Available Now

Have you gotten your Gardener’s Day tickets yet? Get them now to save with the Early Bird rate!

MARGARET ROACH

A Way to Garden

Don’t miss Margaret Roach, this year’s keynote speaker!

more on page 5

Environmental STEM Day at Haverstraw Elementary School

On December 18, Cornell Cooperative Extension educators collaborated with the Rockland County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Rockland County Solid Waste Management Authority to host an Environmental STEM Day for nearly 200 fourth grade students at the Haverstraw Elementary School.

For one of the three sessions, Horticulture Resource Educator Kristen Ossmann taught the students about composting. The students learned about the significance of composting and why it is so important to reduce the amount of “trash” we are putting into the waste stream. Instead of dealing with our food scraps at home most people put them in trash bags to be hauled hundreds of miles away where they rot all together in a landfill. Food scraps in landfills are one of the top contributors to greenhouse gasses. Kristen talked about how that system is not working for our environment and how we can take action through composting to reduce our waste stream and create a natural and beneficial fertilizer right at home. The students learned about all the different things you can and can’t compost at home and just the right recipe to make sure that their composting is a success.

Another session focused on the Hudson River Fish Advisory and was facilitated by CCE’s Environmental Educator, Jennifer Zunino, with help...
from the 4-H Youth Development Educator, Kristin Ruggiero. In this session, the students learned that due to PCB contamination in the Hudson River, boys must wait until they are 15 to eat certain fish from the Hudson, but girls must wait until they are 50, which is when they will be out of childbearing age. Since Haverstraw is a waterfront community, this information is crucial to ensure the health and well-being of community members.

Nicole Laible and Brianna Rosamilia from the Rockland County Soil and Water Conservation District led the third session on the American Eel. After learning about the biology and lifecycle of the American Eel, youth participants competed in an “Eel Relay Race,” where they performed tasks based on the life stages of the eel. Youth learned that eels are transparent when they are young, and that they travel thousands of miles in their lifetime.

We are truly grateful for the support from the staff and students at Haverstraw Elementary School, the Hudson Valley Fish Advisory, the Stormwater Consortium, the Rockland County Solid Waste Management Authority, and the community members who made this program possible.

For more information about Cornell Cooperative Extension youth programs and resources, go to our website at RocklandCCE.org/Youth or call (845) 429-7085.

This year, 26 teens throughout Rockland County participated in our annual 4-H Veterinary Science Career Exploration Program, which gives high school youth the opportunity to explore veterinary careers and develop skills with experienced professionals. In this 9-session series, participants engage in hands-on activities, meet veterinarians and veterinary technicians, gain insight into career opportunities, and develop knowledge about animal care and behavior.

The program is fortunate to have dedicated speakers who return each year to share their experiences and focus on specific topics. This year, Dr. Weiner from the County Animal Hospital discussed various career fields within Veterinary Science; Dr. Wetherly from Haverstraw demonstrated a canine health maintenance exam; Dr. Atkins and Dr. Collins from Valley Cottage focused on anatomy and physiology, and Dr. Goldmann from Nanuet explained the educational requirements and debt considerations related to veterinarians. New this year, the Bergen County Community College Veterinary Technology Program led an interactive session on pet CPR and first aid, and the youth were able to visit the Bergen County Horse Rescue where they learned about proper horse care and rehabilitation. The participants also learned about holistic medicine from Dr. Winikoff of the Rockland Holistic Veterinary Care, along with cat care and handling from Dr. Saunders of the Cat Care Clinic of the Nyacks. For the final session, the students dissected rats and explored case studies with Dr. Byman from North Rockland and Jennifer Battiato from Valley Cottage and the Bergen County Community College.

The 4-H Veterinary Science Program runs from October through December and is open to all students in grades 9 to 12. To learn more about this program, please visit the Cornell Cooperative Extension website at RocklandCCE.org/VetSci or contact Kristin Ruggiero at klf37@cornell.edu.
From the Archives: Ask the Master Gardeners

Q. I received a beautiful poinsettia over the holidays. What should I do to keep this plant happy and healthy?

A. Poinsettias (Euphorbia pulcherrima) are one of the most popular holiday plants which, with proper care, continually give pleasure over the winter months. Plants are usually sold with the pot wrapped in colored foil. As this prevents proper drainage, it’s best to remove it or punch several holes on the bottom of the wrapper. Poinsettias should be watered only when the soil is slightly dry to the touch. If they are kept in bright light, but not direct sun, and a draft free environment, they will last all winter.

To keep the poinsettia alive all year for another holiday display in December, follow these simple monthly steps:

- **February:** Remove any wrapping and begin feeding the plant with a commercial plant food once a month.
- **March:** Cut stems back 4-6” to force new growth
- **April:** Repot into a larger pot using an enriched potting soil.
- **May/June:** Move the plant outdoors once the temperature remains above 60 degrees and feed the plant every two weeks.
- **July/August/September:** Keep the plant in a shaded location, watering when necessary and feeding every two weeks. Pinch back every so often to keep the plant full.
- **October/November/December:** In the fall bring the plant indoors to a sunny window in a cool location avoiding heating units. Stop feeding the plant but continue watering when the soil is dry. At this point the plant needs at least 12 hours of darkness a day for at least 40 days to encourage the bracts to color. A dark basement or closet is a perfect location for the 12 hour daily blackout. Finally, in December, as the bracts become a brilliant hue, the poinsettia can become again the center of interest on the holiday table.

by Vivienne Dieckmann


---

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.

---

Page 3
When we think of boxwood as a landscape plant we often visualize *Buxus sempervirens*, which many consider a relatively boring plant, but is deer resistant and evergreen. Common boxwood does have a useful place in the landscape in the creation of hedges and topiaries, and is often used in a formal garden as an edging plant. There are 30 species of Boxwood and most of the ones utilized in our gardens are cultivars of *B. sempervirens* or *B. microphylla*. Some of these have ornamental features that are desirable in the garden and show that Boxwood is not such a boring plant.

*Buxus harlandii* is a boxwood that is not commonly found in the nursery trade and needs to have more exposure. According to Hortus Third, it is probably not in cultivation and material offered under this name is misidentified. Some sources do list it as a clone and Michael Dirr feels that the form in cultivation is probably a clone of *B. microphylla var. sinica*. Most of the sources claim that the plant is only hardy to zone 7 and should have winter protection. The plant has a much larger leaf that can reach up to 2” long with a rounded tip. The plant also grows in a vase-like habit that is only 3 feet tall. I may have a true species form of *B. harlandii* because my two plants at home in zone 6 are never protected, although one is planted near the house on the northeastern side. I took my cuttings from an old specimen at Willowwood Arboretum that had no winter protection.

There are two different variegated forms of *Buxus sempervirens* that are worth noting and again gives some variety to boxwood. One is *B. s. ‘Argenteo-variegata’*, which has leaves variegated with white margins. This is not as common in the nursery trade as *B. s. ‘Aureo-variegata’* and has leaves that are yellow on the margins. Both of these are striking in the garden and can be a useful accent plant.

Boxwood is easy to root from cutting and this is how I acquired the boxwoods that are in my yard. The plant that sparked an interest in propagation by cutting for me was the Kingsville Dwarf Boxwood and the ones available to me for propagation was from stock that was acquired from the Kingsville Nursery in MD. When I worked at Skylands. Today I have several plants in my rock garden and they average in height about 2 feet and are only about 2 to 3 feet wide. These cuttings were taken in 1986. This is a slow growing plant of less than 2” per year with very condensed, tight foliage that forms a nice bun for the rock garden.

All of the boxwoods are deer resistant and by considering some of the cultivars is an opportunity to add some variety to our landscape. They are not particular about soils but do prefer good drainage and can be drought tolerant. Many different cultivars are available at our local nurseries and if need be, you can ask your nursery to order certain varieties. Support your local nursery.

For questions and information about selection and care of boxwoods, feel free to contact the Horticultural Lab by calling 845-429-7085 ext. 110 or email mw767@cornell.edu.
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rockland County present:

**Gardener’s Day 2020**

Wednesday, April 1, 2020  
8:30 AM – 2 PM

Keynote Speaker

**Margaret Roach**

Author/Podcaster of *A Way to Garden*  
former Garden Editor of *Martha Stewart Living*

“Nonstop Plants: a Garden for 365 Days”

Other presentations include:
- Right Plant, Right Place: Harmonizing Garden Design & Ecology
- (un)Paving the Way: the How & Why of Pollinator Pathways
- Minimizing the Waste-stream: Home & Garden Edition
- IPM: Managing Garden Pests the Smart Way

Early bird rate: $40  |  After March 13: $50
Book Early, Space is Limited!
Visit www.RocklandCCE.org/GardenersDay for more information and to buy your tickets.
(845) 429-7085 | jas946@cornell.edu

New location this year!  
120 Kings Highway, Tappan, NY (OLSH)
Environmental Educator Jennifer Zunino-Smith is pleased to announce that the Rockland County MS4 Mapping Grant has been selected by the American Council of Engineering Companies of New York (ACEC) for a 2020 Engineering Excellence Platinum Award in the category of Surveying and Mapping Technology. The grant is funded by the NYSDEC to map stormwater infrastructure.

Many thanks to our project engineer, H2M Architects + Engineers, for submitting this project and getting us the recognition!

A list of the 2020 Engineering Excellence awardees is available here: https://acecny.org/page/eeawinners20.

---

**Senior Citizens’ Day at the Lab!**

Visit the Horticulture Diagnostic Laboratory on any Wednesday in January 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 January’s code **Seed Catalog** to get the coupon price on your service.

This coupon is good for the month of January 2020. Keep an eye out for the February 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, February 5th**

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

---

**February Session**

**Wednesday, March 4th**

8:00 - 10:00 AM