

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of July 9, 2020 RMGANJ Meeting

Dennis Lenahan called the Webex meeting to order at 9:17 am. Dennis reported that he will be stepping down as President for health reasons and Deirdre Gallagher will be stepping into the President position from the Vice President position. Pat Schanzlin thanked Dennis for his contributions and welcomed Deirdre.

Secretary's Minutes from June 2020 RMGANJ Meeting: Tricia Deering, Recording Secretary, reported that she had emailed out version 2 of the June RMGANJ minutes after receiving some additional county reports and attendance changes. A motion to accept version 2 of the minutes was made, seconded and approved.

Attendance:

Atlantic:	
Bergen:	Karen Pennell
Burlington:	Sharon Astorino, Nick Hendershot, Dave Parsons
Camden:	Tom Gurenlian
Cumberland:	Betsey Simpson
Essex:	Terry Felper, Alice Poueymirou
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodman
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata
Middlesex:	Jerri Barclay
Monmouth:	Gayle Williams, Bill Schutte
Morris:	Deirdre Gallagher
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
Rutgers University:	Jan Zientek

TREASURER'S REPORT: Roberta Quinn, Treasurer, reported that the current balance is \$14,018.30 which is no change from the prior month. A motion to accept was made, seconded and approved.

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

MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Jan Zientek reported that there was a miscommunication regarding Bruce Crawford's new position in the April minutes. Bruce is not the training director for RCE/Master Gardeners as reported, but he will be becoming more accessible to us. He is Rutgers NJAES State Program Leader in Home and Public Horticulture.

Jan reported that there is not a lot to report as Rutgers is slowly moving towards reopening operations and preparing for undergraduate instruction to begin in the fall. Classes will be principally conducted on line. In person instruction will be limited to required clinical workshops, labs, etc. RCE Director Brian Schilling has asked all RCE departments to develop plans / phases for returning to Extension programmatic activities (field work, workshops, etc.) RCE in-person activities remain suspended at least through August 14th (with 4-H in-person activities suspended through August 30th.) RCE County offices are in different phases of either remaining closed, open only to the employees, or open to the public. We see this being a fluid situation across the state, and as re-openings continue, based on safety, comfort, and any additional spikes in virus activity, volunteers and volunteer programming may be one of the last to be resumed.

Nick Polanin will be polling ANR faculty for a department policy regarding resumption of RMG Intern Training, with the distinct possibility that all RMG intern training programs may be postponed until 2021.

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New Business

Deirdre Gallagher reported that Jerri Barclay is leading a nominating committee to fill the vacant VP slot. Karen Pennell is assisting her. The question was asked about how the election for the vacant VP position would work. The By-laws say we should fill it, rather than wait until the position comes up for election in December, it was decided to have an election in September. Anyone who is interested in the position please let Jerri or Karen know.

Old Business

Dave Parsons reported on the 2021 RMGANJ Conference Committee. Members include himself, Sharon Astorino, Judy Kelley and Dennis Lenahan. Dave provided a summary of the issues that the team has been discussing, The first and most important decision is whether it will be in person or online. The team does not want to have to switch horses mid planning. Discussion followed. It was mentioned that Jersey Friendly Yards had a very successful online conference. One option offered is to split the awards and the conference apart and have an in-person awards ceremony. However, some counties may not have awards. Jan Zeintek reported that the Rutgers awards committee may have announcements in the fall for a plan for how to reward Rutgers Volunteers. This is not a replacement for county events and awards programs.

Pat Schanzlin recommended that since everything is up in the air, we should go with online. It seems the best option to avoid the possibility of changing plans due to changing Covid-19 circumstances. The conference could be split across multiple days, weeks or months. Also, the Conference does not have to be in October. Dolores Batz-Culp suggested that late Jan/Feb is a good option.

A motion was made and seconded to have an online and not an in-person conference. The details are to be worked out. The motion was approved unanimously by county poll. A question was asked about what other decision points are needed? Dave reported that there are lots. Dave needs one person per county to form a working group which will use Facebook or an app called Slack to collaborate. Team members do not have to have a Facebook account to use it for this purpose. Each county should send their representatives name and email to parsonsdw@aol.com.

Karen Pennell asked whether we can also vote on changing the timing. It was decided that we would rather have the committee discuss the pros and cons first. There are issues with Spring and Fall conflicts. Home Gardener School, Mercer conference, Jersey Friendly Yards. There is also an issue with being inundated with webinars. We will need to differentiate ourselves from generic gardening offerings. It was suggested that we could do that by sharing topics and projects specific to Master Gardeners.

Deirdre Gallagher recommended that we cancel the August meeting. There was a motion that the next RMGANJ meeting be in September on the originally scheduled date which was seconded and approved unanimously.

It was agreed that there was no need to share county reports – idea sharing is being done at the coordinators meeting.

The need to review the By-Laws was discussed by Deirdre. A committee is needed. Deirdre asked for volunteers to contact her. She will be a member of the committee.

Caring and Sharing:

No discussion.

COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Atlantic – no report.

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Bergen

The newsletter continues to be produced 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.

Burlington – No activity due to Covid-19.

Camden - No report

Cumberland

MG classes are being taught on-line through a variety of resources; The classes ended on 6/23/2020. We did not hold a graduation and hope to invite this year's class back next year so that they can experience the full class.

- Research based educational opportunities continue to be offered to the MG's from a variety of resources
- County WebEx/Zoom meetings include: Monthly Staff Mtg, MG Monthly Mtg (As in year's past, there are no MG county-wide monthly or steering committee meetings in July and August)
- State Webex meetings include: Bi- Weekly MG Program Coordinators meetings; Weekly Policies & Procedures committee
- Pam serves on the State MG Policies and Procedures Committee

Home Horticulture: Highlights for Jun 2020

- 1 article was sent to the Reminder for publication
- 18 radio spots were recorded for POP 99.9 FM Power of Positivity
- Pam was a "live" guest on POP 99.9 Power of Positivity on 6/1/2020 to celebrate their name change
- 17 Facebook posts with 3204 reached and 767 engagements
 - o Data retrieved from Facebook
 - o "Reached" is the number of people who saw the content
 - o "Engagements" is any action someone take
- Resolved inquiries from clients on the Helpline, assisted by a virtual MG Helpline Team
- Pam and Sal are working with Wheaton Arts on presentations for a virtual Eco Fair in August; Pam did spring clean-up of the Pollinator Garden in preparation for that
- Pam returned to the office and is no longer working remotely

Essex –

No activity due to Covid-19.

Hunterdon

Our Enrichment team continues to arrange for speakers via webcast for continuing education credits and enrichment. Our last speaker was Amy Rowe from Essex/Passaic on ticks and tick borne diseases.

The Hunterdon MG Steering Committee continues to meet via Webex every month.

The RMGHC Citizens Scientist have been scouting their properties, taking photographs, writing them up and posting them on the RCE County website. Topics include native plants, insects, diseases, ... Since the group began they have reached 40,000 people through their posts!

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 videos, online material and holding live webinars and "walk-about" using an ipad.

Helpline calls continue to be fielded and is having a busy season with many pest and diseases showing up.

Mercer

We continue to hold Executive Board and General Meetings via Webex. The next General Membership meeting is July 13.

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Helpline inquiries from the public continue to arrive steadily through email to the county horticulturist. They are then posted on Canvas Virtual Helpline and Helpline Committee members research and our horticulturists then responds.

Most committees use Zoom or Webex to hold meetings virtually.

We continue to send information to our Constant Contact list. Our June flyer was all about online opportunities. We also post on Facebook with links to online webinars, current flowers in bloom and invasives like Spotted Lanternfly which has erupted in the last two weeks.

Middlesex

We hosted a general meeting via Webex last month on native and invasive plants. MGs Sue Tarr and Jerri Barclay gave the lecture and answered questions on the topic. There were 35 MG attendees.

We are continuing with the native plant propagation project. MGs have been picking up cell trays, media and native seedlings to transplant and maintain at home throughout the summer. The goal of the native plant propagation project is to promote native plants in home landscapes throughout the county.

RU Ready to Garden webinar series will continue this week with Home Food Preservation: Canning in Glass Jars. To view upcoming webinars and past recorded webinars, visit http://www.middlesexcountynj.gov/Government/Departments/BDE/Pages/Rutgers%20Cooperative%20Extension_Middlesex%20County.aspx

Monmouth

Monmouth County continues to communicate through Webex and Webinars and keep up with presentations to stimulate the mind! Otherwise, we are itching to get out in our PAR garden and grow some veggies for our foodbanks. Not to mention the weeds have invaded all gardens in a really big way!

In May we brought to your attention the NJ Audubon Gardening for Wildlife Habitat certification program for individual gardeners. Since then in Monmouth County 40 MGs have gone on-line and certified their gardens as wildlife habitats. It's been exciting to do something separately, but together and we'd hoped that it would catch on in other counties. You'd be surprised at what your yard may already have that will qualify your garden to become a certified wildlife habitat!

Our Speakers Bureau will remotely vet a new program entitled, "Gardening for the Birds" by Patti Schlegel on July 13th. Once vetted the program may be presented for larger groups or videoed for Webex.

Out just a few days ago was our newsletter, the Garden Vision, which is published 6 times a year. This edition features articles written by our MGs and lots of photos sent in showing the fabulous Master Gardener home gardens. Many photos include the wildlife in their yard and beautifully laid out garden designs. It was a pleasure to be in touch with our MGs this way! Thank you Estelle Lumer for this special issue!

Lastly, over the past three months, we have lost two of our Master Gardeners, Bob LaCosta and John Myers. To honor and celebrate the lives of our MGs who have passed, a brick with their name and year of graduation is placed in our Memorial Garden that is lovingly tended. Both bricks were added by our coordinator a week ago. These fine gentlemen will be greatly missed.

Morris –

As we continue this quiet time, we are continuing what we can for our membership and the residents of Morris County.

Helpline: Tracy Wadhams and Sally Hensen have been gracious enough to continue to answer the incoming calls and e-mails remotely from the Helpline.

Speaker Bureau: The virtual lectures set up for Zoom continue to be in demand. The information can be found on Myimpactpage.com.

IPM Team: The IPM Team is still making observations from their home gardens and a few of the still open Community Gardens. Their findings have been distributed to all Master Gardeners and other interested groups and community gardens.

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As Rutgers has determined that we should not meet as a group until at least August 31, 2020, there will be no new Rutgers Master Gardener class starting in September 2020.

Ocean

Nothing to report due to Covid-19

Passaic

The Master Gardener's Association of Passaic County continues to be idled by the state regulations on COVID-19 activity. We are only remotely manning the Helpline during this time.

Somerset – Master Gardeners of Somerset County president, Gail Smith, announced that winners of the annual awards will be announced in the monthly newsletter “In the Garden” in the July/August issue.

Nick Polanin reported that the RCE office will follow Rutgers guidelines as to the opening of buildings to the public.

The Pathways Program at North Plainfield will be delayed until the state and local education governments decide how the program will run.

Joe Gyurian's replacement is in progress. The position will be advertised in early July. All Somerset Master Gardeners are invited to view a video of the final 3-4 candidates and input is welcomed.

The calendar fund raiser must be postponed since they do not know when the next in-person meeting will be. Entries are still welcomed.

Sussex

Nothing to report. Sussex has suspended all activities.

Union – no report.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 10:15 am. The next meeting is 9/10/2020 at 9 am by Webex.

Respectfully Submitted
Tricia Deering, Recording Secretary

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