

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of RMGANJ Meeting, September 14, 2023

Attendance:

Atlantic:
Bergen: Herb Arbeiter,
Burlington: Nick Hendershot, Dave Parsons
Cumberland: Betsey Simpson, Keiko Warner
Essex: Susan Norkin
Hunterdon: Tricia Deering, Dewey Goodwin
Mercer: Betty Scarlata,
Middlesex:
Monmouth: Bob Magovern, Bill Schutte, Gayle Williams
Morris:
Ocean: Suzanne Keane, Roberta Quinn
Passaic: Rashmi Dhekne
Somerset: Cindy Hedin
Sussex:
Union: Kristin Keifer
Rutgers University:

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

Secretary's Minutes from August 2023 RMGANJ Meeting: Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary, reported that she had emailed the previous meeting's minutes Tuesday. A motion to accept the minutes was made, seconded (Keane/Williams) and approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Roberta Quinn, Treasurer, reported that the current balance as in Talia's email is \$12,681.55, however there is a discrepancy. July's balance was \$14,944.75, and the Excel spreadsheet from Talia shows no additions or subtractions. Talia said there were 2 "pending" charges of \$856.25 and \$786.20, but these do not answer the discrepancy question. There were several suggestions as to the reason for discrepancy, but Roberta said she was awaiting Talia's reply for a definitive answer..

MASTER GARDENER'S COORDINATOR'S REPORT: Nick Polanin was not present.

Old Business

Conference Planning:

Nick Hendershot reported that all seems in place for our October 21 conference. Traves Hall looks good, access to the greenhouse is easy, and the food court menu is fairly basic. Bring your own lunch if you are particular. GPS directions might be confusing. A map should be provided. Betty Scarlata offered to find one among her files from past conferences. Tricia suggested that speakers also might need maps and directions too. When Nick said "Registration flyers have gone out," several folks (Union, Essex, Hunterdon, Passaic & Somerset) said they had not yet received the flyer. Nick said he would send them to all on the RMGANJ list. Videos of the speeches will be available to registrants after the conference. Nick H. is confident that the meeting room will have plenty of room for all who wish to attend in person. There is no limit to Zoom registrations.

Nick H. reported that the search for Nick Polanin's replacement is proceeding. 2 candidates have presented seminars. Several RMGANJers viewed these. 2 more candidates will be presenting Monday. The focus should be on the Master Gardener program. It is uncertain whether or not the candidates' presentations might have been recorded and available for viewing.

Caring and Sharing:

Gayle Williams had a question about lanyards which Betty Scarlata answered.

What are the HelpLine requirements in the various counties? Cindy will tally replies from the Chat.

Burlington County (Dave Parsons) has a HelpLine requirement for both interns and certified Mgers.
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Cumberland County (Betsey Simpson) does not require but strongly encourages.
Hunterdon County (Tricia Deering) does not require HelpLine for recertification.
Passaic County (Rashmi Dhekne) requires HelpLine of interns
Somerset County (Cindy Hedin) requires 30 HelpLine hours for initial certification. There is no Helpline requirement for recertification
Union County (Kristin Kiefer) does not require HelpLine hours.
(Cindy's chat missed a few entries.)

Dave Parsons commented that the Rutgers Homesteading Academy had an excellent program on ticks, *Tips for Navigating Tick Bite Prevention with Confidence* <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/homesteading-academy/archive.php?2023-09-tips-for-navigating-tick-bite-prevention-with-confidence>. For more information on the Academy in general, Dave put the URL in the Chat: <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/homesteading-academy>

COUNTY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Atlantic –

Bergen --

Burlington –

Cumberland -- Butterfly Tent @ CC Fair – Barbara McOscar -- Many thanks to Laura Jenkins, Joanne Nacucchio, Marie Nicke, Patti Sheppard, and Pat Stella for their work at the County Fair. The Butterfly Tent was a success! It held Painted Ladies. Joanne's husband brought chrysalis for the children to see and compare to a sleeping bag from which the butterflies emerge. Tractor Supply donated wildflower seeds for distribution. The best reward was seeing the joy, the wonder, the awe shown by the children as they held the butterflies. Patti and Marie did hand painting which brought in money for our Scholarship Program.

* Alice Phillips sent a lovely Thank You note to us who worked the Butterfly Tent. This made it possible for her 4-H students to show their goats for judging.

Boys Club/Girls Club – Susanne Morrello

On July 10th, Rutgers MG Coordinator KaylInn Hyson and MG Susanne Morello met with Boys and Girls Club of Cumberland County representative Chris Volker at the 560 Crystal Avenue. The center has 6 raised beds at this site. The beds needed some TLC and MG representatives offered guidance in plant identification, planting directions, repairing a water source and irrigation as well as weed control (cardboard and wood chips) for the walkway.

Moving forward, MG's and Boys and Girls Club will work to identify activities and topics to engage the teen and tween members in the garden area. Topics discussed informally included gathering seed heads, working with herbs and other plants in the beds.

Wheaton Wednesday - July 19th – Barbara McOscar

Kaylynn and MG Lori Burke, Susan Evans, Eileen McMahan, Susan Morello, Joanne Nacucchia, and Marianne Rozanski helped 44 children and 14 adults paint rocks at this community event. We met many interesting people and some expressed interest in our Master Gardener Program.

Wheaton Wednesday – August 16th -Barbara McOsar

Susan Evans, Kaylynn, Carol Henry, and I worked with 79 children and 38 adults on the task of painting rocks. The children came up with some very creative designs and there was much fun and laughter in our class.

HalloWheaton & Our Scarecrow Contest- Barbara McOscar

On October 28th, we will be at Wheaton Arts with learning stations on Farm & Forest Animals. Schools throughout the county and youth groups have been notified and we hope for some great scarecrows! We are asking for sponsors from businesses or individuals., who will be recognized in the WA Program Flyer, to purchase a \$50 Visa Gift Card from CC 4H. These cards will be awarded to the winning classes. Some Master Gardeners have become sponsors - we'd love to award all participants. Please see me or Kaylynn for a sponsor letter. See DeeAnn if you wish to be a sponsor.

Children's Table @ Peach Fest 8/19/23 – Barbara McOscar

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We set up the Farm and Forest Learning table with posters and the paw prints and scat samples made by the MG. This event was not well attended. We worked with only 22 children. They loved making their own paw prints with the rubber stamps. The other big hit was hand painting done by Patti Sheppard and Marianne Rozanski. Special thanks to Lynn Houck and Dianna Popwell who helped staff the table.

Helpline – Kathy King--The in-office helpline is now open. Bill mans the desk on Tuesdays and Kathy and Sarah cover Thursdays. Thanks to Jean, Winnie, Eileen, and Sam who have volunteered their time. This summer, we were contacted by 29 clients and answered 31 questions. Most questions came in by phone or email; we had one walk-in client. The in-office helpline will be open through October.

Nora and Kathy attended the Peach Festival and spoke to 42 people that day. Most of the questions we have fielded are general gardening questions ranging from dealing with moles to blossom end rot. Seasonal fact sheets were offered and accepted by many. Our next event is Hopewell Day on September 23. If anyone can help, please let Kaylyn or Kathy King know.

Propagation – Bill Martin -- Nothing to report but watch this space for upcoming events!!!

Promotions – Marianne Rozanski--The aprons have arrived and will be available for pickup at the September meeting. Happy Fall.

Veterans Home –Jan Dwyer LoBiondo

The Planning Committee met twice this summer to lay out projects for Sept. thru June. Pairs of members have chosen a month to create a sample and to buy supplies and to prepare directions to guide the team each month at 9:15 before our monthly meeting at 10. That will prep the team to be ready to teach and guide the veterans through the horticultural therapy project.

This month we will focus on monarchs with a film, milkweed pods and seeds as well as create a butterfly to hang in the craft room windows or their own rooms.

Trip Committee – Nora Zielinski -- Our June 2023 trip to Chanticleer Garden in Wayne, PA was postponed due to poor air quality following Canadian wildfires. The new date is September 22, 2023. At last count, there were sufficient registrants to proceed with the trip.

* The Trip Committee will meet in the auditorium on Tuesday Sept. 12 (our meeting date) at 9:30 prior to our meeting.

Rain Garden - Carol Henry Our team did weed throughout the summer when the weather was good. Recently, I added mulch and pollinator flowers – the flowers were donated by Kim Connor.

State Report – Keiko Warner

The State Conference is Saturday, October 21st at the Douglas Campus Center, Tryes Hall. It will run from 8AM – 3PM. Speakers tentatively are:

Christopher Obropta – Water Management (<https://environmental.rutgers.edu/fac/christopher-c-obropta>)

Karl Gercens – House Plants

Randi Eckel – Native Plants (<https://npsnj.org/news/npsnj-president-randi-eckel-in-the-news-and-on-the-air/>)

Pollinator Garden -- Susan has not been able to get to the office to work on the butterfly & pollinator garden since April. Kathy King has done some weeding there. Once Susan's grandchildren are back in school, she hopes to resume Weeding Wednesdays.

Upcoming Classes/Events

Sept. 23 – Hopewell Day 9AM – 4PM

October- No Monthly Meeting (Kaylynn Away)

Oct. 12 – Tour of FS Growsmark, Agricultural Retailer – 55 Silver Lake Rd., Bridgeton, NJ - 10AM

Oct. 28 – HalloWheaton Scarecrow Contest 10AM – 4PM

Nov. 13 – Recycling ACAU, 330PM

Jan. 8 – Building a Hoop House, 11AM

Essex--.

Hunterdon --Our Helpline continues to be very active.

Our Sensory Garden team has been hosting many tours of our gardens to various groups.

The Presentation Team has had a busy schedule making in person presentation sto various community groups.

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Hunterdon County Master Gardeners provided support for both the annual Rutgers Tomato tasting and the Hunterdon County 4 H fair.

Our Hunterdon Central team has started working with the teens at Hunterdon Central High School.

The 2024 class of Master Gardeners will start next month.

Mercer -- The Rutgers Master Gardeners of Mercer County do not hold an August meeting.

Mercer County welcomed our new Horticulturist and MG Coordinator Justine Gray on July 24. Though Justine's B.A. is in Psychology her work experience has been agriculturally focused for the past thirteen years. She recently graduated from the New Jersey Ag Leadership Development Program.

July Meeting: The July hybrid-format meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by President Louise Senior. The Zoom portion of the meeting was hosted by Karen Bennett. A total of 88 participated, 49 in person at Tulpehaking Nature Center and 39 via Zoom.

President Louise Senior began the July meeting by introducing Alexandria Kosowski, one of the Tulpehaking's teachers and naturalists, who welcomed everyone to the venue noting that the center's name means "land of the turtles" in the language of the Lenape people who inhabited the marsh and surrounding area for thousands of years. As a side note, Alexandria revealed that she herself was a Master Gardener (Class of 2011) although currently not an active one.

Better Impact: Louise gave another mid-year reminder to members to enter their volunteer hours into Better Impact in a timely manner. She encouraged members not to wait until the end of the year and struggle to remember their contributions from earlier months. Instead, she urged MGs to be proactive and keep track of their hours as the year progresses ensuring more accurate and timely reporting of their volunteer work, which is essential for organizational reporting, as well as for maintaining their own certification.

Nominating Committee: First Vice President Ann Mann referenced the bylaws governing elections, specifically Article VII - Elections, Section 1: Nominations (which can be accessed through the Members Only section of the organization's website.) The Nominating Committee is expected to present the proposed slate of 2024 Officers by the October meeting.

Community Ed: The co-chair announced an upcoming Zoom July program "Fireflies of the Mid-Atlantic: Who Are They and What Do They Need From Us?" presented by Richard Joyce of the Xerces Society. The co-chair also previewed the August program "Ticks and Lyme Disease." Led by Amy Rowe, the Zoom program will include key topics such as the tick life cycle, effective tick removal techniques, and identifying different tick species.

Insect Fest: This year's Insect Fest on September 9 is dedicated to the memory of Nancy Putnam, who--along with Greenie Neuburg--initiated the festival in 2003. Originally centering on composting, the event later shifted its focus to insects. This year marks the 19th anniversary of Insect Fest. Nancy's dedication to educating the public about the importance of protecting and valuing insects was fondly remembered, particularly her involvement in puppetry. Many short puppet plays were written by her, and she collaborated with other talented Master Gardeners, including Marilyn Canterbury and Priscilla Knight, to produce puppet shows that were beloved by children and adults alike.

Tours: Private Gardens Tour July 6 - There is no charge for these tours. At 10:00AM Visit mid-century modern home & garden of Craig Wakefield in Rydel, PA, then at 2:00PM Visit garden of Janet Novak in nearby Chestnut Hill, PA

Program: For this month's program, the organization was able to take advantage of the meeting's location at Tulpehaking Nature Center for an on-site tour. At the close of the general meeting, Pat Coleman, president of the Board of Trustees of Friends for the Abbott Marshlands presented a brief introduction to the site, highlighting the history and makeup of the Marshlands and providing the group with a glimpse into the site's natural beauty, its rich history, and the importance of preserving this unique ecosystem

Middlesex -- As part of Hunger Awareness month, the Rows for the Hungry's leader Miriam O'Hare and her amazing team were recognized as a Hunger Hero by the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Commissioners and Replenish at the Commissioner's Meeting on September 7, 2023.

Our new Master Gardener class completed their orientation and will begin work this week at the EARTH center. We are excited to welcome the new Thursday night and Friday morning classes. Some "fresh legs" as we wrap up the gardening season are most welcome.

Graduation for the current class will be on October 20, 2023. We look forward to celebrating their success. This year we will combine graduation and an awards ceremony.

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The Evergreen Garden of Memories recently honored several members of our Master Gardener family who have passed with new plantings in the garden. We thank Bob Hluchy of Tidbury Creek Farms in Monroe for his generous donation of trees. This area serves not only as a place of remembrance, but also a beautiful garden for reflection and contemplation.

Our native Plant Program finished building a new deer fence around the garden and is now planning, clearing and building a new display garden in the area. The Propagation Project is having their annual online plant sale. These preplanned gardens are designed to provide flowers from spring to fall and to attract butterflies and bees. You may choose full sun or part shade gardens and each contains 8 plants in 3.5@ square pots and cover 32 square feet. Gardens are \$30. Go to <https://go.rutgers.edu/nativeplantsale> for more information. Pick up day is September 30th.

Upcoming Late summer/fall programs include Putting Your Garden to Bed Sept 27th, 4H Open House Oct. 6, Growing Garlic Oct 15, Introduction to Backyard Composting Oct 21 and Enticing Your Children into the Garden. Oct 25. Call the EARTH center @ 732-398-5262 for more information and to register.

Monmouth -- Monmouth County interns have been busy with our PAR garden, and to date, have harvested over 2000 lbs.! There is still more out there and they haven't stopped planting yet. We'll see what the final total is. Our food banks are overjoyed! Ag. Building gardens have been in maintenance mode and have been kept in great shape with any pruning and weeding.

In August we had our Recognition Picnic where we enjoyed delicious dishes our MGs brought, fun with a corn hole tournament and cheered on Molly Kocsik and Cheryl Greenfield as our President's Awardees for 2023! All were very happy for these two ladies who have selflessly and lovingly given so much time and effort to our program. Congratulations, Ladies!

Also, several workshops have been held in preparation for our Bugs, Birds and Beyond free children's event being held on September 30th from 12-4 PM. We have recycled toilet paper holders into binoculars, water bottles into potential bee nesting holders with bamboo, made SLF masks and antennae headbands. Our 4-Hers will be on hand with their animals that day as well as raptors will occupy tents outside. Games and crafts will abound inside and out, and all will enjoy a learning experience on the way through the afternoon. Our Helpline will be on site, and tours of the gardens will be given while vendors will join us for a great afternoon! All are welcome to attend.

The Junior Master Gardener Program had its last harvest with the children and is in winterizing mode. Thanks to our JMG chairpersons and all MG mentors and teachers, this year's program was a very good and rewarding one. The Hort. Enrichment Committee wrapped up their rotation with one facility and will begin the last for the year in September at All in A Day, an Englishtown/Manalapan facility.

The Member Education Committee set up an hour pontoon boat tour on the Manasquan Reservoir focusing on native plants and local wildlife. A visit to the NY Botanical Gardens was set up by our Trips and Tours Committee with a guided tour of their native garden. The tour was an hour and jammed-packed full of good information about native plants. There was plenty of time to investigate the marvelous plant selection in the conservatory and check out artist, Ebony G. Patterson's, installations. It was a lovely day spent with great company.

In the wings, we are preparing for graduation in November of 30 interns and our Holiday Recognition Luncheon in December.

Morris

Ocean -- On Aug. 3rd, we had our Installation of Officers and Awards program, but without our (Bef. C) potluck lunch, which we sorely missed. On Aug. 19th, we held a successful Butterfly Tent Event with over 700 attendees. Our garden committees are harvesting much produce to donate to local food pantries. In addition, our Gleaning team, working with Farmers Against Hunger and led by Noreen Baris, has contributed over 3,000lbs of produce to the pantries. A newer section in our Ocean County Park complex is a cutting garden. These flowers are distributed to a local adult facility to use in their flower arranging activities. The Outreach Committee supplied tables at 4 events in Aug. and 3 this month. The IPM group had a workshop last week. Trips and Tours is scheduling a visit to New Castle, DE for the annual Christmas event Dec. 9th. Interns are putting the final touches on their project "Fall Garden Day", to be held on the 23rd. The theme is "Make your Gardens Grow".

Passaic -- The Passaic County Master Gardeners volunteer at the following places:

- RCE high tunnel demonstration and teaching site (209 Totowa Road, Wayne, NJ 07470): We managed to grow RMGANJ 9/2023 Minutes Draft 4

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some wonderful vegetables for donation in accordance with the no till principles and organic methods avoiding the use of pesticides, fungicides and synthetic chemical fertilizers. We managed through the season without any significant problems from pests or disease.

The vegetables grown in the high tunnel were donated to an organization called Oasis.

- Bloomingdale senior center Sunny's garden
- Little Falls club memorial gardens
- Friends of Laurelwood arboretum
- New Jersey Botanical Garden
- Clifton library main memorial
- Clifton library Allwood branch.

The Holiday open house is held on the first Friday and weekend in December at The NJ botanical gardens. This is a fundraiser for the New Jersey Botanical gardens. A theme is decided upon every year and the rooms of Skylands Manor are decorated by the participating organizations. This year the theme is Holiday in the Scottish Highlands. Passaic County Master Gardeners will be decorating the library this year. We also donate a basket to be raffled at this event.

Somerset –

Sussex

Union –

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 9:45 am. The next meeting is 10/12/2023 at 9 am by Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted
Cindy Hedin, Recording Secretary