

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of RMGANJ Meeting, November 11, 2021

Nick Hendershot called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:05 am and welcomed the group to the meeting. Nick made special note of the occasion of Veterans Day and thanked any such present for their service. He also encouraged all to stay positive and do good works.

Attendance:

Atlantic:	
Bergen:	Herb Arbeiter, Karen Pennell
Burlington:	Merry Bogert, Nick Hendershot
Cumberland:	Keiko Warner
Essex:	Terry Felper
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodwin
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata, Sudi Solomon
Middlesex:	
Monmouth:	Bob Magovern, Bill Schutte, Gayle Williams
Morris:	
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn
Passaic:	
Somerset:	Cindy Hedin
Sussex:	
Union:	Dolores Batz-Culp
Rutgers University:	Jan Zientek

Secretary's Minutes from October 14, 2021 RMGANJ Meeting: Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary, reported that she had emailed RMGANJ minutes on Monday, 11/8/21 after which one county report was added. That county's rep (Geri) approved the resulting draft. A motion to accept Draft, v.1 of the minutes was made, seconded (Gayle/Betty) and approved. The final version will be emailed to all.

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

MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Jan Zientek reported that Rutgers University Policy regarding the pandemic continues unchanged. Although hours requirements have been suspended, he encouraged all to continue the good work Master Gardeners do. Their efforts are valued and appreciated, and of use when garnering support from county governments. He urged that new interns be invited to join existing programs. Mercer County is seeking to hire a new coordinator to replace Margaret Pickoff.

The new state-wide training module has been completed and is out for comment to the committee. Questions regarding both the depth and breadth have been raised. Hopefully it will be finalized and ready for the new classes in 2023. In response to the question about in-person classes, Jan replied that will be determined by Rutgers policy regarding undergraduate policies and local county practices. The program will be adaptable to both remote & in-person instruction.

Data, both positive and negative, from the Rutgers 250 Tomato Project should be submitted. The results were very mixed, no matter the horticultural experience of the individual growers

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Nick Hendershot reported in **Old Business** below.

New Business

Nominating Committee report

*The Nominating Committee with Kathy Dopart, Betty Scarlata and Karen Pennell was created in September in accordance with Article III, Section 4 A of the bylaws.

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The nominating committee was tasked with the selection of 2 positions for the slate: the President and the Account and Budget Administrator. In addition, the committee selected a nominee to fill the remaining 1 year Vice President position per Article III, Section 5

The nomination of officers for 2022

PresidentNick Hendershot
Account and Budget Administrator.... .Roberta Quinn
Interim Vice President..... .Sharon Astorino

The election of officers for 2022 will be supervised at the December meeting.

Nick thanked the committee for the work.

Old Business

Conference Planning: The Conference Planning committee consists of Nick Hendershot, Keiko Warner, Terri Felper and Betty Scarlata. Considering Rutgers policies and scheduling issues, we cannot yet set a date for a conference in October, 2022. One speaker, Brian Schilling, has definitely committed to speak. Other speakers should be from the Rutgers community. Perhaps someone could talk about the adaptation of remote learning technology to the gardening world. Usually there were awards presentations, but with no official activity there can be no awards, but individual counties should be encouraged to present successful programs/projects from the past. Several counties have already submitted their exemplar topics: Monmouth (School Program Committee's Spring Teacher's Conference); Ocean (Tick Lab); Cumberland (Peppers); Burlington (Helpline co-op with libraries); Somerset (special needs gardening); Hunterdon (Working with challenged populations). It was suggested that a representative from a nursery or garden center could comment on the effects of Covid on home gardening. If the event will be long enough to require a meal break, bag lunches and "bring your own" snacks should be the order of the day.

The Conference Committee will meet soon.

Other stuff

Cindy Hedin requested that folks (delegates, alternates, coordinators and/or county agents) who are not receiving copies of the final minutes, please contact her (cphedinb@icloud.com) with their desired email address. Also, where is the official archive for the final minutes? And how can Cindy access it? Jan had said he would facilitate that process, perhaps including access to **Canvas** for delegates & alternates which might happen in 2022. Tricia suggested contacting Nick Polanin, and offered to be the point person for **Canvas** access, should that be the archive spot.

Nick wished all a Happy Thanksgiving!!!

Caring and Sharing:

COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Atlantic – no report.

Bergen-- Guest speaker: Lesley Parness, a gardener, and writer, discussed the plants that populated Victorian parlors, how to care for them, and simple ways to bring a Victorian touch to plant-scaping your home. Her talk is titled: Beyond the Potted Palm: Victorians and Their Houseplants. Leslie last spoke to the MG of BC in April 2018 about medicinal plants of the Civil War.

Election of Officers was held at the October meeting. Prior to the lecture, members elected two officers for two-year terms. The election is staggered (with two officers elected one year and three the next) so all officers' terms do not expire in the same year.

Volunteer Site News: MG of BC volunteer sites remain open and are eager for help. MGs are needed for a variety of activities.

Butterfly and Native Garden, general clean up.

Garretson Forge & Farm: Fall chores before the site closes in mid-December. Garlic and shallots will be planted and remaining late vegetables (butternut squash, birdhouse gourds, and tobacco) need to be harvested.

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Cannas and dahlias will be dug up, cleaned, and boxed in pine needles to overwinter in the cellar. Tender perennials will be dug up, potted, and brought to the greenhouse. Asparagus will be cut to the ground, bed-weeded, fertilized, and covered with salt hay.

Hermitage: Volunteering during the cold-weather months may include general cleanup and trimming of bushes, small trees, and shrubs. Help decorate the exterior of the house for the holidays by making wreaths, garlands, etc. When the timing is right in January, MGs set aside a day for winter sowing of plants for the grounds or the spring plant sale.

McFaul Environmental Center: MGs will work “until it gets too cold,” said Joseph Cooper, site coordinator. The group is pruning trees and shrubs.

Teaneck Creek Conservancy: Most of the site is closed for renovation, but volunteers meet to work in the area near the outdoor classroom.

Thielke Arboretum: Removed a large Norway Maple along the southern border and panted 20 large stock American hollies, 4 yellow birch seedlings and 2 red cedars to create a vegetation screen. The allée is replanted with native witch hazel and Atlantic white cedar. Fourth to Eighth graders from the Eastern Christian School spread wood chips on paths as part of their service

Burlington – Burlington County MGs continued outdoor, in-person, work days at the Burlington County Agricultural Center, and the Smithville Butterfly Garden, putting in major efforts to bring our projects up to speed in anticipation of expanded opportunities this coming spring. We continued our virtual "Ask a Master Gardener" Zoom sessions through the Moorestown Library, along with a virtual "Master Gardener Talk" October 20, also through the Library. October saw the start of in-person (albeit outside) "Ask a Master Gardener" events at the Evesham and Pemberton branches of the Burlington County Library system. Two in-person spotted lanternfly updates were held at the Agricultural Center and the Heritage Development Homeowners' Association. And interviews of candidates for the Master Gardener Class of 2022 were held throughout October!

Cumberland

Essex - no report.

Hunterdon --Hunterdon County continues to conduct its new class using a hybrid system of on line zoom and some in person classes.

We continue to have zoom meetings with team members, and meet in small groups

We have had some very good speakers at our monthly meetings via zoom.

Our steering committee continues to meet via zoom, we are hoping to begin meeting in person soon.

Mercer

Middlesex: On October 23, 2021 Middlesex County held a graduation ceremony for the Class of 2020. These 35 graduates, called the “Covid Class”, survived under difficult conditions to become an active addition to our group.

The Native Plant Propagation Project had its fall sale on Oct. 2nd. The aim of this project is to encourage native plantings in the suburban yards of Middlesex County residents and donate native plants to schools, libraries, and other organizations.

Middlesex County master gardeners offered free workshops in October.

10/2 Intro to Beekeeping 10 people, in person EARTH Center

10/24 Garlic Growing 20 people, in person EARTH Center

10/30 Composting 60 people, online and working with Middlesex County Solid Waste Dept.

RCE Middlesex is offering a seasonal edition of the webinar series, RU Ready to Garden on “Christmas Tree and Holiday Plant Care and Selection – Tips from the Experts” on Tues, Nov. 30th at 6pm, featuring Middlesex County Ag Agent, Bill Hlubick, Monmouth County Ag Agent, Bill Erickson, Cumberland County Ag Agent, Timothy Waller and Middlesex MG Coordinator, Angela Monaghan.

The Rows for the Hungry donation garden has donated over 11,300 pounds of fresh produce to date to the Middlesex County food distribution center, Replenish and Elijah's Promise Food Kitchen.

Monmouth We MGs are so proud of our interns and veterans who have spent hours and hot days prepping, planting and harvesting in the PAR garden this year. And, despite the late start, the yield has

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been 1,402.5 lbs. as of November 4th! Quite an achievement...congratulations all! I am also sure that the food banks have been delighted as well.

In the JMG (Junior Master Gardener) and Herb gardens clean up and preparing for winter has begun, but only after a very active and fruitful season as well. We have been so glad to have been able to send wonderful vegetable and herbs to our food banks this year. A big thank you goes out to all of our MGs who have volunteered many hours working these gardens!

Not to be left out, the Native and Memorial Gardens are looking quite nice and almost back to where they were a year ago. The Rain Garden has had an initial clean up and will be worked on as the months go by. With the large tree that fell in there and the abundance of weeds, there's a lot of work and little, it'll get done! In the Monarch Waystation the asters were gorgeous and real eye catchers! Thank you to all who have worked so hard this summer on all of our gardens!

Always ready has been the Speakers Bureau with great talks for our General Meetings and educating the county garden clubs this year. No new programs will be vetted this month, however Diane Larson our coordinator has continued to give her virtual Helpline talks through the county libraries. Our speaker this month for our General Meeting will be our own Blair Bethea speaking on "Winter Vegetable Gardening." And, there will be a vetting of a new program in early December.

In the New Year, we are planning to have in-person classes and plan to have the conference room set up with live streaming equipment as an option. As with all of us MGs, we are anxious to start meeting again in-person and enjoying each other's company. From Monmouth County, we wish you a very Happy Thanksgiving!

Morris

Ocean In October, a Fall Harvest Thank You lunch was held outdoors for the workers who helped the Community Garden recover and thrive after the neglect of the pandemic closure. Helpline and Tick Lab closed the end of October.

Our MGs really like to eat, so instead of a November general meeting at our Ag Center, the gathering was held outdoors at Ocean County Park. This was perfect for the Chilly Chili food theme.

The gardens we maintain at Ocean County Park are open all year and volunteers continue to work Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Our display garden, located in front of the Agriculture Center, had its final workday on November 9th. This garden was also sadly neglected during the pandemic shutdown. It is looking beautiful after all the hard work done there the past few months.

The Open House for prospective MG students was held November 9th. We had 50 people register and more on the waiting list. The room capacity was limited due to Covid constraints. Classes start in January and will be hy-flex.

There are eight requests for speakers for 2022.

Passaic – no report

Somerset – no report

Sussex

Union – no report.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made, seconded (Betty/Karen) and approved at 9:56 am. The next meeting is 12/9/2021 at 9 am by Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted
Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary