

## Environmental Commission/Green Team Monthly Update, October 2025

Dear Neighbors:

The air is crisp, and the leaves are crunchy! Fall is here!

Let's get to the update.

### Upcoming Meeting

**Attend our next Green Team and Environmental Commission meeting on Monday, October 13, 7:00PM, at the Porch Club (213 Howard Street). Note the earlier time this month. We are collaborating with the Porch Club on hosting an event:**

**What:** Building a Backyard Habitat

**Presenter:** Gina DiMaio, Park Naturalist, Burlington County Parks System

**Description:** Plants are the foundations of our ecosystems and with the alarming rates of biodiversity loss, now is the time to join the native gardening movement. Whether you are removing large areas of lawn or container gardening in a small space, everyone can contribute. Learn about some of the most popular native plants in our area, the wildlife that benefit (with an emphasis on pollinators), and the best resources to help make your backyard habitat a success.

We will have a brief Environmental Commission and Green Team meeting after the talk.

Everyone is welcome. Bring a neighbor.

### Upcoming Events

Native Plant Talk at the Porch Club Monday, October 13—See above for details! FREE!

7th Annual Organics Waste Management Summit, hosted by NJ Composting Council, Wednesday, October 15, 2025, 8:30AM-4:30PM, Rutgers University, New Brunswick Campus. \$130-175. [Register here.](#)

Stop by our table at Riverton's Food Truck night on Wednesday, October 15, 5:30PM! We'll be debuting a new handout for the kiddos.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension Earth Day Every Day Webinar Series—FREE! [Register here](#) for one or all.

- Monday, October 20, 6:30PM, Autumn Leaves: Conditions that Affect Leaf Color with Dr. Jason Grabosky, Rutgers University
- Monday, October 27, Born on the Bayou: Wetlands in New Jersey, with Ben Langey and Lisa Clark, Ducks Unlimited
- Monday, November 3, Blinded by the Light: Light Pollution, with Stephen Mariconda, MPH, DarkSky New Jersey
- Monday, November 10, Rock You Like a Hurricane: Hurricane Science, with Dr. Travis Miles, Rutgers University

Concerned about environmental issues associated with scrap metal sites? Attend the upcoming South Jersey Environmental Justice Scrap 101 Information Session, online or in-person, October 21st, 2025, 6:00-8:00 PM, The Salvation Army Kroc Center, 1865 Harrison Ave, Camden, NJ 08105. [Register here](#). FREE.

Thinking about adding a small pond to your garden? Attend “How to Create a No-Fuss Wildlife Pond with naturalist Pat Sutton,” Coordinated by Southeast Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey, Monday, November 17, 7:00PM, Stockton University, Unified Science Center, Room 346. FREE.

Autum with the Animals Festival, Cedar Run Wildlife Preserve, Sunday, November 2, 2025, 10AM-3:00PM, 4 Sawmill Road, Medford, NJ, 08055. Adults: \$20, Kids, 4-12, \$15, Kids 3 and under, Free. [Buy tickets here](#).

Enjoy visiting museums? Check out *Ecosystems at Risk: Threatened and Endangered in New Jersey*, an [exhibition at the State Museum of New Jersey](#), on view through March 15, 2026, 205 West State Street, Trenton, NJ, 08608. General admission is Free.

### New Resource!

Thanks again to Dan Reed for an excellent talk on residential solar last week! If you missed it, [check out our resources on renewable energy here](#).

### Input Requested!

Preserving existing buildings is one way to practice sustainable, green living! As you may know, the Borough recently established a [Historic Preservation Commission \(HPC\)](#), which helps with this. Currently, the HPC oversees requests for demolitions in the historic district and provides non-binding advice for folks making changes to historic structures that require a building permit. Now, the Borough is proposing an update to the HPC ordinance (the law that says what the HPC does) to include binding review of changes visible from the street to [historic district structures](#). There are many things that are excluded from this review, such as paint colors and landscaping. If you would like to provide feedback on the proposed changes to the ordinance, please [check out the](#)

[Borough website for an overview of what is being proposed](#). Contact info for submitting comments is included on this website.

### Have a Green Halloween!

Kiddos looking for a Halloween costume but want to be more environmentally friendly? Pick one up that has been gently used! Or donate one you are ready to part with. Visit one of these free Halloween costume shops in nearby municipalities.

- Maple Shade: Sunday October 19, 9:00AM-11:00AM, municipal building at 200 Stiles Avenue, Maple Shade, NJ
- Maple Shade: Sunday, October 26, 9:00AM-11:00AM, Fox Meadow apartments clubhouse, 100 Fox Meadow Drive, Maple Shade, NJ
- Mount Laurel: Sunday, October 26, 10:00AM-3:00PM, Rancocas Woods Fall Harvest, 118 Creek Road, Mount Laurel, NJ, 08054. Costumes can be donated at the Mount Laurel Library through September 30.

Other things you can do to have a more sustainable Halloween:

- Shop used or vintage for your Halloween decorations.
- Make your own decorations from things around the house.
- Buy pumpkins grown locally.
- Use non-disposable plates, cutlery, and other supplies for your parties.

Get more ideas from the [World Wildlife Fund](#).

### It's That Time of Year Again—Time to Leave the Leaves

Leaves are great, free mulch and fertilizer, and they provide habitat for beneficial insects and other wildlife. [They even help trap carbon](#) and prevent it from turning into carbon dioxide (which contributes to global warming). If this practice is new to you (and that's OK – it is new to many of us!), consider leaving the leaves in one or two garden beds. Of course, if you have excess leaves, the Borough will pick them up as usual. [You can read more about the benefits of leaving the leaves here](#), and feel free to let us know if you have questions. Tag us on social media with your fall leaves pics!

### What Have We Been Up To?

The Environmental Commission and Green Team, along with Council liaisons, have been listening to and researching resident related to environmental issues such as pollution drift from Philadelphia and possible code violations at sites within the Borough. The Environmental Commission and Green Team are exploring partnering with Burlington County and an engineering firm to conduct a climate change vulnerability assessment for Riverton. The goal is to identify key actions to help mitigate risks to the community.

We recently completed maintenance on the native plant rain garden at the Riverton School and the native plant garden behind the war memorial. Check out these spaces for inspo for your own property. Remember—[we have many native plant resources on our website, too](#).

We're also collaborating on developing a compost education and pilot program for Riverton residents—stay tuned for more information about this soon!

Finally, we kicked off our Climate Change reading group in July. Are you interested in reading more about climate change and learning about what you can do to help? Join our climate change reading group! We will meet **every third Thursday** of the month through February 2026. We will meet at Calvary Presbyterian, 300 4th St, from 7-8PM. You need not read the entire book or attend every session to participate! Free plus the cost of books. Register any time (including after July) by [filling out this form](#). Questions? Email Nicole at [nbelolan@pm.me](mailto:nbelolan@pm.me).

Books include: [What if We Get it Right?](#), [The End of Nature](#), [Nature's Best Hope](#), [Parable of the Sower](#), [This Changes Everything](#), [The Serviceberry](#), [The Floating Coast](#), and [An Environmental Leader's Toolkit](#).

*This reading group was created in partnership with the Rutgers Environmental Stewards (RES) program. The program is funded by Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. For more information, visit [envirostewards.rutgers.edu](http://envirostewards.rutgers.edu).*

## Things to Read

Want to learn more about stormwater management? Check out ANJEC's resource paper, "Stormwater Management for Municipalities: Green Infrastructure Designs and Options," [available here](#).

## Nature Neighbors—Q&A

*This month, we're interviewing Fall Oak Leaf we saw resting beneath an oak tree Riverton!*

**Nature Neighbors: How did you first get involved with the Riverton Environmental Commission (EC) and/or Green Team (GT)?**

**Fall Oak Leaf:** I got involved last spring! That's when I grew into a leaf on the branch of an oak tree. Maybe you know some of my friends!

**Nature Neighbors: What is your favorite natural spot or feature in Riverton?**

**Fall Oak Leaf:** I'm happy to rest anywhere for the fall and winter, but I think it's great when I can stay underneath the tree I grew on. Did you know that when you leave the fall leaves underneath trees, you provide a soft place for beneficial invertebrates like

moths to land and overwinter? [You can even go moth cocoon hunting and try to find where my moth friends are spending the winter.](#)

**Nature Neighbors: What actions do you take at home to help the environment?**

**Fall Oak Leaf:** I provide a place for beneficial insects to overwinter; create really nice soil for your native plant garden; help you control weeds; provide habitat for beneficial insects; and sequester carbon from the atmosphere, which means I help mitigate global warming. And I'm just one leaf! But I'm also important because I am part of a tree—an oak tree—that provides habitat for a lot of beneficial insects and mammals. [Lean more about the benefits of planting oaks from one of my best friends, Dr. Doug Tallamy, who is quoted in this article from \*The New York Times\*.](#)

**Nature Neighbors: What steps do you think anyone can take to be greener?**

**Fall Oak Leaf:** Please leave the leaves! As you can see from my response above, I am not litter. I am nature's gold! If you aren't accustomed to this practice of leaving the leaves yet, at least consider leaving the leaves in your garden beds. You can learn more about this practice from the [Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation](#).

**Nature Neighbors: What sustainability or environmental initiative have you seen other municipalities implement or promote that you think would be great idea for Riverton to consider adopting or promoting?**

**Fall Oak Leaf:** I've heard that some municipalities are starting to limit gas-powered leaf blower use. I would appreciate this so I could stick around your garden and help my invertebrate friends. But this would also benefit you and your family! Do your readers know that, [according to the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions \(ANJEC\)](#), "Gas Leaf Blower emissions for 30 minutes are equivalent to the CO 2 produced by driving a truck from Anchorage to Houston"? [You can learn more about how gas-powered leaf blowers damage our health and the environment here](#) and [here](#).

**Nature Neighbors: Thank you, Fall Oak Leaf!**

**Fall Oak Leaf:** You're welcome! I look forward to being recycled back into your garden.

[Are you in the Know?](#)

If you know a neighbor who may want to sign-up for the Environmental Commission and Green Team monthly email (which is what you're reading now!), they can do so by texting the word NEWSLETTER to 888777. They will be prompted to share their email address. Or, you can [access this notice on the Borough website](#).

## Social Media

You can follow us on social media for more regular updates.

Green Team Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/riverton\\_green\\_team/](https://www.instagram.com/riverton_green_team/)

Green Team Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Riverton-NJ-Green-Team/100082748494990/>

Environmental Commission Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/RivertonEnvironmentalCommission/>

Borough Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RivertonNJ>

Borough Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/boroughofrivertonnj/>

We hope to see you Monday, October 13, at **7:00PM!** (Note the earlier time this month.)

Sincerely,

Michael Gawbill and Nicole Belolan

Borough of Riverton Environmental Commission and Green Team

