

New Jersey State Master Gardener Meeting: March 2, 2011

President Caryl Hannemann called the meeting to order at 10am. Ingrid Witty of Morris County was welcomed as a new alternate and Rekha Chandra of Gloucester was welcomed as a guest.

President's Report: Caryl went to Trenton with Nick Polanin to accept the Governor's Award for the work of the State Master Gardeners.

Treasurer's Report: \$8,631.70 in the treasury.

Conference Committees:

There have been no committed speakers for the October Conference decided yet as reported by Somerset/Hunterdon Counties who are in charge of the speakers' selection.

The committee members asked for guidance from the group. Several suggestions were made: Rarefind Nurseries, Peace Valley Farms, Bartrum's, and Gary Pavlis: Growing Grapes in NJ. (Mr. Pavlis is the Ag agent in Atlantic County.), Joe Lolino: State Bee Keepers Association, Colton Burrell, Bill Scheraffa (community gardens), Gary Oppenheimer of ampleharvest.com, the new chair of the Rutgers Landscape Architect program, and Tom Molnar.

A vote was taken and the measure passed, that there be one morning speaker who would speaker from 9:30-10:30. Allowing for questions and bathroom break, the Awards Ceremony would be held from 11:15 to 12pm, Lunch and Garden Market from 12-1pm and ending with two afternoon sessions: 1-2pm and 2:15-3:15pm.

The possible theme for the conference is "Community Gardens and Native Plants."

A proposal for each county to donate a basket for door prizes was voted on and passed. Each county will donate a basket in the \$50-75 price range. One provision is that the winner must be present to win the prize.

Registration forms in the preliminary stage are being reviewed. Facilities are confirmed. There will be no tables this year. Expected attendance is 350+speakers.

The issue of outside vendors will be handled by Passaic County, but the issue was tabled until next month. Possible outside vendors mentioned were Bruce Crawford, Steve Kristoph, Pinelands Nursery.

There was encouragement for more state tables in the Garden Market.

Jim Farmer, a member of the State MG's was in a serious car accident and a card will be mailed to him.

Thanks to Bergen County for their hospitality and Camden will trade with Burlington for April.

Attendance:

Atlantic: absent

Bergen: Jane Furman, Walter Traubel, Karen Pennell

Burlington: Lisa Marie Morris

Camden: Nancy Sullivan, Bernadette Eichinger,

Cumberland: Carol Henry

Essex: Pat Hewitt, Joan Gorman, Pat Radley

Gloucester: Maureen Fitzpatrick, Rekha Chandra

Mercer: Betty Scarlata, Bob Robinson

Middlesex: Kathy Dopart

Monmouth: Ellen Simonetti, Karin Poorvin, Sheila Eppinger, Sandy Wolfe

Morris: Sally Hensen, Ingrid Witty, Pat Hudson

Ocean: Mary Townsend

Passaic: Barbara Cook

Somerset/Hunterdon: Mary Patten, Tricia Deering

Sussex: Absent

Union: Caryl Hannemann

RCE: Nick Polanin

RCE REPORT:

Nick distributed RU Day promo cards and MG Program cards for the counties to distribute. He mentioned using Facebook to post success stories of the Master Gardener Programs to publicize nationally what MG's do. This is part of a "Rapid Response Social Media Plan".

The state budget and county budgets are not decided yet. Rutgers federal funding was cut in half. Larry Katz put out a fact sheet on funding for: Cranberry/Blueberry research, urban 4-H, Childhood obesity.

The number of staff positions to be cut is unknown. Cooperative Extension is being severely cut. Nick named several ways to call attention to the volunteer work of Master Gardeners. He mentioned that April is National Volunteer Month. Certificates should be issued by Freeholders to county volunteers. We should invite the Freeholders to MG graduations and make them "Honorary MGs" to promote good will and make them good friends of the extensions throughout the state.

The Coordinators' meeting was well attended on February 28th. The annual report is still not done. The missing county promised a rapid response to this oversight.

A Civil Rights Review by the federal government will be done in Burlington and Somerset counties. Nick advised that groups keep track of the number of people who attend programs. Make sure that non-discriminatory statements in publications and events mentioned. Keep in mind how accommodating we are to ethnic groups because federal grants are based on these issues. Nick reminded the group that the posters "And Justice for All" are available to be displayed at events. They should be used by the speakers' bureau members. He mentioned that private groups must sign off beforehand that they are non-discriminatory. The posters are available through county Ag offices.

Master Gardener Conference in West Virginia, Oct. 11-12, 2011. Nick sent out the information.

Madeline DeNardo-Flahive made a CD on "Water Management in your Back Yard". Contact her for a copy. There are 300 available.

Advanced Helpline Training is scheduled for May 20 in Morris County and in Ocean County on August 18. Community and School Gardens is the topic. Training starts at 10-3pm and is 4 CEU's. Watch for the announcement.

Nick reported that the NJ Flower Show went well.

Gloucester County is inviting the State Board members for a seminar on May 17, 2011. Information will be forthcoming.

MG's can co-author fact sheets with Rutgers faculty or staff members. Process to get approved will be sent out by Nick. Meeting RU standards needs to be further discussed.

"How to Prepare and Train MG's to Work the Helpline"-Mercer and Morris counties described their programs.

A committee will be set up to discuss the hosting of a regional conference some time in the future.

And lastly, the State Agriculture Museum on College Farm Road is closing due to a loss of funding. The building is now closed to the public and will be disassembled soon.

COUNTY REPORTS:

Atlantic: Absent

Bergen: First plant sale to be held in June. MG/4H Fair to be held for 2 days in August. Scheduled speakers include topics on bats, organic vermiculture. Ira Greenglass to speak. Outreach events for Earth Day scheduled. The By-Laws committee is to meet. Rutgers letters about funding were sent to all garden clubs and master gardeners.

Burlington: New class doing well. Doing projects at County Ag Center in Moorestown.

Camden: Hort. School has started. Enrollment is up. In process of updating By-Laws. Have a continuing presence at Voorhees Town Center. Just enjoyed a workshop on Landscape Design. On 3/22 have a workshop on Urban Restoration. Pat Sutton recently spoke at a meeting.

Cumberland: Planning Eco Fair in May. Setting dates to start seeds at county college. Greenhouse went on a trip to Rutgers Food Innovation Center in Bridgeton and Tri County Community Garden. Grant application approved for MG projects. Helpline will be opening on April 15.

Essex: There's a new president, Fran Krockel. Horticulture for seniors' class running monthly programs. Average attendance is 45 people. Trip to Philadelphia Flower Show. Greenhouse is up and running. Propagating for annual plant sale has begun. Meeting weekly to prepare for sale.

Gloucester: 23 future MG's in latest class. Jr. Mg program begins 3/31. Greenhouse getting started. Bancroft is coping with MG's. May 17 Conference 9-3, still to be held despite accident. There will be nursery tours, boxed lunches, and rented buses to take members to different nurseries and greenhouses.

Mercer: Symposium to be held March 26. There are still openings available. Info on Mercer website. MGofMC.org .Search for Excellence Award form sent in. Meadow restoration project. Plant sale May 1. Presentation on Lawrence-Hopewell Trail. MEG (Mercer Education Gardens) is a hub on the trail. We received a trail grant. The county is spending to complete the trail, 20 miles overall. It will go through a large county park that includes MEG. The county has paid to drill a well to supply water for MEG. This has been a problem when we have a drought. We are looking in to funding a larger venue for our meetings. 90-95 attendees. Talk on roses in June.

Middlesex: New MG classes going well. New plans at Center for Evergreen arboretum. Children's roof garden endeavor up and running. Butterfly house extension underway. Class Reunion in January big success despite weather. Native plants garden getting ready to plant and greenhouse work has begun.

Monmouth: New class of 30 students began 2/22. Spring Garden Days May 13-14. Special focus: Attracting Birds and Butterflies to Your Garden. We are building bird houses for sale.

By-laws integrating new membership nomenclature and sundry account language. Tour at Deerborn Farm Orchid Show. Search for Excellence Award for Par garden-renamed People's Garden. Federal name and signage.

Morris: Classes with helpline training begun. 30 members. Work with homeless/interfaith food pantry. Course on container gardening in 5 gallon containers. Catholic Charities wants to establish a vegetable garden with the master gardeners.

Ocean: 22 new MG's graduated in February. Theme for the graduation was "Paris". New class has 30 members. Greenhouse opened Jan.30. Plant sale in May. Greenhouse classes in January. Featured plant this year: Clematis 'Bijou' can be grown as a house plant. Steve Kristoph is growing them. Dwarf hydrangeas also being grown.

Passaic: Master Gardener class doing well. One make up class needed. Project 1611-working on. Community library program –place plant with info and care. Switch it out monthly. Plant sale May14 "White Elephant Table". Helpline: Increase by 1 day. Will be four days a week. Last General Meeting Gary Oppenheimer spoke: AmpleHarvest.com point is to connect excess produce with food pantries. Awards Program in March.

Somerset/Hunterdon: Helpline starts this month. Native Plants/Propagation workshop well attended. "On the Spot" awards-part of member recognition. MG's get certificates of appreciation. Recognition luncheon successful.

Tree pruning seminar at Snyder Farms. 9 members attended to learn how to prune. Fruit will go to food bank. County Agent started a newsletter to serve community. This is for both counties. Somerset Adult Day Care project is to work on landscaping and gardens for clients to work in. Survey of members, skills and interests to know who's available. Photography team is to use pictures for internal promos or give to press for events. Trips planned for spring. Speakers' Bureau gave 10 talks. Award for Excellence information sent in. Fact sheets written and two published.

Union: Sharing garden saving seeds. Produce from gardens goes to food banks and shelters. Arts and Crafts committee to start. Helpline has longer hours starting soon. Hort. Therapy: First Children's School for severely handicapped has a garden for children and starting one indoors also. Garden Air to be held Sunday after Mother's Day.

Topics for next meeting:

Guidelines for MG Assistance. Essex Cty. Project Coordinator will work to establish guidelines and will report back to group.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:35
Respectfully submitted, Kathy Dopart, Secretary