

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Rain Gardens are Making a SPLASH!

*A Rain Garden is a specially designed landscape that absorbs rainwater using native plants that act as natural sponges. Rain Gardens reduce the need for maintenance, provide improved stormwater infiltration, and enhance wildlife habitat.*

Rain Gardens also become outdoor classrooms with cross-curricular opportunities for students to participate in hands-on monitoring, observing, and nurturing of on-site projects, where teachers and students can better utilize their school campuses as living laboratories to study the environment. Ocean County Soil Conservation District's Rain Gardens also include a teaching podium, and picnic tables to provide a teaching platform and student seating for lessons and activities. Each school also receives an educational sign explaining the project.

The Ocean County Soil Conservation District, has received funding from Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) to fund an additional 5 sites this year through their Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP.) The Society of American Foresters and the Forest Resource Education Center are significant partners in this endeavor and will provide assistance in the planning, designing and installation of the Rain Gardens.

We are pleased to announce the schools chosen to develop Rain Gardens this year are:

- ❖ Hugh G. Boyd Elementary School – Seaside Heights
- ❖ Central Regional High School – Bayville
- ❖ Frederic A. Priff & Waretown Elementary Schools – Waretown
- ❖ Lavallette Elementary School - Lavallette
- ❖ Agriculture and Environmental Science Program at the OCVTS Jackson Center

On October 30, 2006 teams of teachers from each of the schools will gather for a unique workshop opportunity integrating "*Project Based Learning*" as a means to develop and design their school's Rain Garden and Outdoor Classroom. This special workshop is being facilitated by Rutgers Center for Effective School Practices and promises to provide the tools, ideas, and resources for effective project development.

For more information contact Christine Raabe, Education Outreach Specialist at the District at 609-971-7002 or visit the website at [www.ocscd.org](http://www.ocscd.org).

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