Raritan Township, NJ

Environmental Commission & Green Team

RARITAN TOWNSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
GREEN TEAM

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 6 – EC at Hunterdon County Farmer's Market

Sept. 19 – BioBlitz @ Micek Pk

Sept. 19 – EC/GT at Raritan Township Community Day

Sept. 20 – EC at Hunterdon County Farmer's Market

Sept. 22 – *Pollinator Garden Tour and Seed Collection*^

Oct. 4 – EC at Hunterdon County Farmer's Market

Nov. 1 – EC at Hunterdon County Farmer's Market

^Part of our Environmental Series
*Check our 2026 Calendar for more!

Fall 2026 Volume 3

WELL TESTING PROGRAM OFFERED: WHAT'S IN YOUR WATER?

Eighty percent (80%) or 4 out of every 5 households in our Township depend on private wells for drinking water. But how many residents know what's in their water? This Fall, the Raritan Township Environmental Commission is again partnering with nonprofit clean water advocate Raritan Headwaters Association (RHA) to offer well water testing to residents at below-market cost through a state-certified lab.

The Raritan Headwaters Association is offering an annually recommended "basic kit" for coliform bacteria, E. coli, and nitrate for just $70. Testing is available for other potential contaminants including arsenic, lead, Volatile Organics, Synthetic Organics, Radon, Gross Alpha, PFAS, Hardness, Iron/Manganese, Copper and pH for an additional charge.

Residents can purchase water sample collection kits in the Clerk's office at the Raritan Township Municipal Building, One Municipal Drive, from **September 21 to October 2,** from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Please note that the clerk's office **can only accept checks** for the purchase of test kits. If you wish to use a credit card, you can pre-register and pay for your test kit on the RHA website, following the tab for Raritan Township Well Test Event Registration. You will then pick up your prepaid kits at the municipal building.

Samples must be dropped off at the Raritan Township Municipal Building on **October 6 or October 7,** between 7:00 am and 9:00 am. Confidential test results will be emailed to you within two weeks. A summary of the program's aggregate results will be available on the Township website in winter 2027.

Common well water pollutants found in the region are coliform bacteria, nitrate, arsenic, lead, iron, radon, PFAS, and volatile organic compounds. Sources of contamination include failing septic systems; chemicals like fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides; and naturally occurring contaminants.

Raritan Headwaters has two helpful guides, "Well Water Testing Decision Guide" and "What Should I Test My Well Water For?", to help residents identify contaminants that may warrant testing. Annual testing of private well water for coliform bacteria and nitrates is recommended by the EPA, DEP, and local health department. Testing for lead is recommended if your home was built before 1987. Arsenic is commonly occurring in Raritan Township as it is present in our bedrock material. Radon (in water) and Gross Alpha (uranium and radium) have been detected in our water and residents should test at least once for these elements. Those on public water are encouraged to test for lead and copper contamination that may stem from older pipes, solder, and fixtures.

LEAVE THE LEAVES

Each Fall, our area faces a familiar challenge: *leaves*. They fill gutters and pile up on lawns. The standby tradition has been to rake lawns, get the leaves to the curb, and get rid of them as fast as possible. But what if we used these leaves as an opportunity instead?

"Leave the Leaves" refers to simply leaving them where they are. Instead of arranging them carefully near your property line, we invite you to challenge assumptions and leave them be. There are some amazing reasons why.

First, leaves are not garbage. They are part of a nutrient cycle. As they decompose, they return organic matter and nutrients to the soil, help retain moisture in the soil, and provide a habitat for insects and other small organisms.

Mulching leaves with a mower in the Fall should be avoided, as it will kill eggs, cocoons, and insects overwintering in the leaves. Instead of a mower, use a rake or blower to keep leaves intact. In the Spring, when overnight temperatures are in the 40s or when you see the first signs of bees and bugs, remaining leaves are safe to clean up.

Leaving a thin layer of leaves beneath trees and shrubs and in garden beds can shrink the need for expensive fertilizers while supporting healthier soils. Alternatively, you can pile leaves in a sheltered area away from storm drains and let them naturally decompose. Any leaves that are left for the Township's collection program should be placed curbside, out of roadways and at least several feet away from storm drains, to prevent clogging.

"Leave the Leaves" may sound like just a landscaping choice, but multiplied across thousands of yards, parks, streets, and public spaces in the Township, it can become a great way to support our local environment. Consider it a free, locally available environmental resource that can support soil health, wildlife, and stormwater management. Sometimes, the most sustainable solution is to work smarter, not harder, and let nature do its part.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERIES: POLLINATORS AND WATER TREATMENT

Check out our next free **Environmental Series** events with a tour and seed collection at the Environmental Commission Pollinator Garden at the Township Municipal Building on Tuesday, September 22, from 6:00-7:30 P.M.

KEY LINKS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Township Website: raritantwpnj.gov
Environmental Commission Webpage: raritantwpnj.gov/boards/environmental
Environmental Commission/Green Team Calendar is available on the Commission's webpage above.
To sign up for this newsletter or to volunteer, contact us at EnvironmentalCommission@raritantwpnj.gov