

Houston County Master Gardeners' Meeting

Date: 11/17/2020

Present: Mary Thompson, Mary Zaffke, Jean Davy, Nora Beckjord, Bonnie Giesler, Barb Hefte, Janene Hosch, Kris Litscher Lee, Linda Lind, Bev Nelson, Doug Thompson, Charmaine Uphaus, Lane Zaffke, Mike Cruse

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. on November 17, 2020 by Mary Thompson, Chair, via Zoom.

We watched an informative video by Angela Gupta about Jumping Worms and how to identify and avoid the spread of these nasty creatures. You can find further info at <http://greatlakeswormwatch.org/>. A recommended way to bring them to the surface of the soil is with mustard powder and water (they live close to the surface, unlike common earthworms).

Meeting started after the presentation.

On motion, the November 17 Agenda was approved.

On motion the minutes of the October 20 meeting were approved.

The Treasurer's Report: Jean Davy 's report showed the following changes to our accounts:

Checking account balance: \$376.89, Savings account balance: \$369.18, CD: \$3036.66. Total: \$3782.73. We had the following activity:

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| ABC Grant: | \$200.00 |
| La Crescent School Gardens: | \$250.00 |
| Kris Lee 50% course: | \$160.00 |
| | |
| Total: | \$610.00 |

On motion, Finance Report was approved.

Report from Extension: Mike C. had to leave shortly after the meeting started so notes from Extension are included in Mary's Report from the State Advisory Committee. There is a new person in Mike's office named Jenn (we will publish

her last name when available) and we can send any new projects to her, such as updating our mailing list.

Report from State Advisory Board:

Mary Thompson advised that there is a change in our fiscal policy. All counties now have to put their funds in the State Treasury account in 2021. Mary was concerned when she heard this but evidently this has always been the policy- it hadn't yet been fully implemented. All counties will be brought on board with the policy by the end of 2021. She spoke with Diane Greiwe and got more clarification and reassurance. Our CD will be due at the end of February so we can wait until then. At that time, we will meet with them, probably in Rochester, and they will walk us through the process. We will need to fill out a form and keep a receipt. We send the receipt and form to Jean Davy, who checks for completeness, and sends it to Mike, who also checks it for completeness, then he sends it in to the State. They have 30 days to get back to us when we request funds but it usually only takes a few days.

We will also have use of a credit card for large purchases so that MG's don't have to pay in advance (like Jean Davy did when she purchased the MG clothing).

Bev asked about the Thrivent Grant – what happens if the full amount isn't spent. And Charmaine asked if we would be able to collect any interest on the money. Mary will check with Diane about both of these things.

The policy was put into place to protect the MG money because several years ago there was a problem in Hennepin County.

New Interns: We have 2 new interns! Nancy Gulbranson and Pamela Rollins. Nancy was at the meeting last night but the other new member was not and Mary hasn't been able to reach her by phone or email. Mike promises to follow up with them both in the next week for next steps. The new interns will need to send in their checks and get a background check completed. Welcome!

Ongoing/ Old Business:

Heritage House:

Everything was finalized in October. We were waiting for the cost of the trees and plants from Harvey, which we received last week and Bonnie sent to the team. The numbers aren't exact because he didn't have the cost of the shade maple tree but he will also supply that. Bonnie sent the numbers to Kaya for approval but thinks she will approve because they were very reasonable. She also took photos last week of the new patio and sidewalks and distributed them to the team. There is more fill coming and Loretta will also look to see what type of landscape blocks will be needed for the steep hill. (It will also depend on how much \$ is left over). Mike Wiste picked up the supplies for the planter boxes- they cost around \$300 so we will have \$900-1000 left over for trees. Harvey's estimate is at \$769.72.

Loretta mentioned railings for the steps but that wouldn't be our responsibility. She also recommended lattice for the bottom of the front deck so critters can't get under it. We would need to order everything by February in order to have it by April. Curtis, the Habitat for Humanity Superintendent, spoke with Karen Tisthammer, Agriculture Teacher at Spring Grove High School, and her class is interested in helping with the planting. Nancy G. volunteered to talk to her about specifics. An MG will need to supervise. It will also depend on what the UofM allows us to do in the spring.

Bonnie also mentioned the "Pruning Shrubs and Trees course" that Ramsey County is hosting. I think several of us are registered for the course.

Year End Report: Bonnie did a report on the Heritage House for Extension. The 2 grant reports and a report on our vegetable of the year (Beets) were also submitted. ABC and La Crescent school gave their approval to have the pictures of the children published.

Gardens maintained by MG's: See Tom Kenney's last Newsletter (at the end of this report). He is asking for help enumerating and listing gardens in the area in case people want to take a self-guided garden tour. Janene takes care of several gardens in Caledonia (St. Mary's Catholic Church, the swimming pool and auditorium gardens and the Century Link Building garden near Sleepy Hollow, the north park gardens by the Caledonia sign plus the Winnebago gardens!) Bonnie offered to help her with these. Vickie weeds the gardens in La Crescent, Jocelyn (Spring Grove Gardening Club), takes care of the cemetery gardens. Other gardens and names that were mentioned: City Park Gardens in front of the Spring

Grove school and the assigned street side gardens in Spring Grove. (Kathy Taylor may also be helping with these). Mary T sent further information about this in a separate email that I put at the bottom of this report. She thinks the St, Mary's garden might be what they are looking for. The UofM would like to feature a garden from each county.

Projects for 2021:

Fall Event

Finish Heritage House

Plant Exchange (with no jumping worms please)

Christmas 2021

If anyone has any other ideas, please bring them to Mary T.

Janene said there is a Turkey Fest Group that tends the walking trails near the highway in Caledonia and they are wondering if an MG would like to help with decorations and lights. There are 10 trees total. Janene will tell the committee we need a theme, lights and decorations. (Bonnie, Barb, Mary T and Janene are on this team and Janene is the lead. We discussed many things that could be used to decorate the trees- we need to know the size. Some ideas were Gardening Themes- vegetables, pine cones, seed pods, trumpet vine spray (Bonnie), natural things that can be found outdoors. Also dried Hydrangea flowers.

There is also the Festival of Trees put on by Houston County (it will be outside this year with the auction items on display at Red's). Mary and Lane Zaffke, Bev, Jean Young, Nancy Gulbranson and Nora Beckjord will decorate a tree for the festival with a "Feeding the Birds" theme. Barb and Mary may have lights. Nora has lights and lighted garland to donate. Bev is the lead for this group.

Vegetable of the Year: Deb suggested Squash for 2021 since there are so many varieties and great recipes. We would need to decide if we are using summer or winter squash. If we highlight the vegetable at our Fall event, winter squash might make more sense. If we go with Squash, the Coops have beautiful displays that we can take pictures of.

We chose beets for 2020 because they are under-appreciated. Any vegetables can be highlighted except the very common ones such as tomatoes and potatoes.

Charmaine suggested parsnips. Another suggestion was Garlic. Nancy suggested Kohlrabi for another time.

Janene is bottling Beet Wine next Monday. Mary made a Beet Cake with Ricotta Cheese and Orange Olive Oil that she said was really good.

New Business:

Next Meeting: December 15 at 5:30 PM via Zoom Our topic will be Winter Landscaping. Please take some pictures of winter interest, decorated pots or other winter decorating and send them, to Bonnie for the December meeting. We will also have our election of Officers at the December meeting.

Round Table Discussion: We went around the “zoom grid” and talked about our gardening projects and we introduced ourselves to Nancy Gulbranson.

Motion to adjourn was passed. Meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM. 1/2 hour of Education time and 1.5 hours of Volunteer time will be given for attendance at this meeting.

Nora Beckjord

New! Help us build an interactive garden map

The Master Gardener leadership team is developing a new, interactive map that shows all the gardens, private and public, that are maintained by Master Gardener Volunteers throughout Minnesota - a virtual statewide garden tour! Send us information about your garden, and we will add it to the new Gardens Maintained by Master Gardeners Map. Each garden featured on the map will serve as an educational site by demonstrating to local community members what various garden types look like - gardens planted for stormwater management, pollinator gardens, healing gardens, and the like. The educational process occurs when Master Gardeners actively share information about the plants and when passers-by read the signage. The new interactive map will expand this educational opportunity. Submit your garden details today by completing this form: [Google Form to Submit a Garden Site](#). We'll post the map on the Extension website as soon as we've received enough submissions. Please contact [Jackie Froemming](#) if you have questions about this new project. We look forward to seeing your garden on the map!

Director's Message

As we tidy away our gardens and bring this unsettling year to a close, it seems more important than ever to celebrate 2020's accomplishments. You have all done an amazing job of regrouping, re-imagining, and redirecting your efforts so that fellow Minnesotans could continue to learn new skills and receive information about gardening, nature, climate, pollinators, and other Master Gardener Program priorities. Adapting with resilience has been the key to making it through these many months of uncertainty. You have really made the most of what you had to work with.

High on the list of 2020's successes is the result of this fall's recruitment campaign. We have received more than 500 applications – a record number! - and we hope that every applicant will join the program and follow through to become a Master Gardener intern in 2021.

As noted in the report below, new applicants indicated the two Master Gardener Program priorities that interest them most: Pollinators and Nearby Nature. The top two volunteer activities they indicated are walk-by learning gardens with interpretive signage, and service projects like food-shelf giving gardens.

An interesting trend these past two years is that applicants are younger in age, including 15% under the age of 30. Importantly, this suggests that the Master Gardener Volunteer Program is expanding its appeal – and its reach - across generations. Our new volunteers will bring new energy, new talent, and new ideas to help us expand into new directions and increase our capacity to serve our communities.

As we look ahead to 2021, we have more time to plan and prepare for the somewhat uncertain future, rather than react to ever-changing circumstances as we did in 2020. Together we will continue to adapt with resilience and reinvigorate our tradition of community service and engagement.

Congratulations and kudos to all of you. We are looking forward to welcoming the Class of 2021 – and to continuing our good works for all Minnesotans.

Thank you.

Tim Kenny
State Director

Education

Landscaping for pollinators

"[Mitigating the Effects of Climate Change on Grassland Butterflies](#)," an article from the Xerces Society, presents some of the latest research on how we can create resilient landscapes to help pollinator species in the face of changing climates.

In 2021, we'll unveil our climate-change-focused community engagement toolkit that will dive deeper into what you can do to build resilient gardens and landscapes.

CFANS Flower Trials

Here are the links to the 2020 University of Minnesota Annual Flower Trial Performance reports.

https://wcroc.cfans.umn.edu/sites/wcroc.cfans.umn.edu/files/2020_annual_flower_trial_garden_performance_report.pdf

https://wcroc.cfans.umn.edu/sites/wcroc.cfans.umn.edu/files/2020_top_ten_booklet.pdf

Regional Educational Gatherings - recording now available

We were so glad to have 212 Master Gardener Volunteers from 49 different counties join us at the virtual 2020 Fall Regional Educational Gatherings! If you were not able to attend a live event, watch a recording on the [Regional Educational Gatherings](#) page.

Master Gardeners

Recruitment of new volunteers - Update on the class of 2021

Congratulations to you on your recruitment efforts this year! Over 500 people applied to the program - that's the largest number of applications in the history of the program. And compared to last year, the second-highest year, the number of applicants is up 54%! Kudos to you!

This year we are thrilled to welcome interns in several counties where no program previously existed. The counties include Cass, Lincoln, Nobles, Redwood, Roseau, and Wabasha. Jackie Froemming will be serving as the "coordinator-at-large" for these volunteers, providing them with guidance and support.

Based on a quick overview of applications, it is not surprising that we will be working with another talented, passionate, and engaging group of interns. The priorities that most interest incoming interns are Pollinators (93% very/extremely interested) and Nearby Nature (86% very/extremely interested). Volunteer activities that are most appealing to this year's group include planting and maintaining walk-by-learning gardens with interpretive signs (86% very/extremely interested) and participating in local service efforts such as a food shelf garden, community garden, or a school garden (78% very/extremely interested).

Join us in welcoming this talented and passionate group to the program in January 2021!

Attention leaders! Submit your Annual Report Part 1 By November 20

[Part 1](#) highlights your group's best stories - stories that resonate with your community stakeholders. Although this year's stories may be different from those in the past due to the challenging year we've experienced, they tell of your group's resilience, adaptability and care for the community.

Report your volunteer hours by Dec. 31

It has been a crazy year with volunteers adapting in-person activities to virtual activities, doing solo work like writing news articles, and growing

and distributing food to those in need. These hours help us demonstrate to the University and county stakeholders your impact in your community.

Please take a moment to record your hours and contacts in the database by midnight on Dec. 31. [Report your hours here.](#)

Volunteer hours during COVID

Active volunteer and intern requirements for 2020



Given this year's unusual challenges, the State Leadership Team with the input of program coordinators, volunteer leaders, and staff, have adjusted active volunteer and intern requirements for 2020.

Active (A) and Temporarily Inactive (TI) volunteers who do not meet the 25-volunteer-hour minimum requirement by the end of 2020 will maintain their A and TI volunteer status in 2021. A and TI volunteers should continue, however, to log any volunteer and continuing education hours as usual. We also encourage volunteers to pursue the many online learning opportunities outlined in this and [past newsletters](#).

Interns should complete the online core course, if they have not done so already. After completing the course, interns should contact their program coordinators and volunteer leaders to learn about available volunteer opportunities. Group leaders have ideas for interns to volunteer on their own or online.

We encourage interns to continue to work towards the 50-hour volunteer goal this year. Given the cancellation of volunteer events including plant sales, garden tours, and horticulture days, we understand it may be difficult to achieve the 50-hour requirement. If interns fall short of the goal in 2020, we will extend their internships into 2021.

When the combined number of volunteer hours for 2020 and 2021 reach 50 hours, interns will become active, certified Master Gardeners, and receive their badges and certificates.

Thanks to all of you for your flexibility and perseverance during this challenging time! Please contact us at mgweb@umn.edu if you have any questions.

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Submit your garden details today by completing this form: [Google Form to Submit a Garden Site](#). We'll post the map on the Extension website as soon as we've received enough submissions. Please contact [Jackie Froemming](#) if you have questions about this new project.

We look forward to seeing your garden on the map!

Minnesota Harvester Handbook makes a great gift

If you or someone you know likes to gather fruits, nuts and other forest products from Minnesota's woodlands, the Minnesota Harvester Handbook makes a wonderful gift.

Developed by University of Minnesota Extension, the Minnesota Harvester Handbook is an excellent resource for wild gatherers. This field guide showcases sustainable harvest and gathering methods for more than twenty familiar (and some unusual!) non-timber forest products. With a

wide variety of decorative and edible forest products, including syrup, berries, boughs and mushrooms, there is plenty to keep your favorite forager busy all year!

Copies can be purchased at the University of Minnesota Bookstore website at z.umn.edu/mhh.

Learn more about edibles and non-timber forest products from the woods at z.umn.edu/goodsfromwoods

The University of Minnesota Extension has many additional educational resources for the home and classrooms. Go to z.umn.edu/umextpubs to learn more.

COVID Success Story

Crow Wing County - Monarch Waystation Installation

The Crow Wing County Master Gardeners recently completed a Monarch Waystation at the Central Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge campus in Brainerd. The design and plant list were developed by University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners. All 65 plants needed were donated by Master Gardeners. Guests at Teen Challenge provided the muscle and the project was completed in a busy couple of hours one afternoon. Now we just need to wait for spring for the Monarchs to return and the plants to bloom again!