

## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

### Minutes of September 27, 2016 RMGANJ Meeting

Kathy Dopart welcomed the group. Terry Zane led the meeting, following the Agenda.

**Minutes from Sept 6, 2015 Meeting:** A motion was tendered and members unanimously voted to accept the minutes incorporating the changes received by the secretary prior to the meeting.

#### Attendance:

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Atlantic:           | Mary Lou Monihan                                     |
| Bergen:             | Joseph Cooper  |
| Burlington:         | Terry Zane, Marilyn Bidrawn, Merry Bogert, Lee Parry |
| Camden:             | Nancy Sullivan, Diane Shanyo                         |
| Cumberland:         |  |
| Essex:              | Suzie Yamarone, Gail Chumura                         |
| Hunterdon:          | Martha Cleaves                                       |
| Mercer:             | Betty Scarlata, Bob Robinson, Theodora Wang          |
| Middlesex:          | Kathy Dopart, Dale Duchai, Jerri Barclay             |
| Monmouth:           | Gayle B. Williams, Ellen Simonetti, Gordan Boak      |
| Morris:             | Pat Hudson, Sandi Gonski, Carla Schan                |
| Ocean:              | Suzanne Keane, Jerald Jehlets                        |
| Passaic:            | Barbara Cook   |
| Somerset:           | Linda Madretzke                                      |
| Sussex:             | Pat Schanzlin, Jane Gardner                          |
| Union:              | Caryl Hannemann, Delores Batz-Culp, Dennis Lenahan   |
| Rutgers University: | Nick Polanin   |

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Pat Schanzlin reported a balance of \$992.51. This balance is not verified as yet, due to the database conversion currently underway at Rutgers. We will have a more accurate report next month. Motion made and approved to accept the report as presented.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Terry created 300 packages, each with a packet of seeds and a chocolate hazelnut candy for distribution at the Conference. Each registrant will receive one as they sign into the Conference. Our thanks to Terry for her generosity in making the event more welcoming.

**RCE UPDATE:** Nick Polanin reported that a department meeting will be held at the Burlington Extension office in October. The next meeting will be at the Monmouth Extension office. He had a great week in Montana and Wyoming at the national MG Coordinator Conference. The meeting was attended by 83 MG Coordinators from across the nation. They discussed feedback collected from local levels that might be used for comparison across the states.

None of the 50 states collects the same data. The National Conference decided to collect food and security data, ie, how many pounds of food is grown by the MGs and donated to food banks as a known commonality, since this is one area where there is some consistency. However, this data is also gathered by other groups, so the MGs felt that it may need to find a more relevant point around which to gather data for meaningful comparisons.

Many states have MG Educators and some additionally have an MG Diagnostician designation. The MG Diagnostician would be another level of education that could be added to the cadre of recognition for NJ.

The Conference is held every 2 years, and some states wondered if this meeting could be conducted regionally on a more regular basis. There are regional locations designated by NIFA that are used by the National Coordinator group where meetings could be conducted.

Doctor David Gibby was in attendance and gave a nice presentation on how he started the MG program. Photo ops were afforded to the group. As the impetus for the MG program, he was deluged with many messages from the public with questions about gardening and pest issues. He decided to use volunteers to answer this need. Since he had some notoriety, he was able to draw people in to do various clinics and meetings, which were well received. As a result, he started training people and the MG program was started.

Gordan Boak wanted to know if there was an international program for MGs. Nick said that Canada has active MGs. The whole Canadian system is under reorganization currently, which prevented Canada from offering their conference. There is also a program in South Korea.

A lot of states use online data for reporting purposes and Nick will be investigating how this might be beneficial in NJ. The next conference will be held in Madison, Wisconsin.

## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

### **CONFERENCE TASKS:**

**Registration:** *Late online registrations* were problematic. There is an issue of users remembering passcodes or passcodes that were assigned by Rutgers and never sent to the user as reference for later use. Some people had trouble with online registration, some from Atlantic County stating that they did not register as a result of the password difficulties. In advertising the Conference, counties should add the registration form as a PDF onto any reminders that are sent out and have hard copy registration forms available for distribution.

300 *Conference Booklets* were ordered, which is close to the number registered; therefore, nobody should take any booklets home today as there are no extras available. There may be no booklets available for walk-in registrants.

*Reimbursement for Late Registration:* Several people already paid late fees prior to the decision that no late fees were to be charged. If anyone asks you, tell the person to get in touch with Rutgers to seek refunds, particularly if paid by check.

*Meal Count:* Terry constructed a registrant and meal assignment spreadsheet, including how much the person paid. The coloring on the sheet is to indicate the lunch choice. This list can be used at the Registration desk to give the correct lunch tickets. There were 3 people who were registered who had 0 entrance fees. Rita Mestilla had no charge, as did 2 others who were Faculty Agents or Coordinators. We need to remember that Coordinators do not pay, as we do our costing for next year's Conference.

*Walk-in Registration:* Some people forgot to register and would like to come to the Conference. We will allow for walk-ins and will charge them admission fees, but no lunch or folders will be provided. Once we reach the 300 room capacity, then we need to stop allowing entrance. At the present we have 282, which does not include the Coordinators. We are now at 299 including the Coordinators, but this number does not include the anticipated no-show people, which is estimated at under 20 people. The Registration Desk will inform people that the walk-ins can come back for a folder if available after the first speaker. Registration needs a couple more people to help with the process, since there are only 2 people currently in place. The people manning the desk should split the Registration list by the alphabet to assist in the process. The group decided that we will provide an empty box near the exit door to collect used folders at the end of the Conference.

*Evaluation Forms:* A box is needed to pick up Evaluation Forms, as well as have some people circulate to collect the forms. Somehow we missed advertising the Conference properly because there was feedback that the topics were not what people expected. We will ask people to fill in the Evaluation Form as we go along to avoid problems at the end of people filling out the form and missing items. Members asked whether we could offer the Conference by satellite, which is quite costly, though Rutgers does provide such services for fees. We need to get the Coordinators more involved in getting a regionalized approach to the Conference. It is important to understand what the expectations are of our group so that we offer topics and conferences that are more attractive to members.

Some people think that the Conference is a recognition event, while some believe that it is an educational event in which the recognition is becoming more secondary. When we offered flower speakers, the Conference was filled up fast, but then we received issues from the Coordinators of the less than robust topic presented. We might be able to expand the audience by figuring out a way to do live telecast broadcasts at Regional area locations for upcoming years. We will investigate this option.

We should send out an online survey to collect more feedback a few months after the Conference to collect more information about the group's expectations and preferences. Issues to be determined would include purpose of the Conference (ed v Recognition), subjects to be offered, teleconference technology, younger people's expectations for a group like this, award regionalization of meetings, effort required to put on Regionalized meetings by this group, and identifying the future possibilities for meeting organization.

A Video update will be sent to the members shortly. There are no photos from Somerset and Camden. Please send the feedback to Joe Cooper as soon as possible.

**Break:** Thank you to Union County for the refreshments provided this month.

### **County Report Highlights:**

*Atlantic* - We are still working on new signage for some of our projects. Projects are status quo since last report of September 2nd. A suggestion was made at our monthly meeting that perhaps we should consider developing "self guided tour" pamphlets for a few of our projects. Also our Atlantic County MG president & also, acting coordinator, Rick VanVranklin, would like us to have a meeting in order to begin the process of reinstating our plant sale.

We had an excellent speaker at September's meeting Hubert Ling Ph.D. Horticulturalist, The NJ Native Plant Society.

## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

### *Bergen –*

The annual Fall Harvest Festival is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 8 and 9 at Van Saun Park, Paramus. Students in the Class of 2016 have created projects on the following topics: Butterfly Gardens, Rock Gardening, Composting, Herbs, Garden IPM, Horticultural Therapy, Pruning Practices, and Incredible Insects: A Friendly Look.

The festival will also feature 4-H exhibits, a craft fair, hands-on activities for kids, archery, a farmers market, animals, face painting, pumpkin picking, and live entertainment from 10 am-6 pm on Saturday and from 10 am-4 pm on Sunday. Carnival rides are available and an evening movie will be shown.

"Be Somebody - Grow Garlic" will be presented at the October meeting by Roman Oscada. He is a garlic farmer from Newton who wasn't always a farmer though. He worked for a major pharmaceutical company for many years, retired, and starting growing garlic, which became his passion. Roman will tell his story about garlic and how we should grow our own, when to plant it, the types to plant, soil conditions, and when to harvest. Garlic is one of the easiest crops to grow and doesn't appeal to garden pests.

Garretson Forge & Farm will have their Fall Festival on Sunday, Oct. 16 with re-enactors representing the War of 1812, Civil War, and Spanish-American War; open-hearth cooking featuring 19th Century recipes; tours of the homestead and gardens; and the sale of organic herbs, lavender sachets, organic raspberry jam, and late summer vegetables as well as organic hard neck garlic just in time for fall planting. Plant now, harvest next summer.

New Jersey Botanical Garden / Skylands Manor is busy in October with a Harvest Fest, Manor Tours, Carriage House Concert: Arlon Bennett and Family Woodland Hike. Then Nationally known speaker and author Kerry Mendez will present Design Tips for Traffic-Stopping Curb Appeal on Saturday, Oct. 22.

Thielke Arboretum will be having a Weed Warrior Day, Annual Bulb Planting and a Story-walk for children featuring the fall book, "Tap the Magic Tree" by Christie Matheson.

At Washington Spring Garden, Pat Vellas, our iris guru has completed the laborious task of dividing the beautiful irises at Washington Spring Garden with help from Noreen Postman and Surinder Chada of the current MG class and our veteran, Freddie Levitan.

### *Burlington –*

#### *Projects:*

#### *Butterfly Garden at Smith Woods*

The garden has been overtaken with monarch caterpillars this month. The caterpillars were not only found on their host plants of milkweed but also at least ten more were on our butterfly weed plants. The dill and fennel were munched down to the root by the swallowtail caterpillars. The team is starting to collect seeds from the plants in the ten plots and working on a new master plan for the garden next year. The Master Gardeners are preparing lists of possible native plants for the plots to keep the gardens bright and vibrant from early spring through the fall.

The team is currently waiting for some sheep manure from the county, and is continuing to put down the compost and mulch created from the gardens. Heat and lack of water have been a constant source to contend with, but it justifies that next year when planting for the pollinators, drought tolerant perennials will be the majority in the gardens. A rain gauge was donated and added to the garden to monitor the rainfall.

#### *IPM and Demonstration Plots at BCCAC*

The end of our season is fast approaching. The team is in the process of removing the plants that are showing signs of distress. The kitchen garden is still looking great. The asters are blooming and the ornamental grass is showing its nice burgundy fall color. Next the team will be transplanting some of the herbs from the raised beds to the kitchen area. Compost will be added to the five raised beds.

Some cotton has been harvested but the cooler temperature will slow down the maturation of the cotton bolls. All team members agree that the cotton plants named "Black Beautiful" would be a very interesting addition to any garden.

The "Yellow bear" caterpillars are very abundant this year, they have fallen in love with the cotton plants. Large numbers of grasshoppers and praying mantis are being seen. The "Harlequin bugs" have devastated a large horseradish plant. This year many "Black swallowtail" caterpillars are on the dill and parsley. The team is preparing to close down the demo plots. Winter rye will be used as a cover crop on at least three of the demo plots. Thursday, September 22, 2016 was the last IPM team meeting for this season.

#### *Donation Garden at Medford Leas*

Harvested this month were 81 pounds of sweet and hot peppers, watermelon, tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, onions, eggplant, cucumbers, tomatillos and long red beans for a year-to-date total of 454.5 pounds donated. Lettuce and

## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

arugula were planted for a fall harvest. Groundhogs and deer are still decimating all gardens. All water lines were plugged with mud; all filters were cleaned.

### *Tree Group*

Brian McDonald led a group on a walk at the Rancocas Nature Center on Sept. 13. The group also went to Homestead Nursery on Sept. 20 for a tour by the owner, Russ McLaughlin.

### *Articles published in the **Burlington County Times Master Gardeners Journal:***

- September 14, 2016, "Using cover crops in the home garden" by Bobbie Herbs
- September 27, 2016, "Growing and caring for fig trees" by Judy Janas

### *Presentations given:*

- September 7, 2016, Brian McDonald presented Urban Forestry at the Moorestown Library.

### *Events held:*

- September 7, 2016, Jen Bulava, Burlington County Parks naturalist, gave a birding hike at Smithville Park.
- An "Ask a Master Gardener" table was present at the county farmers' market twice during the month.

### *Upcoming Events:*

- October 24, 2016, the President of the South Jersey Bonsai Society will give a presentation on Bonsai trees.

*Camden* – Volunteer Day coming up at our greenhouse. Demonstration Garden Committee has decided on a five year plan which includes a variety of raised beds, an active compost area, signage to explain the gardens, and an inter-active relationship with the County. Rutgers educators will use the gardens as an educational focus point..

*Cumberland* - We are still involved with the Pepper Trials at RAREC Farm. We are also assisting with Dr. Tom Orton saving the Rutgers 250 & the 250 Organic seeds, as well as the KC146 ,Schermehorn and other trial seeds. Hoping to get 5 lbs. of seeds that Rutgers will be selling next spring. We are also working with Tom on a tomato tasting for the public. We will be having Rich Bizub speaking at our October meeting about Water Programs at the Pinelands Preservation Alliance. November's meeting will be about Growing Tea in South Jersey by the Greenwich Tea Company. The Butterfly Tent and Helpline on the Road was a huge success at the Greenwich Faire with well over 500 visits by children as well as adults.

### *Essex –*

*Hunterdon*- The September Hunterdon County meeting was a pot luck and an opportunity for each Team Leader to recognize their team members. The speaker was Brenda Conner from Pine Barrens Native Fruit speaking on Piney Agriculture. In October, the Hunterdon speaker is Dr. David Robinson who will speak on "Gardening in a Changing Climate". A visit to the Philip Alampi Beneficial Insect Lab is scheduled for October 26. This is the third visit Hunterdon Master Gardeners have made to the lab. One hundred and seventy-nine Master Gardeners and 6 non-MGs volunteered at the Great Tomato Tasting in August. Hunterdon Master Gardeners wrapped up their Community Service events for the year with seven events in September. The Helpline has begun to wind down.

*Mercer* – Our Insect Fest, held on September 10, was quite successful in spite of some very hot and threatening weather. The children, as usual, loved it and didn't want to leave, and we had a number of teens and adults without children who came and stayed.

The RMG's will be visiting Shofuso Japanese House and Gardens in Fairmont Park in Philadelphia, and Meadowbrook Farm, the official nursery of the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society on October 21. The Meadowbrook Farm grows many plants for the displays at the Philadelphia Flower Show. They also force blooms as needed for display. It's interesting that many of the plants displayed are purchased by the organizations entering the show rather than grown by them.

The annual Cape May butterfly trip in late September that many RMGs take part in was successful and encouraging. Compared to past years, there were many more Monarchs and Common Buckeyes seen by the participants.

Our September meeting featured a talk by Barbara Geller on roof gardens. Our October meeting will be our annual Awards Banquet, held on a Monday evening at the Unitarian Universalist church in Princeton. The speaker will be Stephanie Cohen.

## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

*Middlesex* – Upon Pat Evan's retirement, Angela Monaghan has taken on the Middlesex County Master Gardener coordinator responsibilities part time. We are still in discussion with the county on the position, but are hoping to fill Pat's full time position.

We are in our third week of the new MG classes. Between the Thursday evening and Friday morning classes we have approximately 35 enrolled in the program.

This past Saturday, we had a successful Herb Garden workshop taught by Caren White (Middlesex County Master Gardener) and a MG picnic on September 25 at the EARTH Center. Upcoming workshops at the EARTH Center include Vermi-Composting on Wednesday October 12, 6:30-8:30 pm; Garlic Growing on Sunday October 9, 10:00 am; and Intro to Backyard Composting on Saturday, October 15 from 10:00 am - 12:00 noon.

Bill Hlubik will be hosting a RU Ready to Farm workshop (1 day or 3-day) beginning Saturday, October 22 at the EcoComplex, from 8:00 am - 5:00 pm (for the 1 day or 3-day participants), and a Wednesday, October 26 evening workshop from 6:00 - 9:00 pm, and a Saturday field trip on November 5, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm. Day 1 will cover the basics of farming discussing available resources, types of farming, land availability. etc. Day 2 will cover the business aspects of farming and Day 3 will be a visit to 1-2 farm operations to look at marketing, machinery, and production techniques. This is open to anyone who wants to learn more about farming in NJ and how to get started for small or large operations. This is for beginning farmers, students studying agriculture (college, high school, FFA, 4-H), Master Gardeners, and those seeking a new career in agriculture. If interested, register with Office of Continuing Professional Education at Rutgers. Full program registration fee is \$150 Adults, \$100 High School students, \$125 Master Gardeners, \$225 for business partnership or 2 family members. Single day (Day 1) is \$75 adults, \$50 High School students, \$60 Master Gardeners, \$120 for business partnership or 2 family members.

Sue Franko and Kelly Rok will be our Award for Excellence recipients at the Master Gardener conference.

*Monmouth* – Monmouth County Coordinator, Diane Larson, prepares to host the first of three Community Gardens Training sessions. Held on September 28, 2016 at the Ag. Building in Freehold, N.J. Attendance for this first session is upwards of 70 people and looks to be very interesting and informative.

On September 17<sup>th</sup> we held our Recognition Picnic where Andy Valdes was recognized as the President's Award recipient for all of her efforts at our Spring Garden Days sale, the Monmouth County Fair display of butterflies (which she and her son, Andrew, built) and her attendance there from set-up to breakdown and every day in between. Andy also organized four plots at the Howell Organic Community Garden, educated community members and made sure that they had Rutgers fact sheets to take home as well. Congratulations, Andy, and many thanks!

Our PAR garden is still producing well and the Interns have gone over 2000 lbs. in their harvesting. The Food Banks have been delighted with the produce! The Junior Master Gardener garden is winding down and will soon be put to bed. The children involved in the program came every Sunday during the summer to harvest their vegetables. Several children submitted entries to the County Fair and won many medals for their efforts.

Since March the Monmouth County Master Gardeners have offered a free symposium, had our Spring Garden Days sale, the Junior Master Gardener Program, participated in the County Fair, participated in 17 community gardens and had our free children's annual Bugs, Birds and Beyond event. We have been very proud to offer these events and our services to our community.

The first Community Gardens Training held here in Monmouth County yesterday was well attended, well organized and the program seems to be easily navigated. I am so glad to have attended!

Lady Bug Information requested by board members: Cathy Shaloo, 36A Brandywine, Brielle, NJ. 732-836-0280

*Morris* – Our new MG Coordinator, Dave Los, joined the staff the end of August.

- A Master Gardener Training Program began this month with 20 applicants.
- HEP venues resumed activities this month after the summer hiatus
- Speaker's Bureau Lectures (five), as always, were well received. A new class on Beekeeping Advocacy was vetted this month for introduction into the current curriculum of lectures (22 topics) now offered.
- Our Event's Committee Members finalized details for sale of items at the State MG conference in October.
- Volunteers with our Outreach Program presented the topic, "Closing up your Garden" at both library venues as well as at the Annual Suckasunny Day Festival.
- In celebration of Rutgers 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Master Gardeners traveled via van/personal car to Rutgers Garden for a tour.

## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

- Courses on bee keeping, herb gardens, unusual bulbs, plant pathology, basic botany, and community garden training were offered this month.

*Ocean* – Ocean County's Master Gardeners have been busy donating our produce to local food banks, cleaning up and weeding our Park gardens, and speaking to the residents on a variety of topics. They have also been tending the container gardens at the sculptures that were on display in Toms River this summer. We had a fellow MG, Bruce Larson, speak to us on "The Evolution of Plants". The Interns are finishing preparations for their signature project, Fall Garden Day, to be held this Friday. It is a program for the public featuring 3 gardening lectures and several demonstrations. The participants receive a small plant nurtured by the Intern committee. It is a highlight of our program.

*Passaic* –

*Somerset* – Somerset County MGs had a very successful Tent Showing at the county 4H Fair in August. Approximately 2500 adults and 1000 children visited the tent. Volunteers answered questions and taught educational information to the adults for the children. There were games and crafts to explain the information on plants.

The Rutgers Great Tomato Tasting at Snyder Experimental Farm was equally as successful as the 4H Fair. Volunteers from MGs picked, washed, cut and served the tomatoes used for the event. Approximately 1500 people attended.

*Sussex* – MGs are working hard to clear out all of the garden sites around the county in preparation for the fall season. Significant effort is being placed in therapeutic horticulture, both at elder care facilities and at elementary schools and high schools across the county. Many children's programs are also being offered.

This year, we are offering our MG training program in the evenings, beginning in January and continuing through May. This program will be open to everyone, regardless of whether participants wish to continue with the MG specific curriculum, which will be offered after the first sessions have been completed. In this way, we are meeting the needs of county residents to provide after-work training programs and more in-depth topics requested by the public, while fulfilling the need of our new MG interns. Once the interns finish their training, they will complete 60 volunteer hours required to obtain certification. Registration is currently open for the class to start in January 2017.

*Union* – The Harvest Festival was held in our County Park. The event runs from 11am to 5pm. Last year we had over 500 people visit our gardens. We had tours of gardens and lots of children's activities.

The Cerebral Palsy League will be visiting our Demo Garden Tuesday, September 27 at 10:30am. They will plant some take home projects in our greenhouse, plant in the raised beds on the patio, and take a tour of the Garden. Mary Krauss and the Horticulture Therapy committee will be heading up this activity.

The new MG intern class is full with 25 people and we have started a waiting list. The new class will be visiting the Demo Garden on Tuesday, November 1 at 10am. Please mark this date on your calendar, as we love to welcome the new class as they tour the garden. They will have a chance to learn about this beautiful site.

As of September 22, over 2000 lbs. of delicious fresh vegetables have been donated to soup kitchens and food pantries in Union County. We will continue to harvest through the end of October. The garden will be turning off water on October 20 and begin preparing for winter.

Barbara Fay won First Place in the 2016 Home Grown Biggest Zucchini Contest. Her zucchini weighed in at 2 lbs. and 8 oz. Debra Stuart won First Place in the 2016 Home Grown Biggest Tomato Contest. The tomato variety she grew was a Rutgers 250 and it weighed in at 1 lb. 11 oz. We ran this contest this summer for Master Gardeners who grew the vegetables they entered into the contest.

The Helpline continues with Diagnostics. Black walnut trees and planting issues around them has been a frequent question this month.

|          |     |            |
|----------|-----|------------|
| November | ECC |            |
| December | ECC | (Pot Luck) |

AMC = Agriculture Museum Classroom  
ECC = Extension Conference Center

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey**

Respectfully Submitted  
Jane Gardner, Recording Secretary