

District CIG Project “Blooms” in Its Second Year



The District is well into the second year of its Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) and is showing some promising results. The project is being conducted with funds from the National NRCS CIG Program to expand or enhance pollinator species habitat areas.

species is being documented with an extensive photo journal and a final report for the project will be prepared.

As part of the overall project, the District will hold a workshop at a national forum for farmers and conservation planners to describe the project, and explain how it can be incorporated into their farm conservation plan.

The project proposed to take the technology of establishing a grass cover with compost filter socks and use it to establish pollinator habitat areas with native wildflowers. The progress of vegetation and the presence of bee and butterfly pollinator



Lanceleaf coreopsis and anise hyssop plants bloom on one of the compost filters socks

The final report and a fact sheet that describes the conservation practice be will be created and posted on the District’s website.



RESOURCE NEWS

Conservation District Meetings

The New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting takes place on October 27th, 2015 and will be held at the Rutgers EcoComplex in Bordentown. The National

Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) 2016 NACD Annual Meeting will be held at the Grand Sierra Resort and Casino in Reno, Nevada from January 30-February 3, 2016.



On Our Radar... The Cape Atlantic Conservation District will be co-hosting the 2016 NACD Northeast Regional Meeting being held from August 14-17, 2016 at Stockton Seaview Hotel and Golf Club. Details will be forthcoming as the event date nears.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



A cedar waxwing perched on a branch in the winter

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USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center in Cape May County Celebrates 50 Years

By Chris Miller, Cape May Plant Materials Center Manager

In 1964, the 88th U.S. Congress authorized the establishment and operation of the Cape May Plant Materials Center (CMPMC) through the United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS) in response to the March 1962 Nor'easter storm.

The Plant Materials Center (PMC) began operation in 1965 as the lead federal facility congressionally chartered to assemble, test and release to commercial seed and plant growers, superior performing plants for coastal stabilization. The facility services the Northeast coastal region and the Mid-Atlantic coastal plain

physiographic province. The location of the PMC was a cooperative effort between NRCS and the State of New Jersey, who purchased the property through the newly created Green Acres Program 50 years ago.

Since that time, the CMPMC has evaluated and selected 21 conservation plants. One of its most successful plants, 'Cape' American beachgrass, is still used extensively along the Atlantic coast for primary dune stabilization to protect the coastline and coastal property from storm damage. The PMC supports a commercial grower network that provides for large scale propagation and availability of these selected

native plants needed for projects and plantings throughout the region.



In cooperation with the Cape Atlantic Conservation District and CMPMC, a 50th anniversary celebration ceremony is planned for Friday September 11, from 10am—3pm at the PMC in Cape May Court House to acknowledge the accomplishments of the Center and its partnership with the District.



**NATURAL RESOURCES
CONSERVATION SERVICE**

Conservation Planning With NRCS: You Make the Decisions

By Nicholas Saumweber, District Conservationist, NRCS Vineland Service Center

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides farmers and forest managers with technical assistance, or advice, to address natural resource concerns on their lands.

Through the conservation planning process, soil, water, air, plant and animal resources on the property are inventoried and evaluated. Alternatives are developed to address any identified resource concerns. The alternatives that the land manager chooses to implement are recorded in a Conservation Plan. This written plan becomes a primary

tool for better management of the natural resources on the property and can be used to direct the land manager to available financial assistance programs, such as those offered in the Farm Bill, designed to help implement



conservation on private lands. The process is entirely voluntary, and NRCS is a non-regulatory agency with a focus on providing private landowners with the best possible information for how to conserve natural resources on their lands.

Do you have a natural resource concern related to soil, water, air, plants or animals occurring on your land that you would like assistance with addressing? Interested in learning more about the technical and financial assistance NRCS has available? Need a conservation plan developed as part of your Farmland Preservation Easement? Please contact the Vineland NRCS office to learn more or begin the conservation planning process on your property. The Vineland Service Center, serving Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland counties, can be reached at (856)-205-1225 extension 3. The USDA is an equal opportunity employer and service provider.

There's Still Time to Celebrate the International Year of Soils

The 68th UN General Assembly declared 2015 the International Year of Soils (IYS).

Key messages include:

- Healthy soils are the basis for healthy food production
- Soils support our planet's biodiversity and they host a quarter of that
- Soils help to combat and adapt to climate change by playing a key role in the carbon cycle
- Soils are the foundation for vegetation which is cultivated or managed for feed, fibre,



2015
International
Year of Soils

fuel and medicinal products

- Soils store and filter water, improving our resilience to floods and droughts
- Soil is a non-renewable resource; its preservation is essential for food security and our sustainable future.

On January 6, 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) began its celebration of the IYS. [NRCS](#) will be showcasing the importance of soil with monthly themes created by the [Soil Science Society of America](#).

Naturalist and preservationist John Muir said: "When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world." This could not be a more appropriately applied than to soil.

How will you celebrate the International Year of Soil? It's not too late. Check out their [website](#) for more information.

New Year Will See Personnel Changes at Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Atlantic County

By Rick VanVranken, Cooperative Extension of Atlantic County Extension Department Head

Mona Bawgus, Agricultural Program Associate for Consumer Horticulture, who literally grew the Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) -Atlantic County Master Gardener program from the ground up, took an early retirement effective August 14, 2015.



Mona Bawgus at her send-off party

Eleven years ago, she began her position with the assignment of creating and building a Master Gardener program to bolster our consumer horticulture education outreach efforts with trained volunteers. Nearly 300 certified master gardener graduates later, the program now reaches all corners of Atlantic County with demonstration gardens in nearly every community and over 120 continuing volunteers covering the Horticulture Hot Line to answer home gardeners questions.

Mona's leadership and creativity will be missed, but we wish her well in her future pursuits.

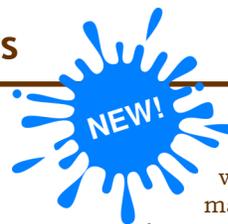
We are currently discussing the future of this position with Atlantic County administration as well as Rutgers Cooperative Extension administration and hope to have someone ready to carry on the program in the new year.

Likewise, 4H Program Associate Navonne Owen has accepted a position with the Maryland Cooperative Extension (her home state) and left a void in our youth development program at the end of August. This position is also part of the discussions with the County and RCE administrations as we begin our deliberations on the 2016 budget.

New Feature to Resource News

Starting with this issue of Resource News, an article, blurb or snip-it will be posted addressing soil health, conservation, or anything, really, having to deal with people and their interaction with the earth. In doing so, the Cape Atlantic Conservation District hopes to provide the educational materials for making better informed choices and decisions regarding our natural resources.

So, let's begin with mulching. Mulching in winter temperatures provides an insulating barrier between the soil and air and thus moderates the soil temperature. This means the mulched soil may not freeze as deeply. Be sure to apply mulch after the ground has frozen but before the coldest temperatures arrive to prevent rodents from over-wintering at the site.



Mulches used to protect plants over winter should be loose material such as straw, hay, or pine boughs that will insulate the plants without compacting under the weight of snow and ice.

A backyard conservation sheet on mulching can be found on the [Districts website](#).

The Results are in for the 2015 New Jersey Envirothon

32 teams of students from throughout New Jersey gathered at the Cape May 4-H Fairgrounds in Cape May Court House on May 2nd vying to become state champs in the 2015 NJ Envirothon. Teams from Cedar Creek and Egg Harbor Township High, as well as Cape May County Technical School, took the challenge to heart.

Ultimately, Marine Academy of Technology & Environmental Science (MATES) team #1 of Ocean County placed first and went on to represent New Jersey at the National Envirothon at Missouri State University 2015. MATES placed 5th out of 52 competing teams!

Check out the power point for a snapshot of the day's events at

the NJ Envirothon. A complete list of team scores may be found here.

The New Jersey Envirothon planning committee will soon be meeting for a wrap-up session of the 2015 event and begin setting the stage for the 2016 New Jersey Envirothon. The 2016 environmental issue will be Invasive Species: A Challenge To

The Environment, Economy And Society.

Information for the 2016 event will be made available as planning details are confirmed.



15th Annual New Jersey Flower & Garden Show

As the hot and steamy days of summer wind down, dreams of falling leaves and snow start to invade our minds. The changing of seasons is what makes the Northeast special. However, by the end of January, many people will be longing for a bright spot from the cold and grey landscape.

There's nothing quite like attending a flower show to jump start the creative juices and lift the spirits of



a gardener who's been hunkered down for the winter! The 15th annual New Jersey Flower & Garden Show will be held

from February 11-14, 2016 at the New Jersey Convention Center in Edison.

The NJ Association of Conservation Districts' display took blue ribbons for best environmental focus and most educational in 2015, so look for our display in 2016.

For those folks closer to Philadelphia, the Philadelphia flower show is being held from March 5-13, 2016 with the theme of "Explore America..100 Years of the National Park Service". Now, get out there and start planning!!



South Jersey Tour des Farms in it's 9th Year

Now that the heat of summer is a thing of the past, at least for 2015, residents of New Jersey can start enjoying cooler weather in

anticipation of the coming fall season. It is also the start for fall celebrations, festivals and some great fall foliage watching here in New Jersey.

A great way to kick off the 2015 autumn season is with a bike ride through parts of beautiful Burlington County! The South Jersey Resource Conservation & Development Council (SJRC&D) is

holding it's 9th annual South Jersey Tour des Farms on September 12, 2015. Three routes are available, each leading the cyclist on a scenic tour dotted with local farm stands where produce can be purchased.

The South Jersey Tour des Farms begins at 8am at The Jack Allen Memorial Early County Living Museum on 224 Landing Road In Vincentown, NJ.



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*"Committed to the Conservation
of Our Natural Resources"*

We're on the Web
Capeatlantic.org

"Your Hardworking Pollinators" Poster Contest Results

Entries for this year's conservation poster contest were numerous and paired with the artwork, made choosing first and second place winners a challenge for the District.

In the end, first and second place winners were chosen in each of the 4 grade tiers and awarded gift cards and certificates of accomplishment. And the winners are:

Grades 2-3

First Place

Evelyn Merino-Guzman

Glenwood Ave.
Elementary School,
Wildwood



Second Place

Bryan Ortiz

Glenwood Ave. Elementary
School,
Wildwood



Grades 4-6

First Place

Ishika Patel

Middle
Township
Middle
School,
Cape May
Court House



Grades 7-9

First Place

Libby Little

Northfield
Community
School,
Northfield



Grades 10-12

First Place

Jasmine
Felliciano

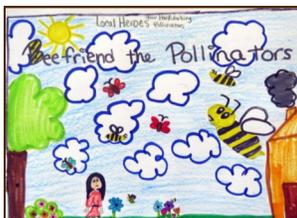
Atlantic
Christian
School



Second Place

Elena Geraci

St. Joseph
Regional
School,
Somers
Point



Second Place

Niki Cautilli

St. Joseph
Regional School,
Somers Point



Second Place

Autumn Sanders

Atlantic
Christian
School,
EHT
Township

