

Master Gardener Association of New Jersey
Minutes of March 5, 2013

Our meeting room in the Operator Training Center was being used by an Air Pollution Training Class so we met in the room behind it, across from the lavatories.

President Ellen Simonetti called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Visitors and new delegates/alternates were introduced.

Attendance:

Atlantic:	Ann Cinquina, Mary Stecher
Bergen:	Joseph Cooper, Karen Pennell, Jane Furman
Burlington:	Terry Zane, Judy Shaw
Camden:	Nancy Sullivan, Diane Shonya
Cumberland:	Absent
Essex;	Suzie Yamarone, Claudia Kolster
Gloucester:	Absent
Mercer:	Bob Robinson, Betty Scarlata
Middlesex:	Kathy Dopart, Dale Duchai, Jerri Barclay
Monmouth:	Ellen Simonetti, Joan Cox
Morris	Pat Hudson, Carla Schan, Sandi Gonski
Ocean:	Jim Digney, Suzanne Keane
Passaic:	Barbara Cook
Somerset/Hunterdon:	Linda Madretzke, Martha Cleaves
Sussex	Absent
Union:	Toni Rinehart, Caryl Hanneman

The February 2013 minutes were corrected and accepted.

The Treasurer's report was read and accepted.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Middlesex County proposed having the June or July meeting at the EARTH Center. Their Butterfly House will be coming to life and they would like to show it off for our appreciation

RCE REPORT – Nick thanked all those MGs who volunteered for the NJ Flower Show. The MG display had no easily visible signage.

A discussion followed about having a computer with WiFi access and printer to facilitate distribution of requested Fact Sheets. Nick explained that we get the space and tables for free and the event sponsors do not donate further.

Nick is still waiting for County reports for his Annual Report. There is a State Coordinators meeting March 11 in Freehold and would like all reports by then.

The Coordinators have suggested holding Webinars for MG education credits; however, only one three-hour webinar per year will be allowed toward 10 credit hours.

Emerald Ash Borer and Asian Long Horn beetles are upcoming webinars sponsored by Sussex County. Flyers were distributed and will be announced via Sakai.

Replacement of retired Ag Agents and coordinators has not occurred because of budget constraints. There is a wait and see attitude as other retirements occur.

The Ag stations are still funded at 1994 levels.

There is talk of the Newark and Camden law school merging. Strategic plans are in place, but we have to wait and see what's going forward.

The Fall 2014 National MG Coordinators Conference is being hosted by Rutgers. No definite date or plans have been made.

BREAK – Thank you, Middlesex

Upcoming:	<u>April 2</u>	Monmouth	ECC	Extension Conference Center
	<u>May 7</u>	Morris	ECC	
	<u>June 4</u>	Ocean	ECC	
	<u>July 2</u>	Passaic	ECC	
	<u>August 6</u>	Somerset/Hunterdon		ECC
	<u>September 3</u>	Atlantic (Pot Luck and Auction)		ECC
	<u>October 1</u>	Union		ECC
	<u>October 5</u>	STATE CONFERENCE		
	<u>November 5</u>	Bergen		ECC
	<u>December 3</u>	Burlington		ECC

2014 - CONFERENCE

Program Committee – To reserve Melinda Meyers as a speaker, an upfront payment of \$500 must be made in January 2014.

COUNTY REPORTS

Atlantic: Helpline reopened February 1. We also meet once a month as a Roundtable group that discusses helpline problems, as well as bringing in some of our own problems and diagnosing them.

A May trip to the Henry Foundation for Botanical Research in Gladiogne, PA is being explored.

Plant Sale committees are meeting. The sale is May 18 at the Galloway Library.

Our Demonstration Garden held the first cleanup. We will be meeting with Mona to discuss our vegetable planting.

Planting in front of our building will resume as soon as weather permits.

Forsythe is on hold due to road repair from Sandy damage.

Gardeners Basin – CRDA has redesigned the entrance to the Aquarium. MGs planted between 1,000 and 2,000 bulbs in the fall.

Our 18 month MG calendar, printed with grant money has been well received by those to whom it was distributed.

Our Book Club met to discuss *The Worst Hard Time* by Timothy Egan. Our next book is *The Orchard, a Memoir* by Theresa Wick, after that is *Prodigal Summer* by Barbara Kingsolver.

Our Executive Committee is meeting to authorize the formation of a Scholarship Committee.

Bergen: Walter Perry spoke on seed starting. He has been a friend to Bergen County by providing plants and flowers to display at our fairs each year. We learned about both commercial and personal seed starting techniques.

At our next meeting, 3/19, Jan Zientek, Essex County Agent, will speak about community gardens.

We will be distributing gavel pins to all our past presidents.

Our MGs are making presentations to students to recruit volunteers for the coming growing season.

Our newly appointed historian is working to research, arrange and catalog old records and photos

Burlington: March 1 is scheduled clean-up day at Burlington County Community Agriculture Center (BCCAC).

Preparations started for the 2nd annual garden expo to be held May 11, 2013 at BCCAC.

Master Gardener, Toni Price, has donated use of her greenhouses for starting Ramapo tomato seeds for sale at the expo.

We have received requests from many groups for speakers.

We are working on our April newsletter,

We have revised our volunteer handbook.

Camden: On February 28, we had a tool sharpening workshop.

Preparations for our Shrub and Perennial Sale is in full swing. Delivery is in May.

On March 14 there is a covered dish lunch and lecture on Boxwoods. Our MGs and students are invited.

Cumberland: Absent

Essex: Our plant sale is faced with a new challenge; change in location. We were advised last week that our usual site in Edgemont Part, Upper Montclair, would no longer be available to us due to impending construction work throughout the entire park scheduled to begin in March.

Our February meeting was cancelled due to the snow storm.

We are implementing several changes to our practices in the Brookdale Park Rose Garden. Our most immediate change was to begin pruning much earlier. Recent past seasons of early hot spring weather forced leaf growth far too early. We have learned that we need an earlier start to our marathon pruning process of 20+ beds and more than rose bushes.

Gloucester: Absent

Mercer: Our Spring Seminar is March 16. We are sold out and, so far, have had no cancellations.

Our plant sale this year has been changed. We having vendors for purchased plants. The vendors pay for a spot, and give us a percentage of their sales. We also have plants donated by MGs along with a 'garage sale' of used articles which has been popular in the past.

Barbara Bromley celebrated 35 years at Extension this week. We had a cake to help her celebrate.

Our new class will have helpline training on Thursday and will begin fulfilling their helpline obligation on Friday. They are required to complete 30 hours on helpline to become certified. Sixty yearly volunteer hours are required to get and maintain MG certification.

Middlesex: On weekends from February to May we have the opportunity to accumulate volunteer hours by working in our greenhouses.

Greenhouse training for our MG classes and anyone new to the greenhouse was held Saturday and Sunday, February 23 & 24.

You can watch the greenhouse fill up and see the flower and vegetable plants flourish by going to our website www.mgmcnj.org/albums/MG-2013/index.pgp and viewing the greenhouse photos.

Middlesex County was well represented at the NJ Flower Show, February 14-17. Ten Master Gardeners staffed the table for a total of 20 hours, answering questions, giving gardening advice and promoting the MG program.

The EARTH center's 6th annual Bird Count was held February 16. The Great Backyard Bird Count is a joint project of Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society.

A great database designed by one our MGs allows us to enter our volunteer and education hours online and view all the entries for the year. Time sheets just got a whole lot easier.

A Rain Barrel *Train the Trainer* workshop is being offered tomorrow at the EARTH Center. Two follow-up workshops for those interested in making their own rain barrels will be held March 20 and April 10 again at the EARTH Center.

Monmouth: Our Membership Services Committee is working on a cookbook with a theme of vegetable recipes.

Our new class of 35 students is going along well. We have teamed up with Ocean County to help train several of their residents as they do not have a class in their county this year.

We had a March 6 bus trip to the Philadelphia Flower Show.

In June, Arlene Swart of Seagrass Landscaping will conduct two workshops on how to make hypertufa planters.

Morris: We are halfway through our new MG training. Classes are also offered to Certified MGs refresher.

Ocean: We are just getting back to more normal activities this week after being out of the Ag Center 5 weeks.

Friday we will graduate 20 new MGs and give 10 year awards and hour recognition at a 'Tea Party.'

Our greenhouse is becoming full with specialty annuals and next week our community garden will be readied for planting and our edible group will be starting its season.

Our calendar is ready for the printer and our Speakers Bureau has been getting many requests,

Charlene Costaris, horticulturist will be speaking on March 18 about *Salt Water Flooding* at the Ocean County Ag Center in Toms River.

Passaic: We are encouraging new projects. Members will be working at a Morris Canal location in Clifton.

We are also working at historic Hamilton House in Clifton, continuing work on last year's projects. An award ceremony is planned for this month's meeting.

To encourage applications for scholarships, letters have been sent out to all Passaic County high schools.

Somerset/Hunterdon: At our February meeting, Nick Polanin was our main speaker. He talked about New Jersey's oldest and largest shade trees using a PowerPoint presentation showing these amazing trees. His main concern is *Who is Caring for These Great Trees?*

At our March Meeting, David Culp, well known lecturer and writer will speak on *Layered Garden and Hellebores*. He will have his latest book *Layered Gardening* and some plants for sale.

We are beginning to prepare for our May 11 plant sale. Most committees are filled and up and running. This sale is our main source of income.

This past growing season we harvested 8,000 pounds of apples for local food banks. Throughout the season MGs trained the trees to a trellis system, thinned the fruit, controlled perennial weeds and harvested the apples.

Sussex: Absent

Union: There is no access to our greenhouse since it is near the demo garden which is blocked at this time.

The meeting ended at 12:05.

Next meeting is April 2 at the Extension Conference Center, our usual location. See you all then