



January 2026

Dear Future Gardeners:

The Junior Master Gardener Committee is accepting applications for the 2026 JMG Program to be held at the Monmouth County Agriculture Building, 4000 Kozloski Road, Freehold. The program is open to Monmouth County residents ages 9 to 11 years (as of 5/1/2026) in Grades 3 through 5. JMG is a unique eight-week gardening program which includes hands-on experiences in both the classroom and in the garden under the supervision of certified Rutgers Master Gardeners. Children completing all eight weeks of this program will receive certification as Junior Master Gardeners.

The JMG Program will be held on Saturday mornings with drop-off at 9:00 a.m. at the rear entrance of the Agriculture Building. Pickup time is 12:30 p.m. Classes are scheduled for April 25, May 2, May 9, May 16, May 30, June 6, June 13 and June 20. It is expected that the JMG students attend all classes. To get the full value out of the program, the children are encouraged to return to the garden on designated days for the remainder of the summer to continue harvesting and maintaining their garden plots.

Junior Master Gardeners may enter their harvest in the Monmouth County Fair Home Gardeners' Competition. This year, the Fair runs from Wednesday, July 22 through Sunday, July 26. We will meet at the JMG garden on Thursday afternoon, July 23 to select and prepare entries. Parents are responsible for delivering their child's entries to the fairgrounds on Friday morning, July 24.

Please complete and return the enclosed application and media release with the \$50 registration fee as soon as possible. The JMG program is very popular, and completed applications are accepted on a first come-first served basis. Deadline for applications is January 31, 2026. If you have any questions, please contact the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Monmouth County at 732-431-7260.

JMG Co-Chairs:
Debbie Gross-Tulli
Eileen Rodriguez
Cheryl Sikora
Ryanne Vigliotti

Sincerely,
Diane Larson
Diane Larson
Extension Horticulturist
Rutgers Master Gardener Coordinator

Encl: JMG Br



Junior Master Gardener 2026 Program Application

Please complete the form below and mail it or deliver it in person with your \$50.00 check made payable to **Rutgers, The State University**, by the submission deadline of January 31, 2026 to:

Rutgers Master Gardeners of Monmouth County

Junior Master Gardener

4000 Kozloski Road

Freehold, NJ 07728

****Please print****

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Current Grade: _____ Name Tag Name: _____

T-Shirt Size (check one):

Child: Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ X-Large _____

Adult: Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ X-Large _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ ZIP: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____ Alt Phone: _____

Explain any health conditions, allergies, or special needs* _____

***The Junior Master Gardener Program strives to meet the needs of all participants. All possible efforts will be made to include participants. In pursuit of this, volunteers may occasionally require parental assistance. As such, we request all parents be ready to assist program volunteers when appropriate and at the discretion of program leaders.**

Upon acceptance into the Junior Master Gardener Program, I understand that:

- Attendance is expected at all 8 classes and garden sessions.
- There will be a comfort break mid-morning, at which time a light snack will be provided. Children are permitted to bring their own snacks.
- Each class session involves 90 minutes of indoor classroom instruction in the Agriculture Building located at 4000 Kozloski Road, Freehold.
- The 90 minute hands-on gardening sessions are held in the JMG garden located directly behind the Ag Building, where children grow and harvest in their own garden plots.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date





Media Release for Minors

I hereby authorize Rutgers Cooperative Extension to use my child's spoken and written comments for news articles, success stories, video and/or audio recordings related to the Junior Master Gardener program offered by the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Monmouth County.

I also acknowledge that the above-named organization has my permission to distribute my child's/children's quotes, photographs and/or video clips as part of its educational and promotional programming efforts.

I further acknowledge that my authorization and permission are voluntary, and I will not be paid any royalties, fees, or other form of remuneration for use of same.

****Please print****

Name of child: _____

Name of Parent: _____

Signature of Parent: _____ Date: _____





Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and The Board of County Commissioners. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.

Program offered by Rutgers Master Gardeners of Monmouth County, Rutgers Cooperative Extension, 4000 Kozloski Rd, Box 5033 Freehold, NJ 07728



For information phone
Rutgers Master Gardener
Helpline
732-303-7614
Or
mgarden@co.monmouth.nj.us
Registration starts in
January



Gardening Program
For Children Ages 9-11



The Monmouth County Board of
County Commissioners

Thomas A. Arnone, Director
Susan M. Kiley, Deputy Director
Dominick "Nick" DiRocco
Ross F. Licitra
Erik Anderson

Topics

Composting
Container Gardening
Ecology
Environmental Horticulture
Fruits
Herbs
Insects
Integrated Pest Management
Landscape Horticulture
Mulch
Plant Diseases
Plant Growth & Development
Seeds
Soil and Water
Soil Testing
Tending a Garden
Vegetables
Vermicomposting

Indoor Activities



Outdoor Activities



What is JMG?

The Junior Master Gardener Program is an international youth gardening program of the university Cooperative Extension network. Under the instruction of Rutgers Master Gardeners, JMG engages children in novel, hands-on group and individual experiences which provide a love of gardening, develop an appreciation for the environment, and cultivate the mind.

Students are encouraged to donate their surplus harvest to local food pantries and to enter what they have grown in the Monmouth County Fair Home & Garden competition. Eight classes are held on Saturday mornings from April through June. Applications are sent out every January.