



Want to Become a South Bethany Oyster Gardener? *Volunteer to Help Improve our Canal Water Quality*

What Are Oyster Gardens?

The Center for the Inland Bays (CIB) is creating new oyster gardens in floating baskets. Up to 20 more South Bethany property owners on canals will be able to have one of them. It is important to act now as cannot count on getting more.

It's easy to be an oyster gardener. The CIB will deliver your float. They will attach it to the side of your dock or to the bulkhead. They will also take care of removing and replenishing the oyster crop. Since a mature, healthy oyster can **filter 50 gallons** of water a day, gardening will help clean up our canals by removing harmful nutrients. When the oysters in just one garden reach maturity, they can potentially filter 5,000 or more gallons each day. The effect on water quality could be substantial in a few years.

What is Involved in Caring for the Oyster Gardens

It was once believed that the oysters needed to be hosed off every two weeks. The CIB has learned that you need to do this very little or not at all. However, if you do pull yours up for a quick hose down, you'll find that a fascinating array of crustaceans and small fish use the gardens for shelter.

So, all an oyster gardener has to do is remove and clean their float each fall and hang the two baskets that are inside the float from the dock or bulkhead. This is necessary to protect the shellfish from winter freezes.

What Happens to the Oysters in the Future?

In the past, South Bethany oyster gardeners have had their oysters periodically removed and transplanted elsewhere. However, in the future we will be able to keep a significant portion of our crop to create below-water oyster beds in our canals as those recently installed along the South Anchorage Canal.

How Do I Sign Up to Be an Oyster Gardener?

The gardens will be distributed to owners on a first-come, first-served basis. Since oysters need oxygen to survive, we might not be able to accommodate owners whose canal waters are low in dissolved oxygen. If you are one of those who has been asking for an oyster garden, now is your chance. To sign up for your garden or have questions contact **Kent Stephan at kentstephanconsulting@gmail.com** immediately.

To sign you up, we need the following information:

NAME; SOUTH BETHANY ADDRESS; EMAIL ADDRESS; PHONE NUMBER

Thank You,
Kathy Jankowski and Kent Stephan, Co-Coordiators