



4-H Camp

At

RUTGERS

Gardens



CAMP INFO AND WELCOME GUIDE

NJ4HCAMP.RUTGERS.EDU/GARDENS.HTML | 973.903.3253



JUST THE FACTS

STANDARD SESSIONS

MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY

STARTING ON JULY 13TH, 20TH, 27TH



MINI-SESSION

WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY

JULY 8TH - 10TH

9AM-4PM

AGES 6-14

OPEN ENROLLMENT: ALL YOUTH MAY APPLY

SERVING YOUTH AGES 6-14 THROUGHOUT JULY, 4-H CAMP AT RUTGERS GARDENS IS DESIGNED TO CREATE A COMMUNITY WHERE CAMPERS ARE FREE TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS AND EXPLORE THEIR CREATIVITY WHILE ENGAGING IN HANDS-ON LEARNING AND EXPLORATION THROUGHOUT RUTGERS GARDENS.



RUTGERS

New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station



Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Rutgers Cooperative Extension is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

4-H Camp at Rutgers Gardens

1-2

Our Mission

Where is 4-H Camp at Rutgers Gardens!?!

3-4

5-6

Our Camp Central
Some of the Places We'll Explore

A Day At Camp
Themes

7-9

10-11

Our Staff is Our Heart
Lunch & Snack

Drop off & Pick Up
Dates & Rates

12-13

Backpage

See You Next Summer!
Office Contact Info

Table of Contents



Pre-Camp Guide



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
New Jersey 4-H Camp
L.G. Cook 4-H Youth Center
for Outdoor Education

Head is for our thoughtful and intentional interactions, clear thinking, and responsible decision-making.

Heart is for our open, welcoming, environment where campers practice empathy, live together with all sorts of different people, and establish long-lasting friendships.



4-H CAMP IS MANAGED BY RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION. THE FOUR H'S ARE THE CENTRAL PILLARS TO THE COMMUNITY WE BUILD HERE TOGETHER EACH SESSION OF THE SUMMER.

Hands is for our responsibility to all take care of the beautiful place we share together. Each camper and counselor strive to be a support to their whole camp family - working to maintain our community and keep it moving forward,

Health is for our camp lifestyle: days chock-full of running, playing, exploring, and breathing in the fresh air. Health is also the culmination of all the H's here at Camp, a healthy community we all benefit from and all have ownership of.

Our Mission



Serving youth ages 6-14 throughout July, this program will combine the social/emotional learning of 4-H Camp's friendly, communal, tech-free experience with the beautiful environment and educational opportunities of Rutgers Gardens. Campers will bond with their "cabins" throughout the week, as they enjoy a unique mixture of hands-on outdoor education and carefree games played outside.

Social Education

While campers spend the session meeting new people in a new place, our staff work hard to support them as they face and overcome challenges, build self-confidence, and gain the tools to treat each other well and interact positively. Campers with diverse identities, backgrounds, and experiences come together to play, learn, and explore in the Gardens.

Outdoor Education

The Rutgers Gardens space provides the perfect location for hands-on educational expert-led activities throughout the camp day. Outdoor educational activities will be run by Rutgers University experts and Rutgers Gardens Staff, as well as counselors who have a passion for the environment, gardening, and outdoor education.

Throughout the week campers will have the opportunity to work directly with experts to learn and interact in new ways with the beautiful environment around us.

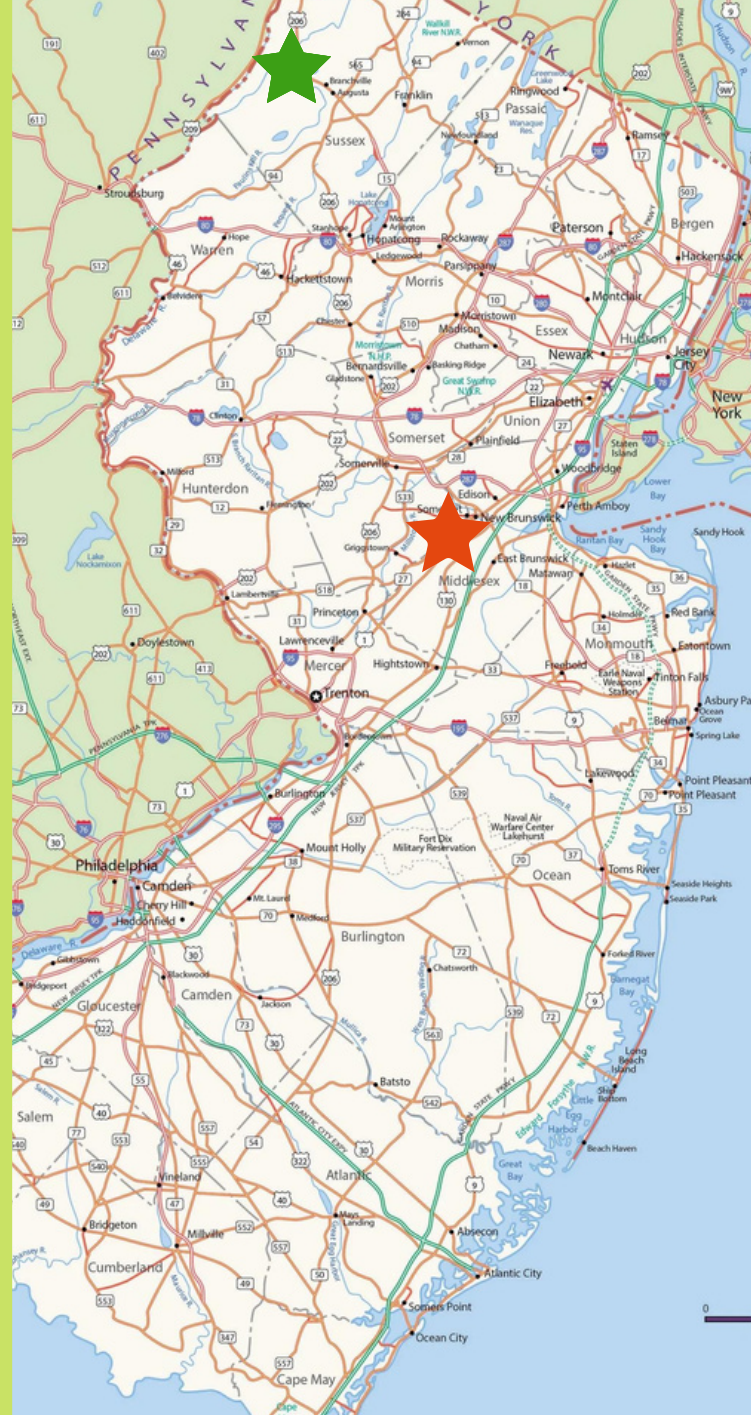


4-H Camp's cardinal rules are **kindness** and **respect**. These tenets shape how we treat each other, our environment, and our community as a whole.



NEW JERSEY'S 4-H CAMP

4-H Camp at Rutgers Gardens is the New Jersey State 4-H Camp's Day Camp Experience. The state 4-H camp has been running weeklong, residential summer camp sessions every summer since we opened in 1951. 4-H Camp at Rutgers Gardens will emphasize the same camper and community focus in a day camp experience at Rutgers Gardens just outside of New Brunswick. We're an open enrollment camp, open to all youth ages 6-14.





Rutgers Gardens

Rutgers Gardens is the official botanic gardens of Rutgers University. The 180-acre botanic garden consists of designed gardens, plant collections, a student farm, farmers market, and natural habitats. The Rutgers Gardens location will provide the opportunity for some wonderful outdoor education programs taught by Rutgers experts. Campers will get hands on experience with the gardens, as well as the bats, bees, and birds who live there. Though we have a large stretch of the gardens to explore, our "Camp Central" area will allow campers to get comfortable, play, eat and relax in their own home base section of Rutgers Gardens.



Our Camp Central

Log Cabin



The Log Cabin was originally built in the mid-1930s, and provides a perfect backdrop to our camp central. While most of our activities throughout the day will be spent outside interacting with the Gardens, the log cabin provides a special spot for when we need to take a break from the heat, or rain.

Pavilion

The Pavilion sits right next to the Log Cabin in camp central. Overlooking Helyar Woods and Weston Mill Pond, the pavilion provides the perfect lunch spot, arts and crafts hub, and all-camp gathering location for special events!



Bathrooms



There are two bathrooms located in the log cabin, as well as two located on the opposite side of camp central. Throughout the Gardens there are also various portable toilets for when we are exploring the wider areas of Rutgers Gardens.

Rec Field

At the front of Camp Central in our Pick-Up/Drop-Off zone is our Recreation Field. Campers will start and end their days playing games, participating in cabin-led activities, and burning off any excess energy left from the day in our Rec Field.



Some of the places we'll explore... ✨

Helyar Woods

Helyar Woods is a mature forest predominately composed of birch, beech, oak, and maple. The area contains several springs, a stream, and an old quarry near Westons Mill Pond. Campers will have the opportunity to hike some of the trails, explore the woods, and learn about the flora and fauna.



Bamboo Grove

Initially planted as a wind screen for honeybee colonies in the 1940s, our bamboo grove now stretches to nearly 2 acres. A visitor favorite, the bamboo grove provides ample shade on hot summer days. Campers will enjoy time getting creative in the bamboo grove with our special "Bamboo Forest Time" each week!



Edwin J. and Ida M. Otken Memorial Garden

The Otken Memorial Garden features a mixed border of shrubs, perennials, and ornamental grasses along walking paths, providing a great space for cabin activities (and photo ops in the iconic oversized Adirondack chairs!)



Pollinator Garden

The Pollinator Garden provides the perfect location for campers to learn about the special relationships between native plants, water sources, and the many diverse pollinators that these plants support. Campers will have the opportunity to not only explore the beautiful flora, but learn about the species that help the garden thrive.



A DAY AT CAMP



Days will be spent...

- Learning in the gardens
- Hiking in Helyar Woods
- Getting creative in the Bamboo Forest
- Studying butterflies, birds, bats, and bees
- Participating in morning and afternoon All-Camp communal meetings
- Engaging in camper-initiated activities during free time
- Building a community based on mutual respect, curiosity, kindness, and treating each other well.
- Enjoying a tech-free, outdoor summer experiences with new friends.

CABIN ACTIVITIES

Camper will have up to two cabin activities per day. Cabin activities will be time for campers to get creative, get curious, and get campy with various team-building, exploration, and hands-on activities specialized to each age group.



EXPERT ACTIVITIES

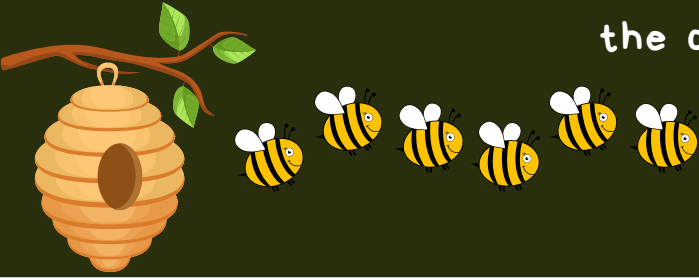
In addition to cabin activities, campers will also have the opportunity to engage in hands-on interactive activities led by experts from Rutgers University throughout the gardens including time in the pollinator garden, and the student farm



2026 THEMES

Every week at 4-H Camp at Rutgers Gardens features hands on experiences in the botanical garden facilities, as well as plenty of new-friend-community-building-activities and active run-around outdoor games.

In addition, each session has a theme that dictates our "Expert Activities" through the week and provides a throughline for the rest of the camp schedule.



Mini-Session - Week 1

Our mini-session is a great way to sample of all what 4-H Camp at Rutgers Gardens has to offer. This condensed week will feature some of our favorite activities from Eco-Friendly Feats, Fantastic Fauna, and Flora Festival sessions, and can serve as a great introduction to our program.



Fantastic Fauna - Week 3

During our Fantastic Fauna session, campers will learn about all the wildlife that surrounds us at Rutgers Gardens. University experts will lead the campers through a series of activities to learn more about the different birds, bugs, bats, creatures and critters that we'd find throughout the Gardens, our communities, and New Jersey as a whole.

Eco-Friendly Feats - Week 2

Eco-friendly Feats is a brand-new theme for 2025! We will be zooming out our focus to how we can help support our homes, communities, and the planet through hands-on, inventive, sustainable solutions. Activities will include sustainable farming and gardening techniques, how to make solar oven s'mores, and promoting natural pollination.

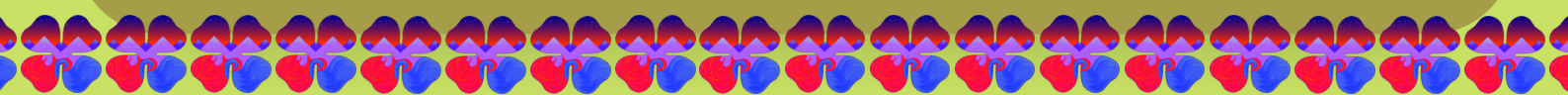
Flora Festival - Week 4

Campers will have the opportunity to dive deeper into their knowledge and skills on the plants, trees, and flowers that surround us with activities led by Rutgers University experts in the life-cycles of plants, farming and agriculture, and gardening. As this is our final session of the summer, we will also include some of our favorite activities from earlier in the summer in the festivities as well.





Our Staff is Our Heart



Our counselors strive to create a transformative experience where campers are free to explore their creativity, make new friends and build a kind and respectful community together.

We maintain at least a 1:8 staff to camper ratio. However, when Camp is fully assembled in one place and we're all together, it's closer to 1:5.



The only thing that makes an **exceptional summer camp** is an **exceptional summer camp staff**.



Hiring is competitive, and we look for the most enthusiastic, responsible, funny, empathetic, and caring young role models we can find to join our team. All staff must be at least 18 years old and complete a Rutgers University background check and protection of minors training. All staff will become certified in First Aid and CPR and go through an intensive, weeklong pre-summer 4-H Camp staff training and orientation.

Lunch & Snack

We ask that campers provide their own nut-free lunch each day.



Campers will eat lunch with their "cabins" each afternoon in our pavillion at camp central overlooking Helyar Woods and Westong Mill Pond.

A light snack will be provided each afternoon. On Friday, campers will also receive a voucher to pick out a healthy snack from Cook's Market located on-site at Rutgers Gardens.



Drop-Off & Pick-Up



Drop-Off

Drop-off windows are between 9:00am and 9:30am each morning in front of the log cabin at Rutgers Gardens. Once you pull up into the drop-off zone, one of your camper's counselors will greet them at the car and assist them through pick-up into our morning organized cabin activities.

Pick-up windows are between 3:30pm and 4:00pm each afternoon in front of the log cabin. Campers will be at camp central during this time after a long summer camp day!



Pick-Up

Please make sure to send your camper with a water bottle and lunch. Counselors will double check this at drop-off.



DATES AND RATES

SUMMER 2026

4-H Camp at Rutgers Gardens is offering four sessions throughout the month of July for children ages 6 to 14.

**Session #1 - The Mini Session: July 8th-10th
(Wednesday-Friday)**

Session #2 - Eco-Friendly Feats: July 13th-17th

Session #3 - Fantastic Fauna: July 20th-24th

Session #4 - Flora Festival: July 27st-31st

**Standard Summer Camp Pricing: \$425
\$400 with 4-H/Rutgers Discount**

**Mini-Session: \$250
\$225 with 4-H/Rutgers Discount**

**All registration is online via our website.
Payment in full is required at the time of registration.**

We believe every child should have the chance to go to summer camp. If your family is facing financial hardship or difficulties, please call the Camp Office at 973-948-3550 to discuss the details of applying for an New Jersey 4-H Camp Campership.



4-H Camp

RUTGERS
Gardens

*See you next
summer!*

4-H Camp at Rutgers Gardens

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