

## Rutgers Master Gardener Association of New Jersey

Minutes of Nov 3, 2015 RMGANJ Meeting

Kathy Dopart welcomed the group. Ellen Simonetti then led the meeting, following the Agenda.

**Minutes from Sept 29, 2015 Meeting:** Minutes from Sept 29<sup>th</sup> meeting are accepted as submitted.

### **Attendance:**

Atlantic:	Mary Lou Monihan
Bergen:	Joseph Cooper, Karen Pennell
Burlington:	Terry Zane, Marilyn Bidrawn
Camden:	Nancy Sullivan
Cumberland:	Carol Henry
Essex:	Suzie Yamarone, Gail Chumura
Hunterdon:	Tricia Deering
Mercer:	Bob Robinson, Theodora Wang, Betty Scarlata
Middlesex:	Kathy Dopart, Jerri Barclay, Dale Duchai
Monmouth:	Gayle Williams, Ellen Simonetti, Gordon Boak
Morris:	Pat Hudson, Debbie Meola, Carla Schan, Stan Nathanson
Ocean:	Suzanne Keane
Passaic:	Barbara Cook, Darlene Nowak
Somerset:	Linda Madretzke
Sussex:	Pat Schanzlin, Jane Gardner
Union:	Dolores Batz-Culp, Caryl Hannemann
Rutgers University:	Nick Polanin

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Pat Schanzlin reported a balance of \$11,383 after all current debits and credits have been posted. We almost made it as an equal expense/income outcome for the conference this year. However, next year, we will incur a \$2000 expense for the facility, for which we will need to account. It was moved and voted to accept the Treasurer's report as submitted.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** Ellen Simonetti thanked everyone for all the hard work at the Conference, which made it a success. There is a job at Princeton Day School job for a garden internship that is posted on the chalkboard for review, as well as a newspaper article on Terry Zane's work as a master gardener. Additionally, there are some supplies left over, including blank nametags and nametag covers. Either these can be used for next year or auctioned off for the December meeting.

Ellen has asked Arnold Kleeburg to be the auctioneer for the December Pot Luck Luncheon event. Arnold was a beekeeper and a former Navy Seal. In thanks for serving as auctioneer, Ellen purchased for Arnold about bees, cost for which we will deduct from the proceeds of the auction at the Dec. meeting.

Marilyn Bidrawn has volunteered to serve as the pin person for the group. There are 13 twenty-five year pins remaining and only a few of the Awards for Excellence pins. We may need to reorder those for next year's conference.

**RCE UPDATE:** Nick Polanin shared some great feedback on this year's Conference and extended how well he thought it went. On Oct 26, there was a Coordinator's Meeting. The Coordinators feedback was that 2 speakers would be enough for conferences in the future. Nobody else had actionable feedback.

At the Coordinator's Meeting, the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Awards Program was discussed. Nominations are due this Friday. One of the categories is Volunteer of the Year – the candidate needs to have been volunteering for at least 10 years for an extension office. Many of the Master Gardeners have received this award in the recent past. RCE started the program to recognize a number of different categories, beyond volunteers. Members should check with their local RCE to learn more information on these awards or to nominate someone. There are many opportunities for recognition through this program.

Nick completed and reviewed the 2015 Annual Report, and discussed the reporting of volunteer hours that are categorized within the report. The coordinators discussed how hours are to be reported for consistency. Additional hours of continuing education will now be included in the report, but under the proper category of additional hours beyond the required. Some counties are using exterior website tools to track their volunteer hours and to categorize hours and education time being submitted.

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There is no update on the protection of minors and education program as yet. Dan has not shared any directives on this requirement as yet and feels it prudent to wait until the university takes a definitive position. Once this occurs, then some action will be established. We need to be mindful of the requirements for background checks and clearance, particularly as it relates to the 4H.

Madeline DeNardo is leading a committee on Community Gardening. By next year, there will be 4 scripted PowerPoint presentations available for use by Master Gardeners.

Many corporations have retiree volunteer involvement programs for their former employees. These programs match with dollars the number of hours that the retired former employee volunteers. The corporation then donates the money to Rutgers Foundation, which then is sent back to various local groups. The Foundation will keep the normal 10% for the service.

Atlantic, Passaic, Cape May and Ocean RCEs have openings for the Coordinator position, of which the Ocean County position has been filled.

Rutgers Disability and counties provide support services to aid in making accommodations for class participants. Rutgers, for example, will provide a signer each session for a hearing impaired person who is completing the MG program to enable the participant to participate.

A long-standing list of names is in place to review the policies and procedures for the Master Gardener program, including both Coordinators and Master Gardeners. Dan and Nick will select participants for this group.

**New Business:** Formation of Nomination/Election Committee – Delores announced that Terry Zane has offered to run for President, while Kathy Dopart consented to run for a second term as Vice President. If anyone wishes to participate in the election, notify Karen Pennell or Delores **Batz-Culp**. The election will be held before the auction at the Dec meeting.

### **County Report Highlights:**

*Atlantic* – A bus trip to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden was a wonderful success. The Master Gardener's were very well pleased with the assorted docents who all had different backgrounds who were very generous with their time. Our group was particularly lucky in that the docent was a sculptor/educator who was not only well versed about the botanic garden and plant material but also enhanced the exhibit on display: The works of Isamu Noguchi thru December 13th. Highly recommended.

Our monthly meeting was hosted at the Forsythe Refuge (previously known as Brigantine Wildlife Refuge) by our volunteers who man their native gardens surrounding the visitors center each Thursday except during greenhead peak season. Speakers included the new refuge director and the director of public relations. We also had a power point presentation by Harry Young who has spear headed our project at the Mays Landing Library; it described in detail the entire project from planning until completion and was very well done. Our meeting was followed by an hour shuttle tour around the refuge (limited capacity) and or time for seeing the new visitors center/and, or walking the trails.

Friday, October 30th was the last day for our helpline until February 1st. The total numbers have not been reported for 2014/2015 season.

Our volunteers at the extended living facility in Galloway continue to report grow in numbers of residents participating. The new sensory garden is very well received.

Most other projects have done their final season clean ups and will resume in February. New signage is being addressed by Richard VanVranken, Atlantic County Agriculture Extension Head.

We will have the election of our new officers, next week. No news about coordinator search.

*Bergen* – Trips & Tours: will begin again in 2016. The new class of students began this October with 25 new participants in the program. They are an enthusiastic group and many have already contacted Joseph with questions about getting involved.

Color Theory for the Gardener will be presented by Bruce Crawford, Director, Rutgers Gardens at our November meeting. His presentation will show numerous approaches to using color more effectively in a garden, regardless of whether the garden is designed to calm and pacify or excite and entice! Bruce Crawford had his own garden design business for nearly 25 years that specialized in plantings for year round interest. His position as Director of Rutgers

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Gardens involves the management of the 180 acre facility, which includes designed gardens, woodlands and open fields with an emphasis on interesting plant combinations that can be experienced throughout the changing seasons

Upcoming Events at Garretson Farm Sunday, November 29, 1-4 pm. The homestead is offering a wreath-making workshop using fresh greens, wisteria vine and dried bounty from the gardens. The cost of the workshop is \$25. However, if you choose to donate your wreath to Garretson for sale at Dutch Christmas, there is no charge. Instruction and all materials are included. Pre-registration is required if you are making wreaths for your own use. Call 551- 206-4380. Master Gardeners can contact Lida Gellman at lb922@aol.com for more information.

Bergen County is decorating a room at the Holiday Open House at Skylands. The Manor will be decorated floor to ceiling for "A 1920s Holiday." It's a warm and welcoming start to the holiday season with a totally different look every year! Gift Shop and Holiday Café, too. Please join us December 3-6 (Thursday-Sunday), 10 am-4 pm and support this NJBG fundraiser. More details at NJBG.org.

### *Burlington –*

#### Projects:

- ❖ Butterfly Garden at Smith Woods – During October seeds have been collected and plots cleared. Planning for 2016 has started with the County Parks system committed to providing plants.
- ❖ BCCAC – The IPM program and demonstration plots have wound down. Several plots have been seeded with winter wheat and all have been amended with either manure or compost. The harvested giant pumpkins, millet, hops and broomcorn have been moved to the pole barn entrance for display during the farmers market. (See photo below.) For more information on the IPM program visit [www.bcmgipm.blogspot.com](http://www.bcmgipm.blogspot.com)
- ❖ Donation Garden at Medford Leas – As of October 19<sup>th</sup> 891.5 pounds of vegetables and herbs have been donated to various feeding programs. The cold weather crops continue to thrive. Weather permitting, weeding and preparation for the spring will begin. A planning meeting is working on developing a mission statement for 2016 and educational aspects for MG's and the general public.
- ❖ Pinelands Preservation Alliance Gardens – The last workday was October 27<sup>th</sup>. The PPA staff is planning a thank you luncheon for December 1<sup>st</sup>. Interested MG's will meet during the winter months to plan the 2016 season.
- ❖ Rancocas Nature Center Gardens – no report.

Our quarterly meeting was held on October 13<sup>th</sup>.

#### Articles in Burlington County Times:

- ❖ October 5<sup>th</sup>, 'Bringing Plants Indoors for the Winter', by Susie Jacobsen
- ❖ October 19<sup>th</sup>, 'The Key to Growing Indoors', by Terry Zane
- ❖ October 21<sup>st</sup>, 'A Growing Hobby' a day in the life of Terry Zane, houseplant hobbyist

Upcoming: November 12<sup>th</sup> workshop on propagating ferns conducted by MG Joanne Szeliga.



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*Camden* – The Vegetable Garden is in the process of closing, as is the demo garden. Volunteer rec luncheon will be on Nov 20. Lakeland Seniors are meeting in Dec. Beehives are being readied for winter, as are the greenhouses.

*Cumberland* – Planning for our 2016 plant sale has started. Rumor has it Doug Tallamy will be a guest speaker. Planning for our Holiday Party & Wreath making workshop. Gardens have been winterized along with seed collection. Had a Rain Barrel workshop at local school. Bus trip to Longwood Gardens is being planned. Last month's speakers were from the Quail Project. Hopefully, we will be able to have some quail at the ext. center. Upcoming speaker is from RAREC, Dr. Paul Cabrera, a part of Nursery Production & Management. Our MGs will be getting a Proclamation for their work beautifying the Women's Heritage Trail Marker.

*Essex* - Horticulture for Seniors learned how to bring outdoor plants indoors for the winter. Rose Garden at Brookdale Park is cleaning up and winding down for the winter. Greenwood Gardens in Short Hills offered advanced training in spring-flowering bulbs. After the training, Master Gardeners helped to plant bulbs in the gardens.

Essex County Presby Memorial Iris Garden had Master Gardeners help to cut back the iris for the winter. Greenhouse is accepting "mother plants" to prepare for propagation for our spring plant sale.

Dr. Randi Eckel of Toadshade Wildflower Farms will be guest speaker at our monthly meeting on November 14. Topic will be native plants.

*Hunterdon*- The Rutgers Master Gardeners of Hunterdon County (RMGHC) November meeting speaker will be Marta McDowell speaking on "The Gardens of Beatrix Potter". The October speaker was Bruce Crawford giving his new talk on the Evolution of Plants.

The 2015 Hunterdon Helpline season has completed with about 700 contacts, which is about the same as 2014. 550 pounds of food have been donated over the last year to local food pantries through RAH. The organization is beginning to use volunteer spot for team sign-ups. Typical start-up problems are being worked through. The Snyder Farm Master Gardener apple plot harvest was about 7000 to 9000 pounds. A new horticultural support program is starting at the Hunterdon Care Center, a nursing home.

*Mercer* – On November 4, our new class graduation will take place, with 24 interns becoming certified Rutgers Master Gardeners. During October, a number of notable events took place. A seed and houseplant exchange was held at Extension on October 13, and was very popular. A talk entitled "Backyard Habitat for Birds", presented by naturalist and author Pat Sutton, drew over 100 to the Hamilton Library on Oct. 14. There was a tour of the Abbot Marshland and Tupelhaking Nature Center for RMG's. During 2015, we arranged a total of 10 interesting and educational tours for our members.

One of our longtime members, Phyllis Al Roy, received a national leadership award for her volunteer work with an organization called "Results", which advocates for effective solutions to poverty.

We have collected and organized 10 years worth of data on Helpline calls and walk-in clients. The total number of contacts increased annually to a maximum of about 3500 in 2008, and has since fallen to around 2000 last year. Throughout, there have been more walk-ins than phone contacts. Part of this fall off is undoubtedly a result of people using internet websites rather than calling. Also, we know our website gets a large amount of traffic, and may serve as a surrogate for phone contacts.

Registration for the March 12 Symposium is open now and is rapidly filling. We currently have 100 registered, with a maximum capacity of 300 in the facility. Thus far, the majority registered are from outside Mercer County.

Some needed repair work (replacing ties outlining beds) at MEG is being done as an Eagle Scout project. The scout leading the project raised the money to have a dumpster delivered to MEG to hold and haul away the debris, and recruited a crew of scouts to do the work.

Carol Edelman presented a photographic and poetic tour of the Pine Barrens at our monthly meeting. Few of us realize the extent and diversity of this national treasure.

Our transition to holding our monthly meetings at the larger Boys and Girls Club facility has been held up by lack of a gym floor – which is being finished now! Next month!

*Middlesex* – We started a new class of 48 interns, including an evening on Thursdays. The remainder of new interns participates in Friday morning's class.

Our gardens are put away for the winter except for some cold crops being grown by the college students in "Rows for the Hungry".

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We had some very successful workshops at the EARTH Center. Over 20 people attended the Growing Garlic and Backyard Composting workshop conducted by Master Gardeners this past month.

There was also a Vermicomposting workshop presented by our colleagues at the County Division of Solid Waste.

Michele Bakacs, our Environmental and Resource Management Agent, is preparing for another Environmental Stewards program to begin in January 2016. In the past, many Master Gardeners interested in local environmental issues have taken the program, which aims to help residents expand their awareness of science-based information on environmental issues and facilitate positive change in their community. Classes take place on Wednesday evenings starting in January. Call 732-398-5275 or email [Bakacs@aesop.rutgers.edu](mailto:Bakacs@aesop.rutgers.edu) for details and registration.

*Monmouth* – October 24, 2015, Monmouth County MGs presented an all day program of speakers at the Monmouth County Library in Shrewsbury under the direction of Janet Dill. The public was invited to learn how to create landscapes for winter interest, planting bulbs for spring, year round composting, growing and using herbs (given by our Ellen and her Prince) and a demonstration using dried and living plants to create a terrarium or picture frame. Our Horticultural Enrichment MG, who gives similar programs to our senior citizens, gave this last talk. The overall program was well attended and is the second one of its kind. As it was well received, there will be more programs at the library in the future for Monmouth County residents.

Since the summer, our Speakers Bureau has picked up steam and they have been busy last month and continue to be so in November. Our Horticultural Enrichment Program meets regularly with local seniors in various facilities. Their gardening lessons and projects bring smiles and much needed conversations all around!

November 19<sup>th</sup> is our Graduation Program for the Class of 2015. We continue to shore-up plans for the event. It should be a wonderful evening with comments and congratulations from Bill Sciarappa, Monmouth County Agricultural Agent, Diane Larson, Monmouth County MG Coordinator and Lillian Burry, our Monmouth County Freeholder and Honorary MG. This class has delivered about 3,000 lbs. of produce to our local food banks!

*Morris* – Classes are in full swing at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum on Mondays from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Morris County has started fall cleanup and clean out at historic Acorn Hall on Tuesdays until the weather prevents it!

The Master Gardeners enjoyed a late season garden tour of one of our MGs. A CEU lecture and networking event was conducted at Frelinghuysen Arboretum with speaker Tom Gabel from award winning landscape design firm Sunrise Farms.

The Horticulture Enrichment season is in swing with 11 Morris County venues. Our Speakers Bureau had 4 engagements at venues around the county in October

*Ocean* – In Oct. our greenhouse teams sanitized their houses and planned what to grow for the 2016 season. We had our last All-day Training with a Halloween theme. The Display Garden & Cuisine Garden were put to bed for the winter. The Hoop House committee replaced their lumite floor and will re-cover the structure with poly tomorrow. The Community Garden is still closing up and cleaning. They have donated more than 2700lbs. this year. The Ocean MGs who attended the Fall Conference reported that it was a success. It was praised by first-timer, Dr. Steve, too.

Coming up this month is Open House for prospective members. Our Thanksgiving food donations made at our General meeting will be going to People's Pantry in Toms River. They are still feeding "Sandy" families. Our speakers group has 4 talks scheduled. The Garden Design Committee is working on 2 projects. By the end of Nov. we will have a new horticulturist/MG coordinator.

*Passaic* – Awaiting Passaic County Freeholders to approve the County Budget so that the search for a MG Coordinator can be restarted. Horticultural therapy programs have been scheduled for the coming months. Will elect new officers in December. Bylaws are being reviewed with possibility of adding members to the MGAPC Board. New committee for the plant sale in May is already planning the event. Asking members to divide and pot their plants and bring them to the Nike base garden to overwinter. Over 103 pounds of vegetables were donated to the Father English Food Pantry in Paterson. Looking to have a joint meeting with Bergen County and share the cost of a speaker.

*Somerset* – Somerset Master Gardeners set up an informational tent at the Somerset county 4-H Fair and hosted approximately 4000 adults in our tent. We also had many activities for children to educate them about gardening. As a result, we hosted approximately 3000 children in our tent. At the conclusion of the fair, the tent received the Manager's Blue Ribbon Award.

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*Sussex* – We completed the Orientation Class for new MG Interns on October 7<sup>th</sup>. Efforts are currently underway to close down garden sites across the county to ready them for winter. Several new requests for speakers are in place with more coming in. We have had some interesting requests from our Hot Line including how to keep birds from eating ornamental berries on shrubs within borders.

Seniors groups and children's groups continued their ongoing horticulture programs across the county. Many new changes and updates have been made to the website to make reporting of volunteer and continuing educational hours more efficient and to enable youth gardeners to upload information on scheduling and accomplishments, to improve communication.

*Union* – the Helpline has changed over to winter hours. Horticulture Therapy Committee has been busy with their 6-week program with the Berkeley Heights Senior Citizens.

Our Fall Speakers Series has been started. Three talks have been given for the public and Master Gardeners. As of Oct 12, over 1,700 lbs. of fresh vegetables have been donated to soup kitchens and food pantries in Union County. We'll be clearing out all the beds in November.

The Plant Sale Committee has been hard at work in September and October, potting up close to 700 perennial plants to winter – over in the demo garden for next year's plant sale. We have a great selection of plants again.

A new rain garden has been installed in the demo garden as an Eagle Scout project.

The Demo Garden was open during the Annual Harvest Festival on Sept. 27 in our County Park. We had a wonderful day and shared our beautiful garden with 546 people and some very happy children. 111 children made bird feeders out of toilet paper rolls, and they also decorated a plastic pot with flower stickers and chose one of two different baby houseplants to pot up and take home.

James Keane brought the insect display and generated a lot of interest in those strange looking (and sometimes scary) looking insects. The Herb Garden Committee gave tours of the herb garden, and Sharing Garden members gave tours of the Sharing Garden. The public also enjoyed self-guided tours of the Demo Garden using our brochure.

We also sold perennial and houseplants, gardening books and arts & crafts items.

### **CONFERENCE REVIEW:**

*Date of conference:* The 2016 Conference is scheduled on October 1, 2016 at the Cook Campus Center.

*Location:* Feedback on the 2015 room was that the seating was too tight. There was a section cordoned off for award winners, which was unused. This section can be deleted to spread out the seats more. Ladies rooms and parking spaces were also concerns cited in participant feedback. Lunch and breakfast could be served in the Cook Room and then put the Garden Room to use for lunch and breakfast. Additional feedback cited poor sound equipment in use, which should be reviewed and upgraded when the room is booked.

Motion was tendered that Terry Zane and Marilyn Bidrawn will reserve the space at Cook. Motion carried.

*Conference Tasking is assigned to the following counties for the next 2 years: (the County name shown in parenthesis is the county assigned for 2015 for reference)*

- *Awards Booklet - Ocean (continuing)*
- *Awards Ceremony - Nick Polanin and the Board President*
- *Awards Video and Garden Market - Bergen (Joseph is continuing; Carol Henry from Cumberland)*
- *Barnes and Nobel - Mercer (Contact David Pressier. Mary Rowson has his info.)*
- *Catering - Burlington (Somerset). Food will remain same for next year. We need to be sure to put out water for everyone at lunchtime.*
- *Door Prizes - Somerset (Suzie Yamarone from Essex)*
- *Evaluations - Atlantic (Jane Gardner has the master form)*

