

# Burlington County Outside

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## Our Native Species are Equally Beautiful

Carlo Popolizio, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist  
New Jersey Field Office



Geographical isolation has been the factory of evolution, training plant life to modify and adapt to local conditions in exuberant diversity over geological time. Since the age of exploration, however, the world of plants has never been the same: seeds, roots and cuttings no longer need events of catastrophic proportions to move around the world; now they are quite comfortably carried in a matter of days or even hours by global trade and passenger movements. Three Asiatic vines invaded the U.S. by winning human beings over with their fragrance and beauty: Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) and wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis* from China and *Wisteria floribunda* from Japan). They exemplify the need to expand the use of native plants for ornamental horticulture.

Japanese honeysuckle was introduced in the U.S. in 1806 to embellish ground cover. It took a while for the species to escape horticultural grounds, but it managed to invade most of the U.S. by the 1900's thanks in part to birds' predilection for its black, pulpy berry, by which means its seeds were dispersed. A fierce Japanese honeysuckle reproduces sexually by attracting a great number

of insect species to its fragrant flowers. Vegetative by underground rhizomes, above-ground runners, and by rooting at the nodes. The species can grow both horizontally and vertically; moreover, it is predominantly evergreen resuming growth and photosynthesizing before and longer than most native deciduous species.

The Chinese and Japanese wisterias were introduced as ornamentals in the U.S. in 1816 and 1830 respectively; they escaped by the 1900s following the call of the wild. Wisteria takes hold by growing on shrubs and trees, strangling and shading them; the woody vine portion of the plant grows around trunks of host species tenaciously, slowly girdling them. The flowers, which appear in April or May, eventually become a seeded pod like most legumes. Unlike honeysuckle, wisteria leaves, flowers, and seeds are poisonous. According to the university of Maryland, two seeds of *W. floribunda* can kill a child if ingested. Wisteria can live up to 50 years, and can vine on a tree to as high as 65 feet. Introduced wisteria species are highly prized for their ornamental qualities. It is little known that these invasive species have native counterparts that are

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# RUTGERS

New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

■ Cooperative Extension



# Putting the Garden to Bed for Winter

Susie B. Hudson, Rutgers Master Gardener  
County of Burlington



Rutgers Soil Test Kit

Now that the summer gardening season is almost over it's time to think about next year. I know that working up the same enthusiasm that we feel as spring approaches and the catalogs arrive is tough, but the fall is a very important time in the life cycle of your garden. On the bright side, the clean-up and soil preparation that is done in the fall won't be waiting for you in March when it's cold. When Mother's Day arrives, all you'll have to do is put in your seeds since the raking, digging and fertilizing will already be done. Fall is a great time to get your soil tested since the prime growing season is past and the volume of tests at the Rutgers soil testing lab has

probably dropped dramatically. In addition, the soil test will tell you exactly what you need to do for next growing season.

Cut herbaceous perennials to the ground and remove annuals. Do not cut back plants with "winter interest" such as ornamental grasses. Wait until late winter or early spring to prune trees and shrubs to avoid damage to new shoots that may appear. Be sure, however, to inform yourself about the plant you want to prune. Spring flowering shrubs such as lilacs that bloom on "old wood" should not be pruned in the spring as their buds will be lost.

Practicing good hygiene is extremely important for both your soil and your garden tools. The removal of dead plant matter reduces pest insect habitats and pulling those persistent weeds can slow their reappearance next spring. Most of this plant matter can go onto the compost pile to reemerge as fabulous fertilizer in the spring.

However, anything that looks like it might be diseased should be put in the trash. This includes those leaves with black spots on the ground under the roses and your tomato plants, even if they seem to be in great shape. Tools should be cleaned and disinfected and stored in a dry place during the winter.

Composting is the very best way to dispose of garden debris and some household trash such as newspaper. Compost should be piled in layers—a green layer (just pulled weeds, etc.) and then a brown layer (fallen leaves, wood ash, corn cobs, etc.)

Household vegetable scraps are great but do not add meat, bones, fat or grease as they will attract unwanted critters to your yard. The pile should be turned from time to time to supply the oxygen necessary to keep the decomposition process working.

Tilling the soil at this time can also help with insect control as it brings grubs and other hibernating insects to the surface. Tilling allows you to work organic matter into the soil to

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## What bug is that?



**Description:** Camel crickets have a slightly humpbacked appearance and long legs that give them a spider like appearance. Adults do not have wings, and camel crickets do not chirp. They can often become a nuisance indoors. When found indoors the crickets were most likely entered via a basement, crawl space or other areas that may be moist.

**Damage:** The camel cricket is primarily a nuisance pest,

particularly during periods of excessive rainfall. If a population is permitted to grow unchecked they can cause damage to stored items due to their fecal matter.

**What to do:** Non-chemical control methods are recommended in cases of infestation. Gaps and openings should be sealed and caulked around window frames, doors, foundations, clothes dryer vents, crawlspace access doors, soffits and where heating and AC plumbing

lines pass through the foundation. Stack items up off of the ground. Reduce the moisture levels indoors and in basements and crawlspaces. Keeping ground covers and mulches at least 12" away from your homes foundation will also help reduce indoor populations



Photo by Clemson University  
USDA slide series

# Leaves and Backyard Composting

Susan Konen, Assistant Recycling Coordinator  
Division of Solid Waste Management of Burlington County



One of the most spectacular sites of the fall season is watching the leaves change from green to a myriad of colors as nature's pallet transforms the landscape. From a distance all is wonderful but as the term defines, the leaves must "fall". Those once beautiful colors all meld into a general brown which isn't so bad except that they need to be removed from our lawns, driveways, patios and streets.

Although this necessary chore can offer an opportunity for good exercise and fresh air, there is usually an abundance of leaves that we would like to just "go away." Many will be stuffed into bags, twisted, tied and hauled to the curb. They will not go to the landfill because leaves are banned from all landfills in New Jersey. Residential leaf programs, either curbside or drop-off, are provided by many municipalities. Some of those send their leaves to farms approved to accept leaves for mulching and the others utilize special Class C facilities located within the County. A few rural municipalities do not offer leaf collection and homeowners are required to contract privately for leaf removal or manage a backyard composting system for their own leaves.

Whether a homeowner bags and hauls leaves to the curb or contracts privately for this service, there is time and money involved in the

process, both of which can be saved by using those leaves in a backyard composting system. With nature's help, you can produce your own "black gold," a rich organic matter to improve your soil.

If you have no experience with composting and would like to get started, the fall season is a good time. The most common compost recipe includes fifty percent dry "brown" carbon-rich material and fifty percent moist "green" nitrogen-rich material in alternate layers. However, leaves alone will compost naturally, over a period of time. Inspect the layers of a forest floor to find an example of natural leaf decomposition in the environment.



Find an area of your yard that is well drained and fairly level. A sunny area is fine but may dry the pile requiring you to add water to keep the process active. The microorganisms decomposing the material need moisture. You can begin with a pile of leaves at least 3 feet high and 4 feet in diameter, but no higher than 5 feet by 10 feet in diameter. If the pile is too large, the center will be without oxygen. The microorganisms that are decomposing the material need air. Depending on the volume of leaves the length of the pile could be extended but maintain 5 by 10 feet for height and diameter. As you are

constructing the piles keep in mind that as leaves decompose the volume should shrink by almost half. If you prefer the look and organization of a bin for your compost process there are many styles from which to choose. Bins can be purchased commercially or you can build your own. All bins have a minimum capacity of three to five cubic feet and must be vented to allow air circulation. Most designs are bottomless so the material sits directly on the soil for easy access to necessary microorganisms. Bins can be constructed from common materials such as wire fencing, wooden pallets, cinder blocks or a combination of these materials which will just corral the natural process. All leaves can be composted, including tough or waxy leaves and pine needles. They just take longer because dead leaves are mostly carbon and lack nitrogen. Water should be added if the leaves are dry so the pile is slightly moist. Shredding will speed up the process. It is not necessary to add any chemicals, activators or soil since leaves already contain a multitude of organisms. Composting neutralizes the pH of leaves that are naturally acidic or alkaline. Turn the pile once a month to move the outside leaves closer to the center where

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# Fall Walks

Jen Bulava, County Naturalist  
County of Burlington



With the days getting cooler and the leaves changing colors, autumn is the perfect time for a stroll through the woods. If you take a closer look at the trees beyond the colors, you will find an impressive diversity of species. Identifying a tree species usually involves more than just looking at the leaf. In some cases it may require inspection of the bark, twigs, buds, and seeds as well as leaves. The fall season allows us easier access to leaves and seeds close to the ground, and sometimes the fall color is even a clue to help figure out what kind of tree it is. Just within our Burlington County Parks – Amico Island, Pennington, Boundary Creek, Long Bridge, Smithville, and Crystal Lake – there are currently 56 species of trees! (That’s not counting large woody shrubs like viburnums, spicebush, and blueberries). On October 24, October 27, and November 1, participants can take advantage of free guided walks through the

County Parks to learn the different species of trees while admiring the fall foliage. **Smith’s Woods section of Smithville Park** has the largest variety of trees in our park system (46 species), so it is naturally a great place to learn trees. Events at Smith’s Woods meet at the kiosk at the East Railroad Ave. parking lot near the restrooms and picnic tables. The flat crushed stone trail allows for easy walking, but does include some steps. **Crystal Lake Park** has beautiful forests of towering trees, some of which are quite unique and do not occur in our other parks. The trails are very steep in places and can be very slippery and/or muddy after rain. Children will have a chance to learn different kinds of trees by their leaves and seeds as well on November 5 when schools are closed for the teacher’s convention. Students can collect what they find on the trail, and learn what tree they belong to.

## Upcoming Walks and Outdoor Activities

**October 24: 10:00am-12. Smith’s Woods, Eastampton Twp.** Registration suggested.

**October 27: 9am-11. Smith’s Woods.** Registration suggested.

**November 1: 1-3 pm. Crystal Lake Park, Mansfield Twp.** Call for directions.

**Please note:** Trails are very steep in sections and is not recommended for inexperienced hikers. Please wear proper shoes with treads for hiking! **Registration required** due to limited parking. Please call 609-265-5068.

**November 5: Smith’s Woods Area, Smithville Park.**

Raindate: Friday November 6

Children must be accompanied by an adult. Parents/guardians should be prepared to stay for the duration of the event (typically an hour to an hour and a half). Please call 609-265-5068 to register so that we have enough materials for everyone.

### Leaf Hunt at 10:00am

Take a short walk on the red trail to look for different types of leaves that have fallen to the ground. Collect your favorite ones, then learn what tree they belong to. Afterwards, students will do a leaf rubbing that they can take with them. Bring a bag to collect leaves in.

### Have seeds will travel at 1:00pm

Take a short walk on the red trail to look for different types of seeds that have fallen to the ground and collect the seeds you find. Afterwards, students will put all seeds into a group collection and divide into age appropriate groups to discuss and identify what they found. (recommended for 2nd grade & up).

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## What is in season now?

### September / October

•Apples, arugula, basil, beets, cabbage, cucumbers/pickles, eggplant, leeks, onions, peaches (Sept), peppers, spinach, zucchini, squash, sweet corn, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, white potatoes

### November

•Apples, arugula, beets, cabbage, leeks and green onions, squash, sweet potatoes, white potatoes



For more information on Jersey Fresh visit:  
<http://www.njfarmfresh.rutgers.edu>



## What To Do In The Garden

### September

- Plant evergreens, early
- Finish transplanting perennials
- Plant spring blooming bulbs

### October

- Bring in houseplants
- Bring in summer bulbs for storage
- Handpick bagworms
- Finish seeding turf by 10/15

### November

- Continue to water newly planted evergreens until the ground freezes

## Volunteer Outside in Burlington County!

**Saturday, September 26**

**Buckingham Park, Willingboro**

Clean up the park and school areas

Contact: 609 877 5775

**Saturday, September 26**

**Adopt A Beach Fall Cleanup** of

rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds

NJDEP state-wide cleanup

Contact: 609 292 3224

**Saturday, October 3**

**Boundary Creek Park, Moorestown**

Remove litter and invasive plants

Contact: 609 499 1001

**Saturday, October 10**

**Palmyra Cove Nature Park**

Adopt a Beach Fall Cleanup

Contact: 856 829 1900 x263

**For more information on Burlington County Clean Communities visit:**

[http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/departments/resource\\_conservation/recycling/clean/index.htm](http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/departments/resource_conservation/recycling/clean/index.htm)

Or call 609 499 1001

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replenish the nutrients lost during the growing season. And, digging in the fall when your muscles are in good shape after the summer's work can save you many aches and pains in the spring. Now is the time to plant winter crops such as kale, spinach, lettuce, mustard greens, parsley, chives and Swiss chard that can be harvested before the first frost.

Some of these crops can continue to be harvested when protected with mulch and crop covers. If you're not growing winter crops and wish to keep the weeds down next spring, you can plant a cover crop such as winter rye or fava beans. These will be turned into the soil in the spring to add nutrients.

Fall is the time to plant and transplant. Most small trees, shrubs and spring-flowering bulbs prefer having a cool period after planting as long as it isn't a hard frost the next day. This is the perfect time to break up crowded iris and day lily patches and separate large clumps of perennials. Be sure to research individual plants for their transplanting preferences as there are always exceptions to the rule. Make a note of what you put where so you won't be surprised in the spring or put something else over

the transplant from the fall. When the leaves fall, use them—don't just blow them into the street! Shredded leaves can be used as mulch for your perennials. Instead of raking or blowing, use your mower on leaves on the lawn. Shredded leaves left on the grass will decompose quickly to replenish the nutrients in the soil. An application of nitrogen (about 1 pound per 1000 square feet) will speed decomposition and feed the lawn. If you have too many leaves to use, contact your township to find out if there are pick up options available to you. Most towns have leaf pick up in the fall and these non-bagged leaves are added to local compost piles. Leaves should not take up precious space in land fills when they can be put to so many uses.

For more information on what to do in your garden this fall visit:

<http://www.mgofmc/docs/wintergardening.pdf>



# Crystal Lake Park

Meredith Melendez, Horticulture Consultant  
Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension of Burlington County



When you enter the drive for Crystal Lake Park you feel as if you are trespassing onto someone's private property. During the growing season you are surrounded by soybean and corn fields but keep driving though, you are indeed on county property. The 388 acre Crystal Lake property was purchased by the county in 2007 from E-town properties. The 3.2 miles of trails are one of a kind for Burlington County as the terrain can vary greatly. Many plant species found here are more common in the higher elevations found at the northern part of New Jersey. There has been a great variety in the bird species viewed at the park and a list is available online at the link at the end of this article. The 10 acre lake is home to birds such as osprey, eagles, herons and egrets. I recently took a morning walk with my 15



month old son in a backpack carrier and I was pleasantly surprised by what the park had to offer. Keep in mind that this is not a park for kids in strollers, young ones should be able to handle a rigorous walk on their own or should be safely strapped to your back. Some of the grade is so steep that I opted for a gentler path while carrying my son. If you have trouble with steep spots I would recommend hiking poles to help support and stability. Yes, we are indeed talking about tough

hiking trails in Burlington County! Please note that the County is currently completing a master plan for the park which will include trail enhancements, entrance improvements and further development of the site. Trails have not yet been stabilized so hiking is at your own risk. The agricultural use of the area is currently being leased to a local farmer, so staying on trails and respecting the fields is important. Crystal Lake is located on Axe Factory Road just outside of the town of Hedding in Mansfield Township. For more specific directions and information please visit:

<http://www.co.burlington.nj.us/parks>

## Winterizing Your Rain Barrel

Mike Haberland, Environmental and Resource Management Agent  
Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension



Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Burlington County held two rain barrel make and take

events this past summer and fall. Many Burlington County residents currently use rain barrels and new barrel users typically have the same question, "What do I do with the barrel in the winter months?" Don't have a rain barrel yet? Take a look at the link at the end of this article for more information and to learn where and when the next rain barrel class will be held.

In order to protect your rain barrel

from damage over the winter, it's recommended that you drain down the water from your barrel, leave the faucet open, and disconnect the downspout from the rain barrel. Since you won't want to leave your downspout hanging at the height of the barrel, you should extend the downspout to the ground using a short piece of downspout and a plastic connector (inserts into the upper and lower downspout pipes) purchased from a hardware store. Place an elbow in the bottom of the downspout to direct water away from the house. In order to secure the bottom of the downspout, you can hammer a 2 x 2 piece of wood

(or similar object) into the ground and brace the downspout against it using a plastic clip, metal strap, or string. During the winter it's best to keep water out of the rain barrel. One way is to move the barrel indoors if you have the room. If that is not practical, you can turn the barrel upside down, or cover over the barrel inlet (top of barrel) with plastic sheeting or a sheet of wood or plastic. If left outside, the barrel should be tied down to keep from blowing around your yard. For more information on rain barrels please visit:

<http://www.water.rutgers.edu>

equally beautiful. Trumpet and wild honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens* and *Lonicera dioica*) and American wisteria (*Wisteria frutescens*) are showy, native vines which are relatively common in the northeast, central, and southern U.S. The former two differ from Japanese honeysuckle in that they have red flowers and perfoliate leaves; hummingbirds and butterflies relish their nectar, and songbirds eagerly seek their fruits. American wisteria flowers later than its invasive counterparts (early summer) is equally attractive, and can also be distinguished by its hairless pods.

In St. Louis during December of 2001, global experts discussing the problem of invasive plants issued voluntary Codes of Conduct, which have been adopted by national organizations such as the American Nursery and Landscape Association, The Gardening Club of America and the American Society of Landscape Architects. These are some of their suggestions for gardeners:

- Visit <http://www.fws.gov/invasives>
- Ask for non-invasive species when you acquire plants
- Determine which species of plants in your region are invasive or show aggressive potential
- Apply environmentally-sound methods to control harmful plant species and remove them from your land.
- Take advantage of continuing education courses, local workshops to learn about invasive plants
- Emphasize the problem of invasive plants in your local media



*Lonicera sempervirens*

•Clarence A. Rechenhain © USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

decomposition is active. In cool weather don't disturb the pile to maintain heat in the center where the process is active. The finished compost is normally ready in 6-12 months. To harvest the composted material, remove the top portion to a new pile. The compost is the dark, crumbly material at the bottom. Screening will remove larger particles which can be added back to the active pile.

Although leaf compost is not considered a fertilizer because it is low in nutrients, it is a wonderful organic amendment serving to improve the texture and moisture retention for all soil types. Adding organic material to the soil will increase microbial and earthworm activity further improving the soil. Leaf compost makes excellent surface mulch in layers of about three inches to protect roots from extreme temperatures, prevent evaporation, erosion and runoff, and prevent soil splatter on leaves and control weeds. Leaves are also the perfect source of "browns" for a compost system that includes kitchen scraps (minus meats, dairy, grease and fats) and other "green" nitrogen-rich materials. A layer of leaves added after every addition of wet, green material will provide the necessary air space and source of carbon needed for decomposition. Layering with leaves can also reduce the need to turn the material since the coarse leaf layer provides air space. A proper compost pile does not have unpleasant odors. Most odor problems are the result of too much wet green

material like grass clippings or kitchen scraps. Adding leaves will fix that problem. Stockpile enough leaves in a separate bin or vented bags to last through to the next season. Leaves can also be shredded or used directly as mulch to protect roots from extreme temperatures and moisture loss. Instead of raking, in some cases it is possible "cut it and leave it" using a mulching mower. The small leaf particles can remain on the lawn if not too thick. For more information on leaf composting visit:

<http://www.njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS074>

## Events

### Pinelands Discovery Fest

October 4th 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Historic Whitesbog Village  
<http://www.whitesbog.org>  
609 893 4646

### Cranberry Industry Car Caravan

October 11, 18, 24 10:00 a.m.  
Historic Whitesbog Village  
\$10 per person, reservations requested  
<http://www.whitesbog.org>  
609 893 4646

### Ornamental Pond Winterization

October 11 1:00 p.m.  
Boundary Creek Natural Resource Area  
Free Course, Registration Required  
609 265 5068

### The Beauty of the Pinelands

October 13 – November 20  
BCC Student Art Gallery, Mt. Holly  
<http://staff.bcc.edu/sgas/events.html>

### Native Plant Society of New Jersey South Jersey Chapter Meeting

Wednesday, October 21, 7:00 p.m.  
Rutgers Cooperative Extension  
Burlington County, Westampton  
Contact: [krtitus124@comcast.net](mailto:krtitus124@comcast.net)

### Fall Foliage Family Float Festival

October 18 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Historic Smithville Park  
Free canoe, kayak, nature walks  
<http://www.exploreburlingtoncounty.com>



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## Burlington County *Outside*

The Burlington County “Outside” Newsletter provides residents with local information from various County offices representing diverse expertise of the natural environments in Burlington County. The Burlington County “Outside” Newsletter aims to give you the most up-to-date information on local topics quarterly.

Do you know someone who would like to receive this newsletter? To sign up please contact Meredith Melendez by email with the subject line: Outside Newsletter to:  
[burlingtonmg@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:burlingtonmg@njaes.rutgers.edu)

