

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of November 12, 2020 RMGANJ Meeting

Pat Schanzlin called the Webex meeting to order at 9:05 am. Pat reported that Deirdre Gallagher had a family emergency and could not attend the meeting. Deirdre had called her that morning to ask her to run the meeting. Midway through the meeting, Tricia Deering took over because Pat's connection was poor. Pat also reported that Jan Zientek was unable to attend because he was taking a short leave of absence to take care of family matters after the death of his father. Nick Polanin was attending the meeting instead of Jan.

Secretary's Minutes from October 2020 RMGANJ Meeting: Tricia Deering, Recording Secretary, reported that she had emailed out version 2 of the October RMGANJ minutes after receiving some minor changes. A motion to accept version 2 of the minutes was made, seconded and approved.

Attendance:

Atlantic:	
Bergen:	Karen Pennell
Burlington:	Merry Bogert, Nick Hendershot
Camden:	Tom Gurenlian, Judy Kelley
Cumberland:	Betsey Simpson, Keiko Warner
Essex:	Terry Felper; Alice Poueymirou
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodman
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata
Middlesex:	Jerri Barclay, Kathy Dopart
Monmouth:	Bob Magovern, Bill Schutte, Gayle Williams
Morris:	Diane Muenzin
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn
Passaic:	
Somerset:	Cindy Hedin
Sussex:	Pat Schanzlin
Union:	Dolores Batz-Culp, Deb Murphy
Rutgers University:	Nick Polanin

TREASURER'S REPORT: Roberta Quinn, Treasurer, reported that the current balance is \$14,018.30 which is no change from the prior month. A motion to accept was made, seconded and approved.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: No report.

MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Nick Polanin reported that Rutgers University Policy regarding the pandemic continues with the prohibition of non-essential, in person events by Rutgers faculty, staff and volunteers through winter 2021 and until further notice. All spring classes are currently planned to be online except for those that require on-campus facilities such as labs.

Nick reported that the coordinators are moving forward with the common Master Gardener New Class curriculum development, which should be ready for the late winter/spring.

Nick also reported that Bruce Crawford is Rutgers State Program Leader in Home and Public Horticulture and is leading development of in-depth classes.

Nick suggested moving to Zoom rather than Webex. Rutgers has both Webex and Zoom licenses. Many find it easier to use than Webex. The group agreed with moving to Zoom.

Old Business

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Nominating Committee: The nominating committee reported on the status of identifying a slate for the December officer election. They have a candidate for Vice-President but still need a candidate for Recording Secretary. They have spoken to 20 members. If anyone is interested or has a suggestion they should contact Karen Pennell at pennellfamily@gmail.com or Jerri Barclay at jerribarclay@me.com. Tricia Deering provided a brief overview of the job. She uses MS Word on her laptop and starts with the prior month's minutes and edits them. For the virtual meetings she just looks at the list of attendees online and updates the prior minutes as needed asking questions for clarification if necessary. She said she is not a good typist, so she usually just types in some key words and fills in the blanks/complete sentences later. Since everyone sends her the county reports on-line, she just copies them into the minutes. It is not particularly difficult.

Conference Planning:

Terry Felper reported that she pulled together the list of the members of the Conference Planning Committee. She gave it to Tricia Deering, who sent it out to the group. The list has members from all counties except Middlesex, Passaic and Somerset. Cindy Hedin volunteered to be the representative from Somerset and Kathy Dopart and Jerri Barclay will decide on the member from Middlesex between them and get back to Terry. Terry still needs to hear from Passaic. It has been difficult to get some counties to respond to her requests for names.

Some one asked who is the committee lead? Dave Parsons had been the lead, but he has stepped down from the position. A new leader needs to be identified, as do team member roles and responsibilities.

Joe D'Errico is working on a proposal for having one webinar in May to help keep interest up and keep Master Gardeners engaged but he was not in attendance at the meeting. Pat Schanzlin reported in the chat that his proposal is under development.

Bylaws Committee: Nick Hendershot reported that the Bylaws Committee is still working on the updates to the Bylaws. They are adding detail about responsibilities/duties and are working on changing the officer positions to the "Leadership Committee" model which was proposed and discussed at the last October meeting.

Suzanne Keane reported that the committee will be sending out a draft of the new Bylaws for the December meeting and asked that the members look for it in their email.

New Business

Tricia Deering reported that Dennis Lenahan let the officers know that he will no longer be able to be a member of the RMGANJ State Board due to his ongoing health issues. Everyone wishes him well. Tricia will be sending out an updated delegate list to reflect the change.

Tricia also reported that currently all emails to the group are coming from her because Deirdre is having trouble with Google Groups and is unable to send out emails to the group. Tricia is also making all updates to the google group for which Dennis recently gave her access.

Betty Scarlata reported that the Mercer March conference has been canceled and is being rescheduled as an in-person conference in the fall. The date will not conflict with the state conference.

Caring and Sharing:

Betty Scarlata reported that they moved from a paper rolodex to an online rolodex for their Helpline several years ago and have also had a database with online access for years. They have documents that have been scanned but have not been updated for years and are now in the process of replacing them with updated documents or ones from other sources. She asked what other counties are doing, where they get most of their information to respond to client questions, what sites do they use, how do they deal with the problem with new MGs who forget the rules, etc.

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Nick Polanin reported that Somerset now has a virtual team and has gone paperless. When they open in person again – they plan to go paperless to the extent possible. They even have “canned” answers to common questions that can be replied to by his admin. Several counties reported that they supplement the Rutgers Fact Sheets with fact sheets from other AG Schools that are roughly in the same climate and do not have pesticide information in them. Also, some non-edu web sites can be extremely useful. Several counties also have searchable databases.

Betty asked members to send her more information privately if they have it.

It was suggested that it would be useful to develop a bank of standardized answers to commonly asked questions that can be used across the state. Nick suggested that this would be a good project for the State Board.

COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Atlantic – no report.

Bergen

Our guest speaker for the October virtual meeting, Michael Mitchell, has been the owner/operator of Rose Gardens by Michael since 1997. He designs, builds, and maintains both public and private rose gardens. While these gardens incorporate all kinds of plants, roses are the predominant flower. Roses produce their own “antifreeze” to protect the plant. Michael discussed when roses go dormant and a step-by-step analysis of preparing your roses for winter

Our wonderful writers and editor continue to produce the newsletter each month with articles of interest and notifications of online webinars.

All volunteer sites are closed per RCE policy.

Burlington – no report

Camden

The following are taking place:

Continued Weekly Webex Check-ins.

Continued Weekly Webex book club meetings: Current Book: Bringing Nature Home by Douglas W. Tallamy

Continued Utilizing RC Extension Online Programs: RU Ready to Garden
Soil Lectures Series
And others based on interest.

Cumberland

Master Gardener: Highlights for October 2020

- Offer research based educational opportunities to the MG's from a variety of resources; the majority of these are free
- State Webex meetings included: State MG Program Coordinators meeting; State MG Mission Statement discussion
- Hosted MG Monthly meeting with 12 attendees
- Hosted Book discussion on Doug Tallamy's Nature Best Hope with 1 attendee/speaker

Home Horticulture: Highlights for October 2020

- 16 radio spots were recorded for POP 99.9 FM Power of Positivity
 - live-streams on Facebook and Comcast Channel 22
- 29 Facebook posts with 993 reached and 116 engagements, per data retrieved from Facebook
 - “Reached” is the number of people who saw the content
 - “Engagements” is any action someone take

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- Researched and provided 15 recommendations for inquiries from clients on the Helpline
- One 400-word article published in the Reminder on “Soil Testing”
- Continue with seed saving project for 2021 gardens
- Started compendium of photos from on-site gardens at RCE
- Cleared pathways of Pollinator Garden
- Tagged 2 monarchs

Essex - no report.

Hunterdon

Our Helpline continues to answer questions.

Our Backyard Scientist continue to post information on the RCEofHC Facebook page.

Our Steering Committee continues to meet via Webex.

The upcoming deadline for our Newsletter is 12/1

Our last General Meeting speaker was Bruce Crawford on Hydrangeas.

Our Speakers Bureau is active with online talks for various organizations

Mercer

We continue to hold Executive Board and General Meetings via Zoom. Our November General Meeting was this past Monday and included a presentation by Master Gardener Dr. Angelina Dugan on Pesticide Safety and the Risk Assessment Process. It was very informative. The December Executive and General Membership meetings will be in the evening on December 07.

Helpline inquiries from the public through email to the county horticulturist are slowing with the cooler weather.

Our county horticulturalist taught a three-part Princeton Adult School course (via Zoom). She was assisted by five Mercer Master Gardeners. Topics included “Leave the Leaves,” composting including vermiculture and bin choices, and birds we can look forward to seeing in the winter and how to make sure we provide the water, shelter and food that they will need.

Our horticulturalist has scheduled Zoom training for Mercer MGs to fully utilize Zoom platform capabilities for our Committee chairs.

Rutgers Environmental Stewards Commencement was held November 9 with the first Mercer students participating.

We continue to send information to our Constant Contact list. Our recent flyer was on timely tips for November gardening and thirteen online webinar opportunities. Included gardening tips were a checklist of things to do before winter, leaving the leaves, planting now including bulbs and a link to the NJ Fertilizer Law Restrictions for Homeowners. The final reminder was to leave seed heads and stalks for birds and insects.

Our Community Education committee is sponsoring a free Zoom presentation on November 19, 7:00 PM, entitled “Regional Riches: Places to Go, Gardens to See” presented by Mercer MG Nora Sirbaugh. Visit mgofmc.org to register.

Middlesex

There are two more classes in the RU Ready to Garden series featuring Master Gardeners on a variety of seasonal topics. All the webinars are free and open to everyone. Interested participants can visit tinyurl.com/middlesexcountygrows for registration information

1. Thursday, November 12 6:30 pm Lessons from a Virtual Tour of the EARTH Center Gardens
2. Thursday, November 19 6:30 pm Caring for Indoor House Plants

On Tuesday October 27 we held our annual “Halloween Howl at the Moon” meeting virtually. It’s usually held in the evening in the gardens but like everything else this year that was not possible. We made the best of it with costumes, spooky poetry and refreshments from our own kitchens.

Our next virtual meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2020.

Monmouth

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Monmouth County continues to meet virtually for General Meetings and this month our featured speaker is Diane Wilkerson from the Jersey Shore Rose Society speaking on "Selecting Roses for Success". In the past few weeks, four of our Master Gardeners participated in the RCE of Monmouth County virtual series called 'Bringing Home the Harvest', where each department (4-H, FCHS, and Ag/MG) led an evening of talks every Wednesday in October. On the FCHS night, our Herb Committee presented 'Marigolds as Herbs', highlighting the use of Marigolds in the 'Day of the Dead' celebration in Mexican culture. On Ag night, our Speakers Bureau presented 'Fall Gardening in Containers' and 'Sweater Weather – Keep Calm and Garden On'. On 4-H night, coordinator Diane Larson presented 'Crazy for Cucurbits', and our School Program Committee presented 'Spiders Aren't So Spooky'. Looking forward, our Speakers Bureau is discussing the possibility of holding a virtual 'Spring Garden Symposium'.

Morris

IPM Team Report

The IPM Team has completed another year of informative reports on pests and diseases. The weekly reports are sent to 35 Community Garden managers, all Morris County RMG's, and the State Coordinators.

Helpline Report

Big thanks to Sally Hensen and Tracy Wadhams for monitoring the helpline remotely with all the challenges that entails this year. As of November 2, 2020, we will answer questions on a weekly basis until April 1, 2021

Speakers Bureau Report

Our Speakers Bureau has transitioned to giving their presentations on Zoom and attendance has never been higher.

Intern Project

All the intern RMG's were recently sent a project they could do at home by themselves to earn some of the volunteer hours needed to fulfill their initial volunteer commitment hours. We only had 6 interns complete the project so that is a little disappointing. I hope we are not losing interest by interns because of Covid-19.

The Community Garden Conference

The 11th Annual Community Garden Conference is scheduled for March 6, 2021 and will be held on Zoom. Three of the pre-recorded side sessions will be presented by Morris County Master Gardeners. They are a seed starting presentation, a how to get the most out of your Community Garden plot presentation, and a presentation from the IPM Team with connections to their three years of data and solutions.

Herbaceous Plant List

We are in the final stages of completing our Herbaceous Plant List with over 600 plants to be used by the Helpline and RMG's in general for finding the right plant for the right spot.

Ocean

Nothing to report.

Passaic – no report

Somerset – no report

Sussex

Nothing to report. Sussex has suspended all activities.

Union – no report.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 9:45 am. The next meeting is 12/10 /2020 at 9 am. Webex or Zoom TBD.

Respectfully Submitted

Tricia Deering, Recording Secretary

RMGANJ November 12, 2020 Minutes Final

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