

# Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

## Minutes of RMGANJ Meeting, April 13, 2023

### Attendance:

Atlantic:	
Bergen:	Herb Arbeiter
Burlington:	Merry Bogert, Nick Hendershot, Tracy Kilmer, Dave Parsons
Cumberland:	Betsey Simpson
Essex:	Trina Ehntholt, Susan Norkin
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodwin
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Angelina Duggan, Betty Scarlata,
Middlesex:	Jerri Barclay, Kathy Dopart
Monmouth:	Bob Magovern, Bill Schutte, Gayle Williams
Morris:	
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn
Passaic:	
Somerset:	Cindy Hedin
Sussex:	
Union:	Kristin Kiefer
Rutgers University:	Nick Polanin

Nick Hendershot called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:02 am and welcomed Angelina Duggan, representing Mercer County, and the delegates present at/on the meeting.

**Secretary's Minutes from March RMGANJ Meeting:** Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary, reported that she had emailed those RMGANJ minutes on Tuesday. Corrections noted today to that draft per Kristin Kiefer & Nick Hendershot will be made. A motion to accept the minutes as corrected was made, seconded (Kathy/Gayle), and approved.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Roberta Quinn, Treasurer, reported that the current balance is \$\$13,467.55 as of March 9 according to Talia. A motion to accept was made, seconded and approved. (Talia is Talia Zirin (zirin@njaes.rutgers.edu)).

### **MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT:**

**Conference Planning:** We have a confirmed date of 10/21/23 at Douglass Campus Center 's Traves Hall (capacity 180 at tables&chairs/300 just chairs). Extra rooms could be available. Working on details. Zoom is possible. Nick H. opined that the Conference probably will be Zoom/in-person hybrid.

Dr. Karen Plumley, Director of Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education, has reported that the Fall Home Gardening School is tentatively scheduled for 10/21/23 on the Cook campus.

Nicki Graf, Floriculture Greenhouses, has been contacted regarding visits to the greenhouses that day.

Searches are still on for 4 positions: State coordinator for Master Gardeners & Consumer Horticulture; Warren County Ag. Agent; Somerset County Ag. Agent; and the State Fruit IPM faculty member. Retirements: Rick Van Vranken, the last federal pension employee, 40 years of service; Kathryn Homa is leaving Mercer County Master Gardeners. Approvals for faculty positions take a long time. Passaic & Mercer positions awaiting approval. Essex is working to shore up their Master Gardener program.

Nick P.'s statewide Better Impact survey revealed data gaps; hours for events are not tied to an activity, All Master Gardeners should be reporting hours appropriately. Citizen Science category includes last year's tomato pruning project and this year's Japanese stilt grass observation (Matt Elmor & Peter Nitsche).

Some folks are having Better Impact date entry problems. Judy Colburn asked for a screen shot of categories. Nick P. will email that to Nick H. for distribution to counties. Categories should be consistent across the state.

There was a question about storage of documents & internal communications. Nick P. will send a link to the listing of all MG groups and their activities, and a screen shot of Somerset's Better Impact home page showing the files link. There is a need to store PowerPoints, lesson plans, etc.

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Will the county awards be given out/announced at the fall Conference? There are no state-wide awards. Year pins are available from Nick P.'s office through Talia. Email quantities per year to Talia. Consolidus/Swag is the place to order T-shirts, hats, etc., again through Talia. Pins are also on that site.

Some counties are missing reps. This is a concern. Virtual meetings should be made attendance easier. 5 counties have no Master Gardener program: Hudson, Gloucester, Salem, Camden, Cape May. Warren is with Sussex. Nick P. will add an item to the agenda of the next coordinators' meeting urging that delegates/alternates be appointed.

Nick H. reminded folks to email him their preference regarding RMGANJ meetings as to hybrid, in-person or all Zoom. He will resend the request.

Conference theme has been decided. *Transforming Your Home: Indoors & Out*. Speakers being considered: Chris Obropta-Rain Gardens, Maryland person-Prairie/Meadow. We can afford to pay speakers, we do not have to rely on Rutgers staff. Gail has offered that Monmouth will do the "Save the Date" flyer.

### ***Caring and Sharing:***

Gayle: New class has started, Plant sale coming up, SLF traps will be sold, guided tours of the MG gardens will be given that day, 5/19 & 20.

Dave Parsons: How many HelpLine hours are required, and how/where defined. In-Office & out-of-office?

From Betty to Everyone: Here's the link to hours requirements from Rutgers

<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/master-gardeners/pdfs/mg-policiesprocedures-2011.pdf>

Judy Colburn: Does any county have "HelpLine from Home"?

Different counties have different needs regarding HelpLine. Every county is different.

### **Chat Items**

Angelina Duggan asked "Spotted lantern fly trap-what attractant used? Please send photo of device."

Re: SLF traps, Kristin Kiefer asked "Please share plans."

### **COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:**

***Atlantic*** – no report.

***Bergen*** - Kathy Sauerborn presented "Gardening for Hummingbirds" at the MG of BC monthly meeting in March. Kathy is a Passaic County Master Gardener with more than 20 years of experience in gardening for hummingbirds in her Certified Wildlife Habitat designated by the national Wildlife Federation.

The new Master Gardeners class of 40 interns began Rutgers MG volunteer training on Jan. 17.

In 2022 Master gardeners of Bergen County recorded 4,749 outreach hours, 738 administrative hours, 17 teaching hours and 217 special teaching hours. Based on a value of 432.39/hr Bergen MG's contributed \$187,019.86 to Bergen County in 2022.

MG of BC now has accounts on Facebook and Instagram.

Facebook: MGBC2

Instagram: Master\_gardeners\_of\_bc.

Garretson Forge and Farm kicked off the season with National Pea Day planting on March 19.

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

***Burlington*** – RMG of BurlCo continues the Master Gardener class which started in January--there are thirteen candidates enrolled.

RMG of BurlCo coordinator delivered a presentation at the Columbus Grange on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Two MGs were present to answer questions.

RMG of BurlCo held a clean-up day at the Rancocas Nature Center demonstration garden on Saturday, April 1 from 10 am – Noon.

RMG of BurlCo conducted a virtual "Ask a Master Gardener" session through the Moorestown Library on Wednesday, April 5 at 1:30 PM.

RMG of BurlCo conducted a traveling helpline the Burlington County Main Library on April 11<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 – 4:00 PM.

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RMG of BurlCo volunteers at the Smithville Butterfly Garden held a planning meeting in mid-March.

RMG of BurlCo volunteers at the Burlington County Agricultural Center held a planning meeting on April 5<sup>th</sup> and began preparing demonstration plots for this season's projects on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Cumberland** - April 11, 2023 Committee Report

General Meeting 9AM followed by CC Mosquito Control Commission Presentation

Please wear your name tags.

Discovery Garden – Susan Morello

The first official clean-up day, 3/27/2023, provided a big surprise. Our friends at WA had done 99% of the leaf removal from all of the flowerbeds! MG's moved onto laying down straw, cardboard and wood chips in the newly cleaned beds. Large swathes of moss areas were left uncovered to show the different textures found in nature. The garden is looking wonderful!

Eight MG's, plus a spouse, were present for the first workday.

Plantings will be added to the existing bed plantings. A site map, locating all the major plantings, is being planned by MG's. The bluebird house is located near the schoolhouse, two tic-tac-toe "boards"-aka tree stumps-were placed near the two picnic benches. The glass flowers are very visible in the garden beds adding whimsy and color!

Next on the schedule is mulching the walkway area.

Mondays and Wednesdays are designated "workdays" in the WA garden. Mulching the walkway, refining the garden beds and reclaiming the area contingent to the schoolhouse are future plans.

If you have any plantings you would like to share at the garden, please contact Lori Burke ([bloridee63@yahoo.com](mailto:bloridee63@yahoo.com)) or Susanne Morello ([susannemorello12@gmail.com](mailto:susannemorello12@gmail.com)) so plans can be made for the best placement

Thank you to all who are helping "wake up" the garden!

### Press – Barbara McOscar

Three press releases were sent out in March. Since home deliveries of papers has been cancelled in Cumberland County coupled with little coverage of happenings in our area, we need member's help spreading the word about our guest speakers, classes, and trips. Could you please take flyers to libraries, post offices, gyms, churches, etc. to publicize our events?

Helpline Committee – Kathy King

Upcoming events:

Strawberry Festival at Dragon Village (June 10)

Peach Festival at Dragon Village (August 19)

Hopewell Day (September 27)

Greenwich Artisans Faire (Oct 7 OR TBD)

Wheaton Scarecrow Festival (Oct 28)

Promotions – Marianne Rozanski

Due to several requests for zippered hooded sweatshirt jackets, I am researching several suppliers for setup fees and costs for the 9 oz. and 12 oz. sweatshirts and I will present findings at the April meeting.

State MG Meeting – Keiko Warner & Betsey Simpson

The minutes from the December were sent to members – It is interesting reading what other counties are doing.

Currently the conference committee is diligently working on the date, place, and theme for our Fall Conference.

### Propagation – Bill Martin

The Propagation team continues to prepare for our Annual Plant Sale at Wheaton Arts ECO Fair to be held Saturday May 6th.

Our different variety of annuals, perennials and natives are up and looking good. Watering teams have been established and work Monday - Friday. A few additional planting dates are scheduled for April.

We have tried to ensure that anyone who expressed interest in being part of our team has had time to work with us at RAREC. If we missed anyone we apologize; please contact Betsey Simpson and we will try to fit you in.

## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

We are looking forward to a great Plant Sale!!! And Wheaton Arts ECO Fair.

Save the date!!!! Saturday May 6th 10am - 4pm. All hands-on deck. Registration for specific shifts that need to be covered will begin shortly.

An ECO Fair meeting will be held in late April to familiarize you with your specific tasks, overview pricing and answer any questions you might have about the day...stay tuned.

Pollinator Garden – Susan McKenna

No report submitted.

Meditation Garden – Cheryl Loatman

No report submitted.

Trip Committee – Nora Zielinski

A trip to Chanticleer Garden in Wayne, PA on Thursday, June 8, 2023 has been arranged. Cost is \$57 without lunch, \$77 with lunch. Safety Bus will provide transport. Ramada Inn has graciously granted us permission to board the bus in their spacious rear parking lot and to leave our cars there for the day. Purchased lunches will be delivered to Chanticleer at noon on trip day. A trip flyer was produced by Kathy King. Notice was sent to free papers by Barbara McOscar. E-mails with trip details were sent to Master Gardeners and County Master Gardener Coordinators. Flyers are available at the Extension Center office for those Master Gardeners who are able to distribute them to friend groups, churches, businesses, etc. Ramada Inn has graciously granted us permission to board the bus in their spacious rear parking lot and to leave our cars there for the day.

Request from 4-H Goat Club

MG Alice Phillips sent a lovely thank-you note to us for all the skeins donated to the Beanies for Premies Project. Her members will be crocheting the beanies needed for the pre-mature babies at Inspira.

Veterans Home – Jan LoBiondo

Jan Dwyer LoBiondo (patiently waiting for a co- chair to appear).

The team will meet at 12 after MG meeting April 11(with or without packed lunch) in the conference room to prep for April 14th trip to Vet Home.

Team will meet between 9:15ish outside Vet Home on April 14 to be tested and then set up on time for 10 AM workshop.

May our second class go as well as first one after three years!! Veterans were so fun and appreciative.

Children's Learning Table – Barbara McOscar

Lynn Houck will be scheduling members interested in staffing the learning stations at the Eco Fair. The activities are:

Seeds – Their importance and showing the growth of a bean seed

Examining a cotton plant

Making seed paper craft

Seed give-away

Hand painting

It is great fun to work with the children and their parents. Please see Lynn to sign up for a session.

Also, save the dates listed in the Helpline report as the Children's Learning Table will be at the same events working with the children on two topics – Seeds and Animals of the Farm and Forrest.

Rain Garden – Carol Henry

Clean-up work will begin soon. Contact me if you want to be part of the Rain Garden Team.

Upcoming events:

May 6<sup>th</sup> – WA Eco Fair

May 9<sup>th</sup> – Figs with Shirley Kline – 11AM

May 9<sup>th</sup> – Ikebana- 12:30-2PM

June 13<sup>th</sup> -Ikebana – 11:30AM – 1PM

September 13<sup>th</sup> – Backyard Garden Pests with MG Chris Benke – 11AM

**Essex** - no report.

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## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

### **Hunterdon -**

1. Our New Class in Hunterdon is on scheduled to graduate this month.
2. Our Presentation Team have scheduled a number of presentations on various garden topics to many groups.
3. Our Help Line is up and running.
4. Many of our Teams are now working and meeting and doing much garden work.
5. We are now meeting in person for our monthly general meeting and continue to have excellent speakers.

**Mercer** - The Rutgers Master Gardeners of Mercer County held their monthly General Meeting March 6. The hybrid meeting was attended by 119 Master Gardeners.

### **Resignation of County Horticulturist**

Dr. Kathrine Homa resigned as Mercer County Horticulturist effective March 22. A search is underway for her replacement.

### **Symposium 2023**

After a three-year hiatus Mercer County Master Gardeners hosted the 2023 *Back to the Future Garden Symposium* at Stuart Country Day School in Princeton, New Jersey, on Saturday, March 11. Approximately 180 attendees enjoyed breakfast, lunch, a silent auction, and four inspiring lectures.

### **Better Impact Changes**

The County Horticulturist discussed the recent improvements to Better Impact. Specifically, she addressed changes that have been made to the categories and titles under which hours will now be logged, to better align with Rutgers' reporting requirements. The new framework provides more clarity and additional detail as to the nature of services provided. *Note:* In early 2023 Mercer County MGs re-established the Hours Committee to track volunteer hours for both certified MGs and interns, and to communicate with and support individuals at risk of not meeting hours requirements. Dr Homa worked with the co-chairs of the committee to re-design hours reporting in Better Impact.

### **Helpline Hot Topic**

Dr. Homa spoke on Native and Invasive Plants.

### **Tours**

The Tours Committee began 2023 with an intense focus on educational tours. Due to strong demand two tours were held to the Phillip Alampi Beneficial Insect Rearing Laboratory and to the Rutgers Soil Testing Laboratory. Due to an overwhelming response, a third tour will likely be scheduled to one or both of these Laboratories.

### **Trent House**

March saw the return to the Trent House gardens to work with Charlie Thomford, archeological horticulturist.

### **Upcoming Community Education Event**

"Wild Plant Culture: Restoring Native Edible and Medicinal Plant Communities" presented by Jared Rosenbaum, Wild Ridge Plants, on April 13.

In May, the committee is planning to hold the MG's Compost Day, a popular demonstration event at the Mercer Educational Gardens.

Our annual Plant Expo is May 6.

With the upcoming 25th Anniversary opening of Mercer Education Gardens, we are making plans for a celebration later this year.

**Middlesex** - Spring brings the Middlesex County Master Gardeners back to the EARTH Center gardens. We are hard at work cleaning and prepping for the new season, painting, installing new fences and clearing the way for a great season.

The current class of Master Gardeners is taking their final exams this week. They have already finished the indoor classwork and will complete their program in our Outdoor classroom- the Vegetable Display garden.

The Greenhouse Project is in full swing with teams of Master Gardeners who have grown over 20,00 plants for the EARTH Center, community gardens and Rutgers Day. The Master Gardeners will be selling plants, educating the public and sharing program information at Rutgers Day on April 29, 2023.

The Native Plant Project is also attending Rutgers Day and selling plants and offering information. The overwintered plants look great and the team is busy propagating more plants for sale, education and use in the Middlesex County community.

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The Rows for the Hungry, the Master Gardener farm/garden is back and has doubled in size to 2 acres. Two acres may sound big but food insecurity is a big issue. All plants are grown by our Greenhouse Project. "The Rows" are maintained by Master Gardeners and community volunteers. This project grows and delivers first quality, fresh produce to Elijah's Promise soup kitchen, the Meals on Wheels program and culinary school and Replenish-Middlesex County's food bank coordination program.

The Children's Garden is up and running with kids coming by daily. Starting in June their popular, free Saturday morning classes for kids age 5-11 return. June 10 *How Does You Garden Grow?* June 24 *Weather Happens* July 8 *Pollinators and Plants* and July 22 *Let's Eat! Leaves, Fruit, Seeds or Roots?*

**Monmouth** - March has been a very busy month for Monmouth MGs. The Coffee Talks in February were a big success for us and folks seemed very pleased with the presentations and speakers. March is always a big planning month for our plant sale and Junior Master Gardener Program (JMG). The JMG will start its Saturday classes on April 29<sup>th</sup> with classes both indoors and out in their garden. MGs have been out in that garden since March cleaning up, bed prep and laying down paths with woodchips which are provided by the county.

Our Spring Garden Days plant sale chaired by Jim Seidel will be May 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> and all committees are in full gear! Something new offered this year for sale will be SLF traps made by our MGs. Garden Tours will be offered as well as programs from our Speakers Bureau. Amongst the plants, flowers and vegetables will be our Garden Decor and More section where garden items and other new and lovingly used items can be found that were donated by MGs for the sale.

All of our garden committees have also been busy with clean up, assessment, planning for new plants, pruning and putting down woodchips. Our interns have been out in the PAR and have come up with their planting plan for the season. This is a very enthusiastic group of interns and we are so glad to have them! The Scholarship Committee has sent out their application and have already received a few. In a few weeks we will find out who our awardees will be this year. Continuing the first Wednesday of each month is our Helpline Roundtable who keeps us well informed of topics that come up in our MG email, callers or in-person questions. At this time of the year weeds seem to be popular as well as lawn care. Hort. Enrichment is finishing up a cycle and will then move on to the United Methodist Community in Red Bank. Our Member Education Committee has made arrangements for a free class in grape growing. That is the first of three parts. Part II will be held at 4JGs Orchard and Vineyard, Colts Neck for a \$10 fee per person. Part III is limited to 20 people and is a course in wine making and includes the finished wine in bottles with each person's own label for a course fee for those who would like to participate. Participation in courses such as this one is paid for by the individuals who wish to take part in the course. Our School Programs Committee has been working with Atlantic Highlands Elementary School, Howell Township Schools and Manalapan HS in creating school gardens. The Speaker Bureau had 8 talks in March for garden clubs and the Monmouth County Virtual Library. Nine talks are scheduled so far for April. New programs have been vetted as well and something to look forward to! The April edition of our newsletter, Garden Vision, came out with bios of our new interns, articles written by MGs and photos of trips taken to New Jersey and New York gardens by our MGs. The Trips and Tours Committee went to the Philadelphia Flower Show in March and gorgeous photos were taken and shared in the newsletter as well.

Our speaker for March's general meeting was Karen Walzer speaking on "Combatting Climate Change" and Bill Erickson, MC Ag. Agent will speak in April on "Lawn Care". Karen's talk was excellent and I'm sure Bill's will be equally as good.

### **Morris**

**Ocean** - Ocean County is back in full participation. Our greenhouses are producing beautiful plants, both annuals and vegetables. The Community Garden Team is sowing seeds and weeding beds. The Education Outreach Team is expanding with our recent graduates taking part. The ARC/Wrangle Brook and the Elms School projects are on-going. Our Speakers' program continues to be popular with senior communities, garden clubs, and libraries. The new Intern '23 class is nearing completion. The Interns are taking turns for Tick Lab and Helpline with their Mentors coaching the first few times. Community Outreach has many events asking for MGs to man tables and MGs have stepped up to volunteer. Earth Day week is very popular for this group and Speakers. The Publicity Committee is expanding their reach via local Patches.

**Passaic** - no report

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**Somerset** – no report

### **Sussex**

**Union** – Master Gardeners of Union County Executive Board met on April 5, 2023, chaired by President Pat Paul

April topics of discussion included:

The External Website is complete. They are now looking to create an internal website for MG use and to store and organize administrative records and historical documents. [Question: How do other counties store their documents and share internal communications? Is there a list of all MG County Websites? Our website creator and historian, Chris Venter will contact Nick Polanin to get more information on MS Teams.](#)

Planning the Spring Garden Sale on May 21, 2023 and participating in the Wild Earth Fest on April 30, 2023. Both will be held at/near the Union County Demo Garden at Trailside Nature and Science Center, 452 New Providence Road, Mountainside NJ. All are welcome.

Approved various changes and enhancements to the Demo Garden. Seeds are started, raised beds are getting repaired, weeding and planting is happening in all of the gardens.

Planning for new Children's, Senior's and Speaker programs. Annie Martin will talk about the uses of Moss in our next County Zoom meeting for all MGs in April. The Senior and Children's sessions in March were very popular.

Discussed the Helpline usage and ideas to expand usage. Ideas were shared for a MG Annual Picnic and a September Pin Party. Discussed how to expand usage of Better Impact for tracking hours and communication.

Award timing and nomination processes were discussed. [Question: Will RMGANJ sponsor the MGANNJ Award for Excellence in 2023? In the past it was presented at the State Conference in October.](#)

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 10:16 am. The next meeting is May 11, 2023 at 9 am by Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted  
Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary