



DEP NEWS RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 6, 2015

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NEW INTERACTIVE WEBSITE OFFERS PRACTICAL ADVICE ON DESIGNING OF JERSEY-FRIENDLY YARDS

DEP TEAMS UP WITH BARNEGAT BAY PARTNERSHIP, OCEAN COUNTY COLLEGE TO PROVIDE TIPS ON ECO-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING

(15/P104) TRENTON – The Christie Administration today announced the launch of a new interactive website, part of a Jersey-Friendly Yards campaign, that provides practical ways for property owners to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater runoff on waterways through the design and creation of environmentally friendly lawns and gardens.

The website, www.jerseyyards.org, provides tips on how to beautify your yard using native and non-native vegetation that requires less fertilizing and watering, as well as an “Interactive Yard” tool that helps users landscape their properties in an environmentally friendly way that will not only reduce stormwater runoff, but will provide tips on how to capture and re-use rainwater in a beneficial manner.



Rain garden at Monmouth County Library's Ocean Township branch

The DEP, Ocean County College and the Barnegat Bay Partnership partnered to develop the website using a \$100,000 federal nonpoint source pollution reduction grant program, known as the Clean Water Act's 319(h) program.

“While the website was designed with the Barnegat Bay watershed as its basis, the tips and tools that it provides are applicable statewide and can be used by residents, landscapers, property managers and others to reduce stormwater runoff and actually have ecologically healthier lawns,” said Dan Kennedy, the DEP's Assistant Commissioner for Water Resources Management.

“The tips and interactive tools developed through this initiative show property owners how they can significantly reduce fertilizer and pesticide use, provide practical advice on making wise

decisions about the types of shrubs, trees and plants they select, and offer practical advice on how to capture and re-use rainwater. At the same time, property owners will be creating natural habitats that will be used by beneficial insects, birds, and other wildlife.”

The website also provides information about the water quality degradations caused by stormwater runoff and fertilizers. Fertilizers that wash off onto roads or other hard surfaces can eventually enter storm drains that empty into lakes, rivers and streams, causing rapid growth of algae and other aquatic plant life. This growth is unsightly and unhealthy, impacting swimming, boating, fishing and other recreational use of waterways. As algae and aquatic plants die, they use up oxygen needed by fish and other aquatic life to survive.

Reducing stormwater pollution is a critical part of the Barnegat Bay Partnership’s efforts to protect and restore the bay, said Karen Walzer, Public Outreach Coordinator for the Barnegat Bay Partnership.

The Barnegat Bay Partnership is working with the Ocean County Soil Conservation District and Rutgers Cooperative Extension to put Jersey Friendly Yards practices into place by developing demonstration projects with six homeowner associations in the Barnegat Bay watershed.

“The website is an easy-to-use source of information for creating a beautiful, healthy and environmentally-friendly yard in New Jersey,” Walzer said. “The website will help us toward our goal of cleaner water for drinking, swimming, fishing, and wildlife – and a healthier environment for everyone in our state.”

Improving water quality is a key environmental priority of the Christie Administration, which has adopted some of the toughest fertilizer standards in the nation. These standards are designed to reduce nitrogen and eliminate phosphorous in runoff that causes excessive algae and aquatic plant growth.

“At the DEP, we are doing everything we can to help reduce the fertilizers, pesticides, automotive fluids and other contaminants that run off into our lakes, rivers and streams – but we need everyone to pitch in to improve water quality,” said Kyra Hoffmann, an environmental specialist who helped develop the website. “We strongly encourage everyone to browse the site and make a difference by putting some of these ideas into practice.”

To learn more about the Barnegat Bay Partnership, visit: <http://bbp.ocean.edu/pages/1.asp>

For information about the 319(h) Nonpoint Source Pollutions Control Grants Program, visit: www.nj.gov/dep/grantandloanprograms/eps_nspc.htm

For information about New Jersey’s Fertilizer law, visit: www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/pcp/bpc-fertilizer.htm

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