
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Columbia and Greene Counties

ANNUAL

REPORT

2020

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ENVIRONMENTAL & NATURAL RESOURCES

Connor Young, Team Leader
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Tracey Testo, Program Coordinator

Audrey Kropp, Program Educator
Kelsey West, Program Coordinator
Donna Peterson, Program Coordinator
Katie Campbell-Nelson, Northeast SARE Professional Development Program Coordinator

4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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Anna Harrod-McGrew, Subject Educator

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Message from the President of the Board of Directors and Executive Director



Whether or not it was a year to remember or a year to forget, it certainly was a year that sparked many emotions. Cooperative Extension has endured World Wars, Great Depression, economic crisis, and so much more, and continues to not only survive, but thrive. As difficulty was put before us once again, our team took that challenge and ran with it. The creativity that was sparked by the pandemic cannot be overstated. Program leaders and educators continued efforts and commitments to our community in new and unique ways.

Many programs were delivered virtually. 4-H Achievement Night was done socially distanced at a drive-in theatre, where the kids received their awards and accolades on the “Big Screen!” Soil samples were still tested and a record number of inquiries were made to our Master Gardener Volunteers. Our Siuslaw Model Forest thrived while the team continued to forge ahead with their environmental projects. The families and children of our counties received the support

and resources needed, especially during this difficult time. Our board proudly worked on and presented a five-year Strategic Plan to ensure the continuation of such great work by CCE. We are proud to be part of such a wonderful, thoughtful, and forward thinking organization. The staff, volunteers, and board that keep the train powering down the track are second to none, and we look fondly on the future and bid a warm welcome to 2021.

This report provides a look back to 2020 and highlights some of the accomplishments of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties. We hope you will enjoy the report and thank you for your interest and continued support.

Billy Greer, Board President
Evon Antonio, Executive Director



COVID-19 posed many challenges, but together with our partners and residents we found new ways to support our community through education. Many Columbia County & Greene County residents experienced a newfound appreciation for nature and their property, some starting gardens for the first time or taking on projects in their woods. Staff provided resources, hosted webinars and safe outdoor programs when possible. The myriad topics were all so interesting including plant and wildlife identification, invasive species, agroforestry, ponds, pollinators and woodland stewardship. We are proud to support all residents in their quest to learn about the environment and achieve their goals during an unprecedented time.

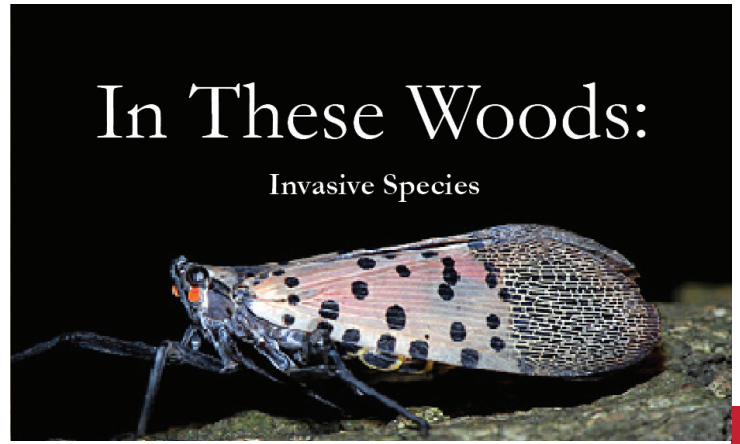
-Connor Young, Team Leader

Agriculture and Natural Resources



LOGGER TRAINING

CCE worked with the NYC Watershed Agricultural Council to adapt the voluntary Trained Logger Certification program so that loggers can receive and maintain their certification during the pandemic. This program helps improve logger safety and productivity while implementing Best Management Practices to protect water quality and build forest health. Loggers and trainers alike transitioned to virtual as needed and made it safely into the woods when circumstances allowed. Our team also created a Catskills regional field guide that helps loggers and forest professionals identify wet soils using native plants which will improve their ability to recognize and avoid wet soils. *Wetlands in the Woods: A Catskill Mountains Guide to Wetlands Plants.*



WOODLAND STEWARDSHIP

Each month, staff write and share an issue of *In These Woods*. This is a woodland stewardship publication that covers many forestry topics that landowners can use to educate themselves and engage with the woods. We send these to all registered participants and make them available on our website. **113 subscribers** received *In These Woods*.

43,576

**Reach of our Forestry
Friday social media posts.**



AGROFORESTRY

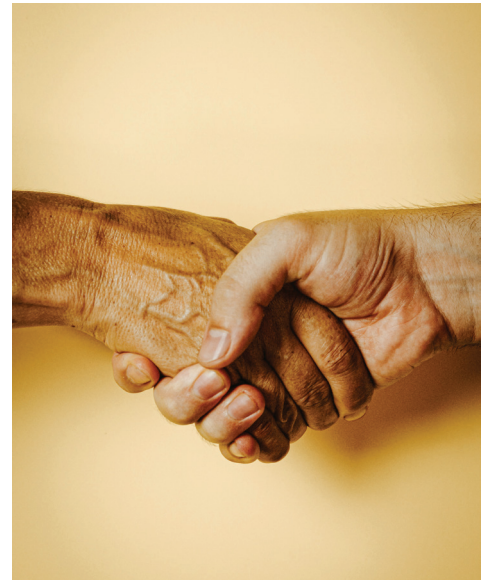
Staff have worked with many individuals, producers and landowners interested in agroforestry. Our annual Shiitake Inoculation Workshop was adapted into a two hour virtual workshop utilizing photos and footage from the shiitake demonstration site at our Siuslaw Model Forest. Our first in-person event was the very popular Mushroom Foray. Even with a smaller group, it was an exciting day with many learning opportunities shared.

Staff created a wide list of social media posts in addition to two fact sheets on Pawpaws, The Lost Fruit and American Ginseng Conservation Regulations. There was also a [MyWoodlot](#) blog about



AVID

Assessing Vegetation Impacts from Deer (AVID). In partnership with [Cornell University](#) and the NYS DEC, this project offers citizen science trainings to landowners and managers who help collect deer browse data. Trainings were made available virtually in 2020 broadening access and resources available to help in



COLLABORATION

Additionally, in partnership with [The Nature Conservancy](#) and [CCE Onondaga](#), staff hosted a Keep Your Forests Healthy webinar that focused on the Forest Health and Resilience Scorecard that helps landowners and forest professionals assess and improve forest health conditions to mitigate potential impacts from invasive species and climate change all in support of adaptive and biodiverse forests.

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Logger Courses

62

Logger Participants

659

Program Participants
(webinars & in-person)

Climate Change & the Environment



HUDSON RIVER EEL PROJECT

This project experienced unique challenges this year. Many sites were closed to monitoring and volunteer participation was not allowed. Fortunately, staff worked with NYS DEC to maintain the Hannacroix Creek site. Staff coordinated and conducted all monitoring while keeping volunteers engaged. Volunteers were understanding and supportive and the data collected will contribute to the ongoing project.



WATERSHED RESILIENCE AND CULVERTS

In partnership with Trout Unlimited and the Housatonic Valley Association, staff have continued to develop Stream Crossing Management Plans for the Towns of New Baltimore, Taghkanic, Ghent and Austerlitz. This process includes town-wide culvert assessments that are compiled into a comprehensive inventory document. The management plans consist of the inventory and describes priority replacement projects with supporting resource information.



CLIMATE RESILIENCY

As part of the ongoing partnership with the Hudson River Estuary Program, the Water Resources Institute and five different CCE associations, staff have been successful in continuing the 2020 Climate Smart Community projects. Staff worked closely with partners in the Village of Athens and City of Hudson to bring these forward virtually along with many engaged community members.

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CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES: ATHENS

In the Village of Athens, the Climate Smart Communities Assessment has been completed and the task force has begun submitting documentation for Climate Smart Community certification. This process includes integrating climate resiliency and sustainability into the Comprehensive Plan public survey and working to gather public input for the Resilience Vision. Staff were also able to attend and present to the recently formed CAC, which is an exciting step for the village.

CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES: HUDSON

In the City of Hudson, staff have worked closely with the Climate Smart Community task force and Mayor's office to complete the Climate Smart Communities Assessment and begin submitting documentation for CSC certification. Staff met with the DPW virtually to begin discussions about a city-wide culverts assessment and Flood Guide for residents.



Community Horticulture



Our staff and dedicated Master Gardener Volunteers transitioned to a new form of community support with great success. Over 1,500 community support requests were fielded in 2020. These are calls and emails that we receive from residents exploring myriad challenges and opportunities in their natural world. They include starting new gardens, woodland stewardship, tree health, landscaping design and many, many more.



1,500 community support requests

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Tubes, Caged Tubes, Nyjer Feeders



Staff and volunteers held virtual programs and created videos.



Programs: 810 programming contacts

Identifying Garlic Mustard

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Columbia and Greene Counties



“What’s that Invasive?”: Over 2,000 views for this series.

Family and Consumer Sciences



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As with every community-based program in 2020, the Family and Consumer Sciences program area was challenged to bring our evidence-based, effective programming to our communities in new ways. We believe we rose to the challenge and continued to help families and individuals through the many crises that 2020 presented.

-Rebecca Polmateer, Team Leader

PARENTING EDUCATION

We continued to offer three different parenting education opportunities in 2020.

In-home Parenting Program, funded through a contract with the Greene County Department of Social Services, provided free, in-home parenting lessons to families exclusively referred by the Greene County Department of Social Services. In-person lessons were temporarily replaced with remote programming. However, socially-distant, in-home visitation was resumed by June of 2020. **This program reached 56 families.**

Parenting Skills Classes, also funded through a contract with the Greene County Department of Social Services, were intended to be a series

of sixteen parenting classes. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, in-person group lessons were suspended. Parenting Skills classes were offered as an in-home program to families exclusively referred by the Greene County Department of Social Services. **This program reached five families.**

Parenting with Confidence Program, funded through a grant from the Dyson Foundation, provided a free series of 6-10 classes to community organizations that served families considered at-risk of abuse and/or neglect. These organizations could also make referrals for in-home classes for families that would benefit more from an individualized approach. As with

our other programs, in-home programming was suspended until June of 2020, when it resumed with socially distant in-home programming. In-person group classes were also suspended, not to be resumed. **This program reached 62**

families.

In addition, videos were recorded on a variety of parenting topics and posted to the CCE YouTube page. **The videos were viewed by an additional 143 people.**

NUTRITION EDUCATION

Two nutrition programs were offered. **The Hudson River Fish Advisory** program, funded through a contract with CCE Dutchess, allowed us to present a free nutrition education program to community organizations. In addition to the nutrition lesson, participants also received information on what fish are safe to eat from the Hudson River and its estuaries. Only one in-person program was able to be held, **it reached 24 people**. In addition, the fish advisory information was provided through a video posted to the CCE social media pages. We contracted with St. Peters Health Partners on the **Creating Healthy Schools and Communities Program**. Under this contract, we coordinated the community effort for the Hudson City School District, with the goal of improving the health of community members. This included efforts in worksite wellness, improving access to healthy foods, and complete streets. Many of these efforts continued remotely until October 2020, when the grant program ended. This was the final year of a five year grant. Unfortunately, the funding for the program is no longer available due to New York State budget constraints.



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ANGER MANAGEMENT



Classes were provided by a certified Anger Management Specialist I and were available to all residents of Columbia and Greene Counties. Due to Covid-19, anger management was offered remotely via the telephone or zoom. **There were 27 participants.** In addition, YouTube videos were recorded on multiple anger management topics and posted to the CCE channel. **An additional 71 people were reached via the videos.**

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

The main source of funding for the Family and Consumer Resiliency program was county appropriations and small fees to participants for workshops. Workshops were offered to organizations in Columbia and Greene Counties with topics that included basic budgeting, organizing household records, identity theft prevention, and more. Information was also available on energy conservation, water quality, indoor air quality, aging in place, fair housing and more. Due to Covid-19, programs were offered remotely via zoom until September when socially distant in-person classes began to be offered. **The program reached 431 individuals.** Videos and online resources were also developed **reaching an additional 147 people.** Theresa Mayhew, the Family and Community Resiliency educator, retired after 30 years of providing high quality education to the members of the Columbia County and Greene County communities. Unfortunately, due to cuts in the Columbia County appropriation, this position has been discontinued and the Family and Community Resiliency program will end.



4-H and Youth Development

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While it has been challenging for the 4-H Youth Development Program staff and volunteers to provide youth opportunities to “learn by doing” (the 4-H motto) and utilize “hands-on learning” (our methodology), we feel that the COVID-19 safety protocols of 2020 have encouraged us to be creative and think out-of-the-box. Unfortunately, associated funding reductions have also impacted our ability to collaborate with community organizations like libraries and community centers and prevented us from filling the vacancy for our 4-H Agriculture and STEM educator.

—Linda Tripp, Issue Leader

REACHING KIDS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

School-age youth have opportunities to learn from 4-H staff and volunteers in their school classrooms, at afterschool programs, and in public programs. Although there were fewer than the usual number of programs and participants, we were able to rethink and involved over 1,500 youth in learning experiences.



SUMMIT LAKE EXPLORERS

Through a collaboration with the Philmont Community Center and funding from Stewarts Holiday Match, kids spent a week at “the lake”. They learned about life in the lake – invertebrates, fish, web of life. Lots of time was spent outdoors collecting samples from the lake as well as fishing in it!

W-A-J SCIENCE CLUB

This student science club of Windham-Ashland-Jewett Elementary School meets six times a year to investigate natural resource topics thanks to a partnership with the WAJ School District and funding from the Windham Foundation.



SAFE SITTERS

CCE partners with Hudson Memorial Health to offer this day-long program several times a year which provides hands-on practice of feeding and caring for a baby and toddlers as well as basic CPR.

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MONARCHS IN OUR SCHOOLS

Twenty classrooms and groups received monarch larvae, equipment, curriculum, and one-on-one guidance to hatch and tag monarch butterflies provided with financial support from the Rheinstrom Hill Foundation.



SCHOOL PARTNERS IN GARDENING

With financial support from the Hudson River Bank and Trust Company Foundation, schools and community organizations that bring youth together in the garden are part of this coalition with 4-H providing curriculum resources, leader training and even equipment. With school visits limited this year, 4-H has partnered with Clermont State Park to create and distribute **130+ student kits** in October and December.



MORRA SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

Since its inception in 2015, **34 residents of Columbia and Greene Counties** have been recipients of the Paul and Maria Morra Scholarship Trust Awards presented by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties. These young adults each received from \$1,000-\$2,000 to assist them as they pursued a career in the field of horticulture, agriculture, forestry or natural resources.

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INVOLVING 4-H CLUB MEMBERS

The volunteer leaders of our **twenty-eight 4-H clubs** located throughout both counties worked their magic to keep their members interested and involved. Even with COVID-19 restrictions, many of our **300+ members** found ways to build their project skills and share what they have learned. Four new 4-H clubs are in the works to provide opportunities for more local youth to enjoy the 4-H club experience.

4-H MARKET LIVESTOCK PROJECT

4-H members have the opportunity to experience the livestock business in its entirety through this project where they acquire a young animal – beef, sheep, swine, goat, chicken, turkey, rabbit – to raise to proper sale weight and then sell through the 4-H Livestock Sale. The 4-H members keep track of costs, prepare the animals for show, solicit bidders and, after the sale, deliver the processed meat to their buyers. Utilizing COVID-19 safety protocols throughout the summer, youth were able to learn during live clinics, have their animals evaluated during a live show and sell their animals during the live auction.



4-H CONTESTS TAKE KIDS OUTDOORS

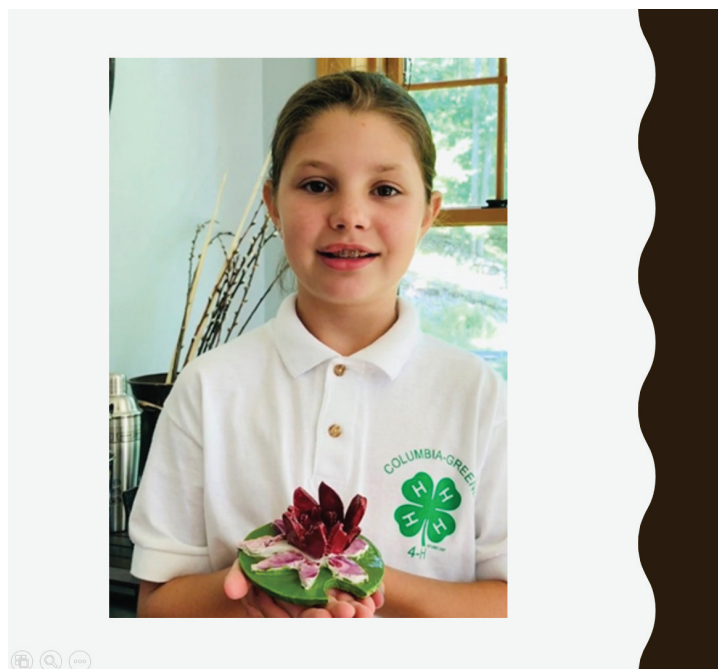
We sent 4-H members outside with three contests this past year. Pumpkin Growing looked for the largest pumpkin. The Plant to Plate Contest challenged 4-H members to first grow two ingredients for their chosen recipe and then prepare it for their family. Our Fishing Contest looked for photos of youth with their caught fish and provided prizes for the biggest fish and the smallest fish caught.



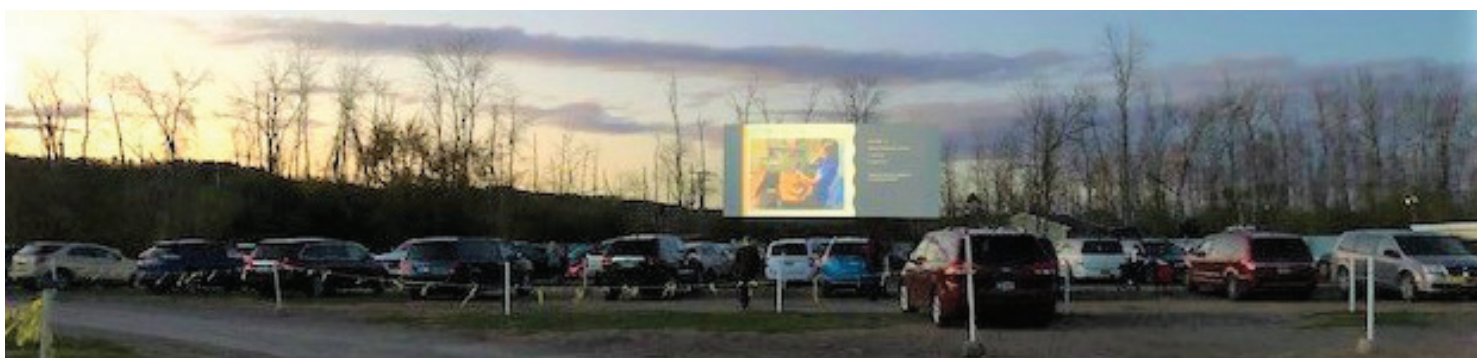
FAREWELL TO SUMMER 2020 4-H SHOWCASE

With county and state fairs cancelled, two major opportunities to provide 4-H members with recognition and leadership growth were gone. In their place this virtual showcase was developed.

Over 60 4-H members submitted a total of 300+ entries, each a photo and description, that represented different aspects of their 4-H project learning experiences this year. Every 4-H member's portfolio of photos was shared with a 4-H volunteer evaluator who provided feedback to the member. The photos were used to create subject matter slide shows posted on facebook as well as shown at Achievement Night.



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4-H ACHIEVEMENT NIGHT AT THE DRIVE-IN

4-H Achievement Night provides an opportunity to recognize 4-H club members and volunteer leaders for their accomplishments. This year's event took place on October 24 at the Hi-Way Drive-In in Coxsackie. 4-H members enjoyed lawn games to win prizes like soccer balls, frisbees and flashlights! As darkness fell, the 4-H award ceremony video was hosted by 4-H educators. CCE Board President, Billy Greer, welcomed everyone to the event via video as well. The evening was capped with everyone enjoying the movie, "Babe".



Taste NY

The Taste NY Market at the Capital Region Welcome Center (CRWC) on the NYS Thruway is a versatile marketplace featuring a wide variety of foods, beverages, textiles, and artisanal goods all grown and processed in New York State. The Taste NY Market shares space with the Welcome Center, which features educational kiosks, a historical artifact wall, musical playground, tourism videos and brochures, and several spots for photo opportunities.

Taste NY and the Capital Region Welcome Center have remained open during the entirety of the COVID-19 outbreak to serve the travelers of New York State. Typical traffic patterns were altered during

the stay at home order and we did see a decrease in sales throughout the end of the year. Because we had to alter some of our services, table and tasting events that we usually try to have 3-4 times a month, were suspended. We stepped up our promotion and marketing to include a “Vendor of the Month” featuring a local small business.

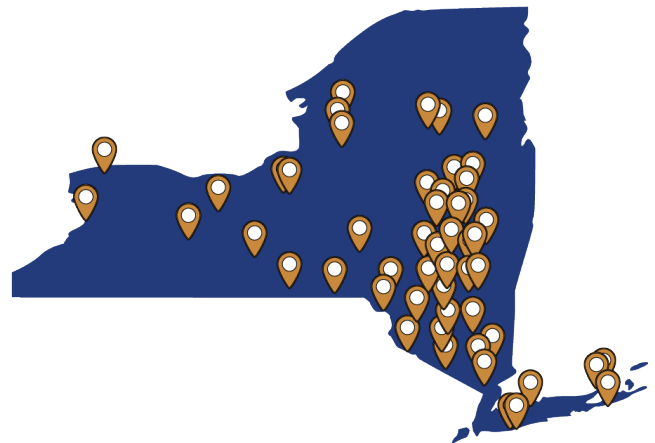
Fortunately, we were able to continue to work with many of our vendors, even if we temporarily had to scale back some orders. We can proudly say that producers and small businesses in Columbia County and Greene County benefitted from the Taste NY Market.



Because of CCE Columbia & Greene Counties' connection to Taste NY and the Department of Agriculture & Markets, we have the opportunity to participate in the Congressional Agriculture Committee with Congressman Antonio Delgado. Being part of the committee has allowed for additional connections to the agriculture community, along with staying informed on important political, economic, and social issues affecting NYS agriculture.

Total Purchases from Columbia County and Greene County Vendors

\$163,072.29



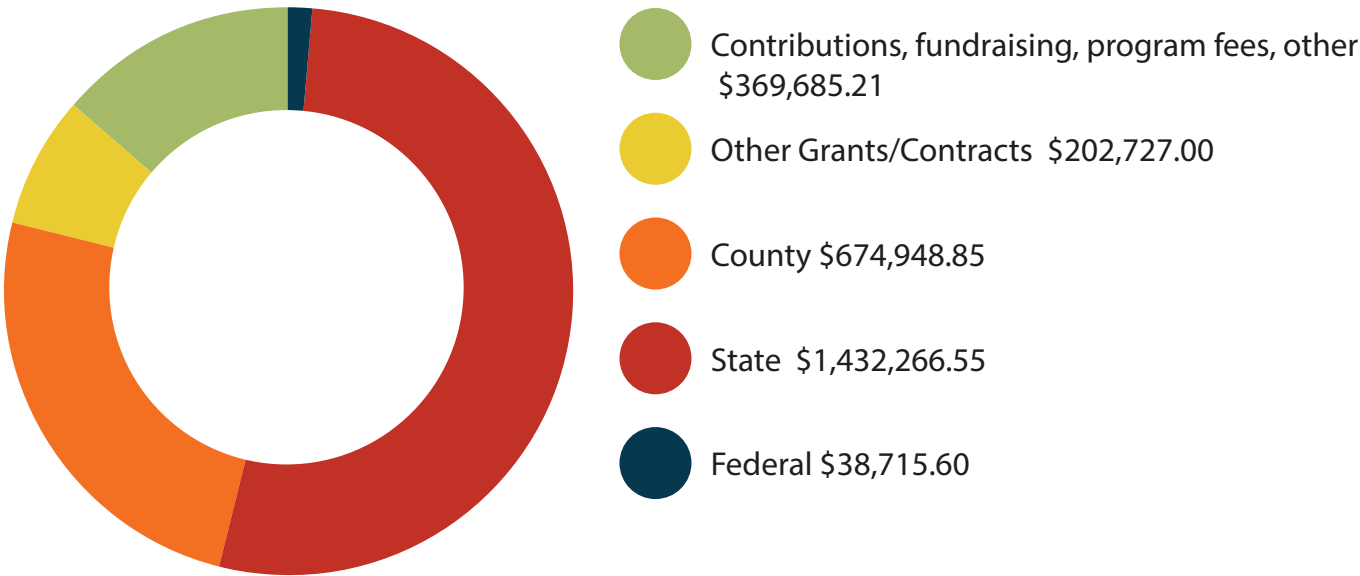
17



We are always looking for ways to engage with the public and our local producers. Events, tastings, and new vendors are always welcome and encouraged throughout the year. We are looking forward to seeing more New York State travelers soon and we're ready for you!

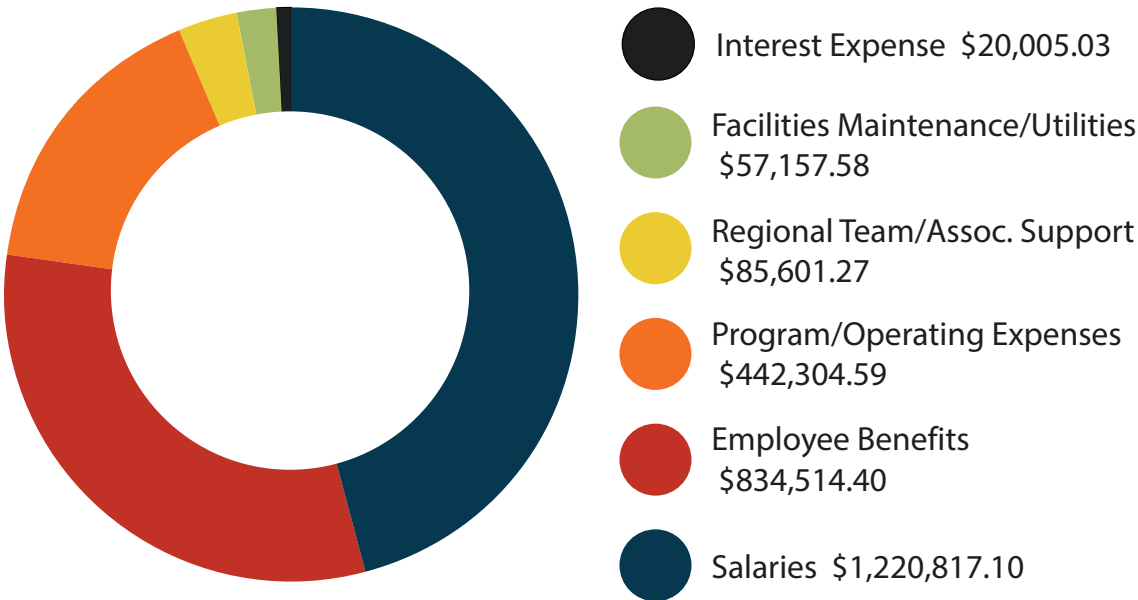
Finances

REVENUES



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EXPENSES



Regional Programs

THE CAPITAL AREA AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL PROGRAM

This Cornell Cooperative Extension program provides agricultural and horticultural education through workshops, newsletters and consultations utilizing traditional and electronic means. Counties included in the program are: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Schenectady and Washington. The primary program areas are: Market Development, Business Management and Analysis, Soils and Field Crops, Nursery/Greenhouse Crop Production, Pasture Management, Applied Research, Dairy Farm Business Summary, Pesticide Recertification, Beginning and Small Farmers, and Cut Flower Farming Operations.

The Capital Area Agricultural and Horticultural Program Educators offer one-day workshops to aspiring farmers. The workshop highlights some areas that a person should be aware of prior to starting a farm business. Attendees have mentioned though while the one-day workshop is good, more in-depth education would be appreciated.

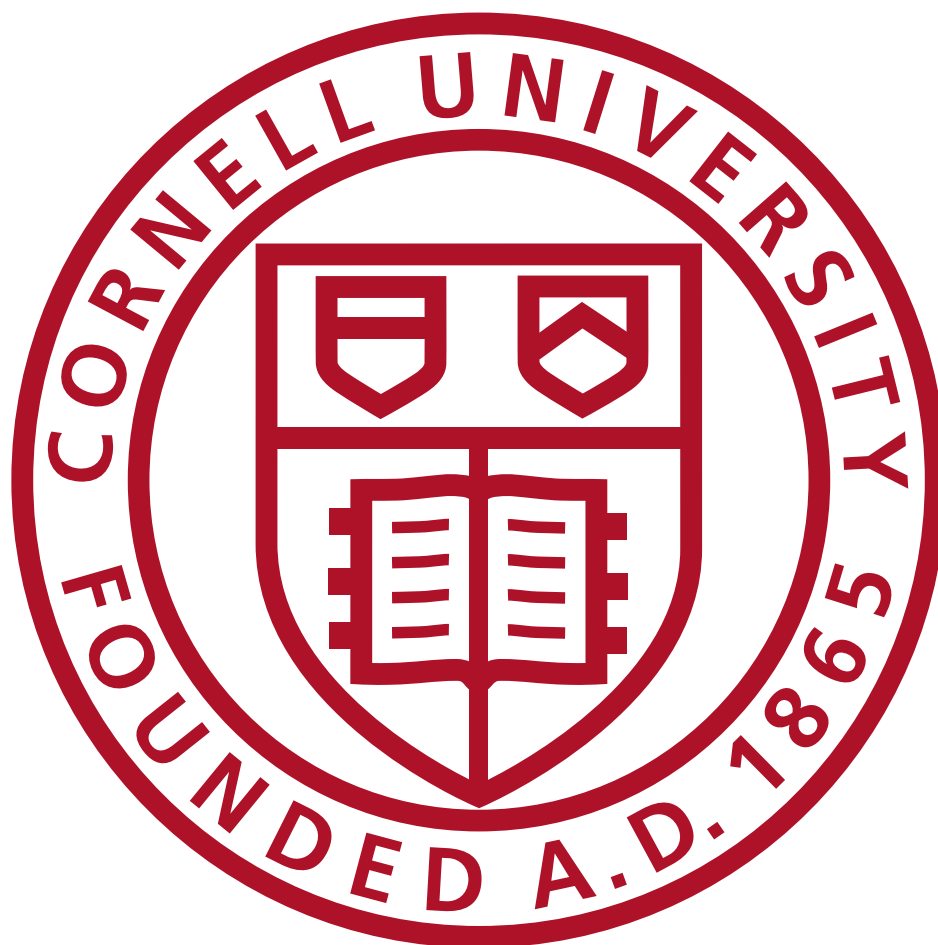
EASTERN NEW YORK COMMERCIAL HORTICULTURE PROGRAM

The Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture is one of the premier regional agricultural Cornell Cooperative Extension programs in New York, serving a large multi-county area in the Champlain Valley, Capital Region and Hudson Valley of the state. The team's specialists work together with Cornell faculty and extension educators statewide to address the issues that impact the vegetable, tree fruit, small fruit and grape industries. The Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture Program provides educational programs and information to growers and agri-business professionals, arming them with the knowledge to profitably produce and market safe and healthful horticultural crops, contributing to the viability of farms and the economic wellbeing of New York State. Specifically, our program focuses on food safety, variety evaluation, market development, pest management, and cultural practices.

Growers and agri-business professionals must enroll in the program to benefit from many of our educational offerings including our newsletter, direct mailings, and pest alerts.

The Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture Program is supported, in part, by 17 county Cornell Cooperative Extensions in the Capital Region of New York: Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Dutchess, Essex, Fulton, Greene, Orange, Montgomery, Putnam, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Ulster, Warren and Washington Counties.

For more information enych.cce.cornell.edu/about_program.php.



CCE at a Glance

CCE connects communities with Cornell research and expertise to enrich and empower New York State neighbors, local businesses, towns, and cities.

In neighborhoods, homes, workplaces, and schools, CCE educators work to empower individuals and families with raising children, saving energy and money, growing and preparing food, starting, sustaining businesses, and protecting the environment.

Each CCE office relies on county, state, and federal funds to solve local problems and strengthen communities.

CCE Columbia and Greene Counties is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Connect

Agroforestry Resource Center
6055 Route 23, Acra, NY 12405
(518) 622-9820

Extension Education Center
479 Route 66, Hudson, NY 12534
(518) 828-3346

Website: ccecolumbiagreene.org
Email: columbiagreene@cornell.edu

Facebook: @CCEColumbiaGreene
Instagram: @CCECGC

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