

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of RMGANJ Meeting, Dec. 9, 2021

Nick Hendershot called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:05 am and welcomed the group to the meeting.

Attendance:

Atlantic:	
Bergen:	Karen Pennell, Liz Gil, Herb Arbeiter, Gimai Ma
Burlington:	Merry Bogert, Nick Hendershot, Sharon Astorino
Cumberland:	Keiko Warner, Betsey Simpson
Essex:	Terry Felper
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodwin
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata,
Middlesex:	Jerri Barclay, Kathy Doport
Monmouth:	Bob Magovern, Bill Schutte, Gayle Williams
Morris:	
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn
Passaic:	
Somerset:	Cindy Hedin
Sussex:	
Union:	Deb Murphy, Dolores Batz-Culp
Rutgers University:	Jan Zientek

Secretary's Minutes from RMGANJ Meeting, November 11, 2021: Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary, reported that she had emailed version 2 of the RMGANJ November meeting minutes on Nov. 9 after receiving some changes to the county reports in the original draft. A motion to accept those minutes (v.2) was made, seconded (Suzanne Keane/Gayle Williams) and approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Roberta Quinn, Treasurer, reported that the current balance is \$14,018.30. A motion to accept was made, seconded and approved. The yearly report was submitted. It showed an unchanged balance throughout the year because of inactivity due to Covid-19.

MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Jan Zientek reported that Rutgers University Policy regarding the pandemic continues the prohibition of non-essential, in-person events by Rutgers faculty, staff and volunteers until at least January 2022 or until further notice. He urged that all volunteer hours be reported for statistical purposes even though hours requirements for certification have been suspended until further notice. Meetings on Rutgers property continue to be governed by Rutgers' Covid policies & rules. In response to Gayle's question, Jan said the technology is available to allow hybrid RMGANJ meetings in the future. Local meetings are governed by the individual counties whose policies vary.

Old Business

Nominating Committee: Kathy Doport, Betty Scarlata & Karen Pennell presented the slate of officers;
President—Nick Hendershot
Vice President--Sharon Asterino
Secretary—Cindy Hedin
Treasurer—Roberta Quinn

There being no other nominations, it was moved and seconded that the slate be accepted. The motion passed.

Kathy expressed her thanks to Tricia Deering for her help and service.

Nick thanked the committee members for their work.

President's Report:

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Conference Planning: We are still looking toward a RMGANJ Conference in October, 2022. A list of speakers, including Brian Schilling, is being developed. The format will be determined by Rutgers' meetings guidelines. We want to keep things simple and streamlined, and are welcoming all thoughts and suggestions for either a half-day or full-day event.

Caring and Sharing:

Addendums to County Reports:

Monmouth's PAR garden was planted with garlic in anticipation of a flavorful 2022. Equipment to enable live streaming is being explored. Some 2020 & 2021 interns have merged with the new class.

Hunterdon's White House Elementary School program will resume in January. The Half Way House program is continuing. The county building has been totally closed.

Ocean members are meeting in small groups in the building. There seems to be lots of enthusiasm for resuming Master Gardener activities.

Burlington's HelpLine is working at the county libraries, sometimes in the parking lots. (that's dedication!!!) Samples may be dropped off at the county building for assessment.

Bergen's representatives are joined today by guest, Gimai Ma.

COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Atlantic – no report.

Bergen--

Guest Speaker

Adam Wheeler presented; **Plant Geeks Are Us - Oddball Plants for Oddball People** at our virtual meeting in November. He explores the world of unusual and uncommon woody plants focusing on rarities best suited for Northeast landscapes. Adam earned a BS degree in urban forestry and landscape horticulture at the University of Vermont. In 2004, he began working at Broken Arrow Nursery in Hamden, CT, where he now manages plant propagation, container production, mail order, and the acquisition and development of new plants.

Bergen County Agricultural Agent

Joel Flagler was quoted in an online article titled Planting a Life — and a Future — After Prison, which appeared in the online "Yes" magazine. Click on the link to read this article about a residential and employment program on a North Carolina organic farm that helps formerly incarcerated women find a new path. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/economy/2021/10/26/farm-future-after-prison-women>

Volunteer Site News

Skylands Holiday Open House: The self-guided tour of the Holiday Open House at New Jersey Botanical Garden/Skylands took place Dec. 2-5. This is the Skylands Association's annual fund-raiser. The Manor House was decorated floor-to-ceiling based on the theme "An Artists' Holiday!" The MG of BC decorated the Main Hall.

Hackensack River Greenway through Teaneck held their Cleanup at the Greenway on Dec. 5th at the Mary S. Topolsky Garden and Trail, Teaneck.

The Hermitage: Cynthia Drennan and Liz Gil followed a nature theme to decorate the Hermitage for the holidays. The first- and second-floor rooms are a feast for the eyes with beautiful sunflowers and roses, butterflies in flight, velvet mushrooms, and birds, feathers, and beading in a whimsical nod to the residents of the home during the Victorian period. Visit the Hermitage website for information/tickets for daytime and candlelight tours. Candlelight tours are Dec. 3, 4, 5, 12, and 17.

Burlington

Cumberland --We held our monthly meeting on November 9th with 28 members in attendance

- Getting back into the swing of things, trying to plan events and bring members back together safely for the new year

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

- Looking for new ways to advertise our program and events to reach new audiences
- Planning for our 2022 plant sale- looking to grow more variety to showcase plant diversity and culturally significant crops
- December 1st, MG took a tour of Mill Creek Urban Farm in Bridgeton where we learned about growing vegetables hydroponically. It was fascinating and the weather was perfect.

Essex

Hunterdon Hunterdon continues to conduct classes for new interns via Zoom.

We continue to have zoom meetings for our Steering Committee and education speakers.

We continue to support some school programs on a limited basis.

Mercer

Administration, training and communications--Monthly meetings continue to be conducted via Zoom, with over 80 attendees attending the November meeting. The meeting concluded with an update on Mercer County Master Gardeners' work at the historic 1719 William Trent House in Trenton, NJ – the oldest house in the State Capital. The children's educational programs based in these gardens received an International Master Gardener Search for Excellence Award in 2019. The four-quadrant, parterre garden has been re-conceptualized, with quadrants dedicated to an African diaspora kitchen- and market-garden and a Lenape-cultivated and wild-gathered-plant garden as companion gardens to the English colonial kitchen gardens. In 2021, the gardens yielded 146 pounds of produce donated to a local food pantry and were re-opened, on a limited basis, to children's educational programs.

While Mercer County COVID protocols require masks be worn at Extension offices and social distancing maintained, Master Gardeners may conduct on-site, in-person meetings. A poll of the Executive Committee was taken in early November to begin to evaluate Master Gardeners' willingness to attend in-person meetings beginning in either January or in March. MG sentiments were split, with a not-insignificant percentage of respondents indicating they continue to be unsure of their feelings regarding in-person meetings. Consequently, Executive and General meetings will continue to be held virtually, with the intention of re-assessing the membership's comfort level with in-person meetings again in early 2022.

Mercer County's search for the position of County Horticulturalist continues; the posting for the position will close December 8.

Activities/volunteerism--Helpline continues to be staffed exclusively by members of the Helpline Mentors committee, with office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Mercer MGs participated in D&R Greenway's Masquerade Halloween Parade, with MGs appearing in costume as a spotted lanternfly, an emerald ash borer, a lady beetle, and a honeybee.

In-person tours are continuing, and the Community Education committee remains active, hosting Larry Weaner, author and "icon in the world of ecological landscape design", speaking on "Living in the Liberated Landscape".

Middlesex: On Tuesday November 30th, RU Ready to Garden-Holiday Horticulture webinar took place. Topics included in the presentation were poinsettia, Thanksgiving/Christmas cactus, amaryllis and Christmas tree selection and care.

On Wednesday December 1st, a group of master gardeners decorated the containers outside the EARTH center main building with greens, holly, winterberry and bows for the holidays. It was nice to return to this activity after last year's shutdown.

The Floriculture Greenhouse Poinsettia sale will be November 30th through December 3rd. You may stop by 64 Nichol Ave. New Brunswick between 11am -2:30pm. These incredible poinsettias are \$8.00 each and make wonderful gifts. Proceeds help support NJAES and the Floriculture greenhouse.

Master Gardeners are busy preparing now for the native plant sale. There are multiple native seed sowing sessions this month.

On Tuesday December 14th from 12-1pm RCE Homesteading Academy is offering a webinar on What to do to Get Started Bee Keeping on Your Property

<https://events.rutgers.edu/njaes/event.php?id=21990&d=202112&u=mg&c=00>

Monmouth Monmouth County Ag. Building gardens have all been put to bed. The PAR garden, after harvesting broccoli, peas, kale and Swiss chard a couple of weeks ago, weighed in at over 1,446 lbs. of produce that was happily taken to local food banks! Also, finishing up their harvest with figs and sweet

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

potatoes was our Junior Master Gardener garden. Even with the late start this year, we are all impressed with the way our gardens look and appreciate the amount of work that went into getting them back on track and performing.

Our Speakers Bureau has been busy organizing and setting up The Coffee Talks that'll be held the month of February. Each Saturday morning via Webex a different program will take place. Notices will be sent out the first week of January to all on our distribution list. Those wishing to attend will be required to register for each talk and will then be sent a Webex invitation prior to the talk. The Coffee Talks last year were very well received and we look forward to presenting four new programs in 2022!

Along with our Coffee Talks preparation, Diane Larson, our Coordinator, has continued to virtually hold Helpline talks with the county libraries. Two new Speakers Bureau programs were vetted and four others were given either in-person or virtually to garden clubs or local libraries this month.

As things wind down in the gardens, our new newsletter editor, Eileen Rodriguez, gears up for one last issue for the year. I'm sure it'll be a great one!

It is hoped that in this New Year we will all be able to meet in-person and be back with our MG friends. Monmouth County wishes you all a very Happy Holiday Season and a very Happy and Healthy New Year!

Morris

Ocean no report

Passaic –

Somerset – A new class of interns, meeting virtually and/or in-person, has begun with 23 members. One of the class sessions was an in-person visit to our revitalized Teaching Garden. Hands-on activities there included soil testing and dividing and potting up daylilies and iris. *In The Garden*, our outstanding newsletter, was emailed Nov. 1. HelpLine sessions are being held virtually, with call-in's directed by our office assistant. Susan Goodman spoke virtually on water issues at our last general meeting. Our Self-Drive team organized a visit to NYBG to see the Kusama installations and visit the whimsical pumpkin displays in the Everett Children's Garden. A trip to Morven is planned for December.

Sussex

Union – no report.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 9:42 am. The next meeting is March 10, 2022 at 9 am by Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted
Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary