

# Essex County Environmental Center ~ Public Programs

## SPRING 2025



The Essex County Environmental Center is located at 621-B Eagle Rock Avenue in Roseland in Essex County West Essex Park and is a facility of the Essex County Parks System. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm and Saturday from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Essex County West Essex Park is open to the public every day from dawn until dusk. Pre-registration is required for all programs unless otherwise noted. **All programs require a minimum number of participants to run.** For more information, please call 973-228-8776



## Essex County Environmental Center

### CELEBRATES

# 20 years

2005-2025

Providing Excellence in Environmental Education,  
Fostering Earth Appreciation, and Engaging  
Outdoor Nature Exploration!

### FIELD TRIP OFFERINGS FOR ORGANIZED GROUPS

(Schools, Scouts, Church/Community Organizations, Home Schools, Etc.)

#### VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS

Choose from a variety of topics. Call the Center for more information, 973-228-8776.

**Fee: \$75 per program, 45 minutes**

#### IN-PERSON FIELD TRIPS

##### **Organized Group Bookings**

**(Institutions, Scouts, Municipal Recreation Programs, Homeschoolers, Etc.)**

**All ages.** Program length is 1.5 hours. Choose from a variety of seasonal topics offered by the Essex County Environmental Center. Inquire by calling the Center at 973.228.8776. Minimum of 10 person booking requirement (if less booked, minimum booking fee applied). **Fee: \$12 per participant (including leaders/chaperones)**

##### **Small Groups/Pods and Families**

**All ages.** Spring topic selections include: Spring Seasonal Adventure, What's in That Hole? Lenape Village Tours, Camping 101, Backyard Birding, Geodesic Dome Gardening, Frog Pond Science, Wildflower Walk, Nature Journaling, Wetland Biodiversity and MORE! One group at a time with a limit of 10 people. Schedule your 45-minute time slot by calling the center at 973.228.8776. **Fee: \$12 per child, \$15 per adult. \*Where noted, additional fees apply.**

## CLUBS FOR CHILDREN

Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).



### LITTLE EXPLORERS

**Mondays-March 3, 17; April 7, 21, May 5, 19, June 9, 16**

**For ages 2 and 3 from 10am to 11am AND for ages 2 to 5 from 3pm to 4pm**

**For ages 2 to 5.** Join us for explorations of nature as we study plants and animals and observe the colors, shapes, textures, and sounds in the Environmental Center's forest habitat. Please come dressed for the weather; all classes include an outdoor adventure. All children must be walking and accompanied by an adult. Paths cannot accommodate strollers. Please be prepared for all weather conditions. Maximum of two children per adult. All sessions are limited to 10 children. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar). Fee: \$15 per child per session**

### FOREST FRIENDS CLUB

**Thursdays—March 20, April 10, May 8, June 12**

**4pm to 5pm**



**For children ages 5 through 10.** We'll explore the forest using nets, binoculars, magnifiers, and microscopes to investigate nature in our wooded wetland habitat. Together we hope to foster an ethic of stewardship and offer an opportunity to take part in hands-on conservation projects. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar). Fee: \$15 per child per session**

### FROG POND CLUB

**Wednesdays—March 19, April 9, May 7, June 11**

**4pm to 5pm**

**For children ages 5 through 9.** Uncover and discover ecosystem interactions at the frog pond. Explore with nets, magnifiers and microscopes to investigate what lives at the pond and learn from a naturalist what can be done to protect and conserve the pond inhabitants. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar). Fee: \$15 per child per session**



### GARDEN DISCOVERY CLUB

**Tuesdays—April 22; May 6, 20; June 10, 24; July 8, 22; August 5, 19; September 9**

**4pm to 5pm**



**For ages 5 and up.** Together we'll grow food in our garden plot and learn about everything from soil to seeds along the way. Participants will get hands-on experience with planting, harvesting and cooking. Session themes include soil and composting, seed planting and labeling, thinning, weeding and watering, selective harvest, garden pests, healthy eating and more! This is a drop-off and pick-up class (children only). **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar). Fee: \$15 per child per session**

# RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF ESSEX COUNTY



**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY**  
**Cooperative Extension**  
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County offers a variety of programs for our community. To explore our full range of programs, please visit <https://essex.njaes.rutgers.edu/>.

## ESSEX COUNTY 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Join us at the Essex County 4-H Spring Fair, held in partnership with the Essex County Environmental Center's Earth Day Celebration on Sunday, April 27th, 2025. Youth in grades K-12 are invited to submit projects in various categories, including Indoor Gardening, Arts and Crafts, Small Animals, Writing, Technology, Photography, and Environmental Education. All projects will be showcased and awarded based on the Danish judging system. For more information and submission guidelines, please visit <https://essex.njaes.rutgers.edu/4h/youth/fairs/>.



## FARMPRENUERS

**Summer 2025**

4-H, in partnership with the Montclair Community Farms Coalition, is recruiting a team of teenage youth to address food security while exploring urban agriculture, culinary arts, and entrepreneurship, expanding the market for local grains via the development and sale of pizza, organic grain products, and other farm based "value added" products. For more information, please visit <https://www.montclaircommunityfarms.org>.

## 4-H DOG CLUB

**Thursdays, March 20, April 24, May 22**

**5:30pm to 6:30pm**

**For youth in grades 4 to 12.** Youth are welcome to join our 4-H Dog Club. Youth will learn about dog training, responsible pet ownership, showmanship, community service and life skills. Well behaved dogs welcome. Meet in Garibaldi Hall. Sign up at <https://essex.njaes.rutgers.edu/4h/>.

## 4-H YOUNG GARDENERS CLUB

**Saturdays; 9:30am to 11:30am**

**April 19; May 3, 17, 24; June 7, 21, 28; July 5, 19, 26; August 2, 16, 23, 30,  
September 6, 27; October 4, 18, 25**

**For children in grades K to 12.** Have you ever wondered how vegetables and flowers grow? From where spaghetti sauce comes? How to find a rainbow in a garden? The 4-H Young Gardener's Club can provide the answers to these questions and more. Learning and fun happen all the time here. Meet in Garibaldi Hall. Advanced registration required; please call 973.353.1337.

## HORTICULTURE FOR SENIORS

**Mondays, April 21, May 19, June 16**

**1pm to 3pm**

**For senior citizens.** Join the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Essex County for this horticulture class especially designed for senior citizens. The program meets in Garibaldi Hall, 621A Eagle Rock Road, Roseland. Advance registration is required one week prior to the program. For reservations and information, contact the Master Gardeners of Essex County Helpline at 973.228.2210 or [mgessex@gmail.com](mailto:mgessex@gmail.com). **Free**



## MONTHLY PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

### NEW JERSEY WOODTURNERS

**Monthly on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday**

**7pm to 9pm**

**For adults and children ages 3 and up.** Learn to turn with the NJ Woodturners Association. Discover the wonders of creating art from found pieces of wood. Topics vary by month. Meet in Garibaldi Hall on the fourth Monday of every month; dates may change, call the Center prior to meeting date to confirm the schedule. For details, please email Bob Amarant at [bobamarant@gmail.com](mailto:bobamarant@gmail.com). To learn more about the organization, visit <https://www.njwoodturners.com>. **FREE for NJWA members**



### ESSEX COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

**Monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday**

**7pm to 9pm**

**For adults and children ages 12 and up.** The Essex County Beekeepers Society (ECBS), a chapter of the NJ Beekeepers Association, is dedicated to teaching new beekeepers how to manage their bees and helping experienced beekeepers to do it better. If you think you might be interested in keeping honeybees and would like to explore what's involved, you're welcome to join.

ECBS meets at Garibaldi Hall from 7pm to 9pm on the second Tuesday of every month unless otherwise noted. For more details on monthly programs, visit [www.njbeekeepers.org](http://www.njbeekeepers.org) or [www.ecbs.squarespace.com](http://www.ecbs.squarespace.com). **FREE for ECBS and NJBA members**

### GREAT SWAMP BONSAI SOCIETY

**Meets monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday**

**6pm to 9pm**

**For adults and children ages 12 and up.** Attendees bring trees, pots, and tools for display, discussion, and problem-solving. Each meeting features a special topic related to the training and cultivation of bonsai for everyone from beginners to masters. Check out the Facebook page [greatswampbonsaisociety](https://www.facebook.com/greatswampbonsaisociety) for the latest updates on meeting topics and special events. For more information, email John Michalski at [huonia@aol.com](mailto:huonia@aol.com). **FREE for GSBS members**



## MARCH 2025 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).

### FAMILY DINOSAUR DISCOVERY FIELD TRIP

**Saturday, March 29**

**2:30pm to 4:30pm**

**For families with young children ages 4 and up.** Meet at the end of Locust Avenue in Roseland and hike 1 mile total to explore this National Historic Landmark that is home to three-toed Grallator dinosaur tracks from the late Triassic age. Using clay, we'll make and take an impression of an existing track and leave the site undisturbed for future paleontological study. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar). Fee: \$12 per child, \$15 per adult**



## APRIL 2025 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).

### gARTbage ART CONTEST

**Register by Wednesday, April 9; Project Drop-Off, Saturday, April 12, 10:30am-1:30pm**  
**For children in PreK through 12<sup>th</sup> grades.**



The Environmental Center's g'ART'bage contest takes a creative approach to protecting our planet from plastic pollution by pulling plastics out of the waste stream and transforming them into works of public art. Contest participants are challenged to be thoughtful and creative in crafting art made from single-use plastic garbage (non-recyclable plastics). Team and individual projects are welcome. Projects must be crafted to withstand the elements, as they will be showcased in an outdoor setting on the grounds of the Essex County Environmental Center. Winning entrees will be displayed during the week of Earth Day! Grand prizes are awarded to entries that place 1st in all categories; 2nd and 3rd place entries will be recognized with a plaque, certificate, and a small gift from the Environmental Center. Pre-registration required. Contact 973.228.8776 or email [tbutler@parks.essexcountynj.org](mailto:tbutler@parks.essexcountynj.org). Register online

at: <https://forms.gle/viPCADgbfGyidvxT8>.

### SPRING CAMP

**Tuesday, April 15; Wednesday, April 16; Thursday, April 17**

**9:30am to 3:30pm**

**For children ages 6-10.** Restore the bond between children and nature. Children will have the opportunity to explore nature right here at the Essex County Environmental Center's varied habitats-forest, wetland, pond, and river. For details, call the Center at 973.228.8776. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).** Fee: \$110 per child per day



### SPRING FOREST EGG HUNT

**Saturday, April 19**

**9:30am to 10:30am or 11am to 12pm**



**For families with children ages 1 to 6.** Celebrate the beginning of spring with a reading of the "Little White Rabbit" and an egg hunt within the forest grounds of the Environmental Center. Kids can bring their favorite basket to collect eggs and earn surprises! In the spirit of being "green," participants will exchange eggs for small prizes. The eggs are sanitized and reused for future events and programs. Refreshments and a spring craft giveaway per child included. Limited space available.

**Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).** Fee: \$15 per child

### SPRING WILD EDIBLE WALK

**Tuesday, April 22**

**6pm to 7:30pm**

**For families.** Take a walk along our trails to identify and discuss the variety of forest groceries available for harvest around our local landscape. You'll meet Spice Bush, Ostrich Fern, Mountain Mint, Stinging Nettle, Wild Leek, Trout Lily and others. Learn some of the folklore behind the plants and, as we walk and talk, we'll discuss proper identification, ethical harvest, growing environment and methods of preparation. On our return, we'll collect a few dandelions to fry as bite size fritters and leave with a greater appreciation for the ephemeral beauty of our changing seasons. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).** Fee: \$12 per child, \$15 per adult.



## APRIL 2025 SEASONAL PROGRAMS



### EARTH DAY 2025

**Sunday, April 27 (Rain Date Saturday, May 3)**

**11am to 3pm**

**For all ages.** Yay, it's EARTH DAY! Bring your family, friends, and neighbors to our annual outdoor festival honoring beautiful planet EARTH, the sustainer of all life! On this special day, the Essex County Environmental Center will make extra efforts to share its wonder and appreciation of the natural world with patrons, partners, and friends. Enjoy a day filled with crafts, games, and recreational opportunities, such as canoeing and hiking. Enjoy demonstrations, information, a local eco-vendors' sale.

Environmental Center staff and partner groups will be on hand to guide you throughout this exciting Earth-centric day! Seeking eco-vendors with a sustainable mission. For more information, call 973-228-8776. **FREE EVENT (items may be for sale)**

## MAY 2025 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

### PROJECT WET & CLIMATE, WATER AND RESILIENCE TEACHER WORKSHOP

**Tuesday, May 6**

**9am to 3pm**

**For educators of grades K-8.** The Project WET curriculum guide is a collection of science-based, interdisciplinary activities and lesson plans that are teacher-tested and classroom ready. They are sure to help educators feel confident addressing themes of water in the classroom and empower students to build a more resilient future. The Climate, Water and Resilience guide helps educators teach middle and high school students about climate and climate change using interactive, objective, science-based activities that students will enjoy. Understanding climate, and specifically the way that climate is changing, is crucial to making informed decisions and building community and environmental resilience. Both guides are aligned with NGSS standards. Bring a lunch and dress for the weather. Certificates are given for the workshop hours completed. Led by Environmental Center Senior Naturalist David Alexander and NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection Project Wet Coordinator Toni Heater. **Fee: \$40 (includes curriculum activity guides) (scholarships available for Essex County urban aid district teachers; call the Center for details)**



Water Education for Teachers



### SPRINGTIME TRAIL WALK AND TERRARIUM CREATION

**Tuesday, May 6**

**6pm to 7:30pm**

**For families.** We'll explore our wetlands for signs of spring focusing on frogs and flowers. Along the way, we'll carefully gather a few ingredients from nature to build our own living terrarium and learn to provide low maintenance nurturing care for it. **Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult**

### MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE

**Saturday, May 10**

**9am to 3pm**

**For all ages.** Stop by the Rutgers Master Gardener's annual plant sale for a wide variety of annuals, perennials, ornamentals, shrubs, small trees, tomatoes and herbs. For more details, call the Rutgers Master Gardeners' Helpline at 973.228.2210 from Monday to Thursday between 10am and 2pm. *Master Gardeners' Annual Plant Sale will also be hosted at the Essex County Presby Memorial Iris Gardens, 474 Upper Mountain Avenue, Montclair, on Friday, May 2 from 10am to 4pm and Saturday, May 3 from 9am to 3pm. Admission is FREE but plants will be for sale*



## MAY 2025 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

### FISHING 101 Saturday, May 10



**12:30pm to 2pm**  
**For families.** We'll begin with an introduction to freshwater fishing and learn to target specific fish species, fishing equipment, knots, bait selection, and technique. Participants will make their own "Altoids Tin Fishing Tackle Kit" to use on site and then take home. Basic equipment will be provided but you are welcome to bring your own. Meet at the waterfront area in the Essex County South Mountain Recreation Complex, West Orange, right near the Clipper Pavilion and boat rental. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar). Fee: \$15 per child and \$15 per adult**

### UPPER PASSAIC RIVER CANOE TRIP Wednesday, May 14

**For adults and children ages 10 and older.** Take a leisurely paddle on the Passaic River! Paddlers will enjoy scenery and peacefulness as they paddle up the river and float downstream. Geared for beginners and children 10 and up accompanied by a parent or guardian. Meet in the Garibaldi Hall parking lot. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar). Fee: \$30 per person**

**6pm to 8pm**



### FROG POND ADVENTURE OUTDOOR CLASS Thursday, May 22

**For families.** This rrrribbetting program will take an up-close look at our wetland and pond ecosystem. Search out and identify the life found in the pond through magnifying glasses, microscopes and field guides. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar). Fee: \$12 per child, \$15 per adult.**

**6pm to 7:30pm**

## LOOKING AHEAD



### NATURE EXPLORERS SUMMER CAMP

**July 7 to July 18, For Ages 4 & 5 (SOLD OUT)**

**July 21 to August 1, For Ages 6 & 7 (SOLD OUT)**

**August 4 to August 15, For Ages 8 & 9**

Enjoy exploring and discovering woodland and river habitats for insects, birds, amphibians, Lenape life and much more. Sign up for one or two weeks per grade level. Call the Center at 973.228.8776 for details. Advance registration is required. **Fee: \$250 per child/per week for Pre-K and K, \$270 per child/per week for Grades 1 and 2; \$290 per child/per week for Grades 3 and 4**

**9:30pm to 12:30pm**

**9:30pm to 1:30pm**

**9:30pm to 1:30pm**

## LOOKING AHEAD

### BUTTERFLY TENT SAFARI

Saturday, July 12 to Saturday, July 26

Tent Hours ~ Monday through Friday from 12pm to 3pm

Saturdays, July 12, 19 & 26 from 10:30am to 1:30pm

**For all ages.** Featuring live butterflies and butterfly-themed programming for all ages. It is encouraged to book a time slot; walk-ins are not guaranteed entry. Advance registration is required for Saturday programs. **Fee: Tent visit is \$8 per person (includes a take-away item per paid participant; Saturday programs \$12 per child and \$15 per adult.**



### BUZZFEST

Saturday, August 9

10:15am to 11:15am; 11:30am to 12:30pm; OR 12:45pm to 1:45pm

**For all ages.** Have you ever wondered how honey goes from hive to jar? Come join our local beekeeper and see a real hive! You'll even get a sample taste. Learn about bees, their current challenges, and how we can help. Take home a bee themed craft. Limited space per time slot; must book from one of three time slots. Advance registration is required. **Fee: \$15 per participant (includes a take-away item)**

### 2025 ESSEX COUNTY PARKS PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

**Submissions are due by Wednesday, September 10**, so *grab a camera and visit any Essex County Park!* Anyone with a camera is invited and encouraged to submit photos that capture a part of your visit to the County Park System. For rules and regulations, please contact the Essex County Environmental Center at 973.228.8776.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**ESSEX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**—Meetings are held virtually on the first Monday of each month at 6pm. Some dates may change. This Board has openings, if you are interested in serving, please email a letter of interest and resume to [tcasella@parks.essexcountynj.org](mailto:tcasella@parks.essexcountynj.org). For an up-to-date listing of meeting dates or for more information, please contact Essex County Environmental Affairs Coordinator Tara M. Casella at 973.228.8776 or visit <https://www.essexcountyparks.org/facilities/environmental-center/partners>.

**GARDENING**—Do you have garden-related questions? Contact the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County and a Master Gardener will gladly assist you on their FREE helpline service. Helpline hours are Monday through Friday from 10am to 2pm. Call 973.228.2210 or e-mail [mastergardenerec@gmail.com](mailto:mastergardenerec@gmail.com). **PLEASE NOTE: MG HELPLINE WILL BE ON WINTER BREAK FROM NOVEMBER 27, 2024, to FEBRUARY 28, 2025.**



## ESSEX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER PARTNER AGENCIES

### **Essex County Beekeepers Society (ECBS)**

John DeBenedett [johndebenedett@yahoo.com](mailto:johndebenedett@yahoo.com)

### **Essex County Environmental Commission**

Tara M Casella [tcasella@parks.essexcountynj.org](mailto:tcasella@parks.essexcountynj.org) / 973.228.8776

### **Great Swamp Bonsai Society**

John Michalski [huonia@aol.com](mailto:huonia@aol.com)

### **New Jersey Audubon (NJA)**

Scott Barnes 908.396.6506

### **New Jersey Woodturners Association (NJWA)**

Bob Amarant 908.442.4729

### **Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension of Essex County Rutgers Essex County 4-H Youth Development Program (4-H)**

Marissa Blodnik 973.353.1337

### **Rutgers Master Gardeners of Essex County Help Line**

973.228.2210

# HAPPY **20<sup>th</sup>** ANNIVERSARY ESSEX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER **2005 to 2025**

*CELEBRATING **20** YEARS OF SERVING  
EXCEPTIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS*

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND PATRONAGE!*

#### **ATTENTION:**

*If you would like to receive an electronic file of our brochure, as well as, other e-notices and alerts, please call the Center at 973.228.8776 or e-mail [tcasella@parks.essexcountynj.org](mailto:tcasella@parks.essexcountynj.org) with an e-mail address.*

*Thank you!*



Our Environmental Center has become the premiere location for environmental education and nature appreciation. With the help of our partner groups, our dynamic schedule of events and activities will captivate all ages. Walk in our woods, discover habitats, get pointers on gardening, learn about nature photography and much more. It's all about nature and it's all at our Environmental Center.

**Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., Essex County Executive**

## **ESSEX COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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**Tyshammie L. Cooper, Vice President, Commissioner District 3**

**Brendan W. Gill, Commissioner-At-Large**

**Romaine Sermons, Commissioner-At-Large**

**Wayne L. Richardson, Commissioner-At-Large**

**Patricia Sebold, Commissioner-At-Large**

**Robert Mercado, Commissioner District 1**

**A'Dorian Thomas-Murray, Commissioner District 2**

**Leonard M. Luciano, Commissioner District 4**



Essex County Environmental Center  
621-B Eagle Rock Avenue  
Roseland, NJ 07068

*Putting Essex County First*