

RUTGERS

New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station



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WATER PAGES eNEWSLETTER



Congratulations to the 2022 Conservation Leadership Award Recipients!



The view from the Liberty House, Jersey City, NJ

At their Fall Gala at the Liberty House in Jersey City on September 29, the **NY/NJ Baykeeper** honored Kim Gaddy, Founder and Director of the **South Ward Environmental Alliance**; Nicole Miller, Chair of **Newark DIG**; and Christopher Obropta with a Conservation Leadership Award for their work with Newark DIG (Doing Infrastructure Green). Together they helped educate the residents, elected officials, and community leaders in Newark on the benefits of green infrastructure to capture, treat, and infiltrate stormwater runoff to help prevent combined sewer overflows. It was a wonderful evening with Greg Remaud, the NY/NJ Baykeeper, as the host. His passion to protect, preserve, and restore the environment was a powerful

backdrop for the evening. Kim, Nicole, and Chris gave short acceptance speeches, which seemed to empower the 200+ people in attendance. This was a very special evening for Chris, Nicole, and Kim. They were very grateful to be recognized with this award and couldn't image a more beautiful place to celebrate.



Christopher Obropta (l.) and Greg Remaud (r.) with the award

South Jersey Landscape Makeover Program Recap for 2022

With the construction season coming to a close, we wanted to highlight some accomplishments realized from this past year's National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) South Jersey Landscape Makeover Program. This program gave us the opportunity to partner with many talented groups in South Jersey to include **Pinelands Preservation Alliance**, **ANJEC (Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions)**, **South Jersey Land and Water Trust**, **New Jersey Audubon**, **American Littoral Society**, and the **Partnership for the Delaware Estuary Program**. Over the last year the Water Resources Program designed and built 17 rain gardens across the Kirkwood Cohansey Cluster Priority Area. These projects ranged in size from



70 square feet to 2,060 square feet equating to a total of 11,950 square feet of installed rain gardens. The drainage area for these projects is 91,438 square feet total. We can't wait to see what we are able to accomplish next spring, summer, and fall with our partners as part of the 2023 NFWF South Jersey Landscape Makeover Program! *Contact **Hollie DiMuro** for more information about this program.*

Naturalized Stormwater Basins at the Three Bridges Elementary School, Readington Township, NJ



The Readington Township School District in New Jersey has been converting detention basins on its campuses into ecologically productive landscapes, promoting sustainability and community resiliency. What began as an initiative of a local resident's project for the Rutgers Environmental Stewards program, quickly became a fundraising magnet, combining funding from the school district's Sustainable Jersey grant, an NJDEP 319(h) grant, and local donations. The Water Resources Program completed the design for converting an existing detention basin at the Three Bridges Elementary School into a 1,400 square-foot bioretention basin. Enviroscapes, Inc. completed the installation of the plants with over 2,000 native landscape plugs and seed. The floor of the basin is designed to act as a sponge for stormwater, keeping rain from the drain by promoting groundwater infiltration. Future plans for the project include engaging the students with a planting event and the installation of interpretive signage. *Contact **Chris Perez** for more information about this project.*



Fall Maintenance Tips



Liatris spicata,
Dense Blazing Star



Eutrochium fistulosum,
Joe-Pye Weed

As autumn sets in, it's time to put your rain garden to bed for the winter. Here are some tips on how to make sure it's cozy!

- Identify desirable plants using your maintenance guide, plant list, and plant ID apps for your phone (such as PlantNet or Picture This). Prune or cut back previous perennial growth. Remove non-desirable and invasive plant species.
- Inspect inlet and outlet structures, stone, pipes, drains, and grates. Remove

accumulated debris from the rain garden.

- Rake out excess leaves and add them to your personal compost bin or set them out in leaf bags for collection. A small layer of no more than two (2) inches is acceptable and will add organic matter to the rain garden soil.
- Check the height of the berm; rain gardens should generally be about six (6) inches deep from the top of the berm to the mulched base. If erosion has caused the berm height to decrease, consider adding soil material to the berm before mulching it.
- For plants that have gone to seed, collect the seeds for sharing, or spread them around your rain garden to encourage more beneficial plants. Some plant seeds are also valuable food for winter birds and can provide winter interest to your garden; you decide what to do with the seed heads of the plants!
- Add a two (2) to three (3)-inch layer of undyed triple shredded hardwood mulch. This will help curtail weeds in the spring.

Take notes of what plants did well this year and which did not, and you will have this to compare to next year. Use this information to help you decide which plants to promote and which ones might need to be pulled from the stage. Now you will really start to know your garden in all its seasons!



Rudbeckia hirta,
Blackeyed Susan



Asclepias tuberosa,
Butterfly Weed



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