

October Newsletter

**Celebrate Campus
Sustainability Month!**

**MISSED THE CLUB FAIR?
CHECK OUT THESE
SUSTAINABILITY CLUBS**

KEEPING CAMPUS GREEN AND CLEAN

Given the public health and safety measures needed for our campus to have a low COVID presence, you may have noticed an increase in the number of single-use items. It's more important than ever to recycling right! Here are some tips for recycling:

- Reduce contamination! Make sure items are **EMPTY** and **CLEAN** before putting them in the recycling bin!
- Paper, cardboard, metal, glass and most plastics can be placed in our **MIXED RECYCLING** bins.
- Plastic bags and film collection bins are located near NRH and Global Village post offices.
- Electronics that you no longer need should **ALWAYS** be recycled in designated collection bins Make sure to remove any packaging and recycle it separately!
- When in doubt, throw it out!
- **Questions? Visit rit.edu/recycle**



GET INVOLVED!

RESOURCES AND EVENTS



CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY MONTH

Every October, the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) has a month-long celebration of sustainable practices on college campuses. Join the celebration at RIT as we host several events throughout this month. [More information](#) on upcoming events can be found on our social media and CampusGroups.

10/1: Divest RIT Info Session

3-4PM, virtual

10/6: Sustainability in Practice

2-4PM, sign up: www.rit.edu/fa/cpd/roadmap

10/10: ESW Campus Cleanup

TBA

10/15: Equity, Sustainability, and the Environmental Movement

9-11am, sign up: www.rit.edu/fa/cpd/roadmap

10/16: Building Bridges Over Brunch: Religion and Sustainability

9-12pm, virtual

10/16: SEAL DIY Tote Bags

2:30pm-4pm, August Center Lawn

10/21: Beekeeping Club Hive Tours

4pm-6pm, TBA

10/26: SEAL Grow Your Own Vegetable Garden

2:30pm-4pm, August Center Lawn

10/30: Sustainable Haunted Trail

4:30pm, Gracies Woods

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR MORE EVENTS ON [CAMPUSGROUPS](#) FROM VEGAN CLUB, NET IMPACT, RECOVER ROCHESTER, AND MORE!



SUSTAINABILITY STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ALYSSA SCHOENFELDT



FUN FACT: SHE COLLECTS VINYL AND HER FAVORITE BIRD IS THE SWAN.

DEGREE: BS/MS ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Alyssa has been involved in sustainability and food waste management through Recover Rochester, a club which reallocates food from the campus dining halls to local food pantries. While in positions ranging from Resource Manager, VP, and President, she found that she was able to create more impact within the local community. Under her leadership, the e-board reorganization allowed for a greater ease for pantry donation transition due to the Gracies renovation.

Currently, Alyssa is working on a three-year long research project under the advising of Dr. Kaitlin Stack Whitney, which entails on whether or not reducing highway mowing could promote vegetation and pollinating insects, particularly bumblebee abundance. Bees were chosen as a focus for this study because native pollinators, such as bumblebees, have been observed to be in decline, which could be partly due to the popularity of using domestic honeybees for widespread plant pollination. The research project took the span of over 30 sites in New York state, excluding NYC and the Adirondacks, on exclusively highways. Other projects of a similar nature tend to be a 1 year study within a county, while this one is a broader scope for state traffic.

To study the pollinator presence, the team mainly used sweep nests to capture samples of butterflies, grasshoppers, bees, and spiders. When not capturing, identification of bees and butterflies was performed. For vegetation, plant identification and changes within the location were tracked. Despite the general variation from site to site, the invasive wild parsnip plant was prevalent in nearly all locations and only bumblebees were found in the Binghamton site. She currently hopes to have the analysis of the data, particularly the relationships on traffic levels, vegetation, and bee presence by the end of the semester.



SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT: ENVIRONMENTAL BIOENGINEERING ETHICS

Environmental ethics focuses on how we think explicitly about the environment and why it matters, especially in regards to one's personal values. While such value conflicts can be presented within animal agriculture, this is heavily prevalent when the topic of genetic engineering for plants arises.

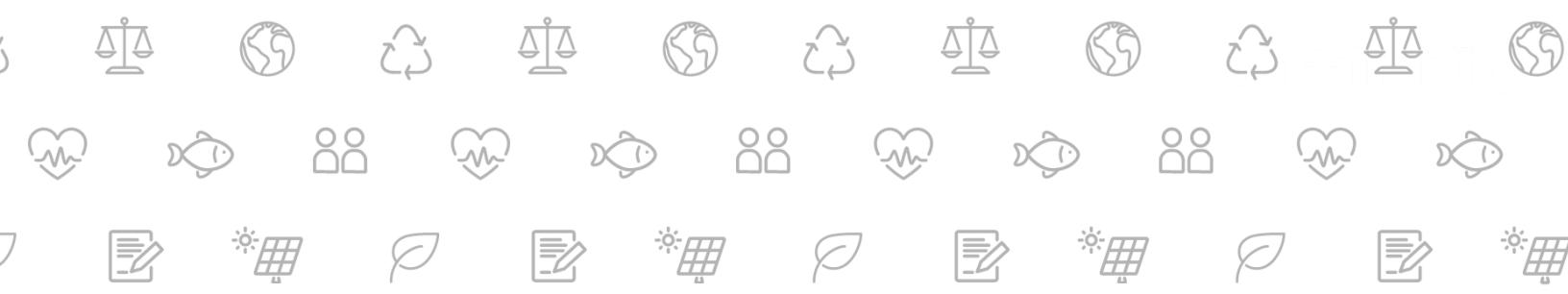
Professor Evelyn Brister is currently working with SUNY ESF on a 30-year restoration project of the American Chestnut tree, a heavily endangered species. Similar to the Oak tree, the American Chestnut is being affected by a fungus that makes the tree not reproductively viable, which had caused billions of trees to die within the past century. Given that the fungus is both common and has a distinct genetic profile, researchers at Syracuse University have been able to design a genetic modification that would allow the tree to be resistant to the fungus. The new tree will be grown in limited captivity for its early years for research purposes.

The new biotech techniques have been a source of much controversy within the restoration community. Seeing that this tree is the first of its kind to be released into the wild, some scientists fear that the replantation with the modification may have unintended consequences, such as affecting the chemicals in the soil, frog life, and the general ecosystem. Moreover, there would need to be much genetic diversity of the re-engineered trees to not be completely vulnerable to a new disease, which is seen with crops used in agriculture.

Although similar gene modifications have been done with the banana, papaya, and citrus trees using revolutionary techniques which include CRISPR, since the environment is controlled for consumer purposes, the fear for unintended consequences is lessened. Additionally, other conservationists fear that allowing the genetic modification for restoration would open the gate for private companies to invest in GMO commercial trees, which is particularly concerning for the Poplar species, where modifications to grow faster would affect the current land usage for these trees.

Brister's forthcoming paper highlights that even if researchers are working within the tightest ethical boundaries, lack of public support can be severely detrimental to project progress, as it can hinder public funding. Given that the very real threat of climate change is approaching fast, she stresses that such funding can be a last-minute effort to not only improve forest health, but also the coral reefs, fishing population, and all of the environmental services humans depend on. Since our actions directly affect the health of the planet, then the ethics concerning our consuming habits must be taken into consideration if we choose to not take preventative measures to save these populations.





CELEBRATE FALL TAKE A HIKE



HIKING LOCATIONS

- 21 mi - Letchworth State Park**
- 15.6 mi - Lehigh Valley Trail**
- 4.6 mi - Irondequoit Creek**
- 4.1 mi - Seneca Park Trail**
- 3.1 mi - Black Creek Park**
- 3.3 mi - Durand Eastman Park**
- 2.3 mi - Mendon Ponds**

- Organize a cleanup event**
- Have a camping trip**
- Enjoy a zero waste picnic**
- Go bird watching**
- Visit a farmer's market**

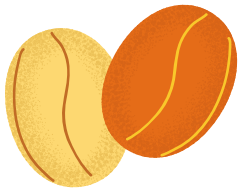


EARTHY FUN



DIY HERB GARDEN

You will need:



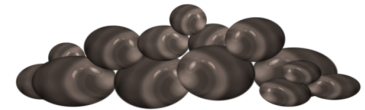
**Seeds or
herb plants**



A glass jar



Potting soil



Rocks

Steps:

- **Place rocks at bottom (for drainage)**
- **Add potting soil**
- **Transplant herbs or plant seeds**
- **Place next to a windowsill and remember to water!**