

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of April 3, 2018 RMGANJ Meeting

Terry Zane, Vice President, welcomed the group and provided some words of wisdom. New delegates and guests were introduced including: Burlington County alternate: Lyn Avale, Camden County alternate: Patrick Goughary alternate; Morris County alternate Deidre Gallagher. Terry passed around the member contact list for updates.

Pat Schanzlin, President, welcomed everyone and then led the meeting following the agenda.

Secretary's Minutes from March 2018 Meeting: Tricia Deering, Recording Secretary, reported that she had emailed out the March RMGANJ minutes and made one change based on feedback– an addition to the attendance list. The minutes from the March meeting were accepted as changed through a motion and second.

Attendance:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Atlantic: | Mary-Lou Monihan |
| Bergen: | Joseph Cooper, Karen Pennell and Melody Corcoran |
| Burlington: | Terry Zane, Marilyn Bidrawn, Nick Hendershot, Lyn Avale |
| Camden: | Diane Shonyo, Patrick Goughary |
| Cumberland: | Carol Henry |
| Essex: | Jane Kinkle |
| Hunterdon: | Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodwin |
| Mercer: | Bob Robinson |
| Middlesex: | Dale Duchai, Jerry Barclay |
| Monmouth: | Gayle Williams, Bob Magovern, Sandy Wolfe, Jay Schaeffer |
| Morris: | Marion Ceruzzi, Deidre Gallagher |
| Ocean: | Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn |
| Passaic: | Barbara Cook, Darlene Nowak |
| Somerset: | Linda Madretzke, Cindy Hedin |
| Sussex: | Jane Gardner, Pat Schanzlin |
| Union: | Dolores Batz-Culp, Dennis Lenahan, Caryl Hannemann |
| Rutgers University: | Nick Polanin |

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jane Gardner, Treasurer, reported that the April balance is \$11,604.39 and this matches the Rutgers balance. A motion to accept the Treasurer's report as submitted was made, seconded and approved.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Pat Schanzlin reported that Nick Polanin will stop by later this morning.

MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Nick Polanin reported that Passaic County has an opening for Master Gardener coordinator. He is working with Sussex to make the part time position full time and Warren County to get a full time senior program coordinator position. He reported that coordinators are sending in annual reports from 2017. The NJ Landscape and Nursery Association is holding a Spotted Lantern Fly meeting on Thursday night April 5 from 3:30 to 6. Beneduce Vineyards in Pittstown. It is free-of-charge, but attendees must pre-register. The Spotted Lantern Fly feeds on 70 different plants. It will be here soon since it is in Pennsylvania. The Department of Agriculture will be setting up a portal for reporting.

Pat Schanzlin asked Nick if there is new timing for POs with the new Cornerstone system. Nick replied that one doesn't need to hold off submitting POs as before.

Marilyn Bidrawn asked about the project number for the conference. It is 202707, task 219. She will put the catering PO in when she has a corrected quote.

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Nick reminded everyone to prepare paper work properly before submitting to Talia Zirin, his admin, Counties should get her in the loop early for help with expenses as reworking paper work is very time consuming. She can be reached at zirin@njaes.rutgers.edu, 848-932-3590.

The question was raised about whether we can run a 50/50 to raise money for the conference. We would probably need a gaming license for that. Nick pointed out that there may be some things we can take advantage of, such as non-commercial sponsors (e.g. the Garden Club of NJ, the Nursery and Landscape Association, and the Farm Bureau). He has an upcoming meeting to discuss this idea. Pat Schanzlin asked about grants. Nick said they are an option, but they are very competitive and difficult to get.

Gayle Williams asked if there are any more Rutgers 250 books available for Speaker gifts. Nick will check and get back to her.

Old Business:

Working Group for Last Year's Conference Survey: Karen Pennell reported that she and her team, Mary Lou Monihan and Dennis Lenahan, will have conference recommendations for next month.

September Meeting Date: The September 2018 meeting will be Tuesday 9/4 at 10am.

Budget Review: As noted last month, we have ~12K on hand but the conference will cost 13+K. The exact shortfall is \$1,393.71. Marilyn Bidrawn reviewed some options to reduce costs from catering. She reported that the prices have not gone up. Last year there was coffee, fruit, yogurt and bagels left over, plus typically 10% are no shows. Suggestions include cutting back to 280 head-count, deleting a fruit tray and adding an additional tray of the cranberry cheese tarts. This would save \$347.95. Cutting back to 270 would save \$421.55. The group voted to go with the 270 number. Also, Pat Schanzlin reminded everyone that the pin order which is \$2500 every few years, needs to be fronted out of our budget. Lunch choices were also discussed. We make \$2 on the sandwiches and \$.75 on the salad; this surplus covers other costs. Marilyn discussed options for sandwich choices. The group decided to trust Marilyn's judgement on the sandwiches. There was a question about whether they can cut the bagels in half or will they charge us for more labor?? Marilyn will ask.

Pins: Marilyn Bidrawn and Pat Schanzlin reported that we are low on \$15-year pins. The prices reduce for a larger order. It was decided we will talk about this next year.

Apparel Sales: Pat Schanzlin gave an update on apparel sales. Some counties already have Master Gardener apparel, many do not. Hunterdon and Cumberland use a registered Rutgers trademark for the apparel. Some counties have apparel that does not use the registered licensed trademark. Pat would like to pre-purchase some inexpensive, un-sized apparel with the registered trademark to be sold at the Garden Market. She and Jane Gardner are meeting with All Colors, the apparel vendor, and will report back at the next meeting. One option is rain ponchos, which are very inexpensive. They are also asking if it is possible to get a bag of some kind at a very low cost, for the registration material. It was suggested that in the future we might be able to set things up, so conference attendees can order apparel through OCPE with a link and pick it up at the conference.

New Business:

Continuing Education Credits for the Conference: Several options for adding additional CEU credits to the conference were discussed. Pat Schanzlin proposed using the existing coordinator-scripted webinar presentations (Ecosystems for Native Plants, Community Gardens, School Gardens) during the conference, plus one person will give a talk summarizing the award-winning accomplishments. These items will count to CEUs. Awards will be detailed in the conference booklet and the names of the awardees will be announced. The proposal was accepted through a motion, second and unanimous vote.

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Schedule changes: Pat Schanzlin reviewed the proposed schedule for the conference. It includes eliminating the door prize piece of the schedule, which is at the end. Instead, the winning numbers will be posted, and the winners can pick them up.

Theme ideas: The following theme names for the conference were voted on and "Plants -Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" was selected: Plant History - Present and Future; It's All About Plants; Take, but give Back; Past, Present and Future of Plants – It's Up to You; Three Centuries of Plants; Motivational Gardening; Plants – From Beginning to End.

Conference Budget: Pat Schanzlin reviewed the budget. It was reported that the Barnes and Noble \$105 check from the 2017 conference is in the mail. Group members brought up the fact that folders can be gotten very inexpensively from places like Walmart and Target right before the start of the school year. Folders were donated in the past and saved – which could take the cost of that line down to 0. It was decided that board members will donate the folders. With this change and the changes to catering and a conference price of \$40 we will have approximately a \$1900 credit for a \$5 increase in fee. Alternatively, there would be a \$550 surplus at the same price. A motion was made and seconded to raise the price to \$40 and approved unanimously. Pat noted that this will help front the price of ordering pins.

Speaker Planning for 2019 Conference: Pat Schanzlin asked for a volunteer team to look at speakers for 2019. They should be high quality and inexpensive. Local is best from a cost perspective. When no one volunteered, Pat asked that each county come back at the next meeting with a phenomenal speaker idea.

Break: Thank you to Union County for today's break food and beverages. Somerset County is responsible for refreshments for the May 2018 meeting.

COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Atlantic – Plans are in the works for a May trip to both The Jenkins and Tyler Arboretums with a docent. We are also working on scheduling several trips to other county sites and get to know our working partners and their programs/projects a little bit better. If you are amiable to such a gathering, please let me know for the future.

We are also potentially working on small garden tours of our members' homes during the summer months. Our plan to begin the institution of my volunteer page is being pushed back a month or so. Stay tuned/ Our county would like some feedback today regarding the topic of "project planning."

We have considered the possibility of using some of our association fees for hiring better speakers. Are other counties doing something similar?

Our new evening class is working out very well.

On 5/25/18 we corroborated with the Linwood Arboretum on a Sunday afternoon lecture: Joel Fry from Bartram's Garden was the speaker.

Our plant sale on 5/19/18 has been moved to the David Wood 4-H center. This will be a first.

On 4/22/18 we will be participating with ACUA on Earth Day.

At our monthly meeting one of our local Master Gardeners demonstrated container gardening tips and design.

Our new "Retention Committee" has had two meetings and is in the process of contacting members who have moved on from our program to obtain information that might be of benefit to our new mentoring program and the entire concept of long term retention of enthusiastic Master Gardeners.

Bergen –

A year in the vegetable garden was presented by Arianna Lindberg. She is an instructor in the Department of Landscape Architecture in the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences at Rutgers University. Arianna is also the Student Farm manager at Rutgers Gardens. Her proclivity for growing food has directly influenced both her research and her work. Her talk included seasonally organized information on garden planning and preparation; planting; pest and disease management; pollinators and beneficials; seed saving; and season extension — all specific to organic gardening/farming.

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Bergen County's 'hanging gardens' Visit the "hanging gardens of New Jersey" in Fine Gardening magazine's blog. Surinder Chadha of Old Tappan submitted photos of hanging plants that decorate the high ceilings in his home. See what a few hooks can do.

Volunteer Site News:

Garretson Forge and Farm: Garretson Forge and Farm will host its annual Spring Festival and plant sale with native plants (mostly perennials), as well as herbs, vegetable seedlings, and milkweed plants for your monarchs.

New Jersey Botanical Garden/Skylands: End of Winter Tree Walk is rescheduled for April 7th. with Rich Flynn, head landscape designer at NJBG. Birding for beginners will take place April 8th. Don Torino, president of Bergen County Audubon Society, will cover bird ID, field guides, and optics. A walk will follow, weather permitting. Bring binoculars if you have them. Butterfly and pollinator garden planting Help plant a new butterfly garden on April 28. This new garden area will be designed to attract many different pollinators.

Teaneck Creek Conservancy April 14th. The first of a nature walk series with an emphasis on identifying common trees in the area and in the conservancy. Each session focuses on identifying specific trees throughout the seasons. Enjoy a discussion through the grounds with Ryan Duff, arborist at Almstead Tree and Shrub Care Co.

Thielke Arboretum of Glen Rock

Grand opening of the new building! The new Environmental Education Center (EEC) at the Thielke Arboretum of Glen Rock will take place Friday, April 27. Festivities will begin at 10 am with a welcome, ribbon-cutting, and a remembrance of the arboretum's namesake, Carol Thielke. Tours of the arboretum and the EEC will be available.

Open house April 28-29 Take a tour of the arboretum during the weekend's open house event. The day begins at noon with the opening of the new StoryWalk® for children, "This is the Nest That Robin Built" by Denise Fleming. This will be followed by an arts and crafts program for children. The Open House will feature a presentation about "*your garden*" by Tom Bender, the arboretum's plant curator. This will be the first of a series of gardening lectures that will take place throughout the summer (dates TBD).

Community Outreach Events Earth Day events taking place in Bergen County: Planet Earth Day at the Bergen County Zoo at Van Saun Park, Paramus, Northern Valley Earth Fair, Northern Valley Regional High School-Demarest, Ridgefield Park Environmental Commission Earth Day/Green Fair, Ridgefield Park,

Burlington –

I am pleased to announce, in mid-March, Burlington Master Gardeners welcomed our new coordinator, Katie Wickel. Katie is a graduate of Rutgers with work in the turf grasses.

Project reports:

Butterfly Garden at Smith Woods –

- Inclement weather has delayed getting out in the garden.
- Perennials and equipment have been ordered in cooperation with the County.
- Clean-up will start soon with emphasis on revamping several plots and more signage with information highlighting host and nectar plants.

Donation Garden at Medford Leas –

- After massive damage in 2017 due to deer a high fence has been installed. On the first two days, 8 foot 4"X4" post were anchored in cement. Ten volunteers worked the third day to install 100-foot sections of fencing. All materials were donated by a very generous Master Gardener.
- Since snow magedon has finally melted, peas have been planted.
- Pink-up and spreading of organic horse manure will be done as soon as the fields are dry enough for the truck to access.

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IPM and Demonstration Plots at BCCAC –

- Advantage was taken of the wet and stormy March weather to focus on cleaning and preparation of the signage.
- Some shrubs have been relocated and blueberries fertilized.

Pinelands Preservation Alliance Kitchen Garden –

- First planning session has been scheduled for mid-April.

Rancocas Nature Center

- No new update.

Articles published in the *Burlington County Times* Master Gardener Journal:

- *Information On Plants, at your Fingertips* – Bobbie J. Herbs
- *Spring Flowers: A Short Subject* – Judy Janas

Camden –

Green Garden Fair

Much of the current work being done by various committees is in preparation for our annual Green Garden Fair scheduled for May 5. The fair includes gardening-related vendor booths, including our Master Gardeners Tent to answer attendee questions and troubleshoot garden problems; many of the activities are educational in nature.

Educational Garden

The educational garden team is in the process of preparing the various beds for planting vegetables, herbs, annuals and perennials. Many of the perennial herbs and shrubs from last season are coming alive, and an early spring crop of vegetables is currently being planted. We expect to have a good variety of plants and growing techniques to demonstrate on the tours planned as part of the aforementioned Green Garden Fair.

Greenhouse

The greenhouse team has been planting seeds and up-potting flowers and vegetables since early February. Plants are scheduled to be ready for transplanting from late April through May. Many of the annual flowers and perennial shrubs will be planted in the twenty-two parks of Camden County. Vegetable sets, herbs, and bedding flowers are for sale to the public.

Fundraising

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“Make and Take Herb Window Box” will be presented on April 18. Herbs are provided by the Greenhouse Committee. Leftover materials will be assembled and sold at the Green Garden Fair.

“Make and Take Terrarium” workshop will be given at the Atco Library on April 28.

The Greenhouse Committee is planning (at least) three public sales of annual flowers, herbs, vegetables, and perennials during May. The first will be during the Green Garden Fair on May 5.

In-House

The newly formed Speakers Bureau, headed by 1st Vice President Judi Smith and At-Large Board Member Valerie Brown, held their first meeting on February 27. Over twenty Master Gardeners showed interest in developing and delivering new lectures to the community.

Becki Szkotak has invited the Board of Directors to visit the April 10 session of the Horticultural School to meet the new class. Board members will explain the variety of tasks performed by Master Gardeners, and the rewards of volunteering their services. The intent is to keep retention high and foster informal mentoring relationships.

Master Gardeners attending the General Meeting on April 19 will be treated to a continuing education presentation on “Growing Grapes in the Backyard.” The lecturer is Rutgers’ own Hemant Gohil, Ph.D.

Community Service

Master Gardeners of Camden County will be conducting a variety of Earth Day activities in the communities of Blackwood, Cherry Hill, Collingswood, Haddonfield, Merchantville, and Winslow.

Cumberland: Tuesday, April 10, 2018 at 1PM. Mary Ellen Walker will give us information on a project dear to her – rescuing exotic birds. Her birds are a hit at September Fun Day and at other Children’s Table events!

Trips & Tours

The bus trip to the Philadelphia Flower Show had to be rescheduled to Thursday, March 8th due to the state of emergency called by Mayor Kenny. The bus company graciously offered this day change when they were guaranteed a parking permit for this date.

Propagation

The Propagation Team has been very busy. Plantings are just about finished with well over 90% of what was planted has propagated. We are in full operations at both the RAREC and Cumberland County College greenhouses.

Butterfly Tent

May 2nd, 3rd, 4th, & 5th – Wheaton Arts

Horticulture Enrichment

On Friday, April 13th, our group at the Veterans Home will be decorating willow wreaths with flowers and greens. Some will be silky, and some will be dried, for example, lavender stalks.

Helping Hands

Something new we will be doing this year.

We will be preparing and planting four raised beds in Greenwich – probably late April year for some of our older members.

RCE Pollinator Garden

Maintenance day in the pollinator garden is April 6th starting to make this garden butterfly, bee, and hummingbird ready.

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Gardening Down Jersey Style

We will begin offering MG classes every other year with a series of classes, workshops, etc. run on the “other” year focused on increasing public awareness of Extension

Essex –

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Master Gardeners of Essex County Meeting Schedule and Speakers:

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Speaker</u> | <u>Subject</u> |
|------------------|-------------------|--|
| 4/14/2018 | Kathy Sauerborn | Gardening for Hummingbirds |
| 5/12/2018 | No Meeting | MGEC Plant Sale |
| 6/9/2018 | Deb Ellis | Feeding Butterflies, Not Bambi – Deer Resistant Natives |
| 7/14/2018 | Jean Epitaph | Native Ferns of Norther New Jersey |
| 10/13/2018 | Marc Zukovich | Fall Fertilization of Trees, Shrubs and Lawns |
| 11/10/2018 | Ruth Hayden | Private Gardens of China – Principals of Design we still see today |

Horticulture Workshops for Seniors

SENIOR CITIZENS OF ESSEX COUNTY YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN HORTICULTURE WORKSHOPS PRESENTED BY THE RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENERS OF ESSEX COUNTY Winter 2018

- APRIL 16: YOUNGER THAN SPRINGTIME
(Reserve by April 10)
- MAY 21: MERRY MONTH OF MAY
(Reserve by May 15)
- JUNE 18: JUNE IS BUSTING OUT ALL OVER
(Reserve by June 12)

ALL PROGRAMS TAKE PLACE ON MONDAYS, 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.
GARIBALDI HALL, 621A EAGLE ROCK AVE., ROSELAND
PROGRAMS ARE FREE. RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE EARLY.
SPACE IS LIMITED. WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACCEPT RESERVATIONS
ONCE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IS REACHED!

Master Gardeners of Essex County Class of 2018 Lesson Schedule

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If you are interested in sitting in on a specific class, please contact Chrystine Gaffney at cg709@njaes.rutgers.edu to let her know you intend to come. The class is very full (40 students) so space is at a premium.

| Date | Subject | Instructor |
|-----------|---|---------------------------------|
| 4/4/2018 | Organic Gardening | Jan Zientek |
| 4/11/2018 | Water Conservation | Amy Rowe, RCE/Essex |
| 4/18/2018 | Pesticide Safety & Use (6 core credits available) | Pat Hastings, RCE/New Brunswick |
| 4/25/2018 | Fruit Trees | Megan Muehlbauer |

MGEC Volunteer Hub – Weather Permitting

404 Community Garden,
404 14th Avenue, Irvington, contact Keisha Newell at
404communitygar-den@gmail.com.

Branch Brook Park Cherry Tree Pruning Team

Meets weekly to prune historical collection of 5000 cherry trees. To volunteer call Lois Young 973-744-5696 or helle-borus133@vizon.net.

Branch Brook Park -Prudential Concert Grove - (Southern Section)!

We lead volunteers in weeding, pruning, planting and trans-planting perennials and shrubs.! Come join us any day from October 2nd through November 6th, Monday through Friday from 9:30 through 12:30 (or whatever time to you care to give). We will also be working with volunteers on Saturdays: 10/28 - 9:30 to 12:30; 11/4 - 11:00 to 2:00.

Meet at the “Lions” and bring tools and gloves.!

For more information contact Kasey Goger at kgoger@verizon.net or Mary Jedrezjewski at maryjed@optonline.net

Brookdale Park Pruning —ongoing pruning of Trees, to volunteer contact Pat Hewitt 201-913-8419, or hewitt36@verizon.net.

Caldwell Pollinator Garden - Creating new gardens. Contact Warren Marchioni. wmarchioni39@gmail.com

Education Outreach

Projects in schools. Contact Fran Kroeckel 973-744-6547, robertkroecel@comcast.net

Giving Garden an *A Lot to Grow* community garden that grows produce for the food pantries and soup kitchens in the Nutley area. Contact Elizabeth (Liz) Li-loia: eliloia@aol.com

Glenmont Project

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Thos. Edison Nat'l. Historical Park in West Orange, Amy Trimarco, aatri-marco@comcast.net, 201-600-8656;

The Greenhouse has plenty of room for those that want to transplant and water. Contact Gail Chmura, chmurag@verizon.net or Pat Hewitt, hewitt36@verizon.net

Grounds Around Garibaldi Hall — help maintain and beautify. Meet Tuesday morning-early. Bring your gloves/tools. Contact Tony Oszmianski (973) 226-1351.

Special Garibaldi project workdays scheduled throughout the year. **Contact Suzanne Broullon.**

GROW Community Out-reach Program., 3-4 Sessions a year, half-day long, recent Graduates become involved. Contact Mike Mallette (973)230-4266 mfieldhand@verizon.net

Helpline volunteer-- Con-tact Lynda Meehan at (973) 228-5806 or lyndam1112@gmail.com, or call the Help Line at 973-228-2210; mastergar-denerec@gmail.com

Horticulture for Seniors meets monthly with seniors. Contact Helen Kesner (973) 731-0717, hkesner@comcast.net

MGEC Bee Keepers at Garibaldi Hall. Beginners must observe until the proper course is taken and equipment purchased. Contact David Haimes, dhaires@comcast.net.

Pollinator Garden In Brookdale Park

For information contact Blanca Gerard at mygerard30@verizon.net

Rose Garden in Brookdale Park NEEDS HELP, lots of get down in the dirt type of work, pick days/time Contact Susan Jankolovits (973) 783-0977 sjankolovits@hotmail.com

South Orange Elks Rent Party Garden Community garden whose produce goes to food banks. Contact Karen Rutberg, at klrutberg@aol.com.

Speakers Bureau is part of our community outreach. Choose a topic of interest and become an active speaker. Contact Jan Zientek at Zientek@NJAES.Rutgers.edu and let him know what topics you can give programs on to other organizations.

The Teaching Garden

At Presby Memorial Iris Garden in Montclair. Contact Fred Solomine at fsolomine@gmail.com.

Save the Date

April 6-8, SEPOS Orchid Show-Greater Philadelphia EXPO Center, Oaks, PA, \$10 Admission

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April 14, MGEC General Meeting, Kathy Sauerborn—Hummingbirds

April 28, Earth Day at Essex County Environmental Center- Garibaldi Hall

May 4 & 5, MGEC Plant Sale, Presby Iris Gardens

May 12, MGEC Plant Sale, Garibaldi Hall

March 24 MG Mercer County Symposium, Stewart Country Day School, Princeton, [Fee]

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May 4 & 5, MGEC Plant Sale, Presby Iris Gardens

May 12, MGEC Plant Sale, Garibaldi Hall

Hunterdon- 20 Master Gardeners graduated from training and are ready to hit the ground running with our Outreach Teams and Helpline in April. Workshops and presenters for Master Gardeners have been very well received, topics included Foodscaping, Hazelnut research, Garden Tool safety, and Pruning Demonstrations.

Mercer - Our annual symposium registered 304 people, and 296 attended. Thanks to fine weather and great speakers, it was a success. All the attendees seemed very pleased with the speakers, the facilities, the book signings and sales, and even the food. There were some computer hiccups, but all were overcome quickly.

In honor of Barbara Bromley's long years of service and impending retirement, we are having a celebration to honor her. It will be held on July 12, in the Mercer Oaks golf course clubhouse in West Windsor. This follows our popular annual "Evening in the Garden", held annually at MEG, on July 11.

Since our program began 25 years ago last fall, we are also planning a series of small events to celebrate the anniversary, spread throughout the year.

Our current class of interns has completed Helpline training and is now beginning their compost training. They are enthusiastic and very involved in the organization.

The annual Plant Expo will take place on May 5, from 9 am until 2 pm, at MEG. This will feature plants donated by Rutgers Master Gardeners, and plants supplied by a number of selected vendors. Some 31 varieties of tomatoes, and also peppers, will be available. Workdays at MEG have begun to prepare the site for the sale, and for spring and summer programs.

During the March 27 tour of Winterthur, the weather did not cooperate. Where is spring?

On April 24, there will be a tour of Jenkins Arboretum, hopefully with spring weather for a change.

Our April meeting program featured George Coombs, the Manager of Horticultural Research at Mt. Cuba in Delaware. He gave an excellent presentation, entitled "Knockout Natives", describing their plant trials program. This grows and assesses many varieties of native perennials (and a few annuals) for hardiness, disease resistance, value to pollinators, flowering, and many other traits. Reports of their conclusions are available for free download on their website.

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Middlesex - The horticultural therapy group at St Peters Adult Day Care Center has been busy planting baby spider plants in hand decorated terra cotta flowerpots to take home for the holidays. They have been planning their raised vegetable garden and are looking forward to spring.

On March 20, 2018 the Middlesex County Master Gardeners held an auction as a fundraiser, An enormous amount of items were donated by master gardeners, auctioned off by Master Gardeners and purchased by Master Gardeners.

Monmouth – On March 15th Monmouth County School Programs Committee hosted our first-class trip of 45 sixth graders from Atlantic Highlands to our Ag. Building for a day of crafts set up in stations geared to teach children about the different avenues that horticulture, science and nature can offer. The day was well received, and we were asked if the school might return next year.

Monmouth County hosted their 4th annual Spring Garden Conference on March 23rd to 120 educators offering topics from growing tomatoes to hydroponics and Aeroponics in the classroom. All presentations were specifically chosen to be used by educators either in or out of a classroom. Thank you to Ellen Simonetti, Robert Mellert and Bill Sciarappa for giving excellent presentations that day!

Our Helpline has been busy as well as our Speakers Bureau. A new presentation was vetted on Hummingbirds and looks to be a popular one. Our Trips and Tours Committee went to the Philadelphia Flower Show and will be going to Mt. Cuba the end of April. A new committee as of last year, the Member Education Committee, was made specifically to provide educational drive-yourself day trips for our members. So far, they have been to the Beneficial Insect Lab that specifically rears beneficial and pest insects with the agenda of using beneficials to control the pests in lieu of chemicals. The last trip was to Jackson, NJ for a tour of the NJ Forest Tree Nursery and Education Center preceded by a tour of the Rutgers Soil Testing and Plant Diagnostic Lab. This committee has been a wonderful addition to our program! Out in the gardens things are being pruned between snowstorms and under the watchful eyes of our in-house expert, Bob Magovern. The PAR is currently under way as our new class goes over last year's plantings for crop rotation and planning for this year's crops (hope the produce is heavy!). Our Horticulture Enrichment Committee is currently working with a group of 16 at Monmouth Crossing Facility on propagation. As there were as many MGs as attendees, each member had a one-on-one experience. The program has been very successful and well received. So much so, we have requests coming in for future seasons or whenever there is availability! Thanks to all!

At our last general meeting, John Black of the NJ Native Plant Society, spoke on "Spiders" ...he was a fantastic speaker on the topic! When you have a night meeting, and everyone stays an extra half hour because they are captivated by the speaker's knowledge of the topic and has made something most are afraid of very interesting, you've got a hit!

Coming up is our free annual Spring Symposium held on Saturday, April 14th and offering a day of presentations from gardening tips and secrets to hummingbirds geared to pique the interest of all attending! And, on April 28th our Junior Master Gardener Program will begin its 8-week program with 18 new children ages 9-11.

Morris

Speakers Bureau: The Speakers Bureau has almost fifty presentations scheduled for 2018 with more requests still coming in They also held a presentation in March, for Rutgers Master Gardeners to socialize and attain a CEU which was attended by 40 Rutgers Master Gardeners.

Horticultural Enrichment Program: We still have an extra team and are looking at adding a ninth site to add to our venues. The feedback has been very positive.

Talks & Conferences: Morris County held its 8th Annual Community Garden Conference on March 4, 2018. This is a joint venture between the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Morris County and the Frelinghuysen Arboretum.

Plant Sale: We have all of our interns signed-up to volunteer at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum's annual plant sale. This is usually the first opportunity for the current interns to volunteer. The Plant sale is from May 4-6 and all are welcome.

Helpline: Began on Monday April 2, 2018.

Rutgers Master Gardener classes: Our 22 interns have completed the classroom portion of their training. They are anxiously awaiting volunteer opportunities to share their new-found knowledge.

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Snyder Farm: Two WPS (worker protection standard) training classes were given in March, which is mandatory training for working in the greenhouses or in the fields at Snyder Farm. One more class might be scheduled in the near future.

Projects We are currently working on three new projects for this year.

- A pollinator garden at the Great Swamp
- Planting shade loving, native, bird attracting plants at the Raptor Trust.
- Having RMG's search the entire community gardens where our demonstration plots are in order to identify and correct pest and diseases problems as they arise.

Ocean – In Ocean County, our greenhouse teams are busy nurturing flowers and vegetables to sell at our plant sale in May. Our new Herb hoop house is ready for the Herb team to occupy with their plants. Shrub garden started spring chores as the weather permits.

Our Intern's training in Helpline volunteering went well. They received their revised class schedule for April dates because of two snow days.

The Display Garden in front of our Ag. Building has had several weather delays affecting their spring cleanup. However, once they start, they will have Interns helping on a rotating schedule. This is new for the 2018 Interns.

April is full of many opportunities to volunteer with all the various county events related to Earth & Arbor days. Speakers' Bureau has 16 presentations scheduled, eight of which are during Earth Week.

The IPM Committee is having an evening session, open to the public on April 22nd. The Advanced Training Committee has organized an "all-day" training, June 21st with the theme "Horticultural Therapy".

Passaic – The current Master Gardener Coordinator has resigned. Amy Rowe the Extension Director will try to fill the vacancy as soon as possible. She will finish this year's intern class. The Master Gardeners of Passaic need to vacate the Nike building by April 30th. A search is on to locate places for the Help Line, plant sale and the vegetable garden. The plant sale will be held at the Dey Mansion in Wayne.

We will be participating in William Paterson's Green A-Fair with a display of MG projects. Will also be working with Passaic County to create a Native Plant Demonstration Garden in Garrett Mountain. Master Gardeners will be working with students from Montclair State who will assist with the Morris Canal Park Project. There will be a teaching class starting with weeds.

A trip is being planned to White Flower Farms the end of June.

We will also be joining Bergen County this month for a program by Leslie Parness on "Medicinal Plants Used During the Civil War"

Somerset– Somerset Master gardeners are in the midst of offering an internal plant sale. It is only for the members of the group. Plants will be purchased to order by mail and will be available for pick-up at the May meeting of the group. This is a way of raising money for further education of our members. Unfortunately, due to the snow storm on March 21 and 22, the pruning even at Snyder farms had to be cancelled and rescheduled for a future date. Teams are moving along smoothly. A few teams have changed leadership.

Somerset "Helpline" is functioning even in the cold winter months and is well staffed. Our speaker at the March general meeting was Carole Stober, a master gardener from Hunterdon County. Carole spoke on the care and idiosyncrasies of orchids.

Sussex– Sussex County MGs are busily learning how to navigate through My Volunteer Page, an easy to use program for tracking education and volunteer hours that was recently implemented. Members can schedule their volunteer hours, get email reminders and quickly log times spent in county Master Gardener activities. The site is also a stop for learning about educational opportunities and signing up for various classes offered to gain continuing education hours.

Our 2018 Intern Classes are again being offered in the evening. We have 22 individuals completing the coursework, some of whom will continue on to become new Master Gardeners. The participants are enthusiastic and engaged. Our County Agent and MG Coordinator are providing most of the instruction in these classes. Hopefully, the snow will end soon in the north to prevent disruption to activities and events.

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Our Recognition Dinner will be held in April, wherein members will receive various recognition awards for outstanding leadership and service in the county Master Gardener program.

Union – McKinley Elementary School STEAM program: MG Dan Black was co-chair for the second year, and gave a presentation on Rain Gardens. John Evangelista, MG class 2018, had a demo on Hydroponics. Three Master Tree Stewards and Jim Nichnadowicz, head of the Union County 4H gave presentations as well.

A thank you note was received by Union County Coordinator, Madeline DiNardo from the McKinley PTO and school community for the presentations by the MGs at their STEAM Night on Jan. 18, 2018.

Union County Master Gardeners welcomed three new Board members: 2nd VP – Dan Black; 3rd VP - Ann Burgmeyer; and Corresponding Secretary- Indira Govindan. New officers were installed and attended their first Board Meeting on February 21, 2018.

A Home Gardeners School Scholarship was awarded to one of our Master Gardeners.

The Demonstration Garden sustained some storm damage from the March Nor'easters. There were four trees that came down and broke fences. Damage was sustained by both the Sharing Garden and Herb Garden. Union County will remove the trees. Spring cleaning up of the DG has finally begun. Seeds have been started for the Spring Fair and some pepper seedlings have been transplanted.

Committee heads made recommendations for Annual State MG Fall Conference honorees (MGANJ Award for Excellence), the Wesley Philo Award nominations, and a list of MG's that qualify for The President's Volunteer Service Awards.

A Grants Summary Document was prepared and submitted by T.J. Karns. Thanks to her efforts over the past few years we have been able to obtain many grants from different organizations for various MG projects.

The new MG Class had two "Job Fair" Chairperson Meetings. They learned about the many groups available both in the Demonstration Garden and out, such as the Helpline, Horticultural Therapy, Community Beautification, etc.

Wild Earth Day will be on Sunday, April 29, 2018, at Trailside. Our Demonstration Garden will be open to the public and MG volunteers will be available for tours.

Richard Leister, Union County MG President announced that the town of Berkeley Heights may be starting a community garden. If so, he will ask for MG to advise on the program.

ADJOURNMENT: At 12:15 PM

Respectfully Submitted
Tricia Deering, Recording Secretary