

What is Rutgers Cooperative Extension?

Since 1914, Rutgers Cooperative Extension has been the statewide outreach network of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Our mission is to help the diverse population of New Jersey adapt to a rapidly changing society and to improve lives and communities through an educational process that uses science-based knowledge. Rutgers Cooperative Extension truly enhances the quality of life for residents of New Jersey and brings the wealth of knowledge of the state university to local communities in all counties throughout the state with funding from federal, state, and county governments.

Our Ocean County Extension Office provides educational programs and conducts applied research in many different areas to serve Ocean County. Please scan the QR code to visit our homepage (<https://ocean.njaes.rutgers.edu/>) and to access websites for all programs.



What We Do

4-H Youth Development

4-H Youth Development empowers youth to reach their full potential while providing a supportive environment where youth can find belonging, develop essential life skills, build independence, create long-lasting friendships, and grow into competent leaders. Through hands-on experiential learning with the guidance of adult mentors, 4-H'ers prepare to take on life's challenges and opportunities and become contributing and fulfilled members of society.



4-H programs spark curiosity, foster growth, teach real-world competencies, and build self-confidence; engage youth in diverse project areas, including community service, public speaking, leadership, agriculture, STEM, and personal development; and reach youth in clubs, camps, schools, community centers, and afterschool programs, and are supported by a national network of positive youth development professionals and the land-grant University system.

4-H Members develop meaningful and lasting connections with their peers and build successful social habits rooted in kind, considerate, and intentional interactions; and discover the power of their own positive impact, while developing the tools, knowledge, passion, and resiliency required to become positive agents of change in their communities.

Please contact Amelia Valente Minervini (4-H Senior Program Coordinator) with any questions related to Ocean County's 4-H Youth Development Program (amelia.minervini@rutgers.edu or 732-349-1227).

Agriculture and Resources Management

Agriculture and Resources Management programs focus on enhancing the protection and restoration of the natural resources of Ocean County and assisting the county's agricultural community in implementing sound farming practices. Through education of commercial businesses, government agencies, agribusinesses and residents on environmental issues such as sustainable landscaping, pollution prevention, and water management, our hope is to improve the water quality of local waterways and the Barnegat Bay. In addition, applied research is conducted on innovative ways to maintain clean water throughout Ocean County.



Regular programming opportunities include native plants for environmentally friendly yards, assessing and managing soil health in one's yard, water conservation in the home landscape, and municipal stormwater management. More information on our programs can be found on our Agriculture and Natural Resources webpage at <https://ocean.njaes.rutgers.edu/anr/>.



Please contact Dr. Steve Yergeau (County Agent II / Associate Professor) with any questions related to Ocean County's natural resource or agricultural issues (yergeau@njaes.rutgers.edu or 732-505-3671).

Lawn & Garden

Our staff and Rutgers Master Gardener (RMG) volunteers provide horticulture information to Ocean County residents. The services below are available by phone, in-person at our office, or online (<https://ocean.njaes.rutgers.edu/garden/>):

- **Helpline**- free assistance with garden and insect questions at 732-349-1245.
- **Tick Identification**- free tick identification to assess potential health concerns
- **Diagnostics**- free identification and diagnosis of plant and pest problems with troubleshooting options and recommendations given. A representative sample of the problem is required for an accurate diagnosis.
- **Soil Testing**- Two types of soil tests: 1) in-house pH test to determine acidity or alkalinity for \$5.00; 2) a mail-in soil analysis kit for \$20.00 (+shipping), includes pH levels, nutrients in the soil, and recommendations.

RMG Volunteers provide vital, research-based education in areas critical to Ocean County residents: gardening, agriculture, and environmental sustainability. From enriching educational programs to providing expert advice for homeowners, RMGs offer unique and trusted resources that benefit our entire county. Services offered to non-profit clubs and organizations include community information tables, speakers bureau, and educational outreach.

Please contact Susan Emhardt-Servidio (Senior Horticulturist: sservidio@co.ocean.nj.us, 732-349-1246) or Patti Dixon (Horticultural Consultant: pdixon@co.ocean.nj.us, 732-349-1246) with any questions related to our lawn and garden issues and our office's programs in these areas.



Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS)

Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS) programming is designed to address the changing needs of older adults in Ocean County through age-friendly initiatives to support healthy aging in place, chronic disease prevention and control, and comprehensive well-being among older adults through community-based outreach, education, and research.



FCHS programming empowers older adults and caregivers through age-friendly initiatives to support health and well-being and enable residents to remain in their homes as they age. Our programs offer support services, educational opportunities, and resource referrals for grandparents, other relatives, and family members raising children and teenagers. We provide evidence-based webinars, onsite presentations/workshops, and publications for older adults and caregivers on healthy aging, chronic disease prevention and control, and comprehensive well-being.

Please contact Dr. Kathleen Cullinen (County Agent III, Assistant Professor) with any questions related to our FCHS programs (cullinen@njaes.rutgers.edu, 732-349-1247).

Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Coastal Resource Management

Our marine extension programming focuses on implementing educational programs and conducting applied research to address issues related to New Jersey's commercial fishing, recreational fishing, and shellfish aquaculture industries, as well as other issues related to the management of our marine resources and ecosystems.

Annual programs include our Coastal Stewardship course during the summer and the Introductory Fisheries Science for Stakeholders (IFISSH) course during the winter. Collaborations with other Extension Agents on our Earth Day Every Day program provides additional educational opportunities on marine and land-based issues. For these programs, we annually feature about 50 guest speakers to learn from many different experts who are actively working on local marine issues.

Please contact Dr. Douglas Zemeckis (County Agent II, Associate Professor) with any questions related to our marine resources and industries (zemeckis@njaes.rutgers.edu, 732-349-1152).

