Advanced Master Gardener Coastal Certificate Program
Sustainable Landscaping for Clean Waters and a Healthy Long Island Sound

The Coastal Certificate program (CCP) is a unique partnership between the EPA Long Island Sound Study (LISS) and UConn Extension, providing advanced certification to Master Gardeners and outreach to coastal and watershed residents about water quality issues affecting Long Island Sound. The program leverages limited resources while strengthening partner relationships by accomplishing shared goals.

The CCP provides 15 hours of training with an emphasis on sustainable landscaping. The program is designed to generate ambassadors of alternative landscaping practices for Connecticut coastal and watershed residents, with an outreach component that is geared specifically to spreading the word through projects, presentations, and educational materials.

The CCP curriculum is taught by university faculty and field professionals and includes organic principles, replacing lawn with wildlife habitat, native coastal plants (and invasive species control), vegetative buffers and living shorelines, and the elements of successful outreach. Educational materials, including a thumb drive containing program PowerPoints, handouts, current literature and web resources, and outreach guidelines, are provided.

Since its inception in 2013, the CCP has enrolled 74 people, logged over 550 volunteer hours, distributed 100s of educational pieces at farmers markets, fairs, native plant sales, Land Trust and garden club events, and offered more than 25 public talks. Outreach has reached an estimated public audience of 5000. Interest in the program remains strong.

For Information:
Judy Preston
CT Outreach Coordinator
Long Island Sound Study
860-405-9303
Judy.Preston@uconn.edu

Coastal Certificate participants collaborate with local non-profits, such as Land Trusts, for outreach (above, right).

A mandatory field trip (top) illustrates topics covered in the classroom curriculum (bottom).

Outreach is diverse, including partnering with the US Fish & Wildlife Service Urban Oasis Program, educating school children (above, right).

On the ground projects are an important element of the Coastal Certificate outreach program (above).

CCP participants on a recent field trip to a newly created coastal park.

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