



RUTGERS

New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station



RCE Extension Connection, Hunterdon County

Volume 1, August 2020

Pursuant to operating guidance from Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey and the County of Hunterdon, Rutgers Cooperative Extension continues to meet the needs of the public primarily through phone, email, web-based communications and education.

General Office

In addition to our website we ventured into social media with a Facebook page in an effort to reach out to our community and keep the community informed on various topics and interests. The Facebook page was launched in May 2020. Since the launch, the page has been used by all departments and have been used to inform the community about upcoming virtual programs, food facts/trivia and our Citizen Scientist have shared what is happening in their own backyards.

Some highlight from July-August:

- Increased page followers from 178 to 272
- Increased page likes from 156 to 240
- Approximately 130 posts (not including shared posts) – 17 posts had a reach of over 1000 and the Spotted Lanternfly post reached 11415
- Our posts have been shared 867 times in July & Aug

Family and Community Health Sciences – Sandra Greci, Family and Community Health Sciences Educator

Webinars and Classes presented:

- Life Camp Videos (4): Partnered with the Greater Newark Life Camp staff to transition FCHS yearly camp nutrition programming to virtual format, reaching approximately 50 campers each week. Created four 20-minute videos to be displayed each week of camp throughout July, 2020:
 - Week of July 6: **Let's Make An Easy Green Smoothie**
 - Week of July 13: **Let's Make Frozen Banana Pops**
 - Week of July 20: **Parts of the Plant We Eat and a Visit to Summer Garden**
 - Week of July 27: **Let's Make Very Veggie Wraps**
- Weekly Facebook posts focused on fruits and vegetables: **FCHS Fun Fact Fridays** (14 weekly posts to date)
- Partnered with Middlesex County RCE to present two webinars on Food Safety/Food Preservation during the spring/summer "R U Ready to Garden Series".
 - July 6, 2020 **Canning in Glass Jars** with Daryl Minch, RCE Somerset County: 99 Attended
- July 15, 2020: FCHS Wellness Wednesday's Webinar: **Mindful Family Meals**: 60 Attended
- Ongoing (Virtual) Diabetes Support Groups
 - Since the Covid Pandemic, the 2 monthly Diabetes Support Groups and Mindful Eating Support Group have transitioned to virtual meetings. Many participants have faced challenges during this time on continuing healthy eating and physical activity. The groups have helped troubleshoot issues and provide motivation to participants.

- July 22, 2020: Clinton/Flemington Virtual Diabetes Support Group Meeting (with Clinton Shoprite) 8 Attended
- Great Tomato Tasting at Home 2020: part of the planning and implementation team for this virtual event (August 26, 2020).
 - Facebook Live Session: **Let's Make Roasted Tomato and White Bean Dip**: 487 Views as of 8/27/20
 - Webinar (with Daryl Minch): **Let's Eat and Preserve Tomatoes**: 57 Attended

Other Activities:

- Supervised and supported remote operations of the RCE County Office.
- Directed development and expansion of new Hunterdon RCE Office Facebook page.
- Acquisition of NJ Dept. of Health grant to develop and implement virtual National Diabetes Prevention Program (Co-PI with Shailja Mathur, FCHS Senior Program Associate)

4-H – Sherrie Peterson, Program Assistant

Covid-19 has brought us all into a way of virtual living for these past few months. 4-H volunteers have kept youth connected by holding virtual club meetings and virtual educational programs. Kahoot games, Scavenger Hunts and fun meeting topics have kept youth engaged in our 4-H Program.

Community Service projects have touched the hearts of many during the last few months. Our 4-H clubs and families have done some very impressive service projects which include the assembly of:

- 300 goodie bags relating to agriculture, delivered to children at the food pantry
- 500 snack packs for our front line workers
- over 350 masks and face shields for the hospitals and other programs in need.

Sherrie Peterson, 4-H Program Assistant spent numerous hours with groups on a Regional and State level to plan a Virtual Fair experience for our youth. The NJ 4-H Virtual Fair, launched in July with registration and completed judging in mid-August. Hunterdon County had the most youth participate in the state wide event with 65 youth and over 200 entries.

Members had the opportunity to show livestock in breed, market and fitting and showmanship classes. Steven Qualtrock grade 6 entered in the Junior Sheep Showmanship class. Steven received an excellent, check out his submitted video <https://youtu.be/mHkugp72duM>

Annabelle Majorossy grade 8 of Mt. Airy Dairy entered this video of her clipping her calf for the fitting Dairy Cow fitting contest <https://youtu.be/p5bmDowtGpc>.

Youth entered Spirit classes showing their spirit dressed in 4-H Attire. Pictured below is Christina Piparo grade 10 member of Centaurs 4-H Horse Club and Aiden Murphy grade 5, member of Round Valley Riders, Kick Butt Kids and Hunterdon Hogs.



Agriculture – Megan Muehlbauer, County Agricultural Agent III

- Answered questions and provided follow-up feedback for 39 farmers via phone calls.
- Answered questions and provided follow-up feedback for 24 farmers via E-mail.
- Assisted in the paperwork for 2 farmers water allocations.
- Provided recommendations for 3 farms soil test reports.
- Went on one field visit, to one of the hazelnut breeding trial plots at a local Hunterdon County farm.
- Ran (via Web-Ex), attended and presented at 1 Hunterdon County Board of Agriculture meeting. ~ 20 Attendees
- Presented a ‘Virtual Tour of the Snyder Research Farm’ for the Virtual Tomato Tasting Event. ~50 Attendees
- Co-coordinated 1 seminar series with my Master Gardener Coordinator which included 3 presentations (I developed and presented 2) for Rutgers Master gardeners and Hunterdon county residents, approximately 100 attendees
- Presented a ‘Backyard Fruit Growing’ Presentation for Agent Bill Hlubiks Home Garden Seminar Series ~75 attendees
- Developed one Plant and Pest Advisory Post regarding application of plant growth regulators for tree fruit growers. ~113 views
- I am in the final review stages of a Hazelnut Production Bulletin, co-written by Tom Molnar and John Capik.
- Developed an SOP for coordinating a WebEx based grower meeting for Pesticide Credits. This is in review by my Chair.
- Provided weekly guidance/leadership to 2 undergraduates for G.H. Cook Scholar Thesis projects, one Masters student, in addition to my secretarial staff and the Hunterdon County Master Gardener Program.

Online meetings that I have attended, included Vegetable Working Group, Wine Grape Twilight Meeting, Tomato Tasting Event Meetings, Hershey Fruit and Vegetable Conference Coordinator Meetings, American Pomological Society Meeting, and the Hunterdon County Board of Agriculture Mission Statement Committee Meeting.

I submitted a Pre-proposal with Agent Tim Waller, and Senior Program Associate Hank Bignell for the 2021 Professional Development grant and my, “PD21-011, Developing educational materials to facilitate modern multi-commodity grower networks to assure regional stability, profitability, and visibility.”, was invited for full a full proposal submission Northeast SARE’s reviewers. Congratulations!

Horticulture – Rebecca Magron, Horticultural Consultant & Research Associate

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented times and difficult challenges to overcome. During July and August, focus has been on keeping county residents as well as Master Gardener volunteers connected and engaged. Out of a concern for safety, all in-person volunteer activities have been postponed. Therefore, a unique opportunity was presented to re-tool how we connect with each other and our audiences virtually, and expand program policies and programming techniques to be more accessible to our audiences and expand our reach.

- 259 phone calls and emails from County residents – questions answered, problems solved
- Over 40 social medial posts on Facebook, reaching over 100,000 individuals and over 1,000 shares
- 5 Garden support outreach programs for The Anderson House, a residential treatment facility for women recovering from alcohol and drug addiction, reaching 16 residents each visit
- 2 public presentations for the Hunterdon County Senior Center reaching 12 people
- 2 continuing program presentations for Rutgers Master Gardener volunteers, reaching 85 attendees
- 1 seminar series, 3 presentations for Rutgers Master gardeners and county residents, approximately 100 attendees
- Rutgers Master Gardener volunteer virtual meetings, including 2 steering committee meetings, 4 citizen science meetings, 2 educational garden meetings
- Roots and Shoots Newsletter, distribution approximately 150 people
- Drafting online Master Gardener training Curricula for January launch, and standardized Rutgers Master Gardener program policy
- Rutgers Fact Sheet on safe Community Gardening during the Covid-19 pandemic

Using over 28 WebEx meetings, presentations and trainings, 259 emails and phone calls and over 40 posts on social media reaching 100,000 individuals as of August 20, Rutgers Cooperative Extension home horticulture remains engaged with Rutgers Master Gardeners and our community.

IPM – Atanas Atanassov, IPM Program Associate, Northern New Jersey

In 2020 twenty-three farms in North New Jersey are participating in Rutgers IPM program, six located in Hunterdon Co. All farms in Hunterdon Co involved in our program are growing apples and peaches while four farms are growing pears, plums and cherries, and three are growing grapes. Farm visits include: Insect and disease monitoring, field scouts and observations of stone and pome fruit orchards in each farm to evaluate pests' status, current or potential problems are performed on weekly basis.

- Weekly farm visits – 54 in Hunterdon County
- 108 IPM Reports / Fruit IPM Recommendations to growers
- 300 phone calls, texts and emails with growers to discuss pest problems and recommendations
- Pheromone trap captures of major insects (BMSB, Codling moth, and several more key insects) and comments on observations are submitted once a week to the Statewide IPM agent, Dean Polk for Plant & Pest Advisory newsletters, fruit edition.
- 32 leaf tissue samples from Hunterdon County Farms were taken and sent to the Plant Analysis Lab in Penn State University for nutrient deficiency analysis.
- Tree Fruit IPM work is also conducted in 17 farms located in Middlesex, Morris, Sussex, and Warren Counties.

This growing season I have two seasonal field technicians. They are scouting and maintaining 102 pheromone traps of fruit moths and tree borers, and 25 pheromone traps of stink bugs. In addition, they help me in scouting trips, mites, stink bugs, various catfacing insects, fungal, and bacterial diseases of trees and fruit



Bitter rot on apples



Japanese Beetles feeding on peach fruit