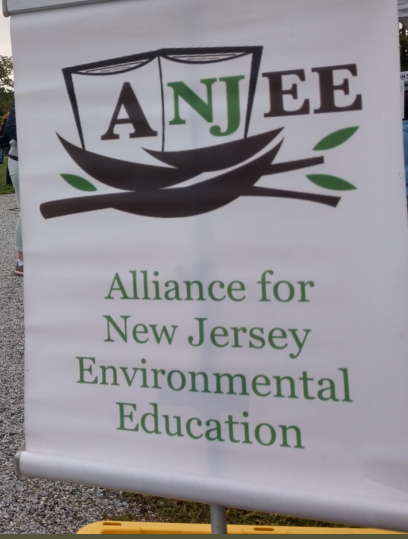


SPRING 2023



THE EE EXCHANGE

Official Newsletter of the Alliance for New Jersey Environmental Education

Happy Earth Day from Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge!

This was an exciting April at Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge in Medford, New Jersey. In honor of both Earth Day and Global Citizen Science Month (a worldwide month-long event coordinated by numerous organizations around the globe) the refuge hosted its first ever Earth Day Bioblitz led by the Cedar Run education and research team. The participants and team worked together during this day long event to identify 95 individual species out of 156 observations! Here is the breakdown of leading taxa for the event:

PLANTS 63% **FUNGI** 13% **INSECTS** 11%

You may wonder why citizen science events like this so important. Citizen science events can affect positive change within the natural world by greatly assisting researchers with data to learn about all taxonomic levels of local and global ecology. They also involve regular folk who might not otherwise have knowledge of what might be growing in their own backyard, as well as include them in real-world research complete with on-site training (and without a research degree). Citizen science events encourage participation from everyone to simply get outdoors for 30 minutes, an hour, or maybe a day - and it brings people of all ages a step closer to a sense of community around their towns and local wild areas. Thank you Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge for a fantastic first Earth Day Bioblitz!



Do you Know Some Great Environmental Educators?

Nominate them for for the 2023 Excellence in EE Awards!

Categories are:

- Environmental Educator - Formal Sector
- Environmental Educator - Non-Formal Sector
- Pat Skelly Community Award
- Patricia F. Kane Lifetime Achievement Award



For more information on categories, criteria, and the nomination form, visit:

www.anjee.org

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Committees and Membership

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ANJEE wants YOU! Join One of Our Standing Committees

GOT MAD SKILLS? USE YOUR POWERS FOR ANJEE!

Awards Planning Committee: SPOTS AVAILABLE!

Help plan an awesome awards celebration event in Fall 2023!

Contact Kelly Wenzel: president@anjee.org

Sponsorship Committee: SPOTS AVAILABLE!

Build our fundraising sources to help fund our amazing conferences!

Contact Beth Stolting: director@anjee.org

WELCOME NEW ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS!



BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

Among the many benefits of being an ANJEE member is the exposure to environmental organizations, jobs, and projects throughout the state by way of:

- post Your jobs in our Career Center
- ANJEE online electronic newsletter and weekly eblast
- annual environmental education conferences
- regional program committees
- an awards and recognition program
- the annual retreat

Being apart of ANJEE not only means making positive impacts on our future, but also establishing and maintaining friendships and partnerships that last a lifetime! For more information, check out our website at anjee.org

ANJEE

SO HOT RIGHT NOW



<https://www.facebook.com/ANJEEORG>



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<https://www.linkedin.com/company/anjeeorg>

DID YOU KNOW?
Members also have the opportunity to be featured in this seasonal newsletter!



Climate Education and Link to Forest Schools - An NAAEE Hot Topic!

As an affiliate for the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) it is important for us to be stay tuned in with hot topics. With that said, NAAEE's most recent articles prove that what we environmental educators and professionals in New Jersey are doing together absolutely impact not only our own lives, but the lives of our children - and at the right time. With climate change awareness and education a focal point, right alongside it is the rise and continuing popularity of forest schools. Forest school curriculum and programs not only immerses young children into the natural world, but helps them develop an appreciation for and a connection to for the constant changes it endures. We checked in with Amanda Schuster, Forest School Director at Tenafly Nature Center to learn the buzz and benefits of an established and successful program.



How long have you been running the Forest School, and what was it like setting up the curriculum?

The Forest School program was started in September of 2020 (then known as Forest Preschool). Our curriculum is emergent, and is based on the interests of the group as the seasons unfold and our curiosity is sparked by the environment around us, as well as the social-emotional development that is unique to each class of children. Many of the elements in our day are in alignment with the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards (2014), though we don't hone in on the Technology components (though we do use Seek and iNaturalist when we are curious about nature finds, in addition to traditional field guides). This does not come by "teaching to the standards", rather, by engaging in play, place-based teaching and learning, and developmentally appropriate guided activities, we converge with many of these requirements.



How would you describe the Forest School's benefits for a greener future?

Anecdotally, I know the stewardship abilities of my students are growing based on their affinity for nature, and subsequently its care. Early on I model trash collection, with no heavy hand. This modeling of behavior progresses through the year, where students readily point out and help with garbage collection, understanding that its continued presence in the environment causes harm for our favorite play places and our animal and plant friends. Our Outdoor Classroom is located close to our garden and compost bin area, and we discuss what can be added (and what cannot) to be able to create new soil. I hear stories from these behaviors continuing at home (some friends become garbage monitors everywhere they go; some work on invasive removal in their own yards). This level of engagement is perfect for our age level. These behaviors match what has been written about in works by David Sobel, Louise Chawla, Ming Kuo, and many, many others who are spreading the word about programs such as ours and their long-term benefits from an educational, socio-emotional, and environmental stewardship perspective.

Cont'd on page 4

A Big Thank You to our Partners and Sponsors



The EE Corner

Cont'd from page 3

What brings you the most joy after finishing a Forest School Year with a group of children?

The most joy I get from my groups is that I am modeling the kind of behavior that I was shown as a child. It feels good to me to help them engage in a love for the world around us, and the inspiration that can be found in our fellow inhabitants. In this way, I multiply myself; I help to encourage children and their families to value the environment and to support its future.

I also know that this work is meaningful in a research-based way! Louise Chawla's paper "Childhood experiences associated with care for the natural world: A theoretical framework for empirical results"* has a very salient takeaway: "Positive, direct experience in the out-of-doors and being taken outdoors by someone close to the child – a parent, grand parent, or other trusted guardian – are the two most significant contributing factors. While lifelong activism is the primary focus of Dr. Chawla's inquiry, as reported in this article, her well-documented study includes citations and explanations of many additional benefits to children from early experiences in the out-of-doors."



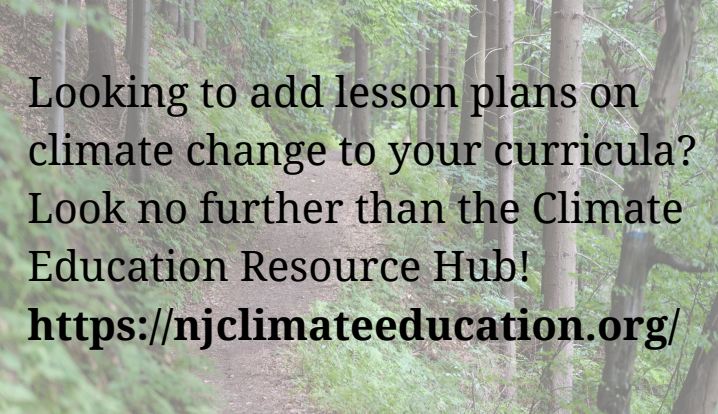
For more information on awesome year-round programs, check out <https://www.tenaflynaturecenter.org>

*Louise Chawla. (2007). *Childhood Experiences Associated with Care for the Natural World: A Theoretical Framework for Empirical Results. Children, Youth and Environments*, 17(4), 144-170. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7721/chilyoutenvi.17.4.0144>

"Call for Presenters!"



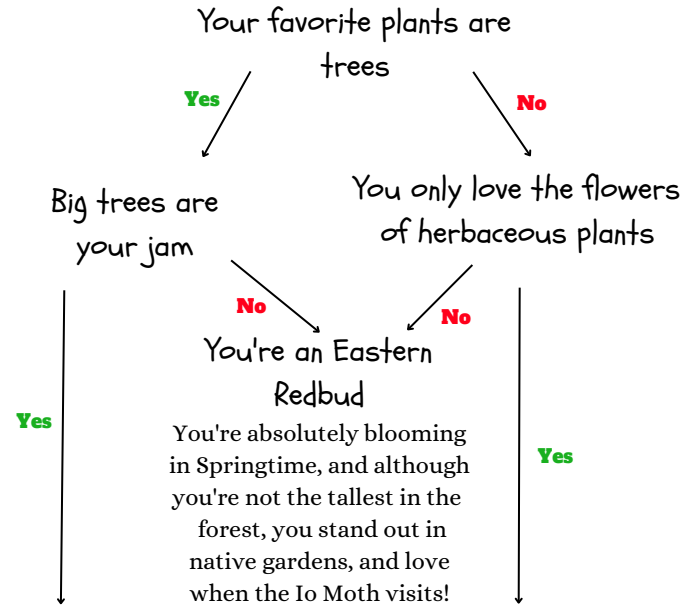
For the Annual Fall Conference on September 29th, 2023!
Only 15 proposals will be accepted for the event!
Check out anjee.org for forms and info!



Looking to add lesson plans on climate change to your curricula? Look no further than the Climate Education Resource Hub!
<https://njclimateeducation.org/>

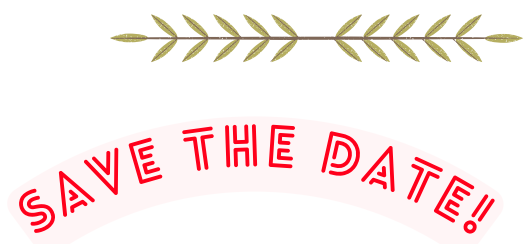
What's Your Plant Personality?

From evergreens to ephemerals, you can always count on EE ingenuity to add some cheeky humor to learning about the natural world. Now kick back, relax and enjoy this fun and floral "personality" quiz! What kind of plant are you??



You're a Tulip Poplar
You grow straight with confidence, and your tulip-like flowers attract all kinds of wildlife. Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterflies find you particularly attractive for laying their eggs.

You're Common Milkweed
Far from "common", your popularity soars like the Monarch Butterflies around you! Keep being you and your fans will continue to plant gardens in your honor!



ANJEE's Annual Fall Conference
Friday
September 29, 2023
Duke Farms, Hillsborough NJ
And Excellence in EE Awards
Party to Follow!