

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of RMGANJ Meeting, August 10, 2023

Attendance:

Atlantic:
Bergen: Herb Arbeiter
Burlington: Nick Hendershot, Dave Parsons
Cumberland: Keiko Warner
Essex: Susan Norkin
Hunterdon:
Mercer: Judy Colburn, Betty Scarlata
Middlesex: Kathy Dopart, Jerri Barclay
Monmouth: Bob Magovern, Bill Schutte, Gayle Williams
Morris:
Ocean: Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn
Passaic:
Somerset:
Sussex:
Union:
Rutgers University: Nick Polanin

Nick Hendershot called the Zoom meeting to order at 9:05 am and welcomed the group (16) to the meeting.

Secretary's Minutes from July '23 RMGANJ Meeting: In the absence of Cindy Hedin (Recording Secretary), Nick Hendershot asked for changes, additions/corrections to the minutes as emailed.. In the absence of any, the minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Roberta Quinn, Treasurer, reported that the current balance is \$14,944.75. Roberta noted that there had been an error in the numbers originally received from Talia, but it was corrected. The report was approved.

MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Nick Polanin announced that 4 candidates (one is from out-of-state) for the State Master Gardener Coordinator/Consumer Horticulture position will be interviewed. They will present seminars which will be available in person and thru a link for the committee and RMGANJ members.

Old Business -- Conference Planning:

Regarding the fall conference, Nick Hendershot noted the need to get registration materials out to the coordinators for distribution to the county units ASAP. The speakers are in place, the date & times established and the venue secured. Nick P. will set up registration through Anchor. The fee of \$5.00 is for both in-person and Zoom attendees. Upon arrival, coffee, pastry & fruit will be provided by RMGANJ thru either Rutgers Dining or Twin Oaks or ??? (Talia is working on it). Registration should include “__ in person or __ via Zoom” check off. Lunch will not be provided. Speakers' fees are about \$1,000.00. We will need a tech person at Treyes Hall. Talia is on it. The Zoom link which will be sent upon receipt of registration. Registration should include “Yes” or “No” for tour of floriculture facility which will come at the conclusion of the presentations. Parking for the greenhouse should not be a problem. The greenhouse is very close to the parking deck. A map should be included with the registration materials. Signs have been given to the new team (per Cathy Dopart). Dave Parsons provided distances to greenhouses (**According to Google Maps, walk to greenhouse is 3' (0.1 mile), drive is 4' (0.7 mile).**) Epic Signs can be contacted if new/more signs are needed. Opening of registration should begin as soon as possible, as soon as set up in Anchor. Nick P. will notify Gayle Williams with the registration link. Debbie LaGatutta will add it to the flyer, and Gayle will send the flyer to Nick P. for distribution to the coordinators. Cut-off date for registration will be October 17.

Fall Conference CEUs: 3.5 for the speeches, .5 for the greenhouse tour. Speeches will be recorded for later viewing by registrants.

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The speakers were announced at previous meetings, Karl Gersens (Longwood Gardens), Randi Eckel(Toad Shade Gardens) & Chris Obruapta(Rutgers). Chris Obruapta is speaking on rain gardens at the Jersey Friendly Yards seminar. Hopefully

New Business

Kathy Dopart asked about cost of facilities rentals at Douglas or Cook for an April symposium. Nick Polanin estimated around \$1,000.00.

Bill Schutte reported on the Master Gardeners' booth at the Monmouth County Fair. Spotted lantern fly information was featured including a photo op, costumes and information hand-outs. A large thunder storm drenched fair goers on Sunday, but didn't deter crowds.

Nominations committee will be needed to fill these positions: president, treasurer.

Middlesex County MG folks did a booth at their county's fair. They also dedicated a Memories Garden honoring deceased Master Gardeners. A festive Garden Gala Night included wine & cheese. Pickles & Jam demonstration at the 4H House where the MG folks cleaned up the garden and planted. There will be an Open House on Aug. 26.

Retention of Master Gardeners is an on-going problem. Kathy mentioned Middlesex's Class Reunion party.

Mercer is having an Insect Festival on Sept. 9. They are also have a Zoom on ticks, including the Bourbon Tick so named because of the town in Kentucky where it was identified.

Middlesex is considering a digital newsletter to be sent to Middlesex Master Gardeners and would like samples. If your county does a digital newsletter, please send Kathy Dopart (kathydopart@gmail.com) a sample.

Roberta Quinn reported that Ocean's Butterfly Festival will feature locally raised butterflies, none will be purchased. The Master Gardeners are raising all the livestock to be displayed. There are 20 registrants for their new class which will have a max of 35 folks.

COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Atlantic

Bergen

Burlington

Cumberland

Essex

Hunterdon

Mercer

Middlesex -- August 7-15 is the Middlesex County Fair and Master Gardeners will be there all 7 days in the afternoon and evening with an Extension/EARTH Center promotion table. To be more interactive with the public we are planning an "Ask a Master Gardener" booth.

The Garden, Arts and Music Festival (aka Open House) will be on Saturday, August 26th from 11am-3pm. This is an opportunity for Master Gardeners to show off the beautifully cultivated demonstration gardens to the public. Music, food, ice cream trucks, garden tours, activities for children and mini lectures are all part of a free day of family fun.

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The Rows for the Hungry has harvested over 3,500 pounds of food for the food insecure of Middlesex County. The new 2 acre plot expansion is replete with beautiful cover crops that are putting on quite a show of pollinators. The food crops and 150 foot bean/squash/melon trellis are also quite a show.

The Native Plants Garden and Propagation program is in full swing installing a new fence that will allow for a "backyard" native plant garden display. Once completed, this display will focus on using Native Plants and educate the public on the various options for these plants.

The butterfly house is full of eggs, caterpillars, chrysalises and adult butterflies of multiple species. Dale Duchai, project manager, has curated an exceptional display of host and nectar plants for the butterflies. Be sure to bring your camera when visiting.

The Master Gardeners Rows initiative to Share Our Harvest and Teach to Empower has drawn over 500 guests to the EARTH Center. Our educational tours are complete with teaching stations covering topics such as composting, propagation, pollinators, community gardening, volunteering and food insecurity. Our Master Gardeners developed lessons tailored to the needs of each group.

Monmouth -- Monmouth County MGs have been busy this last month in preparation for the County Fair and an upcoming event, Bugs, Birds and Beyond, our free children's event. Last summer beach-goers were inundated with SLF washing up on the beaches as well as joining them for/on their lunch! Lots of calls came in to our Helpline as to how to get rid of them. This year the Fair was the perfect venue to showcase this pest and share with the residents our SLF traps and how to make them. An MG was on hand to give trap making workshops, the Helpline was ready with plenty of information on the Spotted Lantern Fly, and for fun, we had a peak hole SLF display with a drawing of every life stage, where you could stick head in the holes and have your picture taken. We also created SLF costumes of each of the two nymphal and adult stage for the public to wear. The JMG table had a SLF mask making project that tied in with the photo ops perfectly. Our displays were very well received and a lot of good information was shared during our time at the Fair! Thank you to Ann Sherwood, Mikkele Lawless, Jane Sims, Jane Zysk, Jim Seidel, Diane Larson and all of the MGs who helped set up, breakdown and who participated at the Fair. Also in our Fair area were the JMG and Composting tables ready to help with questions and to see if county residents with children ages 9-11 would be interested in joining our Junior Master Gardener Program 2024. And speaking of the JMG Program, several of our students chose to enter their vegetables and flowers in the Fair competition taking 16 first place ribbons, 17 second place ribbons, 15 third place ribbons and 20 Honorable Mentions in the following categories: marigolds, green and red cabbage, celery, beets, carrots, red potatoes, garlic, onions, bell peppers, green tomatoes, basil and pear tomatoes. How exciting for them taking 68 of the 101 ribbons awarded! Congratulations to our JMGers!

In addition to the Fair, our MGs are preparing for our annual free children's event, Bugs Birds and Beyond (BB&B) scheduled for September 30th from 12 PM to 4 PM. Workshops are held to make crafts that the children will complete that day. Also available will be games, the 4-Hers with their animals, games that teach as well as full of fun, the raptor show, tours of our gardens, a butterfly tent and earth tunnel. Lots of fun doing and learning for children of all ages! Folks from other counties are most welcome to attend.

In August we will hold our annual Recognition Picnic at the Ag. Building. MGs and guests will have time to relax and enjoy each other's company as well as have a good round or two of corn hole! This is also when the President's Award is given. A really nice afternoon for everyone!

The Hort. Enrichment Program recently completed their sixth activity at the Artis Senior Living in Eatontown which ends the cycle in that facility. In July MGs took a short trip to the Pleasant Valley Lavender Farm with our Member Education Committee. Trips with this committee are a "drive-yourself" trip and any entry fee is paid by the attendee. At the Farm the hostess explained the different kinds of lavender, how it's grown, harvested, how to cook and dry it. A demonstration was given on how to distill the blossoms to get lavender oil and lavender water. It was a lovely trip. Another trip was to Candide's Garden, a teaching garden that MG Jon Gibbons has spent many years planning and nurturing to show the importance of native plants and pollinators. Thank you, Jon, for a most enjoyable learning experience!

In our PAR garden the interns have been diligently planting, weeding and harvesting. As of the first week in August, they have donated 853 lbs. of produce to local food banks! Way to go, Interns!

The School Programs Committee has also been active this summer with projects in Middletown with a request for a speaker and Asbury Park needing assistance in bringing back a garden that had fallen into disrepair. Our Speakers Bureau has been busy this July and August giving seven programs for garden clubs and medical care facilities.

Thank you to all of our MGs participating in any and all of these summer activities!

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Morris

Ocean -- This summer has been very busy with the usual volunteering plus some new Outreach. Master Gardeners returned to volunteer at the Ocean County Fair after an absence of a number of years. On July 30th we had the first "Spots and Dots and Weeds, OH MY!" event that featured tables dealing with summer issues in the garden affecting lawns, vegetables, flowers, weeds, and more.

On August 3rd, we had the installation of new officers and the giving of milestone clothing awards. Produce we have grown in our gardens and well as gleanings has added many pounds of donated food (2856 lbs so far). Our community garden, which grows for food pantries, is trying a new method to combat powdery mildew on tomatoes. Some plants are being sprayed with milk and water to test this method.

We have a new cut flower garden that provides and delivers flowers to nursing homes for residents to arrange or display.

MGs are busy raising butterflies for our Butterfly Tent event on August 19th (raindate August 20). No butterflies are being purchased this year. This event has attracted more people each year.

Twenty people have already paid for the 2024 Intern Class that begins in January. Enrollment will be capped at 35 people.

Passaic

Somerset

Sussex

Union – Lots of beautiful vegetable, flower and herb gardens are flourishing. Donations are made to local food pantries and churches. The Trailside Summer camp kids visit the garden periodically for sessions on Trees, natural paints and a scavenger hunt. Local awards are under consideration.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 9:49 am. The next meeting will be on Sept. 14, 2023 at 9 am by Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted
Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary