

Cook Campus Garden Clean-Up and Planting Day
By
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Our first 2009 Planting Day Event on Thursday, June 18, at the Foran Conservation Garden was a success despite all the rain. The first and main thing that we accomplished was planting daylilies right next to the Cook/Douglass Lecture Hall by a small rain garden that we hope will also be a vernal pond, with tadpoles eventually to come. Daylilies were a good choice because they are not invasive, they are low maintenance, they often slowly increase, and they provide good soil cover/stability, despite the fact that they are not native to New Jersey. Most importantly, they will help in changing perception of the area from one that is abandoned to a garden that is cared for and valued. We also tried to throw away any trash and cigarette butts in the area. There are now temporary signs posted, created by summer volunteer Helen Calacci, that tell students that we are working on the garden and ask them to not throw their cigarette butts in the rain pond. Tony Sgro of Facilities is providing us with new containers for smokers to put cigarette butts in.

After working on the rain garden, we then proceeded to take out some of the weed trees in the garden that we don't want because they forced their way in. There are still a ton of weeds that need to be cut down before herbicide can be reapplied, but everyone was so wet that at this point we decided to take a break for lunch. After lunch, we went on an adventure to move all the plants donated from the Pinelands Nursery (by Don Knezick, the owner), which were being held at Rutgers Gardens. We moved the plants to Horticulture Farm 3, on the other side of Ryders Lane, in three trips. This was at the suggestion of Nick Vorsa from the Plant Biology and Pathology Department. He is also going to donate some blueberry plants from his Marucci Blueberry and Cranberry Research and Extension Center

There have been numerous people involved in the process of improving the Foran Garden. This has truly been—and will continue to be—a stewardship opportunity, not unlike the SWRRG's first annual "Rutgers Recovering Our Resources" Event held this past May, where volunteers helped divert students' discarded trash and used goods from the landfill. The people involved with the Foran Garden include Priscilla Hayes and Ellen Vastola from the Solid Waste Resource Renewal Group; Kaitlin Fischer, a volunteer summer intern with the SWRRG; Zane Helsel from the Plant Biology and Pathology Department; Stephanie Murphy from the Rutgers Soil Testing Laboratory; Tony Sgro and Barry Bailey from the Facilities Department; Don Knezick from Pinelands Nursery; Bruce Crawford from Rutgers Gardens; Joseph Heckman, Edward Durner and Glenn Tappen of the Organic Farm and Hort Farm 3; Jean Marie Hartman and Drew Siglin from the Landscape Architecture Department; and the volunteers who came out such as A.J. Bozenmayer, Class of 2009, Jessie Doyle, Class of 2011, and Thomas Cummiskey, a Rutgers 2010 student who is working at Wakefern Corporation (ShopRite) this summer as the Environmental Affairs Intern.