

# Essex County Environmental Center ~ Public Programs

## FALL 2026



*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.*

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](http://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: \$15 per participant (including leaders/chaperones)**

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

**All ages.** Autumn topic selections include: Seasonal Nature Adventure, Lenape Village Tours, Backyard Birding, Wild Edibles, Frog Pond Science, Swamp Tromp/Wetland Biodiversity, \*Fire Making and Hot Chocolate, \*Camping 101. 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: \$15 per participant (including leaders/chaperones)** \*Where noted, additional fees apply.

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

***ECEC will be operating on a Tuesday through Saturday schedule and will be CLOSED MONDAYS beginning on Saturday, October 17, 2026, through Monday, March 8, 2027. Monday through Friday schedule will resume on March 15, 2027. For more information, please call the Center at 973.228.8776.***

**THANK YOU!**

## CLUBS FOR CHILDREN

### LITTLE EXPLORERS

**Fridays—September 11, 25; October 9, 23; November 13, 20; December 11, 18**  
**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. 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: \$160 per session series**

### HIVE EXPLORERS: HONEYBEE CLUB

**Monthly on Tuesdays—September to August**

**2026: September 29; October 13; November 10; December 8**

**2027: January 12; February 9; March 9; April 13; May 11; June 8; July 13; August 10**  
**4pm to 5pm**

**For children ages 10-18.** Learn about the importance of bees and how to be a beekeeper! Club sessions cover honeybee biology, equipment, getting started, pests and diseases, harvesting honey, and more! Led by Essex County 4-H volunteers and hosted at the Essex County Environmental Center at Garibaldi Hall. This is a 10-month drop-off and pick-up class (youth only). If the bee colony thrives, members will get a share of the honey harvest. This club is project-based.



**Fee: \$180 for the 12-month full club session or \$120 per 6-month session series.**

### FROG POND CLUB

**Wednesdays—September 16, October 14, November 18**  
**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. This is a 3-class session series; must sign up for the entire series. **Fee: \$45 per session series**

### FOREST FRIENDS CLUB

**Thursdays—September 17, October 15, November 12, December 17**  
**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](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).**

**THANK YOU!**

# 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 the full range of programs, please visit <https://essex.njaes.rutgers.edu/>.



## 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 with their FREE helpline service. Call 973.228.2210 or e-mail [mastergardenerec@gmail.com](mailto:mastergardenerec@gmail.com).



## HORTICULTURE FOR SENIORS

**Meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday**

**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. Limited capacity - advance registration is required early in the month of the program. Contact the Master Gardener Helpline at 973.228.2210 or [mastergardenerec@gmail.com](mailto:mastergardenerec@gmail.com). **Free**



## 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

4-H 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/>.**

## 4-H VOLUNTEER LEADER TRAINING

**For adults 21 and up.** Seeking adult volunteers to lead 4-H clubs at the Essex County Environmental Center! Do you have a passion or a hobby you want to share with kids? Well, we are looking for 4-H volunteers to lead clubs! Essex County 4-H will provide training and support through Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Department of 4-H Youth Development. **Contact us at [essex4h@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:essex4h@njaes.rutgers.edu) to get started! FREE**

## 4-H CLOVER CLUB

**Monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays—October to June 4pm to 5pm**

**For K-12th grade youth.** This club gives youth a platform to explore diverse interests while offering a fun mix of arts and crafts, science, food, volunteering activities, and more! 4-H is empowering youth of all ages to work together and become confident leaders through hands-on community service, public speaking, and project participation at 4-H fairs. Opportunities for county, state, and national events and trips too! Meets at the Essex County Environmental Center inside Garibaldi Hall. Led by Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County, 4-H Youth Development Staff. **FREE, sign up here: <https://go.rutgers.edu/iicdm6aj>**

## 4-H ALL PAWS ON DECK CLUB

**Meets Monthly September to June**

**For K-13th graders.** This club is for youth that have an interest in dogs and veterinary science. Club members will focus on different topics around dogs such as grooming, showmanship, obedience, and more. Dog ownership is not required! Meets at the Essex County Environmental Center inside Garibaldi Hall. Led by Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County, 4-H Youth Development Staff. **FREE, contact Passaic 4-H to register [passaic4h@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:passaic4h@njaes.rutgers.edu).**

## 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:bobamarant@gmail.com) and, to learn more about the organization, visit <https://www.njwoodturners.com>. Meet in Garibaldi Hall. **Free**

### ESSEX COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

**Meets 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. For more details on monthly programs, visit [www.njbeekeepers.org](http://www.njbeekeepers.org) and [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 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](mailto:neyamadoribonsai@gmail.com) or visit their Facebook page, [greatswampbonsaisociety](https://www.facebook.com/greatswampbonsaisociety). **Free and open to the public**



## SEPTEMBER 2026 PROGRAMS



### ESSEX COUNTY PARKS PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

**Submissions are due by Wednesday, September 9**

*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 15**

**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.

**FEE: \$40 per person**



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**THANK YOU!**



## SEPTEMBER 2026 PROGRAMS

### 4-H CRAZY CRITTERS WORKSHOP

Friday, September 18

5pm to 6pm



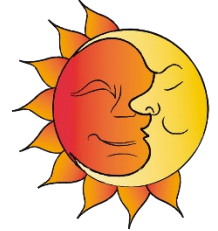
**For families.** Is it a snake or a carrot?! Take fruit and veggies and turn them into ferocious or fuzzy creatures! This is a fun, family-friendly workshop that is open to all ages, with supplies provided! All Crazy Critters will be eligible to be submitted to the 4-H Gardeners Contest to win prizes, or just taken home to enjoy! **FREE, sign up here:** <https://go.rutgers.edu/crazycritters26>

### ANNUAL FALL FAMILY FESTIVAL

Sunday, September 20 (Rain date September 27, 2026)

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.**



### 4-H FALL FAIR & GARDENERS CONTEST

**Project Drop Off: Friday, 3pm-6PM and Saturday 2PM-5PM**

**Project Public Showcase: Sunday, September 20th; 11am to 3pm**

**For all ages.** All residents, including youth and adults, are invited to participate in the 4-H Fall Fair & Gardeners Contest! The fair is held in partnership with the Fall Family Festival at the Essex County Environmental Center. All projects will be showcased and awarded based on the Danish judging system. Each submission will receive a ribbon and judge notes, with Best in Class and Best in Division receiving cash prizes! Projects can be submitted in any of the fall divisions: Fruits, Vegetables & Herbs, Outdoor Gardening, Food & Nutrition, and Arts & Crafts. **For more information, visit:** <https://essex.njaes.rutgers.edu/4h/youth/fairs/>.



### DINOSAUR DISCOVERY FAMILY FIELD TRIP

Thursday, September 24

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. **Fee: \$15 per person**



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

Saturday, September 26

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.**

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**THANK YOU!**

## OCTOBER 2026 PROGRAMS

### LENS: A CREATIVE NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY ADVENTURE

**Saturday, October 3**

**10:30am to 12pm**

**For families.** Discover the wonder of the natural world through photography, mindfulness, and playful exploration! We'll begin with a short, interactive slideshow to spark inspiration and practice a few simple smartphone photography tips. Then we'll head out on the trails for our family-friendly nature photo scavenger hunt, capturing the light, colors, textures, patterns, and the wonders around us. We'll wrap up by sharing a favorite photo (optional) and reflecting on our experience. Led by Carey Kirkella, Creator of The L.E.N.S. Method. **Fee: \$15 per person**



### FROG POND ADVENTURE OUTDOOR CLASS

**Thursday, October 8**

**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. **Fee: \$15 per person**

### ART IN NATURE: 🌿 FERNS & FABRICS—DIY FERN T-SHIRTS!

**Saturday, October 10**

**10:30am to 12pm**

**For all ages.** Children must be accompanied by an adult. Looking for a fun activity that blends science, nature, and creativity? We'll hike the woods to select prehistoric wild ferns, decode their ancient anatomy, and then use professional printmaking rollers and permanent fabric ink to design our own custom clothing in our nature-printing workshop! Bring your own item from home to design! Led by Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County, 4-H Youth Development Staff. **Fee: \$20 per person**



### PUT YOUR GARDEN TO BED

**Saturday, October 17**

**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. **Fee: \$15 per person**

### S'MORES n' MORE NIGHT HIKE

**Friday, October 23**

**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. **Fee: \$20 per perso**



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**THANK YOU!**

## OCTOBER 2026 PROGRAMS

### FISHING 101

**Saturday, October 24**

**2pm to 3:30pm**



**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. **Fee: \$20 per person**

### HARVEST TO HOME: APPLE SAUCE AND FRITTER MAKING

**Saturday, October 31 11am to 1pm**

**For all ages.** Together we'll set up our campfire kitchen and transform crisp, local apples into warm, delicious applesauce and fritters! We'll explore different apple varieties, practice safe kitchen skills, and learn the "secret ingredients" that make homemade special. Led in partnership with Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County, 4-H Youth Development Staff. **Fee: \$20 per person**



## NOVEMBER 2026 PROGRAMS



### FOREST FRIENDS ONE-DAY CAMP

**Thursday, November 5**

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

**For students ages 6 to 10 years.** Learn about New Jersey's forest friends by way of exploration, games, crafts and campfire cooking activities with a naturalist educator as your guide. Come dressed for the weather. **Fee: \$120 per camper**

### TODDLER SENSORY HIKES

**Saturdays— November 7 (Life Under a Log), November 14 (Nature Wreaths)  
November 21 (Wild Turkeys)**

**10am to 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. Held rain or shine.

**Fee: \$15 per person**



### BECOME A CERTIFIED COMPOST CHAMPION

**Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>**

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

**For ages 14-18.** At this half-day workshop, you will master basic skills in composting, learning from experts in environmental science and sustainability. Engage with different compost systems by adding ingredients, feeding worms, and understanding the benefits of compost for our nature and our community. Take home a mini compost-in-a-bottle and tips on

sustainable, eco-friendly actions to make at home. You will earn 5 community service hours and become a certified compost champion in your community! Lunch is provided. Led by Essex County Environmental Center and Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County. **FREE; registration is required through ECEC.**



## NOVEMBER 2026 PROGRAMS



### HOLIDAY WREATH MAKING

**Saturday, November 14**

**2pm to 4pm**

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

### OUTDOOR SKILLS FAMILY DAY

**Saturday, November 21**

**10:30am to 1:30pm**

**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! **Fee: \$25 per person**



### BECOME AN ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER VOLUNTEER

**Saturday, November 21**

**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! **FREE**

## LOOKING AHEAD



### Forest Friends Feeder Contest

**Registration Deadline: Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Project Drop-off: Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup> 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 3-DAYCAMP

**Tuesday, December 29; Wednesday, December 30 & Thursday, December 31**

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



**For children ages 6 to 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: \$120 per child per day**

**For all programs, unless otherwise noted, pre-registration and payment is required either in person, by mail or online at [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar).**

**THANK YOU!**



## 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](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 Tuesday through Friday from 10am to 2pm. Call 973.228.2210 or e-mail [mastergardenerec@gmail.com](mailto:mastergardenerec@gmail.com).

## ESSEX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER PARTNER AGENCIES

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

Ivan Wei, [honeylover131@gmail.com](mailto:honeylover131@gmail.com)

### **Essex County Environmental Commission**

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

### **Great Swamp Bonsai Society**

[great.swampbonsai@gmail.com](mailto:great.swampbonsai@gmail.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)**

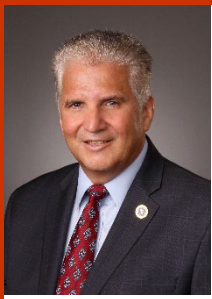
Marissa Blodnik, 973.353.1337

### **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](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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**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](http://www.essexcountyparks.org)**

*Putting Essex County First*