

# From the Potting Shed

Sept. 1, 2024

[www.mgofbc.org](http://www.mgofbc.org)



**Meeting news: Tuesday, Sept. 17, 7:20 pm**

## David Hlubik: Hazelnuts

Welcome back to our first presentation of fall 2024! Our speaker is David Hlubik, who received his undergraduate degree in plant biology and biotechnology in 2018 from Rutgers University. He then joined Thomas Molnar's hazelnut breeding lab at Rutgers for graduate school and completed his Ph.D. this year.



David Hlubik

David Hlubik grew up on his family's farm in Chesterfield, Burlington County. (David's father, Bill Hlubik, is the Rutgers Cooperative Extension agent in Middlesex County.) David's research topics focused on the study of hybrid hazelnuts, including pollination, dormancy, disease resistance, and nut characteristics.

According to the Rutgers [website](#), the Hazelnut Breeding Program was started in 1996 to overcome eastern filbert blight disease of hazelnuts through breeding and to help initiate hazelnut production in New Jersey and the Mid-Atlantic region. In 2020, Rutgers released five cultivars to growers. Click [here](#) for photos and information about each cultivar.

Currently, David works on the family farm where he's planted approximately 400 hazelnut trees. In addition to hazelnuts, David is interested in pawpaws and this year planted 750 trees as part of [Project Pawpaw](#).

*MG of BC meetings are free and open to the public in the first-floor meeting room, 1 Bergen County Plaza, Hackensack. Park in the garage or on the plaza. Refreshments at 7 pm; announcements at 7:20 pm. David Hlubik will follow at about 7:30 pm.*

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## From the President's Desk

**By Theresa Schneider, Class of 2016**

My adult brain and inner child are mourning the approaching end of summer. It's back to school time, which means increased traffic, a faster pace, and the rush to complete projects before it gets too cold and wet.



If you are like me, you also may be stressing a little over the fact that you have not input your volunteer and educational hours into [Better Impact](#). I've had great intentions to get my hours recorded every month, but the reality is that I haven't entered hours since March. Now it's crunch time to get all my hours documented so that New Jersey and Bergen County can get credit for my volunteer work.

Documenting my hours in Better Impact also helps me. First, it ensures my hours are counted toward annual Master Gardener certification. Presently, Rutgers requires 25 volunteer and 10 continuing education hours a year to maintain certification.

Second, Better Impact is the system of record that Rutgers uses to recognize individual Master Gardeners for their years of service. Recognition includes the Years of Service Award pin and the Aurum Insigne designation.

***(Continued on page 6)***

## GOING BACK IN TIME

### ***Bergen County agricultural history documented in 2025 calendar***

#### ***By Miriam Taub, Class of 2011***

When Joel Flagler was hired as the Rutgers Cooperative Extension agent in Bergen County in 1987, he inherited two boxes of old photos from previous RCE agents.

“I didn’t pay too much attention to them, but I knew they were special,” Joel recalled. “They didn’t seem as pressing as other, more important programs that needed my attention. So I let them sit.”

Over the years, Joel examined the contents of the boxes, which contained hundreds of photos (some on glass plates) and yellowed and brittle press releases, all of which amounted to a treasure trove of Bergen County agricultural history. The photos went back many generations documenting farm life in Bergen County as early as 1895.

Some photos had IDs written or taped to the backs while the people and locations in others were a mystery. But all were valuable from a historical perspective. Now the question: What was the best way to turn the photos into something Bergen County residents could appreciate and enjoy? And who was interested in helping Joel with this labor of love?

The Bergen County Board of Agriculture was the likely choice. However, Joel said, “It took decades to stir the Board of Ag’s interest in helping me do something meaningful with them.”

About two years ago, Joel pitched his idea of a historical calendar to Emily Secor, secretary of the Board of Ag and assistant manager of Secor Farms in Mahwah, her family’s generations-old business. Joel said that Emily approved of the calendar project. Then, by this June, the two winnowed down the collection to two photos for each month, plus a few images for the covers and introductory pages.

“Our goal was to shine the light on Bergen County’s rich history in agriculture,” Joel said. “This is the first time we have a written account of Bergen County’s legacy of modern agriculture.”

The New Jersey Farm Bureau, an association that represents the state’s agricultural producers and enterprises at all levels of government, offered its own



**Joel Flagler with the historic agriculture calendar. The calendar will be sold at the Fall Festival Sept. 21-22.**

calendar template to Joel and Emily so they didn’t have to re-create the wheel. Joel said that the Farm Bureau also contributed a few hundred dollars toward the cost of producing the calendar.

The Bergen County Historic Agriculture Calendar will be sold under the MG tent at the Fall Festival Sept. 21-22 in Overpeck County Park. Joel has also been in conversations about having the photos posted on the county website.

#### ***A history of the photo collection***

It all started with the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 that created a national Cooperative Extension Service, which serves as a partnership between the USDA and land-grant universities. In 1939, Joel said, Rutgers authorized a statewide celebration to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cooperative Extension Service.

***(Continued on page 3)***

## **Old photos developed into a calendar** *(Continued from page 2)*

“Bergen County started to assemble all these fabulous photos for this event,” Joel explained. “That’s how they came to be in the boxes that I found in 1987,” adding that he found a program from the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary among the photos. With the information from the program and from the yellowed press releases, Joel said he was able to produce statistics about the number of Bergen County farms and their acreage over the years.

Here are some of Joel’s findings:

- In 1900, Bergen County had 1,716 farms totaling 75,760 acres.
- In 1960, Bergen had 384 farms totaling 7,456 acres.
- In 2024, Bergen has 42 active farms, which include plant nurseries and equestrian centers, totaling 335 acres of preserved farmland and 607 acres of non-preserved farmland.

Joel said the biggest threat to farmland in Bergen County is “the pressure of development.” He estimated that two-thirds of the non-preserved farmland could disappear because it’s not designated as preserved. Click [here](#) for a New Jersey Farmland



This photo of an unidentified man and boy with apples was among the hundreds of historical photos Joel inherited when he became Bergen County’s RCE agent in 1987.

Preservation overview. Click [here](#) to read about the state Farmland Preservation Program.

Of the calendar project itself, Joel said: “This is one of the happiest things I’ve been involved with for years. It’s a treasure.”

## **FALL HARVEST FESTIVAL**

### **Support the MG Class of 2024!**

Enjoy a day outdoors at the Bergen County Fall Harvest Festival Sept. 21-22 in Overpeck County Park. Class of 2024 interns have been working on their displays on Backyard Gardening for Birds; Container Gardening; Sensory Gardens; Herbs; and Composting.

Introduce yourself to the Class of 2024, check out the educational displays and hands-on activities for kids, and buy a 2025 Bergen County Historic Agriculture Calendar, all under the Master Gardener tent.

The festival opens Sept. 20 from 6-9 pm with the midway, food trucks, and carnival rides. On Sept. 21-22 the hours are 10 am-5 pm for the MG and 4-H activities; exhibits; craft fair; and petting zoo. Live

music begins at 2 pm on both days. The midway, food trucks, and carnival rides are open from noon-10 pm Sept. 21 and from noon-8 pm Sept. 22.

The Bergen County Food Security Task Force will collect non-perishable foods under the main 4-H tent. Bring a donation to help fight hunger in Bergen County.

Enter Overpeck Park from 100 Challenger Road, Ridgefield Park, or 40 Fort Lee Road, Leonia.

And while you’re there, check out the Butterfly and Native Garden, one of our MG of BC volunteer sites. The garden has been enlarged this year with the new Native American Recognition Area.

For the Butterfly Garden, enter the park from Fort Lee Road; follow the signs to the Butterfly Garden parking lot (located before you get to the Bergen Equestrian Center lot); and then follow the signs to walk to the Butterfly Garden.

## TRIPS AND TOURS

### **Complete a 'trips and tours' survey; register for upcoming trips**

*Editor's note: Suzy Basu, Class of 2024, is the new Trips and Tours chair. She wants to hear what locations you'd like to visit, and she's already planned two trips; the descriptions follow. Non-MGs are invited to complete the survey and to register for either or both trips.*

#### **By Suzy Basu, Class of 2024**

I'm excited to invite all Potting Shed readers to join us on guided tours exploring diverse gardens and living landscapes in our region. These outings allow you to connect with fellow gardeners, learn from experts, and discover unique beauty and insights. MGs can also earn continuing education hours for participating in these guided trips. If you haven't taken the survey, click [here](#) to do so by Sept. 6.

I'll personally reach out to organize tours that match your interests. Let's come together to explore, learn, and build a strong community.



*Photo courtesy of Rutgers Gardens*

**A meadow in Rutgers Gardens.**

#### **Autumn eco-exploration of Rutgers Gardens, Wednesday, Sept. 25**

Discover vibrant native plants and their diverse ecological benefits on a guided tour of [Rutgers Gardens](#) in North Brunswick. Afterward, we may stroll through the natural [Helyar Woods](#) and enjoy a group lunch together. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.



*Photo courtesy of the Hackensack Riverkeeper*

**Eco-cruise under the Western Spur of the NJ Turnpike.**

#### **Hackensack River eco-cruise, Tuesday, Oct. 8**

Join us for a sunset eco-cruise along the Hackensack River where we'll explore the marshes of the Meadowlands and head upstream into Bergen County. The tour originates and ends in Laurel Hill Park, Secaucus. Bring snacks and drinks to enjoy on board as we learn about the local ecosystem and connect with fellow gardeners. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

## WEBINARS

**All times are Eastern.**

**Sept. 5, 7-8 pm:** Penn State Extension sponsors Watershed-Friendly Native Planting. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Sept. 9, noon-2 pm:** Penn State Extension sponsors Log Landing for Bees: Enriching Pollinator Habitat in Forests. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Sept. 10, noon:** National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts About Fall Garden Tasks. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Sept. 10, 6-7:30 pm:** Penn State Extension sponsors Proper Native Tree Planting for Long-Term Success. Fee: \$5. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Sept. 11, 1-1:30 pm:** University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension sponsors Seasonal Secrets: Fall Bulb Planting. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

**Sept. 14, 9-11 am:** Penn State Extension sponsors Fall into Gardening. Fee: \$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

## IN THE GARDEN

### Native plants and dogwoods for sale

Rutgers is selling native plants and 5- to 6-foot dogwood trees during two separate sales.

#### Native plant sale

You can purchase any of three planned gardens of eight plants each online: Full-sun garden; part-shade garden; and a you-pick garden. You must pick up your order Sept. 7 in North Brunswick. Click [here](#) for a description of what's available, cost, and instructions to purchase and pick up.

#### Dogwoods

The Rutgers Dogwood Breeding Program is selling Scarlet Fire kousa dogwoods, the world's first true



Blossoms of Scarlet Fire.

pink kousa, in a 3-gallon pot for \$75 and in a 4.5-gallon pot for \$90.

Also on sale are the Rutgers' "Stellar Series" hybrid dogwoods in the following varieties: Starlight, Constellation, Ruth Ellen, and Venus. They are

described as vigorous, white-flowering trees and come in a 2.5-gallon pot for \$40.

The sale runs through September or as long as supplies last. Contact [John Capik](#) at Rutgers to order a dogwood and schedule pickup.

### Sale on compost bins

The Bergen County Utilities Authority is selling compost bins, rain barrels, and related accessories to help turn your garden into an environmentally friendly one. Click [here](#) to view the BCUA products for sale, pricing, and ordering instructions. Deadline to order is Oct. 4 and pickup takes place Oct. 6 from 10 am-2 pm at Campgaw Mountain Reservation, 200 Campgaw Road, Mahwah.

*- Information from Ben Weiner, Class of 2020*

### Toronto MGs offer guide to native shrubs

Liz Gil, Class of 2019, shares this [gardening guide](#) from the Toronto Master Gardeners. Canada has its own agricultural zones similar to USDA agricultural zones. Toronto is Zone 6, which is equivalent to USDA Zone 5. Many of the shrubs that are native to the Toronto area are also native to New Jersey. Research the shrub if you're not sure.

### And speaking of gardens. . .



*Photo by Paul Sisko, Class of 2021*

You're invited to tour the garden of Paul Sisko, Class of 2021, Sept. 14 from 10 am-3 pm. The tour is part of the Garden Conservancy's [Open Days](#) program. However, it's free for MGs and interns. The address is 115 Fardale Ave., Mahwah. Park on the street. Be sure to introduce yourself to Paul. He'll be wearing a green badge labeled "Garden Presenter." Above is his waterfall and behind that one of the many sculptures that Paul created for his 3.5-acre property. Separately, Paul will speak at the Ramsey Area Garden Club Sept. 10 at 7 pm. See "Garden Club meetings" on page 6 for details.

## Hummingbird Day



Photo by Miriam Taub, Class of 2011

It was Hummingbird Day at the Butterfly and Native Garden in Leonia Aug. 25. Tammy Laverty, Class of 2015 and one of the site coordinators, led tours and answered questions along with Don Torino, president of Bergen Audubon. Tammy stands at the Native American Recognition Area, which was added to the Butterfly Garden this year. Volunteers work Tuesdays from 10 am-1 pm. For more information, contact [Tammy](#).

## GARDEN CLUB MEETINGS

**Sept. 10, 7 pm: Ramsey Area Garden Club,** Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, 55 Wyckoff Ave. (corner of Woodland Avenue), Ramsey. Speaker: Paul Sisko, MG Class of 2021, artist, and sculptor. Topic: My Life as an Artisan and Gardener.

**Sept. 12, 7:30 pm: Garden Club of Teaneck,** Room MP1, Rodda Center, 250 Colonial Court, Teaneck. Drive up the hill to the rear parking lot. Speaker: Judith Narcelles, canner and jam maker. Topic: Food Preservation. Refreshments at 7 pm.

## EVENTS

**Sept. 17, 7 pm:** Thielke Thursday Talks sponsors All about Screech Owls, a presentation by Jim Wright, author of "The Screech Owl Companion." Thielke Arboretum, 460 Doremus Ave., Glen Rock. Fee: \$10. Seating is limited. Click [here](#) to register. Jim will sell copies of his book and sign them.

**Sept. 21, 2-4 pm:** Bergen-Passaic Chapter, Native Plant Society of NJ sponsors a visit to a native plant garden in Glen Rock. Space is limited. Click [here](#) to register; indicate how many people will be coming in your car. The address will be emailed a few days before the event. Park across the street from the house. Narrow paths won't accommodate wheelchairs or strollers. Sturdy running shoes recommended; no restrooms are available.

### *(President's desk, continued from page 1)*

Rutgers-certified Master Gardeners are eligible for the Years of Service Award pin in five-year increments, starting the year after they complete their training. According to the State Program Leader in Consumer Horticulture and Master Gardener Program, certified years do not have to be consecutive to be eligible for recognition.

For example, a Master Gardener achieved initial certification in 2013 and maintained certified status in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2019 but missed certification in 2018. The Master Gardener was eligible for a five-year pin presented in 2020.

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 effort. To retain the Aurum Insigne designation, a Master Gardener must meet the annual volunteer and educational requirements; if not, they become an Aurum Insigne Emeritus.

If you need help with Better Impact or have any questions regarding your eligibility for the Years of Service Award pin and/or the Aurum Insigne designation, please send [me](#) an email.