

**2015 and 2016: Two-Year Accomplishments  
Ocean County Soil Conservation District  
Education Outreach Program**

*In an effort to support the OCSCD Mission Statement: "...to implement exemplary programs and services focusing on the following issues: ...further natural resource stewardship...develop and nurture effective relationships with [the community] to sustain functioning ecosystem services through education and resource management", the Education & Outreach Department provided high quality programs and point-of-contact services based on the following Action Items, as set forth in the Annual Plan of Operations:*

**Item #3 – General Operations**

**Activity 3:** Participate in training opportunities:

**2015:** ANJEE, CEC Retreat

**2016:** ANJEE, Rutgers Organic Land Care Course, CEC Retreat, Land Conservation Conference, NENACD Conference, NRCS Webinars (Sept 13, Soil Health Impacts on Pest Management; Sept 21, Xerces - Pollinator Habitat; Aug 31 and Sept 28, USDA PLANTS parts 1 and 2), SWCS hosts Xerces Society program, ALS Conference, Project WET

**Activity 5:** Serve as liaison for Barnegat Bay Partnership Communication & Education Committee

**2015-2016:** Actively attended BBP CEC monthly meetings on behalf of OCSCD.

**Item #4 – Education Initiatives (Grant Related)**

**Activity 1:** Continue to manage, coordinate, administer and implement grants and expand granted projects

**Grant 2: SHIP (Soil Health Improvement Project) Jakes Branch County Park**

**2015:** Hosted and facilitated tour of SHIP Gardens for EPA visit, Aug 5.

**2015-2016:** Although the grant is officially closed, E&O continued to utilize Jakes Branch as a venue for educational workshops and programs, utilizing the SHIP Gardens as demonstration sites for soil and native plant education and exploration. OCSCD's E&O Department takes a leading role in plant replacement and garden maintenance, along with volunteer recruitment.

**Grant 3: Partner w/American Littoral Society**

**2016:** Attended culminating program at OC Library, shared E&O literature

**Grant 4: NJ Bay Friendly Yards and Stormwater Practices: Promoting Best Practices through an Interactive Information Portal and Pilot Communities Demonstration Projects - 319h project**

**2015:** OCSCD, subcontractor, began implementation of the "Pilot Communities

Demonstration Projects” component. Through an application process, six Pilot Communities: Bay Head Shores, Cedarcroft Club, Metedeconk River Yacht Club, Nejecho Beach, Seawood Harbor, and Visitation Relief Center were selected to pilot the *Jersey-Friendly Yards* website and be demonstration sites to showcase the *Jersey-Friendly Yards* gardens. Soil assessments and tests were conducted on each site and used in conjunction with the [www.jerseyyards.org](http://www.jerseyyards.org) website to select appropriate plants. \$500 value in plant materials for each site were purchased from Pinelands Nursery and Clemson Farms. Planting occurred in the end of October and early November for all sites. Monitoring will continue to take place in the spring. **2016:** Continued monitoring of sites. Submitted comprehensive Final Report including Case Studies.

#### **Grant 5: From Lawn to Garden – Going Green, Saving Green**

**2016:** Completed project implementation: 3 native plant gardens at 3 OceanFirst Bank branches using Jersey-Friendly Yards website to plan, design and select plants for gardens. Completed the required 6 educational program presentations, plus an additional 5 programs. Submitted biannual reports. Final report to be submitted in January, 2017.

#### **Item #5 – Education Initiatives (Non-Grant Related)**

##### **Activity 1: Seek grants and funding to support non-grant initiatives and programs**

**2015:**

- Wrote and submitted “*From Lawn to Garden – Going Green, Saving Green*”. Grant was funded for 2015-2016 implementation.

**2016:**

- Wrote and submitted proposal to NJDEP: “*Jersey-Friendly Yards Along the Metedeconk River*”.
- Wrote and submitted pre-proposal, “*Discovering Jersey-Friendly Yards*”; pre-proposal accepted; plan to submit proposal, “*Discovering Jersey-Friendly Yards*”, for 2017-2018 implementation.

##### **Activity 2: Maintain and enhance OCSCD website and Constant Contact**

E&O continues to update the OCSCD website with educational information under the “Educational Programs/Resources” tab and the “Healthy Soil Resources” tab. Information is continually modified on the EERT, Poster Contest, and TIC pages to reflect current programs and events.

**2015:** A new tab for the International Year of Soils was created on the OCSCD website to promote monthly workshops.

**2016:** A new tab was created on the OCSCD website to promote educational programs available to the public in 2016.

##### **Activity 3: Maintain communication and network with regional and statewide initiatives**

### **2015 and 2016:**

- Received support from Barnegat Bay Roundtable Steering & Planning Committee for Annual Barnegat Bay Watershed Environmental Educators Roundtable
- Attended monthly BBP CEC meetings and actively participated in event
- Attended and presented at annual ANJEE Conferences
- Partnered with Brick MUA in educational program presentations

### **Activity 4: Trout in the Classroom**

**2015:** Participated in all planning meetings and offered support on TIC Field Day on May 13, 2015. **Serviced 140 students**

**2016:** Participated in all planning meetings and offered support on TIC Field Day on May 18, 2016. **Serviced 150 students**

### **Activity 5: Organize Soil Health Workshops with various partners (OCSCD Monthly Programs)**

**2015:** Implemented 12 workshops in support of International Year of Soils. (See attached descriptions of each program.) Partnered with various organizations: Ocean County Department of Solid Waste, Mary Jerkowicz; NJDEP Watershed Ambassador, Jordan Foreman; NRCS, Rob Tunstead; NRCS, Fred Schoenagel III. Workshops were well received by the public, Master Gardeners, Master Composters and Master Naturalists, all with whom relationships are being built and strengthened. A total of **144 participants** attended workshops in 2015.

**2016:** Implemented 11 workshops through the "From Lawn to Garden – Going Green, Saving Green" grant project. (See attached descriptions of each program.) Partnered with various organizations: BTMUA, Shari Kondrup; BBP, Karen Walzer; Ocean County Department of Solid Waste, Mary Jerkowicz; NPSNJ, President John Black and Jersey Shore Chapter co-leaders; Rutgers Soil Testing Laboratory, Dr. Stephanie Murphy; Montclair University, Dr Jennifer Krumins; Eileen Miller; MATES/Project Terrapin, Dr. John Wnek; and NRCS, Fred Schoenagel III. A total of **190 participants** attended workshops in 2016.

### **Activity 6: Coordinate Local Annual Poster Contest**

Promoted 2015 and 2016 Poster Contest information on OCSCD website, through Constant Contact and via email. OCSCD website information regarding contest and winners is updated to reflect the current contest and the previous year's winner.

**2015:** *Our Hardworking Pollinators*

**Received 22 entries**, selected 1 Grand Champion Winner: Aleia Sabra, who received \$250 prize toward an environmental project – a Butterfly Garden, at her homeschool.

**2016:** *We All Need Trees*

**Received 35 entries**, selected 1 Grand Champion Winner: Anthony Rivera, from Jackson Liberty High School. Planning for 2017 Poster Contest; theme: *Healthy Soils Are Full of Life!*

**Activity 7: Exhibit Soil Health Display at Festivals and Outreach Events**

Set up a table to exhibit the “Improve Your Soil Health” display, handed-out Low Maintenance Landscaping guides and supplemental literature at Ocean County events in 2015 and 2016.

**2015: Exposure to 7395 people**

**2016: Exposure to 4450 people** (\*Decline in numbers due to: attended WILD EXPO on Sunday only, so 3600 fewer people reached than in 2015; rainy BBP Festival, so 3000 fewer guests reached than in 2015.)

**Activity 8: Distribution of Low Maintenance Landscaping Guide**

2015-2016: Distributed approximately 7000 LML Guides at events and workshops, stuffed with additional literature including: “Going Native!”, New Jersey Soil Health Assessment Guide, Jersey-Friendly Yards postcard.

**Activity 9: Provide In-service Workshops and Professional Development Utilizing Discovering Barnegat Bay**

2015-16: \*Non-active.

2016-17: Discovering Barnegat Bay curriculum is the platform upon which the 2017 EERT will be launched. (See Activity 12)

**Activity 10: Convert DBB into Electronic Format**

\*To be explored

**Activity 11: Project Soil Conservation Activity Guide**

\*Project on-hold/Non-active

**Activity 12: Plan and Coordinate Environmental Educators Roundtable**

**2015:** 18<sup>th</sup> Annual EERT on April 22: **83 people attended**; theme: “Celebrating the International Year of Soils”; organizations represented at the Roundtable included: Barnegat Bay Partnership, NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Services), NJ Sea Grant Consortium, Collier Youth Services – Kateri Environmental Center, JCNERR (Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve), Save Barnegat Bay, MATES – Project Terrapin, Ocean County Department of Solid Waste Management, Master Composters, Cedar Hollow Consulting, Naturally!, Potter Creek Crusaders, Ocean County Parks & Recreation, Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish & Wildlife, Pinelands Direct Native Plants – Pinelands Nursery, and BEAR (Boating Education and Rescue).

**2016:** 19<sup>th</sup> Annual EERT on April 20: **90 people attended**; theme “We All Need Trees” (continuing theme of Poster Contest); organizations represented at the Roundtable included: Barnegat Bay Partnership, NJ Sea Grant Consortium, Collier Youth Services – Kateri Environmental Center, JCNERR (Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve), Save Barnegat Bay, MATES – Project Terrapin, Ocean County Department of Solid Waste Management, Master Composters, Cedar Hollow Consulting, Naturally!, Potter Creek Crusaders, Ocean County Parks & Recreation, Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish & Wildlife, State Forestry Service, Jenkinsons Aquarium, and Pinelands Direct - Pinelands Nursery.

### **Activity 13: Barnegat Bay Festival**

**2015:** Exhibited “Improve Your Soil Health” display, set up the soil tunnel, patrons made “soil” using edible goodies, shared hands-on opportunities to touch and learn about soil. Approximately **5000 people** in attendance

**2016:** Exhibited “Improve Your Soil Health” display, set up the soil tunnel, shared hands-on opportunities to touch and learn about soil. \*Inclement weather, lower attendance rate. Approximately **2000 people** in attendance

### **Activity 14: Internship Opportunities**

**2015:** Retained **2 summer interns** and **15 volunteers**.

Volunteers assisted with gardening/weeding, implementing Outreach Programs.

**2016:** Recruited **one steady “part-time” volunteer**, Rita Varneke, who offers her time 2 days a week to assist with light office duties including organizing and filing, with grant implementation including garden installation, weeding and planting, and assists with facilitation of events and education programs. Ms. Varneke has offered over 300 hours in 2016.

### **Activity 15: Outreach Programs**

**2015:** Developed and implemented adult and children’s Outreach Programs; presented to schools, scouts, garden clubs, libraries, YMCA summer campers, community groups, government committees and interested organizations. Also presented special programs at Master Composter Training Session, Rutgers Shellfish Restoration Volunteer Training, Rutgers Soil Summit for Teachers. **Serviced a total of 906 people**

**2016:** Developed and implemented adult and children’s Outreach Programs; presented to schools, garden clubs, libraries, YMCA summer campers, community groups and interested organizations. Presented special programs at ANJEE, Master Composter Training Session, CEC Retreat, Rutgers Soil Summit for Students, New Jersey Conservation Foundation Land Conference, Native Plant Society of New Jersey Spring and Fall Conferences. **Serviced a total of 179 people**

### **Activity 16: NJ Envirothon**

**2015:** Led the Wildlife Station. Created and implemented the Wildlife Station Hands-on and Written Tests with assistance from NJ Watershed Ambassadors, Freehold Soil District, MacKenzie Hall of NJDEP, and volunteers. Theme was “Urban and Community Forestry”. **Serviced 36 teams of 4 = 128 students**. Also facilitated the South Jersey Training, **22 students**.

**2016:** Co-led the Wildlife Station. Created the Written Test only, with assistance from NJ Watershed Ambassadors and MacKenzie Hall of NJDEP. Co-implemented the Wildlife Station with Freehold Soil District. Theme was “Invasive Species”. **Serviced 36 teams of 4 = 128 students**. Also facilitated the South Jersey Training, **22 students**.

\*In 2017, OCSCD will continue to co-lead and co-implement the Wildlife Station, creating Written Test only.

**Activity 17: Update/create/maintain database and mailing list/contacts for E&O activities**

Initiated the requisition of Constant Contact in 2015 as a tool for education and outreach promotion, in an effort to mainstream communications with constituents. Information regarding educational programs and events is actively disseminated through Constant Contact.

**2015:** OCSCD had 674 active *Constant Contact* contacts; 16 campaigns were sent, 1 event registration was created.

**2016:** OCSCD has 1116 active *Constant Contact* contacts; 16 campaigns were sent, 2 event registrations were created, 1 survey was sent.

\*For both combined years, we have an average 27.9% open rate.

**Activity 18: Track participants, evaluations, etc. Provide quarterly reports on E&O activities to District Director and Board**

**2015:** A total of **14,213** people participated in or were exposed to Education & Outreach programs, workshops, events and activities, offered throughout the year by OCSCD E&O Department.

**2016:** A total of **7772** people participated in or were exposed to Education & Outreach programs, workshops, events and activities, offered throughout the year by OCSCD E&O Department.

(\*2016 decline in numbers due to: attendance at WILD EXPO on Sunday only, so 3600 fewer people reached than in 2015; rainy BBP Festival, so 3000 fewer guests reached than in 2015. However, taking those two events into account, all other things being equal, exposure/participation in E&O programs/events **increased by 113 people in 2016.**)

Quarterly comprehensive reports are created and offered to the District Director and Board for all Board Meetings. Education & Outreach updates are informally shared at Staff meetings. Program evaluations are distributed at formal programs, and information collected.

OCSCD E&O Partnerships:

Barneget Bay Partnership: OCSCD is an actively participating and voting member of the Barneget Bay Partnership CEC. BBP funded and supported "*From Lawn to Garden – Going Green, Saving Green*" grant project. OCSCD's E&O Department works closely with BBP to promote and implement *Jersey-Friendly Yards* programs. OCSCD exhibits at BBP's annual Barneget Bay Festival.

Ocean County Parks & Recreation: Presented at the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> annual Roundtable; will be presenting at the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Roundtable; Park staff offer much relied-on assistance with event facilitation. OCSCD has a partnership with Jakes Branch for program venue and SHIP Gardens project. OCSCD supports OCPR programs and events.

EPA: provides funding support for grant projects.

MATES/Project Terrapin: Dr John Wnek provided his expertise presenting a program on behalf of OCSCD's monthly program series.

Watershed Ambassadors: Invited to present at the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> annual Roundtables.

Rutgers: partnered on NJ Yards program, Steve Yergeau shared his expertise. Anticipate strengthening our partnership with Rutgers Master Gardeners in 2017.

Internal Collaboration with other departments:

OCSCD staff assists with the Barnegat Bay Festival and EERT, annually.

**Overall, E&O had an extremely successful past two years. I am looking forward to providing continuity of programs, workshops and outreach in 2017!**

## **2015: International Year of Soils, Education Programs**

### **January 31: “Gardening from the Ground Up!”**

In this hands-on workshop we will explore soil from a garden’s point of view, compare different soil types, learn about the importance of pH, meet the organisms that live in soil, and discover why healthy soil is at the root of a healthy garden!

### **February 28: “Gardening for Pollinators”**

Pollinators such as bees, butterflies and hummingbirds are crucial to the vitality of our gardens. They adorn our yards and provide important eco-services to humans. In this hands-on workshop, you will discover ways to design and create backyard habitat that supports these beautiful creatures, starting with healthy soil and native plants.

### **March 22: “Soil to Spoon – Healthy Food Gardening on the Jersey Shore”**

A healthy soil produces healthy food. The unique sand, acidic soils of the Jersey Shore offers gardeners opportunities to produce and harvest local specialties that thrive in these native soil conditions. Learn the needs of your favorite food crops and naturally amend your soil to support their growth.

### **April 18: “Composting Workshop”**

The Ocean County Board of Freeholders with Ocean County Department of Solid Waste Management and Ocean County Soil Conservation District is sponsoring a free “how-to” compost class for Ocean County residents. Learn how you can manage your organic waste, explore the benefits of using finished compost, and improve your soil health. Presented by the Ocean County Master Composters in collaboration with the Ocean County Soil Conservation District.

### **May 30: “Rain Garden Workshop & Tour”**

This workshop teaches the basics of designing and planting a Rain Garden for Barnegat Bay watershed homeowners. Make your yard a sponge! Prevent flooding and erosion, recharge our groundwater supply and provide habitat for wildlife. We will tour the SHIP native plant demonstration gardens to see what an authentic Rain garden looks like and how it works. Presented in collaboration with NJDEP Watershed Ambassador, Jordan Foreman.

### **June 28: Native Plant Gardening”**

Native plants are adapted to the natural soil conditions, climate and wildlife around them. Learn how gardening with native plants can save you time and money, create a beautiful landscape, and attract wildlife to your backyard. A colorful photo presentation will be followed by a tour of the SHIP (Soil Health Improvement Project) native plant demonstration gardens at Jakes Branch Count Park.

### **July 18: “How to be a Soil Food Web Gardener”**

Healthy soil is at the root of all life on Earth – including the plants in your garden. Enhance your garden’s productivity by becoming a soil food web gardeners. By understanding the macro and micro-organisms that live in a balanced underground ecosystem in your soil, you can provide them with the optimum conditions they need to survive. You’ll reap the benefits of healthy, functioning, naturally nutrient-rich soil.



**August 30: “Low Maintenance Landscaping”**

The Jersey Shore is a sought-after place to live, work and play. But our hot summers, cold winters, sandy soils and salt spray can pose many challenges to home gardening and landscaping. This program offers solutions by taking a low-maintenance approach, and working with the conditions nature offers. Explore and discover ways to landscape your yard and garden with beautiful native plants, water conserving techniques and healthy soil-building strategies.

**September 27: “Gardening with Native New Jersey Soil”**

Native soils support native plants and animals. Jersey soils are sandy, acidic and nutrient poor – a perfect recipe to support native plants that are adapted to thrive in these unique soil conditions. Once you get to know your soil’s properties, you can make appropriate landscaping decisions for a healthier yard and garden.

**October 17: “Assessing Your Soil’s Health”**

It’s important to have a healthy foundation on which to build your garden. Soil is that foundation – it provides your plants with mineral nutrients, air, water and a place to grow. But, how do you know if your soil is healthy? A “soil health assessment” can provide you with valuable information about the physical, chemical and biological properties of your soil, and offer solutions to common problems such as compaction, erosion, lack of nutrients, and pH that is too acidic or too alkaline. Discover how to assess your own soil, determine its health, and amend your soil to create a healthier garden.

**November 12 “Soils on the Web”**

*Soils are the Foundation of Our Lives!* Do you know the type of soil under your feet? Under your house? Under your town? Knowing the type of soil below, can inform your decisions about what to build or plant above. Soil surveys can be used by gardeners, farmers, and for local area planning. Soil survey information can be used to make informed decisions about gardening and farming practices, home ownership, wetland proximity, and high water table limitations. In this workshop we will use the internet to show you how to access and use the *Web Soil Survey* and *Google Earth* to help you get a better understanding of the soil beneath your feet. Bring your laptop if you have one. This program is presented in partnership with Rob Tunstead, NRCS.

**December 12: “Celebrating Soil”**

*“Soil Supports Life on Planet Earth!”* Soil is truly the foundation of our lives – the rock that keeps us grounded. Soil supports our food crops, cleans our drinking water, provides a place to live, work and play, and keeps our planet functioning properly through its many systems and cycles. Join the Ocean County Soil Conservation District and guest presenter, Fred C. Schoenagel III, Resource Soil Scientist with NRCS, for a hands-on exploration, discovery and celebration of the gifts of soil.

# *From Lawn to Garden – Going Green, Saving Green!*

The [Ocean County Soil Conservation District](#) is excited to announce our 2016 monthly series of educational programs, **From Lawn to Garden - Going Green, Saving Green**. Programs are designed to promote low maintenance landscaping, highlight the ecologic and economic benefits of best landscape management practices, and inspire stewardship of natural resources. Program goals and objectives are supported by the Landscape for Life™ curriculum, which is based on the principles of the Sustainable Sites Initiative™ (SITES™) program. Each month features a new topic; all programs are FREE to the public. The [From Lawn to Garden - Going Green, Saving Green](#) monthly educational programs series is a collaborative effort with [OceanFirst Bank](#), and made possible in part through funding from the [Barnegat Bay Partnership](#). For a list of topics, dates, times and program descriptions please visit [www.soildistrict.org](http://www.soildistrict.org) or contact Becky Laboy, Education Outreach Specialist, [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org), (609) 971-7002 ext. 114.

## **Sunday, January 31 (12:30-2:30pm): Water Conservation in the Garden**

Water makes our garden grow! Knowing how to water your garden is just as important as knowing when to water. In this program we will introduce you to some water-saving tips to significantly reduce the water requirements of your garden and landscape. Topics explored include: remediating stormwater runoff in your yard, amending garden soil, mulching, how plants take-in water from the soil, and appropriate plant selection. Presented by Shari Kondrup, [Brick Township Municipal Utilities Authority](#) and Becky Laboy, [Ocean County Soil Conservation District](#). FREE! Location: [Jakes Branch County Park](#). Pre-registration required, seating is limited. For more information contact Becky Laboy, Education Outreach Specialist, Ocean County Soil Conservation District, 609-971-7002 ext. 114 or [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org)

## **Sunday, February 28 (12:30-2:30pm): Bees, Native Plants and Healthy Soil - a Sweet Garden Recipe**

Soil provides the foundation in which all food grows - even food for bees! Bees and other pollinators depend on a healthy food source of nectar and pollen. Native plants growing in healthy native soil are the perfect choice for gardeners who want to support the life cycle of honey bees or attract native pollinators to their yard. Join us for an introduction to home beekeeping, healthy soil and native plants, and taste the sweet rewards of a sustainable yard and garden. Presented by John Zingis, [Air, Land & Sea Environmental Management, Inc.](#), and Becky Laboy, [Ocean County Soil Conservation District](#). FREE! Location: Jakes Branch County Park. Pre-registration required, seating is limited. For more information contact Becky Laboy, Education Outreach Specialist, Ocean County Soil Conservation District, 609-971-7002 ext. 114 or [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org)

## **Tuesday, March 22 (6:30-8:30pm): Winter Planning for a 3-Season Flower Garden**

When the weather outside is frightful... it's a good time to begin planning your garden! Imagine your yard bursting with color from early spring to first frost in late autumn. By taking the time to assess your conditions, including soil, sun and moisture, you will have the foundational information on which to build your blooms. This program will introduce you to garden planning, design and plant selection using the Jersey-Friendly Yards website:

[www.jerseyyards.org](http://www.jerseyyards.org). Presented by Karen Walzer, Public Outreach Coordinator, [Barnegat Bay Partnership](#), Pam Almeida, co-leader, Jersey Shore Chapter of the [Native Plant Society of New](#)

[Jersey](#), and Becky Laboy, Education Outreach Specialist, [Ocean County Soil Conservation District](#). FREE! Location: [Toms River Library](#). Pre-registration required, seating is limited. For more information contact Becky Laboy, Ocean County Soil Conservation District, 609-971-7002 ext 114 or [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org)

**Saturday, April 5 (6:30-8:00pm): Native Plants for Pollinators**

The Jersey Shore Chapter of the [Native Plant Society of New Jersey](#), in partnership with [Barnegat Bay Partnership](#) and [Ocean County Soil Conservation District](#) is excited to announce “Native Plants for Pollinators”, presented by Tom and Steve Knezick, the next generation of native plant specialists in their family-owned business [Pinelands Nursery and Supply](#). Tom will discuss the ecological functions and benefits of planting natives in your garden and explore the idea of “local provenance”. Steve will share some of his favorite native wildflowers and the interesting pollinators that depend on them. Together they offer a fresh take on how to use natives in your landscape that will make your yard attractive to birds, bees, butterflies and humans! FREE! Location: [Toms River Library](#), Mancini Hall. Pre-registration required, seating is limited. For more information contact Becky Laboy, Ocean County Soil Conservation District, 609-971-7002 ext. 114 or [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org)

**Saturday, April 16 (10:00am-12:00pm): Composting Workshop**

The Ocean County Board of Freeholders with [Ocean County Department of Solid Waste Management](#), [Ocean County Master Composters](#) and [Ocean County Soil Conservation District](#) are offering a free “how-to” compost workshop for Ocean County residents. Learn how you can manage your organic waste, explore the benefits of using finished compost, and improve your soil’s health! Made possible in part through funding from the [Barnegat Bay Partnership](#). FREE! Location: Ocean County Recycling Education Center, 800 Towbin Ave, Lakewood. Pre-registration required, seating is limited to 25 participants. For more information and to register, contact Mary Jerkowicz, Ocean County Department of Solid Waste, (732) 506-5047 ext. 4365. Registrants should arrive early to enjoy a light continental breakfast. Workshop begins promptly at 10:00am. For additional information about educational programs through the [Ocean County Soil Conservation District](#), please contact Becky Laboy, Education Outreach Specialist, (609) 971-7002 ext. 114 or [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org)

**Saturday May 21 (9:00am-12:30pm): Rain Barrel Workshop**

Rain barrels are a great water conservation tool for the home gardener or conscientious citizen. Rain barrels capture rain from rooftops and help prevent pollution from stormwater runoff from entering our creeks, rivers, bay and ocean. Join us for a “make-and-take” workshop, and start harvesting rainwater at home! All tools and barrels will be provided to build your own 50 gallon Rain Barrel. Barrels are 34 inches tall and 25 inches wide, and can be placed lying down in the backseat of most vehicles to be transported home. Presented by Shari Kondrup of [Brick Township Municipal Utilities Authority](#) and Becky Laboy of the [Ocean County Soil Conservation District](#). FREE! Location: Brick Township Municipal Utilities Reservoir, 811 Herbertsville Road, Brick, NJ 08724 (For directions please visit <http://brickmua.com/reservoir/resdirections.asp>) To register, please contact Shari Kondrup, Watershed Education and Outreach, (732) 701-4282 or [skondrup@brickmua.com](mailto:skondrup@brickmua.com) **PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED, SUPPLIES ARE LIMITED.** For more information about educational programs through [Ocean County Soil Conservation District](#), please contact Becky Laboy, Education Outreach Specialist, 609-971-7002 ext. 114 or [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org).

**Saturday June 11 (12:30-2:30pm): The Chemistry of Soil – a Primer for the Home Gardener**

Soil is arguably the most important component in a gardener's landscape. Understanding the chemistry of your soil can help guide you in nurturing healthy plants and creating a healthy yard and garden. Join Dr. Stephanie Murphy, of [Rutgers Cooperative Extension/Soil Testing Laboratory](#), as she breaks down the complexities of the science of soil for a fascinating look at the chemical processes that take place beneath our feet. FREE! Location: [Jakes Branch County Park](#). Pre-registration required, seating is limited. For more information and to register contact Becky Laboy, [Ocean County Soil Conservation District](#), (609) 971-7002 ext. 114 or [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org)

**Saturday, July 30 (10:30am-12:00pm) Native Stars of the Summer Garden, Part 1: Outdoor Garden Tour - Rain Garden and Wet Garden**

Native plant species offer a diversity of color, bloom time, sustenance to wildlife and joy to the native plant gardener. They are adapted to the natural soil conditions, climate and water resources within their local environment. A tour of the SHIP (Soil Health Improvement Project) native plant demonstration gardens offers a look at the diversity of natives that create beauty and color in the summer months. We will tour the Rain Garden and Wet Garden. Rain or shine, dress for the weather. FREE! Location: Jakes Branch County Park. Pre-registration required. For more information contact Becky Laboy, Ocean County Soil Conservation District, (609) 971-7002 ext. 114 or [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org)

**Sunday, August 28 (10:30am-12:00pm) Native Stars of the Summer Garden, Part 2: Outdoor Garden Tour - Sun Garden, Shade Garden and Butterfly Garden**

Native plant species offer a diversity of color, bloom time, sustenance to wildlife and joy to the native plant gardener. They are adapted to the natural soil conditions, climate and water resources within their local environment. A tour of the SHIP (Soil Health Improvement Project) native plant demonstration gardens offers a look at the diversity of natives that create beauty and color in the summer months. We will tour the Sun Garden, Shade Garden and Butterfly Garden. Rain or shine, dress for the weather. FREE! Location: Jakes Branch County Park. Pre-registration required. For more information contact Becky Laboy, Ocean County Soil Conservation District, (609) 971-7002 ext. 114 or [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org)

**Sunday, September 18 (10:30am-12:30pm) Assessing Your Soil's Health**

It's important to have a healthy foundation on which to build your garden. Soil is that foundation – it provides your plants with mineral nutrients, air, water and a place to grow. But, how do you know if your soil is healthy? A "soil health assessment" can provide you with valuable information about the physical, chemical and biological properties of your soil, and offer solutions to common problems such as compaction, erosion, lack of nutrients, and pH that is too acidic or too alkaline. Discover how to assess your own soil, determine its health, and amend your soil to create a healthier garden. Rain or shine, dress appropriately for indoor and outdoor learning. FREE! Location: Jakes Branch County Park. Pre-registration required. For more information contact Becky Laboy, Ocean County Soil Conservation District, (609) 971-7002 ext. 114 or [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org)

**Saturday, October 8 (12:30-2:30pm) Soil Food Web Gardening**

Healthy soil is at the root of all life on Earth – including the plants in your garden. Enhance your garden's productivity by becoming a soil food web gardener. Join Dr. Jennifer Adams Krumins of Montclair University on an exploration of the macro and micro-organisms that live in a balanced

underground ecosystem in your soil. Gain a deeper understanding of the optimum soil conditions they need to survive. You'll reap the benefits of healthy, functioning, naturally nutrient-rich soil that supports your home garden or landscape. FREE! Location: Jakes Branch County Park. Pre-registration required, seating is limited. For more information please contact Becky Laboy, Ocean County Soil Conservation District, (609) 971-7002 ext. 114 or [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org)

**Saturday, November 19 (12:30-2:30pm): Turtle Gardens – Creating Native Habitat along Jersey Shore Backyards**

Intact coastal soils and native vegetation are vital shoreline components for the survival and well-being of native New Jersey turtles. This program emphasizes the importance of healthy soil and upland habitat for nesting activity and hatchling survival of turtles, in particular the Diamondback Terrapin, a protected NJ species. Dr. John Wnek, of [Project Terrapin](#) and Stephanie Egger, of [Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey](#), will introduce the concept of a “[backyard turtle garden](#)” and share information about how to create new nesting locations in coastal backyards along the Jersey Shore. FREE! Location: Jakes Branch County Park. Pre-registration required, seating is limited. For more information please contact Becky Laboy, Education Outreach Specialist, Ocean County Soil Conservation District, (609) 971-7002 ext. 114 or [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org)

**Sunday, December 4 (12:30-2:30pm): Matching Your Garden to Your Soil**

Every plant that grows on the face of the Earth, whether it has been planted in a garden or crop field, or was established on its own in woods or meadow, has a specific set of soil and site conditions that support its growth. Wherever you want to establish a garden, it is critical to match the plants you wish to grow to the soil and site conditions. Join Fred Schoenagel of USDA-NRCS as he discusses some of the physical and chemical properties of soils that are essential to plant growth. Concepts learned can be applied to your own soils and help you choose the most suitable types of plants for your garden. This program includes some hands-on activities, so be prepared to get your hands dirty, literally! FREE! Location: Jakes Branch County Park. Pre-registration required, seating is limited. For more information please contact Becky Laboy, Education Outreach Specialist, Ocean County Soil Conservation District, (609) 971-7002 ext. 114 or [education@soildistrict.org](mailto:education@soildistrict.org)