

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of June 11, 2020 RMGANJ Meeting

Dennis Lenahan called the Webex meeting to order at 9:05 am. Dennis reported that we have two new delegates from Camden: Tom Gurenlian and Judy Kelley.

Secretary's Minutes from May 2020 RMGANJ Meeting: Tricia Deering, Recording Secretary, reported that she had emailed out version 3 of the May RMGANJ minutes after receiving some additional county reports and attendance changes. She realized she had forgotten to add Sudi Solomon's name to the attendees, so she will make that change. A motion to accept the minutes with the aforementioned change was made, seconded and approved.

Attendance:

Atlantic:	
Bergen:	Karen Pennell
Burlington:	Sharon Astorino, Nick Hendershot, Dave Parsons
Camden:	Tom Gurenlian, Judy Kelley
Cumberland:	Betsey Simpson
Essex:	Terry Felper, Alice Poueymirou
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodman
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata, Sudi Solomon
Middlesex:	Jerri Barclay
Monmouth:	Gayle Williams, Bill Schutte
Morris:	
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn
Passaic:	Joe D'Errico
Somerset:	Cindy Hedin, Linda Madretzke
Sussex:	Jane Gardner, Pat Schanzlin
Union:	Dennis Lenahan, Dolores Batz-Culp, Deb Murphy
Rutgers University:	Jan Zientek

TREASURER'S REPORT: Roberta Quinn, Treasurer, reported that the current balance is \$14018.30, which is no change from the prior month. A motion to accept was made, seconded, approved

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Dennis Lenahan reported on Old Business below.

MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Jan Zientek reported that he is going to his County's Community Garden opening and that it is nice to get outside again. He also reported that some Rutgers research is starting up again. On 6/15 there will be update on Rutgers policies related to Covid-19. As of now we are still operating under the 8/14 guidelines. He also reported that this is the last few weeks of Dr. Goodman's tenure and Dr. Laura Lawson has been appointed as Interim Executive Dean of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS) and Interim Executive Director of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) effective July 1, 2020.

Jan also reported that the digital helpline records project has not progressed due to the spending freeze.

Old Business

Ideas for the 2021 Conference/activities were discussed. Suggestions included but were not limited to:

- A keynote speaker followed by breakout groups for sharing among counties.
- Use of Webex instead of or in conjunction with an in-person conference
- Surveying the membership: Nick Hendershot reported that Burlington is doing a survey. He will send it to Dennis Lenahan when it has been approved. Dennis thought it was a good idea. Tricia Deering reminded everyone of the survey we did a few years ago. Jane Gardner will send the

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results for distribution to the membership. There are also the surveys from the conference attendees

- A conference with a virtual component, breakouts on herbs, vegetables, sensory gardens, etc.
- Quarterly Webex webinars plus an innovative in-person conference
- Eliminate the State Awards component and let it be handled at the Rutgers Volunteer Award Ceremony (which are under consideration). One member reported that the Conference was originally started to recognize awardees. Some felt that it was important to ensure that there is still a vehicle to recognize the awardees appropriately.
- Hold quarterly Webex webinars where awardees are recognized and award winning projects winners report on their project.
- Hold quarterly Webex webinars where counties report on their projects. Each webinar would be focused on a particular theme such as: school programs, helpline, community gardens, special needs groups, nursing homes, etc.

The status of the State Awards was also discussed. No decision about awards was made at the last coordinators meeting, There was some discussion about what counties are doing for awards in 2020. Many members reported that their counties are not giving out any awards for 2020. Seven counties reported no awards on the Webex chat. Union reported that they have already selected their awardees which are combined State and County.

Pat Schanzlin suggested a working group to explore options for the conference possibly taking advantage of Webex. Webex has not been an option for use the past and offers many new possibilities. Jan Zientek reported that Rutgers is also adding a Zoom license.

A motion was made to form a committee to explore all options for 2021, which was seconded and passed unanimously. Dennis Lenahan had asked at the May meeting for members to think about whether they wanted to volunteer to form a committee to plan the 2021 conference. The following members volunteered for the committee: Dave Parsons, Dennis Lenahan, Judy Kelley, and Sharon Astorino

Dennis Lenahan reported that he had updated the google group with the input he received from members. Tricia Deering reported that she was working on updating the membership spreadsheet and would be sending it out for input and feedback.

Dennis Lenahan reported that he would like the membership to think about whether we should add a position of Historian to the Board. This would be voted on at the next Board meeting. The Historian would be responsible for maintaining the By-Laws and keeping the meeting running properly according to Robert's Rules of Order. In addition the Historian would be responsible for documenting the history of the organization. RMGANJ used to have a historian position who saved records and wrote an annual history summary of activities (but did not maintain the By-Laws or help with running meetings). However, no one took over the role after our last Historian, Nancy Sullivan, passed and no one knows what happened to her binders of paper records. Judy Kelley from Camden will try to find out what happened to Nancy's records. Dennis Lenahan has binders of paper records that were put together by Ellen Simonetti and passed down and maintained by Pat Schanzlin but she does not believe they include the Historian records.

There was a discussion about the Corresponding Secretary Board position and what records are being stored on Sakai. Tricia Deering reported that she looked on Sakai recently and no minutes have been posted there since late last year and Joe has not been in attendance at our meetings so far in 2020. She will contact Joe Cooper to see if he is still filling that role. She also reported that the By-Laws state that the Corresponding Secretary is responsible for maintaining the membership list, which is not how we have been operating. A summary of the Board positions provide by Jerri Barclay is included here:

- In December 2019 there were two 2 year terms filled for 2020-2021
 - They were President - Dennis Lenahan and Treasurer - Roberta Quinn

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Since Dennis vacated his position after 1 year, Deirdre Gallagher was selected to fill the 1 remaining year of the Vice President's position.

- The following offices will be on the ballot in December for the 2021-2022 elections
 - Vice president
 - Recording Secretary
 - Corresponding secretary

Alice Poueymirou reported on confirming the cancelation of The Cook Conference Center.. The contact person is no longer there so she is working on finding the right person with whom to confirm the cancelation.

Caring and Sharing:

A question was asked about what company different counties use to host their websites since they are having trouble with their provider. GoDaddy and StartLogic were both mentioned as companies that were being used and provide good service.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting, seconded and unanimously approved.

COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Atlantic

As of 6/5/20 Atlantic County is still following Rutgers guidelines and projects are not open. By visiting our garden sites on a regular basis, our coordinator is doing a non-scientific, casual study of evaluating the garden projects as mother nature has her way with them in order to evaluate maintenance needs, what is surviving, what is not. Also, insect activity. Interestingly enough, insect/butterfly activity has been low to date. One might anticipate the opposite except for the cold/wet spring that we have experienced.

Until now, our coordinator, Belinda Chester, has managed to cover our helpline needs. However, as the need increases, she is taking names of those interested in taking helpline calls/emails from home, and the office will forward to interested members research questions.

Our county office is taking in samples from home owners. A county agent is on site every day MON-FRI. She has seen lots of calls for maple leaf damage from late frosts with no damage to the tree and lots of concerns about the European hornet that has been confused for an Asian hornet.

We anticipate that updates might be coming on 6/15/20. Hopefully our county office might be opened in some capacity.

She shared with us online the new home horticultural website/: site name : Rutgers/ Home/Lawn/Garden

Our classes are continuing and there are 3 remaining. We will not do a helpline class at this time since the helpline might not be normally and fully operational into the New Year.

Mary-Lou Monihan gave a report from her last state meeting mainly reporting about the extended conversations about whether or not to have a state conference this year in the form of some kind of online event. After much discussion, it was voted not to do so and to spend the time evaluating and planning something well thought out for 2021.

Belinda will be sending out a link for an Urban farming educational event that is coming up.

Bergen

Our wonderful writers and editor continue to produce the newsletter each month with articles of interest and notifications of online webinars. To read the current issue, please go to our website mgofbc.org and click on 'The Potting Shed-newsletter'.

All sites and meetings have been closed or cancelled, respectively, per RCE policy.

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Burlington - no report

Camden - no report

Cumberland

May 2020 Cumberland County

At the June MG Monthly meeting the Program Coordinator explained the state, county and Rutgers directives regarding community/demo gardens and will advise MG's immediately when they are able to log hours in Better Impact for volunteer hours in community/demo gardens.

Cumberland County is not having a yearly award recipient for this year. We'd rather have something in which we can celebrate all MG's who did what they needed to do to stay safe during this time. Not sure what or when that will be.

Master Gardener: Highlights for May 2020

- MG Classes are being taught on-line through a variety of resources
- County WebEx: Steering Committee; MG Monthly Mtg; Thankful Thursday
- State WebEx: MG Program Coordinators meetings; Policies & Procedures committee
- MG Classes hosted via WebEx
 - o Status of Beekeeping with 9 attendees
 - o Power of Flowers with 14 people
 - o Propagation Q&A with 10 participants
- 1 article was sent to the Reminder for publication
- 16 radio spots were recorded for POP 99.9 FM Power of Positivity
- 30 Facebook posts with a total organic reach of 3419
 - o Data retrieved from Facebook
 - o Organic is the number of people who had an unpaid post from your Page enter their screen (per Facebook)
- Resolved 9 inquiries from clients on the Helpline

Essex – no report

Hunterdon

The Hunterdon MG Steering Committee met via Webex this past week.

Ideas were presented as to how to continue to support our local Food Pantry.

The RMGHC Citizens Scientist have been scouting their properties and one of our MG captured photos of a Spotted Lanternfly egg hatching, the photos were posted and viewed by many.

Several on line educational seminars have been listed in an email that was forwarded to all our members.

Several teams continue to support their clients by developing online material and holding live webinars.

Helpline calls continue to be fielded.

Mercer

We held our first General Webex Meeting June 1 and had 92 participants.

Horticulturist Margaret Pickoff reported that Helpline inquiries from the public have been arriving steadily through email and thanked the members of the Helpline Committee for their assistance with responding to them. She set up a Virtual Helpline on Canvas (through Rutgers) for the Committee to assist in answering email questions. Canvas allows the committee members to work collaboratively on responses.

Margaret recognized, via photos and individually by name, the 23 members of the Class of 2020. They completed the MG course on March 5th and passed their final exam however, their internship year was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and there will not be a graduation in November. As soon as in-person volunteering is allowed again, they will complete their Helpline training and additional volunteer hours needed to become certified.

Hot Topic – As a learning opportunity for MG's, Margaret Pickoff highlighted one of the recent topics being raised by clients through Helpline: Murder Hornets. Since there is an excellent article in this month's newsletter by Doris Petruska on Murder Hornets, Margaret focused on the two other look-alike hornets being mistaken for the Asian Giant Hornet in NJ.

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These are: the Cicada Killer Wasp, and the European Hornet. She indicated that the Asian Giant Hornet discovered in Washington State in December 2019 had not been spotted in the East Coast thus far. The overwhelming majority of the photos she has received through Helpline have been determined to be the European Hornet.

Margaret showed slides from the US Dept of Agriculture and explained the prominent physical/habit characteristics differentiating the three types of hornets/wasps - primarily size, coloration and abdomen markings:

1. Cicada Killer Wasp: large size; create in-ground nests; males, in particular, have a dive-bombing habit when threatened, but cannot sting; females have a mild sting. They are evident in late July during cicada season. Some states in the East Coast will have a cicada cycle this year, not New Jersey.
2. Asian Giant Hornet: very large size, painful sting; dark yellow/orange head; wide brown stripes on yellow abdomen; devastating impact on honeybee hives. So far only identified in Washington State.
3. European Hornet: large size; honey color head; thinner, irregular brown stripes with tear-shape "intrusions" on yellow abdomen; nests at least 2 meters off the ground, usually in tree cavities or attics; forage on the bark and sap of trees and woody plants to feed their young and can cause damage to plants including stem girdling; can be aggressive when protecting their nests, which die off in the winter (except the queen) and sting can be painful. Best to leave them alone..

Middlesex

Per Rutgers University and NJAES directive, no Rutgers Master Gardener volunteer is permitted to volunteer or gather in groups until August 15th. This means no one is allowed to volunteer as a Rutgers Master Gardener and log hours as such. Therefore, we will not be opening the gardens as usual this year. As you may remember, all volunteer and education credit hours are suspended for 2020. All awards will be extended to 2021.

On June 9th we had our county executive board meeting via WebEx. It was a first for us and there were a few glitches but definitely worth continuing and we planned another next month.

On June 30 we will host our general meeting as a webinar on invasive and noninvasive native plants.

We have tentatively set September 20 for our Master Gardener picnic in the hope's restrictions will be lifted by then.

Monmouth

While we have not participated in person, two committees have managed to meet via email and phone conversations. Our Speakers Bureau will be presenting a Webex vetting on June 15th of a new program, "How to Grow Dazzling Dahlias". Also, we are very excited to be included in Ocean County's Webinar series "In The Know to Grow" with one hour presentations held on Tuesday evenings, 6:30 PM. Monmouth's contributing talks will be on July 14th- Creating a Hummingbird Habitat, July 28th-Irresistible Irises: Easy as 1-2-3, and September 22nd-How to Grow Dazzling Dahlias. Thank you to Ocean County for the invitation and thank you to our MGs, Ann Sherwood, Jane Zysk and Debbie LaGattuta for their informational talks.

Our Scholarship Committee has chosen four awardees for our Howard Bodner Memorial Scholarship. Usually we would honor these students in person at our June General Meeting. Under the circumstances, we will be mailing a certificate and congratulatory letter to the students and Freeholder and Honorary Master Gardener Lillian Burry will be honoring our awardees remotely. We thank our committee co-chairpersons Fran Ambio and Carolyn Giovanniello and committee members: Marv Koren, Estelle Lumer, Heather McGrath, Deanna Griffin, Janet Dill, Rose McSweeney and Olga Norstrom for their time and efforts in making some very difficult decisions in choosing outstanding awardees for 2020!

Morris – no report

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Ocean

We had a virtual informal meeting of MGs and our Coordinator on June 4th via Webex in lieu of a general meeting. We were apprised by the coordinator of the current situation at our Ag Center and how the horticulturists are dealing with gardening and tick questions.

There will be no 2021 Master Gardener class in January. All interns and veterans have until the end of 2021 to finish their 2020 hours.

To reach the public, RCE of Ocean County started a Facebook page and an Instagram account. The horticulturists post three times a week.

Some MGs from our Speakers Bureau are participating in the virtual "In the Know to Grow" series being offered every other week on Tuesdays. MG presentations have included "Hydrangeas" that attracted 200 attendees, and one on vegetable container gardening that had over 100 attendees. There is an upcoming program on deer-resistant plants scheduled for June 16th. We have even had attendees from California and New York.

Passaic

The new MG class has concluded. 12 individuals who completed the course will be recognized with certificates and will be honored later in the year. Traditionally, the merit awards for the county mgs are recognized at the graduation for the new mgs.

All activities have been canceled in accordance with the Rutgers COVID-19 guidelines.

The Totowa office will be open on June 15 for staff employees only. The helpline will continue to be monitored remotely by volunteer mgs.

Somerset – no report.

Sussex

Nothing to report. Sussex has suspended all activities.

Union

SHARING GARDEN - Due to the COVID 19 guidelines which Rutgers put forth suspending all in-person programs into August the Master Gardeners of Union County will not be planting produce in the Sharing Garden this summer season and as a result will not have produce to donate to food banks throughout union county for the 2020 summer season.

HORTICULTURE THERAPY: New committee co-chairs Deb Murphy and Charlotte Gudropp of the horticultural therapy committee. They've begun collecting pressed flowers for the horticultural therapy committee's use in future projects.

DOCENT PROGRAM: The docent program that was started last year (2019) is continuing; we are having virtual training sessions and anyone interested in giving guided tours of the MG of Union County demonstration garden is welcome to join.

We've begun working on creating a Docent Brochure to promote the program.

BETTER IMPACT - The MG of Union County have begun using Better Impact the volunteer management software. Virtual training was done on May 20 as part of the Monthly Continuing Education meetings.

ELECTIONS: Elections will be held in December 2020 for open Executive Board positions: President, 1st VP, Historian, and Recording Secretary.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 10:38 am. The next meeting is 7/9/2020 at 9 am by Webex.

Respectfully Submitted
Tricia Deering, Recording Secretary