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SHELLFISH GARDENERS WANTED

The Barnegat Bay Shellfish Restoration Project (BBSRP) is looking for individuals interested in learning how to grow clams and oysters and educating the public about Barnegat Bay and its watershed. Starting in the end of April, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County and NJDEP Bureau of Shellfisheries will offer a program to provide education in a special shellfish gardeners program resulting in a Shellfish Gardeners Certification. The Shellfish Gardener Training Course, which is similar to the Master Gardeners Program, will include spring and fall classroom work, field trips and a supervised summer practicum.

During the past four years we've trained over 125 volunteers in the Barnegat Bay Shellfish Restoration Program. These people having been enjoying themselves tremendously in this effort. Beside the fact that we are successfully raising shellfish, the most important part of our program is to educate the public about water quality issues in the Barnegat Bay Watershed. We do this by inviting the public to join in our efforts at our nine shellfish nurseries at various locations around the bay. In addition, ReClam the Bay (RCTB), our non-profit organization, advertises our work in the news media and on their website. RCTB helps to support the Barnegat Bay Shellfish Restoration Program through fundraising and education. We need folks with all kinds of skills and energy. In 2008, the program won a Governor's Award for Tourism and an Honorable Mention in the Governor's Environmental Excellence Healthy Ecosystems Program. You can be a part of this great program too!

As an introduction to the Shellfish Gardening Course you are invited to join us at a free, open house conducted by BBSRP/ReClam the Bay. The open house will begin at 7:00 PM on April 28, 2008 at the Ocean County Extension Center on Whitesville Road in Toms River (Route 527). For more information, log on to the website <http://ocean.rcre.rutgers.edu/marine/bbsrp.html> or <http://www.reclamthebay.org/> call the Rutgers Cooperative Extension office at 732 349-1152.

