

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of RMGANJ Meeting, May 12,2022

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

Attendance:

Atlantic:	
Bergen:	Karen Pennell
Burlington:	Merry Bogert, Nick Hendershot, Sharon Astorino
Cumberland:	
Essex:	Terry Felper, Trina Ehntholt
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodwin
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata, Sudi Solomon
Middlesex:	Kathy Dopart, Jerri Barclay
Monmouth:	
Morris:	
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn
Passaic:	
Somerset:	Cindy Hedin
Sussex:	
Union:	Deb Murphy
Rutgers University:	Jan Zientek

Secretary's Minutes from April 14, 2022 RMGANJ Meeting: Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary, reported that she had emailed draft 2 of the April meeting's minutes RMGANJ minutes after receiving some changes to the county reports. A motion to accept the minutes was made, seconded and approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Roberta Quinn, Treasurer, reported that the current balance is \$14,018.30.

MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Jan Zientek reported that policies and procedures for Master Gardener events and activities will be governed by individual county's guidelines. Work is continuing on the proposed state-wide curriculum. Adoption is forecast for perhaps next year.

Old Business

Conference Planning:

Report on Fall Conference-The room at Cook has been confirmed and will be paid for by Rutgers. There is space for 150 attendees, but probably will have no more than 75. Many will carpool. Kathy Dopart has the directions signs. We will probably need only one parking lot. There is concern about the availability of handicapped parking spaces-to be confirmed with facilities. There will be coffee and bagels but no lunch. Folks may bring bag lunches. Volunteers to take names/counties at the door will be needed. Kathy Dopart (+a Middlesex volunteer) & Cindy Hedin volunteered to woman the attendance clipboards. CEUs will be given for the 2 lectures, Andy Wayandat-"Plant Diagnostics: Diseases of Vegetables", Rebecca Magron-"Plant Diseases." Brian Schilling will be the keynote speaker. All advance registration including parking will be online through one Rutgers platform; a Canvas site will be set up to provide any information re: the conference, handouts, etc. Recordings of the presentations will be available on that Canvas site which will be available to all registrants. Who will be Jan in October, perhaps Nick Polanin? Jan suggested there be a nominal fee to ensure registrants (including Zoom) actually attend. A motion was made and seconded (Nick H./Suzanne K.) to charge a nominal fee of not more than \$5.00 carried after much discussion (yes-12, no-6, abstain-1). Do we have a theme/title for the conference? "Returning to the Garden"? Send any suggestions to Nick H. before Memorial Day.

New milestone and hours pins are available from Nick's (Polanin???) New Brunswick office.

Several counties have held graduations and more are coming.

Caring and Sharing:

Burlington planted a medicinal garden. It's doing well despite the cold weather.

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Union County is holding its plant sale at Trailside Museum Sunday, May 15.

Please get your county reports in. There's a lot going on.

COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Atlantic – no report.

Bergen- MG of BC continued to hold virtual meetings in April.

April

Guest Speaker: Kerry Ann Mendez, an award winning educator, author and design consultant presented "Heavenly Plants for Tough Spots and Hell Strips".

Outreach Events:

Ridgewood Daffodil Day

Party for the Planet – Van Saun Park Zoo

Burlington – no report

Cumberland - Our plant sale at Wheaton Arts on May 7 went quite well in spite of the the freezing, blowing and cold rain. Many MGs were true troopers and held down the fort and sold our many plants. Leftover plants were then taken RCE and sold last week until gone.

On other fronts, we have been participating in local county events to make people aware of us and all we do or can do.

Essex - no report.

Hunterdon - Our Helpline has been busy and maned in person, and our County office is now open to the public.

Many of our teams are now meeting in person in small groups and beginning to engage the public as well as working around our office flower beds.

Our school teams are active and working with the school administrators, some seedlings are being planted and some classroom discussions are taking place.

Hunterdon continues to offer CEU's via zoom during our monthly educational programs.

Mercer - The May General Meeting for Mercer County was accessible both in-person and via Zoom to the membership. The meeting was well-attended: 108 attended -- 80 online and 28 in-person.

Leadership and administration - Mercer County Master Gardeners welcomed two new members – one relocating from Kent, Maryland, another from New Jersey's own Middlesex County.

Activities/volunteerism

Helpline - With the advent of the gardening season, Helpline office hours have been expanded, as follows: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Tuesday: 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Friday: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

The volume of calls, emails and walk-ins continue to increase.

Interns of the Class of 2020 are working to fulfill their hours requirements; some are close to completion.

Coordinator for the Mercer MG program, Dr. Kathryn Homa, is working with the Helpline Mentors and the Information Resources Committee (IRC) to use digital/electronic tools and platforms to enhance Helpline operations. A Virtual Helpline is being explored: teams of MGs working together (via Zoom) to respond to Helpline questions.

An electronic logbook is also under development. The draft has been reviewed by the IRC and will be shared with and reviewed by the Helpline Mentors in the coming days.

Tours of other county's MG gardens -Somerset County Master Gardeners will visit the Mercer Educational Gardens on May 26, with a reciprocal tour/visit likely in June. A tour of Middlesex County's gardens is under discussion for later In the summer.

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Plant Expo - Preparations for Plant Expo on May 14 are intensifying. While the number of vendors invited to attend has been reduced for this year's event, Mercer's MGs donated a record-breaking number of plants. Over 2,300 plants are anticipated (the previous record was 1,471 plants); an increase of 56%!

Middlesex - The Master Gardeners are back to work and reaching out to the Middlesex County Community. Our MGs attended and tabled at Rutgers Day offering garden advice to the public, discussing the various projects at the EARTH Center and encouraging enrollment in our Master Gardener program. The MGs gave out close to 1000 Marigold and Basil plants grown by our Greenhouse Program as a "welcome back from Covid" gift to the public.

Master Gardeners are tabling at events across Middlesex County with the History Day at Olde Towne in Piscataway and Middlesex County Day being the highlights of the month. Throughout the Summer the MGs will be out sharing their garden knowledge and passion for all things from the garden.

The Rows for the Hungry (RFH) donation garden team is working in full swing. Tilling and planting are underway at the ¾ acre garden. The RFH has begun offering educational tours to schools and the community. The entire 8th grade of New Brunswick schools will be visiting over 3 days in June as the closing module to their studies on community gardens and food insecurity.

We are pleased to announce that the Butterfly House will be back in operation this year. The Grand Opening will coincide with the Native Plant Sale on June 4, 2022. The Butterfly House will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 10-12 during the months of June, July and August.

Tours of the EARTH Center have resumed with events scheduled to start in June. If your group is interested in a tour please let us know.

Our Native Plant Propagation program had a very successful Native Plant Sale at Rutgers day. On June 4th the Native Plant team will have a plant sale at the EARTH Center. This sale is rapidly becoming a Middlesex County Tradition and is highly anticipated by Native Plant enthusiasts.

Monmouth - Monmouth had a busy April and was able to vet two new programs for our Speaker Bureau. One program is on roses and the other on the Art of Kokedama (creating moss balls as plant holders). Both programs were approved and will be shared with the public in the near future. The JMG Program has been awaiting their start date of April 30th and ready for thirteen children eager to learn about gardening. All MGs are getting ready for our Spring Garden Days sale on May 13th and 14th, and all hands will be on deck for the occasion!

The last weekend of April we were asked to have two tables at the Green Event at Joe Palaia Park in Ocean Township where we manned a Helpline and Compost table. In the PAR snap peas, lettuces and onions have been planted with potatoes to follow. One enthusiastic intern, Mike Pado, installed Purple Martin birdhouses behind our Ag. Building. It is hoped Purple Martins find their way there! All of our Ag. Property gardens have been raked, pruned, weeded and mulched. Thank you to the county for providing the mulch. After our May meeting we will all convene around our beautiful Memorial Garden to remember fellow MGs who have passed. The Memorial Garden is a serene place to come and catch your breath. The garden is lined with a brick path; each brick inscribed with the name and graduation date of an MG who has passed.

Our Scholarship Committee has received 20 applications from students interested. They will be screening the applications along with essays, grades and references for each student. Scholarships will be awarded at our June General Meeting on June 25th.

At our General Meeting this month MG Irene Wanat spoke on "Host Plants for Native Pollinators." Irene is well versed on this topic with lots of ideas for native plants for home gardens and encourages folks to choose native plants and shrubs for their landscapes. We always enjoy her programs. Thank you to our Speakers Bureau for interesting and informative programs this year. We will offer thirteen programs either virtually or in person this month as well as nine on-campus talks held outside during our plant sale. Helpline is always available.

Morris

Ocean - Without repeating last month's report, most committees are active now. Speakers' Bureau had four talks in April and this month there are six scheduled. The IPM Committee is having their first Diagnostic Workshop on May 19th in person with pre-registration. The Display Garden team redesigned the beds and recently planted a section of Native plants. Our Interns will help maintain the gardens this year. Stafford

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Library Helpdesk resumes twice a month through September to service the southern section of Ocean County. The Education Outreach Committee has an on-going project with the Sensory Garden at Elm's Elementary School. They advised on establishing it and now are directing the students in weeding, pruning and planting activities. Tick ID and Helpline are busy. We had some publicity in the form of a newspaper article about how the MGs grow plants in the greenhouses and outdoor gardens at our Ocean County Park facility. The Bylaws revision has been publicized in our newsletter and emailed to all MGs for approval before voting at the June meeting. 'Spotted Lantern Fly Trap-making' classes were offered at our Ag. Building with limited attendance.

Passaic – no report

Somerset – no report

Sussex – no report

Union – no report.

ADJOURNMENT: Adjournment at 9:52 AM. The next meeting is 6/9/2022 at 9 am by Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted
Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary