

CCE Monroe County Horticulture Program Update February 2026

Program Highlights:

Master Gardeners:

- Successfully completed Winter Seed Sowing workshop.
- Two workshop “Discovering the Basics of Seed Starting”.
- Dedicated time to redesigning the Speakers Bureau program to ensure greater efficiency and broaden its outreach.
- Lilac Festival planning is well underway, we are preparing for a 2nd tent location, providing MGV with dedicated parking spaces (HUGE thank you to the Parks Department).
- Changing leadership in the Site Assessment program to expand leadership opportunities across the team
- Redeveloping the recruitment and interview process for the next Master Gardener Training Program.
- Developing a partnership with Rochester Deaf Kitchen to create an educational training garden explicitly for those who utilize ASL as their first language. This is through our Seed to Supper Program.

Natural Resources:

- Development of a plan to comply with the ROC Forestry Plan, including a description of activities.
- Creation of brochure for programs related to Natural Resources to be offered to the community for educational purposes. These programs would address topics such as runoff, water contamination, plastics and microplastics, as well as tree biology, guided tree walks/tours, and the impact of trees on the environment and urban comfort.
- Meeting with Mitch Gruber and Jessica R to identify potential partners and allies for developing activities related to the ROC Forestry Plan.
- Meeting with TJ to obtain guidance on the Climate Stewards program in Monroe County.
- Attendance at the Seeds to Supper virtual workshop (01/31/2026), as the goal is to implement this program in Spanish. Additionally, outreach to IBERO to explore the possibility of using their facilities as a venue for carrying out the activities.
- Supporting the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Survey Program Workshop through promotion via social media, and at NYS Ag Society Annual Meeting (01/08/2026).
- Natural Resources CCE registration for the Fly Fishers workshops (03/07/2026) and the Earth Day event at the Seneca Zoo (04/18/2026)
- Climate Stewards Program Reporting.
- Enrolled in the Train-the-Trainer program for Climate Stewards (April 7–9, 2026)
- Attending the online session of the 30H Pesticide Course as a TEC assistant, while also taking it to prepare for the certification exam.

Garden Outreach:

- Presented HNY evaluation plan; reviewing scope of work, EQs, measures, designs, and samples of how to effectively evaluate Garden Outreach Educator role in relation to CCE and HNY Urban Agriculture Program Outcome standards and the NYSAGM Urban Farms and Community Gardens Grant Program.
- Met with Orange County CCE Master Gardener Coordinator to share about our GROWS program as they are trying to develop something similar.
- Attended a PWWood Risk Management Zoom webinar - “All You Auto Know” in preparation for having a CCE Monroe van.
- Met with Phil Hounshell of Rochester Education Foundation to share more about the GROWS program. Planning a Gardening 101 workshop for late Feb.
- Attended informational meeting presented by Brandon White and Jeremy Smith, in support of their agricultural based charter middle school proposal.
- Presented at CCE Monroe’s first staff Lunch and Learn – on the topic of membership at the SEAC Toolshed.
- Attended one Seed 2 Supper online training.
- Participated in “Hort Team Learning Loop” - weekly online trainings selected by Hort Team leader to grow our work skills.
- Helped the Urban Ag Conference’s Content Committee plan and organize the upcoming March conference.
- Support the 4-H team and covered a day of Ag in the Classroom lessons at Helendale Elementary.

Strategic Plan Update:

MGV:

- Working with intern from Empire State College on social media campaign for Blocks in Bloom.
- MGV intern working on social media to promote our speakers bureau program
- Promoting Master Gardeners at local libraries to recruit for new class.

Natural Resources:

Canopy Tree Project & Rochester Forestry Plan:

- Selection of locations in the Northeast Quadrant of Rochester to visit curbside markets and explore opportunities for providing environmental education to community members participating in the markets.

Natural Resources Programs

- Connecting strategic partners and collaborators to support implementation and expand project impact, including R-Centers, schools, and libraries.

Community Outreach & PRISM Event Promotion

- Supporting the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Survey Program Workshop through promotion via social media.

Climate Stewards

- Hold 1:1 meeting with volunteers to check on the status of their projects and connect with them, as well as group meetings, and update the volunteer rosters.

Commercial Hort.

- Obtain the 30H Pesticide Course certification.

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Garden Outreach: [5.2 Ensure the flow of information through formal and informal channels thereby strengthening the representation and value of the organization to the community.]

- Reconnected with Ave D Rec Center manager and lead volunteer – Rachel and Lily from 4-H are proposing a joint effort to support their community gardens this summer. They will be attending a public community meeting at the R Center on 2/10 at 6:30PM.
- Created a list of Monroe County Food Pantries, their location and phone numbers to be shared at the Urban Ag Conference and online.
- Tabled at the Irondequoit Job Fair hosted by Rochester Works, promoting GROWS and CCE Volunteer opportunities.

BOD Engagement Opportunity:

• **Master Gardeners:**

- We need people to drive our golf cart (if approved). This will assist master gardeners to get back and forth to their vehicles, move lilac shrubs from tent to tent and assist customer who purchase 2 or more 3 gallon lilacs.
- Save the date for the Plant Sale and Expo June 6th, 2026. We will need help with parking, holds area, set up and take down 😊

• **Natural Resources:** In 2026, we will launch the following Natural Resources programs as part of our ongoing community education effort.



Cornell Cooperative Extension
Monroe County

NATURAL RESOURCES PROGRAMS

Learn. Protect. Sustain.

About the Courses

Our Natural Resources courses empower community members to understand, manage, and protect the natural environment. Through hands-on activities and practical learning, these classes support sustainable communities and healthy ecosystems. Courses will be in-person, and they can be adapted for children (ages 8+), teens, adults, and bilingual English-Spanish groups.

Microplastics, Water & Environmental Health



01

Runoff Demonstration (Hands-On) - 90min

Discover what stormwater runoff is, where it comes from, and why it causes pollution. Participants build mini landscapes to see how vegetation and design can reduce runoff and protect waterways.



02

Pollutant Identification & Water Quality Testing (Hands-On) - 90min

Become a water scientist! Test real water samples to identify pollutants and measure water quality using simple field kits.



03

Plastics and Microplastics Awareness & Action (Interactive) - 90min

An interactive session exploring plastics and microplastics, their sources, environmental and health impacts, and practical ways to reduce plastic use and exposure.

Urban Tree Stewardship



04

What Is a Tree & How It Works: Exploring Ecological Roles (Interactive) - 90min

Learn tree anatomy and the vital roles trees play in oxygen production, cooling cities, capturing carbon, and supporting wildlife.



05

Tree Identification Walk (Interactive) - 120 min

Join a guided outdoor walk in your neighborhood to identify trees, especially native species, by observing leaves, bark, canopy, and overall health.



06

Urban Comfort Walk: Measuring the Impact of Trees (Interactive) - 120min

Measure temperature, noise, biodiversity, and comfort levels in areas with different tree cover, and see how trees improve urban life.

Change starts locally.

Join us to learn, take action, and inspire your community.
Together, we can build a more sustainable and resilient future.

Register here ➡:



CCE Monroe delivers equal opportunity programs

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- **Garden Outreach:**

- Hold the date for the Urban Ag Conference! March 21st, 9AM-3:30PM at East High School, 1801 East Main Street, Rochester, NY, 14609. Registration and detailed schedule to come.
- Come by and pick up some GROWS flyers and info sheets to help me distribute at Rochester R-Centers, city libraries, food pantries, etc. Contact rad346@cornell.edu to arrange pick up of materials.

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Story of Celebration or Success (Add 1 or 2 pictures with a short description)



Above: Two GROWS info flyers that were available as handouts at the Winter Job Fair. Contact Rachel if you want to help distribute and spread the information, as we try to recruit new participants.

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**



**2026 ROCHESTER
URBAN AGRICULTURE
CONFERENCE**

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

- FRUITION'S GIFT OF SEED EXPERIENCE
- INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS
- COMMUNITY EXPERTS & KNOWLEDGE SHARING
- GARDENING TABLES & DISPLAYS

**East High School
1801 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609**

**HOSTED BY
THE ROCHESTER URBAN AG WORKING GROUP
REGISTRATION AND SCHEDULE TO COME!**

Below: Save the date flyer for the Urban Ag Conference!

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