

# Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

## Minutes of RMGANJ Meeting, April 8, 2021

Deirdre Gallagher called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:05 am and welcomed the group to the meeting.

**Secretary's Minutes from March 11, 2021 RMGANJ Meeting:** Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary, reported that she had emailed the March RMGANJ minutes after receiving some changes to the county reports. Unfortunately most delegates had not received them. Cindy resent those minutes. They will be voted on at the May meeting.

### **Attendance:**

Atlantic:	
Bergen:	Karen Pennell, Suzanne Danzig, Herb Arbeiter
Burlington:	Nick Hendershot
Cumberland:	Betsey Simpson, Keiko Warner
Essex:	Terry Felper; Alice Poueymirou
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodwin
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata
Middlesex:	Kathy Dopart
Monmouth:	Bob Magovern, Bill Schutte, Gayle Williams
Morris:	Deirdre Gallagher, Diane Muenzin
Ocean:	Roberta Quinn, Michael Hogan, Susan Reese, Suzanne Keane
Passaic:	
Somerset:	Cindy Hedin,
Sussex:	
Union:	Dolores Batz-Culp
Rutgers University:	

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Roberta Quinn, Treasurer, reported a current balance of \$14,018.30 the same as February. A motion to accept was made, seconded and approved.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Deirdre Gallagher reported on Old Business below.

**MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT:** Deirdre reported for Jan Zientek who was called away. His report follows: *We are still waiting for Rutgers approval for a return to outdoor activities, but for now the prohibition against in-person programming is extended until the end of April. We expect that the prohibition will be in place until at least June. In anticipation of being allowed to return to some limited form of in-person programs, we are developing a protocol to follow to ensure the health and safety of volunteers, staff and the public.*

*Approximately 200 Rutgers Master Gardeners from across the state are participating in this year's Rutgers 250 Tomato project.*

**Old Business:** As requested at the March meeting, a list of delegates' responsibilities had been emailed to all.

### **Conference Planning:**

Deirdre reported on the results of the survey of members regarding the fall event. The summary of the results and the thoughts of the Event Committee had been distributed via email. Rutgers Gardens is the proposed venue. Requests for information about the availability of the site, its facilities, etc., have been unanswered. Going to an outside venue would entail more expense. Dr. Lena Strue is the acting Garden supervisor. Jan and Nick should be asked to suggest contact information. Rutgers' Covid requirements, whatever they maybe at the time, will be followed.

## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

The committee envisions a multi-part , half-day event that will include booths/tables for each county to showcase a special project, a speaker, and perhaps one or more roundtable discussions. Any project aimed at educating the public would be great. Interaction with other Master Gardeners would be a goal. There are some constraints of an outdoor venue. There could be CEUs. Roberta Quinn said Ocean County has a tick project that could be part of the booths/table segment. Nick Hendershot suggested that a keynote speaker should address or relate to Master Gardener activity or activities. Nick Polanin or Brian Schilling would be excellent considering their experience/history with Master Gardeners. Possible topic-- "What is the vision for the Master Gardener Program in the future." Community Gardens might be an appealing panel discussion? Round Table scheduling problematic. Could include coordinators' comments/history. George Hamilton--stink bugs, cicadas, ? International winners & their projects? Could this event happen on a weekday morning? Many Master Gardeners are retired. Columbus Day? Friday--combined with Farmers' Market???? Must be vaccinated??? Would increase comfort level. Deirdre will report as soon as she hears anything about Rutgers Gardens' availability. Weather is always a problem, but rain date would be difficult. Could a last-minute switch to virtual be possible?

County/Delegates' Responsibilities: For the fall event, each county will have to participate. Past tasks (eg.--signs, catering, book store, venue, speakers, awards video, speakers' gifts, clean-up, etc.) will not be the same. Nick suggested a new task list be developed. Two counties could share a task. (Cathy has the old signs, do we still need them? All reference Student Center. Deirdre said please keep them.)

Deirdre requested a few words high-lighting some counties' activities:  
Bergen: Bill Kolvek -- excellent speaker.

Burlington—virtual helpline and virtual programs-Merry Bogert in the lead

Cumberland—Coordinator resigned. Sal Mangifico, county agent, is standing in. County meeting coming up next Tuesday.

Essex—doing Tomato 250, volunteers working as individuals at various sites-Glenmont, Rose Garden, new Verona community garden.

Hunterdon—Steering Committee meets regularly via Zoom. Coordinator communicates educational opportunities, Hunterdon Central project/Tricia is proceeding. Anderson House is starting up again. In Tomato 250.

Mercer—Tomato 250, seed starting project for foodbanks. Requested lists of gardens who might want/use seedlings from Isles. Informal plant share set up.

Middlesex—R U Ready to Garden programs will run through May. Can't work on any garden spaces. Zoom is difficult for many folks. HelpLine is working virtually.

Monmouth—RCE cross-department series via Zoom, eg. Attracting Birds, Starting Seeds, Pizza Gardens. School Programs Committee is working virtually, gives 3 Monmouth County graduating seniors or college students each \$1,000.00. Participating in Rutgers 250 program.

Morris—HelpLine and speakers remotely. Educational opportunities sent out by Dave.

Ocean—Honored hours and years members. Responding to speakers requests via Zoom. Public spaces weedy

Somerset—New Coordinator, Roslyn Dvorin. HelpLine requests are being forwarded to Team for responses. Better Impact adoption a struggle.

Union—Volunteers anxious to work. Hired a crew to de-weed garden spaces. Tomato 250 participation. Upcoming speaker-Richard Leister. subject - Green Infrastructure. Deirdre asked what is it? Google has lots of answers. Michelle B., Union/Middlesex Environmental Steward, source for rain garden info.

## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

**Caring and Sharing:** Al Hannaman, Carol's husband, passed away. He had been an alternate for the state meeting

### **COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:**

**Atlantic** – no report.

**Bergen:** We continue to meet virtually each month.

In March, guest speaker Bill Kolvek presented: Are you ready to try grasses? Bill identified and discussed some of the most garden-worthy grasses for the landscape. He went over great choices to extend garden interest late in the season and add motion to the garden. He reviewed growing information and general maintenance techniques. Bill Kolvek has been gardening in some form for more than half a century and formerly owned a nursery in Chestnut Ridge, NY.

Our county is participating in the Rutgers 250 Tomato Project.

Our wonderful writers and editor continue to produce the newsletter each month with articles of interest and notifications of online webinars.

All volunteer sites are closed per RCE policy.

**Burlington** – no report

#### **Cumberland:**

Pamela Burton has resigned her position as Master Gardener Coordinator and Home Horticulture educator in Cumberland County. We are currently in a search to re-fill this position. This is a County position and is funded by the County. The County has without hesitation backed re-filling this position. We thank the County for its support of this program and all Cooperative Extension programming in the county.

The RMG and Home Horticulture program in Cumberland County continues to fulfill its core missions. This includes routine activities like responding to homeowner questions, conducting soil pH for homeowners, and airing daily educational radio spots. We are also involved in the multi-county gardening education series, that has weekly lectures and, for us, weekly discussion sessions for attendees from Salem, Cumberland, and Gloucester Counties.

**Essex** - no report.

#### **Hunterdon**

Our Steering committee continues to meet via zoom on a monthly basis

Our Citizens Science group continues to be busy sharing gardening interest in our community. To date our post have reached 38,000 people.

Many question are now coming into our help line concerning Spotted lanternfly, Emerald ash bore, leaf curl, lawn care, etc.

We continue to offer interesting monthly lectures via zoom to our members.

#### **Mercer:**

Our March Executive and General meetings were held via Zoom on March 1, with over 100 members participating in the General Meeting.

The training to help prepare new committee chairs for their roles within the organization will be rolled out in April. It will consist of two sessions: 1 hour on bylaws and the function of the Executive Committee, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> session will focus on how to give presentations.

The Speakers Bureau continues to receive numbers of requests for talks/presentations.

The Community Education committee reported the April 16<sup>th</sup> program will focus on Soil Health and Happy Vegetables. A flyer will be sent out shortly.

On March 22<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Randi Eckel of Toadshade Wildflower Farm, delivered her talk on "Growing Your Own Native Edibles".

## **Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey**

Our Coordinator's Princeton Adult School class on Spring Gardening Skills is close to capacity, with only two seats remaining. The class runs from March 3 – March 17.

Mercer County Helpline mentors continue to support our Coordinator with public inquiries, communicating through the Rutgers' CANVAS platform.

Seed catalogs collection for donation to the Boys and Girls Clubs of America in support of their gardening-oriented project work was closed to the large number of catalogs submitted. Seeds will continue to be accepted.

An informal "PlantShare" program among Mercer's RMG's that would be outside the auspices of the RMG program will be held in May. Work continues on planning and logistics; further information to follow in April.

The meeting closed with a presentation by our Coordinator on pruning hydrangeas: an overview of the different varieties and their (very different) bloom habits and pruning needs. Also shared was a look at the expanded/updated NJAES

### ***Middlesex – no report***

***Monmouth:*** Monmouth has been keeping publicly active with the faculty and staff of our RCE with a cross-department series, "A Season of New Beginnings." Starting with a 4-H night on April 7<sup>th</sup>. With each part of the series, speakers from our Speakers Bureau will make a presentation appropriate with its partner for the evening. On April 7<sup>th</sup>, MG Patti Schleig will be speaking on attracting birds, April 14<sup>th</sup> MG, Jane Zysk will be speaking on direct sowing seeds in the garden and spring lawn care. April 21<sup>st</sup> Clare Skeen will partner on FCHS night with a presentation on pizza gardens.

During the months of April and May our Speakers Bureau will be vetting 3 new programs: Small Garden Spaces, Winter Vegetable Gardening and Extending the Life of Your Holiday Plants. All talks will be available for future presentations after they've been vetted and approved. Our Speakers Bureau continues to be busy with virtual garden club presentations and speaks monthly after our general meetings. We are thankful for the interesting and educational talks from which to select our general meeting presentations. A big thank you goes out to our Speakers Bureau speakers for their diligence and expertise throughout this pandemic.

Our Schools Program Committee continues to meet virtually with elementary schools in the county who wish to have gardens designed and suggestions for gardens on school grounds. The Scholarship Committee will be reviewing applications received. The screening process will begin and all members of the committee have input on each applicant. Many thanks to their time and efforts in selecting awardees based on transcripts, extracurricular activities, volunteer work and essays. And, 12 of our MGs will be participating in the Rutgers 250 tomato project this year. Thank you to them for participating.

Like all other counties, Monmouth is itching to get back to our Ag. Building gardens...which, at the moment, are dreadful! Much needed TLC is needed and a really big composting station for all of the compostable items growing in them!

Be safe, be well, and if your doctor advises, get vaccinated!

### ***Morris***

***Ocean :*** On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, we had a virtual Service Awards Celebration for our folks with 5, 10, 15, 20, and 30 years of volunteer service. We also honored those with 100, 250, 500, 1,000, and 2,000 hours of volunteer service. Pins and certificates were mailed to the recipients.

Speaker requests came in for Zoom presentations on Container Gardening and on Seashore Gardening. We have two speakers who volunteered to do those. They also did talks for our Stafford Library program through Zoom.

More MGs were in attendance at our April General Zoom Meeting than at previous meetings. MGs are getting anxious to get out again.

### ***Passaic – no report***

## **Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey**

**Somerset** – Our Administrative Council and general membership continue to meet via Zoom. The Newsletter Team, HelpLine and Speakers Bureau are active with appropriate social distancing and Zoom contacts. The Teaching Garden Team is beginning plans for a major weed clean-up..

**Sussex** Not active due to Rutgers restrictions

**Union** – no report.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 10:52 am. The next meeting is May 13, 2021 at 9 am by Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted  
Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary