

## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

### Minutes of RMGANJ Meeting May 11 ,2021

Dierdre Gallagher called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:05 am and welcomed the group to the meeting.

**Secretary's Minutes from March and April 2021 RMGANJ Meetings:** Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary, reported that she had emailed the March 2021 RMGANJ minutes after receiving some changes to the county reports. A motion to accept those minutes was made, seconded and carried. The RMGANJ April meeting minutes were emailed Monday, May 10. A motion to accept those minutes with minor changes was made, seconded and carried. Dierdre requested that the approved minutes be emailed to the coordinators.

#### **Attendance:**

Atlantic:	
Bergen:	Herb Arbeiter, Suzanne Danzig
Burlington:	Merry Bogert, Nick Hendershot, Sharon Astorino
Camden:	
Cumberland:	Betsey Simpson, Keiko Warner
Essex:	Alice Poueymirou
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodwin
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata, Sudi Solomon
Middlesex:	Jerri Barclay, Kathy Doport
Monmouth:	Bob Magovern, Bill Schutte, Gayle Williams
Morris:	Deirdre Gallagher
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn
Passaic:	
Somerset:	Cindy Hedin
Sussex:	
Union:	
Rutgers University:	Jan Zientek
Bergen County Hort. Ass't	Karen Riede

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Roberta Quinn, Treasurer, reported that the current balance is \$14,018.30, same as last month .

**MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT:** Jan Zientek reported that Rutgers University policy regarding the pandemic has changed. Outdoor Master Gardener activities may resume at the discretion of the counties. Guidelines for such gatherings will be established locally. Suspension of hours requirements continues until 2022. No Master Gardener is to be asked about their vaccination status.

The Tuesday daytime and Wednesday evening online training sessions are about to wind up. In Essex, about 20% of the attendees seem to be interested in becoming Master Gardeners. Online training may resume in the fall.

In response to a question, Jan stated that recurring events, such as weekly garden maintenance, may be requested for a span of dates (eg.-Mondays & Wednesdays, May-Oct.) as long as the appropriate box is checked on the request form and said form is submitted at least 7 days before the first day of the activity so that each participant will have time to watch the Rutgers 9 minute video. Approval for activities will be from local coordinators. Rain dates could be covered by an email to coordinators. Attendance sheets/Better Impact records will be used for contact tracing. Health assessment form may be photographed/screen shot taken and that shown at the event/activity.

**Old Business:** Celebration Event planning continues. Contact with Rutgers Gardens has been attempted but there have not been any response. Brian Schilling agreed to be our speaker. Several counties have

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committed to displaying their most significant activity. CEUs will not be an issue since hours requirements are still suspended. The present Rutgers group limit of 25 persons may be expanded by the fall. We have to plan as though the event will happen, despite the uncertainty.

Improving the visibility of Master Gardener activities is very difficult because of the limitations of the pandemic situation. Nick asked that all think of ways to reach the public. Any and all suggestions would be welcomed. Gayle outlined Monmouth's Coffee Hours programs which were very well attended. Their events are publicized via their extensive email database compiled over the years from folks attending Monmouth County's events. Suzanne (Ocean) emphasized contacts with public, free calendar. Mercer's monthly newsletter is emailed to 3,100 in their contact database. Counties helping each other. County activities are very different. Contacts with local community gardens.

Flyers at nurseries were suggested, as were tables at farmers' markets.

Judy--Contact local land trusts and establish closer ties to Rutgers' Environmental Stewardship Certificate program

Mercer—seed starting pilot program

**Caring and Sharing:** Betty (Mercer) question--do other counties have a Master Gardener Emeritus category-15 year membership, but want to step back. Should they be considered alumnae? What do Rutgers' official rules say? Bergen—20 years membership + lots of hours, honorary status, pay dues.

Rutgers Gardens does have a pavilion at the Log Cabin.

Save Chat by clicking the ellipsis at the bottom of the Chat, then click "show in Finder/Folder" to see exact location.

### **COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:**

**Atlantic** – no report.

**Bergen**-- Monthly meetings are held virtually.

Guest speaker, Tovah Martin, presented "Houseplants by Design" on April 27. She is the author of several books including; "The Indestructible Houseplant", "The Unexpected Houseplant", and "The New Terrarium". Tovah provided a photo tour of her house and described her design ideas and plant choices. The plant displays were beautiful with a creative use of plant containers.

Volunteer sites remain closed per RCE policy.

Planning for the projects for the Fall Conference are in the early stages.

The "Potting Shed", our monthly newsletter, continues to provide interesting articles and notifications of online events.

**Burlington** – no report

**Camden**

**Cumberland** MG Coordinator - Sal Mangiafico, County Extension Department Head

Cumberland County continues to work on filling the open position for the County Rutgers Master Gardener and Home Horticulture Program Coordinator. We have had the position vacant for about two months and have conducted a search for candidates during this time. We anticipate beginning to conduct interviews in the very near future.

## **Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey**

Broad Street Cemetery, Bridgeton – Jane Hankins

May plantings around the Revolutionary War and Civil War graves and monument has been a long MG tradition.

Unofficially, (not under the umbrella of Master Gardeners), last year Barbara McOscar and I continued this traditional planting wearing masks and social distancing. The red impatiens were a beautiful display all summer long!

This May, we will again unofficially plant impatiens after thinning the ice folly daffodils. We then plan to replant the daffodils bulbs throughout the cemetery.

Greenwood Cemetery, Millville – Carol Henry

Each year, I plant flowers around the Veterans Memorial. I will unofficially continue this tradition this year.

Press – Marianne Bagliani, Sue McKenna, Barbara McOscar

In September, A press release was sent to all media contacts regarding Rutgers EnviroStewards Link.

Sue continues posting pictures on MG Facebook Page.

Meditation Garden – Cheryl Loatman

RCE's Meditation Garden will need to be weeded. The tarp will be removed from our "pond" so our fish will be visible. Anyone interested in working on this garden can contact Cheryl.

Rain Garden – Carol Henry

The rain garden doesn't look too bad. It needs a good weeding and cutting back. I'd like to put some more plants in for color. Anyone interested in working on the Rain Garden can call Carol.

Sunshine – Cheryl Loatman

A get well card was sent to Barbara Paulos.

A sympathy card was sent to Carol Henry on the death of her Mother, and a donation of \$50 was sent to the Make a Wish Foundation in her memory.

A sympathy card was sent to Marianne Bagliani on the death of her Aunt for whom she provided care.

Recognition is to be given to Carol Henry, Jan LoBiondo, Barbara McOscar, Marie Nicke, Steve Ries, Marianne Rozanski, and Pat Stella for the concern and support shown to Barbara Paulos. Their calls and the meals prepared for her brought much sunshine into her life.

Butterfly Tent – Patti Sheppard and Cheryl Loatman

The butterfly tent has been in moth balls for a while. We are looking forward to using the Butterfly Tent when there are activities again in which we can participate. Hopefully this will happen in the near future.

Propagation Team – Betsey Simpson

In January, we distributed tomato, basil, and zinnia seeds to those who wanted them.

Butterfly Garden – Susan McKenna

On March 31st I stopped by the RCE to check out the Butterfly and Pollinator garden. Pam did a good job maintaining it last year so it wasn't too overrun, but things hadn't started growing much by then. I'm sure now that it has warmed up, plants are filling in. Previously, we always scheduled a spring cleanup work day the first week in April.

Last year's stems and stalks will need to be cut down and tidied.

The paths always need to be weeded and the beds edged, especially in the front, (the side facing the building).

I'm sure the honeysuckle and greenbrier are starting to creep into the shrubs that are on the wood's edge. I usually try to weed whack back there.

The forsythia shrubs by the road need a hard pruning. (They were glorious in bloom!)

Just our typical spring clean up! As soon as we are allowed back on the property, we can schedule a day and get to work.

Before the pandemic we had discussed adding some lattice fencing and an arbor on the road side to make the garden more prominent. I would love it if we could get that done this year.

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### **2021 State Conference Duties – Keiko Warner**

We discussed the status – not too much has changed but a person at Rutgers Gardens did respond. Not much info but will follow up. Chairperson has also reached out to Brian Shilling to invite him to be guest speaker. As the Cumberland County delegate, I am tasked with “presenting” a program for the conference. All counties are asked to present a program.

**Essex** - no report.

**Hunterdon** Our Steering committee continues to meet via zoom on a monthly basis

Our Citizens Science group continues to be busy sharing gardening interest in our community. To date our post have reached 38,000 people.

Many question are now coming into our help line concerning Spotted lanternfly, Emerald ash bore, leaf curl, lawn care, etc.

We continue to offer interesting monthly lectures via zoom to our members.

**Mercer** Executive and General meetings were held via Zoom on May 3, with over 90 members participating in the General Meeting.

The inaugural Executive Board training for committee mentees and new committee chairs was conducted on April 20; eleven RMGs participated in the virtual training. Feedback from participants was positive; the County plans to continue to offer this training annually.

The Community Education and Constant Contact team members were collectively and individually recognized by the President for their extraordinary contributions throughout the pandemic.

Constant Contact is the platform through which emails are sent to the public regarding Mercer RMG programs, activities, webinars and monthly Timely Tips. Prior to the pandemic, the mailing list numbered 1,700. As of April, subscriptions had climbed to over 3,100 – close to doubling the number of members of the public the county reaches on (at least) a monthly basis. Our coordinator, Margaret Pickoff, was thanked for her support and her outstanding programs and the Community Education Committee was acknowledged for offering increased levels of virtual programming throughout.

The co-chairs of the Information Resources Committee closed the May 3<sup>rd</sup> General Meeting with their presentation on the completion of an important Committee initiative. The Committee recently completed its review and update of the Electronic Rolodex of research and reference materials that supports Helpline research. Individual database entries were reviewed for relevance/timeliness; all contents were fully digitized and additional electronic resources were incorporated. All changes were then ultimately reviewed and approved by the Coordinator.

### **Activities/volunteerism**

Mercer County RMGs were invited to participate in the planting of 1,000 native plants at the Chambers Locust Community Gardens in Trenton on May 20. The plants were awarded under a grant by the Xerces Society to the Pollinator Habitat Garden project coordinated by RCE and Isles.

Mercer County Helpline mentors continue to support our Coordinator in responding to public inquiries, communicating through the Rutgers' CANVAS platform.

The County's inaugural/trial charity seed-starting initiative continues to gain momentum, with hundreds of flower, fruit and vegetable seedlings grown by the seventeen participating RMGs. Seedlings will be brought to the RCE office to be donated to Isles, the Boys and Girls Club of Mercer County and SNAP-Ed.

### **Middlesex**

**Monmouth** Monmouth County MGs continue to meet monthly for their General Meetings via Zoom. This month our Scholarship Committee brought forth three awardees for this year's scholarships at our Ops meeting on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. All recipients must be Monmouth County residents. Two of the students were graduating seniors who will attend Rutgers or Stockton in the fall majoring in Botany/Plant Biology and Sustainability. The third awardee from Monmouth currently attends Rutgers studying in Landscape Architecture and Environmental Design. After putting our information out through our email list, high schools, 4-H, press releases and by word of mouth, our Scholarship Committee did a fine job of studying

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and discussing all completed applications and chose three outstanding candidates for our scholarship 2021. The scholarships will be awarded at our June General Meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Many thanks to our Committee for all of their time and efforts into the selection process!

Our Speakers Bureau continues to give presentations virtually to garden clubs and for our monthly General Meetings. In the fall it was discussed that in order to keep our costs down, our Speakers Bureau arranged with our Program Committee to give all but one talk this year. We are so grateful to them for stepping up with fabulous, interesting and informational talks of the very best kind! This month's presentation is by John Eaves on "Blueberries, Brambles and Ribes." Should be a great talk! Further, this month we've had two new programs vetted on small garden spaces and winter vegetables.

Our School Programs Committee continues to meet via phone or virtually with county schools who are interested either in classroom projects or the desire to design and put in a school garden. In addition, this committee has graciously agreed to represent Monmouth County at the State Conference in the fall. We are very proud to have them share their Spring Teachers' Conference with everyone attending the Conference! Many thanks to them!

Meeting monthly also is our Helpline Roundtable where topics that may come up in Helpline are discussed. This month pokeweed, garlic mustard and ground ivy were highlighted as that's what seems to come up everywhere in everyone's yard! What also may be discussed is what might be happening in our own yards and how to address the concern. Many thanks to those who researched this month's topics!

Finally, Estelle Lumer, the editor of our Garden Vision newsletter since 2013 and has also been an active member of many committees and a past president of our association. In addition, she was instrumental in designing and executing that design at the Ronald McDonald House in Long Branch. And, over the years as an MG since 2002, she has helped design over 34 public gardens in the county! Amazing! Estelle put out her last fabulous edition of the Garden Vision last week. It has been a pleasure to know and work with Estelle, and she will be greatly missed as she and her husband move to Connecticut to be closer to their children. We wish her all the best, health and happiness!

### ***Morris***

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

***Passaic*** – no report

***Somerset*** – Zoom has been our means of meeting for the Advisory Council and monthly Master Gardener meetings. The Helpline Team continues to assist the public with the very competent help of Marilyn Cubano, Agricultural & Natural Resources Administrative Assistant.

Team meetings are also being held via Zoom. The Teaching Garden Team is planning for a major clean-up and resumption of activities whenever Rutgers gives the OK. The newsletter, *In The Garden*, has offered interesting and informative articles.

### ***Sussex***

***Union*** – no report.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 10:30 am. The next meeting is 6/10/2021 at 9 am by Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted  
Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary