

## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

### Minutes of February 11, 2021 RMGANJ Meeting

Deirdre Gallagher called the Webex meeting to order at 9:05 am and welcomed the group to the meeting. She welcomed a new face: Suzanne Danzig, an alternate from Bergen County.

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

#### **Attendance:**

Atlantic:	
Bergen:	Karen Pennell, Suzanne Danzig
Burlington:	Merry Bogert
Cumberland:	Betsey Simpson, Keiko Warner
Essex:	Terry Felper; Alice Poueymirou
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodman
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata, Sudi Solomon
Middlesex:	Jerri Barclay, Kathy Dopart
Monmouth:	Bob Magovern, Bill Schutte, Gayle Williams
Morris:	Deirdre Gallagher, Diane Muenzin
Ocean:	Michael Hogan, Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn, Susan Reese
Passaic:	
Somerset:	Cindy Hedin
Sussex:	
Union:	Dolores Batz-Culp, Deborah Murphy
Rutgers University:	Jan Zientek

**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:** Deidre Gallagher reported in Old Business below.

**MASTER GARDENER COORDINATOR'S REPORT:** Jan Zientek reported Rutgers' reopening plans have not changed, but there is optimism that the end of the spring semester will see changes. The Spring Seed Starting project is moving ahead. Rutgers 250 tomato seed will be distributed through MG coordinators. Plans for the distribution will be worked out after next week's coordinators' meeting. Resulting plants will be identified as a Master Gardener effort. MG volunteers may count hours for seed-starting work. Master Gardeners' hours requirements for 2021 have been suspended, but folks should record hours for work done. There are several county online opportunities: Rutgers Gardening Education Series at <http://www.cpe.rutgers.edu/HGSatHome/> ; Union County's Tuesday mornings online training; Essex County has 145 participants in evening sessions, also Saturday morning sessions are available (<https://mgsex.org/calendar/>).

#### **Old Business:**

**By-Law revisions** were distributed via email. There were no questions, comments or objections. The motion to accept the by-law revisions as emailed was made (Suzanne Keane) and seconded (Terri Felper). The motion carried.

Deidre put forth 3 topics to be discussed:

##### **1. Plan 2021 Conference:**

Why? What is the purpose of the conference? To highlight and honor Master Gardeners and their activities? To provide continuing education?

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When? Gayle Williams suggested that October 2021 seems to be the better time. Gardening activities are winding down then. A spring date would find most of us very busy.  
How? If Rutgers' closure policies continue, an online format would be our only option.

The FaceBook Committee plan advanced at the last meeting did not materialize. Deidre asked for volunteers to work on planning the conference. Volunteers to help on a Planning Committee included Terry Felper, Roberta Quinn, and Keiko Warner. Potential speakers contacted previously might be available for online presentations (WebEx or Zoom). Roberta suggested that since hours requirements have been suspended, there is no need for a continuing education component.

### 2. Explore furthering the goals and exposure of Master Gardeners and their projects -- How can we increase the visibility of Master Gardeners?

Jan offered the comment that "...we do not value our volunteers," but illustrated (maps attached) that Master Gardeners volunteer many hours to projects and activities, and there is a societal and monetary value to those hours. Brian Schilling, Director of Cooperative Extension, and Christopher Molloy, Chancellor of Rutgers are aware of the Master Gardeners' efforts.

### 3. Communication of Master Gardeners' efforts & achievements

Deidre emphasized the need to get the word out about Master Gardener activities and offerings, to assist the coordinators and RCE in promoting the Master Gardener program. It was suggested there should be an overarching web page to enable the public to connect to the various county MG groups, especially since there are so many virtual options available. Jan mentioned the Wisconsin Master Gardeners' exemplary web presence, but said there was little hope that Rutgers would/could provide any technological support. It was suggested that Rutgers students might be available to assist with technology. Alice Poueymirou offered to help

Dolores requested that RMGANJ switch to different platform for meetings—WebEx is too quirky. Could the meetings be held via Zoom? Deidre said we could explore switching to Zoom.

Betty Scarlata commented that Mercer uses Constant Contact to email their newsletter to 1,800 people notifying them about events. There have been 100s of responses including many from beyond New Jersey.

Roberta Quinn requested some guidance regarding the budget that she is scheduled to present at the March meeting since there will be no or minimal conference expenses.

### **COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:**

**Atlantic** – no report.

**Bergen**--The January meeting was held virtually. Arnie Friedman presented: "Water in the Garden "Water. Water has been a key element in gardens from ancient times to the present. Arnie's presentation surveys water's historic importance in the history of garden design and the lessons home gardeners can apply to their own landscape. Arnie, Class of 2004, is a New York Botanical Garden- certified landscape designer and former NYBG instructor. He is the owner of Landscapes by Design.

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** -- MGs present an "Ask a Master Gardener" program the first Wednesday of every month and have been doing so since May 2020. Burlington County MGs have also given virtual presentations, such as "Plants with Winter Interest" on January 27 and "Early Garden Planning (starting seeds)" on January

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20, 2020. A future presentation "Prepping Your Garden For Spring," is planned for February 17, 2021. All of the virtual presentations are through the Moorestown Library.

### **Cumberland -- Master Gardener: Highlights for January 2021**

- Hosted MG Monthly meeting with 17 attendees
- Spoke with Wheaton Arts and learned there will not be an EcoFair in 2021
- 3 Prop Team Members organized a seed giveaway for MG's from 2020 seeds of tomatoes, basil and zinnias using safe covid practices

### **Home Horticulture: Highlights for January 2021**

- 16 radio spots were recorded for POP 99.9 FM Power of Positivity
  - live-streams on facebook, webpage and Comcast Channel 22
- 36 Facebook posts with 1345 reached and 119 engagements, per data retrieved from Facebook
  - "Reached" is the number of people who saw the content
  - "Engagements" is any action someone take
- Researched and provided recommendations for 6 inquiries from clients on the Helpline
- Collaborated with other counties to prepare for the Gardening Education 2021 class
- Started communication with Cumberland County Library for a possible virtual on-line garden program

**Essex** - no report.

### **Hunterdon**

Our Steering committer continue to meet via webex on a monthly basis.

We continue to have great speakers via zoom and webex for continuing education.

Our backyard scientist continue to post interesting observations on our face book lpage.

Many of our teams are meeting virtually.

### **Mercer**

Our February General Zoom Meeting was Monday, February 1, with 108 members participating. Our 2021 Goals and Objectives were approved after the second reading, as per our bylaws.

The January 30th Community Education webinar, Veggie Basics I, presented by Coordinator Margaret Pickoff and RMG Mike Gliddon, was a tremendous success with 630 registrations received. Margaret thanked her co-presenter as well as our Community Education co-chairs for their outstanding work coordinating the event. Unfortunately, the Zoom platform currently available to us only has capacity for 300 participants, so Margaret is looking into other platform options for future programs. The first 300 registrants to log on were able to view the presentation live, and the remaining 330 registrants received a link to the recording.

Seventeen Interns from the Class of 2020 participated in a meeting with our Coordinator and President. They are eager to remain involved until such time as they can complete their training. In the spring, our coordinator will be meeting regularly with the Intern Class to review class material and plan for training.

The Coordinator has also met with the Helpline Committee Co-Chairs to explore further virtual options that can be utilized even after our in-person volunteer restrictions are lifted, and to brainstorm for ways to get more RMGs involved in Helpline.

It was announced there will be no Plant Expo in spring 2021. There is interest in continuing the informal, contactless plant exchanges that helped keep the county's MGs connected during the pandemic.

The first class of the 2021 Rutgers Environmental Stewards began last week.

Our February public newsletter featured information on pruning and the Rutgers Plant and Pest Advisory Bulletin and highlighted twenty webinars for February. Upcoming February 25<sup>th</sup> will be a webinar hosted

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by Mercer County Master Gardeners on “Deer Resistant Garden Design” presented by garden designer and author Karen Chapman.

Our February meeting program was given by a Master Gardener from the RMG Class of 2005. Presented an excellent and informative program adapted from one of the presentations available through our Speakers Bureau: “Success with keeping and overwintering plants indoors.”

**Middlesex** no report

### **Monmouth**

Monmouth County continues to meet virtually for their monthly general meetings. As we are not able to have our Symposium due to COVID restrictions, we came up with virtual presentations starting Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, when we had the first of four Coffee Talks for Home Gardeners given by our Master Gardeners Speakers Bureau. Saturday’s talk entitled, “Let’s Talk Tomatoes”, which was given by Laura Dreifus who gave good practices for successfully growing tomatoes as well as giving attendees different ways of preserving them and trying new varieties such as dwarf tomatoes. We had over 300 register from several counties and even out of state! It was very successful and we will have a Coffee Talk every Saturday for the remainder of February. Congratulations Laura, Debbie LaGattuta and Diane Larson for organizing the Coffee Talks and fielding questions asked by attendees!

On another note, our periodical, Garden Vision, continues to come out with articles written and photos submitted by MGs. There are also pictures of “days gone by” where events we’ve had are featured such as the County Fair, Spring Garden Days and Bugs, Birds and Beyond. It is always good seeing good times with our Master Gardener friends!

Further, our Speakers Bureau continues to give virtual talks to garden clubs throughout the county and some have been booked a year in advance with the hope that they could be done in person when it’s safe. As of February 10<sup>th</sup> our Helpline Roundtable resumed virtually lead by Diane Larson, our coordinator, reviewing the Rutgers Pest Management and Control manual. Although we are not in session and cannot work the helpline, a good review was just what we needed so that we were all on the same page with how to use the manual efficiently.

Like the rest of the counties, we have discussed the possibility of having our Spring Garden Day Sale with the likelihood that it will not materialize this year. Along with that, we will also not be having our Junior Master Gardener Program. We are all hoping that as many people as possible will be vaccinated as soon as possible and that the virus will be stopped in its tracks and we can all get together again! We are hoping that we might at least work the gardens at our Ag. Building sometime this summer.

### **Morris**

#### **11<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Garden Conference.**

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Garden Conference is being held virtually this year on Saturday March 6, 2021. Please visit the website below for details and the cost of the program this year is 25.00.

Visit [www.arboretumfriends.org](http://www.arboretumfriends.org) to register and for more information.--

Call 862.325.7754 with any questions

### **Helpline Report**

The Helpline is currently pretty slow but the incoming questions and samples are still being answered remotely at least one a week by the Helpline mentors.

### **Speakers Bureau Report**

The Morris County Speakers Bureau has 39 presentations scheduled for 2021. Three new talks have been developed and approved in the last few months, and have already been requested. All the Speaker Bureau presentations are being delivered virtually this year.

### **On-line Class**

We are currently offering the “Rutgers Gardening Educational Series” an on-line program in conjunction with 5 other counties. In Morris County, we are providing this program for educational purposes only and not as part of the Master Gardener program.

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### New Project for Morris County Rutgers Master Gardeners

We are working on a project where Master Gardeners can identify plants in County Parks and upload the pictures and plant ID information to Inaturalist. We hope to eventually have listings of plants found in many of the County parks here in Morris County. This project can be accomplished using all the social distancing rules currently in place.

**Ocean** - Ocean County has nothing to report this month.

**Passaic** –no report

### **Somerset** –

RMGSC's Advisory Council has continued to meet monthly via Zoom. The search for a person to fill Joe Gyurian's position as Environmental Coordinator continues, the field of applicants has been narrowed to 3. When the county approves, an offer will be made to the top candidate. Hopefully someone will be on board by June or July.

A nominating committee is developing a slate of candidates for open office positions.

Hours requirements, especially for interns from Class of '20 & '19, were discussed.

Better Impact training continues.

Will there be a Class of '22? If so, the New Class Team will begin planning, perhaps for a September start since there are 20 people interested. January '22 may be a more realistic target.

HelpLine questions are being responded to, thanks to our Office Assistant's help forwarding questions.

*In The Garden*, our newsletter, appears regularly as the Team works diligently to publish interesting, timely research articles, members' photos and activities updates.

**Sussex** – All activities cancelled due to Covid-10.

### **Union**— HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020

AWARDS: Tina Helmstetter is the 2020 recipient of the Wesley Philo Award. The 2020 Award for Excellence recipients are Laurie Westra, and the newly formed Docent Committee. Joanne Krueger received the 2020 Rutgers Cooperative Extension Award for Excellence Volunteer. is to recognize faculty, staff and volunteers who demonstrate outstanding performance and creativity, and their contribution to RCE, how it has resulted in a positive change or has made a significant impact and enhanced RCE at a local county, state and/or national level. Joanne has dedicated an impressive 11,862 hours over 30 years promoting the mission of Rutgers Cooperative Extension for, among other accomplishments: works full-time as a professional conference organizer; has served as 1st Vice President and 2nd President of Union County's Master Gardener Executive Board; returned to serve as Secretary and Treasurer; wrote the first edition of the planning manual for the annual State Master Gardener conference as a board member. Krueger's efforts helped to lay the foundation for the Master Gardener program. She is an engaging and inspirational leader. Madeleine Flahive DiNardo says, "Her professionalism and advocacy with local supporters and legislators has made the Master Gardener program an integral part of Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Union County."

<https://sebsnjaesnews.rutgers.edu/2020/02/awards-bestowed-at-rutgers-cooperative-extension-annual-conference/#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20Rutgers,at%20a%20local%20county%2C%20state>

DEMONSTRATION GARDEN: closed since March of 2020 Deb Murphy and Dolores Batz-Culp planted, fertilized and cared for twenty pots of three varieties of caladiums with Kathleen Murray, intended for the Spring Plant Fair. A wheelchair accessible potting bench was purchased for indoor and outdoor gardening. Union County cut up and took away a fallen Norway Spruce. Joanne Krueger, Bridget Mracek, Dave Regal, Steve Jurczak, Jerry Mahony, and Uschi Ueltzhoeffer worked with Union County Department of Parks and Recreation's "Adopt a Park" program to check on the garden, and keep it safely

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mowed.

DOCENT: Committee met eleven times to produce a full color Demonstration Garden Tour Brochure.

EDUCATION: November was Jeannie Germia, president of the Garden Club of New Jersey discussed "Paths to Discovery through Outdoor Learning Centers", Liberty State Park, Perfect Together and other projects she has been a part of creating.

EXECUTIVE BOARD: Virtual meetings were held throughout the year with the last being February 6. Board Elections took place by mail and online for four board positions in December 2020. The Executive Board started an initiative to call every Union County Master Gardener to say "hello" and update the MG Directory. UCMG internal and public websites experienced major problems, and are being rebuilt. Communication is being done by email.

HELPLINE: closed since March 2020. Dolores Batz-Culp initiated a publicity program leaving pansies she potted and delivered with a MG Helpline business card on the steps to cheer over 50 residences during the start of the Wuhan Coronavirus Pandemic.

RETIREMENTS: Grant writer and Publicist, T.J. Karns was instrumental in securing much needed funding for major and minor MG projects for many years. Carol Walczuk served on the MG Executive Board for 13 years in various positions. We are grateful for their contributions.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION: Madeline DiNardo hosted a virtual New Year's Party on January 6, where MGs played Horticulture Trivia with a Seek and Show segment. Winners will receive seeds donated by Debra Stuart.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 10:15 am. The next meeting is 3/11/21 at 9 am by Webex.

Respectfully Submitted  
Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary

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