

Want to Help the Harbor? **Become an Oyster Gardener!**



Help Keep the Oyster in Oyster Bay (and Cold Spring Harbor) by working with family and friends and making new ones. Raising oysters improves water quality and enhances marine habitat while establishing a sustainable oyster population. Mostly though, folks are having a blast connecting with their neighbors and their local waters as they help their baby oysters grow big enough to fend for themselves (and filter up to 50 gallons of water per day).

Community Shellfish Gardening

Since 2017 hundreds of volunteers including families, scouts, church groups, students, yacht, garden and bath club members and elected officials have been raising oysters in “community gardens.” The project is led by the Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee, along with Friends of the Bay, the villages of Laurel Hollow and Bayville, the towns of Oyster Bay and Huntington, Cornell Cooperative Extension and numerous other organizations. To date nearly 200,000 oysters have been released into and around a spawner sanctuary in Cold Spring Harbor.

The Community Shellfish Garden program provides participants basic training, equipment and ongoing support necessary to successfully grow-out juvenile oysters in floats on community moorings or on their own docks for enhancement purposes only (i.e. not for consumption).

The shellfish gardening training consists of: review of the historical, ecological, economic, and cultural value of shellfish; shellfish biology (i.e. habitat, nutrition, predators); shellfish culture (i.e. broodstock, spawning, larval rearing, post set), health considerations (i.e. water quality, viruses), and grow-out (i.e. location, gear, maintenance, fouling organisms, FAQ).

Juvenile oysters (i.e. seed stock) are acquired from Cornell Cooperative Extension's hatchery in late June or early July and are grown-out in "gardens" (floating cages) located in areas approved by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Each shellfish garden consists of a 1,000 oysters. Participants work together to clean their floats and measure a sampling of their oysters at least twice per month from July through September when they are released into the spawner sanctuary.

The Community Shellfish Gardening program is designed to increase appreciation of our local waters among residents while supporting the public benefits of oysters. In exchange for returning their oysters for seeding in the spawner sanctuary, gardeners have an end of the year celebration. At this celebration they receive mature shellfish from a certified local vendor to show appreciation for their efforts. No shellfish in the gardening program are consumed directly or sold commercially.

Get Involved!

In 2021 we welcome you to get your feet wet and hands muddy by becoming a gardener or sponsoring a garden for others. Please help us connect more residents with their local waters by expanding community gardens in every community surrounding Oyster Bay and Cold Spring Harbor.

To learn more, get involved or to sponsor a cage for others visit our web site:

www.oysterbaycoldspringharbor.org

Or contact:

Rob Crafa, Coordinator
Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee
E-mail: rob@oysterbaycoldspringharbor.org

The mission of the Oyster Bay/Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee is:

To improve the health of Oyster Bay and Cold Spring Harbor by coordinating the efforts of eleven (11) municipalities in the watershed and engaging the public.



Nassau County

Town of Oyster Bay

Village of Bayville

Village of Centre Island

Village of Cove Neck

Village of Lattingtown

Village of Laurel Hollow

Village of Mill Neck

Village of Oyster Bay

Cove

Village of Upper

Brookville

Village of Lloyd Harbor

Friends of the Bay