

HORIZON

Newsletter from the Assumpink Environmental Institute (AEI)

Spring/Summer 2011 (Vol. 53)



Mercer County Schools Buzz with Excitement!

Seven local schools were awarded **Plants for Pollinators in the Classroom** resource kits from the Mercer County Soil Conservation District this spring. The resource kits included a two-tiered plant growing stand, grow bulbs, potting soil, seeds, teaching materials, potted perennial plants and much more!

For the past several weeks, students have been caring for and observing the growth of pollinator-attracting plants such as zinnias, cosmos, squash and fennel (for the caterpillars!) in their classrooms. As the school year came to a close, they planted the seedlings in their schoolyards along with native perennials such as butterfly milkweed and blazing star as part of their pollinator-friendly school garden projects.

Recipient schools include BC Gregory Elementary, Joyce Kilmer Elementary and Paul Robeson Charter Schools in Trenton, Community Park Elementary School in Princeton, Ethel McKnight Elementary School in East Windsor, Trenton Catholic Academy in Hamilton, and Village Elementary School in West Windsor.

Sincere thanks go out to the following organizations and businesses who provided support and/or donations to make this year's program possible: The Contemporary Club of Trenton, Master Gardeners of Mercer County, Mercer County Board of Agriculture, Terhune Orchards, Mercer County Community College Horticulture Club, Ms. Marie Wszolek, Kale's Nursery & Landscape Service, Timothy's Center for Gardening, and Home Depot of West Windsor.



Above: Students from Mrs. Bresnahan's and Mrs. Kleckner's fifth grade class at the Village School proudly show off their seedlings.

"In the middle of April, our class planted the packages of seeds. We put special lights above the plants to make them grow. Over the course of several weeks, the plants began to sprout and grow. The fennel was the tallest at first, but a few days later the squash was like a giant. The plants still are growing, and before we know it, the plants will be thriving in the school's garden! This has been a great learning experience for us."

- Takeru Tokui, 5th grader at the Village School

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Join Us for the MCSCD Pollinator Picnic

What: A family-friendly event to celebrate NJ's Native Pollinators

When: Friday, June 24, 2011

Time: 3pm to 7pm

Where: Mercer County Soil Conservation District
508 Hughes Drive, Hamilton Square, NJ 08690



Black Swallowtail Butterfly

Bring the kids, a blanket, and a picnic dinner! Children's activities will include games, stories, crafts, face painting and lessons in the Butterfly Garden. Presentations & informational displays will be provided for adults.

Presentations include:

- Who's Who in Pollination?
- Meet a Beekeeper!
- Local Storyteller Doreen Sheppard
- Mercer Co. Horticulturist, Barbara Bromley. Bring your lawn and garden questions!

For details and a schedule of presentations
visit: <http://www.mercerscd.org/education/pollinators.htm>

National Pollinator Week is June 20 - 26, 2011!

**FORESTS
FOR PEOPLE**



**MORE THAN YOU
CAN IMAGINE!**

Get Ready for the
2011 NJ Conservation Poster Contest

Forests for People... More Than You Can Imagine!

Poster Brochures and entry forms will be available shortly
at <http://www.mercerscd.org>

Mercer County deadline is October 21, 2011.

Did you know that 2011 is the International Year of Forests?

- The NACD offers forestry-related stewardship materials including activity booklets & posters at <http://nacdstore.org/>
- Project Learning Tree offers forestry teaching resources including teacher workshops and a nationally acclaimed Environmental Education Activity Guide. Visit <http://www.newjersey.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/plt.html>

MCSCD Board of Supervisors Annual Spring Tour

Each year the Board of Supervisors meeting for the month of May is expanded to include a tour of selected conservation practices in Mercer County. This year Board members visited the new Stony Brook Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Pathway to learn about two bridge structures that minimize streambed disturbance and offer historic character. Paul Schiariti, P.E., the District NPS Coordinator, also lead discussions about the site stabilization measures and porous pavement used for some sections of the trail. For dinner, the group savored a delicious meal that was crafted from locally-sourced produce and meat by the chef at Eno Terra Restaurant in Kingston, NJ.



Local High School Wins Third Place at the New Jersey Envirothon

The weather was mild and the setting was beautiful as students from across New Jersey convened for a not-so-typical year-end exam on May 7, 2011.

The 18th annual New Jersey Envirothon included a day-long sequence of written and hands-on tests in the areas of Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife, Current Issue, and Team Presentation. The 2011 current issue was “Fresh and Salt Water Estuaries”.

This year’s NJ Envirothon was held at Camp Glen Grey; a rustic and rugged Boy Scout Camp in Mahwah, NJ.

A team of local students from **Princeton High School** placed third out of 38 teams. Congratulations Princeton High School! The Second Place team was from Middlesex County (not affiliated with a school), and the First Place team was from the Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science (MATES) in Ocean County.

According to NJ Envirothon Coordinator Richard Belcher, “The NJ Envirothon motivates high school students to develop an in-depth understanding of natural resource management.” He adds, “They’re challenged to work effectively as a team, and they have an opportunity to interact with various professionals in the conservation and environmental fields.”



Above: Students compare mammal pelts during the hands-on section of the wildlife test at the 2011 NJ Envirothon.

Supervisors

Priscilla Hayes, Chairperson
Gary Mount, Vice Chairperson
Edward J. DiPolvere, Treasurer
Peggy McNeill, Member
Scott Ellis, Member

Nicole Ciccaglione
NRCS District Conservationist



**Mercer
County
Soil
Conservation
District** est. 1959



Staff

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Paul Schiariti, P.E., NPS Coordinator
Heather McNeil-Nazareth, Resource Spec./Educ. Coord.
Cheryl Lowe, District Clerk
Jillian Jaworski, Agricultural Resource Specialist
Frank Wu, Agricultural Resource Specialist

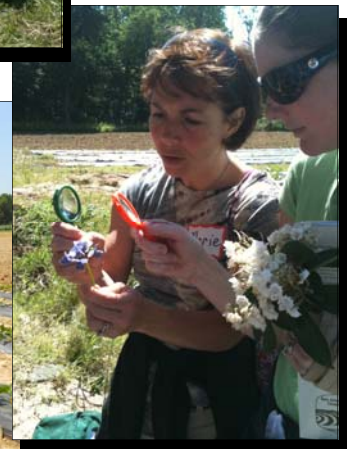
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***NJ Secretary of Agriculture visits "Plants for Pollinators in the Classroom" Teachers Workshop
co-sponsored by the Mercer County SCD & Freehold SCD
June 3, 2011, at the MCSCD and Terhune Orchards.***



*"Visiting the Orchard and the opportunity to spend time in the field were excellent."
- Kindergarten teacher, J. Catena School*

Photo to Right: Gary Mount (owner, Terhune Orchards), NJ Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher, Pam Mount (owner, Terhune Orchards), Frank Minch (State Soil Conservation Committee), Dr. Rachael Winfree (Asst. Professor at Rutgers University), Lindsey Fenner (NJ Watershed Ambassador and Field Technician in the Winfree Lab).



*"I hope to incorporate aspects of what was presented in the management of our school grounds."
- K - 5th grade teacher, Community Park School*

*"I learned so much about insects and the importance of pollination. I am excited to share with my students."
- 1st and 2nd grade teacher
Community Park School*



*"There were so many things covered that relate to my curriculum."
- 7th grade teacher, Carl Sandburg MS*