

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of RMGANJ Meeting, October 12, 2023

Attendance:

Atlantic:	Belinda Chester
Bergen:	
Burlington:	Merry Bogert, Nick Hendershot, Dave Parsons
Cumberland:	Betsey Simpson, Keiko Warner
Essex:	Trina Ehntholt (and Cape May)
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodwin
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata
Middlesex:	
Monmouth:	Bob Magovern, Gayle Williams
Morris:	
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn
Passaic:	Rashmi Dhekne, Monica Chalgeri
Somerset:	Cindy Hedin, Ellen Locker
Sussex:	
Union:	Deb Murphy
Rutgers University:	Nick Polanin

Nick Hendershot called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:05 am and welcomed the group to the meeting. Ellen Locker, a new delegate from Somerset, was introduced and welcomed.

Secretary's Minutes, RMGANJ Meeting September 14, 2023: Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary, reported that she had emailed RMGANJ minutes. A motion to accept was made, seconded (Williams/Keane) and approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Roberta Quinn, Treasurer, reported that the current balance is \$13,271.30. A motion to accept was made, seconded and approved. Roberta noted several items and a question about which she had emailed Talia last month. Those items are still a mystery. Roberta will report when Talia replies.

MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Nick Polanin commented that he will confer with Talia on Friday regarding Roberta's concerns. Conference information--Conference registration stands at 104 online (maximum is 150) and 98 in person (Maximum is 150).

Every registrant will receive the Zoom recording links to the 3 presentations.

Catering numbers will be carefully reported.

Niki Graf will be kept up to date as to greenhouse tour numbers.

Open Positions—

Passaic coordinator (Rutgers employee) - 2 have been interviewed, 2 others to be interviewed

Somerset EPC (County employee) MG & Enviro steward 3-4 applicants

State coordinator 4 candidates

Somerset-Nick's position

Justine Gray (Mercer coordinator), a Rutgers employee, is doing well.

Old Business

Mercer will be handling conference check-in, probably should be in place about by 7:30. List of registrants will be available at the sign-in desk. Walk-ins and online flippers will be admitted. Payment will be accepted at the door.

Conference recordings will be available by the end of the month-early November. Sharing of links to non-registrants was discussed. The recordings from 2022 were made public in January 2023.

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A new Conference caterer will be doing the food and does have the correct address. There will not be any folders with agendas, etc. handed out. Agendas were and will be emailed. Attendees should wear their Master Gardener name badges.

Karl Gercens would like a lavalier microphone. Nick P. will check with support staff.

Campus staff will set up directional signs saying "Event." Parkers must register their vehicles.

Face masks may be worn.

Lectern will have laptop for speakers' use. Presentations should be on USBs.

Nominating Committee needs names for President and Treasurer. Treasurer's job is routine, request Task 219 report from Talia, look it over for discrepancies. Announce need for officers at Conference. Nominating Committee--Kathy Dopart, Jerri Barclay and ??? (Karen Pennell??) Nick H. will make some calls.

New Business

Passaic Master Gardeners are working with NJ Botanical Gardens/Skylands on a Holiday Open House fund raiser on Nov. 30, Dec. 1 & 2 (Thursday, Friday & Saturday). Save the date! Decorated rooms, absolutely beautiful, theme is Scottish Highlands, lots of plaid. Passaic MGs are decorating the library.

Keiko Warner volunteered to lead the Nominating Committee.

Cindy Hedin asked that any counties that do teacher education (not classroom visits) contact her with details about their programs/offering.

Caring and Sharing:

Deb Murphy--Union will be holding a Pin Party. 1,000 potted perennials have been prepared for spring plant sale. They are looking for horticulture therapy photos/project ideas. Joel Flagler (Bergen) does this. Hunterdon (Trish Deering) has a brochure on their programs for challenged populations. Essex has curtailed its Horticulture for Seniors programs because of overwhelming response/attendance.

Trina Ehntholt is trying to get a MG program going in Cape May County as she will be moving/has moved there. Keiko suggested she look for Atlantic County folks who are still active.

Nick P. emphasized the importance of impact statements for monthly reports to be used for USDA reports (10/1/22 - 9/30/23) that will be prepared soon.

Betty Scarlata asked about changes in requirements for working with children. Nick P. said if teachers are present, youth protection standards are not as strict, but it varies from district to district.

Why don't monsters eat ghosts?

COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Atlantic – no report.

Bergen -- no report.

Burlington – no report

Cumberland -- no report

Essex-- no report.

Hunterdon - no report

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Mercer -- The Rutgers Master Gardeners of Mercer County hybrid monthly meeting was held September 5. A total of 111 participated, 51 in person and 60 via Zoom. President Louise Senior began the meeting by announcing changes to two committees, Speakers Bureau and Annual Garden. Justine Gray, our new coordinator, will now oversee the Speaker's Bureau, managing requests and ensuring their appropriateness.

Helpline Committee: The newly appointed co-chairs introduced a new addition to the monthly General Meeting agenda called "Helpline Happenings." This segment-- to be prepared each month by a member of the Helpline Committee—is designed to present timely information that can be applied during Helpline shifts. This information will be delivered during the monthly meetings and will also be featured in the MG newsletter. This month's focus was the cicada killer wasp.

Insect Fest: This year's Insect Fest on September 9 was dedicated to the memory of Nancy Putnam, who--along with Greenie Neuburg--initiated the festival in 2003. Featured were Bugs Galore, bees, butterflies, composting, bugs in water, carnivorous plants, and an insect hunt in the meadow. The 420 visitors attending included 221 children. The day was beautiful and, thankfully, the storm clouds didn't arrive until the event was over and everything put away.

Community Education: On September 10, Love your Leaves was presented by Louise Senior, Mercer County Master Gardener at the Morven Museum and Gardens and discussed how to use your piles of leaves to care for your yard and garden this fall.

Tours: The September 21 tour was into the heart of the Pine Barrens at the Franklin Parker Preserve to be guided by the senior land steward of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

Outreach: Master Gardeners participated in three events in September. On September 16, Trenton River Days was held at South Riverwalk Park, on September 23, Hopewell Harvest Days was held at Hopewell Elementary School and on September 30, Lawrence Township Community was held in Central Park.

Program: The September program, entitled "The Buzz about Beekeeping, from the Sweet to the Stings," was presented by Charli Decker of Lee Turkey Farm. Ms. Decker is the third-generation beekeeper at the farm.

Middlesex -

We have started our new Master Gardener class. The new interns seem excited about the class and even more excited to work in the gardens. The main class material will come from the Penn State Master Gardener Manual with more hands on labs and a focus on a Master Gardener's role as a volunteer in our community.

The EARTH center, home to Middlesex County Master Gardeners, is alive with fall beauty and all the changes of the season. October 14 is our annual Garden Clean Up and Brunch. It is the first time our new interns work in our gardens, and it brings all of our Master Gardeners home to put all of the gardens to bed.

Rows for the Hungry is a donation garden that partners with the Middlesex County food bank and Elijah's Promise- a soup kitchen, meal distribution program and a culinary school. We are still harvesting from the Rows and also planning next year's garden using more of the two acres.

Our Fall programs continue into October on Saturday mornings covering topics such as Growing Garlic, Introduction to Backyard Composting and Enticing Your Children into the Garden.

Monmouth -- Monmouth County has been "buzzin" for the last several weeks in preparation for our free children's event, Bugs, Birds and Beyond, which took place on September 30th. Over 700 community residents came through our doors and had loads of fun! Games and crafts, tours of our gardens, 4-H animals, raptors, our Helpline and lots to see held both inside and out. Garden tours were held and our interns were on hand in the PAR garden to demonstrate harvesting and answer vegetable gardening questions. Overall. A very successful day!

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To date in our PAR garden, over 2500lbs. of produce has been delivered to local food banks in the county. All other gardens are beginning some clean up and preparation for winter weather. The JMG garden had its last harvest with the children on August 26th but continued producing and weighed in at 1144 lbs. in late September. Our JMG did a super job this year! Congratulations!

Our Hort. Enrichment Committee began their last rotation for the year at All in a Day facility. The Speakers Bureau continues to give presentations at various county garden clubs and continues to hold Helpline through the Monmouth County Library system virtually in coordination with our coordinator, Diane Larson.

In the wings, preparation for this year's graduation is going on along with our end-of-the-year Holiday Recognition Luncheon. Both are exciting events to be with good friends and celebrate successes throughout the year!

Morris -- no report

Ocean -- Most of our activities are coming to an end in October. Helpline and Tick Lab end October 31st. There are seven Speakers Bureau presentations in October. There are a few Community Outreach events in the county.

A committee wrote a monthly gardening guide that was printed and will be distributed for free to Ocean County residents. Approximately 1200 copies were printed.

There will be a fun pot washing party followed by Chilly Chili Day at our greenhouses the end of October.

Gleaning and donating produce and non-perishable foods is always important to our county. More than 6000 pounds of produce has been gleaned so far. The goal is 10,000 pounds. We glean with Farmers Against Hunger.

Fall Garden Day held in September was a good project done by our Interns. This was open to the public.

A few trench composting demonstrations have been done by one MG.

Trips and Tours is planning a trip to New Castle, Delaware in December.

Passaic – no report

Somerset – no report

Sussex – no report

Union – no report.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 10:12 am. The next meeting is 11/9/2023 at 9 am by Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted
Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary