

The Village of Briarcliff Manor Sustainability Advisory Committee - and - Environmental Advisory Council

October 2024 Newsletter

Welcome to our Fall Newsletter!

Leave your leaves this fall

In our completely unbiased opinion, we live in one of the most beautiful places in the country where the fall colors are spectacular! Unsurprisingly, during the fall season (October-December), leaves account for 90% of all organic yard waste handled by the County (over 60,000 tons)! Briarcliff Manor is a proud supporter of Love 'Em and Leave 'Em (LELE), a Westchester County initiative which aims to reduce organic yard waste. Leaving your leaves would protect microorganisms that keep your soil healthy and also reduce the use of gas-powered leaf blowers which negatively impact the environment and human health. The estimated 2024 fall cleanup budget for Briarcliff Manor is \$53,800. Removing leaves from our waste stream would significantly reduce costs associated with tipping fees, labor overtime, fuel and transportation costs, purchase and maintenance of specialized equipment, and clogging of storm drains.

Here are some practical ways to leave your leaves, especially if you have a small yard.

- Rake whole leaves into wooded margins of your yard. This allows insects a warm space to overwinter.
- Mulch mow remaining leaves into your lawn (free fertilizer!)
- Mulch mow leaves on a hardscape, and use this on landscape beds.

For more information, visit **NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Xerxes Society for Invertebrate Conservation, Leave Leaves Alone.**

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SAC Activities Recap

Summer Sustainability Walk (Pocantico Lake Park)

After being rained out 3 times last summer, SAC finally held its first Summer Sustainability Walk on July 11th at Pocantico Lake Park. The walk was led by Melissa Rinzler who is a member of the Sustainability Advisory Committee and a Guardian of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve. Melissa described the history of Pocantico Lake and spoke a little about the various native and invasive plant species and wildlife that are found there.



Pocantico Lake Park is a county park located in Briarcliff Manor. It is nestled between Briarcliff's largest park, at 70+ acres, and the state-owned Rockefeller Preserve. The lake was created in 1888 when a dam was constructed across the Pocantico River to provide drinking water to North Tarrytown (now Sleepy Hollow) and neighboring communities. The County purchased the 164 acre parcel (including the 69 acre lake) in 1992. It is a popular fishing and bird-watching spot. If you visit, be on the lookout for bald eagles, turkey vultures, red-tailed hawks, and blue heron! The western side of the lake is privately owned, with a 32 lot subdivision application currently under review.



Fleabane is a lovely native plant that is prevalent around the lake, and we saw monarch butterflies and other pollinators enjoying a nectar snack on these flowers. Although we saw plenty of thistle thriving in the park, many thistle species in our area are not native. Clover blankets the area near the dam and attracts pollinators as well, although it is not native.



Tree of heaven is highly invasive and prevalent at the Park. It serves as a host plant for Spotted Lantern Fly (SLF). Current NYS guidance is to immediately kill SLF by crushing, using traps, destroying egg masses, vacuum removal, or insecticides.

Other invasive plants such as Mugwort and Japanese Barberry are also rampant along the Lake trail, often displacing native shrubs and trees.

SAC Activities Recap

Community Day 2024

Community Day 2024 was held on September 14th after having been rained out the previous weekend. It was a sunny afternoon, and the turnout was amazing! Visitors to our booth played sustainability games, got free giveaways, and got information about our upcoming events!



Huge shout-out to our enthusiastic high school volunteers who played Sustainability Trivia and recycling sorting games with our visitors.



Trustee Rhea Mallett stopped by to check out the sustainability action at our booth!



Visitors to our booth learned about composting and how to divert food scraps from the landfill.



The Sustainability Advisory Committee enjoyed talking to the community about our various projects and events.

Spotlight on solar panels

Case study with the Ziltzer Family (Briarcliff Manor residents)

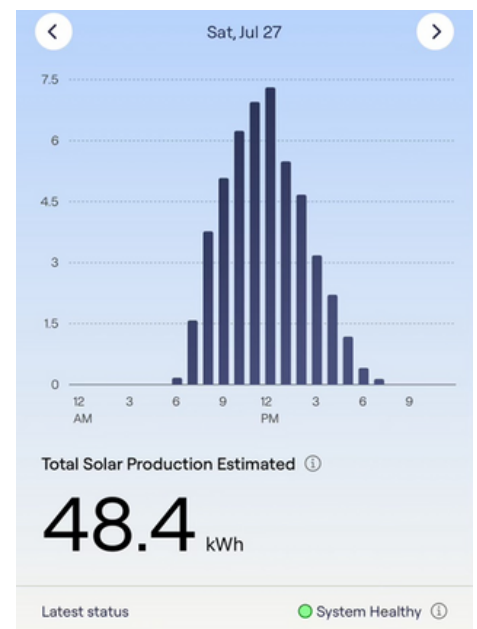
Our family started thinking about installing solar panels when our neighbors began the process and explained their reasons for doing so. We were looking to save money on electricity and be more sustainable in daily living for the sake of the planet. We did additional research online and learned that using solar energy can substantially **reduce greenhouse gas emissions** like CO₂, and **reduce pollutants such as sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides and particulate matter**; and indeed, we confirmed that using solar energy vs electric could provide a **financial benefit**.

It seems obvious, but it's important to know that for solar panels to really be effective your house needs to have enough sun exposure reaching the installed roof panels; a reputable solar company won't install panels if not. The company will initially view your house on Google maps to assess solar exposure (e.g., are there too many trees or other obstructions), and if you're eligible based on that, will visit you with a drone that flies over your roof for a more detailed survey and measurements.

When we started speaking with various solar companies we found that they may also provide **installation-related incentives**. We had been discussing how we had to replace our roof soon and started getting some roofing contractor estimates; but when we told our selected solar company that we knew we needed a new roof before installing solar panels, they offered a very appealing financial incentive on the roof replacement as part of the whole package. They provided us with their local roofing subcontractor – we were a bit trepidatious but he did an excellent job – and the roof replacement cost was significantly lower than had we done it as a separate project. Regarding timing, the roof work took a week and the solar installation just a few days, and neither was an intrusive process within our house. We didn't have any unexpected issues throughout the process.

Another decision was whether to lease the solar panel system or purchase it outright. Since we ultimately chose to lease our system, we receive state tax credits, but not federal which you only get when you buy. However, our lease covers all system maintenance and any necessary servicing for 25 years. We have an app to track our solar energy collected and used, and **based on our bills we estimate we're saving about \$80/month having solar vs electric energy**.

Here is a screenshot from the app on a sunny day.



Spotlight on solar Panels

Case study with the Ziltzer Family (Briarcliff Manor residents)

Your Net Meter Summary (cont'd)

Billing period	Your electricity use	Cumulative net meter energy credit	kWh billed
Oct 06, 2022 - Nov 04, 2022	-89	-2930	0
Nov 04, 2022 - Dec 08, 2022	219	-2711	0
Dec 08, 2022 - Jan 09, 2023	274	-2437	0
Jan 09, 2023 - Feb 08, 2023	187	-2250	0
Feb 08, 2023 - Mar 10, 2023	5	-2245	0
Mar 10, 2023 - Apr 10, 2023	-417	-2662	0
Apr 10, 2023 - May 08, 2023	-502	-3164	0
May 08, 2023 - Jun 07, 2023	-926	-4090	0
Jun 07, 2023 - Jul 07, 2023	-314	-4404	0
Jul 07, 2023 - Aug 07, 2023	-287	-4691	0
Aug 07, 2023 - Sep 06, 2023	-178	-4869	0
Sep 06, 2023 - Oct 05, 2023	-81	-4950	0
Oct 05, 2023 - Nov 02, 2023	-64	-5014	0
Nov 02, 2023 - Dec 06, 2023	225	-4789	0
Dec 06, 2023 - Jan 05, 2024	333	-4456	0
Jan 05, 2024 - Feb 06, 2024	435	-4021	0
Feb 06, 2024 - Mar 07, 2024	993	-3028	0
Mar 07, 2024 - Apr 05, 2024	676	-2352	0
Apr 05, 2024 - May 06, 2024	-175	-2527	0
May 06, 2024 - Jun 05, 2024	-495	-3022	0
Credit Carried Forward to Next Period			-3022 kWh
Your electricity use			-495 kWh
The electricity supplied to you by your Utility or the electricity you generated back into the grid during this period. A negative number indicates a net meter energy credit for the period.			
Cumulative net meter energy credit			-3022 kWh
The sum of your net meter energy credit(s) you earned in the current billing period and any credits from prior billing periods.			
kWh billed			0 kWh
The amount of kWh you were billed for in this billing period. If you generated more electricity than you consumed in this current period and/or have a cumulative net meter energy credit from prior period(s), that credit has been applied towards your kWh Billed.			
For more information on Net Metering please visit us at: conEd.com/solar			

We also learned about **Net Energy Metering**, which we can see on our utility bill. Net Metering is when you produce more solar energy than you're using so you build up a "bank" of electrical credits with the utility company; in times when you're producing less than you use (typically winter) you automatically withdraw credits from this bank. In this way, our summer and winter electric bill don't differ.

Sample energy bill for our home

Your electricity breakdown

Rate: EL1 Residential or Religious - Net Metering

Electric Meter Detail - billing period from May 6, 2024 to June 5, 2024 (30 days)

Meter #	New Read	Read Type	Date	Prior Read	Read Type	Date	Read Diff	Total Usage kWh
██████	36336	Actual	Jun 05	36831	Actual	May 06	-495	-495

Your Supply Charges

Supply 0 kWh	\$0.00
Merchant Function Charge	\$0.00
GRT & other tax surcharges	\$0.00
Sales tax @4%	\$0.00
Total electricity supply charges	\$0.00

Your total electricity supply cost for this bill is 0.00¢ per kWh. You can compare this price with those offered by energy services companies (ESCOs). For a list of ESCOs, visit PowerYourWay.com or call 1-800-780-2884.

Your Delivery Charges

Basic service charge	\$19.64
Delivery 0 kWh	\$0.00
System Benefit Charge	\$0.00
Customer Benefit Contribution 10.00kW @ 1.410/kW	\$14.10
GRT & other tax surcharges	\$1.08
Sales tax @4%	\$1.39
Total electricity delivery charges	\$36.21

Your electricity total \$36.21

Some advice if you're considering installing a solar energy system for your home:

- Make sure the solar company is licensed and insured.
- Ensure the company files for all necessary permits prior to initiation of work, including for a new roof if that's part of your install project.
- Find out if your roof has enough "life" left to last as long as the solar panels will; if not, consider a new roof and ask the solar company if they will help subsidize it.

Your Guide to EV Chargers

Seth Leitman (Member, Briarcliff Sustainability Advisory Committee;
President, Greater Hudson River Electric Vehicle Association)

As the shift towards sustainable transportation accelerates, understanding the nuances of EV chargers has become indispensable. The landscape of electric vehicle charging is evolving at an unprecedented pace. This burgeoning infrastructure is not only pivotal for supporting the growing number of electric vehicles on the road, but also paramount for drivers seeking convenient charging solutions.

Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure



Level 1 and Level 2
Residential Charging



Level 2
Work and Public place Charging



Level 3
DC Fast Charging

Electric vehicles are charged via an AC power supply at a normal (Level1) or semi fast charging rate:
Voltage
120V 1-Phase AC
Amps
12-16 Amps
Charging Loads
1.4 to 1.9 KW
Charging Time
3-5 Miles of range per hour
Price per Mile
2c-6c mile

Electric vehicles are charged via an AC power supply at semi fast (Level2) charging rate:
Voltage
208V or 240V 1-Phase AC
Amps
12-80 Amps (Typ 32 Amps)
Charging Loads
2.5 to 19.2KW (Type 7KW)
Charging Time
10-20 Miles of range per hour
Price per Mile
2c-6c mile

Electric vehicles are charged via an DC power supply at a fast (Level3) charging rate:
Voltage
208V or 480V 3-Phase AC
Amps
<125 Amps (Typ 60 Amps)
Charging Loads
<90KW (Type 50KW)
Charging Time
80% Charge in 20-32 minutes
Price per Mile
12c-25c per mile

Level 1 chargers are typically included with the purchase of a new EV. They utilize a standard 120-volt outlet and do not require any special installation. Although convenient for overnight charging, Level 1 chargers provide a slower charging speed, adding about 3 to 5 miles of range per hour of charging.

Image credit: www.lifewire.com

Level 2 chargers require a 240-volt outlet similar to what large household appliances use. Level 2 charging significantly enhances the charging process by offering speeds that are about three to seven times faster than Level 1 chargers. These chargers can add approximately 25 miles of range per hour of charging and are recommended for home installation as well as locations like shopping centers, hospitals and restaurants.

DC Fast EV chargers or Level 3 chargers can provide up to 250 miles of range per hour of charging (* depending on the vehicle and charger specifications*). Typically, a DC Fast Charger can charge an EV to about 80% in just 20 to 30 minutes and is clearly the best option for long-distance travel. However, since not all EVs are compatible with DC Fast Charging, it is crucial to ensure that the EV's battery has the capacity to handle the rapid charging.

Your Guide to EV Chargers

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Vehicle Connector Types

EVs utilize various connector types, each with unique features tailored to different charging levels and regional standards. The J1772 connector is commonly used in North America and Japan. It supports up to 19.2 kW power output for Level 1 and Level 2 charging. In contrast, the Mennekes (Type 2) connector is prevalent in Europe and accommodates up to 22 kW. For rapid charging, the Combined Charging System (CCS) serves as the standard in North America and Europe, delivering up to 360 kW. Tesla vehicles typically use the proprietary North American Charging Standard (NACS), previously known as the Tesla Supercharger connector, which supports both AC and DC charging.

Compatibility Challenges

Adapters play a crucial role in bridging the compatibility gap between different EV connectors. Tesla provides adapters for its vehicles to connect to J1772 and CCS1 chargers, facilitating access to a broader range of charging stations. Conversely, adapters also exist for non-Tesla EVs to utilize Tesla's charging infrastructure. The transition to a unified standard, such as NACS, will eventually reduce the reliance on adapters, streamlining the charging experience for EV users. Currently, EV charging adapters are readily available at a number of retailers including Amazon, Home Depot, and Lowe's.

Benefits and costs of Home Charging

Charging an EV at home offers unparalleled convenience and cost savings. Charging at home typically costs less than public charging stations and allows EV owners to take advantage of off-peak electricity rates. Moreover, having a home charging station can increase the property value, making it an attractive feature for potential homebuyers. Hiring a qualified electrician is recommended to handle the installation and to ensure that it meets local electrical codes. Most home installations involve a Level 2 charger, which requires a 240-volt outlet. Installation may also require upgrades such as a new circuit breaker or additional wiring.

The cost of purchasing and installing a home EV charger can vary widely, typically ranging from \$300 to \$2,750. However, numerous incentives can help offset these costs. The Inflation Reduction Act offers a federal tax credit that covers 30% of the total cost of the charger and installation. Additionally, many states and utilities offer rebates and incentives for home EV charger installations (information available through the DSIRE database).

For more information about EV charging, visit **NYSERDA**; **Con Ed**

Our Sustainable Holiday Celebrations

Trish and Casey Lindemann (Briarcliff Manor residents)

The holidays are traditionally a time of consumption, but that doesn't mean you have to lose sight of a more sustainable way of living.

We can't get away from the gazillions of plastic candy wrappers for Halloween, but we can save and reuse our ghost and goblin decorations and participate in costume swaps. Although we go big on Halloween in our family - almost a requirement for living on Hirst Road - we stopped using the yards of spun plastic 'spiderwebs' that always ended up being single-use, and switched to all LED lights. Now our decorations are made of mostly wood and metal, and we use them year after year, placing them in different spots each year to keep things fresh.

For the December holidays, we've continued to replace old light strings when they break with LED and solar powered ones to help save energy. And we favor experience gifts over more "stuff" that we probably don't need.

The question of live vs. artificial trees basically comes down to personal preference. As long as you purchase a 'Made in the USA' artificial tree and keep it for at least 20 years, it can be reasonably sustainable. My family always goes for a live tree, but after the holidays, we cut the branches off and lay them on the ground to protect perennials from the winter weather. That keeps the boughs out of the waste stream and also adds a nice spot of green in dreary January.

However you celebrate the holidays, keep in mind the little changes you can make towards sustainability. You'll be surprised what a difference it makes!

Here are some holiday recommendations from the Sustainability Advisory Committee

- Shop local for food and gifts.
- Give handmade gifts.
- Switch over to LED lights; in addition to being more energy efficient, they produce less heat than the older lights and are therefore less likely to cause fires!
- Use eco-friendly wrapping paper; reuse wrapping paper.
- Get holiday decorations at local swaps, Take it or Leave it events, thrift stores, or church tag sales.
- Making shopping lists and meal plans cuts down on food waste.
- Drop off your food scraps at the Cedar Lane food scrap facility in Ossining.

Parks and Trails

Rockwood Hall State Park

Jennifer Sendek, Member, Sustainability Advisory Committee

A long time ago, in a galaxy not so far away, stood **Rockwood Hall**, a sprawling estate belonging to William Rockefeller. The Elizabethan marvel stood tall atop a prominent hill overlooking the mighty Hudson River. Although the mansion no longer stands, the time has never been better for you to explore and enjoy the beauty that remains in Rockwood.

Three main trails wind through the picturesque park. Start out on **upper trail** and enjoy winding forest paths interspersed with clearings offering impressive views of the Hudson. The most prominent clearing is known as the foundation, which, you guessed it, is what remains of the Gilded Age mansion. Take a moment of silence and appreciate the panoramic views and pleasant breeze. If you're looking to add mileage to your outing, take a loop around the foundation and observe all sides.

Next, traverse **middle trail** down toward the river. Watch your step, because middle trail can be steep. Make sure to save some energy for the climb back up too. At the bottom of middle trail, you'll intersect with lower trail and be faced with an important decision. Take a left, and you'll be treated to gorgeous views of the river just feet away. Take a right, and you'll be treated to gorgeous views of the river just feet away. You can't go wrong.

There are several benches along the **lower trail**—great spots to take a break, look out over the Hudson and appreciate that you don't live in Rockland, or worse, New Jersey. While you rest, you may be treated to the cacophonous spectacle of a passing commuter train. It may sound like a nuisance, but without it you'd surely become lost frolicking in the unmatched forests and fields of Rockwood.

Set your alarm early, for parking spots are low in supply and high in demand. Follow Route 117 to the western terminus to a lot along Kendal Way just past Hospital Access Road. Alternatively, park on the shoulder of Rockwood Rd along Route 9. This park is great for dogs (on leashes) and has convenient trail access to the rest of Rockefeller State Park and Preserve via the Old Croton Aqueduct trail.

Hiking Project app: Yes, Rockwood Hall State Park

Parking: Phelps Way until you see a parking on the left.

Dogs allowed: Yes, on leash



Native Plant Spotlight

Woody Plant: *Viburnum nudum* (Possumhaw)



Image credit: gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org

A shrub species within the *Viburnum* genus, Possumhaw is a wonderful native addition to the home landscape. It generally grows 5-12' tall, and is characterized by dense vegetative growth and white summer-blooming flowers. Sunny to partly shady conditions suit this plant, and it prefers moist to wet/mucky soils. Possumhaw becomes especially striking in the fall, when its berries transition from light pink to dark blue-black, often displaying an attractive combination of colors at the same time. The berries also attract birds, providing an energy source during their fall migration.

Herbaceous Plant: *Symphyotrichum oblongifolium* 'October Skies' (October Skies aromatic aster)

'October Skies' is a cultivar of the native aromatic aster. It is a perennial that is well-adapted to our suburban environment. It is drought-tolerant, compact (1-2' tall and up to 3' wide), and is resistant to deer browse. Starting in early fall, it blooms in a pop of violet-blue daisy-like flowers that persist for a long time and provide a much needed late season nectar source for bees and butterflies. 'October Skies' prefers dry to moist soils in a sunny place.

See if you can find it in bloom around the Village, especially in front of Village Hall!

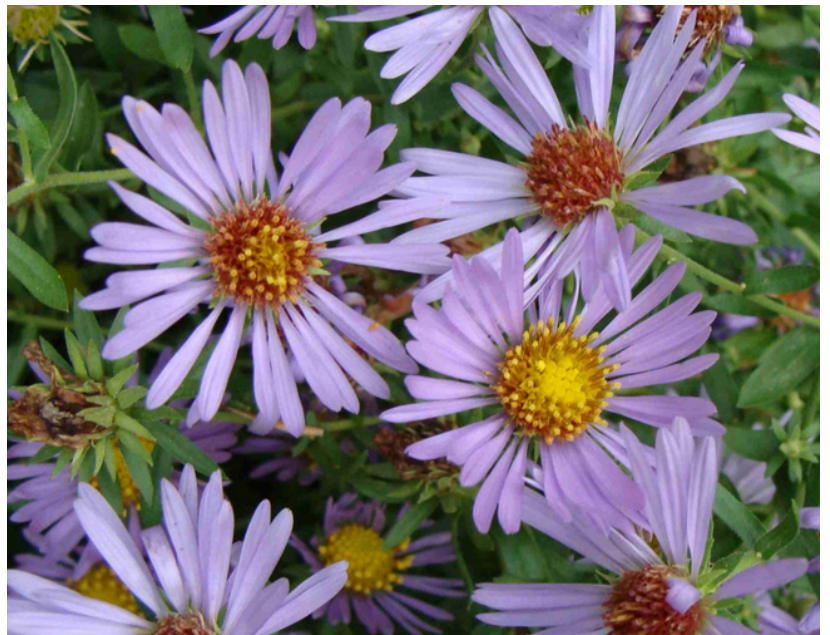


Image credit: mtcubacenter.org

What Gardeners Need to Know about Rose Rosette Disease

Ernie DeMarie, Ph.D., Environmental Advisory Council

Rose Rosette Disease (RRD) is a virus that is spread by a type of mite found on the dormant buds of roses. The mite itself is spread by wind. It might also possibly spread by tools used on infected roses, as well as deer browsing on wild or cultivated infected roses.

RRD appears to be native to this country, but was a rare problem until two things happened. One was the introduction and spread of the Japanese multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), which has reached invasive status in much of this country. Initially introduced for hedgerows in farm fields, it is attractive when in bloom and is seen along highway edges, in forests, and on many properties as its seeds are efficiently spread by birds. These shrubs will appear in home landscapes and especially the border areas of properties. Multiflora rose is very susceptible to RRD and it is not hard to find infected plants in our area. The second factor which accelerated the spread of RRD is the creation and widespread use of “landscape” roses such as the Knockout series. These roses were bred to have lots of simple but colorful flowers over a long period of time, and to have minimal leaf disease issues such as blackspot. They were, and are, sold in huge numbers by nurseries and big box stores and are often seen in mall plantings and other places in addition to being grown by homeowners. This increased density of roses makes it easy for the mite and the virus it carries to find its way to new host plants.



A rose infected with RRD. Image credit: thegoodearthgarden.com

RRD symptoms are easy to spot. New growth looks abnormal (it's often said to look like herbicide damage), it will be reddish, with small highly distorted foliage, often with many stems and many thorns. The density of thorns will be noticeably in excess of what is normal for that particular rose type. Some refer to it as a “witches’ broom” appearance. Do remember that new rose growth is also often reddish in color, but then the leaves expand normally and turn green, and there should not be an excess number of branches and thorns.

So why should you worry about this? You could always cut out the distorted growth, right? Well, yes, you could, but by the time you see it, the entire plant is infected and will slowly die over a period of a few years. Also, the tiny mites that hang around the dormant buds of the rose and disperse in spring and summer from those favored sites are all also infected with the virus and will spread it to any rose within reach of the wind. It has caused major problems for some public rose gardens. For example, there was an infestation at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden some years ago that required the removal and replacing of many roses. It also drove some rose growers out of business, and although the remaining growers know about it and take care to remove infected plants, that doesn't always stop them from appearing for sale.

So what can you, a homeowner and/or gardener, do about this dreaded rose disease?

- Remove any multiflora rose on your property. Learn to recognize what this shrub looks like and remove any you can.
- Inspect any rose you buy for suspicious growths that might be RRD and do the same for the roses in your garden.
- Do not put an infected rose into a compost pile nor into the paper bags used to collect plant debris that are then used to make compost by many towns. It's important to dig up the root as roses often resprout from roots left behind in the soil. Avoid planting any rose in that spot for several years in case the virus persists in the soil.
- If you see an obviously infected rose in a commercial planting, inform the business about RRD and hopefully they will remove the roses and use something else that won't present a danger to the roses we grow in our gardens. The same goes for nurseries or other sources of plants; if they have an infected plant let them know and certainly don't buy roses from them as the mites may have already dispersed to other roses nearby.



Distinguishing features of the invasive multiflora rose. Note the reflexed (backwards-pointing) thorns along the stem.

Image credit: Midwest Invasive Species Information Network.

There is ongoing work to breed RRD resistant roses but as far as is known, no rose is completely immune to the virus. The use of barrier plantings of non-rose species, such as tall grasses or other shrubs, can slow the spread of the virus by acting as a windbreak to slow the spread of the mite vector. Another good practice is to disinfect tools used to prune roses so that you don't spread the mites or infected sap laden with virus from a diseased plant to another, healthy plant.

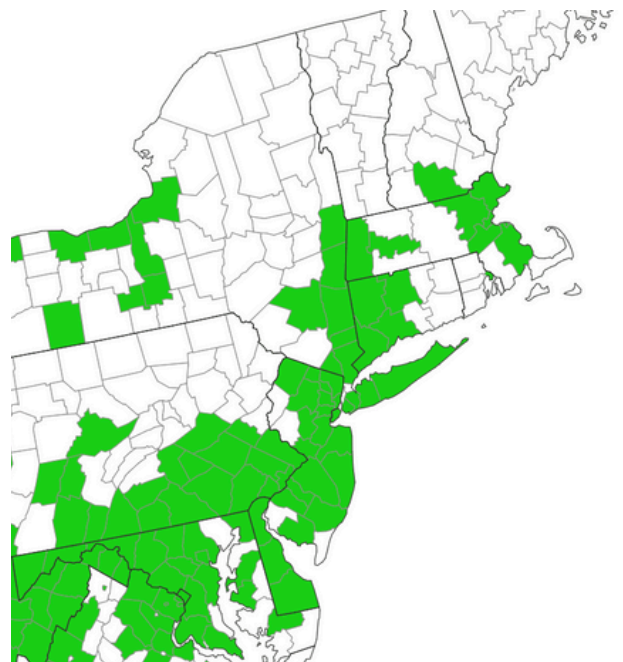
For more information, check out <https://roserosette.org/>. There are also many other informational resources on the internet about RRV that show what it looks like. Understanding what RRV is, learning to recognize it, and eliminating any Japanese multiflora roses on your property can go a long way to slowing the spread of this devastating rose disease.



A rose infected with RRD. Image credit: gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu



The mite that spreads RRD, magnified. Image credit: roserosette.org



Regional distribution map of RRD, present in counties shaded green. Image credit: roserosette.org

Upcoming Events

Halloween Costume Swap

Drop off your **gently used Halloween costumes** at the Briarcliff Manor Recreation Department until October 4th. Come and pick up a costume on **Saturday, October 5th (Noon-4 pm)** at the Harvest Mess and Music Fest event on Atria Field (Vescio Community Center if rainy).

Movie Night

Join us on **Friday, October 18th at 7 pm** to watch **Just Eat It** at the **Briarcliff Manor Public Library**. This is a multi award-winning important but entertaining look at food waste in our lives.

Holiday Swap

Drop off your extra holiday cards, gift wrap, ornaments, and holiday decorations at the Youth Center followed by an afternoon of free “shopping”. **Date TBD**

Join us at our meetings to learn what we are working on, and to see how you can contribute to making Briarcliff cleaner and greener!

SAC meetings: First Thursday of every month. 7:00 pm

EAC meetings: Fourth Thursday of every month. 7:00 pm
Village Hall, Court Room

For more information, email us at
SAC@briarcliffmanor.gov or EAC@briarcliffmanor.gov
Visit us at

Sustainability-advisory-committee and
Environmental-advisory-council

SAC

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