

Essex County Environmental Center ~ Public Programs

WINTER 2025-26



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. For more information, call the Center at 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. Winter selections include: Seasonal Nature Adventure, Lenape Village Tours, Backyard Birding, Animal Tracking, Owls the Night Hunter, Swamp Tromp/Wetland Biodiversity, *Fire Making and Hot Chocolate, *Camping 101 and MORE! One group at a time with a limit of 6 people. *Where noted, additional fees apply. Schedule your 45-minute time slot by calling the Center at 973.228.8776. **Fee: \$12 child, \$15 adult**

**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!**

CLUBS FOR CHILDREN

LITTLE EXPLORERS

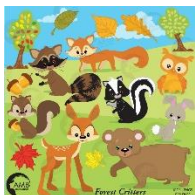
Fridays—January 9, 23; February 13, 27; March 13, 27
For ages 2 to 5; 3:30pm to 4:30pm



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. Maximum of two children per adult. All sessions are limited to 10 children. This is a 6-class session series; must sign up for the entire series. **Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar. Fee: \$120 per session series**

FOREST FRIENDS CLUB

Thursdays—January 15, February 19, March 19
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 3-class session series; must sign up for the entire series. **Fee: \$45 per session series**

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/>.

4-H TEEN COUNCIL: COMMUNITY SERVICE

Meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday

For youth in 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! Club meets once a month at the Essex County Environmental Center, Garibaldi Hall. Join the club by filling out the sign-up form: go.rutgers.edu/iicdm6aj

4-H DOG CLUB: ALL PAWS ON DECK

Meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday

For youth grades K-12 and well-behaved dogs are welcome. 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. Club meets once a month at the Essex County Environmental Center, Garibaldi Hall. Pet ownership is not required! Well-behaved dogs are welcome to join each meeting. Join the club by filling out the sign-up form: go.rutgers.edu/5wrxj573.

RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF ESSEX COUNTY

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. **PLEASE NOTE: HELPLINE IS CLOSED FOR WINTER UNTIL MARCH 2, 2026.** Call 973.228.2210 or e-mail mastergardenerec@gmail.com.



HORTICULTURE FOR SENIORS

Meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday at 1pm

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**

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 www.greatswampbonsai.com. **Free and open to the public**

DECEMBER 2025 PROGRAMS

ART IN NATURE

Saturday, December 13

10am to 11:30am

For families. Allowing ourselves to be inspired by nature, we will begin the session with a walk outdoors to observe the different colors, shapes, textures and sounds that the season has to offer. We will collect materials from nature and bring them back indoors to create expressive and unique works of art that can range from collage, sculpture, plant prints or mixed media. Led by Roxana Marroquin, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Program Associate, Agriculture & Natural Resources. **Fee: \$15 per person**



DECEMBER 2025 PROGRAMS



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. The purpose of this contest is to provide participants with a fun and educational experience, evoking creativity, to make natural edible treats for the center's backyard forest friends. Add to a winter's bounty by registering for this contest and submitting a forest feeder for our forest friends to enjoy! All contest entries will be displayed for one week (or for as long as the wildlife will allow) during the winter holiday and will be voted on by a panel of eco-experts! Grand prizes are awarded to entries that place first in all categories; second and third place entries will be recognized with a plaque, certificate and a small gift from the Environmental Center. For contest rules and to register, please contact the Essex County Environmental Center at 973.228.8776 or email tbutler@parks.essexcountynj.org. **FREE**

TODDLER SEASONAL SENSORY HIKE—HIBERNATION

Saturday, December 20

10am to 11am

For children ages 1 to 5 with caregiver supervision. Bring your toddlers for a seasonal sensory exploration outside with an ECEC staff naturalist. Visit the forest trails, frog pond, Passaic River and more. **Fee: \$12 per child, \$15 per adult**



OWL PELLET DISSECTION

Saturday, December 20

2:30pm to 4pm

For families. Learn about these beautiful and mysterious silent hunters of the night. Discover what they are eating by carefully reconstructing the bones found inside owl pellets, while discussing predators and prey and food chain dynamics. **Fee: \$12 per child, \$15 per adult**

S'MORES n' MORE

Saturday, December 27

11am to 12:30pm

For all ages. Join an ECEC naturalist-guided short walk on the trails and experience forest life in wintertime. Practice fundamental fire skills and build a campfire in a safe and controlled environment. Once we get our fire burning, we'll roast marshmallows and make s'mores. **Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult**



WINTER WILDLIFE EXPLORERS CAMP

Tuesday, Dec. 30 and Wednesday, Dec. 31

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. **Fee: \$120 per camper per day**

JANUARY 2026 PROGRAMS



TODDLER SEASONAL SENSORY HIKE—ANIMAL TRACKS

Saturday, January 10

10am to 11am

For children ages 1 to 5 with caregiver supervision. Bring your toddlers for a seasonal sensory exploration outside with an ECEC staff naturalist. Visit the forest trails, frog pond, Passaic River and more. **Fee: \$12 per child, \$15 per adult**

JANUARY 2026 PROGRAMS



MILKWEED AND MONARCHS: SEED STARTING

Saturday, January 10

3pm to 4:30pm

For all ages. You'll learn how the right plants can offer a banquet for bees and butterflies, creatures that enrich our lives with color, beauty and grace and support biodiversity around our homes. Together we'll plant native swamp milkweed seeds in milk jugs that act as a miniature greenhouse, providing a protected place in which the seeds can cold-stratify outside and then germinate and grow outdoors until late April and May when they are transplanted into container pots or directly into your garden. **Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult**

DIY FIRE CIDER FOR WINTER WELLNESS

Saturday, January 17

10am to 11:30am

For adults. Fire cider is a traditional herbal folk remedy that uses easily accessible kitchen ingredients to create a powerful winter tonic. This vinegar and honey-based infusion has been used throughout the ages to keep the immune system strong all winter long. We will discuss the history and tradition of fire cider, the medicinal properties and benefits of the ingredients that go into it, as well as recommended guidelines for how to use it. Everyone will create their own fire cider to take home. Led by Roxana Marroquin, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Program Associate, Agriculture & Natural Resources. **Fee: \$30 per person**



S'MORES n' MORE

Saturday, January 17

2:30pm to 4pm

For all ages. Join an ECEC naturalist-guided short walk on the trails and experience forest life in wintertime. Practice fundamental fire skills and build a campfire in a safe and controlled environment. Once we get our fire burning, we'll roast marshmallows and make s'mores. **Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult**

TODDLER SEASONAL SENSORY HIKE—GROUND HOGS

Saturday, January 24

10am to 11am

For children ages 1 to 5 with caregiver supervision. Bring your toddlers for a seasonal sensory exploration outside with an ECEC staff naturalist. Visit the forest trails, frog pond, Passaic River and more. **Fee: \$12 per child, \$15 per adult**



FEBRUARY 2026 PROGRAMS

GROW AND GLOW: HERBS FOR SELF-CARE

Saturday, February 7

10am to 11:30am

For families. Learn about the different herbs that can be used for self-care to reduce stress, boost confidence and to promote radiant skin and hair. We will discuss the importance of taking care of our mental and emotional wellbeing and how herbs and plants can become supportive allies in our personal growth and care. Participants will create their own herbal product, such as oil infusion, bath salts and/or sugar scrub to take home, as well as write a personal affirmation to help them remain committed to their wellness and self-care. Led by Roxana Marroquin, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Program Associate, Agriculture & Natural Resources. **Fee: \$30 per person**



TODDLER SEASONAL SENSORY HIKE—EAGLES

Saturday, February 14

10am to 11am

For children ages 1 to 5 with caregiver supervision. Bring your toddlers for a seasonal sensory exploration outside with an ECEC staff naturalist. Visit the forest trails, frog pond, Passaic River and more. **Fee: \$12 per child, \$15 per adult**

FEBRUARY 2026 PROGRAMS

VALENTINES' FAMILY WALK & CAMPFIRE

Saturday, February 14

2:30 to 4pm



For all ages. Experience forest life in wintertime and make birch bark hearts and necklaces that double as fire-starters. We'll build a campfire, make s'mores, and enjoy fire-popped popcorn and mint tea or hot chocolate. Dress warmly for the weather. Advanced registration and minimum number of participants required. **Fee: \$15 per child and \$20 per adult**

ESSEX COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY: BASIC BEEKEEPING: 3-DAY SHORT COURSE; Saturdays, February 21 & 28 from 8:30am to 4pm; Snow-day March 7; Field Day in April TBA

For adults and children ages 12 and older. This short course is appropriate for new beekeepers, as well as those who need a refresher. It is offered by the Essex County Beekeepers Society (<http://ecbs.njbeekeepers.org/index.htm>), a branch of the New Jersey Beekeepers Association, and overseen by EAS Certified Master Beekeeper Landi Simone. Successful completion of this class fulfills the education requirement necessary to legally keep bees in New Jersey. Classroom topics covered include: Honeybee Biology, Beekeeping Equipment, Getting Started with Bees, Keeping Bees in Populated Areas, Bee Plants, Seasonal Management, Honey Bee Pests and Diseases, Harvesting Your Honey Crop, Queens, Queen Problems and Re-Queening. Day 3, Field Day, takes place in apiaries in Montville Township and provides students with an introduction to working with the bees. Students will have the experience of opening and inspecting a beehive themselves and obtaining hands-on lessons in recognizing the various components of a hive and colony as well as inspection basics such as smoker lighting, protective gear, and correct use of the hive tool. For more information, contact registrar Justin Luna at Justin@GalacticGold.org. Online registration available at <https://njbeekeepers.org/Education.htm>. Meet in Garibaldi Hall. **Fee: \$130 (includes all class materials, continental breakfast, and afternoon snack)**



PLANNING YOUR SPRING AND SUMMER GARDEN

Saturday, February 21

10am to 11:30am

For adults. Join Claudia Urdanivia, Urban Agriculture Agent for Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex and Hudson Counties, to learn about planning your spring and summer gardens. We will review the basics, best practices, and a calendar of activities to prepare for gardening season. For beginner and all garden levels. **Fee: \$15 per person**



BECOME AN ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER VOLUNTEER

Saturday, February 21

3pm to 4:30pm



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. Opportunities include programming support, gardening, outdoor stewardship projects and much more! **FREE**

TODDLER SEASONAL SENSORY HIKE—WOODPECKERS

Saturday, February 28

10am to 11am

For children ages 1 to 5 with caregiver supervision. Bring your toddlers for a seasonal sensory exploration outside with an ECEC staff naturalist. Visit the forest trails, frog pond, Passaic River and more. **Fee: \$12 per child, \$15 per adult**



BUILD-A-BIRD HOUSE

Saturday, February 28

3pm to 4:30pm

For all ages. Join us to build a home that encourages breeding birds and other wildlife to take residence. Putting out bird houses now improves the chances of having a nesting pair of songbirds in gardens by spring. Advanced registration and minimum number of participants required. **Fee: \$25 per birdhouse (2 people max per birdhouse).**

LOOKING AHEAD

SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION PACKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE MID-FEBRUARY 2026! FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL THE CENTER AT 973.228.8776 OR CHECK THE ONLINE CALENDAR AT www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.

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. For an up to date listing of meeting dates or for more information, 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

Diego Garnica 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

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!

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