

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of RMGANJ Meeting, April 14, 2022

Nick Hendershot called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:05 am. Nick welcomed the group to the meeting, noting that he would be leaving early and Roberta Quinn would take over for him.

Attendance:

Atlantic:	
Bergen:	Herb Arbeiter
Burlington:	Nick Hendershot, Sharon Astorino
Cumberland:	Keiko Warner
Essex:	Terry Felper, Trina Ehntholt
Hunterdon:	Dewey Goodwin
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata, Sudi Solomon
Middlesex:	Jerri Barclay, Kathy Doport
Monmouth:	Gayle Williams, Bob Magovern, Bill Schutte
Morris:	
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn
Passaic:	
Somerset:	Cindy Hedin
Sussex:	
Union:	Deb Murphy
Rutgers University:	Jan Zientek

Secretary's Minutes from March 10, 2022 RMGANJ Meeting: Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary, reported that she had emailed the previous RMGANJ earlier this week. Attendance records may be incorrect because not everyone responded to confirm their presence, but approval should not be held up, Any corrections to attendance should be emailed to Cindy. A motion to approve the minutes was made, seconded 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.

MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Jan Zientek reported that Brian Schilling is confirmed for the October 15 conference as is the room reservation. The room is equipped for hybrid meetings. There will be no cost for the use of the room. Rutgers will cover the cost. Parking arrangements are being worked on. Rutgers is now permitting live, in-person events. No masks are required on campus. County guidelines should be followed for local meetings. Sign-up procedures have yet to be determined. Essex County has been using StoreFront. Registration will be online, probably through Canvas. There are some kinks to be worked out. His official last day is to be July 1, 2022. Replacing him temporarily will be Nick Polanin.

Old Business

Conference Planning:

In addition to Brian Schilling speaking on the future of Master Gardeners, the committee hopes for 2 more Rutgers people who will address common HelpLine questions. Gayle Williams requested confirmation of pertinent details for a "Save The Date" flyer which Monmouth will prepare: date-October 15; location-Cook Campus; time-8:30-1:00; registration-online; format-hybrid; theme-Future of Master Gardeners Statewide; cost-free; food/coffee-no lunch(BYOL), just coffee & ??; Betty shared the schedule from the previous conference. County assignments, such as directional signage, check-in, etc., will be determined. No awards will be given. Possible topics for speakers 2 &3 might be lawn issues, spotted lantern fly (insect questions in general), plant pathology/diagnostics (Dr. Andy Wyand, Rebecca Magron, Sabrina Tirpak, Entomology Dept.). Jan will reach out to all and relay info to Nick). Nick confirmed that a county projects showcase will not be held. The Conference Committee will continue planning & communicating with Jan.

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(Roberta Quinn assumed chair.) Union County rep. Deb Murphy asked about terminology describing horticultural therapy programs by non-accredited persons. Hort Enrichment was the term used by several counties. She also requested input as to specific activities and/or crafts other counties use. Keiko Warner offered to share Cumberland's hort enrichment information. Deb offered to compile a resource list of information and activities. Please email Deb (murph1de@gmail.com) any hort enrichment information/activities/pictures.

New Business

Caring and Sharing:

Monmouth/Gayle-Jr. MG program getting underway, Plant Sale one month from today (member donations and local vendors), very active Speakers' Bureau, Coffee Talks very well received

There are lots of local speaker resources. Is there a list somewhere? Probably only in minutes/county reports. Should there be such a list? Where could it reside? Deb offered to compile. Jan-there is no system at this time, an on-going challenge.

Adjournment:

Next meeting-May 12 at 9 AM via Zoom.
Motion to adjourn Gayle/Cindy 9:45am

COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Atlantic – no report.

Bergen- MG of BC continued to hold virtual meetings in January and February. The March meeting will be held virtually. Research is in progress to hold hybrid subsequent meetings.

January

Guest Speaker: Dorothy Smullen, mushroom lover and nature and garden club speaker for 35 years, discussed the fungi kingdom and its importance in our world in her "Mushroom Mania" presentation.

February

Guest Speaker: Don Torino. President of the Bergen County Audubon Society, presented "Gardening for Butterflies". Don discussed specific native plants that are both hosts and nectar sources for our butterflies.

Volunteer Sites:

The Hermitage held their annual spring "maple Sugaring" event in February. Master gardeners are collecting the sap and there will be a big boil off in a few weeks when the tapping season is over.

The Garretson Community Seed Library, located at Garretson Forge & Farm in Fair Lawn, is celebrating its seventh year as a resource for free heirloom and open-pollinated seeds and a source of information about the importance of maintaining local seed varieties and preventing the loss of genetic diversity among seeds and plants. Members obtain small packages of seeds to grow, and — if successful — collect the seeds at harvest and return seeds to the seed library.

Burlington – no report

Cumberland - Sometime in the middle of June we will recognize our graduates from the last 3 classes, those who have achieved certification, and any lifetime hour achievements.

We are now open to the public and plan to hold meetings and classes in person again. We have several projects, new and old, that we are beginning to work on.

Our propagation team has been busy tending to our plants to get ready for the ECO Fair at Wheaton Arts on May 7 from 10-4.

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Essex - no report.

Hunterdon

Mercer

Leadership and administration

Executive Committee and General meetings for April were a hybrid with in person attendance and also via Zoom. Approximately 30 MGs attended the General meeting in person and 81 via Zoom.

At present, masks, social distancing and sign-in protocols continue to be required at all Mercer County facilities, including Extension. On-site, in-person committee meetings continued to be an option for Master Gardeners throughout the winter.

Activities/volunteerism

Helpline welcomed in person visits Monday through Friday, from 9:00AM to 4:30PM. It is being staffed by the County Horticulturist and Helpline Mentors and interns.

Small-group, in-person Helpline training for interns from the Class of 2020 continues to be conducted three days/week through April. The training is being conducted by Helpline Mentors. The MG organization remains committed to supporting this most recent class as they work towards certification in 2022. The interns' support of MG programs has been critical over the past two years; the class remains motivated and committed to supporting the program and attaining certification.

Mercer County's Plant Expo is being held on May 14. Due to structural changes at Mercer Educational Gardens the event is somewhat curtailed with less hours and limited vendors. Workdays are also resuming.

The tour committee is scheduling in person garden tours for April and May. The first tour will be to Jenkins Arboretum on April 28.

The next Community Education presentation is Thursday, April 28 at 7 pm – Michele Bakacs, Middlesex and Union County Agent, will be presenting "Invasive Plants in the Landscape and Native Alternatives." This will be a virtual event.

Middlesex -

- The Middlesex Master Gardeners are back to work and scheduling appearances for community events including tabling and public speaking through the Speakers Bureau. School and community tours of the EARTH Center will also resume.
- The trained and informative Middlesex Master Gardener Helpline is ready for the garden season to begin! Calls and emails, questions and concerns are already being received from the public seeking advice on numerous home landscape issues, including one important area of concern, the Spotted Lantern Fly.
- The Middlesex Master Gardeners are gearing up for the Rows for the Hungry project. This year the team is refining their growing methods using Field Data Collection to increase yields and productivity for the food insecure in Middlesex County. The team is also expanding their community outreach to educate people about food insecurity and the benefits of growing food as a way to combat this issue and encourage self sufficiency.
- The EARTH Center's Butterfly House is on track to be open for visitors on June 4, 2022. The butterfly house is a favorite of families, avid gardeners and numerous park visitors. This display garden gives an up close and interactive look at Butterflies in a replicated natural habitat and teaches the public about the plants and conditions that attack all much needed pollinators.
- All of the other Gardens at the EARTH Center, including the popular Children's, Vegetable Display, Fruit, Native Plant and Rain Gardens will be open in May The Middlesex County Master Gardeners have worked hard to restore these gardens and a few surprises have been added.
- The Greenhouse Project, which grows all the plants for the gardens at the EARTH Center - including the 3/4 acre Rows for the Hungry - is up and running. This project is staffed by Master Gardener interns and taught by experienced Master Gardeners. This educational program teaches proper seeding, planting and propagation techniques.
- The current Middlesex Master Gardener Class will take their final exam in late April. This class of 28 has studied numerous topics from Botany to Vegetable Gardening. The Field Work portion, which spans from May until October, moves the classroom outside to the Vegetable Display and other gardens.

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- The Native Plant Nursery has begun seeding another crop of plants and the Native Plant Garden will be planted with some of the cultivars that were grown last year for the public to view.

Monmouth - Monmouth County MGs have been busy with our Ag. Gardens. The Native and Rain Gardens are being weeded and pruned and new plants are going in as well as “volunteers” that have been more appropriately placed. Our interns have already been out to the PAR garden and have had a tutorial in planting from mentor, Geoff Bray. The JMG (Junior Master Gardener) garden is being prepped for the students who will start the Program on April 30th. The Herb and Memorial gardens and Monarch Waystation have been tended to and are looking especially nice. Quite a far departure from last year at this time! At least we didn’t have flea beetles in the PAR last summer when the eggplant was planted! Guess two years without eggplants cured that!

Folks in the county have been to their community garden plots and we even have one that had closed down now reopened! Our Community Projects Committee is buzzing with opportunities as well as our School Program Committee with schools interested in teaching gardens. On-going Community projects continue at St. Anselm’s PAR garden in Tinton Falls and Jackson Woods Park in Long Branch. New requests for advice and consultation came from St. Mark’s Food Bank in Keansburg for advice on making a raised bed garden and Congregation B’nai Israel would like a consult on installing a donation garden in Rumson. We also had a Helpline request for a Heritage Park event in Allentown. And, Brookdale Community College is very interested in planning a community garden and would like some advice.

The Member Education Committee was able to offer a drive-yourself-trip to Battleview Orchards for a pruning demonstration out in the orchard. This committee has been able to offer some wonderfully educational trips for us. Can’t wait to find out where we’ll be going next! The Horticultural Enrichment Committee has been working with residents at Chelsea at Shrewsbury. This month’s activity was making decoupage pots and planting it with spider plants. The residents enjoyed every minute of it! So did our MGs! Also, a project that was scheduled to take place in 2020 was completed by the installation of an elevated mobile garden for Pine Bush Care Center. MG, Mikkele Lawless was able to complete the project which was made possible by an anonymous donation specific to this committee. Thank you, Mikkele!

Morris

Ocean - Ocean’s State Board report – April

All protocols were met when we had our April General Meeting in-person last week. It was great ‘seeing’ folks again. Most programs are up and running – garden design help, speakers’ engagements, outreach tables at community events, and, of course, Tick ID and helpline, both restricted to one volunteer. Our Nominating Committee presented the slate for 2022-2023. Voting will be at our June meeting. Our Bylaws are being updated to better fit current times.

A butterfly tent event planned for August had its first committee meeting. The 2020 class is helping here as they complete their hours to graduation. Meanwhile, the 2022 Interns just finished their final exam and were happily texting that they passed the test and can’t wait to volunteer in our program. They discussed how to organize their September project, Fall Garden Day, with the current restrictions. It was decided to have an outdoors event, details to be decided by the group during the next month.

We participated in a virtual 3-part Advanced Education series: Best Practices for Gardening, Tick ID, and Diagnostics. Good presentations.

Passaic – no report

Somerset – no report

Sussex

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Union – no report.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at ??????? am. The next meeting is XX/XX/2021 at 9 am by Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted
Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary