

Houston County Master Gardeners' Meeting

Date: 5/22/2020

Present: Mary Thompson, Mary Zaffke, Jean Davy, Nora Beckjord, Richard Bartz, Bonnie Giesler, Janene Hosch, Loretta Knutson, Kris Litscher Lee, Linda Lind, Anna May, Char Meiners, Sue Meyer, Bev Nelson, Vicki Otto, Kathleen Taylor, Doug Thompson, Charmaine Uphaus, Jean Young, Lane Zaffke, Deb Zillmer, Mike Cruse

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. on May 19 by Mary Thompson, Chair, via Zoom.

Charles Beckjord did the Water Garden Presentation in the first hour (see attached). He is happy to answer any questions you have- you can send them to Nora.

Meeting started after the presentation.

On motion, the April 21 Agenda was approved.

On motion the minutes of the April meeting were approved.

The Treasurer's Report: Checking account balance: \$396.89, Savings account balance: \$1118.89, CD: \$3036.60. Total: \$4552.38. Activity was as follows:

Jean Davy: The numbers are the same as last month.

The CD opening date was Jan. 8 and it runs for 13 months. The expiration date is Feb. 8, 2021. If we withdraw from it, we pay a \$25 penalty plus 1% of what we withdraw. The interest rate is 1.3%.

We still have outstanding payments of \$164 for 4 interns (\$656) (when they complete their volunteer hours) and the 2nd half of the grant money (we paid half and the 2nd half is due upon completion of the projects). Our savings will cover most of this without touching the CD, especially since the Grant projects probably will not be completed this year.

On motion, Finance Report was approved.

Report from Extension: Mike said that as of now, the office will not open until June 30 but, it probably will not open until Fall. Even then, the staff will rotate 1 week in the office and 1 week at home. Jake Overgaard in the Winona office has resigned his position to work for an Organic Certification Company. There is an opportunity for 2 Full Time people dedicated to certain areas. Mike said a survey of needs assessments was going to be going out to see how we can be helped. He mentioned that It is hard to envision now with everyone working from home.

Ongoing/ Old Business:

Vegetable of the Year- Beets:

Jean Young sent out the attached Beet Cookbook! Her daughter helped with the layout and graphics (thanks Katie). Doug Thompson will add it to the website.

Other Updates:

Vickie Otto and Janene Hosch are both working on Church gardens. Jean Young has plant starts she has given to the food shelves. The contact in Caledonia is Kris Olson or Susan Oddsen, 725-3677. There are also tomato starts available at Mary Zaffke's work.

We have more opportunities with starts, garden kits, victory gardens, webinars, Horticulture Society (garden in a box to get kids gardening).

Grants Update:

Le Crescent School Project Grant: We gave them \$250 for a compost tumbler, Taste Test event, and raised garden beds. Deb said the garden is in good light and well-placed close to the school and food shelf. Sue Meyer asked if we can help with design of the space (or are we completely restricted with face to face meetings). Deb said we can take pictures and give advice.

ABC Works Grant: We don't know when they can go back to work. We gave them \$200 and Mary Thompson and Jean Davy visited them in March. They bought a cattle tank to use as a raised bed. They planned to grow vegetables and Vickie Otto was going to mentor the project. They also have a small kitchen for growing vegetables. It's doubtful if they will be able to complete the project this year. Jean Davy also forwarded the email from Katie Schroeder explaining that the building is closed so they have to wait for Dept. of Human Services to give the go-ahead to open.)

New Business:

Garlic Mustard:

Deb Zillmer sent pictures of her garlic mustard that she has been pulling.

It's a non-native, invasive plant that came from Europe via NY. It inhibits growth of beneficial fungi on native plants. It takes about 5-7 years for the native plants near it to go away. It's a biennial plant. Once you pull it, it can still set seed so it needs to be bagged. You have to pull it out by the root and it's hard to get the root because it twists by the root. It smells like garlic and can be used in cooking. (Jean Young also sent a garlic mustard pesto recipe) The seeds mature in July-August and can be viable for 5 years.

In Oregon and Washington, they have provisions for disposing it. WA has special compost sites with enough heat to kill it. There is no place to dispose of it in Houston County. Rushford has a hot enough composter but it is only available to people in Fillmore county. Burning it is the best option unless we can convince Houston County to get a hot enough composter.

It was suggested that we call Environmental Services of Houston County and reference what Rushmore is doing. Mary thought this would be a worthwhile project for our group. Deb is working on writing an article and Mike can send it to the few newspapers we have left in the area. Jean asked if hours pulling them can be counted towards our volunteer hours. Mike said we can wrap education hours into it by writing and educating about it.

Mary asked who would like to work on it. Jean Young said she can pull it. Bonnie will make a poster and Deb will write the article that can also be posted on our website and Facebook page. Bonnie will send the DNR information about it. This would also be a good topic for the Houston County Fair if it happens this year.

There are several webinars available that we can take for education hours. Mary Thompson sent several out to us. There is a Food Preservation beginning on June 1 for \$15. There will be webinars every Thursday between June and September from 7-8 PM. Look at Mary's email for links. Also, the Horticulture Society has several resources and podcasts that count for education hours.

Next Meeting will be June 16 at 5:30 PM via Zoom. We will have updates on Garlic Mustard, Bonnie will give a presentation on Beets taken from the poster she put together for the cancelled workshop, and we will have an update on COVID-19.

Motion to adjourn was passed. Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM. 1 hour of Education time and 1 hour of Volunteer time will be given for attendance at this meeting.

Nora Beckjord