

## Spring Garden Days article

This year's Rutgers Master Gardener's Spring Garden Days (SGD) will take place the week after Mother's Day: Friday and Saturday, May 15 and 16 at the Rutgers Cooperative Extension, aka the Ag Building, at 4000 Kozloski Rd in Freehold, just north of the county Fairgrounds. SGD hours are 9 to 5 on Friday, and 9 to 3 on Saturday. There is no admission charge.

Once again the county's Master Gardeners will be offering excellent plants at excellent prices. Offerings include a wide variety of plants grown personally by Master Gardeners for the sale. There will also 'exotics' such as Rutgers' own famous but not generally available Ramapo tomato plants, as well as Annuals, Vegetables, Herbs, Hanging Baskets, Perennials, and Trees and Shrubs. Hands on demonstrations will show the design and construction of miniature Fairy Gardens and patio container gardens for patios and decks. Compost sifters, custom painted birdhouses, and rough cedar birdhouses hand crafted by Master Gardeners will be available. Trash and Treasure will feature garden related items at ridiculously low prices.

All sales are by cash or check.

Tours are available on site to see: 1. the Master Gardener's Plant a Row for the Hungry garden which gives hands-on experience in vegetable gardening. Last year it raised more than a ton and a half of food all of which went to local food banks; 2. The Junior Master Garden where young teens grow their own garden under the direct tutelage of master gardeners. Many of these students' plants win prizes at the annual Monmouth County Fair; 3. Our new herb garden; 4. the rain garden, which demonstrates ecologically safe ways to minimize erosion and waterway pollution caused by runoff from hard-scapes such as driveways; and 5. The Compost center showing how easily any household can recycle everyday organic waste into rich organic mulch.

Rutgers' Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Helpline will be open during the event to answer everyone's gardening questions and help trouble shoot home garden, lawn, and tree and shrub problems. Bringing a sample of the plant to demonstrate its condition is extremely helpful in pinning down the problem and providing accurate timely advice.

During Spring Garden Days, a series of free discussions by Master Gardeners will provide expert advice on such topics as lawn care, herb gardening, beekeeping, composting, and attracting birds and butterflies to the garden.

In conjunction with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension, the Monmouth County Master Gardener program seeks to educate everyone in matters horticultural, help answer questions regarding gardening problems around the home, support community gardens for towns and schools, and provide a speaker's bureau to bring Master Gardener led discussions to local gardening clubs and other interested community groups around the county.

