

Through the Grapevine



The Official Publication of the Master Gardener Association of Ocean County Inc.

December 2024
Volume 33, Issue 12

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2024 – 2025

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By Mel Russen

For the past 12 years some of my Master Gardeners colleagues have joined me at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial when the Wreaths Across America Arlington Convoy would stop for lunch and a ceremony. During that ceremony wreaths were placed for each branch of our military and Gold Star Moms received a Remembrance Wreath for their "Fallen Hero".

This year the convoy will stop on the Point Pleasant side of the Manasquan Inlet. The ceremonies' primary focus will be to honor all those members of our military who have been buried or lost at sea. These men and women never returned home to their families and loved ones.

The Arlington Convoy will travel through the towns of Point Pleasant Borough, Bay Head and Point Pleasant Beach before arriving at the inlet parking lot. There will be wreath placements on land as well as shipboard placement of biodegradable wreaths in the inlet waters as part of this ceremony stop.

Gold Stars Moms will be honored, local and county officials will attend and students from local towns will be there to perform. I invite all my fellow Master Gardeners to join me for this special event and lunch. The date is **December 11, 2024**, with an ETA of 11:30 a.m.

These members of our military never were able to say "I am a Veteran."

Want more information? Contact Mel at dmrussenjr@wreathsassamerica.org



President's Message

by Roberta Quinn



In the past month or so, I have found that I am using skill sets I haven't used in decades. This has happened within the MG universe and in other areas of my life. We all have talents we can use or develop. I would encourage you to use your skills and interests to help make MGs the best it can be.

Volunteerism is a big issue with Master Gardeners in New Jersey. As you know, we are not a garden club and don't do many of the activities done by garden clubs. That's because of our mission statement, which was updated this year. In signing up and taking the MG course, we were embarking on a relationship with the public, sharing our knowledge and educating them in the best practices of consumer horticulture. As an Intern, it is difficult to grasp the full potential of this type of volunteering or the level of commitment needed.

In Ocean County, we have a wide array of committees and opportunities compared to some other counties. One thing that impacts our effectiveness is a failure to follow through on volunteer commitments by some MGs. One reason for this has been, "I am just a volunteer." We are all volunteers. I personally do not take on certain activities because I know I can't commit to them. I would urge current committees to "propagate" new leaders in this organization. Committees can create a calendar of monthly activities for themselves. It would be good if the Trustee liaison also kept a copy. That way if there must be a change of leadership for whatever reason, the new chair can feel confident they know what is involved.

The calendar for MG General Meetings in 2025 will be a bit different due to certain holidays falling on or near our regular meeting day. As I am writing this, not all dates have been confirmed for next year for meetings. I will send out a list of meetings for the year when it is available.

Enjoy welcoming winter and celebrating all it has to offer!

Special thanks--I would like to thank my son Alexander for taking my research and making it into the crossword puzzle for this newsletter. I hope we can come up with some for future newsletters. The answers will be in the January newsletter.



Gardening Journey

By Susan Emhardt-Servidio



Happy Winter Solstice! Enjoy the holidays you celebrate with your friends and family!

As our volunteering season is ending, your volunteered hours must be logged in Better Impact by December 15th, 2024. I know there are still maybe 10 people with no hours recorded still. If you need help, please reach out. Don't stay silent.

Any volunteer services performed from December 16th through December 31st, 2024 will be logged in as done on January 1, 2025. If you are not sure how to log them in, let me know.



The Shack, LBI

Year-End Report forms for Committees are due January 6, 2025. The blank form was emailed out to current committee chairs on November 12, 2024. Let me know if you need one.

Looking forward into 2025- LOTS of new things and dates

Room reservation forms are available through Teresa Becker- tbecker@co.ocean.nj.us to request meeting/class room space for the Auditorium or the Conference room.

New requirement for 2025

As per Rutgers State Coordinator, NO travel time (getting to/from events, meetings or donation to pantries) is permitted for hours.

All Ocean County RMG volunteers must serve a minimum of 3 hours in Helpline in office, tick lab in office or at 'Ask a Rutgers Master Gardener' events. To make it easier to understand which hours count, I have made a new category in Better Impact- OUTREACH-HELPLINE ACTIVITIES.

2025 Requirements for volunteers' service hours are as follows:

For VETERAN RMG Hour Requirements- Total of 35 hours

25 Volunteer Service Hours- broken down as:

15 hrs. (minimum) in OUTREACH- A minimum of 3 hours MUST be served in the OUTREACH- Helpline Activities- (Helpline and tick lab (in office) or at 'Ask a Rutgers Master Gardener' events.)

10 hrs. in OTHER (Other- OCP, general meetings, and admin/ committee work) or extra OUTREACH hours are ok too.

+

10 CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE)Hours- Coordinator approved CE programs

For INTERNS- Continuing from 2024- Some Helpline and Tick Lab is necessary so you have some training in these areas-

60 Volunteer Service Hours- broken down as:

40 hrs. (minimum) in OUTREACH A minimum of 3 hours MUST be served in the OUTREACH- Helpline Activities- (Helpline and tick lab (in office) or at 'Ask a Rutgers Master Gardener' events.)

20 hrs. OTHER (Other- OCP and admin/ committee work) or extra OUTREACH hours are ok too.

Protection of Minor (POM)

Currently, I have 36 volunteers on my list:

Calla A, Dina C, Faith N, Mel R, Kathy D'A, Denise G, Aileen K, Heidi R, Kathleen B, Mary W, Al S, Ellen S, Megan H, Peggy O, Rachel H, Bianca A, Kim B, Dawn W, Karen W, Joann B, Linda L, Deb Mc, Kat S, Mark B, Arleen S, Megan B, Cora M, Kathleen T, Mary P, Trish S, Joseph C, Debbie K, Alice S, Elaine B, Alison B, Silke S.

POM Training information will be emailed out to those on my list after December 26, 2024, so be on the lookout for 2 emails- Rutgers POM training video and one from Hire Right to complete background check. These are time sensitive! You will only have 5 days to complete before your training links will expire.

For those not on the above list, I am holding a POM Training session on January 16, 2024 about the process if you would like more information or would like to go through the training.

Who should take the training? Those who intend or want to give presentations to children in schools or other non-profit venues or if we would host events where children are not accompanied by a parent. It is not needed for interacting with children at Fairs, Butterfly Tent Event, plant sales. All RMG Program interns will receive this training going forward in 2025. So if you are in Speaker's Bureau, Education Outreach or are interested in interacting with children, this training is a must for you. Events requiring the POM qualification will not be visible to volunteers who do not complete the POM training video and Rutgers background check. Other agencies' background checks are not valid for this.

New Training and Continuing Education Classes

As mentioned in November's newsletter and at the General meeting, I am hosting training classes and Continuing Education classes for Ocean County RMGs. I want to help volunteers to feel confident with the procedures and duties performed while volunteering for events. The training classes are mandatory; the Continuing Education classes are not. I am hosting these classes just like the Intern Classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays starting January 16th through April 17th. The classes will be held here at the Ag Center in-person or live via Zoom. Most classes will be recorded (if presenters allow) and available to view on CANVAS. Volunteers must access Rutgers Canvas to participate. All class materials and quizzes will be there as well. I have 12 presenters scheduled so far. I will release the schedule after December 16th, 2024.

At that time, I will add all current RMG volunteers and interns to the CANVAS site. You will receive an emailed invitation to sign up on Rutgers Canvas. The mandatory training classes will include Using CANVAS/Better Impact/POM, Volunteerism, Diagnosing Plant Problems in the Master Gardener Helpline, Helpline-Hiring Sustainable Landscaper resources, Helpline- Client questions and recommendations, Speakers' Bureau presentations and expectations, Community Outreach Event tabling and expectation, 'Ask an RMG events' how to set up and forms, and Tick Training. All volunteers must attend or watch the recording and complete the course work to be qualified to see the opportunities in these OUTREACH events. Only Tick Lab training will have an in person exam with samples and a written portion that volunteers must pass with a minimum of 85% to be proficient for Tick Lab. I am working on the details.

For those who have limited computer access, there are 2 computers in the RMG room here at the Ag Center that can be used to access CANVAS and Better Impact.

Whew! That was a lot for y'all to read and digest. Feel free to send me an email with questions. Thank you for all of you time and effort in making out County grow! Enjoy your holidays.





Committee Reports



Ask A Master Gardener

“Report” by Susan Emhardt-Servidio

Patti Dixon has posted some dates for “Ask an RMG’ events for the First Quarter of 2025. There will be 2 spots open for veteran RMGs and 1 spot for continuing 2024 interns for each shift. See Coordinator’s Report about new class trainings.

County Connection –
10 am -2 pm
January 10, 2025
February 14, 2025
March 14, 2025

Brick- 1-3 pm
March 3, 2025

Manchester- 1-3 pm
March 18, 2025

Point Pleasant – 2-4
pm
January 15, 2025
February 12, 2025
March 12, 2025

Lacey- Dates pending

Stafford- Dates
pending

Community Garden

Chairs: Rich Marine, Noreen Baris and Cheryl Clearo

* The October donation to local pantries included 129.5 pounds from the Community Garden, 24.0 pounds from the Homegrown Garden, and 25.5 pounds from Master Gardeners’ personal gardens.

* We are still harvesting radishes, turnips, and herbs.

* Most of our work now is cleaning and storing away our garden equipment.

* Noreen’s class planted two beds of garlic.

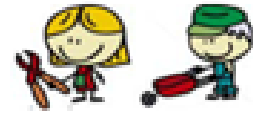
* Our last food collection will be December 5, 2024 at the Winter Party.

* Thank you again to everyone who volunteered at the Garden. It was a difficult summer and your help was invaluable.

Report by Rich Marine



Committee Reports



Cuisine Garden

Chair: Cindy McGrath, Co-Chair: Sue Priolo

The Cuisine Garden has been put to bed for the season. We look forward to working with our crew of volunteers and anyone else who would like to join us in 2025!

Some of our cuisine group assisted the ARC clients in Tuckerton last month & guided them on planting Christmas cactuses. We propagated cuttings and decorated the pots with holiday ribbons.

Report by Cindy McGrath



Photo by Sue Priolo



Committee Reports



Display Garden

Chair: Beth Kimber, Co-Chair: Caryn Muskus

The Display Garden has been put to bed for the winter.



Photo: www.facebook.com/CoopersRockGiant/



Committee Reports



Education Outreach

Chair: Kathy D'Antonio, Co-chair Mark Baranyay

We held a meeting November 4, attended by eight MG's. We discussed current projects and ideas for expanding them.

On November 12, four MG's from the Cuisine Garden visited the Arc Tuckerton Program. They helped 31 clients plant Christmas Cactus for the clients to take home. Hot Chocolate and cookies were served as a mini celebration of the Holidays.

There are two pending projects: Jackson Liberty High School, which involves planning a new garden, and The Special Children's Center in Lakewood, which is asking for information and workshops for an established garden.

We look forward to increasing the number of groups with whom we work as well as expanding our existing projects.

Report by Kathy D'Antonio



Photo by Sue Priolo



Committee Reports



Gleaning

Chair: Noreen Baris

We finished the Gleaning season on a high note having picked 640 pounds of apples at Riamede Farm up in Chester. This year's total is only 4,494 pounds. A far cry from the 12,159 pounds we picked last year!! There were only 11 gleaning opportunities we were able to participate in, but we did our best! I am hoping to book a few "group" gleaning for just the MGs next year.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who came out and helped supply our food pantries with fresh produce: Rene Gayder, Bianca Aniski, MJ Rossilli-Mitchell, Jim Digney, Denise Boughton, Lynn Bottrell, Joe Scuttro, Bernie Rehberger, and Alan Schwarz and his wife Maureen.

I hope more of our members will join us next year!



Bernie Rehberger, Lynn Bottrell, Denise Boughton and Noreen Baris gleaned sweet potatoes at Specca farms. Denise is holding a sweet potato that weighed over 6 1/2 pounds!



Noreen's truck full of sweet potatoes!



Committee Reports



Hoop House

Chair: Vickie Monks and Bernie Rehberger



We'd like to thank Tricia Schnepf and also Lisa Franey for their hard work in weeding the Hoop house. What a transformation!

Report by Roxane DiVuolo

Hydroponics

Chair: Betsy McLaughlin, Co-Chair: Bart Mazzei

Our final harvest was completed in the second week of November. We had a very successful year harvesting 8.25 pounds of lettuce. St. Joe's was one of the pantries that really enjoyed receiving the lettuce.

The new greenhouse will enable us to start much earlier since we will not need to share the Herb House with the plant sale. We are hoping to set up the 2025 growing season sometime in March.

The units were cleaned and stored for the winter in the new greenhouse. We can't wait to get started next year!

Report by Betsy McLaughlin





Committee Reports



IPM

Chair: Vinnie Delia, Co-Chairs: Ann Kinney and Rachel Halford

In 2024 the IPM Committee completed its 9th year of providing education and diagnostic training.

Thanks to everyone who attended IPM Workshops this season, as we learned this year through our research & power point presentations that IPM has become the industry standard in pest control. Not just here in America, but throughout the modern world. Biorational, and alternate pest control products are also being produced and implemented in Europe and Asia.

In 2025 the Committee will continue to present the history of IPM, as well as current events, and how IPM can make inroads into the future of plant health care. Workshop dates for the new year will be provided in the MG January Grapevine Newsletter. The committee is open to anyone who wants join in and grow with us.

The Committee will once again be emailing daily growing degree day reports for Ocean County beginning March 1st 2025

Special thanks to IPM Co Chairs Ann Kinney, Rachel Halford & Tom Barnes, as well as Sue Servidio, the Agricultural Center staff, and the MG Board of Directors. Wishing our GDD scout Mel Russen, and everyone a Happy Healthy New Year.

Report by Vinnie Delia





Committee Reports



Ocean County Park Operations

Chair: Al Soyster

Winter officially starts on December 21. With the cold weather, little time is spent outside in the park, so be sure to check your area to ensure that everything is secure from the wind and freezing weather.

The shade sail supports have been placed in the shrub garden. In the Spring we will set the sail to provide shade while allowing rain to pass through the sail. Thanks to Joe and Peter for their assistance.

We have begun removing non-gardening supplies from the garden shed to accommodate the tools and provide inside storage for all Garden Teams without, or with limited inside storage, a place to put tools and supplies.

Big shout-out to Joe and his chainsaw for tackling the overgrowth along the side of the Greenhouse, allowing more light and easier access along the side of the Greenhouse. Planning a tree-trimming party this holiday season? Joe and his chainsaw are available for rent!

Thanks to Jim, Joe, and Peter for assisting with removing shade covers throughout the park.

The Greenhouse door project has been moved to the Barn at the park. Stop by and check out the progress.



More photos next page



Committee Reports

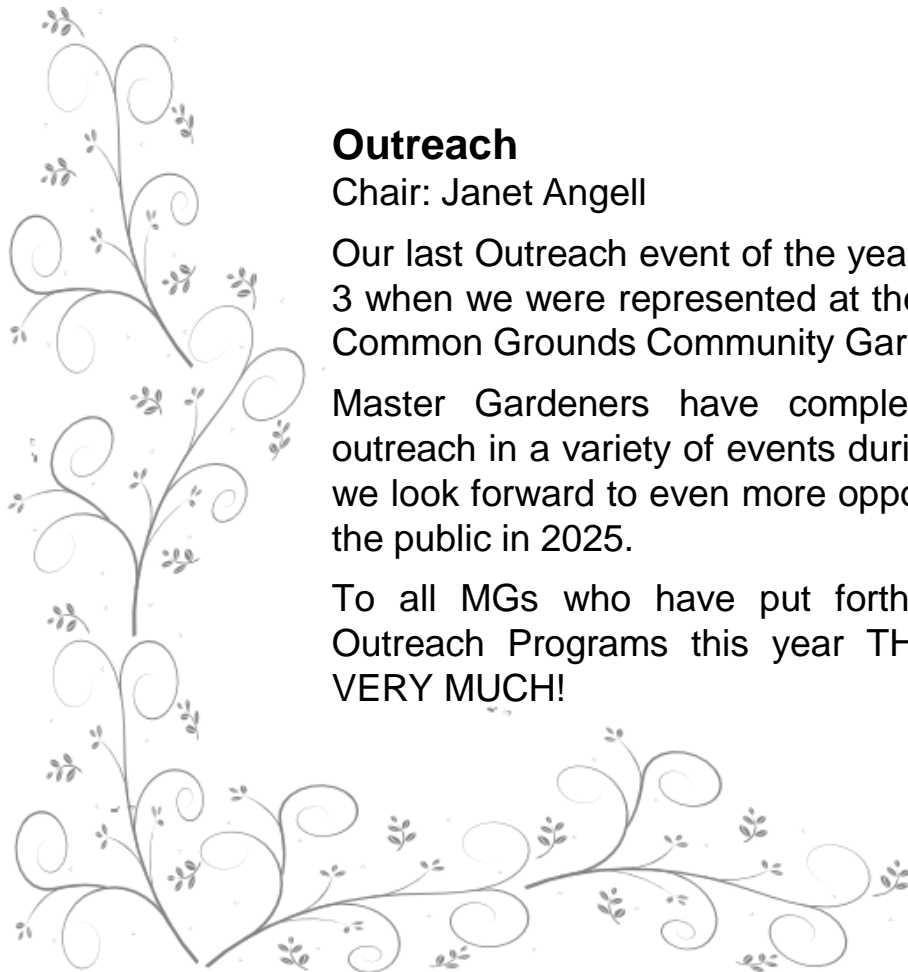
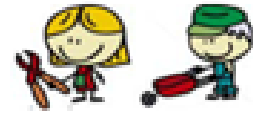


Photos of Ocean County Park Operations Projects





Committee Reports



Outreach

Chair: Janet Angell

Our last Outreach event of the year was held November 3 when we were represented at the Fall Festival held at Common Grounds Community Gardens in Lakewood.

Master Gardeners have completed many hours of outreach in a variety of events during this past year and we look forward to even more opportunities to work with the public in 2025.

To all MGs who have put forth much effort in the Outreach Programs this year THANK YOU ALL SO VERY MUCH!

Speakers Bureau

Chair: Suzanne Keane, Co-Chair Sue Masoorli

The Speakers' Bureau meeting was held on November 7. We had two MGs join our committee and several others come for PowerPoint information.

We shared some tallies for 2024. Fourteen Ocean County municipalities were visited and we spoke on 28 different topics with "Container Gardening" the most requested.

All members and prospective members received an email containing our Guidelines, Topics List, and RCE required slides for new PowerPoints. after the meeting. If any other MG is interested, we will be happy to send you some information and welcome you to our group.

Thanks to all for a great year.



Committee Reports



Shrub Garden

Chair: Laura Docherty, Co-Chairs: Peter Ascolese and Jill Jordan

Things are pretty quiet in the shrub garden these days. We are continuing to water and weed the garden as needed but thank goodness we have gotten some rain. The Herb House has provided a place to overwinter those perennials and shrubs that weren't ready to be placed outside, and we are continuing to monitor them.

Vickie Monks was invited to give us a tutorial on how to take care of our tools, and of course she agreed. We cleaned, sharpened and oiled all of our tools under her direction. Thanks Vickie!

We noticed a great deal on winterberry holly plugs - they are native to our area, and we have sold many of them. We purchased plugs, potted them and placed them in the ground for the winter.

Peter has been working on replacing Lumite as a ground cover, and he said it is a really tough job. We might all have to pitch in to pull it up. At the beginning of next year, we will start winter sowing again, and we are looking forward to that.

Hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving!

Report by Laura Docherty



Mary Mackle making sure our shrubs don't die due to lack of rain.

Master Gardeners Share

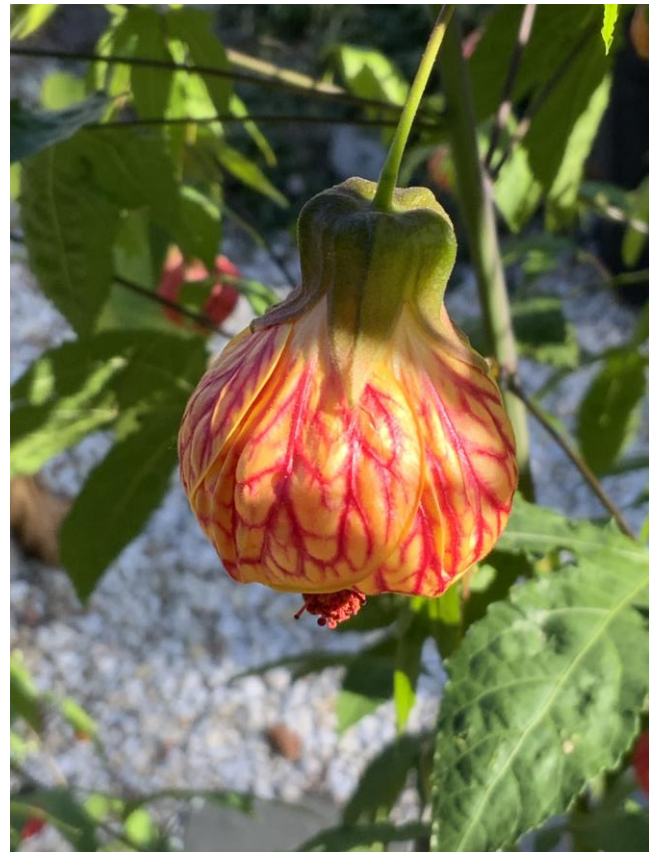


From Yvonne Klock

“This plant is Abutilon, Biltmore Ball Gown. It grew to at least seven or eight feet tall and although it was late in the summer to bloom, it is still blooming now. The blossoms are really lovely and unusual.”



“Here’s a close up of the blossom.”



Master Gardeners Share

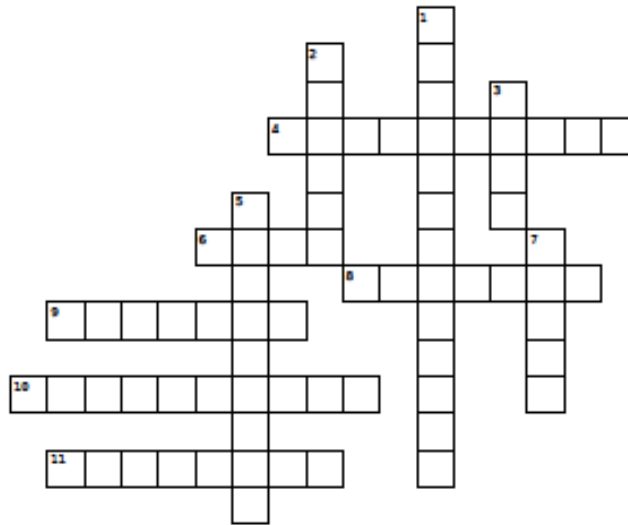


From Roberta Quinn

“Gaillardia still blooming November 24th. Attractive to pollinators.”

Master Gardeners Share

Welcome Winter Evergreen Majesty



Down:

1. tree of genus *Ilex* with red berries (2 words)
2. to tidy up... or an evergreen tree with edible tips
3. evergreens with flat and soft needles... the tall Douglas varieties are actually pines
5. turpentine and tar source for axle grease in Colonial times (2 words)
7. a Stafford Township "run" and aromatic charcoal and wood source

Across:

4. Latin for "tree of life": the common name of *Thuja occidentalis*
6. number of needles in a bundle for *Pinus strobus*
8. North America's most widely distributed native conifer... gin, anyone?
9. nickname of a 60- to 70-foot evergreen and common name of unrelated Socratic poison it means "naked seed"
10. it means "naked seed"
11. compounds of hydrogen and carbon atoms that produce the "evergreen" smell

From Roberta Quinn

"This is a collaborative effort of my son Alexander Quinn and me. He is the editor. The answers will be provided in the January newsletter."

Master Gardeners Share

From JoAnn Bowman

“My beautiful healthy Thanksgiving cactus almost ready for the holiday. Purchased from MG!”



Master Gardeners Share

From Laura Docherty

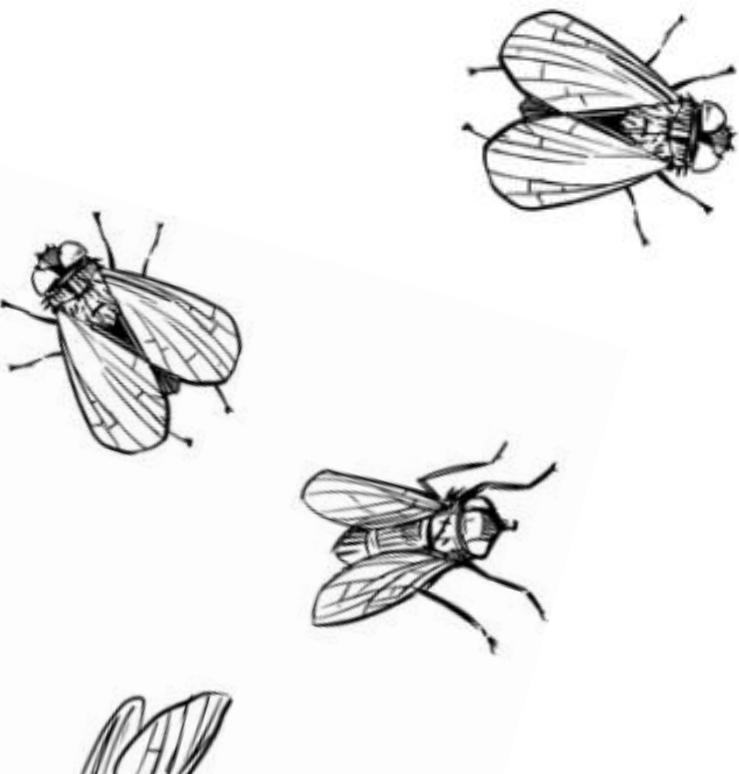
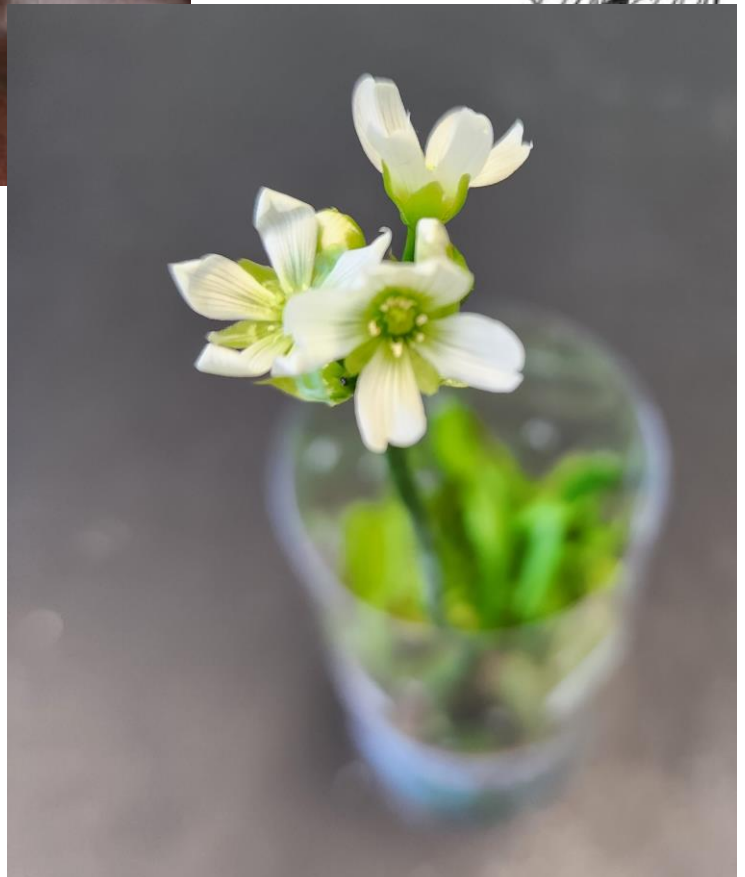
“This is white Gomphrena. The seeds were free from the greenhouse and were winter sown.”



Master Gardeners Share

From Kat Schaffer

“My Venus Fly Trap plant getting a flower!”



Announcements

Executive Committee Information for December and 2025

The Executive Committee meeting will be Zoom only on December 18th at 10:30. Roberta will be sending out the Zoom link and running the meeting. Sue Servidio is not available that day. We will be using the meeting to brainstorm new or improved methods of Outreach. Ideas are welcome for all committees. Executive Committee chairs only need to submit their current balance of budgeted funds via email to Berry Jones. We will not be giving reports at this meeting, just sharing ideas. This meeting will follow a Zoom Board of Directors meeting that has a different Zoom link from the one you will be sent, so please be patient while we are switching to your Zoom session.

Executive Committee meetings in 2025 will be at 10:30 in the Auditorium on March 19th, June 18th, September 17th, and November 19th.

Still Available



**We know you love it!
The shrub garden still has beauty berry for sale. MG special price: \$15 each.**

Contact Peter Ascolese, Laura Docherty, Mary Mackle, or Jill Jordan to buy



There will **not** be a MGOC, Inc. trip to the Philadelphia Flower Show. When we get chairpersons for Trips and Tours, we can plan trips later in 2025. If you are interested in arranging trips for MGs, either by bus or by meeting up at a location, please contact Roberta at rquinn55@comcast.net.

The Community Garden will be having its Fourth food collection at the Winter Party. Rich Marine is planning to park as near as possible to the entrance adjacent to the north parking lot at 10:45 a.m.

As always, gift cards are very welcome.





Follow us on Facebook
Master Gardeners of Ocean County
mgocinc.org
This is a closed group open only to
veteran MGs and interns.
Contact Jill Jordan to join.
(jillmjordan2@yahoo.com)

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Policy:

All comments or questions regarding any item in this newsletter should be directed to the editor. (See above for contact information.)

December

- 5: Welcome Winter Party
- 18: BOD Meeting, 9:15
X-Com, 10:30
Both by Zoom only
- 25: Christmas Holiday
Ag Center Closed
- 25: Newsletter Deadline



January

- 1: New Year's Day
Ag Center Closed
- 9: General Meeting
10:30 am, Auditorium
- 15: BOD Meeting
9:15 am, Conf. Rm
- 20: MLK Day
Ag Center Closed
- 25: Newsletter Deadline

