

CCE Monroe County Horticulture Program Update March 2026

Program Highlights:

General:

- Joined CCE representatives to Veterans Outreach Center meeting and tour.
- Enacting new budget tracking procedure.

Master Gardeners:

- Speaker Bureau-completed 11 presentation in February, 15 scheduled for March
- Hosted 2 hands-on workshop (seed starting and winter sowing)
- Hosted Jack Butler at our monthly meeting
- PCI trainings- 2x this month, totaling 35 volunteers
- Blocks in Bloom hosted mentor training 8 people completed (picture)
- Celebrated 30-hour pesticide course training

Natural Resources

- **Tree Education Flyers & Workshop Preparation:** Created a flyer and prepared activities for tree education workshops, including the Fly Fisher workshop on erosion and native plants/trees.
- **Freedom Scholars Afterschool Program & Aspira Lunch Group:** Participated in educational programs to learn about dynamics in youth education with Lily Horne (4H-Educator), as well as, and make connections for future collaborations.
- **Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) Event:** Sampled HWA presence at Alasa Farms and connected with Genesee Land Trust and PRISM.
- **Pesticide Applicator Exam:** TEC support during course delivery and presented and passed the commercial pesticide applicator application exam.

Garden Outreach

- Meeting with HNY team and Ag and Markets (HNY funders) - each garden educator presented brief highlights of individual work plans to AGM team.
- Taking weekly Monday evening Beekeeping classes from Ontario Finger Lakes Beekeeping Association at the CCE Ontario office space.
- Met with Ave D R Center manager alongside 4-H educator Lily, to discuss summer workforce development collaborations at the R-Center.
- Presented a Garden 101 class and microgreen sowing workshop to Rochester Education Foundation teen work group.
- Met with People's Pantry ED to discuss upcoming season partnership and to learn about workshop possibilities. Reported back to Nutrition Team.
- Met with a potential GROWS participant (who learned about the program at IronD. Job Fair) and 2 Starbridge Navigators to talk about the workspace and answer program questions.
- Began seeding trays for South Lawn Farm! (Parsley, onions, bunching onions!)
- Joined Ashly for a garden consultation at Asbury Church.

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program opportunities.

Strategic Plan Update

Master Gardeners:

- VOC Tour and possible collaboration
- Smola Consulting meeting-future collaboration. Presented at their Thursday's Wellness Now FLASHP meeting in Canandaigua.
- 'Ask a MG' tabling event: working on scheduling several events over the next several months; thus far 4 confirmed

Natural Resources

- **Meeting with Karl Naegler from GFLX:** Discussed connecting with commercial horticulture; plan to attend GFLX events to expand regional connections.
- **Meeting with Chris Widmaier from REP:** Shared CCE Monroe's tree grant efforts and explored collaboration opportunities.
- **Canopy Council Meeting (REP):** Learned about Tree Ambassador training to continue contributing to the City of Rochester's urban forestry project.
- **Meeting with Kathy Bunting-Howarth (SEA Grant):** Gained resources to connect with people working on waterways in New York State.
- **Meeting with Lesli Pude and Lily Horne (4H):** Began building connections with Northeast quadrant schools to explore potential tree education and planting projects.
- **Meeting with Federation of Monroe County Environmentalists (FMCE) representatives:** Juliana attended to make some connections. They have a monthly meeting to share and discuss actions to take on environmental issues in Monroe County.
- **Ave D R-Center & CCE Admin Meetings:** Met with the center manager and followed up with CCE administration to support Rachel, including drafting an MOU to establish a safe and collaborative partnership.
- **Meeting with Dan Justis (Smola Consulting):** Met to explore potential collaboration for his upcoming Nature Rx program.
- **Meeting with Kristina Owens (Edison Tech Career High School):** Discussed the programs of the horticulture team to explore potential opportunities for collaboration.
- **Contact with Bill Lista:** Engaged former CCS volunteer who will participate in Earth Day at Seneca Zoo.
- **Meeting with Victoria and Jonathan:** CCS volunteers. They introduced and discussed their permaculture project at their property and provided important contacts with organizations working with natural resources as well.
- **Weekly Social Media Posts:** Published Thursday posts on Facebook to engage the community and share updates.

Garden Outreach:

- Met with Ave D R-Center manager, had a follow up meeting with CCE Admin. Drafting a MOU to ensure a safe partnership.
- Weekly Wednesday social media posts on Instagram and Facebook. Being more active on personal LinkedIn (repping CCE Monroe as GOE).
- Planning a Mushroom workshop with Lori at the Irondequoit Library.
- Follow up emails with Asbury Church garden volunteers, addressing some questions they had.

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program opportunities.

BOD Engagement Opportunity:

Master Gardeners:

- Lilac Festival: May 8th-17th 2026; [click here](#) for more information
- ***Possibly need help with driving a golf cart-more info to come!***
- Market in the Park: May 23rd, 2026; [click here](#) for more information
- Plant Expo and Sale: June 6th, 2026 9am-3pm; [click here](#) for more information

Natural Resources: A flyer introducing new tree education programs planned for the Northeast Quadrant, developed in partnership with the City of Rochester.

Tree Canopy Community Programs & Workshops

Empowering neighborhoods to grow healthier, greener spaces!

In partnership with the **City of Rochester**, we offer tree canopy programs for libraries, schools and community clubs and organizations. These bilingual (English/Spanish) sessions engage residents of all ages in neighborhoods with low tree canopy, exploring environmental challenges and opportunities through interactive learning about trees, urban greenspaces, and environmental justice.

Browse our available workshops:

 <p>How Trees Work: Exploring Ecological Roles (Interactive) - 90min Learn tree anatomy and how trees produce oxygen, cool cities, capture carbon, and support wildlife.</p>	 <p>Tree Identification Walk (Interactive) - 120 min Join a guided walk to identify trees in your neighborhood by observing leaves, bark, canopy, and overall health.</p>
 <p>Urban Comfort Walk: Measuring the Impact of Trees (Interactive) - 120min Measure temperature, noise, biodiversity, and comfort in areas with different tree cover to see how trees improve urban life.</p>	 <p>Plant a Tree Workshop -120 min After completing at least two workshops, CCE coordinates with the City of Rochester to plant trees in your neighborhood! Learn proper planting techniques and support a greener community!</p>

Contact us today to select your program and help expand the tree canopy in your community!
All workshops are FREE and supported by the City of Rochester through funding from the USDA Forest Service.
Interested in another tree topic? CCE can help arrange a custom workshop to meet your needs!


City of Rochester, NY
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Monroe County

CCE MONROE

Contact Information: Juliana Alvarado
Horticulture Program Leader

 2449 St. Paul Blvd
Rochester, NY 14617

 lja73@cornell.edu

 <https://monroe.cce.cornell.edu>

 585-753-2557

CCE Monroe delivers equal opportunity programs

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program opportunities.

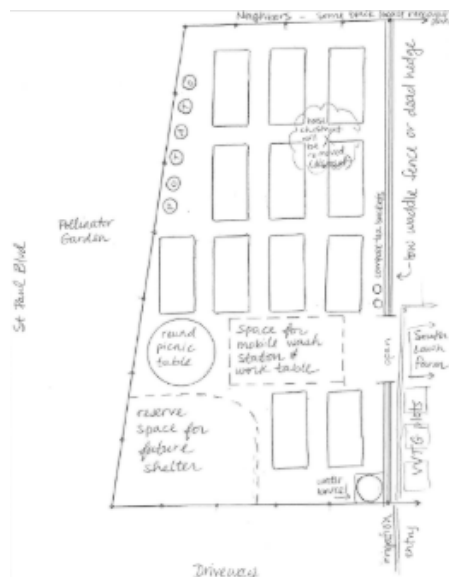
Garden Outreach:

- Attend the Irondequoit Library Mushroom Workshop on April 9th, 11AM, register here: [Mushroom Cultivation Workshop with Lori Koenick, certified Community Mushroom Educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension - LibCal - Irondequoit Public Library](#)

Story of Celebration or Success

The collaboration between the **CCE Monroe County Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) Program** and **Rochester Deaf Kitchen (RDK)** grew from a shared goal of increasing equitable access to gardening education and fresh food within Rochester's Deaf community. In 2025, the partners launched the first Deaf-inclusive *Seed to Supper* pilot program delivered directly in American Sign Language (ASL). Through the combined leadership of Deaf and ASL-fluent Master Gardeners, interpreters, and community organizers, participants were able to learn gardening skills in a fully accessible environment without language barriers. What began as a short pilot course quickly evolved into a vibrant community learning space where participants worked together to restore and cultivate a previously unused garden plot while building relationships through hands-on food education.

Building on this success, CCE Monroe and RDK are expanding the initiative into a larger community gardening space located at South Lawn Farm. This partnership combines evidence-based research and curriculum of the Master Gardener Seed to Supper program with RDK's deep community connections. Together, the organizations are creating a Deaf-centered space where participants can grow food, develop gardening skills, and contribute produce back to the community. The collaboration reflects a shared commitment to accessibility, food security, and community empowerment, demonstrating how cross-organizational partnerships can strengthen local food systems while ensuring that education and resources are inclusive for all.



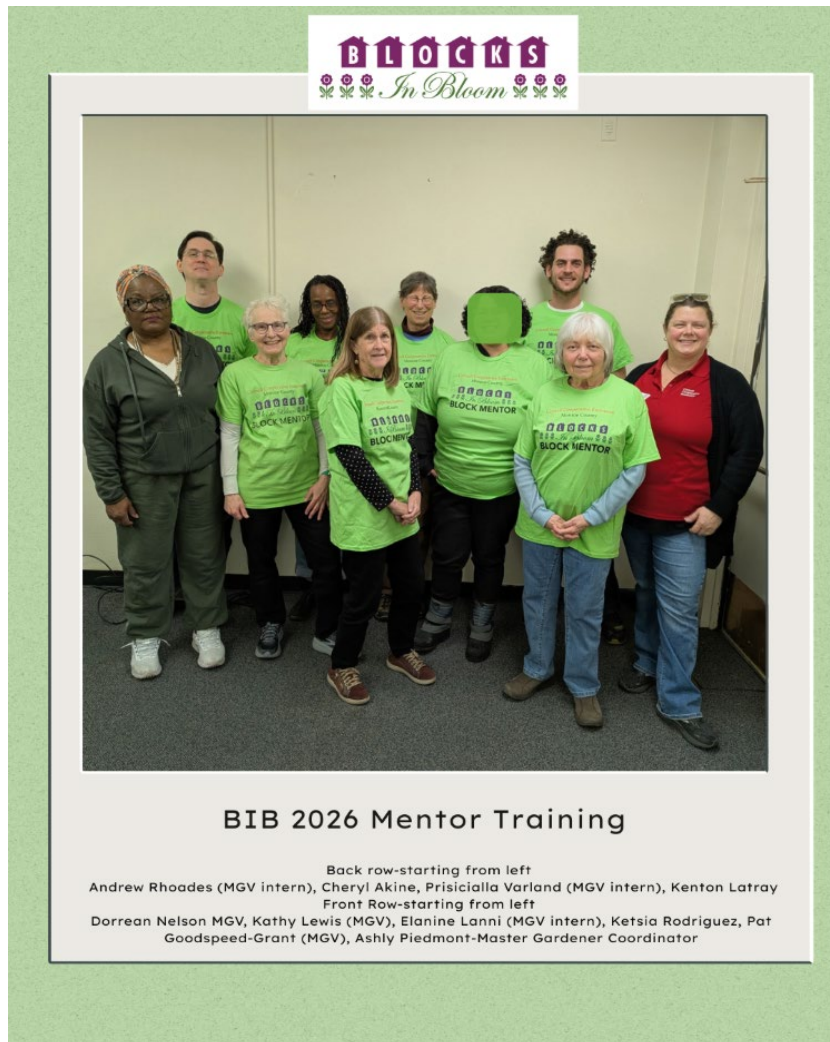
Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program opportunities.

Blocks in Bloom-Graduated a new class of mentors!

The **Blocks in Bloom** program brings together community residents and Master Gardener volunteers to mentor and support neighbors within a “block” in the City of Rochester. Mentors help residents with site assessment, plant selection and placement, and practical horticultural techniques while encouraging neighbors to collaborate and learn together. The program focuses not only on gardening skills, but also on building connections that strengthen the neighborhood as a whole.

Through shared work, moving yards of compost and mulch, delivering plants to one another, and transforming their yards, neighbors collectively beautify their block. Along the way, relationships grow alongside the gardens. Residents begin to look out for one another, water each other’s gardens during vacations or dry spells, greet each other while walking their dogs, and help foster a greater sense of safety and belonging within their neighborhood.



Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program opportunities.