

Essex County Environmental Center ~ Public Programs

FALL 2025



The Essex County Environmental Center is located at 621-B Eagle Rock Avenue in Roseland in Essex County West Essex Park, 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.

PLEASE NOTE: ECEC will be operating on a Tuesday through Saturday schedule and will be CLOSED on MONDAYS from October 20, 2025, through March 9, 2026. A Monday through Friday schedule will resume on March 16, 2026. For more information, please call the Center at 973.228.8776. THANK YOU!

The Essex County Environmental Center offers a variety of seasonal environmental education programming for individuals, groups and families. Pre-registration and payment are required for all programs unless otherwise noted, and all programs require a minimum number of participants to run. Pre-registration and payment can be made either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.

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. Maximum of 20 participants including group leaders/chaperones. Program length is 1.5 hours. Choose from a variety of 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. Fall topic selections include: Autumn 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! All programs are held completely outside. One group at a time with a limit of 6 people. Schedule your 45-minute time slot by calling the center at 973.228.8776. **Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult**

CLUBS FOR CHILDREN

**For all programs, unless otherwise noted, pre-registration and payment is required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.
THANK YOU!**

LITTLE EXPLORERS

Fridays—September 12, 19; October 10, 24; November 7, 21; December 12, 19
For ages 2 to 5; 3pm to 4pm

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. This is not a drop-off class; adults must accompany children. This is an 8-class session series; must sign up for the entire series. **Fee: \$150 per session series**



GARDEN DISCOVERY CLUB

Tuesday, 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). **Fee: \$15 per child**

FROG POND CLUB

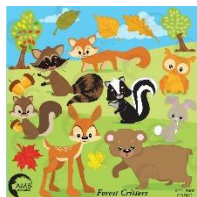
Wednesdays—September 17, October 15, November 12
4pm to 5pm



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. This is a drop-off and pick-up class (children only). This is a 3-class session series; must sign up for the entire series. **Fee: \$45 per session series**

FOREST FRIENDS CLUB

Thursdays—September 18, October 16, November 13, December 18
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. This is a drop-off and pick-up class (children only). This is a 4-class session series; must sign up for the entire series. **Fee: \$60 per session series**

**For all programs, unless otherwise noted, pre-registration and payment is required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.
THANK YOU!**

RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF ESSEX COUNTY

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



4H is the youth development component- of Rutgers Cooperative Extension, connecting youth and our community to Rutgers University (4-H Connects Kids with Rutgers). The 4-H Youth Development Program uses a learn-by-doing approach to enable youth to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to become competent, caring and contributing citizens of the world. This is accomplished by using the knowledge and resources of caring adults. To learn more about 4-H programs hosted throughout Essex County, visit <https://essex.njaes.rutgers.edu/4h/>.

RCE FALL HARVEST CONTEST

Adult and youth project entrees are welcome at the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Fall Harvest Showcase! The showcase will be held in partnership with the Annual Fall Family Festival at the Essex County Environmental Center on Sunday, September 21, 2025. A detailed fair submission book can be found at <https://essex.njaes.rutgers.edu/4h/youth/fairs/>. Youth and adults can submit projects in any of the fall divisions including Outdoor Gardening, Food and Nutrition, and Fruits and Vegetables. Projects will be judged, showcased and ribbons will be given to all submissions. Cash prizes for best in division and best in class! This year, we challenge our young people to create and submit a Crazy Critter! There will be special gift basket for the winner.

4-H DOG CLUB: ALL PAWS ON DECK

Dates TBD. Join our 4-H Dog Club and embark on a journey of learning and fun! Youth grades 4-12 and well-behaved dogs are welcome. Whether you're a seasoned dog owner or a first-time pet parent, our 4-H Dog Club offers a welcoming and supportive environment for you and your furry friend. Club meet once a month at the Essex County Environmental Center. **Register at** <https://essex.njaes.rutgers.edu/4h/youth/fairs/>

RUTGERS MASTER GARDENERS OF ESSEX COUNTY

Do you have garden-related questions? Contact Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County and a Master Gardener will gladly assist you on their FREE helpline service. Helpline hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10am to 2pm. Call 973.228.2210 or e-mail mastergardenerec@gmail.com.

HORTICULTURE FOR SENIORS

Meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday (except September class is Monday, Sept. 16) 1pm to 3pm

For senior citizens. Join the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Essex County for this once-a-month horticulture class especially designed for senior citizens. Monthly topics vary. **Advanced registration is required one week prior to program**; contact the Master Gardener Helpline at 973.228.2210 or mastergardenerec@gmail.com. **Free**

MONTHLY PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

Dates subject to change; call the Environmental Center prior to meeting date to confirm the schedule.

NEW JERSEY WOODTURNERS



Meets monthly on the 4th Tuesday

7pm to 9pm

For all ages. Learn to turn with the NJ Woodturners. Discover the wonders of creating art from found pieces of wood. Topics vary by month. For details, please email Bob Amarant at bobamarant@gmail.com and, to learn more about the organization, visit <https://www.njwoodturners.com>. Meet in Garibaldi Hall. **Free**

MONTHLY PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

ESSEX COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Meets monthly on the 2nd 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. For more details on monthly programs, visit www.njbeekeepers.org and www.ecbs.squarespace.com. **Free for ECBS and NJBA members**



GREAT SWAMP BONSAI SOCIETY

Meets monthly on the 2nd 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 different area of focus, including a particular species, designs and horticultural issues. Meet in the main Center classroom. For more information, email neyamadoribonsai@gmail.com or visit their Facebook page, [greatswampbonsaisociety](https://www.facebook.com/greatswampbonsaisociety). **Free and open to the public**

SEPTEMBER 2025 PROGRAMS



ESSEX COUNTY PARKS PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Submissions are due by Wednesday, September 10

Grab a camera and visit an Essex County Park! Anyone with a camera is invited and encouraged to submit photos that capture a part of your visit to the County Parks System. For rules and regulations, please contact the Essex County Environmental Center at 973.228.8776.

EVENING CANOE PADDLE ON THE PASSAIC

Tuesday, September 16

5:30pm to 7:30pm

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.** **FEE: \$30 per person**



NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY FALL EVENT: SHRUB SALE, PRUNING WORKSHOP & NATURE WALK

Saturday, September 20

10am to 1pm

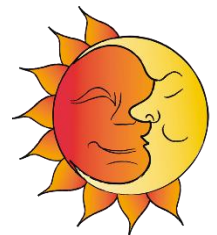
For all ages. Sponsored by the Native Plant Society and the Essex County Environmental Commission. A variety of native shrubs will be on sale to attract birds and butterflies to your yard. A free pruning workshop is at 10:30-11:30 and guided nature walk is at noon. No registration necessary; walk-ins are welcome. Meets at Garibaldi Hall. **Free event; plants will be for sale.**

20th ANNUAL FALL FAMILY FESTIVAL

Sunday, September 21 (Rain date September 28, 2025)

11am to 3pm

For all ages. Come celebrate the Autumnal Equinox at the Environmental Center! There will be fun-filled activities for the entire family to enjoy, including hands-on nature games and crafts, naturalist-led walks, live butterflies, live animals, canoeing, Native American life, a pumpkin patch, petting zoo, food, and more. **FREE EVENT; some items may be for sale.**



SEPTEMBER 2025 PROGRAMS

DINOSAUR DISCOVERY FAMILY FIELD TRIP

Thursday, September 25

4:45pm to 6:45pm

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.** Fee: \$15 per person



OCTOBER 2025 PROGRAMS



FROG POND ADVENTURE OUTDOOR CLASS

Thursday, October 9

5:30pm to 7pm

For families. This rrrribbetting program will take an up-close look at our 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.** Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult

BATS OF NEW JERSEY

Tuesday, October 14

5:30pm to 7pm



For children in grades 1 through 5. Ever wonder what kind of local bats are catching bugs in your backyard? Or where they sleep? Learn from a bat enthusiast about our upside-down friends, play the role of a bat biologist in a simulated study and take-home plans to build a bat house! **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.** Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult

PUT YOUR GARDEN TO BED

Saturday, October 18

10:30am to 12pm

For adults. Join Claudia Urdanivia, Urban Agriculture Agent for Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex and Hudson Counties, to learn about putting your garden to rest for the winter. We will review best practices and a calendar of activities to prepare for the next season. For beginners and all garden levels. Meet in Garibaldi Hall. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.** Fee: \$15 per person



S'MORES n' MORE NIGHT HIKE

Friday, October 24

5:30pm to 7pm



For families. Come out to build a campfire and practice fundamental fire skills in a safe and controlled environment. Once we get our fire burning, we'll roast marshmallows and make s'mores. All ages are welcome. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.** Fee: \$15 per person

OCTOBER 2025 PROGRAMS

FISHING 101

Saturday, October 25

10am to 11:30am



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 is provided, but you are welcome to bring your own. Meet at the waterfront area in the Essex County South Mountain Recreation Complex, West Orange, near the Clipper Pavilion and boat rental. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online**

at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar. Fee: \$15 per person

LENAPE LIFE

Saturday, October 25

10:30am to 12noon

For families. Visit our Lenape Learning Area to better understand how they hunted, fished, foraged and farmed using sticks, stones and bones. Make a clay pot and explore topics such as fire-friction, plant identification, games, clothing and more. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar. Fee: \$15 per person**



HEMLOCK FALLS HIKE

Saturday, October 25

2pm to 4pm



For families with young children ages 4 and up. Join an Environmental Center Naturalist for a guided hike beginning at Tulip Springs in Essex County South Mountain Reservation. We'll decorate our own walking sticks before entering the Lenape Trail and walking through the great pine grove. Then we cross the bridge and continue through the forest discovering pigment and paint from stones and other natural wonders on the way to Hemlock Falls! Pack a snack and bring water. Meet up location to be confirmed upon registration. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar. Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult**

NOVEMBER 2025 PROGRAMS

TODDLER SEASONAL SENSORY HIKES



Saturday, November 1 (Bats); November 15 (Nature Wreaths), & November 22 (Wild Turkeys)

10am 11am

For children ages 1 to 5 with caregiver supervision. Bring your toddlers for a sensory exploration outside with an ECEC naturalist. Visit the forest trails, frog pond, Passaic River and more. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online**

at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar. Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult

BECOME AN ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER VOLUNTEER

Saturday, November 1

3pm to 4:30pm

For ages 13 and older. Do you have an interest in the environment and/or education and want to get more involved? Join Center staff for an information and training session to find opportunities that fit your skills, interests and schedule. Opportunities include program support, gardening, outdoor stewardship projects and much more! **Pre-registration required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar. FREE**



NOVEMBER 2025 PROGRAMS



FOREST FRIENDS ONE-DAY CAMP

Thursday, November 6

9:30am to 3:30pm

For students ages 6 to 10 years. Learn about New Jersey's forest friends by way of exploration, games and craft activities with a naturalist educator as your guide. Come dressed for the weather. **Pre-registration required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.** Fee: \$110 per camper

MOBILE APPS FOR CITIZEN SCIENCE!

Saturday, November 8

10:30am to 12noon

For individuals and families. This program teaches participants how to use free smartphone applications such as Merlin, Seek and iNaturalist to submit data and contribute to worldwide citizen science projects. By recording and identifying what we've seen, we'll help biologists keep track of what's happening and better protect our local biodiversity. Becoming a citizen scientist can be as easy as using the phone in your hand! **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.** Fee: \$12 per child, \$15 per adult



HOLIDAY WREATH MAKING

Saturday, November 15

11am to 1pm

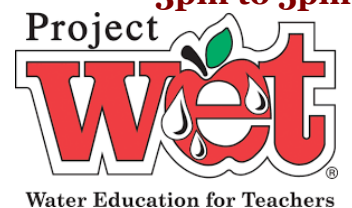
For ages 15 and older. Welcome your friends and family for the holidays with a beautiful holiday wreath! Together we'll use evergreen boughs and other materials to create a seasonal work of art! All materials including hot chocolate and tea are included for this hands-on workshop. **Pre-registration required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.** Fee: \$30 per person

PROJECT WET – CLIMATE WATER AND RESILIENCE WORKSHOP

Saturday, November 15

3pm to 5pm

For adults. Join Toni Heater from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection for this workshop that 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. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.** Fee: \$15 per person



OUTDOOR SKILLS FAMILY DAY

Saturday, November 22

10am to 1pm

For families. Come together and challenge yourselves in winter outdoor skills. We'll explore animal tracks, plants that make cordage, practice fire skills, make a winter campfire and enjoy our own campfire cooked treats! Be prepared to do some walking, smell like woodsmoke, make new friends, feel confident in your outdoor skills, and get back to nature. Please dress for the weather and pack a lunch! **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.** Fee: \$25 per person



LOOKING AHEAD



Forest Friends Feeder Contest **Registration Deadline: Wednesday, December 10th** **Project Drop-off: Friday, December 19th by 5pm**



For all ages. Create an edible, festive and unique wetland wildlife feeder for our outdoor exhibit. Projects will be on display on our forested trail for as long as the forest critters allow!

For contest rules and to register, please contact 973.228.8776.

WINTER WILDLIFE EXPLORERS 2-DAYCAMP **Tuesday December 30 and Wednesday December 30** **9:30am to 3:30pm**



For children ages 6-10. Campers enjoy stories, crafts, campfires and forest adventures exploring our wooded wetland forests in wintertime. For more information, call 973.228.8776. Advanced registration and minimum number of participants required. **Fee: \$90 per child per day**

OTHER OFFERINGS



NATURE-THEMED BIRTHDAY PARTIES

For ages 3 and up. Book a children's birthday party at the Essex County Environmental Center for an intimate gathering close to nature. Choose from a variety of topics serving the interests of various ages and outdoor comfort levels. Center birthday parties offer classroom space for 3 hours, including an hour-long ECEC naturalist-led program mix of fun and education. For more information or to book your party today, call the Center at 973-228-8776.

Fee: \$350 (additional fees may apply)



EXTRA! EXTRA!

Calling all Nature Enthusiasts....

Grades Pre-K through 7. Youth Eco-Activity Boxes are available for purchase! Looking for enrichment ideas? The Environmental Center educational staff has custom made boxes designed to excite and engage youth in nature exploration and active learning. The boxes are intended to keep children in pre-K through seventh grades excited and engaged in environmental science related outdoor activities. Box themes include Autumn Discovery, Butterfly Safari, Buzz Box (Bees), Flying Friends (Birds), Hop, Walk & Slither, Junior Naturalist, Wilderness Skills and more! **Fee: \$40/Box**

The boxes include crafts, projects, activities, and outdoor fun opportunities!
Boxes are available for pick-up only at the Essex County Environmental Center.

Limited Availability!

For more information, please call 973.228.8776.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ESSEX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION—Meetings are held virtually on the first Monday of each month at 6pm at the Essex County Environmental Center. Some dates may change. Open slots are available; if interested, please email a letter of interest and resume to 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 Tuesday through Friday from 10am to 2pm. Call 973.228.2210 or e-mail mastergardenerec@gmail.com.

ESSEX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER PARTNER AGENCIES

Essex County Beekeepers Society (ECBS)

Landi Simone beeladylandi@gmail.com

Essex County Environmental Commission

Tara M. Casella tcasella@parks.essexcountynj.org / 973.228.8776

Great Swamp Bonsai Society

Diego Garnica digar01@hotmail.com

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

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 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

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COUNTY OF ESSEX

Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs

ESSEX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

621-B Eagle Rock Avenue, Roseland, NJ 07068

973.228.8776 / www.essexcountyparks.org

Putting Essex County First