

### Sustainable Landscapes Demonstration Site Network

The Sustainable Landscapes Education Program has established a network of demonstration sites illustrating best management practices for low-maintenance, environmentally friendly landscaping. Practices are implemented to enhance the goals and reduce resource consumption at each site.

#### RCE of Ocean County Office Site

*Location:* Toms River, NJ

#### *Public Programs:*

- Self-guided Tours
- Seasonal Presentations/Workshops
- Master Gardener Volunteer Corps

#### *Issues:*

- Shaded Garden Beds
- Not watered
- Thatch and die-off
- Invasive ornamentals
- Unused lawn space



#### Site Highlights

##### *Native Ornamentals*

Ocean County's horticulturists and the volunteers in the Master Gardener Program work with Ocean County's Buildings and Grounds department to create and maintain the landscape around the facility. A xeriscape garden was installed in 2010 to display a variety of the beautiful drought-tolerant species which will succeed in our area. Proper mulching practices are used throughout the property. This both reduces the need for water, and helps prevent weeds which would require greater labor or herbicide use.

##### *Water Conservation*

Two commercial rain barrels are in use on site. Other downspouts are fitted with drilled sections of pvc pipe to distribute water to surrounding ornamental beds.

##### *Lawn Maintenance*

The county has had an existing overseeding program for many years now, allowing higher quality and lower maintenance species to be introduced regularly. Soil health is maintained with seasonal aeration, and the county practices Integrated Pest Management.

##### *Wild Areas*

A significant border of undisturbed wild lands has been left undeveloped by the County.

#### Impacts

##### *Cost/Benefit*

- Turf fertilization occurs annually. Tall fescues need the lowest amount of nitrogen of available turf types.
- Wild border area allows for water recharge and screens roads, buildings and parking lots, and are a significant aesthetic benefit.

##### *Environmental*

- By linking the rain barrels to the roof and slow release soaker hoses, hundreds of gallons of water are redirected from impervious surfaces into ornamental beds and high-quality soils, from which they recharge the ground water.
- The diversity of plantings provides habitats for many important species of wildlife.