

**Master Gardener Association of Bergen County
Board Meeting Minutes – October 15, 2024**

President Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm.

Roll call – Keith Mazanec took the roll call.

Present: Hosting – Theresa Schneider, Keith Mazanec, Miriam Taub, Suzanne Danzig, Chris Kozar, Janet Stofkoper, Donna Dorgan, Wendy Sowa-Maldarelli, Maria Bushman, Cesar Coy

Absent: Lisa Yoler, Jean Friedman, Arnie Friedman, Joseph Cooper, Suzy Basu, Alison Bloomfield

*(Note: Alison Bloomfield has resigned as Alternate Class Liaison, Class of 2024).

Approval of Minutes - President Schneider announced the revised August minutes had been distributed as well as the September minutes. The minutes for both months were approved.

Officer Reports:

President – Theresa Schneider

Theresa reported on two items: 1) The importance of recording hours in Better Impact. Rutgers uses this data to recognize individual Master Gardeners for their years of service. Recognition includes the Years of Service Awards Pin and the Aurum Insigne designation. The Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Aurum Insigne is an honor bestowed to an active Rutgers certified MG who has accumulated 1,000 hours of volunteer service. 2) The use of AI software to facilitate processes. How can we leverage this? Ex. updating bylaws.

Vice President – Lisa Yoler (absent)

No report given.

Treasurer – Jean Friedman (absent)

The Treasurer's report for September was submitted and filed.

Recording Secretary – Keith Mazanec

No additional report given.

Corresponding Secretary – Miriam Taub

Corresponding secretary

- Distributed Oct. 1 and 15 Potting Sheds.
- Mailed Potting Shed and attachments to 2 dues-paying members who don't have electronic access.

Corresponding Secretary report cont...

- Responded to email inquiries:
 1. Essex County resident who wanted to enroll in our 2025 MG training class as Essex isn't sponsoring a class. Directed her to inquire at the Passaic County RCE office and provided phone #.
 2. Rockland County resident, who wanted information about Bergen County's composting rules, asked if BC has a food scrap program, and whether BC distributes free kitchen composters like Rockland County does. Directed her to the BCUA website and BCUA's recycling contact. Also directed her to the state Division of Sustainable Waste Management webpage

There was a discussion about which organizations in Bergen County sponsor composting and does Bergen County have a facility which processes food scraps.

Potting Shed editor

- Produced Oct. 1 and 15 Potting Sheds and Fall Harvest Festival "photo album."
- Emailed board and site coordinators of upcoming Potting Shed deadlines.

Committee Reports:

Community outreach liaison – Arnie Friedman (absent)

No report given.

Publicity - Maria Bushman

Maria reported we have 59 followers on Facebook and 63 followers on Instagram.

Hospitality – Chris Kozar

Chris reported we are looking at hosting a holiday party possibly the second full week in December (week of Dec. 8), from noon – 2:30 pm.

Membership – Janet Stofkoper

Janet reported we have a total of 110 dues-paying members. We discussed reorganizing the Membership form.

Newsletter – Miriam Taub

There will be four more Potting Sheds coming out this year. Topics will include the holiday party, reporting volunteer hours, Holiday Open House.

Garden Club Liaison – Distributed Potting Sheds and notified liaisons of upcoming Potting Shed deadlines.

Site coordinator liaison – Wendy Sowa-Maldarelli

Contacted several sites to get information to be used in the Potting Shed. There was a discussion about adding new sites, specifically horticultural therapy sites. There are no new volunteers being accepted at Bergen New Bridge Medical Center. Possible venue might be Valley Hospital.

Volunteer Records – Suzanne Danzig

We currently have 105 certified/active MGs, 37 are still completing their hours for initial certification. To date 3 of our interns have been archived by Karen due to lack of activity. It is likely an additional 10 + or - will be archived by the end of the year due to no activity. We can welcome our newly certified MG, Charlene Mariano, Class of '24. YTD our MGs recorded 5,182 Outreach hours, 741 admin hours, 183 Special Events hours, 103 hours on Hotline, 59 Teaching hours and we have recorded 674 CE hours. I will have to post a reminder in the Potting Shed regarding CE hours as the 674 CE recorded hours were by only 69 members out of our 105 active members, so clearly we have to work on that number before the end of the year. Some of our sites will begin to slow recording their hours due to their activities coming to an end during the colder months. We may want to advertise the Holiday Open House in the Potting Shed again to remind some of our newer members of this opportunity. Garretson and Thielke continue to record the greatest number of hours with The Hermitage and Butterfly and Native garden accounting for over 500 hours each. In addition, there has been a flurry of activity at Davies Arboretum; not sure who generated that activity but it is good to see.

Website – Joseph Cooper (absent) and Miriam Taub

Website

- Updated meeting notice and “news and newsletters” section as needed.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension

Keith read Joel’s report:

RCE Report to the MG Association Board Mtg. 10.15.2024

Joel Flagler

1) Kudos to all of you who played a role in the creation and delivery of this year's Fall Harvest Festival. The county administration was so pleased with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension team and our talented and committed volunteers (4-H and MGs). It is also wonderful how the public has come to really enjoy this family-friendly free event, which celebrates the harvest season and Bergen's agricultural roots. The county estimated a total attendance of around 5,000 on the 2 days.

2) The Historic Agriculture calendar, produced by the BC Board of Ag and my office, is getting a sincere welcome from people inside and outside of county government and inside and outside of agriculture.

RCE Report cont...

We have much to be proud of when it comes to farming roots and preserved farmland and the support the community shows to our farms, nurseries, and farm markets. The calendars will be on sale at select farm markets, including Secor Farm's in Mahwah. If you want a few to give as gifts, get them soon. Contact me with questions. The cost is \$20, which is what it cost to print this beautiful agriculture calendar.

3) Mark the new ag calendar for Jan. 9, and plan to come to Landscape Day, the third day in the North Jersey Ornamental Horticulture Symposia. Turf Day is Jan. 7, Tree Day is Jan. 8. We have great speakers on all 3 days but the Landscape Day program is particularly well-suited to MGs. I am chair of this event as I have been since 1988. It will be co-chaired by Julia Piermatteo of Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Passaic County. The location is the beautiful small campus of the County College of Morris in Randolph. More to come.

Joel

Discussion Topics

- Implement the Audit recommendations.
- Timeline for 2025 budget – Jean will email, by Nov. 7, a request to board members for their budget information for 2025.
- Bylaws updates – TBD
- Policies and Procedures manual – TBD
- Updating the Membership form – TBD
- Can we do a monthly hybrid meeting?

Class Liaison – Cesar Coy; Alison Bloomfield (absent)

Cesar inquired, with the departure of Karen Riede, what will be the role of the Rutgers class liaison going forward? What should he be communicating to the class and sites? Miriam will email Cesar reminders to distribute to the class.

Programs – Donna Dorgan

Donna reported she has received a lot of positive feedback about September's speaker. Tonight's speaker is Dr. Charles West. November's speaker is Thomas Cawley, and his topic is Floral Design for the Holidays. The fourth-floor Learning Center has been reserved for March, April and May (third Tuesday.) Both trips and tours were well attended.

Adjournment

Motion: Chris motioned to adjourn the meeting. Suzanne seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:07 pm.