

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of RMGANJ Meeting, June 10, 2021

Nick Hendershot called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:05 AM and welcomed the group to the meeting. Deirdre Gallagher had a family emergency, hence could not preside.

Secretary's Minutes from May 2021 RMGANJ Meeting: Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary, reported that on Tuesday, June 8 she had emailed the 2021_5_13 RMGANJ minutes, v.2 after receiving some changes to the county reports. A motion was made to accept those minutes as emailed, seconded and approved.

Attendance:

Atlantic:	Belinda Chester (coordinator)
Bergen:	Karen Pennell, Herb Arbeiter
Burlington:	Merry Bogert, Nick Hendershot
Cumberland:	Keiko Warner
Essex:	Terry Felper, Alice Poueymirou
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodwin
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata, Sudi Solomon
Middlesex:	Jerri Barclay, Kathy Dopart
Monmouth:	Bob Magovern, Bill Schutte, Gayle Williams
Morris:	
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn
Passaic:	
Somerset:	Cindy Hedin
Sussex:	Lisa Chiariello (coordinator)
Union:	
Rutgers University:	Jan Zientek

TREASURER'S REPORT: Roberta Quinn, Treasurer, reported that the current balance is \$14,018.30, the same as last month . A motion to accept was made, seconded and approved.

MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Jan Zientek reported that Rutgers University, while lagging behind Trenton, will begin transitioning to open, business-as-usual on July 6, 2021. The University is anxious to get students back in the classrooms. Individual counties may proceed at their discretion, within state guidelines, to resume activities and programs, including training classes. Some may choose to hold these classes in person and/or online. It was announced that Ariana Arancibia (<https://rutgersgardens.rutgers.edu/director-announcement/>) will become the new director of Rutgers Gardens and Campus Stewardship. Jan will contact her regarding the use of Rutgers Gardens for the RMGANJ celebratory event.

Old Business

Conference Planning: Nick Hendershot reported that Deirdre still has not heard back from Rutgers Gardens regarding holding our fall event there. The list of county responsibilities for that event were reviewed and these, Awards booklet, Book store, Catering, Door prizes, Garden Market, Registration desk, Registration RCE staff and Speaker's gift, were determined not applicable considering the event as presently envisioned. Evaluations, Facilities, Financial, Program Flyer (Cumberland will do), Program speaker (already arranged for?), Save the Date (Monmouth will do), Signage/directions, Speakers' gifts and Video remain dependent on selection of venue, date and other considerations. Lengthy discussion lasted 20 minutes or more. How can we proceed with planning when so much is uncertain? Should the event be postponed until sometime in 2022, spring or fall? Could we do webinars in the winter to whet gardeners' appetites for spring? A motion was made, seconded and approved to postpone further Event discussion/planning until Rutgers Covid-19 restrictions are clearer and venue details are known.

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In order that all of us better understand each other, Nick Hendershot will send out a questionnaire to gather information about the individual counties' organizational structure, finances, general programs and procedures. He will compile a spreadsheet from the information submitted and disseminate it to the counties.

Caring and Sharing:

COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Atlantic – no report.

Bergen - The monthly meeting was held virtually.

Three sites agreed to open following RCE guidelines prior to the recent notice lifting restrictions.

Karen Riede announced that the Bergen County Fair will be held on September 18th and 19th. The new Master Gardener class will present their projects.

Guest speaker, Bruce Crawford, presented "A Designer's Love Affair with Trees" on May 25 via Zoom. Bruce is the state program leader for home and public horticulture with the NJ Agricultural Experiment Station. His discussion evaluated the many ways trees enhance both our garden and our community.

Volunteer sites are beginning to open.

The "Potting Shed", our monthly newsletter, continues to provide interesting articles and notifications of online events.

Burlington – no report

Camden

Cumberland

Essex - no report.

Hunterdon

Mercer ---Administration, training and communications

Executive and General meetings were held via Zoom on June 7, with over 80 members attending the General Meeting.

Interns from the 2019-2020 term have been able to return to the Mercer Educational Gardens to resume work on MG program requirements. A composting refresher course and the assignment of composting bins at the Gardens to intern teams is complete, and the interns are actively engaging with MG committees.

An update on Rutgers' guidelines regarding COVID-19 restrictions was given (now superseded). County employees will return to their offices on July 1; Extension offices will open to the public on July 7. As of the meeting, there was not a scheduled return date for volunteers to Extension offices.

Activities/volunteerism

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

The County's inaugural/trial charity seed-starting initiative culminated in the donation of vegetable, herb and flower seedlings to Isles, the Boys and Girls Club of Mercer County, SNAP-Ed, Capital City Farm in Trenton and to the Mercer County Extension office.

Planning is underway for a number of programs and events:

For the balance of 2021...

- Master Gardener Learnmore session on raising caterpillars
- Presentation by Dr. Elena Tartaglia, co-founder of National Moth Week, open to the public

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- a composting demo for the public
- Larry Weaner, author of Garden Revolution, speaking on “Natives for the Home Garden”, also open to the public

...and into 2022...

- Plant Expo
- Tours of Master Gardener’s private gardens.

The meeting concluded with a presentation on “Top Performing Annuals” by Master Gardener Kelly Thompson, Aurum Insigne

Middlesex With the ease on Covid restrictions, the Middlesex County Master Gardeners board met on June 3, 2021 to begin planning for future activities. The first function will be our annual MG picnic on September 19, 2021. We are hoping to rev up many existing programs, encourage new ones and most importantly reestablish the camaraderie missing from the gardens for the last 15 months.

Monmouth - Monmouth County MGs are overjoyed to be able to work our Ag. Building gardens! Underway are the Native, Memorial, PAR, JMJ (Junior Master Gardener Garden) and Monarch Way Station. First to start were the Native and PAR gardens. Within a very short period of time, the PAR MGs pulled, weed-wacked and macheteed the weeds in that garden, added rows and planted MG donated tomatoes and other veggies! Volunteers from past years are potatoes and garlic found amongst the weeds. The Native Garden is in the process of weeding and pruning...nice job team! As you can see, WE'RE BACK!! And, it looks like we may be able to volunteer in county parks and gardens soon, too!

Continuing to bring us interesting and informative programs for our monthly General Meetings is our Speakers Bureau. They will vet a new program on June 14th entitled, “How to Care for Holiday Plants” presented by Patti Schleg. And just recently Blair Bethea vetted his program entitled, “Winter Vegetable Gardening.” Blair had some great tips for producing winter vegetables all throughout the colder months including instructions for making and building small enclosures. All programs vetted are ready for public presentation when requested. Some of our programs have been adopted which means that they started out as another’s project and may have sat for a while, then adopted by someone else, brought to completion or revamped and updated by another MG. Some programs are started from “scratch” by an MG who has a particular interest in that area. Either way, great programs are produced!

In the town of Freehold on June 5th our own John Myers was honored with a tree dedication. We lost John last year who touched many of our lives in a very short period of time...he is missed.

Morris-- Morris County has begun offering vegetable gardening workshops online in Spanish.

Programs from the past have begun opening up again. Morris County participates in volunteer farm work at Snyder Farms and this has opened up for those who have current WPS online training.

The annual Snyder Farm event previously known as the Tomato Tasting Event is being evaluated and may resurface at least for this year in abbreviated form. Discussions currently being held but may include garden tours at a lesser admission price along with a goodie bag of vegetables. No official comments available.

Volunteer activities are struggling with the Rutgers defined rules vis-a vis the vaccinated mixing with the un-vaccinated folks.

Acorn Hall has returned as a volunteer site working on restoring the grounds to the original garden plan.

Speakers Bureau continues to be active on-line only at this time.

Helpline will return to in-person very shortly. Currently volunteers are located remote.

Morris County will begin another Master Gardener Class in September 2021! It will be a hybrid class with online and in-person events. Dave Los has 30 people waiting to begin volunteer hours from last class that graduated.

Cynthia Triolo is working on the Community garden Conference that is being planned to March 2022 in person, although not at the Arboretum at the time of this update.

Ocean - In our June newsletter, the photos of our gardens in Ocean County Park, once we returned to the site, show just how quickly nature takes over when we can’t control it. It is heartbreaking to see no paths between the shrub rows and the raised beds of the Community Garden full of non-edible weeds. Critters have destroyed the blueberry patch and the vinyl cover of the Hoop House was never meant to last 2 years. So, the starter pots of

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perennials grew willy-nilly and fed some of the critters. Workers came in shifts, according to the directives, and managed to clear the beds and get them ready for veggie seeds. And so, the clean-up begins. Other counties are doing the same, I imagine.

The office continues to answer the Helpline calls and Tick questions. The clean-up of the Display Garden, flowers and shrubs, in front of the Agriculture Center will begin this week. Our Coordinator has been doing short videos of pruning, thinning, harvesting on our FB/web site.

We continue to meet via WebEx for our General Meeting each month.

Passaic – no report

Somerset – We are looking forward to opening and weeding our Teaching Garden, a monumental task. Our HelpLine has been very busy, and has held 2 live, call-in sessions that were well-received. Our Camp Jotoni Team has begun planning for the summer season. Our Newsletter Team has been working on the next edition, and the Speakers' Bureau has several new programs in the works. The 4H Center where we hold our indoor meetings and programs remains closed. At our May meeting, Dr. George Hamilton spoke about the latest news on the spread and management of the spotted lanternfly In NJ, and in June our coordinator, Roslyn Dvorin, educated us on *Beneficial Reptiles Common in New Jersey Gardens*.

Sussex

Union – no report.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 10:24 am. The next meeting is July 8, 2021 at 9 am via Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted
Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary