

Rutgers Gardens collaborates with Scarlet Arts Rx program to enhance student well-being



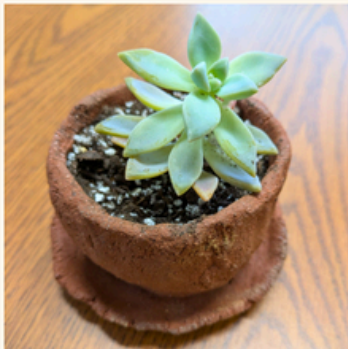
This October, a joint effort to meld the arts, nature, and wellness activities came to fruition when students enrolled in the [Byrne Seminars](#) were invited to sculpt flowerpots made from clay that was harvested at Rutgers Gardens. Ryan Lilienthal, a Mason Gross School of the Arts MFA in Design alum who coordinated with Dr. Lauren Errickson to safely extract natural clay from soil at Rutgers Gardens, presented the workshops. Ryan, a recipient of a Scarlet Arts Rx grant for these sessions, shares that “Rutgers Gardens' generous contribution helped [the students] experience the connectedness and grounding that comes with holding and forming clay and their meaningful exploration between the arts and well-being.”

After the clay flowerpots were sculpted, dried, fired, and cooled, students were able to plant a succulent donated by Rutgers Gardens to complete the take-home craft.

Bushra Imran, a student in the Byrne Seminars class, *Resilience is Everywhere: How to Find Yours*, says "This project was a relaxing experience. It was fascinating to use clay to create something meaningful and purposeful. It offered a unique way to blend art and nature together."



Scarlet Arts Rx is a partnership between the Mason Gross School of the Arts and the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, with support from the Rutgers–New Brunswick Chancellor’s Office. It is "designed to expand student access to arts activities and events and promote student awareness of the association between the arts and wellness. Students will cultivate the habit of using the arts as a tool to manage stress," according to the program's [webpage](#).



Adds Lauren Errickson, Director of Rutgers Gardens and Campus Stewardship, "This project is a great example of how Rutgers Gardens can help improve the wellbeing of our students, whether that happens in the Gardens or across campus. It's an amazing thing to see students connecting with plants in a reflective way that also elevates joy as a part of their Rutgers experience."

Rutgers Gardens is listed as a site on the Scarlet Arts Rx [Arts and Well-Being Walking Map](#), which hopefully brings awareness to students that the gardens and Helyar Woods trails are available to visit when one needs to de-stress and reconnect with nature.



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