Leave the Leaves
By Michael Wilson

Once again, it’s the time of year when we address the leaves on our yards. After raking or blowing them into piles, along comes the rain or wind, blowing them all over-again. Then it’s time to give up and just leave the leaves.

This time of year I find myself cutting the lawn 2 times a week to grind them up. This does work and adds organic matter to the lawn. The important thing is to not allow the leaves to accumulate and thickly cover the lawn because that will smother the grass plant. Remember those leave blades must be exposed to sunshine so the grass plant can photosynthesize. The weather got ahead of me the other day and the leaves had to be removed due to such a thick covering, so they were raked up. Yes, raked without the aid of a blower and added to a compost pile in the back of the property with other garden waste and food scraps.

I have several perennial gardens and find it best to just allow the leaves to stay where they land in the gardens.

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Richard Diaz has been an active CCE-RC Board Member since 2016 and treasurer since 2019. It can be challenging to schedule meetings with Richard because even though, technically speaking, he’s retired, he keeps a full time schedule of volunteer activities. In addition to his work on our Board, Richard serves as:

- President of the Veterans Memorial Association of Congers
- Commissioner on the Rockland County Sewer District 1 Commission
- Trumpet player with the following bands: the Tappan Zee Bridgemen (a professional parade band), First Class (a top 40 band), Mighty Tight (a soul, r&b, and funk band), and Soul’d Again (a soul, r&b, and funk band).

Previously he served as a County Legislator, for District 11 (Congers/Valley Cottage/New City). Before that he enjoyed a 30+ year career at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, finishing his tenure as the Regional Director. He was also a youth baseball and basketball coach. An avid fisherman, Richard finds times to fish in our local rivers and lakes in between board meetings and gigs. We are fortunate that Richard brings his many and varied skills to our Board.

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Richard (second from the right) and his First Class band-mates.

save the date for Gardener’s Day April 1st, 2020

with keynote speaker Margaret Roach
Snap-Ed in Rockland County (formerly recognized as Eat Smart New York) can work with East Ramapo School District and North Rockland School District at the building level to provide free services that meet the needs, wants and vision of your school. SNAP-Ed is the educational component of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We are dedicated to working to create an environment where healthy food, physical activity and wellness are the simple choice. Our services include:

- **Classroom Nutrition Education**: SNAP-Ed can provide classroom-based nutrition education for grades 1-12. Our curricula are evidence-based and incorporate physical activity and healthy eating concepts. The curricula are interactive and designed with the flexibility of having a standalone lesson or a series of 2-6 lessons that fit well within a variety of subjects. Classes are fun, engaging and empower your students to make healthy lifestyle choices.

- **Wellness Committee Facilitation**: SNAP-Ed can participate in or facilitate the district’s wellness committee, helping revise and implement a wellness policy that fosters a healthier school environment.

- **Smarter Lunchroom Movement Support**: SNAP-Ed teams work in collaboration with the food service director to introduce Cornell University's Smarter Lunchrooms Movement. This initiative aims to make the healthy choice the easy choice by assisting the food service staff to develop a plan that promotes healthy foods to students.

- **Professional Development**: Staff training can include a variety of topics that promote wellness in the schools, including brain breaks, healthy fundraisers, healthy celebrations, or another topic that suits your needs.

- **Parent Education, Afterschool, and Summer Programming**: Nutrition education can be delivered to parents, caregivers, and/or students as a one-time or ongoing event.

For more information on SNAP-Ed programs and how your organization can implement them, contact our SNAP-Ed educators by calling (845) 429-7085, option 2 or email Steven Alihonou at sa2277@cornell.edu.

Eat Smart New York is Now SNAP-Ed

SUEZ Residential Customers can get a $75 Rain Barrel for $25!

If you are a residential SUEZ customer you can buy a rain barrel for $75 at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rockland County. You can then submit a rebate form to SUEZ who will reimburse you $50. Each residential SUEZ account in Rockland County can apply for a rebate for one rain barrel.

The rebate form can be downloaded from the My SUEZ Water website (www.MySUEZWater.com/...ResidentialRebateApplication2.pdf.)

SUEZ provides rebates on additional water-saving devices.
MGVs Try Vegetable Varieties for Citizen Science Program

Lessons from our MGV Demonstration Gardens

Cornell University maintains a Citizen Science Website, Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners, of selected vegetable varieties rated by gardeners across New York State. (VegVariety.CCE.Cornell.edu). The varieties are given a 1 to 5 star rating in the categories of Overall, Taste, Yield and Ease. There are also comments about the gardener's experience growing the variety. You can register with the site and browse the many vegetable varieties and their ratings and also contribute your own ratings from your home garden.

Supporting this site is a Cornell program called Vegetable Variety Trial Garden (VVTG). Master Gardener Volunteers at Cooperative Extension Demonstration Gardens and other public garden partners around New York State, plant specific vegetable varieties each year suggested by Cornell. Cornell provides free seeds, seedlings and interpretive sign templates to these groups along with a theme based design for nine, 3’ x 3’ beds. This year’s theme was ‘New York State, New York Seeds’. Organic and regionally grown seeds from Fruition Seeds in Naples, N.Y. were supplied for bed designs that included ‘NY Heirlooms’, ‘All Season Pollinator Plants’, ‘Edibles as Ornamentals’, ‘Disease Resistance’, and ‘Ancient Grains’.

We have been a part of the VVTG program for several years. It’s always interesting to try not only new varieties but also new vegetables. We grew Duborskian Rice, good for northern gardens, and learned that you don’t need a water paddy for rice which is used in the tropics to keep the weeds down. A nice cluster of ginger roots grew from a single ginger tuber started indoors in April and planted outside at the end of May. Two great spring crops were Kohlrabi ‘Larro’ and Kale ‘Dwarf Vates’. The summer brought a tasty tomato, ‘Summer Sweetheart’, which lasted disease free through the middle of October with prolific 1” fruit. Two cucumbers were highly rated; the long, thin ‘Green Finger’ and the very pale green skinned ‘Silver Slicer’. We’re looking forward to next year’s selection.
Young Explorers Series Gets Youth Out Hiking in Nature

Jeff Solomon lead another Nature Hike on November 2nd. The Young Explorers series is designed to get youth aged 10-12 out into nature, active, and learning. Jeff lead a group of 5 youths around Lake Kanawauke in Harriman State Park. On their hike, the children learned to look and listen for signs of wildlife. The team spotted a number of different birds, mammals, insects, and plants. They even came across a sizable pile of black bear scat.

Jeff will be leading one more hike before the end of the season on November 23rd at 10 AM. Visit our website’s event page for more information and to register for the hike: www.RocklandCCE.org/YENH

Upcoming Gardening Events

To find more information on these and future events, visit our Event Page (RocklandCCE.org/events).

Composting Made Easy

Thursday, November 14, 6:30 - 8:00 PM
Piermont Public Library

Composting is an effective way to manage organic waste at home. It enriches your soil, conserves moisture, and reduces the amount of yard and food scraps that head to the landfill. Curious about how to get started or troubleshoot issues like rotten smells or rodents? In this class—the first in a series of Sustainability Workshops organized by Sustainable Piermont—CCE’s experts will introduce easy backyard composting using kitchen scraps and other materials found in and around the home. You’ll learn how composting can save money while keeping your garden and the environment green.

This program is being presented through Piermont Public Library. Please call the office at (845) 339-4595 for more information and to register for the program.

Understanding Wine

Thursday, November 21, 7:00 - 8:30 PM
South Orangetown Continuing Education
at Tappan Zee High School

For those who have an appreciation of wine which goes beyond just drinking it, this program will explore the history of wine as well as the growing of the grapes and the making of the final product. We also will discuss wines from around the world and the wines which do best in each region, paying special attention to US wines.

This program is being presented through South Orangetown Continuing Education. Please call the office at (845) 379-1012 for more information and to register. You must register in advance and there is a fee for this program.
Thursday, November 14, 8:30 - 10:30 AM
CCE Rockland
The workshop is being presented by Sylvia A. Welch, Ph.D., a local grant writer who has brought literally millions of dollars into Rockland County through successful grant applications.

• Do I Follow this Money Road or Not: Does the grant fit my organization’s mission? Will this grant reinforce/complement my current activities and approved plans?
• Basics of Grant Writing and Budget Development: Dissecting/analyzing a funding request, usually known as a Request for Proposal (RFP) from government agencies, and guidelines for Letters of Interest from foundations.
• Identify a grant writing team and organizing their work using the RFP as your guide.
• Budgeting - can existing staff run the new program, or will full and/or part timers be needed, and what is the market rate for those-what are your current overhead costs (rent, utilities, insurance, phone, internet, etc) and how to prorate these costs for your new budget.

Have you noticed a knowledge or skills gap in your team? Make a suggestion for a future INP Leadership Seminar. Email Suzanne at sb2475@cornell.edu

Future INP Programs

Tuesday, December 3, 8:30 - 10:30 AM
CCE Rockland
This workshop will explains Planned Giving and how to develop a program for nonprofit agencies. Presented by Nancy Brownell, VP of Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley. In addition to her community foundation experience, Ms. Brownell serves on the Board of Directors of the Estate Planning Council for Putnam County. Topics will include:

• Fundamentals of Planned Giving
• Future Trends
• Developing a Planned Giving Program
Leave the Leaves (continued from page 1)

Again, if too many accumulate, I may remove them from certain plants that do not want too much organic matter around their crowns. However, my wife and I do not like the look of just leaves as a mulch, so I will mulch on top of the leaves to hide them. We do the mulching in the fall for several reasons. One is to disguise the leaves. Another is so the leaves stay in place over the winter instead of blowing around. And begin finally, mulching helps the process of decomposition. In time, this will develop into nice garden loam and an area that is so fertile that fertilization is an option. By mulching now, one spring chore is eliminated and if you grow bulbs, then a nice layer of mulch is already applied. It is difficult to mulch most spring bulbs once they emerge.

If you put your leaves out along the curb line to be picked up by your municipality, please keep them a few feet away from the curb and out of the street. Not only are they a traffic hazard, but they also can be washed down a catch basin in the street and clog up stormwater systems. Most towns have the equipment to pick them up from your lawn. Better to adopt the concept of “Leave the Leaves” and find the beneficial uses for them.

For questions and information about leaf removal or other garden chores, feel free to contact the Horticultural Lab by calling 845-429-7085 ext. 110 or email mw767@cornell.edu.

Teaming up to Take on Composting Education

CCE does outreach and education on composting and waste reduction at farmers markets, elementary schools, libraries, and public events. This program is made possible through joint collaboration and funding provided by the Rockland County Solid Waste Management Authority (RocklandRecycles.com).

For more information contact CCE’s Horticulture Resource Educator Kristen Ossmann at kno7@cornell.edu.

Senior Citizens’ Day at the Lab!

Visit the Horticulture Diagnostic Laboratory on any Wednesday in October and present this coupon to pay just $5 for your first diagnostic service ($10 per sample for each additional sample)

You can save the paper and be environmentally conscious by using the coupon word instead. When you come to the Lab, mention November’s code Leave the Leaves to get the coupon price on your service.

This coupon is good for the month of November 2019. Keep an eye out for the December coupon in our next Newsletter.

Upcoming Events

Fertilizer Law Certificate Class
This course qualifies participants to obtain a landscaping license through Rockland County. Certificates of Completion required by the County are distributed at the conclusion of the class.

Wednesday, December 4th
8:00 - 10:00 AM
at CCE’s Education Center 10 Patriot Hills Drive
Stony Point, NY 10980

Fee: $35.00

Although payment can be made on the date of the class, registration in advance is required.

To register contact: Jennifer Strianese at jas946@cornell.edu or (845) 429-7085 x117

January Session
Wednesday, January 8th
8:00 - 10:00 AM