards season after season, garbage cans n etc. eye sore in the community. Clothes lines shouldn't be allowed in front yards...unsightly! Clothes lines should only be allowed in backyards. Clothes lines in front yards take away beauty from our community/gardens.
- Re: Nearby neighbors do not clean the garden side sidewalks of leaves, mud, debris, vines, ivy, and overhanging hedges. Thanks to one or two of us, our SS sidewalk stays clean.
- Regarding sidewalks, a neighbor of mine partially obstructs the service side sidewalk because it runs through their yard. This is annoying to the neighbors, who have to use this sidewalk, and surely it's burdensome to service and delivery people who have to walk through to deliver mail, packages, and pick up trash/recycling.
- The neighbor that does not want me to remove the fence has overgrown hedges planted where the fence stops. Although they're seemingly in my yard, she insists it's her yard and won't allow me to trim them.
- A few yards continue to be overly filled with junk or are poorly maintained.

GHI rules/regulations/processes

- GHI rules re: yards are often hard to understand, and often seem arbitrary. Given that they change, you can't assume that "what your neighbors do/have, you can do too." Wish GHI would give people advice on lawn alternatives.
- Yard inspections are conducted unfairly. After being cited for small issues only to see the same overgrown yards year after year not being cleaned up is not appropriate.
- The "beautification" inspections aren't frequent enough to keep yards looking cared for.
- GHI enforcement of rules and standards regarding yards/beautification, specifically pertaining to vegetation overgrowing walkways.
- I marked not satisfied with GHI rules and standards only because I feel like my neighbors have crawling English Ivy that should not be allowed. I think we are too lax on the invasive we allow into the yards.
- The approval process is somewhat prohibitive.
- The processes and restrictions for putting a shed and (especially) a clothesline in our gardenside yard are very cumbersome. We need more flexibility on where we can locate the shed (e.g. close to a window). It's literally impossible to get all 12-ish neighbors to formally sign off on putting up a clothesline, even though it's much less obtrusive in the gardenside yard than it would be in the serviceside yard. Making it easier to put up clotheslines would help to meet the task force's goal of achieving a greener GHI.
- Our court has a common area rain garden that used to be well maintained by GHI staff. Since Matt Barres left, there does not seem to be anyone on GHI staff trained in appropriate rain garden maintenance and native plant identification. For example, last time the garden was cleared of weeds, many of the native plants were removed with the weeds. It is important to provide training for at least one GHI staff person in rain garden maintenance and native plant landscaping.
- It's frustrating that a neighbor's consent is required to remove a fence or a gate, yet the burden to maintain that fence is on the owner of the fence only. The owner of the fence should be allowed to remove a fence from their own yard.
- I'm still waiting to hear back about my request to build a trellis to help cover the large electrical meters area.
- Obtaining GHI permits has started taking too long the last couple of years.
- Enforcement of members' maintaining yards is unsatisfactory.

Privacy

- Would like to increase privacy between my yard and neighbors beyond the 8' screen now allowed, but not with a full 6' fence
- Everyone seems confused about what's allowed for screening - is lattice allowed or not?
- My garden side yard borders the GHI boundary and overlooks the neighboring driveway to a single family home where the residents park multiple vehicles frequently. This detracts from my view and enjoyment of my own yard, but according to current rules, I am not allowed to erect a privacy fence to screen their driveway, so in effect, I do not enjoy the intent of having a garden side yard, which is meant to not have vehicle traffic interference.
- It would be nice to be allowed to have taller and more private fencing along public walkways and streets.

- It would be very nice to have the ability to erect a privacy fence / sound barrier along Ridge Rd. We are currently limited by the fencing rules.
- I don't have much street noise, but I do have highway noise.
- [I have] no privacy.

Storage

- no storage place for tools,
- I would like to build a custom shed/shelter, but find GHI's rules too restrictive.
- We currently don't have a storage unit in our yard for lawn mower or other garden materials. If we get some kind of storage it would need to be very small, as the yard is very small.
- I have a detached garage which I use for storage
- My current shed is oversize but just the right size for us. I'm committed to keep it in good condition so we can continue to use it.

Drainage/swales

- We have a swale on the side that does not drain well. It is supposed to be maintained by GHI but it just fills with water in the rain and they won't fix the problem. We end up with a terrible mosquito problem as they breed in these puddles. See comments above about the neighbor's yard.
- I'm concerned about grading and a retaining wall. It rained very hard on Friday, the water pooled on my sidewalk and almost got to the crawlspace. I have a large retaining wall in the yard, and there are several rotting railroad ties, and I'm concerned that I might have to repair or replace the wall. I don't know if this is a GHI responsibility or mine, and I'm not sure how to find out.
- We have been written up for spots with no grass. When it rains the water pools in our service side yard. It is very hard to grow grass in those spots.
- WE do not know what a swale is!
- When it rains, g/s gets FLOODED.
- Much of my yard is very swampy due to lack of drainage.
- WSSC has been biggest problem. Swales continue to have to be worked by owner - GHI ineffective on this.
- My swale pools a large amount of water every heavy rain. I've gone back and forth with GHI over the years, but you aren't fixing it and I don't currently have the funds to do it.
- Drainage isn't good in my yard. Water collects in a pool near my shed and garden side gate when it rains. A french drain would remedy the current situation.
- We need updated information about the location of the swale as well as long proposed changes to swales (I believe that was in a master plan from long ago.)
- The gardenside yard of our unit is atrocious. There wasn't much grass (mostly just exposed dirt) in the gardenside when we purchased the unit, and it has only gotten worse since then, despite our efforts. The swale is constantly flooding the gardenside yard because all of the runoff dirt clogs the drain in the walkway (where the swale is supposed to channel the water).
- The drainage in my back yard (garden side) is really a problem -- we have a swale that has simply disappeared and on rainy days water just stagnates in the yard. We have sent at least twice complaints to GHI with no result.

- We have addressed our drainage by creating a pond where water was naturally pooling in an area of the yard. It looks natural and attracts wildlife. It is also very relaxing to sit and listen to the water. We would like to complete our fencing since it's only on one side of the yard.
- There's common area behind my yard, but I'm not sure if it's official woodland or other. It is not much maintained. I wish it were more maintained, especially leaf removal. I think that leaf buildup affected drainage and made the water flow change to create a dip in my yard where it was previously flat.
- The garden side of my yard is always water logged when it rains because the so called fire lane is unpaved and always collects standing water. I feel that if that area is paved my neighbors and I would not have this problem.
- Drainage is sometimes a problem for our gardenside yard after heavy rains. There is a drain in the ground; the solution may be as simple as cleaning out the drain or directing the water flow to it.
- Some issues with the yard are the slope and the drainage cover. Because I have small children I would like to maintain some type of heavy item over the drainage cover that is in the backyard.
- There's been an ongoing problem with "pooling" water since '08.

Trees

- We are very concerned that our neighbor planted a tree that will shade out our whole yard and garden area within 5-7 years. We just moved to GHI and bought the house in large part because of the sunny yard and ability to garden. We hope that there is room for compromise in the near future.
- I understand that it is expensive to maintain trees, but I would appreciate more response when I ask to have dead limbs taken off my trees -- or, failing that, I'd like to be allowed to hire private tree work.
- We think that the big tree in our yard needs a trim. It would also give us a little more sunlight to work with for planting more than deep shade plants.
- I have requested the limbs from my neighbor's tree be pruned so I don't get large limbs falling on my side (and falling on my fence) to no avail
- There is a tree (either in my neighbor's yard or on city property) that leans on and has disrupted the growth of one of our oaks. The problem started many years before we bought our home. Since nothing has been done about this tree, it is now a threat to existing structures in our yard (fencing and a pergola) as well as the tree it leans on. In addition, we would like to add a shed to our gardenside yard, but the only location is in the path of one of the tree's largest limbs. We're not sure how to address this challenge.
- Neighbor tree roots are in my yard going down into the crawl space.
- Cannot grow grass because the soil is dry can compacted and too many trees.
- Too many trees causing too much shade therefore inability to have a garden or a nice lawn.
- Even if we have to go 50/50 on price, it would be great if GHI would offer replenishing the soil in our yards with new top soil. With the roots from the humongous tree in my neighbor's yard soaking up all the nutrients in my yard and the flooding and runoff of soil, there is no top soil left. I can't even get grass to grow.
- My yard is mostly shade and the tree roots from large trees prevent from digging. The tree roots are so large at my gardenside gate you can barely open gate.

Yard & common area maintenance

- I might have the most bamboo in Greenbelt. I constantly have to maintain it but since I'm on an end unit by the street, I really like the privacy it gives; plus the shade it provides in the summer keeps the house cooler. However, during the winter, if there's an ice storm or the wet, heavy snow it'll bring the bamboo down into the middle of the street and over the pedestrian sidewalk. My son and I always work to get it back up, but it's always a worry when wintertime comes around. From all the cutting and snipping over the years, my left hand has carpal tunnel syndrome and I'm afraid it'll start in my right hand at some point (I'm almost 53.) I truly don't know what to do about my situation with this bamboo - my love/hate relationship with it. Definitely would like some advice.
- Bamboo in woods just outside my fence continues to encroach on my yard.
- I think the common area could be maintained better (stumps, rodent holes) by GHI, or I would like to take responsibility for the common area behind our fence.
- It is very disconcerting to walk the garden side paths and see how overgrown, and ill cared for are many of the yards.
- Common area/ woodlands adjacent to my yard overrun with invasive s that cover my fence and grow into my yard. I had to pay extra to install a gate to an area that is inaccessible
- Common area maintenance is loud, and basic: mow and blow. Maybe some of the trees can be mulched? Maybe some areas are too shady to need mowing i.e. let it grow, leave it be? Would like common area maintenance to include cutting back tree branches from the walkways.
- Grass cutters often miss the path the cuts behind my row of houses at 11 Laurel Ct. Don't know if were' on the yard list to be cut?

Wildlife visits

- Also, wildlife visits to yards, I marked not satisfied because we have a raccoon, mosquito and tick problem.
- One neighbor has outdoor cats which scare away the birds. Another has an unsupervised dog that barks a great deal when I use my yard.
- Wildlife - raccoons in garbage.
- Other: visits to yard by animals other than "wildlife". There are multiple cats that frequent my yard, which is ecologically problematic, but also creates tension with my immediate neighbor as my dogs bark when they see the cats sitting on my back deck. I have added chicken wire under the deck to try to keep the cats from entering there, but cannot restrict their access to my entire yard, the woods behind the house, nor my neighbor's decks.
- I had a dead raccoon removed from y yard and ongoing mole/vole problems.

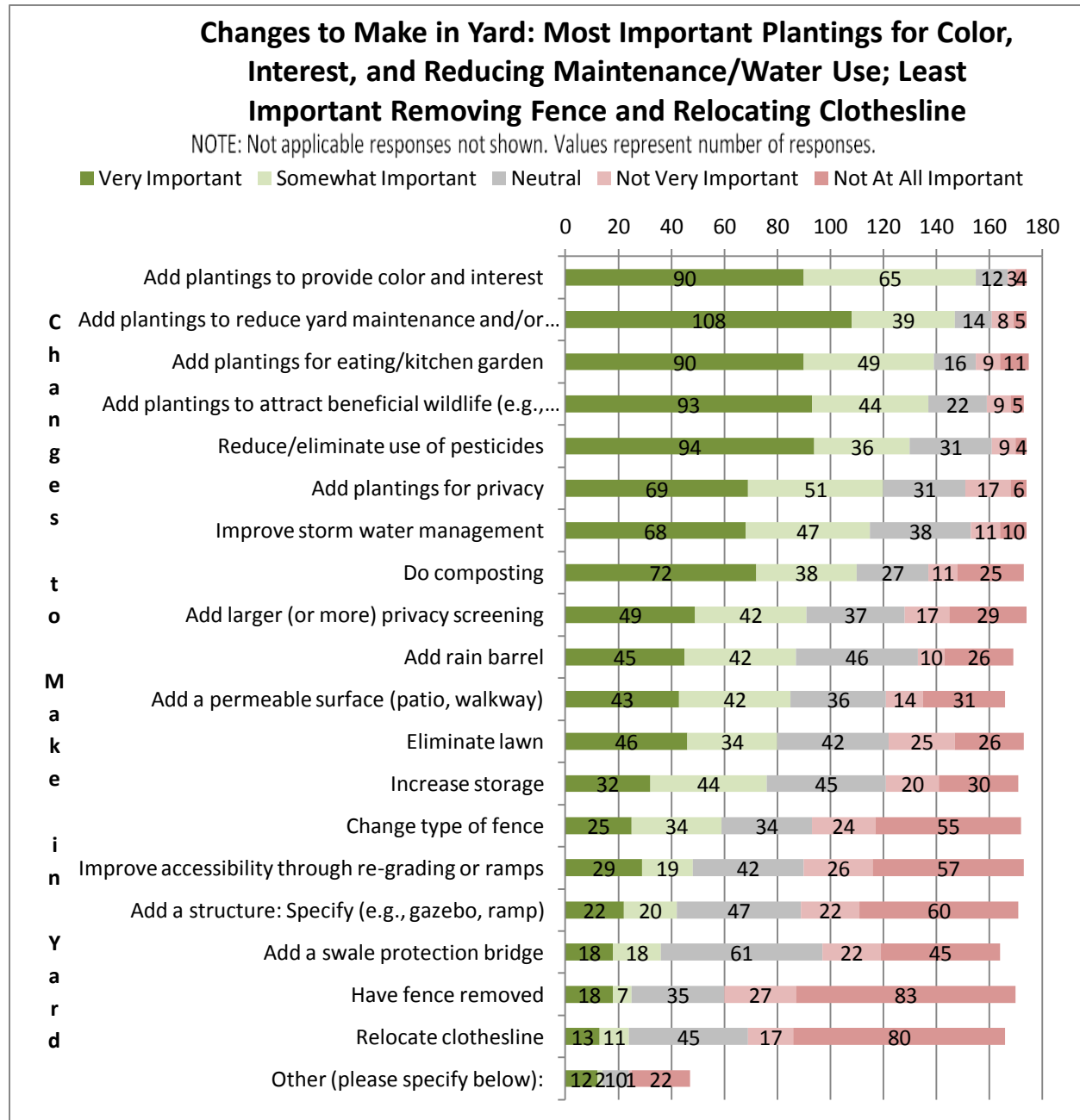
Members' Solutions

- We have planted native plants and worked to make our service and garden yards useful for laundry drying and spending time outdoors.
- I did my best to eliminate any lawn to save time and money on care + for ecological and aesthetic reasons
- My gardenside yard is so shady and I like having furniture, so it's very hard to have grass grow. I would prefer my entire yard be a combination of deck & patio with garden beds, planters and the common areas providing the greenery.

Miscellaneous

- We would like to block out street lighting and neighbor's lights that are much too bright and prevent us from enjoying our yard at night.
- We feel we should be able to put the close line in the back yard which we feel is a preferred place from aesthetic standpoint.
- I live in a frame house. My neighbor smokes uses a fire pit (all year round) and grills on the deck which makes using the yard impossible for more than brief moments and also means I cannot open windows or the doors in nice weather. All the smoke comes right in my unit.
- I can't afford to have the mole problem taken care of by professionals.
- GHI should have solar panels
- What does "GHI process to make changes in yard" mean? What changes are you thinking of doing for my space/yard?
- You need to differentiate between front (s/s) and back (g/s) yards. What is ok in the front may not be ok in the back (which is how it is for me). lawn maintenance on s/s is fine; on g/s it's terrible

Importance of making changes to yard



Comments on importance of making changes in own yard

Multiple changes

- There are many things I would like to do to my yard because the shade provided by the trees (which I don't want to lose), paired with low soil permeability and lots of rain runoff make it challenging to maintain a lawn. Cost is the biggest factor at the moment, preventing me from adding a rain barrel and planting a more appropriate ground cover that would also tolerate dog activity. Knowledge would be the second barrier, in order to identify native ground cover that would be well-suited for my yard and how to best integrate other wants (like a rain barrel, compost, and raised garden bed) into my landscaping.
- It is important to me to have an eco-friendly yard. I love to watch the birds and rabbits. I am interested in maintaining a pollinator garden at some point and would like to put a small patio back there. It would be helpful to make this process easier by playing this info on their website.
- Because our unit is a middle one, we don't have much room to spread out and add on as many of the end units have. It would be nice to be able to meet with someone either on staff or aware of GHI policies to discuss what improvements we could make to our yards at no or low cost. We are also open to installing rain barrels or doing other things that will add to the overall benefit of the court. Creating an outdoor living room/dining area would really improve our enjoyment of the yard
- I love gardening but I am frustrated not being able to adapt to the wildlife and not having enough experience and money for improvement. I would love to have the help of experts in our area. Thank you!

Swales/storm water

- I'm not sure what a "swale" is. I'll leave that up to you.
- Storm water/swale on my unit is fine, but in other units in this row "ponds" up to 1 foot deep accumulate.
- What is a swale protection bridge?
- What is a swale?
- Swales from yards above my yard have been removed causing my yard to get water I shouldn't get!!
- On the garden side, my yard is sinking some and is creating a swale that should be filled in. So far, I have not hired a contractor to do that.
- The service side sidewalk in my court often gets muddy puddles because of a neighbor's gardening choices. It would be preferable if she were required to better manage rain water/mud in her service side yard.
- I had a huge problem with water pooling at deck stairs in '08. A French drain was added. Now water pools at the back entrance and some run off at deck stairs from neighbor who has never raked leaves so his yard is built up on one side and the neighbor has layers of mulch and I'm the BOWL that collects the water.
- I don't know about swale bridges. I have lots of water on sidewalk after heavy rains. I'd like to resolve this. I think owners/members need to be informed of swales, their use, where they are when we purchase homes. Maybe some swales should be on garden beautification checks?

Fences

- I'm on an end lot, and I have a chain link fence. I like it, it doesn't stick out and it doesn't block out the sun.
- When we moved in (2004) we had all of the fences removed from our yard. GHI did a wonderful job of removing even the concrete holding the posts in the ground. We have appreciated the open look of our yard ever since.
- We inherited a common fence when purchasing the unit, and were told that we must obtain the neighbor's permission before removal of the shared fence. However, reviewing the sale notes of our purchase, it is evident that our property is responsible for painting and maintaining the fence. We would like the ability to remove the fence or to transfer responsibility for painting and maintenance to the neighbor who does not wish to remove the fence.

Screening/Privacy

- Allowed screening is inadequate for us to use our porch and patio when neighbors are in their yards.
- I live by Southway and am affected by noise and lack-of-privacy from cars stopping and starting at the intersection with Ridge, as well as yard sales at the intersection. I wish there were a berm along Southway to reflect the sound from the undercarriage of cars. I also wish there were shrubs in the large common area to block the sight of cars and yard sales. And I wish there were exceptions made for privacy fences along busy roads. These are my main concerns.
- I would like to add a privacy fence to my garden side. Actually either side. There is no privacy from my neighbors.

Additional structures

- A ramp, if necessary.
- Would like to add a screened gazebo on to my patio.
- Would love to have a usable outdoor space. I would like to eventually put in a screened in porch so that mornings and evenings can be enjoyed with being eaten up by mosquitoes.
- gazebo
- Would like to add a Screened in porch
- I would love to add a gazebo on the garden side and a trellis with benches on the service side.
- Since we have been rejected for removal of the oak tree, I would like to put a roof on my deck.
- Add a deck

Rain barrels

- I would like to be able to get a rain barrel without permission from my neighbors.
- It would be resource-wise to have more rain barrels and the ability to have at least one on each side of the house.
- I already have a rain barrel and a composting bin but my water and compost storage can improve
- We already have a GHI-approved rain barrel installed and are content with just one.
- I've been interested in adding a rain barrel, although I think that we would need GHI's help because we have a gutter system that appears to drain directly into the sewer system.

Surfaces

- I have slate slabs for my walkway which can be very slippery if there's freezing going on. I put down salt which helps, but the slates are slippery and because of all the shade in my yard (due to the bamboo) and if we are having a cold winter, it doesn't melt very quickly. I usually walk on the side of the pathway to avoid slipping, so I don't know if something else could be put down that would look nice.
- Permeable surfaces on the courts!!
- We park on the street and walk through a common area path through slightly wooded area to our front door. The path gets very muddy in the winter, spring. Last fall GHI started to create a walkway with bricks, then took that away. I'd like to have slate pieces or stones or bricks in the path (stepping stones) to reduce the mud we bring into the house.

Trees

- I would love for some of the trees to be cut back to allow for more direct sunlight.
- I would like to be able to grow grass. The big tree along fence drinks all the water.
- Get rid of excessive trees.
- My yard needs topsoil. The yard is full of old tree roots and moss.

Storage/shed

- I would prefer a larger shed to use as a "she-shed" for writing
- Add bigger shed
- We'd like to be able to have storage sheds in both the service (for bicycles) and gardenside (for gardening tools and materials) yards. Since we have an inside three-story unit, it's overwhelming to have to bring our bikes from our gardenside yard through our neighbor's yard to access the street.
- There is very little storage or ability to have a good storage unit in the yard.

Clothes lines

- We don't have a clothesline but want one.
- We need to work on interesting ways to devise clotheslines (I am an architect by training)

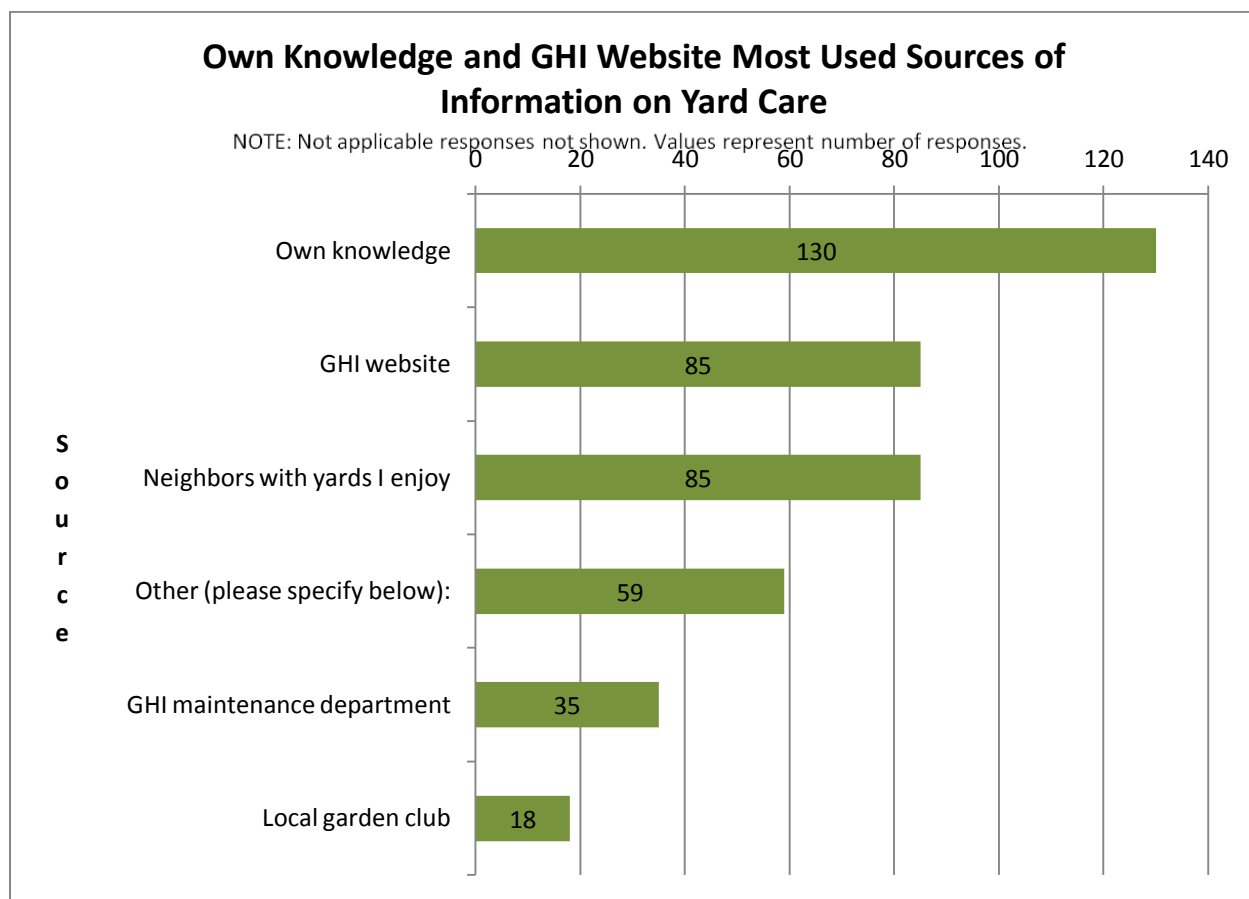
Miscellaneous

- Our yard is bordered by hedges. We used to have a nice looking metal gate in the back and a wooden gate adjacent to the parking area. GHI made us take both down. I never was given reasoning for this. Now to get into our back yard from the sidewalk we have to go through the hedges.
- During yard beautification inspections, it is very important to have the inspector trained in native plant landscaping.
- It would be nice to have shrubs around the bus stop area.
- The above questions are too hard to answer. Should have a column that says N/A. The way I read the question to the way GHI is stating the question is somewhat useless. I don't want my fence nor may clothesline removed thus put down important or not important?

Appreciation

- [Despite concerns], I'm happy with GHI and appreciate the work they do.

Sources of information for caring for yard



Comments on sources of information

Internet

- General (Google, websites, online research, etc.) 39 mentions
- GHI groups on Facebook 2 mentions
- Online garden sites for our region.
- the local extension service
- Gardening video website by Susan Harris
- GHI newsletter
- Susan Harris's blog
- University of Maryland native plants guide

Local nurseries/garden centers

- Behnkes 15 mentions
- gardening nurseries 5 mentions
- Hyattsville Elementary native plant sale and we want to plant as many natives as possible.
- advice from plants people at our local nurseries
- Franks nursery
- Stark gardening

- Breck's gardening center
- Homestead Gardens
- I receive guidance from Forested, an edible forest garden featuring native plants that's been established on Rte. 193 in Bowie

Personal consultation

- consultation with landscaper
- Friends and family with garden knowledge 9 mentions
- I would appreciate advice from those knowledgeable about what works in GHI yards.
- I let my neighbors care for my service side outdoors area. My garden side outdoors area is fairly self-maintaining as there is no grass. It's mostly azalea bushes and planted ground cover.
- We love the community gardens and use them to grow vegetables that wouldn't be possible in our small shady yard. It's a good source of information on plants. The GHI website I have used to find rules and regulations.
- I have asked some questions at the Farmer's Market.
- Time bank
- I interact with staff at University of Maryland Extension and ask questions, 2 mentions

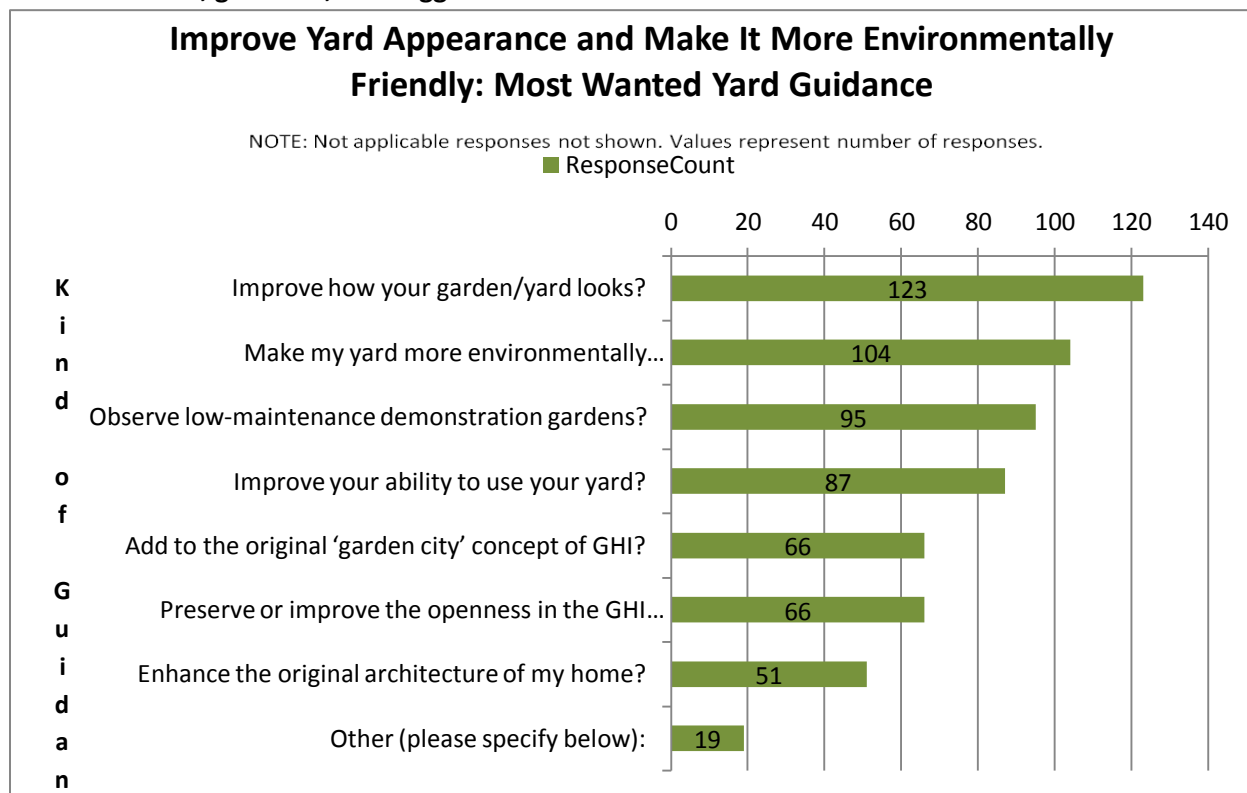
Books/magazines/print

- Library, 3 mentions, including books from our library that are specific to our region
- Magazines, 2 mentions
- Books, 9 mentions
- Mailings
- Communicator and News Review
- Communicator
- green GHI notebook, 3 mentions ("for rules only")

Other

- I initiated rain garden workshop held in Greenbelt last year by county staff for State rebate program.
- I have sought counsel with Remmy (?) in Tech services who was supposed to remedy pooling water [in my yard] and counsel on mole/vole issues with GHI maintenance and was told I'd have to handle myself.

Interest in ideas, guidance, and suggestions for



Comments on yard guidance

General yard improvements

- increase pocket gardens to lower mowing and maintenance
- Before getting involved in the community garden plan and woodlands we have got to learn what to do about our own yard! Lots of things are growing and we don't know what kinds of plants they are and how to best care for them. There are some problem areas, too, such as where something like bamboo keeps spreading and overtaking part of the yard.
- We are very interested in figuring out how to make the most of our yard our first garden season at GHI! I'd also specifically like to
- Given the size of my front yard on a big corner lot where many dog walkers and people walk by, I would like to make it much more beautiful all year round. The spring is the best time of year for the plants in my yard, while the rest of the year it looks rather plain.
- build and locate raised beds
- improve yard for growing flowers and plants

Neighbors' yards

- I feel that my neighbor makes both my court, and theirs miserable. I don't know what action to take. It is hard for us to enjoy our yards because of their barking dog and horrible house light.
- How to work with my neighbor to resolve yard issues.
- Improving appearance of neighbors yards, to make the court more attractive

Edibles

- Growing edibles!
- Incorporating more edible plants in the landscape)...
- Have an interest in edible gardening.

Drainage/swales

- Improve drainage
- GHI finally dealing with swale issue and extensive land erosion as a result.
- problem areas where water collects
- how to level out my garden side yard & fix areas that don't drain well & thus get muddy

Lawns/ground covers

- eliminate grass,
- how to switch my ultra-shady, sloping, compacted, mossy, muddy service side yard from "grass" to ground cover (after over 10 yrs of failed attempts to grow grass)
- I'd like to know if there are any options for the garden side of my house to replace the sparse grass with something that won't require regular mowing or maintenance.
- Shade planting for ground over that is not invasive. Need to replace ivy and grass.

Native plants/pollinator/wildlife

- Planting native, wildlife-supporting gardens
- Figure out how to make a certified wildlife habitat and pollinator garden in my yard.
- I am interested in seeing GHI offer guidance on native plantings that are beautiful, appropriate to the yard's microclimate and soil, and that will provide edible fruits, nuts, and/or perennial vegetables.

Garden City/original plan

- I like the history of the community and find some of the courts really beautiful. I think exceptions should be made to the "openness" of the community, though, when some houses are located in problem areas. For me, the biggest issue is road noise.
- I like how Greenbelt gardens offer variety against the backdrop of the simple architecture
- I'd love to remove the vinyl fake-wood siding on my block unit and restore the original architecture. But it's too expensive

Hedges

- Many hedges are far too tall, and some completely surround the yard. Hedge height should be limited to 6 feet, or restricted to mixed hedges with some tall, some lower.
- I'm keeping our privet. I don't like fences and am sorry when I see new ones being put up. How can we encourage other ways to do yards?

Privacy

- More access to wildlife, privacy, and quiet
- I would actually like to have more privacy in my backyard. I love the idea of GHI being open and a community but every person needs moments of privacy. I'd like to sit in my backyard without neighbors being able to see me so that I can enjoy the woods behind my house in total isolation and meditation. I'd also like to entertain in my backyard but do to water pipes from our house we are unable to build a deck and level out the yard. :(

- Enjoy what little shrubs there are backing my unit that affords some privacy which is one reason I chose this unit. I'm not in favor with making the path through my block of units more "public" thoroughfares.

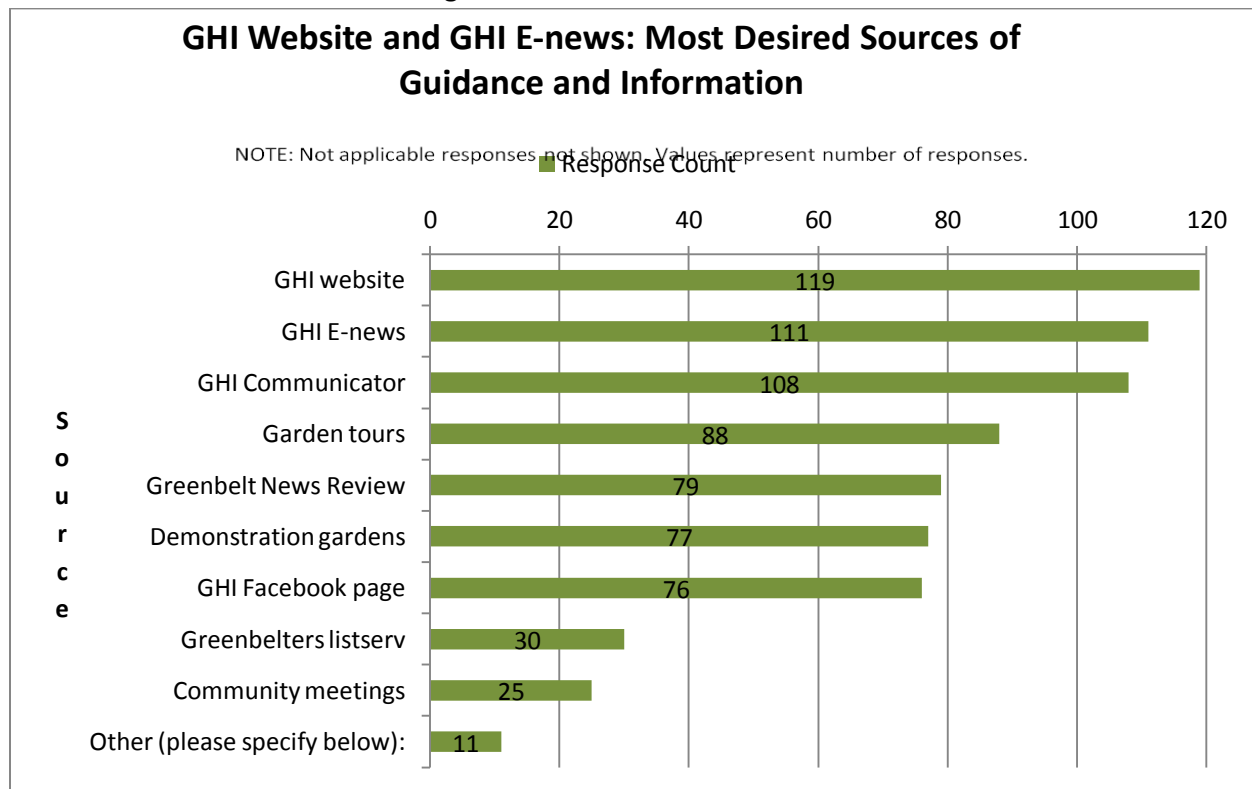
Pests

- how to eliminate voles (Lawn Doctor Grub Control doesn't completely do the job)
- What can we do about ticks and mosquitoes other than spraying with Off?

Miscellaneous

- how to replace a messy magnolia tree (which frequently drops big, thick leaves that lawnmowers can't mulch much plus big seed pods that kill grass under them & make the lawn lumpy) with an easier to live with tree
- Best deck strategy for our yard
- Information on plants that will grow in the shade and clay soil. Also how to make clay soil better for plants
- Are we still able to enclose our back porch without going thru GHI bureaucracy?
- Not sure what a friendly/sustainable yard defines.
- Not sure what the 'garden city' concept is.
- I don't know what this means: "Preserve or improve the openness in the GHI garden city community plan" or "Add to the original 'garden city' concept of GHI".
- None of the above.

Preferred sources of information or guidance



Comments on sources of information

Consultations

- via consultations with knowledgeable people who come to my yard & advise me
- We would love a garden expert to come take a look and tell us what we have got! And what we can do to improve the yard.
- Expert gardeners/consultants who know GHI rules and how to work within them.
- Direct Consulting as Matt Berres used to do. Between maintenance and members we have enormous expertise to tap into
- Have someone that really knows their native plants come and give us personal guidance in each of our yards.

Internet

- More photos of "environmentally friendly" yards and privacy options on GHI web page.
- Unofficial GHI FB page, Greenbelters FB page
- Unofficial GHI Facebook page.
- Email updates
- How about an Instagram account?
- I don't know how active the Greenbelters Listserv is. I tried to subscribe about a year ago and my request to join was "denied" because no one approved it. I received an automated message. They must have it set up to automatically deny requests if it's not approved in so many days. Please publicize more about it or put info in the GHI Communicator
- I am fine using the internet
- I don't have a computer

Garden tours

- I would like to see the house and garden tours reinstated.
- GHI members' open gardens.
- Would LOVE to have a home and garden tour again!!!! Hyattsville does a great job doing a historic home and garden tour that the participants get to place a sign in their yard stating they participated. It costs money to purchase tickets to do the tour which detracts from people stealing in the homes or causing harm to the property. The money collected from ticket sales could be either donated to a local charity or used to make a community garden space.

Beautification program

- GHI can share information but I don't think we need more regulations. More importantly, I don't think the community beautification program is a good use of GHI's resources or money.
- When GHI does yard inspections, what are they looking for? Seeing this on the website would help me keep my yard up to standards.

Shared resources

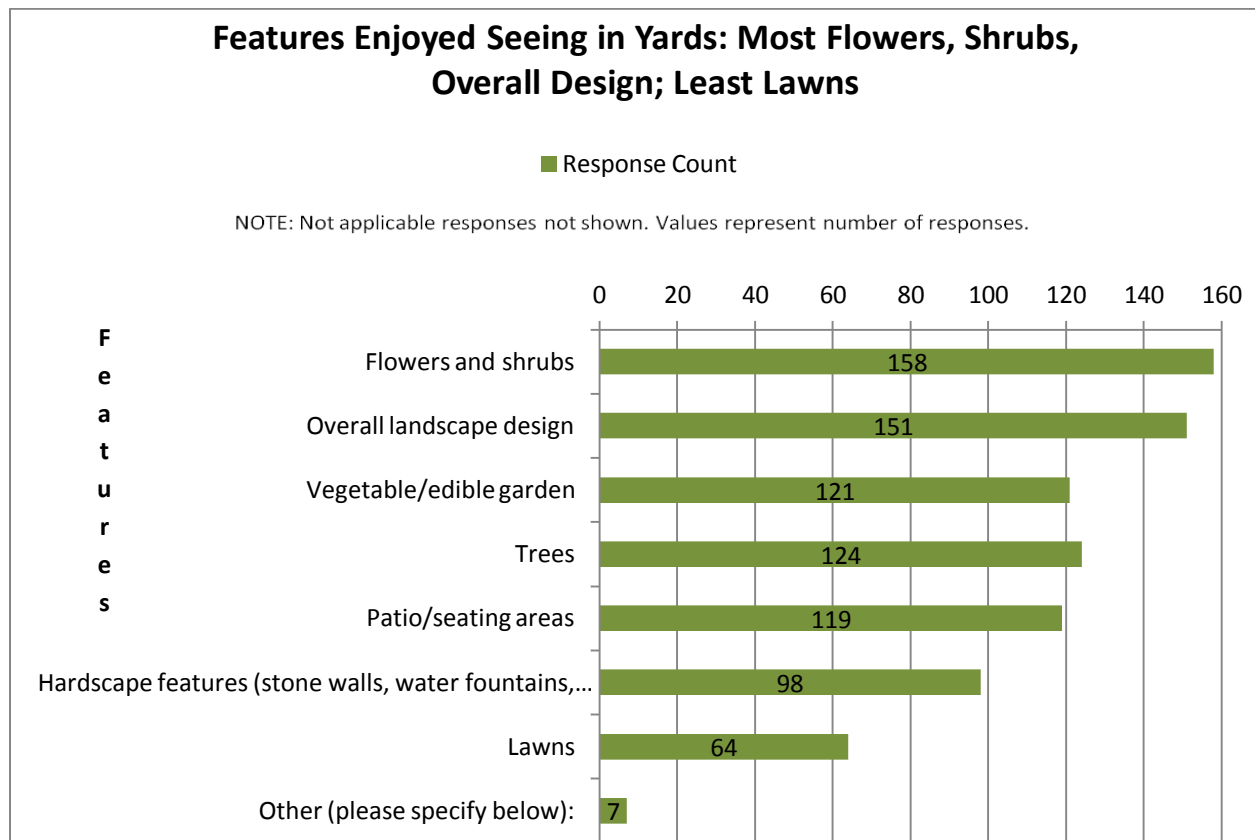
- Neighborhood (court) YARD DAYS...come out, GHI and neighbors working together with rakes, bags, tools, plantings to increase pride in our surroundings.
- Garden freecycle, plant share, timeshare assistance with yard planning and improvements
- Do we have an active garden club? That would be nice.
- Pooling of resources
- Better plant purchase plan from GHI

Miscellaneous

- Guidance documents
- I'd especially love to learn about lawn elimination (in favor of vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers) plus environmentally safe(r) pest removal of moles, voles, mosquitoes, and wasps.
- all of the above are good for me ...
- My interest in gardening is nil.

GHI YARDS AND COMMON AREAS

Features enjoyed in others' yards



Comments on features enjoyed

Garden Enhancements

- outdoor artwork, fairy gardens, rock gardens
- art
- Statuary set into the garden.
- the use of pots of plants placed in interesting patterns and in different areas of yards is nice

Plantings

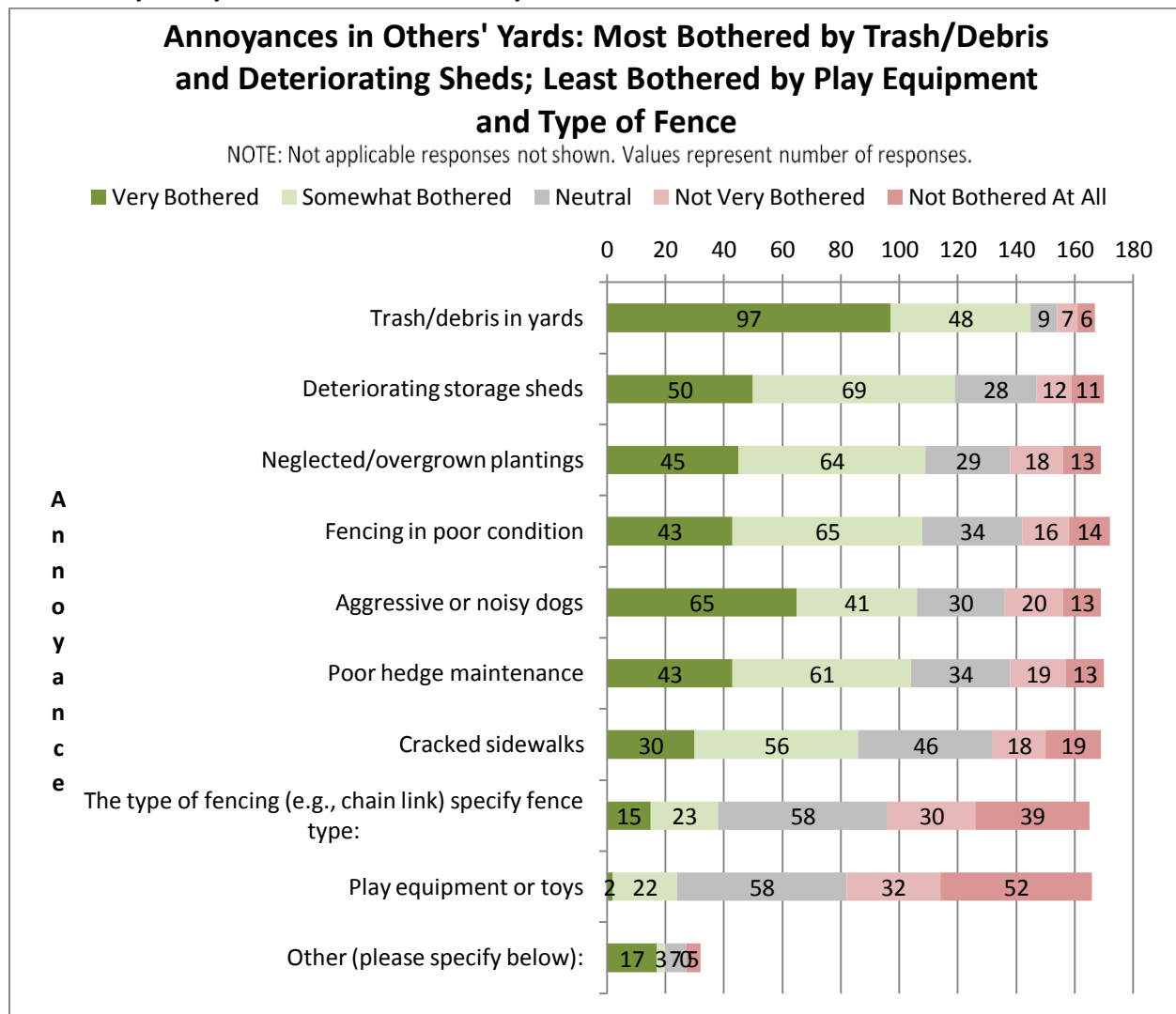
- Edibles! Edibles! Edibles! To hell with lawns and down with oppressive sunlight blocking trees!
- native vegetation that attracts pollinators

- Less trees, more light, less fungus problems
- More gardens, less lawn.
- Pollinator gardens, native gardens that increase habitat and food for native critters.
- I'd love to see GHI offer guidance on replacing lawns with low maintenance, native, perennial plantings.

Miscellaneous

- Really, anything that looks maintained.
- Bird feeders.
- screened in porch
- I really do not want to see other members' yards.
- I miss the garden (and house) tours we used to have every year. I really enjoy talking with members working in their yards as I walk past.
- Observation gives me good ideas.

Bothered by annoyances in other members' yards



Comments on annoyances

Fencing

- I generally don't like chain link fences, especially rusty ones!
- We personally hate chain link but more importantly, it lowers curb appeal for all GHI units
- Chain link, yuk!
- Chain link fencing is not terribly attractive and feels institutional. It would be nicer to see split rail or Cherokee fencing or stone walls or hedgerows. More natural looking fencing is desirable.
- Escaped/escaping invasive plants...
- I personally dislike chain link fences...so much that I had mine removed. I love the open look, but if fences were necessary I would prefer picket fences for the appearance.
- Type of fencing I'm very bothered by - chain link.
- Bothered by all kinds of fencing
- Bothered by weathered wood fencing in need of power washing
- I really dislike the chain link fences - that was the fencing around our yard. But I realize that for many members it is the best fencing option for them and would not want to ban it.
- I'd rather see less chain-link fencing.
- I think GHI should stipulate what kinds of fences members can and can't use. Some are very unattractive (e.g. chain link).
- Unless the co-op is going to help pay for the more expensive fencing for people (like myself) who have dogs and cannot afford the expensive fencing that would keep my dog in the yard then I think the chain link argument needs to be dismissed. It is the affordable option. There are so many other "annoyances" to get worked up over in my opinion
- I am bothered by my non-GHI neighbors' vehicles since their driveway borders my own garden side yard, and I am not allowed to put up a privacy fence. I am not bothered by anything in my GHI neighbors' yards, they are mostly very nice.
- Fencing in poor condition doesn't look nice, but if it's actively being used to enclose a companion animal, then it doesn't bother me. Perhaps that individual cannot afford to repair their fence. However, if a fence is in disrepair and is not being used, or could not be used, to enclose a companion animal, I'd rather see it be removed. Likewise, if the remnants of an old fence are in one's own yard and they wish to remove it (because it encloses nothing); they should not need the neighbor's consent to do so.
- Some fences are rusted, sagging and unpainted
- To the extent that I would be bothered by the type of fencing, I'd prefer fencing that doesn't totally block all view.

Invasive Plants

- Too many people grow non-native invasive plants (e.g., the japanese honeysuckle tree and english ivy). GHI should help people identify and remove them EARLY in their growth and suggest alternatives.
- My neighbors around me keep their yards neat and there are no dogs left out in the yard so I have no complaints about them. I would imagine some of them might find MY yard with all the bamboo a bit of a nuisance, however. Last fall, the neighbors whose house is across from my garden side yard very nicely asked if I could cut some of the bamboo so the shade of it wouldn't impede on the growth of their newly planted ever green trees they put in last spring.

My son, brother and I worked two to three hours to take down a bunch of it and afterwards, it didn't look like we did as much as we thought. There was so much down in the yard, we had to stop taking it down. I used to be able to ask GHI to come and get what I take down (if there's a lot from a snow or ice storm or from doing maintenance) and I would pay them to haul it off. However, this past year, they said they didn't have the man power and gave me a person's name and phone number to call to see if he could help me. I called him and left a message on his voice mail and never heard from him, so it's taken me most of the winter to get all what we took down cut and bundled so Public Works could take it away. Since the weather has been weirdly warm this winter, that has helped, but if it had been cold and snowy, it would all still be sitting out there. Some of it still is. By mid-April I should have it all out and the rest of this one grove down and taken away, but I still want to figure out what to do about it.

- Weeds that are being grown as attraction plants for pollinators and are not clipped before the weed seeds spread everywhere
- Invasive ground cover that spreads into other adjoining yards.
- Would like assistance getting rid of the invasive ivy in my yard and common area as well as bamboo in the woodland area that runs along my yard line.
- Invasives
- Moss is growing on the awning over the back door below my unit--which I can see from my window--this is not good for the structure.
- Volunteer nuisance trees and plantings affecting walkways are what bother me in the neglected/overgrown plantings category.

Yard Design/Features

- Since we have lots of playgrounds in GHI, I believe that personal playgrounds are not necessary. Basketball hoops are a nuisance and unattractive to neighbors.
- Patios in poor condition are a dangerous eyesore. For example, there is a "patio" with random loose bricks strewn over the yard near my home.

Trash/debris/overall yard care

- Like I said before, when a person's leaves or debris come into my yard--that is a problem.
- Old leaves not picked up in the common areas.
- My neighbors do not care for their yard on a regular basis. They mow about 2x per summer and never have removed all of their fallen leaves.
- Some common areas are full of trash.
- It seems like it is a fine line between what is trash and yard art.
- Some neighbors leave their kids toys/bicycles all over the place.
- Yards that I see from my kitchen window are not well maintained--trash, leaves, etc.
- There are several yards that I walk past regularly that are being used as garbage dumps (old tires, construction materials, junk) and haven't been cited per GHI rules for years. Meanwhile, I get cited for having long grass! Some houses (cinderblock) are badly peeling, and continue this way for years.
- Direct neighbor's inability to care for their yard.

- We have yard inspections where things are either ignored or overlooked which is both a waste of time and money. For example one house across the street from me hasn't cut their grass in almost 2 years and the weeds are up past the windows. Their neighbor has had bags of trash in their front yard since last summer. It's an eyesore and does nothing for property values for the rest of us. What's the point of yard inspections? What happened to follow up and/or enforcement? As I see walking my dog, yards are looking worse all the time and nothing is done anymore. If I see a rat I'm calling the health department.
- Yard/garden tools should be stored

Trees

- Lots of trees have dead branches and many branches fall.
- I hate enormous trees that block all of my precious sunlight. I'm not suggesting we cut down all the trees, but trimming them back would go a long way. I can hardly grow anything edible in my yard and it's all because of trees on nearby land stealing all of the sun.
- Trees growing too close to the building, which GHI (i.e. we) will eventually have to pay to remove.

Hedges/overgrown plantings

- Any growth, plant or hedges that impede the ability to use the sidewalks is frustrating.
- Hedges that over grow common sidewalks.
- Overgrown plantings that block sidewalks and paths.
- I am very bothered by the hedge maintenance of yards along the interior walkways. The hedges often appear to be trimmed and well-maintained, but the outside of the hedge still overhang the walkway a little.
- Very high and unkempt hedges make walking on the dark inner walkways even more stressful
- I'd like the hedges trimmed back to keep the width of interior walkways.
- Neighbors plants growing through the fence.
- Bothered by Hedges above fence line.

Dogs & cats

- Neighbors' cats that pee, defecate, spray and kill birds in my yard and community. After a year of calls to GHI, reports, contact with Animal control, nothing has changed. The cats roam where they want and we have to suffer because of lack of enforcement. Sigh.
- Aggressive/Noisy dog comment should have been split. 2 very different issues. Aggressive dogs with local history of biting (no bans due to breed only) very bothered. Noisy dogs happily barking or to alarm family members NOT bothered at all.
- Some neighbors don't pickup after their dogs. Poop smell wafts to other people's yards. Or one steps on the poop when it is in the common areas.
- Noisy dogs are a serious problem in 2 court plateau
- We have several neighbors with very yappy dogs that are allowed to bark all the time.
- I've had issues with noisy dogs in the past; it's fine now, but I dread having a barking dog move nearby.

- I don't like it when people leave their aggressive (different from noisy!) dogs outside, unattended-- especially when dogs are not to be left outside alone at all!

No annoyances

- Am lucky to have very good neighbors - none too messy or unkempt.
- I don't have any of these issues in my neighborhood. If I did, they would bother me to varying degrees.
- I should say that because I back to the forest preserve, many of these things do not impact me regularly except for when I am walking through the community, but if I lived next to a neighbor with more of these issues (such as a lot of toys in the yard), I might be more bothered by it.
- These ratings are mostly for how bothered I would be if the annoyances occurred. I haven't actually experienced most of these near my home.

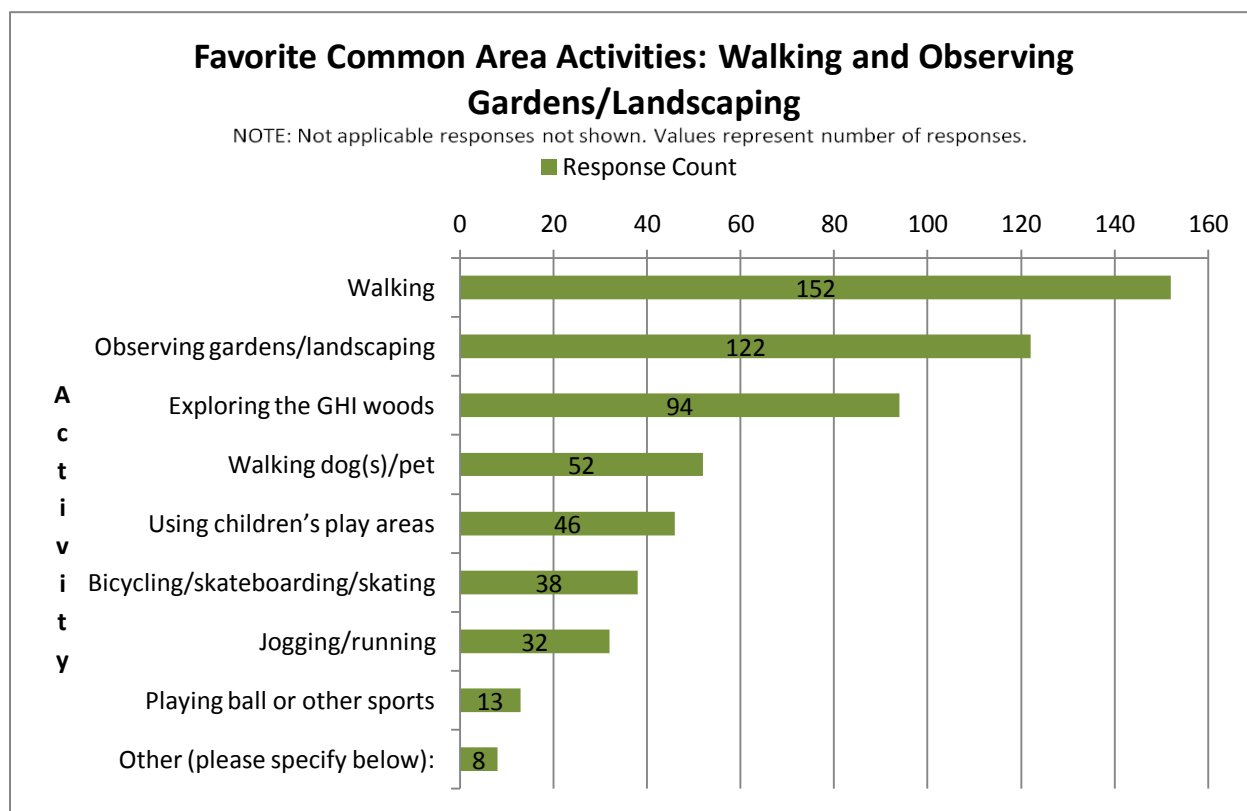
Sidewalks

- It's important to maintain sidewalks for neighbors with visual and motor impairments.
- Cracked sidewalks have a hazard potential. Someone can catch a toe in the crack and fall, possibly injuring themselves
- Sidewalks get cracked from having large trucks driving on them (which they are not rated to handle), or are poured new and crack/spall within months because they weren't properly cured. And, there is pornographic graffiti spray painted or pressed into the sidewalks and they just stay there for years.
- City of Annapolis seems to have a system where 2 unmatched sidewalk pieces are sanded so that no one may trip. Is this a possible solution to some sidewalk cases?

Other

- I'm somewhat bothered about the huge shed across from me on my garden side. Blocks view and takes away open look of greenery.
- I am very bothered by the smell and health risks of second-hand tobacco smoke. I would like to see tobacco smoking on all GHI property limited to e-cigarette (vapor) smoking only.
- Smoking in neighbor's yard makes it nearly impossible for me to use my deck or open gardenside windows
- Some neighbors have lots of cigarette butts, near where they smoke, strewn all over. Cigarette butts are a high contaminant that affects wildlife and waterways.
- Terrible front door light. I'm not a person who complains much- but it's crazy how disruptive that light is!
- SS yard with only mud/dirt. Not a blade of grass or anything else. GHI reseeded and covered it with straw after the utility dig but the dogs have destroyed every living thing--except maybe insects. The yard inspection may have some adverse comments.
- Bother by Political signage. Flags strung out like wash on clothesline? Multi-resin chairs all over the yard.
- Some home do not have their address visible on garden or service entrances. Can we encourage safety and neighbors to have street address on both sides?

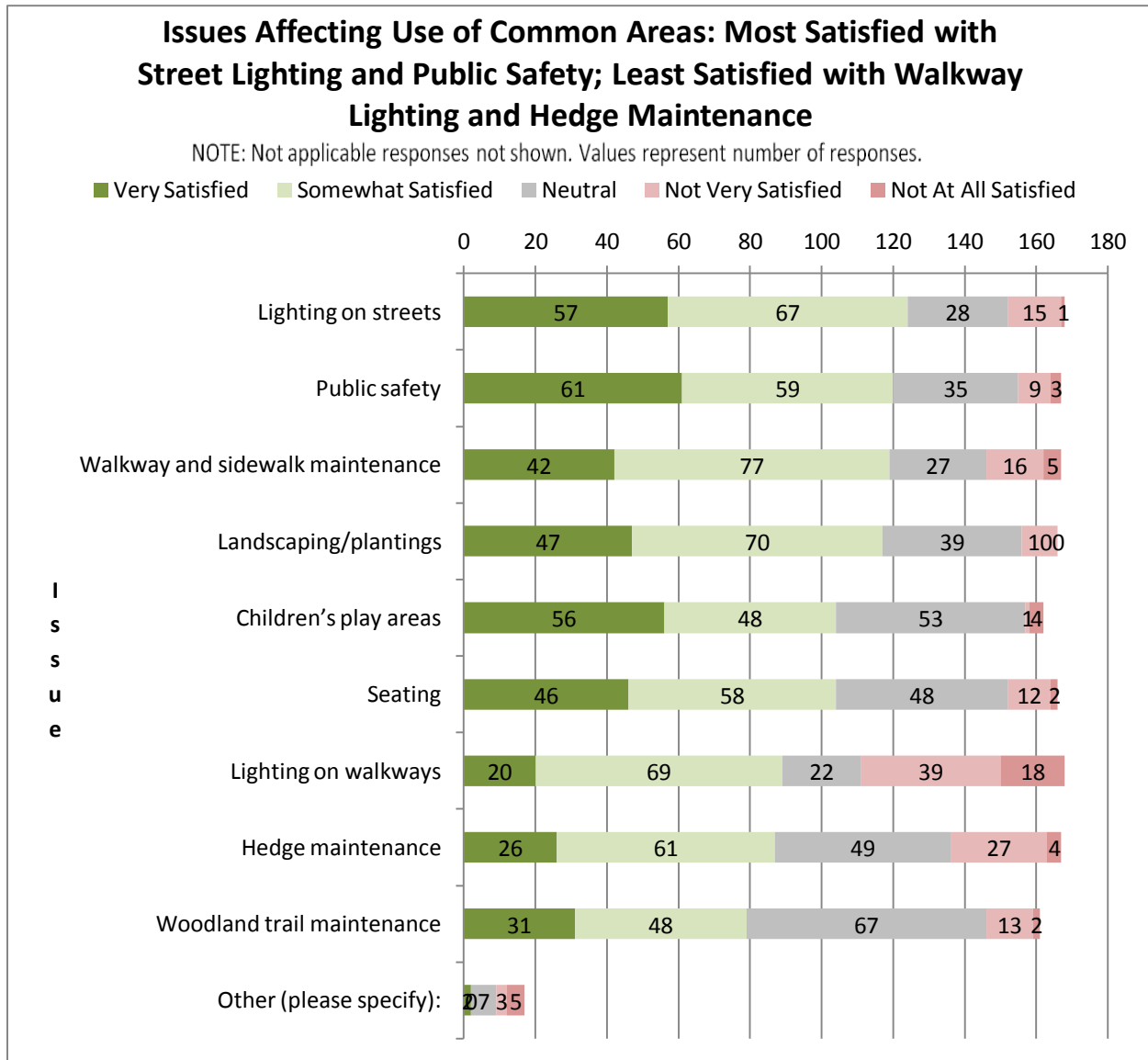
Favorite activities in GHI common areas



Comments on favorite common area activities

- sitting quietly on a bench and meditating or drawing
- We will be getting a dog and look forward to walking him / her in GHI.
- Walking to the lake!
- walking paths to the lake
- Greenbelt Lake
- Access to and walking around the lake and town center.
- I enjoy sunbathing in common areas.
- I also enjoy working out on children's playground equipment. Real outdoor adult fitness equipment would be a godsend.
- Art installations. Prayer flags.
- Photography
- I am handicapped and don't walk.
- Too many bugs to enjoy the woods.
- Having conversations with neighbors. Having court parties.
- Casual chats with neighbors; watching others play or otherwise enjoy the areas.
- Seeing neighbors and stopping for a chat.
- Not just walking, but walking to go somewhere such as to the Center or to visit friends.
- We have such a beautiful neighborhood - I love how pedestrian friendly it is!
- Bird watching, and bird-listening.
- Tables & chairs at Center by movies; Music @ Center

Satisfaction with issues that may affect ability to use and enjoy the common areas



Comments on issues that may affect ability to use and enjoy the common areas

Hedges

- Inadequate hedge maintenance along Research Road side of 65 Ridge Road, Units J - M
- Bad hedge maintenance makes inner sidewalks dangerous in 2 ways - causing slips and falls, and protection for criminals. We avoid the sidewalks at night because they aren't lit.
- There are a lot of overgrown hedges that are personal property but creep over the common sidewalk.
- Some walkways are hard to walk by because hedges are not trimmed for proper access.
- Many hedges are infringing on inner pathways (too narrow) and make them creepy (too tall).

Walkways: Lighting/Maintenance

- Walkways have many low spots that pond water after rain so that it is difficult to use the inner walkways without getting soaked. It would be good to survey these spots and for GHI to work with the City to correct these areas with better drainage or some other solution.
- The walkway between Ridge Road and the community center/library on Crescent Road is very dark at night.
- Lighting on walkways is great, but there have been numerous issues with the walkway lighting in our court ever since it was installed. One of the light posts keeps falling over, and for several weeks we have had no lights working at all, despite having reported the issue.
- I volunteer at the News Review in the evening and for most of the year I am uneasy about walking home on the poorly lit interior walkways to our unit. I realize that maintaining the lighting can be costly, so I use the city sidewalk to go to our home.
- If more lighting is to be installed for walkways, let it be lower to the ground, but brighter. Better to light where people are walking and reduce light pollution than have ugly orange anti crime lights that shine in windows and make it harder to sleep.
- My neighbor has vision problems and GHI promised to install lights along our long walkway. Many years later, we are still waiting.
- Since the walkway on the garden side of my home is not paved I am not at all satisfied.
- The walkway from Greenbelt Elementary to Buddy Attick Park has some areas (at the beginning) that could be improved. I took family members there this past weekend and some were concerned about slipping on all the wet leaves, though the leaves covered the mud. Also, the lights in the tunnel are not very bright.
- Tunnel lights at Hillside underpass should be directed at the ground. Streetlights over inner pathways should be switched to path lights. Both of these impact wildlife and cause light pollution as they are. Sidewalks are regularly swamped with water when it rains-- drainage issues.
- More lighting on walkways would facilitate night time walks.

Street Lighting

- Street lights shine a ridiculous amount of light straight into my bedroom windows. I've had to completely block them in order to improve my sleep. I can't open my windows or really use them at all because of this. The street lights need to point at the street/sidewalk, not directly into my 2nd floor windows. I have fantasies about climbing the pole out there and smashing that damn thing.
- Parking lots are too dark...making one unsafe upon arrival home after sunset. GHI should add more lighting to parking lots....much too dark!!!
- I strongly dislike the streetlight directly outside my house, but reluctantly accept that it's necessary for public safety. I would like to see GHI (or the city, whoever has responsibility) replace existing streetlights with amber-colored LED lights as the existing lights break and need replacement. Amber-colored LEDs use far less energy and do not interfere with human sleep, which can be impaired by bright "white" lights shining into our windows
- Please full cutoff light fixtures everywhere in GHI. Glare from lights is dangerous and wasteful.
- I don't expect lighting and I don't think it should be provided because after dark is not a time to be using the play areas. When I use the walkways after dark, I can bring a flashlight. I find that some of the lighting on walkways shines in my eyes, which hurts my night vision. I find that the street lighting shines in my windows, which bothers me. Sure I could use curtains, but then I don't get the sun in the morning or I don't get the cool breeze on a summer night.

- The lighting in many areas is very poor, so much so that it can be difficult to tell where I'm going when taking the bus. This may be more a city than a GHI issue.
- Pretty dark at night by Court. Seems an increase in foot traffic assaults, not sure where GB police are in afternoon especially when some assaults occur.

Parks/playgrounds

- We could really use calisthenics equipment in one of the common areas. A small section with a few bars goes a long way.
- There are not enough benches on the garden side walkways for the elderly to sit. And often the ones that are present are at an angle that is hard to sit on...much higher on one end than the other. We need to do as much as possible to encourage our elderly to walk. Providing more benches at the appropriate height would help.
- Children's play equipment (bouncy animals) needs to be repainted-- which I would take on as a community project.
- I'd like more seats and benches.

Trash/Maintenance

- Would like to see more landscaping and clean up to common areas. I did not see much leaf collection around the parking lots of my court.
- Need for a few more trash cans.
- We need lidded garbage containers to help minimize the amount of litter in our community. We also need to add lidded recycling containers in these areas.
- We need trash cans away from the playgrounds. The playgrounds smell so bad in the summer because the trash cans are filled with dog poop. We also need more common areas (gazebos, fire pits, dog parks) away from the playgrounds.
- Poison ivy and dead trees allowed remaining in plain sight.
- Public garbage cans are often overflowing. It would be nice to see more garbage cans available for use.
- My only concern has been with old trees. Despite all of the aggressive trimming, I've seen several large branches come down near my court. These large branches falling could cause damage to our slate roof, or worse, harm a person or a companion animal in the fall.

Appreciation

- The common areas are always beautiful and well maintained!
- I like the common areas as they are. I would hope that cigarette butts and dog poop are not left there, in addition to other trash...
- I am sure people will complain about everything because they like to complain but I am VERY grateful to have access to sooooo many green spaces. It is fantastic.
- I've seen various problems with maintenance for sidewalks, hedges, and playgrounds, but on the other hand, many of these problems do seem to get resolved eventually.

Woodland trails

- I certainly would welcome additional woodland trails
- On woodland trail maintenance - I thought there technically isn't supposed to be any?
- The trail behind my house is overgrown. Not sure how to fix it.

Miscellaneous

- Welcome the possibility of consulting an arborist without spending a fortune (pruning advice is essential)
- Again, I just moved in, I haven't had time to observe much.
- Because GHIs are two story (or most of them) you're never going to have a truly private backyard, so I wouldn't put a lot of effort into privacy hedges, etc.
- There should be more sidewalks on Crescent Road and other streets; I love the interior walkways, but the streets also need to be pedestrian-friendly and safe.
- 10 Laurel Hill court has sidewalks that are very cracked, and the water collects in large pools. Otherwise I think the sidewalks in GHI look very nice considering their age.
- Dogs that bark for long periods of time are a serious issue. Most dog owners do a great job checking their dogs; others just dismiss the fact that it is a problem. I am lucky to live close to good dog owners and far enough to bad dog owners... but I feel terrible for those who have to suffer through it.
- + I really think chain link fences are the main reason why we don't look like as much as a garden city as we did before.

GHI common areas to be improved and/or used in a new way

More diverse/interesting parks/garden areas

- Parks that aren't 'tot lots'
- More demonstration low maintenance plantings/gardens, with native plants, pollinator attracting plants, alternatives to lawns ground covers.
- Would love to see a dog park!
- I would also like to see common area gardens maintained to the level of landscaping that we see at nearby apartment complexes. Neat and attractive. I believe a good place to start would be to showcase an attractive well-maintained landscape around our GHI offices. This would be a great example for members - to demonstrate what we would like to see throughout our community.
- I would like to see improvement in the mini-parks for the children with adding space for practicing soccer skills, etc.
- My 5 Court Ridge common area has been planted with shrubs and plants from my yard. One was mislabeled when I bought it and it was too large for my space. I asked my neighbors and a Limelight hydrangea, a white lilac, a David Austin rose, some bulbs, liriopse, etc. We all enjoy this!
- I'd love to see more picnic areas with tables and benches--in both established parks and in green spaces between rows of garages. Or members could have the freedom to plant flowers or vegetables in landscaped areas behind garages.
- There's enough room in many of the play areas for calisthenics equipment.
- If there was a bocce court or other adult play area near some of the playgrounds with a lot of extra space near them, I would use it.
- I would like to see community gardens on sunny corners all over the place. We have a ton of sun and a ton of corner bits by intersections that are not being utilized.
- Have a fenced area for dogs to run around in that is walkable from GHI, which the current dog park isn't. Full it with things dogs can climb on and run through. It doesn't have to be permanent - have a PopUp dog park with agility stuff.
- How about a meditation garden, a walking labyrinth, a series of artist garden installations...

- Occasional, but not excessive, seating offered in areas other than children's playgrounds to meditate, observe nature, take breaks in walks for elderly or differently abled.
- Some of the playgrounds need to be upgraded.
- I'd love to see more of the areas that are maintained as lawns converted to wildlife and native gardens, particularly to support our birds and pollinators. Non-native plants could be included, of course, but gardens that show how to use
- I would like to see common areas planted with trees that bear fruit. I would like to see large sunny areas populated with small, well-managed community garden plots (raised beds, common fence for predators, 4'x8' plots), which I would also take on as a community project.
- Grassy areas could be used for sustainable, naturalized vegetation instead. Pollinator gardens, for instance.
- Add some adult exercise equipment to playgrounds so adults can use the equipment too.
- Our playground has only equipment for older children, would like to see some for younger ones.
- More community vegetable gardens or flower/shrub gardens to make the area more interesting would be helpful. Right now it's just an open lawn with trees and a playground, and I never go there even though it's behind my house, there is nothing interesting for us to do there.
- The areas that are overgrown need to be cleaned up. That may mean removing old plantings and starting fresh.
- More pollinator gardens and other native plant areas.
- More pocket parks
- It would be great to have a designated dog park/run
- I really love the garden area in the corner of the common area behind 33 Ridge and 1 Gardenway. More common areas could use that treatment.
- better and sturdier benches
- The playground across from my house was removed, 11a, maybe a compromise could be struck, like picnic tables and a swing set.
- Let's put edible forest garden plantings into common areas - native fruit and nut producing trees - when it's time to do plantings! Forested, an edible forest garden established on Rte. 193 in Bowie, provides many examples.

Trees/Leaves/Maintenance

- Less trees, the leaves are everywhere and no one wants to clean them up including GHI
- GHI has planted at least 3 new trees in the common area behind my house (31 Ridge Rd).
- Maintain pathways in woods. to include cutting fallen trees across existing paths
- Better cleaning of leaves in common areas in the fall.
- leaf and branch pick up in common areas
- When maintained GHI does an adequate job but in the growing seasons they wait too long in between mowing and leaf removal especially in the areas off the main roads!

Walkways/Lighting

- I think getting some real enforced maintenance standards would be a great start. I'd like to see clear walkways...free of leaves and tree debris year round! The leaves and tree debris are too much for many of our older residents to deal with. Tiny yards can fill 25+ bags of leaves. Cleaning up larger size common areas is a monumental chore...we need help maintaining the grounds like any community does. Really enforcing the rules about overgrowth onto the walkways would help. We have many walkways in GHI that are seriously narrowed due to unmaintained overgrowth. We need help. Walkways that are maintained and repaired with attention to all trip and fall hazards such as cracks, uneven joints etc. We have a large population of folks who are lucky to still be on their feet walking and they deserve to have safe, clear walkways to walk on.
- Maintain pathways in woods. to include cutting fallen trees across existing paths
- It would also be great to have better lighting on walkways.
- Walkways are narrow and dark at night. Trim hedges lower. Low lights.
- Lighting on ALL inner walkways is badly needed.
- walkway lighting,
- More lighting in parking lots and walkways!
- Replacement of pole lighting on inner pathways with bollards, as has been done in other courts.
- There should be common lighting in ALL the Courts.

Appreciation

- I've been pleased with all of the GHI common areas that I use.
- Common areas that GHI takes care of look very nice.
- They are all lovely!

Invasive plants

- The blanket of English ivy in the woods behind my house bothers me a lot. No new trees can survive. I'd like to see more focus on eliminating (untended) ivy, bamboo, wild rose, honeysuckle and other pests.
- Keeping invasive plants in check is a big job in some areas. The woodland committee alone can only have a small impact in a small number of areas. Involving residents more aggressively would be useful. Providing training would be good.
- English ivy in common area on other side of my fence. I whack it back, but feel I'm fighting a losing battle

Miscellaneous

- Better trail marking in the woodlands behind Plateau Place
- Directional signage, i.e. "To Greenway Center;" to local schools, churches, lake, etc.
- Bus stops
- More seating in the vicinity of bus stops would be nice.
- I would like to see covered bicycle racks in or near the parking lots of courts to promote the use of bicycles over cars.

- It is sometimes difficult to know what areas are GHI and which areas are City.
- I would like to see us do a community composting at the Northway Field area. The compost I have gotten from there never heated enough to kill the weeds so I stopped using it but we could do a LOT better!
- Given that GHI is a co op, ANY area outside a building is a common area. While we let each other regulate the use of an area on one or either side of a unit, we members still own ALL that area. As a result my biggest peeve is having any fences allowed within Greenbelt. Dog owners should be allowed to tie up their dog(s) outside based on their near-by neighbors' concerns.

Specific GHI sites

- 2 Court Northway. Trucks go up and down the common area, to get to other local areas which is annoying, noisy, and destroyed part of the common area.
- Playgrounds behind 2 court Eastway & 39 court of Ridge and 44 court of Ridge.
- The grassy area by 14 Laurel Hill Rd.
- The ones near me, of course. Between Crescent 4 and 6 and between Crescent 6 and Ridge 5. The latter has a swale that maybe could be planted with something other than grass. The upper more level area I would keep in grass as a nice play area.
- The playground and common space behind the Strathcona Apartments can use some upgrading and have some better landscaping to appeal to a wide variety of audiences, not just kids.
- The playground behind 2 court research road. It needs to be updated for older children to use as it is a frequent place for morning elementary aged children to play before school. Which is great! But the structure is falling apart in places.
- The walk way on the garden side of my home off of 10 Court. It is always MUDDY and water logged when it rains. Your grass cutting people (True Green) do not make any attempt to blow the leaves away or cut the grass outside of the Storage units.
- Area between 53 and 55 Cts Ridge
- The playground across from 3 Ct Ridge road has deteriorated surfaces and cracked coatings. It is well used and in dire need of a rehab.
- The common area in my court, 16 Ridge Road is unused, and there's very little common life in the court.
- The common area on the garden of 8 - Court. That walk way needs to be paved so that when it rains or snows it is not slushy and muddy. All the other areas I have walked are paved, why can't this area be paved to be uniform like all other fire lanes?
- Some of the playground equipment is getting quite old and rusty. (See, e.g., the playground on Research Rd. north of Hillside Ave
- The sidewalk in front of 18 Ridge from parking lot in front of Z3 to 18W. No lighting. Very dark.
- I would like to see some sort of hedge at the open space corner of Southway and Ridge that doesn't obstruct the views of turning cars, but does add some privacy and sound reduction to

that expanse of common area.

- Keep large park behind 60 Crescent open for games like throwing football, etc. Too much play equipment can preclude such usage.
- The areas along Southway
- Check woods between 3 Court Research and Ridge -- leaves aren't removed and there are dangling tree limbs
- The woods on Parkway next to the Parkway apartments and the garages
- The walkway behind my house at 32 Court, between 32 and 34 court is very badly maintained. It is not paved and overgrown with various plants. Also people let their dogs poop there and don't pick up.
- The garden area on the walkway leading to the underpass behind the Sunoco is always very sad to look at and could use some love...
- The strip between the sidewalk and play ground near GHI needs to be improved for water runner.

Ideas and suggestions about the overall beautification and "greening-up" of GHI

General suggestions/practices

- More composting and rain barrels, more frequent recycling of electronics and styrofoam. More trails through the woods. More native plantings in common areas.
- My main priority is for the GHI community is to use "best practices" to green our community, to be as ecologically sustainable as possible, to be a source of habitat for wildlife and encourage pollinators, to manage storm water in a way that allows as much ground absorption as possible and reduces runoff into streams, and other such good environmental practices.
- More composting and rain barrels, more frequent recycling of electronics and styrofoam. More trails through the woods. More native plantings in common areas.
- Involving nearby residents is important. I think only sustainable projects should be taken e.g. plant bushes and trees not flowers unless local residents agree to participate in maintenance. May be bulbs only.
- More gardens, less grass.
- It's next to impossible to get grass to grow in a lot of the lawns due to the nature of the soil. Any help with that for members (beyond just here's some grass seed, water it) would be helpful. Even if it was a fee for service type of thing.
- GHI providing new top soil for those yards where it needs replenishing. Owner could be given the opportunity to go 50/50 in price. This would enable us to plant more and more interesting things.
- And many yards are bare of anything but lawn and need more large plants.
- Provide public compost areas for those living in the apartments and those without their own garden composters, along with education about what goes in compost and what does not.
- We need to generate awareness on trash/poop/butts. It is sad to see bushes full of trash people throw in them (small liquor bottles, plastic bags, styrofoam...).
- Suggestions of how to remove grass and replace it with low-growing vegetation. The local weeds are prettier than grass, and there are other plants that can be stepped on.

- Ask court members if they would be interested in adding flowers to common areas with GHI's approval. Make sure to notify GHI landscaping company not to use their equipment in that area to cut down the plantings. Several years ago, I planted excess day lilies from my yard to area by garage and landscaping mowed over it.
- The many open park and playground areas are great, but there might also be an opportunity to put in more beneficial plantings in some of those areas, particularly for pollinators.
- I do not know a lot about gardening, but I like the idea of planting more non-invasive, local plants. Also, I love and appreciate the maintenance that goes into keeping up the daffodils, tulips, pansies, etc. planted along Southway. I would love to see more flowers like this in the common spaces.
- Pocket gardens of perennials.
- Many of us have surplus plants that are perennials that we would like to share with GHI in addition to the Woodlands Swap with our neighbors. These plants could be collected and then planted in some of the comments in areas with input and hard work from GHI members.
- I'd like to see designated common areas that are demonstrations of using native plants to attract pollinators, agro forestry with natives for consumption such as blueberries, pawpaws, persimmons, storm drainage vegetative plantings
- I would love to see more rain gardens in swales, and would very much appreciate GHI help with the swale that runs through my yard.
- It would be delightful for the gardeners here in GHI to share their abundance of plants with others....and perhaps volunteer to plant for the elderly.
- More flowers...
- Want to see more plants in GHI yards and common spaces. Want to see built features in the yards that complement and respect our historic architecture. Want to see less fencing, and what new fencing there is to be made of natural or natural-looking materials. Want more enforcement of rules about keeping inner walkways clear - and safe. More wild flower meadows &/or perennial gardens - less mowed lawn. Especially more landscaping instead of mowing or mulch patches among groups of trees along common pathways.
- I am probably most interested on how to get wildflowers in my front yard so I have less area to mow - it's not that mowing is a burden since it's just a small GHI yard, but I want to know how to do a wildflower patch right, esp. if it could replace my fence.
- The beautification of certain areas such as 18 Court was an improvement. Now GHI needs to continue to keep the weeds and vines from overtaking the new plantings. GHI should clean up other common areas. We pay enough in our monthly fees that we should not have to work on the common areas.
- Be respectful to those neighbors whose lots back or front to areas that are GHI targets for greening up
- Maybe some more art installations in common areas. All the playgrounds seem pretty much the same and not very interesting for someone with no kids.
- More group volunteer activities, such as removing invasive plants; these should be announced widely and well in advance.
- Soil issues and possible amendments are a big issues we need to address to make all beautification possible
- I would like to see more edible bushes, fruit trees ...
- I think there should be more colorful plants through GHI common areas just as it is on Southway even though Southway is maintain by Public Works.

- I would love to see us fostering edible forest gardens all over GHI - they are low maintenance, lush once established, and provide free hyper-local food production for residents.
- More low-maintenance plantings where there are now poorly-maintained plantings. Number of trees are fine--we need some open space for softball practice, Frisbee throwing, etc.
- It would be nice to broadly encourage the development of gardens, so that neighbors might be more receptive. Perhaps we could have a community greenhouse that members could use to start plants for their gardens or yards.
- Neighborhood plant swaps/sales; trees made available by organizations/utilities (PEPCO).
- More garden space, seems like the only way to get garden space is if you know someone.
- I think that GHI could investigate the Incredible Edibles initiative of Todmorden in the UK. It is a project to promote sustainable gardening by using public green space to grow edible foods for community use. Information is available at <https://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/>. Not only does this align with Greenbelt's community ethos, but also serves as an illustration of how to better live with green spaces while also reducing food waste.

Beautification program

- A few of my neighbors' yards have fallen into disrepair because they are either elderly, don't spend much time in their unit, or just don't care. I would love for there to be some sort of scholarship, or program, to take care of their yards. I fix my neighbor's yard, but he feels guilty about it and insists on giving me money for it (which he can't afford). I hope the committee can come up with some nice low maintenance yard options- using the black plastic with mulch is really ugly. Maybe an option for yards that get a lot of sun is to scatter wildflower seeds, and then mow it down in the fall.
- It would be nice if someone would say something to people who have junk stored in the service side.
- Make people clean up their yards and keep them neat.
- When the annual beautification comes up and residents get notice for fixes, it doesn't seem like GHI follows up to make sure the items were done. We were told about our siding once and it was a few months before we were told that had passed after our "fix". Also, I think overgrown yards are an issue.
- Members should be required to maintain a clean yard or be fined!
- Yards should be free of overgrown weeds, dog waste n leaves!
- We need to improve the beautification program. Many situations are not identified or handled well.
- For the most part I am pleased. I wish GHI were fairer about the Spring inspections. Some yards get passed when they have never taken care of issues in the past.
- GHI needs to manage common areas with the same standards that homeowners are supposed to follow-- no English ivy, no poison ivy, clear pathways. Beautification standards, if kept, should be upheld.
- I don't think it is clear that there are the same requirements for homes which are directly visible from street or common sidewalks and homes that may be off the path in terms of overall maintenance. Either keep the same standards for everyone or don't have the silly review of our yards.

Drainage/Storm water/Swales

- Drainage will always be an issue, but it needs to be addressed in a comprehensive and systematic way. Current conditions cannot persist.

Fences/Privacy Screens

- Ability to have taller fences. Again, max allowed is ridiculously short.
- Ability to have privacy screens. We should be allowed to build them.
- To summarize, we want to see new fencing be of more residential, attractive types rather than chain link.
- The widespread use of chain link fence detracts from the overall appearance of the community. While I understand it's openness, it is unattractive at best

Clothes lines

- Rule about clothes drying in service yard only is a joke. It is not enforced and is not realistic for many residents that want to dry outside.
- We should facilitate gardenside clotheslines, since drying clothes outside is an important green step (in the environmental sense of the word).

Trees

- Trim trees so we can get enough sun to grow edibles!
- I suggest less tall trees that are decorative.
- The many trees in GHI are beautiful, but by over-favoring large varieties of mature trees, we deprive many units of sunny spots in their yards and the ability to have gardens.
- Thinning out trees in yards (I get very limited sun due to all the trees in neighboring yards) and/or opening more common spaces to community gardens. Not sure what restrictions are in place for tree planting (and I love trees), but some of those big maples, oaks, etc. planted in tiny GHI yards decades ago probably weren't the greatest idea.
- Adding more trees to common areas, and adding a berm to deflect road noise
- GHI already does a lot with its offers of list of available trees and offers of planting, but I think our big old oaks are dying faster than they can be replaced. I would like to see GHI plant more OAKS rather than Crepe Myrtles everywhere. Soil erosion due to water run-off in common areas is also a problem, exposing tree roots.
- Get rid of some trees so some yards can have some sunlight.
- I would love to have more trees behind the Lawrence and Strathcona apartments to provide more interest to the area and more privacy.
- We are already very green... But I'd like to see planting more trees to replace the ones that are aging - or are being cut by Pepco.
- I understand the issue with Pepco and power outages, but I moved to GHI because of the tree cover, and every effort should be made to preserve them and provide for replacement.

Education/outreach

- More opportunities for education. Also, the list of contractors on the GHI website seems out of date. I'd be interested in recommendations for landscapers and the like.
- Home and garden tour!!
- A yard to highlight every other month or each month in the Communicator
- Send out gardening advice to novice gardeners to help them get started. Post pictures of model gardens for inspiration.

Pests

- Mosquitoes are out of control in the spring and summer. Any help or advice to keep them at bay would be welcome! In yards and in common area
- Help with eliminating mosquitoes from common areas and from our gardens. Come up with environmentally friendly solutions
- Seriously deal with the free roaming cats issue. To me, they are more problematic than dogs.

Miscellaneous

- Clearing away overgrown bushes & weeds from garage areas. Paint garages walls with peeling paint.
- Better lighting on the homes and more consistent lighting throughout courts would be a HUGE improvement for this community. It would LOOK so much better and be safer!
- Assist with lowering the cost of purchasing and installing rain barrels.
- Most important. (Fix the walk way /Fire lane on the garden side of 8 Southway. It needs to be paved like all the other walk ways I have walked through.
- Make it possible for us to keep bees. I think a good idea would be an area for setting some bee hives, where any person of the community could put a bee hive and maintain.
- Make it possible for us to keep chickens and harvest fresh eggs.

Appreciation

- I think that GHI has done a fine job keeping the common areas maintained and green.
- Thanks for asking. Lots of good questions. Lots of work to sort through member's responses. Thank you. Keep up the great work!

Other thoughts on how GHI should direct its efforts and funds for helping members enjoy their yards and the common areas more and in new ways

Yards

Information/education

- Information on tree maintenance and removal on my yard.
- possible workshops, website development, consultation from knowledgeable GHI staff or GHI members with knowledge
- Tips on proper maintenance thru GHI/Greenbelt websites/publications.
- A yard and garden show with a map for people to view other people's places and get ideas. Giveaways and contests for most efficient use of resources, most colorful, most traditional, etc.
- Scholarship for elderly people, disabled, or veterans to get help with their yard. Getting a professional to see how we can make lower maintenance yards that still work with our aesthetic and heritage. Providing some little yard sign with "star yard" that we can put out if we maintain our yard in order to encourage others to do the same. Some way to hold others accountable for letting their yards fall into disrepair that are fully capable of maintaining them.
- Have a staff member dedicated to coaching individual members on the options for how to optimize their yards. Each yard has its own unique challenges and strengths but the rules are the same for everyone so it's frustrating to try and figure out what you can do to make improvements that will be allowed and also pleasing to the eye.

- Is there any help newcomers can get to learn about their yards and how to care for them?
- 2) Planting Location Guidance - To avoid later problems, inform members of the location of swales and underground utilities, so that members won't plant there, and digging when pipes break will not be so invasive to yard plantings, and swale restoration can be reemphasized over underground piping. Perhaps give new members a marked up yard plat showing swales and utilities. Later give existing members such plats over time as staff time permits.
- I have no idea where to even begin with landscaping. Part of what I liked about GHI was the small yards to minimize that kind of thing. But when I do need help, I don't know where to begin. You can win a consultation with GHI gardeners but is that a service (understandably a fee-for service) thing that could be available to members? Along with possibly a list of GHI-approved landscaping companies (folks who already know the GHI rules)? I would love for my yard to look nicer, I just don't have the skill set needed and get overwhelmed by the rules for patios, decks, plants, etc in GHI's rules.
- It would be great for GHI to help promote the planting of native species that are adapted to this eco-region and beneficial for wildlife, pollinators, water management, etc. - through education and perhaps even organizing seasonal sales of native plants. Promotion of and education around alternatives to grass lawns would also be very helpful!
- Access to a GHI-knowledgeable garden consultant would be very helpful.
- Maintain list of GHI members with expertise willing to help others -- build raised beds, eliminate lawn, advise on planting, etc.
- Gardeners' club to share ideas (this could be free, meeting in the GHI office building or even an email discussion group)
More frequent garden tours, encouraging tours of "in-process" yards/gardens such as mine--I plan to be part of a tour this year,
- Some help with poorly maintained yards - advice or meetings on what member resources we have available to us. I personally have a hard time managing a yard that was already in poor shape when I purchased my house. I do not have a green thumb and often don't know where to turn.
- Encourage more demonstration gardens and maybe gardening classes for GHI members to provide focused instruction, using GHI gardens as an example.
- Having access to volunteers with plant identification knowledge would be useful. The GHI handbook mentions plants that are not allowed or discouraged but most people do not know how to identify them. It would only take 10 minutes for a knowledgeable neighbor to help. I could see doing that for others.
- Offering help with: Expert advice & Possibilities to implement the advice at a reasonable cost
- Regular announcements (perhaps quarterly, via E-news, Communicator, GNR, etc.) of equipment available to borrow, materials available to distribute with or without charge (straw, paint, seed, etc.), availability of staff for informal visiting and advice.

Yard & garden modifications/Review GHI rules

- We should have additional reviews of the regulations to see if there are some rules that now seem outdated (such as the clothesline restrictions).
- Allow more site-specific screening choices that allow members to use their yards as gardens while also looking good and maintaining as much openness as is reasonable and possible. But limit hedge height.
- Allowing privacy / noise-abatement fencing along garden-side sidewalks and public roads would be very beneficial.

- Stop requiring the very expensive rain barrels, otherwise I would have bought one already but still haven't.
- Also, make it easier for homeowners to build storage sheds in their service side yards, within reason, without having to go through an extensive review process
- Tree Planting Rules - Set regulations for tree plantings such that shorter trees (at maturity) are allowed within 30' of unit, mid-height trees within 60' and tall trees farther back. Purpose: To avoid trees falling on units which causes great expense for GHI. Will also save tree trimming costs. Also apply same limits in common areas as GHI and city often plant tall trees too close to units. Emphasize to members that permits are needed for tree plantings.
- Clothes Lines - Encourage use of and GHI installation of clothes poles. Reducing use of dryers is an easy but very energy saving action that is easier than many other more "exciting" actions such as wind power, solar, etc

Resources for members

- Spring Bulbs - Perhaps provide bulbs to members at reduced prices similar to grass seed. Could also involve shrubs, like the tremendous program.
- Purchase wholesale plants, perennials for members to purchase. Have people sponsor/take responsibility for a pocket garden
- Maybe GHI should add a lawn service? Some neighbors really struggle and their yard looks awful. Or a coordinated effort to have people volunteer for a particular yard.
- More tools in a community tool shed or for rental or fee-for-service, including compost rollers, a plug/core aerator, and other tools as recommended by members. A way to connect members who need help maintaining their gardens with volunteers. A program to plant more natives in the woodlands, including appropriate native food plants. In every way we can, we need to promote the growth of native plants and other plants that will keep our landscapes and all their inhabitants healthy.
- It would be great if a contract could be designed to enable a member to pay for collection of and delivery of mulch from Northway. A small company might be willing to do this on specific days in the spring and fall when mulch is usually put down.
- GHI should encourage residents to have pride in their yards and in the common areas
- To have the city of greenbelt include GHI IN THE LEAF COLLECTION BAGS ARE TOO EXPENSIVE FOR THE AMOUNT OF LEAVES WE HAVE BY THE WOODS
- There must be a balance between carrot and stick. There should be a lowest common denominator for yard maintenance and enforcement vs. enticement to beautify our yards. (I know, we had contests where you gave recognition to courts with exceptional yards. But not all courts are tightly knit "families.") Those members who can't or won't, must be helped, for the good of all. I remember one member at a special meeting remarking that if she had driven down streets in Greenbelt and seen unpleasant "curb appeal," i.e. trashy, neglected and overgrown yards, she would not have considered buying a unit here. That says a lot.
- I would hope GHI uses the court liaison system better to generate awareness on various issues.
- The GHI handbook refers to court coordinators, but I never heard of anyone doing that job. A court coordinator might help neighbors with yard maintenance questions, like where to find advice or hire help?
- perhaps there can be a pool of people who can volunteer (or be paid a small amount - some of us are retired and our income isn't as large as when we were working) to help with 'big stuff' in the yard: hauling heavy bags of mulch, digging out bushes, et al

- Reduced fees for services for people on fixed income who need help with yard work.
- Provide assistance for members with disabilities who can't mow their own lawns. Finding a reliable person to mow can be difficult. I've been left waiting several times, and ended up failing inspection twice because of it.
- Maybe a strictly GHI yard work bank....
- Maybe the city government or even the county could help fund the trimming of overgrown trees with limbs that can and have fallen dangerously close whenever there is a wind storm.
- I don't want to see changes in the rules that would require me to spend more money to be in compliance. I think there are plenty of rules on the books that just need to be enforced better. Maybe for members whose yards are seriously out of compliance, a team of GHI member volunteers could meet with them, suggest improvements and volunteer to help them make improvements over time. I'd recommend a brief contract be signed that basically says the scope of work, material costs and that the member would be responsible for paying for the improvements
- Problem Trees - Annual removal by GHI of volunteer trees arising in fence and hedge rows, which eventually require maintenance and cause sidewalk damage, and trees too close together in wrong places. Many members can't identify young trees and when the tree grows, and then it's more of a problem.
- Tree Survey - Undertake a survey of existing trees in GHI (college student project?) to help plan for the eventual planting, in common areas and yards, a diversity of tree types, such that specific tree type and spacing requirements of various species of native birds can be reestablished.
- Yard inspections are helpful. Not perfect but helpful. Unfortunately some of the inspectors don't seem to know much about plants (e.g. asking us to remove valuable native plants and not noticing volunteer oak trees growing a couple of feet away from the structures in some courts.)
- The lack of sun really restricts what I can grow. Creating a balance between shade trees and sun is would be nice. Perhaps negotiating a GHI discount or GHI day at a local nursery for plant purchases

Yard Drainage improvement

- Swales Work with city to restore swale's in large parks like behind 60 Crescent such that runoff again is directed to existing/original drains; swale's have filled in, and runoff is flowing down sidewalks and into yards, adding to crawlspace water problems
- Renovate Swales in Yards - Begin a long range project to map and renovate the swales as units are sold (through the inspection process & at GHI's expense), as members will allow, with the goal of eventually re connecting swales, without major disruption.

Miscellaneous

- It is important to strike a balance between character-preservation and individuality. Some gardens are a bit 'corny' but they are carefully maintained and fun.
- Set a Court Picnic Day that encourages each court to have their own picnic but all on the same day. Also to have more activities on Sunday afternoon for those of us who either work or worship on Saturday.
- mosquito control
- GHI help with outdoor pest control
- Storage Sheds - Reconsider the idea of building nice climate-controlled storage units behind

GHI Office so as to reduce the need for large often ugly or incompatible sheds in yards. Some falsely believe zoning will not allow GHI to construct such units but this use is allowed!

- Replacement of WSSC Pipes in Yards - A long standing problem that affects plantings, etc. which has been deferred b/c of the complexity, but needed as pipes keep breaking and piecemeal fixes are made.
- Prototype of Carports in GHI Parking Lots (out of box idea?) - Test out an easy to construct and install open-sided "carports" over existing parking spaces where members so desire, to provide shade in summer for cars, and if strong enough, protection from snow in winter. Also plan ahead to provide electric chargers for all parking spaces.
- Gang Mailboxes - Look into economies of the now more commonly seen group mailboxes at entrance to courts.
- Some neighbors leave bright outdoor lights on all night, making our court seem like a WalMart parking lot. Too bright, have trouble sleeping and cannot open windows and blinds in warm weather because the lights shine right into my bedroom.
- Do more to reduce the feral (free-roaming) cat problem.

Common areas

- Remind members if they have hedges that they need to keep them trimmed, not just when notices come out about yard inspections. Also at the height that is in the Greenbelt Handbook. This also goes for GHI maintenance regards common walkways such as by Crescent and Hillside. Really hard to walk there with excess branches extended over the walkway.
- GHI should encourage residents to have pride in their yards and in the common areas.
- Tell residents how much money GHI spends on the common areas and let them realize how their co-op fees are being used. My court has done clean up on its own for the common areas and I'm fine with that. Our fees are going higher and higher and we all need to figure out ways to lower costs.
- Purchase wholesale plants, perennials for members to purchase. Have people sponsor/take responsibility for, a pocket garden.
- Calisthenics equipment; specifically parallel bars, pull-up bar configurations, a place to hang Olympic rings, and other fitness bars. Do a google image search of "calisthenics park" for examples of what I'm talking about. They can be as big or small as you need them to be and can be relatively inexpensive compared to children's playground equipment. I think this would be invaluable GHI members who are interested in fitness.
I would love to help plan this.
- A path through the woods that teaches why forests are important, how to ID trees, ways to engage people about their surroundings and nature.
- Add benches in some common areas. Handle barking dog complaints. Update playground equipment and improvement fencing & seating in playgrounds.
- It's great to see people out walking. It would be nice to have bench(es) or picnic table(s) near all the playgrounds. It would also be nice to add some new sculptures (perhaps nature related, climbable for kids?) in some of the common areas.
- Some of the children's play areas clearly need more work than others. While some are great, some are in very bad shape. It would be good to elevate the standards of some of the more run-down play areas

- Places where several picnic tables can be used with a cookout bbq. Rather than going to the lake and having to deal with getting there early it would be nice to have several areas throughout GHI where court members are encouraged to come together and have a pot luck to build community.
- Some of the common area plantings are covered with vines and weeds. GHI should start trying to clean them up including removing old plantings, destroying the vines and replanting new bushes and trees.
- I would like to see the Landscaping Contractors plant more color plants through GHI.
- Truck Damage Stop maintenance trucks (GHI & City) from driving in common areas unless absolutely necessary, and only when ground is dry.
- If not bees and chickens in our backyards, then in a common area that is well protected from predators, similar to the garden plots.
- Open up sunny common areas for more community gardens
- This may be off-topic, but in terms of pedestrian safety, there should be more push-button walk lights, like the one at Green Ridge house. Cars always stop at red lights; they don't always stop at crosswalks. We can continue to blame drivers and feel smug and righteous, if that's the goal. Or we can recognize a failed safety strategy and invest in saving lives.
- Plant more trees intentionally, and cull "junk" trees.
- Storm water management in the form of rain gardens along Hillside pathways.
- Many more issues much more important right now.
- This survey was too long
- Also, it may help to add, as an option, Shutters around the Windows during the HIP.

Appreciation

- We are very fortunate to have so much open space and houses backing woods.
- Thank you for taking into account our input!
- I hope this survey generates a lot of useful and inexpensive suggestions.
- Thanks very much for your efforts!

DISCUSSION

Major concerns/issues/trends (across one or more questions); Favored solutions (across one or more questions) [to be completed after Task Force Discussion]