

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of RMGANJ Meeting, October 14, 2021

Nick Hendershot called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:05 am and welcomed the group to the meeting.

Attendance:

Atlantic:	
Bergen:	Karen Pennell, Herb Arbeiter, Gimai Ma(guest)
Burlington:	Merry Bogert, Nick Hendershot, Sean Sanford (guest), Sharon Astorino
Cumberland:	Betsey Simpson, Keiko Warner
Essex:	Terry Felper
Hunterdon:	Dewey Goodwin
Mercer:	Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata, Sudi Solomon
Middlesex:	
Monmouth:	Bob Magovern, Gayle Williams, Bill Schutte
Morris:	
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn
Passaic:	
Somerset:	
Sussex:	
Union:	Dolores Batz-Culp, Deb Murphy
Rutgers University:	Jan Zientek

Secretary's Minutes from Sept. 9, 2021 RMGANJ Meeting: Nick reported that Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary, could not attend today but that she had emailed RMGANJ minutes after receiving some changes to the county reports. A motion to accept the minutes was made, seconded (Suzanne/Gayle) and approved. Nick reminded everyone to sign into the Chat. Karen Pennell will be communicate today's meeting recording & Chat printout to Cindy.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Roberta Quinn, Treasurer, reported that the current balance is \$14,018.30. A motion to accept was made, seconded and approved.

MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT: The pandemic continues to dictate how programs and classes are offered across RCE. Hunterdon, Middlesex, and Passaic Counties have resumed MG classes this fall, offering in-person instruction with the option of attending by Zoom. In Essex the class is beginning on line, with the expectation that in-person instruction will resume Spring 2022. Somerset County is also offering MG classes this fall. Most other counties will resume MG classes in early 2022. Mercer is delaying until search for a new coordinator is complete.

The MG state curriculum has been provided to an ANR department committee for review with the expectation of a department vote this winter. It is expected that the final, approved state curriculum will be implemented across the state in the fall of 2022.

As a reminder, we never stop recording volunteer hours, we have only suspended the annual requirement to maintain certification. Please continue to log your volunteer and continuing education hours in *Better Impact*. A decision will be made this winter regarding the annual requirement for 2022.

The new Cumberland County MG Coordinator and home horticulture educator is Lauren Fordyce.

Many Master Gardeners have continued with outdoor gardening chores in public spaces. In Essex County, one unintended/unforeseen consequence has been the boost to Brookdale Rose Garden maintenance from passersby stopping to ask MG volunteers if and how they could help.

Nick asked that all county coordinators remind MGers to log hours to emphasize the value of the groups' efforts.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: not much to report

Old Business:

New Business:

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Election of Officers

President—Nick Hendershot (Deirdre will not be continuing.)

Vice-President—(need nominee to serve for 1 year)

Account & Budget Administrator (formerly Treasurer)—Roberta Quinn will run again

Secretary—Cindy Hedin (1 year left in term)

The Nominating Committee made up of Karen Pennell, Kathy Dopart & Betty Scarlata will present 2 names for the V-P slot to be voted on at the November meeting, the winner to be installed in December to be active in January, 2022.

Mail monthly reports to Cindy.

Planning to begin for Conference '22 in March (January & February –no meetings). Betty asked that counties be solicited for ideas for Conference. 2022 is an Olmstead anniversary. The Conf. Committee has been working. Would they please affirm their continuance to Nick? Brian Schilling has committed to be at the Conference '22.

COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Atlantic – no report.

Bergen - Guest speaker, **Elaine Silverstein**, spoke on Designing and Planting with Native Plants: Creating a Native Habitat at the September meeting. Horticulturist Elaine Silverstein was trained in sustainable landscape management at the New York Botanical Garden where she continues to study botany, ecology, and landscape design. She gave step by step instructions on how to create a garden that's both beautiful and welcoming to insects, birds, and other wildlife. Elaine has a small horticulture practice in Bergen County and is founder and co-leader of the Bergen-Passaic Chapter of the Native Plant Society.

The weather was ideal for the **2021 Bergen County Fall Harvest Festival**. The MG tent was filled with beautiful, educational displays on topics ranging from pollinators to propagation to compost, and more. Congratulations to the MG classes of 2020 and 2021. Children enjoyed the activities and the take-home items, like indoor houseplants and butterfly bookmarks that they colored on the spot. Thanks to Rohsler's Allendale Nursery for donating the flowering and foliage plants; to Secor Farms in Mahwah for the corn stalks, donuts, cider, and pumpkins; and to MGs from previous classes who lent a hand.

Volunteer Site News

The **NJ Botanical Garden's Harvest Fest** took place Oct. 2nd at Ringwood State Park. Among the festivities: Crafters, garden tours, a plant sale, exhibits, music and dance, a fairway of booths and exhibits, and, of course, food. For the kids, there's pumpkin painting, applesauce making, hayrides, and free games. Volunteers from **Hackensack River Greenway through Teaneck** for a cleanup of the Andreas Park area. Volunteers bring their own gloves, loppers, and clippers. Masks required.

Garretson Forge & Farm hosted its annual Fall Oct. 10. The festival featured the 1800s farm period with open hearth cooking demonstrations, tours of the gardens, hands-on children's activities, and re-enactors in period costume. Admission free. Limited late-summer organic vegetables and herbs, dried herbs, luscious strawberry and raspberry jams, lavender sachets, and Garretson's hard neck organic garlic.

Burlington – no report

Cumberland

Our first meeting with our new coordinator. Ah youth, so much enthusiasm!

MG Coordinator – Lauren Fordyce

Introduction and goals

Brief review of policies and procedures for the program

Brainstorming and gauging interest/comfort: trips, tours, workshops, meetings, moving forward

Planning for the winter

Budgeting and financials

Committees- who does what and getting different folks involved

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Rain Garden at RCE – Carol Henry--Not much to report. Worked in the Rain Garden October 13th with Gloria Guidera and Marie Nicke. Cleaned out most of the weeds and weed whacked. Garden is looking very good. Hopefully will be able to plant something this year. If not next year we will add to it.

Greenwood Cemetery - Carol Henry--Veteran's garden spot at Greenwood Cemetery is doing well continuing to maintain until frost.

VA Home – Jan LoBiondo--We are still waiting to receive info from both Rutgers and Veterans Home to comply with safety protocol. With COVID, we know those requirements can change weekly. Presently, no visitors are permitted in the building.

Press – Marianne Bagliani, Barbara McOscar--An introductory PR on Lauren was sent to our press contacts. If you see this in one of your papers, could you please cut it out and save it for our MG scrapbook.

Discovery Garden at Wheaton Arts – Barbara McOscar--Special thanks to Gloria Guidera, Marie Nicke, and Pat Stella who helped me clean up the Discovery Garden. We pulled vines and gathered branches and twigs. The wooden trellis needs to be replaced as one side is rotted and broken. An entangled vine and tree hold the structure in place. Also, signage is missing.

We will need much help for spring cleaning as three years of leaves will carpet parts of our garden.

Pepper Trials –Pepper trials continue and special thanks to the MG and Interns who have helped pick peppers. Peppers have been distributed to the following food banks and soup kitchen: Elmer Food Bank, St. John UMC Church, Bridgeton, Good Sheppard Dining Hall, Bridgeton, Marianist Retreat Center, Cape May. Millville Senior Center

Butterfly and pollinator garden report:--We had our first Weeding Wednesday/ fall garden clean up on September 29th. Priscilla Myers, Jan LoBiondo, Lori Burke, Susanne Morello & Susan McKenna were all on hand (and knees) to help. "Many hands make light the work!" is an old adage and very true when it comes to gardening. They were able to clear the main garden paths of all the weeds so it now looks like a garden again instead of a wilderness. The sun is passing over lower in the southern sky, keeping the garden in the shade. The air was cool and working was very pleasant, as was the company. I believe the cool temperatures are the reason we did not see many butterflies or other pollinators nectaring. But there are still many flowers. We all had a chance to meet Lauren, who showed us that the passion vine fruit can be quite tasty when ripe. (I have been trashing it for 10 plus years, trying to keep that aggressive vine from spreading even further afield.) It's actually delicious, who knew? The passion fruit has been donated to the CATA community garden in Bridgeton to give to community members, who love the fruit! We like to leave most of the flowers standing through the fall and winter for the wildlife to enjoy the seed heads so keep watching your emails for announcements of more work days.

Meditation Garden at RCE – Cheryl Loatman--We will start weeding the Meditation Garden and putting down Preen in the near future. Date to be announced.

Sunshine – Cheryl Loatman-A sympathy card was sent to Lynn Hoch. Her daughter in law passed away.

Propagation- we will start planning for our spring planting for the ECO Fair at Wheaton Arts. It looks like at this point that they are holding events again.

Steering committee will meet prior to the next county meeting.

Essex - no report.

Hunterdon

Hunterdon County has started a hybrid new class, some in person and some via zoom. This seems to be working well.

Some in person work has started in accordance with the Rutgers guidelines.

Some teams are preparing plans, in small groups, to restart activities as soon as the guidelines allow.

Hunterdon continues to meet via zoom for our Steering Committee, and education opportunities.

This past week we had a interesting lecture on "jumping worms and the garden".

Mercer

Administration, training and communications

The September meeting was well-attended with over 70 attendees; the meeting closed with a presentation of photographs from Mercer's Master Gardeners' gardens through 2021.

While applications for the position of Mercer County Horticulturalist continue to be accepted, resumes from qualified applicants have been received and interviews with the hiring committee are being scheduled.

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Meredith Melendez, County Agricultural and Natural Resources County Agent II, continues oversight and support of the Mercer MG program.

Activities/volunteerism

Helpline continues to be staffed exclusively by members of the Helpline Mentors committee, with office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Mercer County's held its first in-person community education event since the pandemic in late September. The composting demonstration at Mercer Educational Gardens was fully subscribed and very well received by the public.

In-person tours for Master Gardeners have re-commenced and virtual webinars continue to be hosted for the public.

The final workday for the Mercer Educational Gardens was held October 9.

Through the end of the year, Executive and General meetings will continue to be held virtually.

Middlesex On September 13, 2021 Dr George Hamilton gave an update on the "Spread and Management of Spotted Lanternfly in New Jersey" as part of Earth Day Every Day Webinars - Fall 2021

Fall is a great time to get started on native plant gardening with our preplanned gardens and plug trays. These gardens and plug trays are designed to provide flowers from spring through fall and to attract butterflies and birds. The online sale ended September 30 and plant pickup was at the EARTH Center on October 2.

October 16 will be our Garden Cleanup and Potluck Brunch. We will put the gardens to bed while we celebrate the end of the season with colleagues and friends.

The Middlesex Master Gardener Book Club will meet on Wednesday October 20. This month's book is "Composting for a New Generation" by Michelle Balz.

On October 23rd, 2021 the Master Gardener class of 2020 graduation will finally take place. A special congratulations to all those who made it through a most difficult year.

Free, in-person horticulture talks at the EARTH Center have resumed. They are open to all with limited seating. Call 732-398-5262 to reserve a spot.

October 2 was An Introduction to Bee Keeping

October 24 Growing Garlic

October 30 An introduction to Backyard Composting

Monmouth

Monmouth County continues to meet virtually for our monthly Ops and General Meetings. In the PAR to date our interns and veterans have harvested and donated over 1,200 lbs. of produce. We are all very proud of the successful season they've had considering we all had a late start. Our JMG (Junior Master Gardener) Garden and Herb Garden have fared very well too in their harvest and donations of produce. Although clean-up has begun in these gardens, the harvesting keeps on going! Many thanks goes out to our dedicated MGs for tending these gardens! In addition, all other gardens: Native, Memorial and Monarch Way Station are all looking so much better with added plants, lots of weeding and pruning! It was thought that the donated plants that were being held by a couple of MGs for the next Spring Garden Day Sale (May 2022) would be sold virtually. Instead, many of the donated plants were donated to the existing gardens at the Ag. Building...they are looking great! Another garden that has been in need of a good cleaning is our Rain Garden which got a clean-up jump start a couple of weeks ago. In the winter the committee will begin to tackle area-by-area until the garden is looking the way it should. Many thanks for our new Rain Garden committee chairs, Rita and Maria for a great start!

In the Community, we have been asked to consult with the Sea Girt Conservancy who is looking to eliminate invasive plants and replace with the best native species for their site. In early October our MGs were involved in a Native Plant Sale held by the Manalapan Environmental Commission in Manalapan. Featured were their demonstration gardens, habitats for pollinators and becoming an environmental steward. The Speakers Bureau continues to go out or to meet virtually with Garden Clubs speaking on relevant and interesting topics. Additionally, they have supplied us with wonderful talks at our General Meetings. Many thanks to our speakers and chairpersons, Laura and Debbie for continuing on through this whole pandemic situation. Also, the Helpline series through the Monmouth County Libraries has continued led by Diane Larson, county coordinator. Also in the community, our School Programs Committee has been meeting with local schools for consultation on school gardens and in-class lessons.

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As with all other counties, we are preparing for our Board of Trustee election of trustees. Ours will be held electronically in November. It is hoped that in the New Year we will be able to meet on campus in the Ag Building for Ops and General Meetings...we'll see as year-end approaches.

Morris

Ocean

Our General Meeting was held last Thurs with about 25 members, masked and distancing, but in-person. The 2022 calendar was distributed. The horticultural articles were written in late 2019, so I had to refresh my memory of my contribution, (Goat's Beard). Active committees gave reports: Community Garden is harvesting produce for the food banks and gleaning, too. The Greenhouse team sanitized and cleaned last week in preparation for the 2022 season start in February. They will offer their required lectures in January to all workers, in-person or, if necessary, on zoom. Volunteers are still needed in the Shrub and Perennial areas. The Display Garden is redesigning the beds in front of our Ag. Center and hopes to offer tours in the Spring. Speakers' Bureau is filling requests for next Spring.

Open House for prospective Interns will be held November 9th. Classes will start in late January.

There was a discussion of the Philly Flower show and whether it was going to be worth planning a trip since it is in June again. Consensus seemed to be to look into gardens right here in NJ.

Our November meeting will be a Chilly "Chili" Day at the OCPark since the auditorium was already reserved by another group.

Passaic – no report

Somerset – Work is continuing on wresting the Teaching Garden beds from the weeds and over-growth resulting from 16 months of no attention. In the Edible Bed, strawberries and raspberries have been thinned, weeded and pruned as necessary. Preparations are underway for vegetable planting in the spring. The Native Plants Bed has been expanded to 4 islands, with last year's plants groomed and staked. The Pollinator Bed has been weeded and expanded with more plants to be added shortly. The Perennial Bed has been cardboard-layered, covered with soil/compost and laid out in a Yin/Yang design ready for planting. The Sensory Garden stakes are in place, as are the Annuals Bed markers. GREAT PROGRESS!

Descriptive photo labels, included QR codes for more detailed identification, are being placed in all the beds in preparation for a Show & Tell Day with our new class.

A border path of wood chips has been laid around the interior perimeter of the deer fence.

The new class began sessions Master Gardeners staffed an information table at a Branchburg community day.

In The Garden, our newsletter, continues to provide interesting and informative articles, as well as garden notes and area activities to all Master Gardeners.

Several slide presentations have been given at civic group meetings, including "Know and Grow Chrysanthemums" at the Basking Ridge Public Library.

Sussex

Union – no report.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:35 am. The next meeting is November 11, 2021 at 9 am by Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted (with thanks to Karen Pennell for her assistance)
Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary