Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County provides research-based information and educational programming to ensure the vitality of agriculture, strengthen families, promote health and well-being, responsibly improve home and community landscapes, and enhance our natural environment.

Serving Monroe County Since 1913
Director’s Message

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County (CCE-MC) has had an exciting year. We have increased community awareness of our services, more than doubled our community outreach in all program areas, and increased our financial resources for greater capacity to serve Monroe County residents. I am honored to continue to serve alongside such a passionate and talented team of educators, staff, volunteers, Board of Directors, and community partners. Together we are putting knowledge to work for Monroe County residents.

The Land Grant Act and The Smith Lever Act both established support for agriculture education through teaching, research, and extension education. Agriculture is the foundation of our lives and our food system affects everything from food access, nutrition, health and wellness, business and workforce development, economy, our environment, and more. Horticulture and youth development are key players in this important system. “Agriculture is the greatest and fundamentally the most important of our industries. The cities are but the branches of the tree of national life, the roots of which go deeply into the land. We all flourish or decline with the farmer.” Bernard Baruch, attributed, American Agriculture: A Brief History

We recognize the importance of local agriculture in Monroe County and our region, and because of this we believe in the importance of pursuing Agriculture Sustainability in Monroe County. To that end, we will continue to focus on providing research based educational programming to support our farmers, nurseries, landscapers, and home gardeners; to bring agriculture education to our students and expose them to the wide array of agribusiness career opportunities; to provide our youth with experiences that help them become educated consumers and engaged citizens; and to provide continued community awareness of the importance of agriculture to our daily lives. Always, our end goal is to ensure the vitality of agriculture, strengthen families, promote health and well-being, responsibly improve home and community landscapes, and enhance our natural environment.

We look forward to continuing this important work by supporting the traditions of Extension, embracing emerging issues, and fostering new opportunities with community partners in 2018.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County serves as a dynamic education organization that uses Cornell University’s world-class research and Cooperative Extension network to enhance the lives and well-being of Monroe County residents.

Cornell Cooperative Extension believes in shared leadership through locally elected Boards of Directors and active program development committees. Our dedicated staff works with Cornell faculty, agriculture, nutrition and 4-H youth development teams to put research to work to grow, strengthen and sustain a healthy, vibrant and economically strong Monroe County.

Thank you to our Volunteers!

We could not accomplish our mission without the dedication of over 200 volunteers at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County. Thank you to each and every one of you who have given your time, talent, and treasure to educate and support Monroe County residents. Your contribution can not be adequately measured. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County thrives today because of you.
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Cornell Vegetable Program
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Integrated Pest Management
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4-H Youth Development

4-H Afterschool and Summer STEM Programs

Our lives are completely immersed in science and technology: cell phones, computers, cameras, internet, social networking, and so forth. One cannot avoid the impact of science and technology in our daily lives. According to the United States Department of Commerce, employment in STEM occupations grew much faster than employment in non-STEM occupations over the last decade (24.4 percent versus 4 percent respectively).

Monroe County 4-H STEM programs combine the strengths of experiential, hands-on education and inquiry-based science learning with a positive youth development framework that addresses the developmental and educational needs of young people. Afterschool and summer programming was offered at multiple urban sites in the City of Rochester during the 2016-2017 4-H program year.

Diverse youth participated in 4-H programming offered by 4-H staff, 4-H volunteers, and 4 interns. Emphasis was placed on all youth recognizing that they could be successful learning more about STEM, and that they could aspire to find STEM related careers in the future. Our 4-H team provided a variety of experiential STEM activities weekly for youth to explore and expand their knowledge. Programs ranged from Agriculture in the Classroom activities and growing food to learning about basic physics with marshmallow catapults, and density with homemade lava lamps. Students actively engaged in programming throughout the year to bring increased awareness, and for many students a newly found interest in STEM.

Monroe County 4-H Shines at the 4-H Expo

The Monroe County 4-H Youth Development Program has once again explored new and innovative ways to showcase their program to new audiences. On July 14th the Monroe County 4-H program held their first 4-H Expo Family Event at Ontario Beach Park. The 4-H Expo was held to showcase all the wonderful youth projects and activities that our program has to offer. Pet chickens, calves and a miniature horse were brought to one of the pavilions at the park to allow members of the public a first-hand look at these animals. 4-H members proudly discussed their commitment to husbandry practices used to care for their animals. The K-9 Kids 4-H Club was represented by many members and their 4 legged canine friends. These 4-H members demonstrated dog obedience and agility classes to spectators.

The neighboring pavilion showcased all non-animal 4-H projects and activities. The ever popular 4-H Energy Bike proved to youth and adults alike that it really does take less energy to power an LED lightbulb. Youth learned how to take a few kitchen supplies and make a marshmallow catapult. Another station showed youth how to make foam plate flyers and test their aerodynamic knowledge. Other stations included CCE Master Gardeners, our CCE-MC Agriculture educator, CCE Nutrition team members, Soil and Water Conservation, the ROC Rec Centers, and more. Food, snacks, and drinks were offered for sale by a vendor who is a long time 4-H supporter. The park venue proved to be an excellent location for the 4-H Expo as it is well attended by diverse families from all over Monroe County. To cap off the festivities, the Monroe County Parks Department invited a family friendly band to play in the evening, followed by a movie at dusk. The Monroe County 4-H Youth Development Program looks forward to hosting this event annually.

Tara Defendorf-Kuba, 4-H Educator
Agriculture in the Classroom

Maureen Russell, 4-H STEM & Agriculture in the Classroom Educator, works with teachers to identify curriculum especially suited to STEM and Agriculture Education, and offers programs of enrichment for any grade level. Currently, her focus is helping teachers align lessons with the updated New York State Science Learning Standards, visiting classrooms to provide information on the science of climate change (Cornell University resources), encouraging middle and high schools to start agriculture clubs, and of course, introducing those students to the incredible opportunities Monroe County has in agricultural and agribusiness careers.

As an example of our school partnering, Maureen recently showed fourth grade students at Allendale Columbia School how stream monitoring can be used to determine the relative health of nearby Allen Creek. The students collected and examined various aquatic macro-invertebrates that live in the creek, and the presence of particular taxa indicated that the creek was “slightly impacted” by pollution. Students learned that the chemistry of the water was also a clue to the creek’s health. Levels of dissolved oxygen, pH, phosphate, nitrate and chloride could determine if there were pollution issues upstream of the study site.

Another great outdoor learning opportunity for students was Monroe County’s Soil and Water Conservation District’s “Conservation Days” at Ellison Park. At the CCE station, students learned about soil pH and why it is important to plant growers. Students participated in a colorful demonstration on the pH of household solutions, and tested mystery soil samples to find out if the pH was acidic, neutral, or basic.

Integrating STEM and Agricultural Science in the school curriculum is an important step in encouraging students to consider career opportunities that support agriculture and agribusinesses in Monroe County. Maureen will continue to connect with public and private schools to help educators choose STEM / AG learning experiences that will work well in their programs, and help them align lessons with the NYSSLS. She is also available to visit schools to share information with guidance counselors and students about the diverse career opportunities in agriculture and agri-business, including information about the levels of education needed to enter those careers.
Horticulture

Diagnostic Lab Guides Invasive Plant Removal

Invasive plant species, in addition to being problematic in landscapes, can pose economic and health concerns. Landscape maintenance and pesticide applicator professionals recognize invasive plant management as a task of the business. Minimizing the expense and maximizing the efficacy of invasive plant removal is a prime objective. The resources in CCE-MC’s diagnostic lab allow CCE to assist landscape professionals in removing undesirable plant material while achieving these objectives.

Recently the horticulture diagnostic lab was contacted by a pesticide applicator for guidance in the removal of an infestation of Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*). The lab confirmed an appropriate protocol for plant removal with a review of research based protocols and current labels for appropriate products. With the correct procedural knowledge, the pesticide applicator was able to remove the vegetation.

![2017 Diagnostic Tests](chart.png)

Increased percentages for consumer plant (up 23%), insect (up 18%) and soil pH (up 30%) samples would indicate Monroe County and other NYS residents are more aware of CCE-MC Diagnostic Lab as a result of our website and we continue to create awareness of available services and their benefits throughout the community.

PLANT gflx

PLANT gflx, the region’s nursery landscape professional organization, prioritizes professional development. CCE Monroe County leads this program delivery. The well-respected education event is due in part to the outstanding venue and members’ participation. The latter is driven by the program’s caliber.

Landscape maintenance and installation professionals recognize the importance of continuing education and look to CCE-MC as a key resource in leading training opportunities. gflx membership encompasses over 50% of businesses in this sector in the seven county region (installation, maintenance, garden retail with receipts over $468 million supporting payroll of $200 million in Monroe County, census of commerce 2012). CCE-MC is the principal commercial Extension horticulture program in their region. Members look forward to an annual, day-long cluster of horticulture related seminars as key offering of their Association’s professional improvement menu.

CCE-MC takes leadership for planning the annual event with assistance from the gflx planning committee. Tasks outside of CCE-MC abilities (venue, vendor participation) were undertaken by these volunteers. Volunteers’ suggestions guided CCE-MC in building an education program with topics and speakers. With a strong agenda, a very favorable location and a strong marketing plan, the result is a well-supported activity. Attendance is steady in the last five years (3x greater than previous events). Regulatory participants included NYS DOT, DOL and DEC as well as many commercial exhibitors.

Walt Nelson, Horticulture Educator
St. John Neumann School Garden Club Program

School administrators and staff at St. John Neumann School identified students in grades 3-5 as unfamiliar with where food comes from and how plants grow. A comprehensive understanding of human nutrition (at the elementary grade level) was lacking. Teachers were looking for support in STEM areas. In an effort to enhance school STEM offerings and lead students toward lifelong skills, a garden based instruction was established.

In collaboration with the teachers, and with the Master Gardener volunteer providing support, thirteen units utilizing simple hands-on experiments, demonstrations and videos were developed. These units were shared through a ‘garden club’ in which the youth were enrolled. Units encompassed spring bulbs, soils, botany, plant growth and food gardening. Participation occurred weekly during the school year with fourteen youth. A demonstration garden was also established on site and used for instruction. Outcomes included opportunities for youth to grow their own food and learn where food comes from.

Conversations with the youth demonstrated increased knowledge of where our food comes and a fuller understanding of the relationship between water, soil and plant growth. Plant identification skills were also improved. The demonstration garden’s location generated interest from other students and their parents, thus becoming an opportunity to engage and build interest for another year.

Walt Nelson, Horticulture Educator

Master Gardeners Extending Knowledge

Master Gardeners provide Monroe County residents a number of critical educational services. Some staff the garden helpline, answering telephone requests for information and solving problems. They maintain gardens at the Extension headquarters. They administer annual programs such as our plant sale during the Lilac Festival, the Gathering of Gardeners seminar, and Blocks in Bloom. Master Gardeners speak to local groups, write articles, and support demonstration and community improvement projects.

Site Assessments

The CCE-MC Master Gardeners offer site assessments of residential properties within Monroe County. For a nominal fee residents receive a one-hour consultation with a team of two CCE-MC Master Gardeners in the areas of plant identification, disease, pest or weed identification. Master Gardeners can offer suggestions on landscape and garden design, as well as report on environmental situations limiting the growth of particular plants (soil or light conditions). They will also identify situations that might require professional follow-up such as tree care or removal and can provide a list of companies. This year, 28 site assessments were completed, more than double the number last year.
Agriculture

Rochester Youth at the Farm

On-farm visits have become one of the hottest activities popular with the Monroe County public this summer. Meeting farmers in person and getting a closer look at life on a farm can be especially attractive for young children living in an urban setting such as the City of Rochester. This unique opportunity was given to 12 Rochester City Summer Program youth and 4 staff members, some of whom have never been past the City border.

The event was designed by the Cornell Extension of Monroe County and Stonecrop Farm, a USDA Organic Certified egg and meat farm. In this 2-hour farm adventure, the children talked to the farmers, learned about pasture-raised animals, egg production, and crop production. They also learned the process of how eggs and meat make it to market. Their experience included interacting with the animals, collecting eggs and even performing an external pregnancy test on a young sow. They also explored the tropical ginger and turmeric growing in a hoop house. At the end of the tour, the CCE educator designed an engaging group discussion and a team challenge for the kids to test their newly gained knowledge. All of the children enjoyed this on-farm visit, asking for the ‘next time.’ This event presented great practice for the farmers who are considering Agritourism for additional income.

Cultural Orientation Workshop

The CCE-MC Agriculture Program developed and presented a Cultural Orientation workshop for Spanish Speaking workers. The event was created based on the request of three large-scale farms. The majority of farm workers, who are the key to the U.S. food system, come from Mexico, a country where many traditions and customs are significantly different to those in the United States.

The workshop was created to narrow this cultural gap and assist the newcomers with their transition. The goal of the workshop was to increase farm workers’ understanding and comfort level as they settle down in their new cultural settings. The workshop covered greeting styles, written dates or naming conventions, and holiday customs. The 45 participants learned about the history of patriotic observance days such as July 4th, Labor Day and Memorial Day, and our traditions during holidays like Halloween or Thanksgiving. The participants also heard about services that are available to them such as free computers, books, newspapers and videos in their community library.

The farmers conveyed expectations regarding job performance and living accommodations that keep the workers safe and happy. Since happy employees tend to be more productive and efficient, the ‘Orientation’ workshop also benefited the farmers who employ them.

Jarmila Haseler, Agriculture Educator

~Photos Courtesy HFH
The spring was cold and wet. Saturated fields slowed planting or prevented vegetable farms from getting an early start. Pictured here is sweet corn scouting early in the season (near Churchville) for European corn borer, a pest that weakens the stalks of the sweet corn plants and ultimately reduces yields. Through CVP research and specialist assistance, farmers can quickly be on top of solving issues before they become huge economic losses.

Robert Hadad, CVP Specialist

Cordelia Machanoff, CVP Program Aide

The Annual Lake Ontario Fruit Team Summer Fruit Tour was held on July 12, and featured five farms along the lake from Niagara, Orleans, and Monroe Counties. The final two stops were held in Monroe. At Frank & Hale Burch Farms in Hilton, LOF’s Tess Grasswitz and Cornell’s Art Agnello discussed Brown Marmorated Stinkbug Trap Comparison. New Cornell faculty member Awais Khan introduced himself to the Western NY commercial fruit industry and discussed his program, mechanisms of resistance research in fire blight and scab. At the West Wind Fruit Farm & Blue Barn Cidery in Hilton, farm co-owner Jeremy Wolfe talked about fine-tuning his Oxbo mechanical blueberry harvester. Cornell’s Greg Loeb gave update on Spotted Wing Drosophila in raspberries and other crops. Following this, the tour group went to tour the brand new cidery, where co-host Jill Wolfe talked about their business plan and Cornell’s Greg Pack reported on hard cider research updates.

Craig Kahlke, LOF Team Leader

CVP specialist, Jud Reid and Program Aide, Cordelia Machanoff consulting at Kirby’s Farm Market high tunnel in Brockport in June. Kirby’s has experienced good results after working with grower Chad intensively over the last 3 growing seasons – he has changed his fertility program, started grafting his own tomato plants and will be adopting a fall/winter cover crop this season to help with nutrient cycling and adding organic matter to the soil.

Cordelia Machanoff, CVP Program Aide

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Robert Hadad, CVP Specialist

NOWNY Dairy, Livestock, & Field Crops

First cutting was extremely hard to harvest in a timely manner for dairy and hay producers this year due to the significant amount of rainfall we experienced throughout this spring and summer. First cutting represents a significant portion of dairy farms total hay crop for the year and has the potential to be a very high quality feed when harvested at the correct time. To help dairy producers monitor that timing, the NOWNY Team participated in a statewide weekly monitoring program through the months of May-June and provided field updates from growers fields across the NOWNY region.

(NOWNY Year In Review 2017)

Carl Moody, Dairy Specialist, leading a presentation at the Western New York Institute of Food Technologists Expo at the Rochester Convention Center.

~Photo courtesy Carl Moody

Harvest New York’s goal is to expand and enhance Cornell Cooperative Extension’s regional agriculture programs to spur agricultural economic development in New York State. The team began in 2012 in Western New York, expanded into Northern New York in 2016, and now extends into New York City to better serve all of New York.

Harvest NY

Carl Moody, Dairy Specialist, leading a presentation at the Western New York Institute of Food Technologists Expo at the Rochester Convention Center.

~Photo courtesy Carl Moody
Over 80% of the youth served through the City of Rochester Department of Recreation and Youth Services (DRYS) programs live in poverty, and nearly 90% of the youth qualify for free or reduced cost lunch. The DRYS staff and AmeriCorps members, Finger Lakes Eat Smart NY (FLESNY) Nutrition Educators and Monroe County Master Gardener volunteers collaborated this growing season to provide a garden and nutrition education program to youth at five recreation centers in the City of Rochester.

FLESNY Nutrition Educators provide weekly or bi-monthly nutrition education workshops. Master Gardener volunteers assisted with gardening tasks in R-Center gardens by weeding, pruning, building trellises and providing hands-on gardening education to youth ages 6-19. In addition, both FLESNY staff and Master Gardener volunteers mentored DRYS staff at the five R-Center locations by providing them with the skills and knowledge to feel more comfortable creating nutrition or garden focused activities of their own to share with R-Center youth.

During the growing season, Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardener volunteers played a large role in educating the youth all about the gardens by how each plant grows, and teaching skills on how to water the plants, how to get rid of invasive species (weeds), and when it was time to harvest. In addition, FLESNY’s Community and School Garden Specialist delivered weekly programming to South Avenue and Flint Street R-Centers. Because the youth participated in this healthy, garden experience, it created an excitement for them to eat more fruits and vegetables, opportunities to share their newly gained knowledge and skills with their families, and community engagement that promoted food security.

Maggie McHugh
FLESNY Regional Director

Integrated Pest Management

Cornell IPM specialist Brian Eshenaur, who’s housed in the Monroe County Extension office, works with Penfield Christmas tree farmer, Jon Freckleton on pest control challenges in his trees. Jon has attended IPM sessions and recently adopted a monitoring tool to trap and detect an important pest of many evergreens, the white pine weevil. Instead of spraying for this pest throughout the season Jon is able to spray only on when the pests are showing up in the traps. This saves pesticide, labor and helps protect the environment. Jon is pictured here with the trap used to monitor for damaging pine weevils.

Canada Geese frequenting school athletic fields are a growing concern. New York State school districts that completed surveys in 2001 and 2013 reported nearly a doubling in concern over geese as a pest, the only one that showed a significant statistical increase between these two surveys (Braband 2015). Since the birds are usually not limited to a single property, effective management often entails a community wide approach (Swift 2000). In 2014, a large (1,750 students) high school in Rochester, NY was cited by a regional athletic association for “unsanitary conditions” on its athletic fields due to goose fecal droppings. Lynn Braband and the NYS IPM Program partnered with the Rochester City School District to host an educational seminar on geese at schools, to trial several hazing techniques, and to begin development of a neighborhood coalition for sustainable reduction in goose problems. Pictured here is a hazing technique used by Edison Tech High School.

Lynn Braband, IPM Specialist
CCE Monroe is a subordinate governmental agency with an educational mission that operates under a form of organization and administration approved by Cornell University as an agent for the State of New York. It is tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The Association is part of the national cooperative extension system, an educational partnership between County, State, and Federal governments. As New York’s land grant university, Cornell administers the system in this state. Each Cornell Cooperative Extension association is an independent employer that is governed by an elected Board of Directors with general oversight from Cornell. All associations work to meet the needs of the counties in which they are located as well as state and national goals.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County greatly appreciates the generous support of our County and State representatives. This funding ensures our services are available to Monroe County residents. While the percentage of Contributions (donations) may be small, this support is by no means insignificant. Program development and capacity for outreach are supported by the generous donations of our patrons. We can only reach as far as we have capacity; donations provide this capacity. Program fees are nominal and support the infrastructure to provide excellence in programming.
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