

Cornell Cooperative Extension Rockland County 2021 Annual Report



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About CCE Rockland

Mission

Cornell Cooperative Extension puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability and social well-being. We bring local experience and research based solutions together, helping New York State families and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world.

Vision

Cornell Cooperative Extension is a national leader in creating positive change on behalf of families and communities through rigorously-tested extension programs. We create measurable change by aligning local needs with the resources and priorities of the land grant system and its state and federal partners



A Letter from the President of the Board & the Executive Director

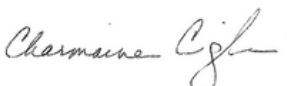
Dear Friends of Extension,

If nothing else, the pandemic has taught us the value of being flexible and of being community focused. (Actually, 2020 did a pretty good job of getting those lessons across but 2021 underscored their importance.) The spotted lanternfly was not on our radar when it arrived in Rockland in the fall of 2020. Nevertheless, it quickly became the center of much of our work in 2021 which included surveying, trapping and educating the public about this invasive insect. We were gratified to learn that these efforts, combined with those of numerous partner agencies, have helped control the population here in Rockland.

Surprisingly, 2021 was a year of some exciting firsts for us. We successfully debuted our first Youth for Climate Action program with thirteen students representing five high schools. Several students are even returning for a second year! After postponing it twice, we held our inaugural Congers Lake Sustainability Walk & Showcase with the help of numerous volunteers. Feedback was excellent – people got a little exercise on a beautiful day and learned something about their Rockland environment. We hope you'll join us when we present it again next October.

In addition to presenting highlights of our work, this Annual Report hopefully convey the creativity and commitment of our staff members, our many volunteers and the countless community partners with whom we regularly collaborate. 2021 reminded us how fortunate we are to be the connection between the Cornell campus and the residents of Rockland to promote economic vitality, sustainability and social well-being.

Sincerely,



Charmaine Cigliano
Board President



Suzanne Barclay
Executive Director

4-H Development

Youth for Climate Action - One of the highlights of this year was the first annual Youth for Climate Action Program. Designed with local environmental leaders, this program provided opportunities for high school students to explore climate change issues on a global and local scale through demonstrations, discussions, and community science projects. From January through June, the thirteen youth members visited sites including the Clarkstown Solar Field, Minisceongo Creek, and local parks, and they worked with peers and professionals to design, create, and implement service projects centered on climate change. Through this program, the members coordinated two park clean-ups, planted fifty white pine seedlings and two Eastern Redbud trees, removed invasive plants, and contributed to the Hudson River Eel Project and Keep Rockland Beautiful Events.

Other Highlights Included:

- **Teen Leadership Rockland**, Sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension Rockland County and Leadership Rockland: From November 2020 through June 2021, twenty-nine high school sophomores met virtually and in-person to develop leadership skills.
- **4-H Public Speaking through Play**, led by Ariela Nazar-Rosen: In this 5-session virtual program in January and February, eight youth from Rockland, Suffolk, and Wayne Counties played fun theater games to improve their public speaking skills and enhance their self-confidence.
- **Young (and Adult!) Explorers Nature Hikes**, led by Jeff Solomon, Dr. Regina Alvarez, and Dominican College Students: This spring, youth ages 8-13 joined Jeff Solomon and Dominican College students on hikes in Harriman State Park and Kakiat Park, while their parents and other adults explored separate paths with Dr. Regina Alvarez.
- **4-H Beginner Dog Training**, led by Fran Hellman, Four Paws Guidance Dog Training: In May and October, the 4-H Program offered three classes of the four-session Beginner Dog Training Program, where nineteen youth ages 8-17 learned how to read canine body language and communicate clearly with their dogs using a reward marker.
- **4-H Veterinary Science Career Exploration Program**: From October through December, twenty-two high school students throughout Rockland County met in-person to explore veterinary science careers with local professionals.
- **Horses-R-Us 4-H Club**: Led by two new 4-H Club Leaders, the eighteen members of the Horses-R-Us 4-H Club participated in a variety of local, regional, and state events this year including (but not limited to) public presentations, community service with 13 Hands Horse Rescue, showcase events, and educational programs.



SNAP-Ed New York

What is SNAP ED NY? SNAP-Ed is the educational facet of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as the food stamp program. SNAP Ed is a federally funded program that works to improve the health of SNAP and SNAP- eligible residents where they live, work, learn, play and worship. CCE Rockland is a member of the Hudson Valley team made up of six counties. Two nutritionists based in Rockland provide education to children and adults, individuals and families in Rockland and Westchester. During the 20-21 program year the SNAP-Ed NY regional team offered 250 direct educational programs to the Hudson Valley reaching 4,097 unique individuals. Youth accounted for 82%, 16% were adults and 2% were seniors. Overall, 38% identified as Hispanic or Latino(a).

Rescued EATS- Rescued EATS (Education, Assessment and Technical Support) is a SNAP-Ed pilot project working to reduce food insecurity, fill nutritional gaps and improve nutrition among those at risk of poor health, chronic disease and obesity. In September the SNAP-Ed team brought together folks around the region contributing to these efforts and built a platform for growth and support. We collaborated with various food pantries regionally, provided networking opportunities to support each other and roundtables for discussion to help.

Summer institute and Rockland Teacher's Center Partnership- SNAP-Ed was able to offer virtual professional development to Hudson Valley teachers last summer that was eligible for CTLE credits. The Rockland SNAP-Ed team also offered these lessons and more to Rockland and Orange-based school staff in partnership with Rockland Teacher's Center and the Rockland Department of Health.

Equity & Inclusion- As the lead organization for SNAP-Ed NY Technical Assistance, we listened to nearly 150 educators around the state and heard the desire and need to learn more and tailor our programming to the communities and cultures we serve. We worked with others to bring together Trauma Informed Nutrition Education Training and Leah's Pantry. Then we developed a space for educators to share their insights on food culture around the world through an eight-part series. Six of our team members contributed to food culture presentations for the state sharing insights, experiences and passions for African, African American and Spanish speaking countries.



Horticulture Education & Master Gardener Volunteers

In 2021 CCE Rockland and the Master Gardener Volunteers continued to embrace and expand virtual programs as well as in-person educational outreach when possible. The Master Gardener Volunteers provided horticultural educational outreach throughout Rockland at local libraries, community centers, farmers markets and public events.

Green Gardener - In the winter months CCE Rockland offered the Green Gardener program, a new virtual beginning gardening series. The program covered five gardening topics - starting a garden from scratch, organic edible gardening, native plants, garden design and garden health. The program was structured so that each of five lecture presentations was followed by a separate hands-on session a week later. In the lecture presentation, students were given an assignment. In the follow up session, students presented their work and received feedback. Taught by Cornell Cooperative Extension educators and Master Gardener volunteers, this series prepared students to create a healthy and thriving garden of their own. The program was well received and will continue to be part of CCE Rockland's horticulture education offerings.

Spotted Lantern Fly - Come spring our focus shifted to addressing the new invasive pest spotted lanternfly (SLF). With funding provided by Lower Hudson PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management), we were able to partner with the Rockland Conservation Service Corp and work with two enthusiastic and capable interns. The interns worked closely with Horticulture Resource Educator Kristen Ossmann to provide educational outreach on SLF to the public. We extensively surveyed the insect and its primary plant host, Ailanthus, commonly known as tree of heaven, at the infestation site in the southern end of the County. Data was recorded in iMapInvasives. In the late summer we participated in the set up and monitoring of SLF traps at the site. Hundreds of Spotted Lanternfly were trapped and eliminated. Unfortunately, there are still many more SLF out there that threaten our ecosystem. Our efforts to educate the public on this issue will continue for many years.

Native Pollinator Plants - Native pollinator plants play a critical role in a healthy eco system and are a primary focus in CCE's horticulture education programs. This fall we were able to put that education to practice by partnering with the Rockland County Soil and Water District in creating a new native pollinator garden at Kakiat Park. Master Gardener Volunteers created a list of ideal plants, a planting plan and guidance for the new garden to succeed. It was installed in October and we look forward to going back in the spring and summer to see how the garden fills in and supports the local pollinators.



Horticulture Diagnostic Laboratory

Rockland's only Horticultural Diagnostic Lab offers information to residents and businesses related to gardening and the environment. Lab Manager Michael Wilson assisted by Master Gardener volunteers answers inquiries for pest and plant disease problems as well as general gardening questions for ornamental plantings and vegetable gardens. During 2021 the Lab responded to 1,452 inquiries made when 329 people visited the Lab and an additional 1,123 people called or emailed.

Rockland Weather- Last winter started with moderate temperatures and below average rainfall and ended with below average rainfall and snow. In the summer, there was record breaking rainfall with July being the third wettest on record. During this period, most of the rainfall fell in 2 or 3 storms per month. The periods in between the storms were dry. There also were a few heat waves in June and July. Lab inquiries often tracked the weather and included winter damage of plants, drought impact on turf and ornamentals, heat-stress damage, and fungal issues caused by above average rainfall. For example, *Picea* (spruce) was the most common plant affected by infestations of spider mites which is related to drought conditions. As people continued to stay home, there was an increase in requests for plant identification. The drought effects on both ornamentals and turf presented an opportunity to promote water-wise gardening techniques.

Ticks- Late August and September saw a plethora of tick samples. Most of these were the Lone Star Ticks that were in the larva and nymph stage found primarily on dogs. In addition, there were several samples of the Asian Longhorned Tick. Both of these ticks are relatively new to Rockland County and can be carriers of diseases such as Babesia and Lyme disease.

Fertilizer Law - The Lab also offered the Fertilizer Law certification class which presents the safe and proper application of fertilizer. This class is required for landscape contractors who want to be licensed in Rockland County. All monthly sessions were held virtually and translated simultaneously into Spanish by a Master Gardener volunteer.



Lower Hudson Valley Regional Farm to School Program

In June of 2021, CCE Rockland hosted a new program in collaboration with Harvest NY, the Lower Hudson Valley Regional Farm to School program which covers Rockland, Putnam, Westchester and Orange counties. The primary goal of this program is to increase the volume and variety of local New York farm products purchased by schools to serve in their breakfast and lunch programs. School districts can be rewarded with a higher lunch reimbursement rate when they include more local products in their lunch programs. Products can include dairy, meat, bakery goods, produce and processed foods. To introduce and promote the program, the Farm to School (F2S) coordinator provides comprehensive support to school food authorities, farmers, distributors, manufacturers, processors and food hubs.

Since June of last year, the F2S has reached out to all food service directors in Rockland school districts to understand their buying practices and the potential for them to purchase more local products. Many schools are already purchasing fresh produce from farmers in the region. School districts that manage their own cafeterias have expressed interest in increasing the frequency and quantity of what they purchase from local farms and at least one school in the County is planning to highlight NY foods at lunch. A virtual training program is available to school districts and has been delivered directly to 15 schools in the area. The training presents pathways they can follow and provides models and concrete examples of how to buy more local food.

Serving more local food in schools is a universal win. It can mean more and higher quality fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as proteins and grains for the students. It supports the farming economy in our region. Finally, studies have shown that students eat more, nutritionally sound, school-provided lunches on the days when local foods are served.

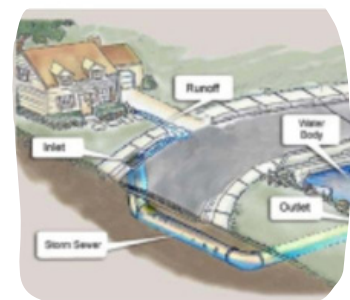
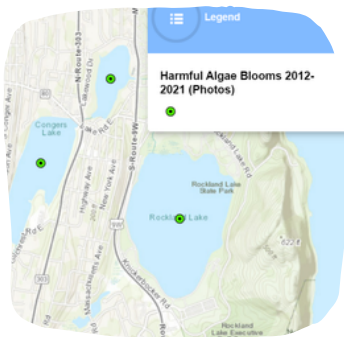


Environmental Education

Stormwater Consortium - The Stormwater Consortium of Rockland County, managed by CCE Rockland, helps member towns and villages to comply with stormwater permit requirement required by the Federal Clean Water Act and to educate the public on stormwater pollution. Each of the 24 municipalities in Rockland has its own network of stormwater outfalls and conveyance pipes running underground, but no single map exists of this infrastructure. The consortium has received grant funding from the NYS DEC to map the municipal storm sewer systems to a centralized Geographic Information System (GIS) database. Mapping work funded by this grant and conducted by municipalities continued for its fourth year. As shown on the graphic, polluted stormwater enters the inlet and discharges into the nearest surface water untreated. As a result, our state's surface waters are becoming increasingly impaired by stormwater pollution. Combining the stormwater mapping with existing data on water quality will allow us to understand stormwater impacts on Rockland's surface waters.

Radio Show - As part of the Consortium's public education work, our Hort Lab Manager hosts the Stormwater Consortium Radio Show, a monthly program on WRCR. The themes for the show included the environmental impact of stormwater for the homeowner, green infrastructure, ecological landscaping, rain gardens, Best Management Practices, bio-filtration and flooding. The Lab also recorded educational sessions on stormwater and pollution for municipalities to comply with the NY stormwater regulations.

Sustainable Landscapes - In accordance with NYS DEC Climate Change Pledge Element 7: Water Conservation and Reuse, an eight-part series entitled Sustainable Landscapes was developed focusing on outdoor water conservation. The series was offered virtually and was free to attend. Speakers from Cornell University, Columbia University, NYS IPM, the NY Botanical Garden and our Master Gardener program addressed turf management, the Rockland County Water Conservation Plan, soils health, pest management and other related topics.



Our 2021 Community Network

Thank you to our Community Partners!

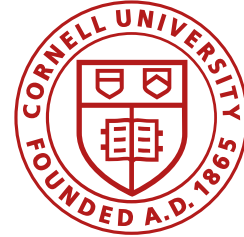
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rockland has partnered with hundreds nonprofit agencies, organizations and businesses during the past year including:

- Bergen County Horse Rescue
- BRIDGES
- CANDLE
- CCE Dutchess County
- CCE Orange County
- CCE Putnam County
- CCE Sullivan County
- CCE Ulster County
- CCE Westchester County
- Center for Safety & Change
- Clarkstown Justice Court
- Clarkstown Police
- Dominican College
- Fit Chick CPR
- Four Paws Guidance Dog Training
- Garden Club of Nyack
- Haverstraw African American Connection
- Haverstraw, Nyack Youth, Spring Valley and Western Ramapo Collaboratives
- Headstart
- Meals on Wheels
- Mercy College
- Keep Rockland Beautiful
- New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Department of Health
- New York New Jersey Trail Conference
- Nyack Pollinator Pathway
- Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory
- Leadership Rockland
- LH-PRISM
- Rockland Community Foundation
- Rockland BOCES
- Rockland Conservation and Service Corps
- Rockland County Division of Environmental Resources
- Rockland County Department of Health
- Rockland County Environmental Educators
- Rockland County Food Pantries: TOUCH, Sloatsburg, People TO People, Catholic Charities
- Rockland County Legislature
- Rockland County Libraries: Blauvelt, Finkelstein, Kings Daughter, Nanuet, New City, Nyack, Orangeburg, Palisades, Pearl River, Piermont, Sloatsburg, Suffern, Rose Memorial
- Rockland County School Districts: Clarkstown North & South, Nanuet, North Rockland, Pearl River, South Orangetown, Suffern, Nyack, East Ramapo Central
- Rockland County Youth Bureau
- Rockland Green
- Rockland County Human Rights Commission
- Rockland Municipal Planning Federation
- Rockland Sierra Club
- Rockland Teachers Center
- Rockland Veterinarians: County Animal Hospital, Valley Cottage Animal Hospital, North Rockland Animal Hospital, Nanuet Animal Hospital, Spring Valley Animal Hospital, Cat Care Clinic of the Nyacks
- Sparkill Creek Watershed Alliance
- The Learning Collaborative
- Towns of Clarkstown, Haverstraw, Orangetown, Ramapo, and Stony Point • United Way
- Upper Nyack Green Committee
- Villages of Airmont, Chestnut Ridge, Grandview-on-theHudson, Haverstraw, Hillburn, Kaser, Montebello, New Hempstead, New Square, Nyack, Piermont, Pomona, Sloatsburg, South Nyack, Spring Valley, Suffern, Upper Nyack, West Haverstraw and Wesley Hills
- Westchester Rockland Veterinary Medical Association

2021 Funding

Thank you to our Funders!

- All Bright Electric
- George Kohnight Trust
- Health Research Inc. (HRI)
- Hudson River Estuary Program
- Manhattan Beer Distributors
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- New York State Water Resources Institute
- New York/New Jersey Trail Conference
- Orange and Rockland Utilities
- Rifkin & Co. LLP
- Robert Grando Masonry
- Rockland County Division of Environmental Resources
- Rockland Independent Living
- Rockland County Department of Social Services
- Rockland County Youth Bureau
- Rockland Green
- Stormwater Consortium of Rockland County
- SUEZ
- Tractor Supply Company
- Westchester Rockland Veterinary Medical Association



County

Honorable Edwin J. Day Rockland
County Executive

Honorable Alden H. Wolfe
Rockland County Legislative Chair

State

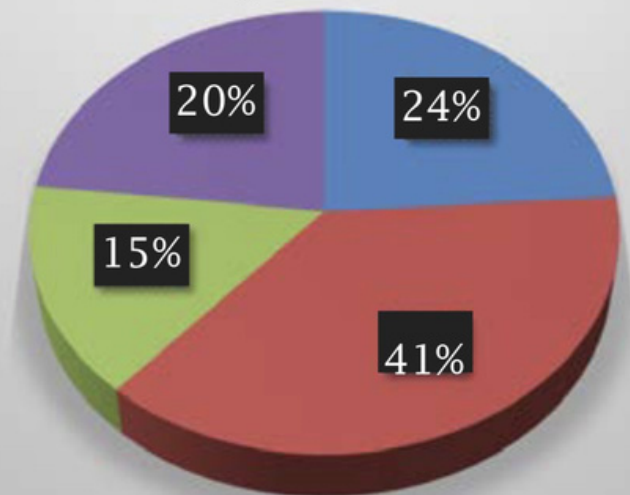
State of New York
Cornell University
Dr. Christopher Watkins, Director, Cornell
University Cooperative Extension

Federal

United States Department of Agriculture

The County of Rockland, through the offices of County Executive Edwin J. Day and the County Legislature, provides substantial funding for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rockland's programs and operations which allows us to leverage state and federal funding

- **Rockland County**
Direct Aid
- **New York State**
Fringe Benefits, University Resources, Direct Aid, and Grants
- **Federal Government**
- **Contracts, other Grants, Program Revenue, and Fundraising**



Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities



Help CCE Rockland reach 200 years and beyond

- Be a **Speaker**, share your expertise
- Be an **Advocate**, spread the word
- Be an **Advisor**, help shape our programs in advisory committees
- Be an **Intern**, gain experience and help us reach the community
- Be a **4-H Leader**, shape the next generation
- Be a **Master Gardener Volunteer**, keep Rockland growing
- Be an **Environmental Steward**, keep Rockland healthy
- Be a guide for **Youth**, educate & enrich Rockland's youngsters
- Be a **Participant**, attend our programs & utilize our services
- Be a member of the **Board of Directors**, help guide CCE

To find out more about volunteering or to express your interest, please email rockland@cornell.edu or call the office at (845) 429-7085



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension