

Essex County Environmental Center

SUMMER 2026

Public Programs



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.

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

Small Groups/Pods and Families

All ages. Summer topic selections include: Summer 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: \$15 per participant (including leaders/chaperones). *Where noted, additional fees apply.**

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. 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

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 973.228.221 or mastergardenerec@gmail.com. **Free**

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/>.



4-H TEEN COUNCIL

Meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday

For grades 8-12. Each meeting is focused on completing a fun community service project for various areas in need! Youth will gain 1 hour of community service at every meeting! The club meets once a month at the Essex County Environmental Center, Garibaldi Hall, in June and will break in July and August. Join the club by filling out the sign-up form at go.rutgers.edu/iicdm6aj

4-H DOG CLUB: ALL PAWS ON DECK

Meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday

Youth grades K-12 and well-behaved dogs are welcome. Join our 4-H Dog Club and embark on a journey of learning and fun! 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. The club meets once a month at the Essex County Environmental Center, Garibaldi Hall, in June and will break in July and August. Join the club by filling out the sign-up form at go.rutgers.edu/iicdm6aj

YOUTH URBAN FARM CLUB

July and August

Meets Weekly (Dates to Be Determined)

For ages 12 to 18. Participating youth will visit community gardens and small urban farm sites led by adult volunteers from the community and gain hands-on experience while also learning about food systems, the local environment, and learning by doing. The goal of this program is for youth to develop new skills in horticulture, urban agriculture, or animal husbandry; serve their community by supporting the maintenance of these sites; and forge relationships with their peers and adult volunteers. Meet at Garibaldi Hall. For more information and to register, please visit <https://essex.njaes.rutgers.edu/4h/youth/urban-ag-youth-garde>

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**

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 in 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 great.swampbonsai@gmail.com or visit their Facebook page, [greatswampbonsaisociety](https://www.facebook.com/greatswampbonsaisociety). **Free and open to the public**

JUNE 2026 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.



NATIONAL TRAILS DAY 2026

Saturday, June 6; 9am to 1pm

For all ages. Celebrate the first annual National Trails Day with the Essex County Parks Department! A variety of hikes for all ages and abilities will be offered in select Essex County Parks locations, led by the Essex County Environmental Center, Essex County Turtle Back Zoo and our partner organizations—South Mountain Conservancy, Hilltop Conservancy, Eagle Rock Conservancy with Sierra Club's Essex Chapter, Branch Brook Park Alliance, NYNJ Trail Conference, NJ Native Plant Society, Essex Chapter and the New York City Parks Department's Greenbelt Native Plant Center. For details and to register, information forthcoming at www.essexcountyparks.org. **FREE**

JUNE 2026 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.

THE GREAT SWAMP BONSAI SOCIETY CELEBRATES 50 YEARS WITH FREE ANNUAL BONSAI SHOW

Saturday, June 6; 11am to 3pm



Families welcome. The Great Swamp Bonsai Society (GSBS), a long-standing bonsai club in northern New Jersey, invites the public to its Annual Bonsai Show. Founded in 1976, GSBS is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. The club draws members from eight New Jersey counties and Eastern Pennsylvania, making it one of the longest-running bonsai clubs in the region. The show offers visitors a chance to see dozens of unique bonsai trees on exhibit, watch live styling and shaping demonstrations, and talk with experienced members about the art of bonsai. No bonsai experience is needed to enjoy the show. Held at Garibaldi Hall. For more information visit www.greatswampbonsai.com. **FREE**

BECOME AN ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER VOLUNTEER

Monday, June 8; 5pm to 6:30pm

For adults and students in grades 9 and up. 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. Needs include program support, gardening, outdoor stewardship projects and much more! **FREE.**



FAMILY DINOSAUR DISCOVERY FIELD TRIP

Tuesday, June 9; 5:30pm to 7:30pm



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

KITCHEN GARDENS

Saturday, June 20; 10:30am to 12pm

For all ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Bring the vibrant flavors of garden herbs into your kitchen year-round and harvest them fresh for cooking! We'll dig into the essentials of indoor cultivation and, whether you're a culinary enthusiast or a beginner gardener, you'll leave with the confidence to maintain a thriving, aromatic kitchen garden that's as beautiful as it is delicious. We'll visit our herb garden and meet some favorites like basil, cilantro, oregano, thyme, parsley, chives, dill, lemon balm and sage. Each participant will roll up their sleeves to pot their own personalized herb garden. Led by Roxana Marroquin, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Program Associate, Agriculture & Natural Resources. **Fee: \$15 per person**



NATURE EXPLORERS CAMP COUNSELOR TRAINING WORKSHOP

Monday, June 22; 3:30pm to 5pm

For ages 13 and older. This session is essential for volunteers looking to assist our Lead Educators during our Nature Explorers Summer Camp. You will master the art of "invisible teaching," learning how to transform a simple hike into a captivating journey of discovery. Through this training, you'll build the confidence to lead nature-based activities for elementary-age campers and sharpen your ecological knowledge of our beautiful local landscape. For more information or to register, contact Maura Toomey, mtoomey@parks.essexcountynj.org. **FREE.**

JUNE 2026 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.



FROG POND ADVENTURE OUTDOOR CLASS

Tuesday, June 23; 6pm to 7:30pm

For families. This rribbetting 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. **Fee: \$15 per person**

GROWING VEGETABLES USING INTENSIVE GARDENING PRACTICES

Saturday, June 27; 10am to 12pm

For adults. Join Claudia Urdanivia, Urban Agriculture Agent for Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex and Hudson Counties, to learn to make the most of your vegetable garden plot by growing intensively and using best practices such as succession planting, interplanting, and crop rotation. For all garden levels. Meets in Garibaldi Hall. **Fee: \$15 per adult**



TEEN TRAILBLAZER CAMP

June 29th through July 2nd—Monday to Thursday; 9:30am to 1:30pm



For ages 13 to 16. Captain a canoe! Navigate the trail! Lead a frog pond exploration! Learn first aid! Through teambuilding and outdoor adventures, this program gives teens the confidence, motivation, and skills to become leaders. **Fee: \$320 per child**

JULY 2026 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

BUTTERFLY TENT SAFARI VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Thursday, July 9; 9:30pm to 12:00pm

Open to volunteers ages 13 and older. Come ready to help Center staff bring the magic of nature to the community! The Environmental Center is seeking enthusiastic volunteers to assist during its popular Butterfly Tent Safari program. This training will equip volunteers with the skills to facilitate a high-quality educational experience for visitors of all ages. Learn about butterfly gardening, care and feeding, and build confidence in communicating environmental education with visitors. Must be able to commit to most of the program's open tent schedule, July 11 to July 25. For more information or to register, contact David Alexander at dalexander@parks.essexcountynj.org. **FREE.**



BUTTERFLY TENT SAFARI 2026

Saturday, July 11 to Saturday, July 25

Tent Hours ~ Monday through Friday from 12pm to 3pm & Saturdays, July 11, 18 & 25; 10:30am to 1:30pm

For all ages. Featuring live butterflies and butterfly-themed programming for all ages. Walk-ins will be accommodated Monday to Friday. Must book a time slot for Saturday by calling the Center at 973.228.8776. Tent and programming to take place at the Garibaldi Hall side of Environmental Center grounds. *Fees collected*

go to the Essex County Parks Foundation and directly back to Environmental Center programming. **Tent Visit Fee: \$10 per person (includes a take-away item per paid participant)**



JULY 2026 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.



INSECTS OF SUMMER NIGHTS Monday, July 27; 5:30pm to 7pm

For families. Discover insects of summer nights, both the pesky and the pretty – they all have their place. First, we'll make our own natural insect repellent, and then together we'll explore in search of fireflies, ladybugs, aphids, moths and more before returning to make and take an insect mosaic craft! **Fee: \$15 per person**

ADVANCING CAREERS IN STEM & ANIMAL SCIENCE (ACAS) TEEN INTERNSHIP July 27 to 31; 9am to 4pm

For rising 10th-13th graders. Join Passaic & Essex 4-H in an exciting Agriculture & STEM focused internship week. Teens will dive into hands-on learning, professional development, and career exploration. Engage in workshops & field trips to discover endless opportunities in these dynamic industries. Visit colleges and learn about continuing educational opportunities. Then, spend time applying skills in a real-world career setting. Meet at Garibaldi Hall. For more information and to register, please visit go.rutgers.edu/acas2026



AUGUST 2026 SEASONAL PROGRAMS



NATURE'S PALETTE: A BOTANICAL DYE WORKSHOP

Saturday, August 1; 10:30am to 12pm

For ages 10 and older. Unlock the hidden colors of the summer garden! Join us for a hands-on class as we transform flowers into fashion. We will harvest vibrant marigolds, coreopsis, and sunflowers from our Learning Garden to create a spectrum of natural pigments. Participants will learn the ancient art of botanical dyeing, using traditional techniques to "fix" colors onto fabric. You'll leave with a beautiful, custom-dyed cotton bandana or scarf and the knowledge to start your own natural dye vat at home. Led by Roxana Marroquin, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Program Associate, Agriculture & Natural Resources. Meets at Garibaldi Hall. **Fee: \$20 per person.**

EVENING CANOE PADDLE ON THE UPPER PASSAIC Wednesday, August 5; 6:30pm to 8:30pm

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**



BUZZFEST

Saturday, August 8

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 **Fee: \$15 per person**

AUGUST 2026 SEASONAL PROGRAMS

Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.



FOREST MUSHROOMS 101

Thursday, August 13; 5:30pm to 7pm

For families with children ages 6 and up. Fascinated by fungi? Explore the local forest for gilled, pored, ridged and toothed mushrooms. We'll learn their anatomy and create whimsical, yet realistic air-dry clay replicas of what we find.

Fee: \$15 per person

FROG POND ADVENTURE OUTDOOR CLASS

Thursday, August 20; 6pm to 7:30pm

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



PICKLE MAKING

Tuesday, August 25; 5pm to 6pm



For all ages. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Turn a humble cucumber into a tangy masterpiece! In this hands-on workshop, we'll visit our garden to collect cucumbers, explore the science of preservation and the art of seasoning. We'll skip the hot canning baths and focus on "Refrigerator Pickles," a safe and speedy method that delivers big flavor without the long wait. Led by Roxana Marroquin, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Program Associate, Agriculture & Natural Resources. Meet at Garibaldi Hall. **Fee: \$15 per person**

4H OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CAMP

August 24 to 28; 9am to 3pm

For youth in grades 6 to 10. Spend the last week of summer learning about environmental stewardship and outdoor education while building leadership skills for the upcoming school year! Each day, we will take on team challenges, learn new skills, and go on an outdoor adventure. Meet at Garibaldi Hall. For more information and to register, please visit: go.rutgers.edu/oac2026. **Fee: \$150.00**



LOOKING AHEAD



2026 ESSEX COUNTY PARKS PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Submissions are due by Wednesday, September 9, 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—For more information and a schedule of meetings, please 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

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

973.228.221

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

ESSEX COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Carlos M. Pomares, President, Commissioner District 5

A'Dorian Murray-Thomas, Vice President, Commissioner District 2

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

Tyshammie L. Cooper, Commissioner District 3

Leonard M. Luciano, Commissioner District 4



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

Putting Essex County First