

## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of March 8, 2017 RMGANJ Meeting

Kathy Dopart welcomed the group. Terry Zane called the meeting to order at 10:03 am. New State Representatives were introduced including Carolyn Gretchen from Bergen County, David Haines from Essex County and Jane Kinkle from Essex County.

**Minutes from December 6, 2016 Meeting:** A motion was tendered and members unanimously voted to accept the minutes as submitted.

### **Attendance:**

Atlantic:	Mary Lou Monihan
Bergen:	Joseph Cooper, Donna Faustini, Carolyn Gretchen, Karen Pennell
Burlington:	Terry Zane, Marilyn Bidrawn, Merry Bogert, Lee Perry
Camden:	Diane Shonyo
Cumberland:	Carol Henry
Essex:	Suzie Yamarone, Jane Kinkle, David Haines
Hunterdon:	absent
Mercer:	Betty Scarlata, Bob Robinson, Theodora Wang
Middlesex:	Kathy Dopart, Jerri Barclay
Monmouth:	Ellen Simonetti
Morris:	Carla Schan
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane, Jerry Jellets
Passaic:	Barbara Cook
Somerset:	Linda Madretzke
Sussex:	Pat Schanzlin
Union:	Dennis Lenahan
Rutgers University:	Nick Polanin

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Pat Schanzlin reported a balance of \$10,611.38. A motion was made to accept the Treasurer's report and was seconded. Motion carried.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Terry Zane announced that member Nancy Sullivan was ill and taking a medical leave. A card was passed around for all to sign. Terry reported that \$178.00 was raised at the December meeting auction. Money will be dedicated to the refreshment fund and general supplies: \$272.96 is currently available. The RMGANJ Board verification list was passed around for any possible changes. Terry reported that the By- Laws are being updated. Changes to the by-laws will be forwarded to Terry for further discussion.

**MASTER GARDENERS COORDINATORS REPORT:** Nick Polanin reported that his department has changed its name to the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources. He also reported that Carol Quinn retired and has been replaced by Talia Zirin. Dan Kluchinski is ill but undergoing treatment.

Nick reported on Youth Protection updates. He used Monmouth County's Junior Master Gardener Program as an example of the need for minor protection training. Master Gardeners in this program must have background checks and fingerprinting. Monmouth County will absorb the costs of background checks and fingerprinting for their county. There will be classes addressing Youth Protection Training in the future.

Nick reported that with Rutgers' new financial system there is no tabor system in effect. The new process will entail W-9 forms, plus receipts. The W-9 form requires using one's social security number, so Nick advised using cash. Do not use credit or debit cards when purchasing items for RMGANJ.

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Nick also reported that there will be a coordinators meeting March 20. He is still waiting for Mercer and Atlantic County reports for the Annual Report.

Nick also reported that a committee would be formed to discuss the concerns about CEU's.

### **Old Business:**

It was reported that the Conference Evaluation Survey can be done through the Rutgers Survey System, Qualtrics. Also, pin orders must have an IPO.

### **New Business:**

*Historian:* It was reported that the search for Historian has been completed. Mary Lou Monihan from Atlantic County, will be the historian and provide the report that goes out each March.

Terry Zane presented the 2016 Historian's report as follows:

- Rutgers University celebrated the 205<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- President, Terry Zane, established an email account for receiving communication from Board members; plus, a google groups account for the president, vice president, recording and corresponding secretary to send emails to delegates and alternates.
- Joseph Cooper was elected corresponding secretary. He will post the Board agendas, minutes and other pertinent information to the SAKAI site.
- Procedure for ordering pins was revised. We have an approximate 5-year inventory of pins for county needs.
- The conference was successful, well attended with positive survey results. Joseph Cooper produced a beautiful video of Rutgers Gardens. The video was shown during breaks. Post conference tours were conducted of Rutgers Gardens and the Eco Wall.
- We continue to celebrate the successes of the county master gardener programs and that of individual master gardeners.
- Election was held for vice president, recording and corresponding secretaries. Their term is for 2017 and 2018.

*2017 Budget:* Terry went over the budget which had been sent to all members. A 10% increase was included in budget. A motion to approve the budget was passed.

*County Reports:* All reports to be sent to Secretary Tricia Deering. There is no change in the email address: [rmganjsec@gmail.com](mailto:rmganjsec@gmail.com) has been redirected to go from Jane Gardner to Tricia.

*Refreshments:* Thank you to Burlington for their hospitality. Passaic County will host in April.

*Conference 2017:* A contract with OPEC was arranged for the Conference in 2017 for October 7, 2017. Facilities and speakers were announced. Jane Kinkle and David Haines are in charge of facilities and Ellen Simonetti secured the speakers. This was Ellen's last official duty as a representative for Monmouth County. Field trips to Rutgers Gardens and the Green Wall will be available to attendees after the Conference.

*Caring and Sharing:* MG apparel: Camden County was informed by Nick Polanin to try Personalized Paraphernalia for Rutgers shirts.

A question was raised concerning when CEU credits are approved; before or after the events. CEU's are approved before the event.

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**Break:** Thanks to Bergen County for the refreshment set-up for this meeting.

### **County Report Highlights:**

**Atlantic** –Atlantic County projects are just in the process of waking up from the winter, re-evaluation & planning for the season. Our helpline & round table discussions resumed as of February 1st, morning hours only. Our county received good local publicity covering the first-place win for the second year in a row of Gardiner's Basin Project in Atlantic City by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society for urban/public gardens.

Coordinators Report: There has been concern expressed by a few members about policy for education hours. After much research/ discussion with Rutgers, Rick announced that unless Rutgers announces otherwise, we will be following their policy of 10 hours. Our new classes are beginning on 2/21/17. Our director, agriculture agent Rick Van Ranklin, also announced that he would be doing interviews for a new coordinator on 2/10/17. He also announced that our Master Gardener, Sue Scarlett was asked by Atlantic County Utilities Authority to present another community garden series that she successfully completed last year.

Seashore Gardens Horticultural therapy program has expanded into 2 programs: one is inside (growing herbs for a sensory garden) & another working outside in the sensory garden itself. We are in the process of making plans to restore our plant sale, simplifying & rethinking how to proceed using master gardener donations. Our native plant distributor will no longer be available to provide us material. A local nursery owner/local arboretum director demonstrated & reviewed some pruning basics for our hour education meeting in February.

**Bergen** – Our January guest speaker, Kim Eierman, presented: Eco Beneficial Gardening 101: Boosting the Ecosystem in Your Own Yard. Even the most beautiful gardens are not always healthy ecosystems. Kim explains how gardening with an ecosystem approach contributes to species diversity, attracting and supporting more birds, butterflies, pollinators, and beneficial insects. The design choices you make, the plants you select, and the maintenance practices you use make a difference in creating a beautiful, healthy ecosystem.

Congratulations to all who made the Skylands Holiday Open House at the New Jersey Botanical Gardens such a success. Videos of Volunteers and Decorations have been posted on our website, please take a look at MGofBC.org in the 'MG's in Action' section.

Every 5 years the bylaws are reviewed in order to keep current to the ever-changing needs of the group. The bylaws were recently updated.

The Hermitage Museum and the Hermitage Master Gardeners held a maple-tapping event in February. About 15 trees were tapped on the grounds of the National Historic Landmark in Ho-Ho-Kus.

Garretson Farm celebrated the opening day of their third season hosting the Garretson Community Seed Bank on February 26th. This seed library offers heirloom and organic seeds from the farm as well as donations from carefully selected heirloom and organic seed companies. The mission of the seed library is to educate the community on the importance of preserving heirloom seed varieties as well as to offer support for people who wish to start their gardens from seed.

Theilke Arboretum started the winter sowing project at the arboretum, on Saturday mornings, weather permitting. Participants learn how to plant seeds for maximum yield, soil mixtures for native plants, and how easy and fun the process is to grow plants. This is also an up-cycling project in which recyclable plastics (clean, clear/translucent gallon water containers or clear two-liter bottles) are used to house the plants through winter.

The Language of Bark - a Winter Workshop. In February, expert Jean Epiphan taught an interactive workshop on bark ID. Participants were shown how the mysteries of bark patterns, texture, feel, color, and sometimes even smell can be used to identify the trees.

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The Winter StoryWalk®, *Tracks in the Snow* by Wong Herbert Yee, was launched in January and remains up all winter. StoryWalk® is an innovative approach to encourage people of all ages to get out in nature and read at the same time.

**Burlington** – Our coordinator, Brian McDonald, left for a new position on January 20, 2017. It is unknown if he will be replaced in the near future. There will be no intern class for 2017.

Projects:

Butterfly Garden at Smith Woods: Seaweed and compost was added to the plots December – February. A walkthrough is planned for March 29. The team will review each plot and go over the spring plan. Debris will be removed and soil testing will be done on some of the plots.

IPM and Demonstration Plots at BCCAC: Planning meetings have started and plot and raised bed plantings determined for the season. The team took advantage of the warm weather and cleaned and weeded many of the areas. Plot signage is being worked and a seed planting timetable completed.

Donation Garden at Medford Leas: The team has been planning the 2017 gardens and will be starting seeds on March 6. This year's educational theme will be, "weed control and management". The team is actively recruiting both Master Gardeners as well as interested non-Master Gardeners to join the group.

Rancocas Nature Center: The team had a planning meeting in February, had a general cleanup of the pollinator beds and planned for changes and additions. Mary Belko, a part time employee, is working on the historic/children's garden this season replacing a Master Gardener. It is going to be a garden for the school groups and campers to work in again.

Articles published in the *Burlington County Times* Master Gardeners Journal:

- December 26, 2016, "Planting and caring for a living Christmas tree" by Judy Janas
- January 24, 2017, "Orchids: Beautiful exotics to grow at home" by Terry Zane
- February 8, 2017, "Get the dirt on your garden's soil" by Brian McDonald
- February 22, 2017, "Buying firewood? Know where it came from" by Meredith Bogert

Presentations given:

- January 18, 2017, Marilyn Bidrawn presented "Xeriscape Gardening, Making Every Drop Count" at the Mount Holly Garden Club
- February 15, 2017, Meredith Bogert presented "Something Different for your Garden" at the Moorestown Library
- February 15, 2017, Meredith Bogert presented "Native Alternatives to Common Landscaping Choices" at the Mount Holly Garden Club
- February 23, 2017, Bill Bamka presented "Understanding Soils" to the Master Gardeners

**Camden** – no report

**Cumberland** – Our new classes have started with 14 new interns. The propagation team is in full swing cleaning the greenhouses and planting their seeds with plenty of Rutgers 250 tomatoes that will be for sale. We have been in talks with some schools to get gardens started and a community garden as well. Horticulture Therapy has been on hold for the winter. We are sponsoring a bus trip to NYC on April 20th. There will be guided tours of 2 gardens Central Park and Jefferson Garden in the Village. With a final stop at the 9/11 Memorial which they will be on their own to explore. One of our new interns will be heading to California with the tour sponsored by the Monarch Teacher Network and tell us all about when she returns. We are also entered the world of Facebook.

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### **Essex – Programs during the Months of January, February and March:**

- The Teaching Garden is appealing for Volunteers starting in March. For those of you who are not familiar with the Teaching Garden, we plant and maintain a vegetable garden and share what we've learned with the community. Whether it's the popular "Let's Talk Vegetable Gardening" series or one of our "Introduction to Gardening" programs, we reach out to the community with a wide range of cultivation, planting, maintenance, and other important gardening techniques. Along the way, every one of us learns something new like discovering a new variety of plants or maybe an alternative way to prune a tomato. I personally learned how to grow potatoes and the wonderful use of hoop houses. We share our gardening experiences with each other and continue to learn something every week. This month we are seeking new volunteers to help in the Teaching Garden. We need volunteers to plant the garden and provide maintenance throughout the season. We also need volunteers to conduct program research and development and to promote the programs we offer and take on a host of other responsibilities to keep the Teaching Garden alive and well. The Teaching Garden is located behind the Walther House at Presby Memorial Iris Garden, 474 Upper Mountain Ave., Upper Montclair, NJ.

The first talk, Let's Talk Vegetable Gardening Series, is scheduled for Wednesday March 22, 2017 at 7:00 PM. At Maplewood Arts Center, 1978 Springfield Avenue, Maplewood, NJ 07040. This session will focus on seed starting, succession planting, three season gardening, companion plants, and space allocation, everything you need to plan you garden for the season.

The second talk, Container Vegetable Gardening is scheduled for Saturday March 25, 2017 at 10:00 AM. At Garibaldi Hall, 621A Eagle Rock Avenue, Roseland, NJ 07068. This class will introduce novice and experienced gardeners alike to the benefits and techniques of growing vegetables in containers.

### **Workshops during January, February and March:**

- One of our own Master Gardeners, Jim Myracle, taught a class on tomato grafting. Jim has been grafting his own tomatoes (splicing a desired fruit bearing plant on to root stock) for a few years now with very good results. This was a "hands-on" workshop, so the size of the class was restricted to 20 people. During the class, everyone had an opportunity to actually graft plants - and take them home.

### **Trips during January, February, March and Beyond:**

- The 2017 Philadelphia Flower Show "Holland: Flowering the World". Wednesday March 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Mt. Cuba Center in Hockessin, Delaware on Wednesday April 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Hunterdon** – Hunterdon County held its Volunteer Luncheon in January which was attended by 65 RMGHC members. In addition to Master Gardener of the Year and Lifetime Award of Excellence Awards, three "Always Reliable" awards were given. The new class started in January with 10 participants. Graduation is scheduled for April 20. It was decided that next year the class will change from twice a week starting in January to once a week starting in September because many applicants work part time and it is difficult for them to make two classes a week. The Presentation Team (formerly Speakers Bureau) held an internal workshop on how to create a presentation followed by one-on-one power point sessions. The Presentation Team has been giving a steady stream of talks throughout the winter. Programs continue at the Hunterdon Care center and Whitehouse School. Other teams are beginning to plan for the upcoming season: Helpline, Community Events, Hunterdon Central, Seed-for Salad Teams and the Sensory Garden. Recent speakers include Carole Stober on Orchids and Jack Donahue on Tree Identification.

**Mercer** – In January, our new officers assumed their positions. Our new president, Pat Frawley, transferred to us from Union County a few years ago, and not many years later became, in short order, Treasurer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, and now President. Thank you, Union County.

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We now have our RMG calendar online. It can be sorted by committee, and is searchable. We have also introduced a simple method of recording hours online. There was quite a bit of reluctance to use our previous system. Adoption of the improved system is much enhanced; 132 RMG's signed on in the first month.

For 2017, we have 9 Community Education events planned, at venues spread throughout Mercer County. Our "Winter Garden Library" program for children is ongoing. Within our organization, we now have separate coordinators responsible for our website and our social media, and a dedicated group responsible for Tech Support.

Within the organization, we have initiated an "unsung hero's award". Anyone can present one of these to another master gardener that they feel has done exceptional work behind the scenes, but may not have been recognized by others. It's a simple "attaboy" sheet, and is announced at monthly meetings. Great for morale.

At our February meeting, there was a presentation on Mercer County sustainability initiatives given by Christine Symington of Sustainability Princeton, and Sophie Glover, author. A list of invasive plants that should not be used was handed out. At our March meeting, Jess Niederer, the recipient of the 2016 Young Farmer Award and the owner of Chickadee Creek Farm in Hopewell, gave a presentation on her organic farming techniques and how we can deal with pests and diseases in our own vegetable garden organically.

The Mercer County symposium, our 10<sup>th</sup>, is now completely sold out and is being held on Saturday, March 11.

A tour to North Creek Nursery is planned for March 16. Our annual Plant Expo will take place at MEG on Saturday, May 6.

**Middlesex** – Our Master Gardener helpline, which remained open during the winter months, is back to a full schedule. Help is available Monday through Friday from 9-12. We plan to take our helpline directing to the public by offering a couple of evening sessions at local libraries.

Our graduation and awards program was held on February 16<sup>th</sup>. In addition to the 37 graduates, numerous Master Gardeners were recognized for their service. Kathleen Krug and MaryAnne McMillan received their 25-year pin.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Backyard Bird Count was held at Davidson's Mill Pond Park in South Brunswick on February 18. 25 species were spotted during the count including 2 red tailed hawks, 3 wild turkeys, a belted kingfisher and 100 Canadian geese just to name a few!

Middlesex Master Gardeners attended The New Jersey Flower and Garden Show February 23-26. It gave us the opportunity to meet the public, answer questions and share upcoming events.

On February 25<sup>th</sup>, the Earth Center Conservancy sponsored a bus trip to Longwood Gardens to see the Orchid Extravaganza.

Two workshops, taught by Master Gardeners, are scheduled in March at the EARTH Center, Davidson's Mill Pond Park in South Brunswick. Micro-irrigation was on Saturday March 4 and Horticultural Therapy at Home on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

March 28<sup>th</sup> will be our Master Gardener auction/meeting. This auction is one of our fundraisers.

**Monmouth** – Monmouth County MGs began the New Year with Committee meetings: Helpline Roundtable (our February meeting welcomed Vinnie Delia and Georgina Price from Ocean County as speakers on

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I.P.M. and Growing Degree Days...a fabulous presentation...thank you so much!), Native Garden Committee new perennial plants design and planning, Herb Committee, Junior Master Gardener Program Committee planning for the new group of children to begin in April and Spring Garden Days planning meetings for our annual plant sale and educational lectures. In March, we will host two large educational events. Friday March 24<sup>th</sup> the School Program Conference will take place and on Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup> "Celebrate Spring...A Symposium" will offer garden courses free to the public.

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, we welcomed 27 new interns into our MG training class. A Welcome Breakfast was prepared and our veterans pulled out all the stops with a delicious fare and lots of good conversation. Because of the very warm weather, our Helpline has been very busy...more so than normal for this time of the year! In January, our speaker was Bruce Crawford on, "2016 Flowers of the Month", always chocked full of good ideas with a little humor added! And, February's speaker was Michael Roswell on, "Pollination...Up Close and Personal" ...excellent presentation with great photos of pollinators in the act of pollinating. A trip to the Philadelphia Flower Show is planned and our Speakers Bureau has been busy with multiple speaking engagements on and off campus. This month we also began another series of Community Garden Education Series. The second of 3 presentations will be made on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. And, because we have our JMG Program and work with children, many of us (60+) have gone through the Protection of Children Training Process.

All in all, the Monmouth County MGs have hit the ground running!

### **Morris** –

- Implemented a form documenting HEP Projects for development of HEP Project Library.
- Two new lectures for Speaker's Bureau Lectures vetted.
- Negotiated dates and topics for Library Outreach Programs.
- Pursued several new hands-on gardening venues for expansion of volunteer opportunities.
- Accepted an outreach request at Madison Library for "Green Day".

**Ocean** – Ocean County had 23 Interns become certified at Graduation and 7 MGs receive their ten-year certificates and pins. Helpline is moving into the new year with revised guidelines for which we'll have training with the Interns in April. Our Tick Lab opened last week. Speakers Bureau has filled 36 requests for the coming months. Our former Garden Design Committee has a new name- Education Outreach. The MGs are working with school children and having a great time teaching youngsters where their food/candy originates. The greenhouses are busy raising specialty annuals and the vegetables are just being planted. IPM had its first education session. Outside gardens will start up later this month. Philly Flower Show bus trip for next Wednesday is filled.

**Passaic** – A slate of officers was elected to serve for the coming year. There are 2 new additions to the board. Plans are on the way for the plant sale in May. The horticultural therapy teams are in full swing. Activities and a budget for the coming year have been approved. Passaic County will be doing a joint meeting with Bergen County in April. Looking to review and revise Bylaws this year. Passaic County will be decorating the Drawing Room this year for the Magical Holiday at NJBG.

**Somerset** – Somerset County Master Gardeners are being offered a Standard Pesticide Use and Safety Methods course. In order to work at Snyder Farm (Rutgers's experimental station) this course must be taken and passed. The Speaker's Bureau of our group is in full swing - writing and presenting mini gardening courses to the public. More presenters are needed at this time.

**Sussex** – Our new MG and friends class is fantastic. We are conducting an evening class of 44, of which 30 are interested in volunteering and becoming Master Gardeners. This is part of the reorganization of our educational program in order to reach more constituents and to address the needs of a larger number of learners wishing to cover the MG program contents. We are looking into ways to use technology to streamline our program.

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Sussex County will be breaking ground for us and helping us put in walkways in our research garden this spring. We have a major renovation of the county park (Newton Green) also planned for this spring. We are redesigning and renovating the existing plantings, again with county collaboration.

Lisa Chiariello, our MG Coordinator, had the opportunity to teach a Native and Invasive Plants class to Somerset MGs. She thoroughly enjoyed the experience and the class!

**Union** – In March, in our greenhouse we'll be starting several varieties of tomatoes, peppers and cool weather crops for the Sharing Garden and our Spring Fair.

### **Wild Earth Fest - Sunday, April 30**

**Wild Earth Fest is an educational event to promote awareness and appreciation of global and local conservation issues, including energy, recycling, land and wildlife conservation and pollution. Wild Earth Fest will inform visitors about these issues through displays, talks, demonstrations, and other fun family activities.**

Wild Earth Fest will be set up in the grassy field adjacent to the Demo Garden. We would like to offer the following activities to the public:

1. Have the Garden open for garden tours, highlighting the rain garden installations and our beautiful gardens and the greenhouse.
2. We have been offered a separate table outside the garden, where we can promote Master Gardeners and our Fair, distribute fact sheets, and sell soil test kits.

The New Class Visit and Demo Garden Clean Up Day is Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>

Our regular Helpline hours will be starting soon. Due to the warm days, we have had a lot of calls recently.

**BREAK** – Thank you Burlington County for the break refreshments.

**ADJOURNMENT:** At 12:10 PM

Respectfully Submitted

Tricia Deering, Recording Secretary and Kathy Doport