

Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey  
Minutes of April 7, 2015 Revised 4/16/15

President Ellen Simonetti called the meeting to order at 10:15am.

**Attendance:**

Atlantic:	Mary Lou Monihan
Bergen:	John Walters, Karen Pennell, Joseph Cooper
Burlington:	Terry Zane, Marilyn Bidrawn
Camden:	Nancy Sullivan, Diane Shonyo
Cumberland:	Absent
Essex:	Suzie Yamarone, Gail Chmura
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering
Mercer:	Betty Scarlata, Bob Robinson, Theodora Wang
Middlesex:	Dale Duchai, Kathy Dopart, Phyllis Pappas
Monmouth:	Ellen Simonetti, Gayle Williams
Morris:	Pat Hudson, Carla Schan, Sandi Gonski
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane, Noreen Baris
Passaic:	Absent
Somerset:	Linda Madretzke
Sussex:	Jane Gardner, Pat Schanzlin
Union:	Absent
Rutgers University	Nick Polanin,

Kathy Dopart welcomed delegates and guests.

Minutes from the March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting were accepted as amended. The job of Secretary is now vacant as the former secretary, Claudia Kolster, has been offered the job of Passaic County coordinator of Master Gardeners. Claudia was not present at this meeting. She is wished the best in her new job.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** We have a balance of \$12,480.81 with two outstanding checks still pending.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** We have a problem of where to hold the March 1st 2016 meeting. Ellen suggested we can reschedule the meeting for March 8th, 2016 and have our meeting in our usual space.

Several counties volunteered to make their meeting places available but Ellen will check on keeping the meeting as close to our normal meeting place as possible.

Ellen announced a trip to Winterthur in Delaware with the Monmouth County Master Gardeners. She said several seats were available at \$45.00 per person.

**RCE UPDATE:** Nick Polanin is setting up a committee which will include both coordinators and Master Gardeners. He asked those present at the meeting to notify him if they are interested. The commit will review/re-write the State Policies and Procedures for Master Gardeners. The next Coordinators meeting is April 27, 2015.

All counties have been in touch with Nick about their activities for 2014.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Pin Inventory: There is a huge pin inventory of 5, 10, 15 year pins. We need a drawing down of pins. Just letting counties know that they are available.

Seven to ten 25 year pins will be needed for next year. The design of the 25 year pin will be discussed. Nick will check on this.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

University policy regarding re education hours will be part of the revision of the Rutgers P&P for MG's. The goal of the Committee will be to create a consistent procedure for county policy and procedures.

### **CONFERENCE TASKS:**

The Conference on October 3, 2015 will be held again at the Cook Campus Center.

Still under discussion is whether the Office of Continuing Education will set up an on-line site and do all the registration tasks except for name tags. The advantage for our group is clear: participants can pay by credit card, all fees move within the Rutgers internal system. However, there will be a 10% administrative fee necessitating an increase in registration fees. A motion was made to raise the registration fee to \$30.00 per person. The motion passed.

Registration forms will be available on line. Members may make hard copies and mail in their registrations. Full details will accompany the materials being developed.

The deadline for Award Recipients is July 15, 2015. Materials from each county should be sent to Suzanne Keane @ <[MGSue06@gmail.com](mailto:MGsue06@gmail.com)>. Pictures should be sent to Joseph Cooper.

### **BREAK** – Thank you Monmouth!

Upcoming:

May 5	ECC	Atlantic
June 2	ECC	Bergen
July 7	ECC	Burlington
August 4	ECC	Camden
September 1	ECC	Cumberland (Pot Luck)
September 29	AMC	Essex
October 3		STATE CONFERENCE
November 3	ECC	Hunterdon
December 1	ECC	Mercer

AMC = Agriculture Museum Classroom

ECC = Extension Conference Center

### **COUNTY REPORTS:**

**Atlantic:** Programs are up and running the elementary school vegetable garden in Pleasantville is going forward this year; in addition, the horticultural therapy programs at both extended care facilities are growing. Our new and significant project is off the ground redesigning and developing of garden beds at the Mays Landing Library.

Education credit hours were given for a lecture sponsored by the Linwood Arboretum which was excellent: Mark Weathington from the JC Raulston Arboretum spoke on Scree Gardens in the Lowlands.

Our county has developed two new presentations for educating the public: Four Season Gardening and Landscaping in Southern New Jersey.

We have improved our agriculture station vegetable garden and are re-evaluating our contributions to the Community Food Bank of NJ in Egg Harbor Township.

Our plant sale committee is working hard preparing for our annual sale on May 16th 2015.

**Bergen:** At our March meeting we learned about the impact of storm water on our homes and parks, ponds and rivers, excess run off and storm water pollution. *Water, Water, Everywhere!* was presented by Arnie Friedman, Owner, Landscapes by Design, LLC Master Gardener, Class of 2003. As gardeners there are best practice tips to manage your yard responsibly and prevent storm water pollution. He gave practical options for the home gardener to protect our future water supply by employing the use of rain gardens, water filtering systems and storm water harvesting options.

Our Trips and Tours will be an exploration of the private gardens at the Hay Honey Farm in Far Hills, NJ. Garden areas created near the house include a dwarf conifer/spring bulb garden, a large walled perennial border, hosta garden, native meadow and a large kitchen garden. A natural stream flows through a Rhododendron garden. While woodland and field walks highlight collections of unusual maples firs and other trees and shrubs.

Earth Day is approaching and every year, Bergen County is asked to participate in various community events to celebrate the occasion and do the good work we Master Gardeners do. This year includes the Paramus Earth Day, Ridgewood EARTH DAY 2015 FAIR "Let's Grow Ridgewood Green and Yellow!! and Party for the Planet—at Van Saun Park.

The Helpline has opened this month. Many of our sites are starting their Spring clean up days.

**Burlington:** The third in a series of monthly presentations to the public at BCCAC was given March 21 by Terry Zane on the topic "Houseplants".

An article was published in the Master Gardeners Journal in the Burlington County *Times* on March 13 entitled "To Prune or not to Prune" by Judy Janas.

A presentation was given by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts on March 23 to the Master Gardeners on the topic "The Artist's Garden". This was in conjunction with the current exhibition "The Artist's Garden: American Impressionism and the Garden Movement, 1887 – 1920" on display until May 24.

The Rancocas Nature Center team held its first clean-up day for the butterfly/hummingbird garden.

The Pinelands Preservation Alliance Team held its first planning meeting. This year their emphasis will be on the shade and kitchen gardens. Work on the blended garden will continue as needed.

The IPM Team held its last planning meeting. Work to prepare the beds of the ten demonstration plots at BCCAC is scheduled weekly beginning in April.

The Medford Leas Donation Garden Team has started seeds in flats which members have taken home to germinate. Later they will be transferred to the unheated greenhouse which has been swinging from over 100 degrees to under 30 within a 24-hour period. Peas and onions have been started in the garden and other cold crops like carrots, beets and collards will be added the first week in April.

The 2015 Intern Mentor Team has been meeting and mentoring begins mid-April.

A planning meeting for the Plant Expo Plant Sale at BCCAC in May was held.

**Camden:**

**Cumberland:** Absent

**Essex:** Education committee is working with Clara Maas Hospital on a project called “Life line challenges to a healthy living”. We will be working with 6 schools over the next 3 months teaching children to plant veggie seed and to nurture them resulting in transplanting a grown plant to bring home at the end of the school year.

The Rose Garden at Brookdale Park had its opening day on March 26. Roses were pruned, beds cleaned of debris and an application of Epsom salt was done.

Speaker at our March 14<sup>th</sup> meeting was Shari Stern from the Raptor Trust

Our next Senior Horticulture program will be on Honey Bees and their importance as pollinators.

Our annual plant sale is May 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at Presby Memorial Iris Gardens and May 9<sup>th</sup> at Garibaldi Hall in Roseland.

We are hosting a table at Branch Brook Park during the Cherry Blossom Festival on April 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. On the 19<sup>th</sup> we will be doing hands on activities for children in the new Branch Brook Children’s Garden.

**Hunterdon:** The Hunterdon Master Gardener new class started March 3. There are 13 members of the new class, all women. The class is very enthusiastic.

Mark Mayer from the Phillip Alampi Lab on Beneficial Insects spoke in March; a workshop was also held at the Lab outside of Trenton. An additional workshop at the Lab is being scheduled for later in the year. Upcoming speakers include: Mark Vodak on Invasive Insect Pest Species in April; Tom Sheppard from the Hunterdon County Park System on Bats in May; Chela Weiler from Burpee on Herbs in June, and Kathy Klink on Monarch Butterflies in June

Participation at Community Events is beginning to be scheduled for the upcoming season.

The Helpline opened on April 6.

Horticultural Support activities continue at the Meadows facility. The Hunterdon Central High School Team, which works with developmentally dis-advantaged teens, has programs scheduled every Tuesday through October. Sessions that have been held include: crop rotation, worm composting and turning in the cover crop in the vegetable garden.

As part of the Rotary and Rutgers Initiative, the Experience Garden Team prepared for a presentation in April at the Kid’s Homeschool Network (KHSN). The team will present to KHSN on April 9 from 1:30-3:15, the first “traveling gardening” activity. After that the team will begin scheduling activities with other groups both onsite at RCE and offsite traveling activities.

Planning for other Children’s Programs and Anderson House activities is starting up.

The Snyder Farm team put in over 14 hours of work at the farm.

**Mercer:** Our March 21 Symposium went off very well, in spite of the snow. We had 282 registered, and only a few failed to attend. The snow did require one speaker to fly into Philadelphia rather than Newark. Some 50 RMG’s worked that day to keep things running smoothly. We are still working through such things as travel expenses for the speakers, but we feel it was a great success and a wonderful educational opportunity for all Rutgers Master Gardeners.

We are partnering with the local Boy Scout troops. They can provide manpower and ideas useful to us, and we can provide opportunities for community service, which is a requirement for their advancement into the top four Scout ranks. One scout is now working on his Eagle service project at MEG. We can also provide training and potentially act as counselors to the scouts for a number of merit badges. The scouts will be helping at the Insect Fest this September.

During our Executive Board meetings, we have begun asking members to give a short talk describing their background and life experiences. This helps us to better know and appreciate the members. The breadth and depth of experience and talents represented by our members are surprising and impressive.

This summer, we will again lead three day-long camp experiences at Trent House in Trenton. We partner with the Boys and Girls Clubs, Isles, and the Trenton YMCA to provide inner-city youth with a fun and educational gardening and history experience. We also have a summer library reading program for children that will be presented at nine Mercer County libraries.

Our speaker at the April monthly meeting was John Bartram! He gave a witty, inspiring, and informative presentation well worth attending. If anyone is interested, check out Kirk R. Brown. He is a lecturer, writer, and rein actor of several personalities, based in Pennsylvania.

Our Community Outreach and Community Education events have begun. Our Plant Expo will be held on May 2.

**Middlesex:** The greenhouse team has been seeding and transplanting..... Getting flowers, vegetables and herbs ready for our Spring Flower sale. All interested master gardeners have been trained and the greenhouse is in full swing.

Our speakers bureau and community outreach team is naturally busy this time of year filling requests on talks from "getting ready for Spring" to container gardening to perennial plants and shrubs. Requests have also come in to man education/question and answer tables at the Middlesex County History Fair and Earth Day.

Upcoming Free workshops at RCE EARTH Center include Composting on April 11 and 15 and companion planting on April 19th. Call 732-398-5260 to register.

**Monmouth:** At the March 18 General Meeting, Sabrina Tirpak of the Rutgers Diagnostic Lab gave a presentation about the history and use of the microscope.

On March 6 we held our first School Gardens Conference. It received very good reviews and we plan to host a second one next year.

Two large boxes of seeds have been donated for use in gardens where food is grown for Monmouth food pantries.

All the committees responsible for the gardens that surround the building have met. Schedules are set and the work of bringing those gardens back into shape and production has begun. Bricks honoring MG's who have passed have been delivered and will be installed with a short ceremony to be held close to Memorial Day.

Interested members will take a bus trip to Winterthur on April 24.

**Morris:** Here are the doings for March for Morris County

The open position of MG Coordinator has been posted.

We held the Turf Management Symposium with 72 attendees at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum

We held a Helpline refresher course

Morris County MGs staffed an Outreach refresher course at the County Library

**Ocean:** Ocean County MGs have been busy in their greenhouses nurturing specialty annuals & vegetables for our sale in May.

The Speakers Bureau gave nine talks in March and has eight scheduled for April. One on "Get your Garden Growing" is a free talk at the Ag. Center for the public.

Our Community Garden Committee is preparing their beds this week and will plant onions.

Helpline and Tick Lab are now open.

The Interns are anxious to begin volunteering as their classes wind down. They are pairing up with their Mentors or another Veteran for the next six weeks for Helpline & Tick ID.

Our 25th Anniversary Committee has invited past presidents to write about our history during their term for our newsletter and to attend our Pot Luck Luncheon in May which will be our "big" celebration. And, Nick is invited, also.

**Passaic:** Absent

**Somerset:** In order to raise some revenue, newly formed Somerset MGs have decided to have an internal plant sale. Plant selections must be pre-ordered from grower. Flowers must be picked up from our meeting place by purchaser.

Volunteer Recognition Luncheon is on April 15th at a lovely restaurant in Raritan N.J. Called Soriano's.

**Sussex:** This year's *Springfest* was a good success, with an estimated 8,500 visitors coming to enjoy a wide variety of speakers and vendors. RCE Sussex MGs volunteered to set up, clean up, prepare handout materials for visitors, served as docents and support staff for the event. We prepared and presented two lectures, and a new educational exhibit titled *Plants in Action*. The exhibit is planned to be expanded and used for the NJ State Fair in August, and potentially Rutgers Gardens Open House as well. It also was requested to be brought to the YMCA and Sussex Library. Many countless hours are donated by MGs, without which the event could not be held. The event supports the Agricultural Division of the NJ State Fair as well as hort/ag scholarships. Proceeds have improved the greenhouse, built the Conservatory, paid for hardscaping which connects outside garden exhibits with the Conservatory, and will pay for upgrades to the facilities in the future such as improved flooring and restrooms.

The new RCE Research and Education Garden breaks ground this spring with fence repair, gate building and hardscaping. MGs will be working on the hardscape within the site in order to develop a major teaching area for a variety of events and demonstrations currently being considered.

A new page on our website will now replace our newsletter. Our webmaster, Phil Schaming and his team are testing various types of formatting to ensure a good result. This effort will enhance communications and make information much more accessible by visitors to the site. By moving toward a web format, the researched articles previously published through the paper format *Blooming News* will be available to a much broader audience. Plans to correlate this effort with creating Fact Sheets out of researched topics are also underway.

MGs are working diligently at Kittatinny Valley State Park and other sites across the county to get the area ready for visitors this spring. MGs have already scheduled educational outreach engagements for

this spring participating in the Ladies Retreat at Sussex County Community College, Older Americans Day at Selective Insurance, Healthy Kids Day at the YMCA, and Children's engagements at Hope School, Project Self Sufficiency and the Sussex Main Library. Spring is finally here, even in the North. MGs will soon be back at work to ensure plants and gardens can be enjoyed by all the visitors coming to Sussex.

We will celebrate 2014 achievements at our Annual Awards and Appreciation Luncheon this month. Some of the milestones we will celebrate: 13 MGs achieved their 100 hour initial volunteer service requirement and will receive their certificates and pins, 4 MGs have achieved over 1,000 hours and will be given their Aurum Insigne golden badges and 5 MGs will be awarded 15 years of service pins.

**Union:** Absent

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45am.

Next meeting is May 5, 2015.  
Extension Conference Center

Respectfully Submitted  
Claudia Kolster, Recording Secretary