

Through the Grapevine



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

January 2025
Volume 34, Issue 1

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MGOC, Inc.
Officers and BOD
2024 – 2025

President:
Roberta Quinn

1st VP:
Jill Jordan

2nd VP:
Caryn Muskus

Treasurer:
Alison Del Rio-Stellita

Gen Sec:
Vacant

Exec Sec:
Berry Jones

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Betsy McLaughlin

Trustees:
Vickie Monks,
Ellen Silverman,
Lynne Smith

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Cooperative Extension
of Ocean County
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

Rutgers Master Gardeners
Class of 2024 Graduation &
Awards Ceremony
Presents
Greenhouse
Mysteries

Clarion Hotel
815 Route 37 West
Toms River, NJ 08755

Friday, February 7, 2025
12:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Complementary
Buffet Luncheon & Dessert
For Graduates
\$35.00 per additional guest

RSVP to Kelly at 732.505.4563
by January 14, 2025

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President's Message

by Roberta Quinn



Welcome to an exciting new year as a Master Gardener! As you know, there are many changes in the program this year. Please make sure you keep up with Sue Servidio's instructions and information, so you meet the new volunteer requirements.

We are now celebrating the 35th year of the program in Ocean County. Thanks for the MG tips for consumers given at the Welcome Winter Party. Sue will be choosing some tips to use during the year. If you didn't attend the party and have some words of wisdom you want to share with the public, submit them to Sue.

Speaking of the Welcome Winter Party, I need to thank Caryn Muskus, Debbie McCabe, and Roxane DiVuolo for helping me with decorations and activities. Thanks also to Linda Scarano for helping with the day of the event. This year I will explore Northern Ocean venues for the party.

At the December Executive Committee meeting, we brainstormed different ideas to increase Outreach, not just for committees funded by MGOC, Inc. The corporation is always interested in funding projects that reach large numbers of people, if possible. However, this year's plant sale proceeds will be affected by the lack of volunteers in areas that grow plants for the Plant Sale in May. With fewer volunteers, fewer plants will be grown so they can get the proper care. With an expectation of less profit, we are interested in additional fundraising ideas. If you have any, let me or any Board member know.

I have included a list of meeting dates in the newsletter. These dates have been reserved with the Ag Center. Please put them in your calendar of choice. You will notice some meetings are not on their usual days this year.

What do you plan to grow this year? I am going to grow nasturtiums from seed again and try some other seeds. I haven't grown much by seed in the past. I want to see how my revamped sunken garden with shade plants does after the winter. I think we will be getting a lot of calls on winter damage this year. I got a digital wildlife trail camera that has a 120-degree range. As I write this, it has not been set up. I want to find out what critters are knocking over or eating plants. It should be entertaining.

MEETING DATES FOR 2025

Please put these dates in your calendars.

*Due to holidays and other events, meeting dates may be different from past years.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Hospitality at 10:00. Business meeting at 10:30 in the Auditorium.

All meetings are on Thursdays

*January 9

February 6

March 6

April 3

*May 8 (Post Plant Sale)

June 5

*July 10

August 7

September 4

*October 9

November 6

December 4 (Most likely will be Welcome Winter Party instead.)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meetings are on Wednesdays and start at 9:15 in the Conference Room

January 15

February 19

March 19

April 16

May 21

Special Budget Meeting Thursday June 12 from 10-12.

June 18

July 16

August 20

September 17

October 15

November 19

December 17

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Meetings are on Wednesdays at 10:30

March 19

(SUBMIT YOUR BUDGET REQUESTS BY JUNE 6 to Alison Del Rio-Stellita)

June 18 (The July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026 Proposed Budget will be presented.)

September 17

November 19

Gardening Journey

By Susan Emhardt-Servidio



A new year is upon us again. As we move into 2025, let us remember those who have left our program this year.

Balas, Tracey		Lahr, Stacie	2025
Baldaccini, Maureen	2022	Marino-Jennings, Susan	2009
Boneski, Marguerite	2018	Osterberg, Nancy	2022
Canetti, Patty	2011	Rehberger, Steve	2011
Christopher, Bob	2019	Robinson, Jane	
Ciallello, Carmen	2004	Romero, Deborah	2021
Conway, Emer		Yocum, Holly	2006
Downs, Leon			
Hahn, Renee		Deceased	
Height, Howard	2008	Ernst, Sue-Kay	2011
Johns, Judi	2003		

While some have moved on, we are gaining 25 new Certified Master Gardeners from the 2024 Graduating Interns. The 2024 Graduation and Award Ceremony will be held on February 7, 2024, from 12:30-4:30 at the Clarion in Toms River. For more information and registration, please call Kelly O at 732-505-4563 by January 14,

If you volunteered hours between Dec 16 and Dec. 31, 2024, please record the date volunteered as **January 1, 2025**.

Patti D. is almost finished scheduling speakers for the RCE 2025 "In the Know to Grow" season. Ellen Silverman will be leading us off again this year with an in-person Winter Seed Sowing workshop on January 21, 2025. A mushroom demo will be our second program on February 18, 2025. Flyers will be forthcoming. The 'In the Know to Grow' programs are not counted for RMG Continuing Education hours, unless otherwise noted.

Gardening Journey continued next page



New Requirement for 2025

All Ocean County RMG volunteers must serve a minimum of 3 hours in either Helpline or Tick Lab (in office), or at “Ask a Rutgers Master Gardener” events. To make it easier to understand which hours count, I have created a new category OUTREACH-HELPLINE ACTIVITIES on Better Impact

2025 Requirements for Volunteers’ Service Hours

For VETERAN RMG Total of 35 hours, as follows:

- **25 Volunteer Service Hours** broken down as:
 - **15 hrs. (minimum) in OUTREACH**
 - **A minimum of 3 hours MUST be served in the new OUTREACH-HELPLINE ACTIVITIES** (Helpline or Tick Lab in office or at “Ask a Rutgers Master Gardener” events.)
 - **10 hrs. in OTHER** (OCP, General Meetings, or Admin/Committee Work) or extra OUTREACH hours are ok ,too.
- **10 CONTINUING EDUCATION Hours- Coordinator** approved CE programs

For INTERNS who have not completed hours in 2024, as follows:

Some Helpline and Tick Lab sessions are 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 new OUTREACH- HELPLINE ACTIVITIES** (Helpline or Tick Lab in office or at “Ask a Rutgers Master Gardener” events.)
 - **20 hrs. OTHER** (OCP and Admin/Committee Work) or extra OUTREACH hours are ok too.
- **No CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE) Hours** are needed for Graduation

Gardening Journey continued next page



New Training and Continuing Education Classes

The training classes and Continuing Education classes for Ocean County RMGs are 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.

Just like Intern Classes, these new classes will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays starting January 16 and ending April 17. 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. The schedule of the training classes for 2025 is on CANVAS and posted in this newsletter. I color-coded (of course I did) the training and educational classes.

Volunteers must access Rutgers CANVAS to participate. A Rutgers CANVAS invitation email went out on Monday, 12/23/2024. All class materials and quizzes will be there as well. The class on January 16 will go over navigating CANVAS, the new additions to Better Impact, and info on Protection of Minors training for those who might be interested. Volunteers must attend or watch the recording and complete the coursework for the Training classes to qualify to see the opportunities on Better Impact for these OUTREACH events. **The first 2 training classes (January 16 and 21) are mandatory for all RMGs.** Training classes for specific volunteer areas are mandatory if you want to volunteer in that area.

For Example:

- If you want to be qualified to volunteer in the Helpline, you need to attend/zoom the class or watch the recordings of all OTHER Training/Helpline Classes on Feb. 4, Mar. 13, and Mar 27.
- To volunteer for Speakers' Bureau, you must attend/zoom the class or watch the recordings of all OTHER Training/Speakers' Bureau on Jan 23 and Feb 20.
- For Community Outreach Events, you must must attend/zoom the class or watch the recording of the OTHER Training Community Outreach Events on Feb 25.
- For Tick ID, you must take the March 20 class. Only Tick ID 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. Test will consist of 10 multiple choice questions and 10 physical identifications. Testing dates will be announced for Tick exam for participants.

Gardening Journey continued next page



Gardening Journey continued

On Better Impact, I have added a sign-up for IN-PERSON and ZOOM class participation. Please check the sign-up for the correct opportunity, as IN-Person classes have limited seating! If you are unable to make the sessions in person or via Zoom, I will have the recording of the mandatory training classes up in CANVAS after class.

NOTE: The Native Plant Propagation at Cream Ridge on 4/1/2025 isn't on Better Impact yet, as I have not heard back from the presenter regarding the time or limit for people. I'm still working on that one.

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.



Thank you all for your hard work and sweat to keep the RMG Program in Ocean County so successful.
Here is to a great and prosperous New Year!



2025 Class Schedule

2025 Schedule of RMG Training/Educational Classes

Must use Rutgers Canvas for ZOOM link, class materials, assignments and class recording

Limited to 75 volunteers attending in-person- Sign up on Better Impact

Mandatory for all volunteers

Training- Mandatory to qualify to volunteer in these events

Continuing Education- Not Mandatory

IPM Workshop, Pruning Workshop- Limited seating- Sign up on Better Impact- only

January	Training or CE	Topic	Speaker	Presentation	Time
16-Jan	OTHER- Training-Better Impact	Better Impact/Using Canvas/ POM Info	Susan E-S	In person/Zoom	10am - 11:30am
21-Jan	OTHER- Training	Volunteers	Ruth Carll	In person/Zoom	10am - 11am
23-Jan	OTHER-Training- Speakers' Bureau	Speakers Bureau Procedures	Suzanne Keane/ SES	In person/Zoom	10am - 11am
28-Jan	CE	Tree ID	Jean Epiphan	Zoom Only	10am - 12pm
30-Jan	CE	Small Gardens	Bobbie Herbs	In person/Zoom	10am - 12pm

February	Training or CE	Topic	Speaker	Presentation	Time
4-Feb	OTHER-Training- Helpline	Hiring a Sustainable Landscaper	Steve Yergeau	Zoom Only	10am - 11am
11-Feb	CE	Plant Propagation	Bill Errickson	In person/Zoom	10am - 12pm
14-Feb	OTHER-Training- IPM Workshop- Not mandatory- limited- no zoom not recorded	IPM	Vinnie Delia	In person only	10am - 1pm
18-Feb	CE	Beech Leaf Disease	Jean Epiphan	Zoom Only	10am - 11am
20-Feb	OTHER-Training- Speakers' Bureau	Speakers Bureau- Presentations	Al Soyster	In person/Zoom	10am - 11:30am
25-Feb	OTHER-Training-Community Outreach Events	COE & 'Ask an RMG' Events	Linda Locke	In person/Zoom	10am - 11am
27-Feb	CE	Small Space Vegetable Gardening	Belinda Chester	In person/Zoom	10am - 11:30am

March	Training or CE	Topic	Speaker	Presentation	Time
4-Mar	CE	Rain Barrel Upkeep/Maintenance	Steve Yergeau	In person/Zoom	10am - 12pm
11-Mar		TBD			
13-Mar	OTHER-Training- Helpline	Helpline- Procedures and role play	Peggy Mott & Class Liaisons	In person/Zoom	10am - 12pm
18-Mar	CE	Cover Crop	Angela Monaghan	In person/Zoom	10am- 11:30am
20-Mar	OTHER-Training- Tick ID	Tick Identification	Lynne Smith	In person/Zoom	10am - 12pm
25-Mar	CE- Limited participation- no zoom not recorded	Pruning Workshop	Steve Kristoph	In-person Only	10am - 11am
27-Mar	OTHER-Training- Helpline	Diagnostics & Helpline	Rebecca Magron	In person/Zoom	10am - 12pm

April	Training or CE	Topic	Speaker	Presentation	Time
1-Apr	CE- Limited participation- no zoom not recorded	Native Plant Propagation at Cream Ridge Research Facility	Bill Errickson	In-person only at Cream Ridge	TBD
8-Apr		TBD			
10-Apr		TBD			
15-Apr	CE (other RCE services)	Responsible Stewardship of Coastal Marine Resources	Doug Zemeckis	In person/Zoom	10am - 11am
17-Apr		TBD			

Welcome Winter Party – “Evergreen Majesty”
December 5, Calloway’s Restaurant, West Creek, NJ



Photo: Mary Cummings



Photo: Jill Jordan

Planning and Decoration Committee

Welcome Winter Party – “Evergreen Majesty”

Photos by Roberta Quinn



“This is Janet Pakrul. She, Grace Hagemeyer and Judy Caldwell made these Greenhouse Majesty headpieces.”



Needlework by Roberta



Welcome Winter Party – “Evergreen Majesty”

More photos from Roberta



Tips from MGs to the public



Quilt made by Debbie McCabe



Photographer unknown

Welcome Winter Party – “Evergreen Majesty”

Photos from Jill Jordan



Welcome Winter Party – “Evergreen Majesty”

Photos from Jill Jordan



Welcome Winter Party – “Evergreen Majesty”

Photos from Jill Jordan



Welcome Winter Party – “Evergreen Majesty”



Photos from Jill Jordan



2024 Statistic by Susan Emhardt-Servidio

Certified RMG and Interns- 209 volunteers

Overall RMG Service Hours: 18,506 hours volunteered

2,000 hours more than in 2024!

Total people engaged: over 8,200



OUTREACH: 7,654 total hours

- Helpline 237 calls
- Ticks 732 ticks identified
 - 569 Lonestar, 85 BLTs, 65 American Dog, 12 Brown Dog,
 - 1 Gulf Coast Ticks and 37 Not a Tick
- Soil pH Tests: 77 tests
- Speakers Bureau- 56 speaking events
 - People educated: 1,680
- Community Outreach- 47 events- 545 hours volunteered
 - People engaged: 4,079
- 'Ask an RMG' and Houseplant Hospital Events- 89 events, 550 hours volunteered
 - People engaged: 1,910
- Outreach- Gardens
 - EOC: ARC/Wrangle Brook/RMG Collaboration, ARC Tuckerton, ARC Brick and Greenbrier (just some events)-
 - 445 hrs. and 52 volunteers
 - People engaged: 250
 - Community Garden at Ocean County Park – 966.75 hrs. volunteered by 38 Volunteers
 - Pounds of produce grown and donated: 1,436 lbs.
 - Cuisine Demonstration Garden- 552 hours volunteered by 22 volunteers
 - Working with Ocean County Culinary Arts Program
 - Pounds of produce grown and donated: 1,210 lbs.
 - Cut Flower Donation Gardens at OCP: 324.25 hrs. by 12 volunteers
 - 44 buckets of Cut flowers grown and donated to adult enrichment program at local retirement home
 - Display Garden- 409 hours volunteered by 31 volunteers
 - Maintenance of educational pollinator and native plant garden
 - Gleaning- 79.5 hours volunteered by 11 volunteers
 - Pounds of produce gleaned and donated: 3,055 lbs.
 - Home Grown Garden- 68 hours volunteered by 9 volunteers
 - Educational vegetable garden- pounds of produce donated- 150 lbs.

OTHER: 10,082 total hours

- OCP: 6,517 hours volunteered
- Other/Administrative: 4,335 hours volunteered

CONTINUING EDUCATION: 1,995 hours logged

LARGE EVENTS:

(Visitor counts included in total outreach people engaged)

- MGOC, INC- Spring Plant Sale- over 900 visitors in four hours
- Ocean County Fair- 192 visitors
- RCE- Butterfly Tent Event- over 1240 visitors over two days
- RMG Interns- Fall Garden Day- 153 visitors over two days



Committee Reports



Ask A Master Gardener

County Connection

Chair: Kate MacDonald,

Co-Chair: Anna McPeek

Lacey Library

Chair: Debra Cuba-Cowles

Manchester Library

Chair: Judy Richtmyer

Point Pleasant Boro Library

Chair: Linda Locke

Stafford Library

Co-Chairs: Debra Cuba-Cowles,

Debbie McCabe



Anna McPeek at the "Ask A Master Gardener" table set up at the County Connection inside the Ocean County Mall – December 13

Education Outreach

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

The Education Outreach Committee is starting a new project with the Special Children's Center. The program is based in Lakewood but has a site in Howell, which is where the activities will occur. This is a collaboration with Monmouth County Master Gardeners.

We will be providing workshops and activities for the after-school program of young men 13 years to young adult with special needs. The site is on a working farm. The students help with farm activities as well as tend to their vegetable garden. The workshops and activities will supplement what they are learning on the farm.

If you are interested in participating in this new project and/or would like more information, please contact me at kathy.dantonio3@comcast.net The hours are Outreach. You will need to sign up for the Protection of Minors certification.

Report by Kathy D'Antonio



Committee Reports



Community Garden

Chairs: Rich Marine, Noreen Baris, and Cheryl Clearo

The Community garden raised a wide variety of vegetables and herbs which were delivered to several local food pantries including:

St. Gregory's St. Joseph's
SOS St. John's
St. Mary's Blessed and Dressed Pantry

The Community Garden donated a total of 1,435.5 pounds of produce to local pantries. This figure includes 136.5 pounds of produce donated by Master Gardeners from their personal gardens and 103.25 pounds from Home Grown Garden. Therefore, the Community raised and donated 1195.75 pounds.

This year we introduced bush cucumbers, watermelons, and patio eggplants to our plant list.

There were four food collections:

- February 10, 2024 167 pounds of food to St. John's Pantry
- June 12, 2024 161 pounds of food plus \$160.00 in grocery gift cards to Saint Mary's Pantry
- October 3, 2024 249 pounds of food plus \$85.00 in grocery gift cards plus \$20 to Destiny's Bridge
- December 5, 2024 188 pounds of food plus \$690.00 in grocery cards to Providence House

Total food donated – 765 pounds

Total gift cards - \$935.00

Total cash - \$20.00

Many thanks to our core group of volunteers – Betsy McLaughlin, Kathy D'Antonio, Bart Mazzei, and Cora Morrison – who helped make the 2024 growing season so successful.

Report by Rich Marine



Committee Reports



Display Garden

Chair: Beth Kimber, Co-Chair: Caryn Muskus

Some bright colors to delight those who visit the display garden this winter.



Golden Winterberry Holly



Winterberry Holly



Golden Saint John's Wort



Oakleaf Hydrangea

Happy 2025 to all!

Report and Photos : Beth Kimber



Heather



Committee Reports



Greenhouse

Chair: Linda Convey

Co-Chairs: Denise Boughton, Judy Caldwell, Grace Hagemeyer, Janet Pakrul, and Mary Townsend

Happy New Year, Everyone! Are you ready for another stellar year in the greenhouse? Well, we certainly are!

Thanks to Al Soyster and Mel Russen, the GH – including all the walls, floors, and benches – has been sanitized. Yvonne Klock, Jennifer McKeever, and Sandy Pilitowski cleaned the lights, which are now sanitized and ready for duty. (Boy, that was a big job! Glad it's done.)

Many thanks to Joe Scutro, who dragged in a bale of ProMix and helped us move things around. We still have a few more things to do, but we are done with the hard stuff.

On Monday, Jan 6, Dwulet's will deliver ProMix for the GH, HH, and WH. (MGs, you will still need to go to their garden center to pay for and pick up the individual bales you ordered through Bart.) We expect the Griffin order to arrive during the second or third week of January. The seeds we ordered have arrived; and the plug order has been confirmed and will be ready for pick-up during the second week of March. Sounds like we're ready, right?

Well, not quite. We still haven't heard from YOU!

As of today, we do not have enough volunteers to cover the workweek. Veterans, please let Mary Townsend know whether you plan to return. And Interns, please consider joining us this year. In lieu of the GH lectures we gave every January, the leaders will teach you everything you need to know during mini-lectures and step-by-step demos in the greenhouse. Contact Mary if you can devote one day a week to the project. (mary_townsend@comcast.net).

What happens if we can't get enough volunteers? Well, we just won't be able to grow as many plants, which means profits will be down, which means that MG discounts may be a thing of the past and that some MGOC-funded outreach programs may be in jeopardy. Sounds ominous, yes? But we're not worried, MGs have always stepped up when needed.

As an extra incentive, take a look at the plants we'll be growing next year. We're bringing back customer favorites, *Abutilon* 'Biltmore Ballgown', *Hibiscus* 'Mahogany Splendor', *Leonotis* 'Staircase', and *Thunbergia* 'Susie.' Plus, we're adding a few new selections. Check out these beauties on the next page.



GH report continued



Committee Reports



Greenhouse Report continued



Cosmos 'Candy Stripe'



Helianthus 'Smiley'



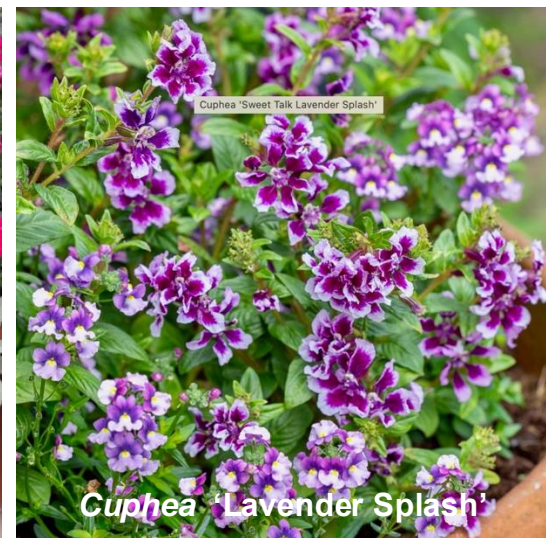
Panicum 'Purple Majesty'



Euphorbia 'Ascot Rainbow'



Senecio 'Angel Wings'



Cuphea 'Lavender Splash'



Salvia 'Blue Bedder'



Schizanthus 'Angel Wings'



Eucalyptus 'Silver Dollar'

Report by Mary Townsend, Photos by Google Images



Committee Reports



IPM

Chair: Vinnie Delia

Co-Chairs: Ann Kinney and Rachel Halford

2025 IPM Workshop Schedule



Here is the IPM Workshop Schedule for the Season

Friday February 14th 10 am to 1 pm

Annual Valentines Day Pot Luck Brunch

Thursday April 3rd After the General Meeting

Wednesday June 11th OC Park 10 am – 12 noon

Thursday August 7th After the General Meeting

Tuesday September 9th 10 am Cuisine Garden

Dutch treat lunch in the Cuisine on The Green Restaurant

Thursday October 30th 10 am to 1 pm

Annual Halloween Pot Luck Lunch Workshop

NOTE: IPM Workshops are held at the Agriculture Center unless otherwise noted. Sign up through Better Impact. Schedule subject to change due to inclement weather, and other unforeseen circumstances.



Committee Reports



Ocean County Park Operations

Chair: Al Soyster

What a great place!

With my first year of being the fix-it guy at the park, I would just like to thank all of the regulars at the park who make working there rewarding and fun. Whatever challenges I have faced there are always those ready to lend a hand, offer experience, or crack a joke. Additionally, a big shout out to those who volunteer to help nurture plants and enable us to have a successful Plant Sale every year. If you have not volunteered at the park, I would encourage you to come out and check out the opportunities, and snack time, this spring.

As we enter 2025 we are looking at several courses being developed for 2025:



Tool ID & Maintenance: How to identify the right tool for the job, take care of it, and repair it if necessary. We hope to kick this off in early spring.



How to make your Greenhouse Greener: Solar in the Garden and Beyond is for those wanting to incorporate Solar energy into their Gardens and other applications. The course will explain the principles of solar power and how to design and set up a system. This course will include the hands-on setup of several different systems. We hope to kick this off in late spring.



Water in the park

Due to freezing conditions, the water has been secured to all but the greenhouse. Please use the sink, or the slop sink in the greenhouse for your water needs.



Committee Reports



Speakers Bureau

Chair: Suzanne Keane, Co-Chair Sue Masoorli

The Speakers' Bureau completed our year with 53 presentations, including five children's programs and seven demos/workshops. The audiences are appreciative of our willingness to share researched-based knowledge and our enthusiasm for gardening. It was a fine year.

To start off 2025, we have one talk:

Jan. 14, "Winter Seed Sowing Workshop" at The Garden Club of Toms River, Toms River, 11am

Thank you to all our Speakers.

Report by Suzanne Keane



Sun Shine

Chair: Kate MacDonald

Sympathy cards were sent to Patty Canetti, Denise Gomolka, and Rosemarie Witczak, who all lost loved ones in November and December. May loving memories bring them peace this holiday season.

A Christmas card was send to Holly Yokum. Holly is living in the Arbors Assisted Living in Spring Lake.

Wishing you all good health and much happiness in 2025!

Pondering Plants

by Bianca Aniski

Oh, the weather outside is frightful
But the tropics are so delightful
Iguanas eat orchids and so
Just say no, just say no, just say no

After enjoying the fortuity of a lengthy escape to Rincon, Puerto Rico, my daughter and I viewed multiple examples of orchids attached to trees that were flourishing. Based on our observations, we decided to experiment. We had no clue on how the actual process worked. We also were not fluently bilingual and could not garner a tutorial. During our RMG internship in 2022, we had joyfully shared images of this thriving orchid experiment. After 5 years of being anchored to a palm tree, the orchids actually bloomed. Irresistibly, the experiment needed replication. This time the purchase came from a vendor who had not marked the pots with genus and species. There was neither an understanding of the orchid's light needs nor a hint of the color. The "known" was that each pot was a thrifty \$4.00/plant and worth our time. Blindly, four (4) healthy leafed plants were purchased and tied to a palm tree with an old cut-up pillowcase.

A "How To" guide from an "edu site" is found here:

<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/browardco/2020/05/28/orchids-grow-on-trees/>

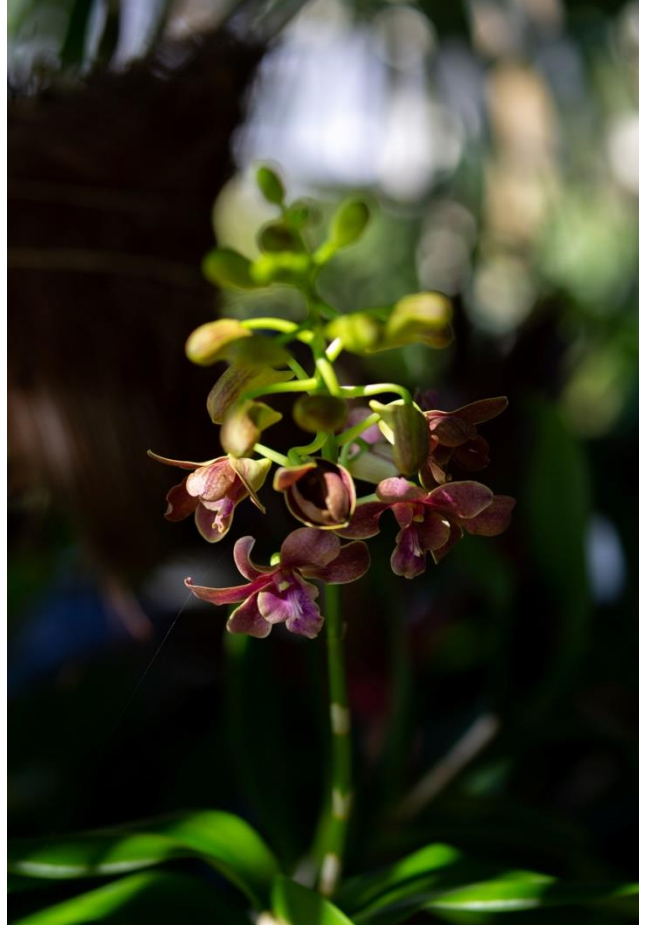
Consumer horticultural experimentation combined with naiveté can be costly, time consuming and disappointing. Regardless of these pitfalls and a fast forward to 2024 - ALAKAZAM - we have blooms in striking yellow, pinks, purples, and magenta. Some bore an additional spike of fragrant buds to follow. Awe-struck by the floral display, we were quickly snapped into steamy fauna reality to find a very hungry (no - not a caterpillar) huge camouflaged iridescent lime-green iguana munching away at the blooms. (&#@% !) Before brandishing our hands to shoo the iguana away, images of the villain were captured for your entertainment. Before scrolling, think for a moment about getting IPM training for iguanas ... I would turn in my "badge" in. Spotted Lantern Flies can be "smooshed" but this invader's IPM include lethal methods above my pay grade. So, here's to an Iguana free New Year and May your IPM be easy-peasy in 2025!



All photos by
Krystal Aguilar

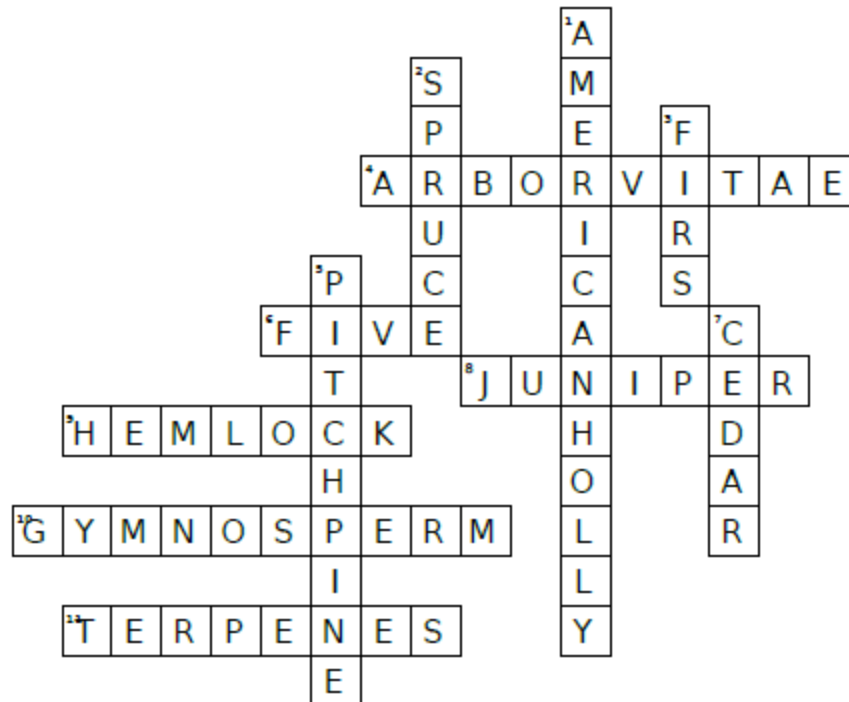


Krystal Aguilar



Krystal Aguilar

Welcome Winter Evergreen Majesty



Down:

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

Across:

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

Continuing Education

Cornell **CALS** College of Agriculture
and Life Sciences

New York State Integrated Pest Management

Each monthly webinar counts for 30 minutes of RMG Continuing Education.

What's Bugging You? Webinars

Practical Solutions to Pest Problems

Each month, experts will share practical information and answer questions on using integrated pest management (IPM) to avoid pest problems and promote a healthy environment where you live, work, learn and play. We'll end with an IPM Minute, and cover a specific action you can take in the next few days to help you avoid pest problems.

When: Noon until 12:30 p.m. ET on the first Friday of each month.

Register to attend our events live on Zoom. You will receive a Zoom link the week of the event. The 2025 schedule is available below and on the registration form.

2025 Schedule

- ▲ **January 3:** [Winter lighting for houseplants](#) | [2024 Year in Review](#)
- ▲ **February 7:** [Proper storage of pesticides & household chemicals](#) | [Misuse of moth balls](#)
- ▲ **March 7:** [Considerations for hiring a pest pro](#) | [Choosing a tick repellent](#)
- ▲ **April 4:** [Pest rats explained](#) | [Myth: cats for rat control](#)
- ▲ **May 2:** [Spongy moth caterpillar management](#) | [Feeding Friendly Insects: Plan to prep your soil](#)
- ▲ **June 6:** [Spotted lanternfly update](#) | [Recognizing wild parsnip](#)
- ▲ **July 4:** [Grow green lawns with overseeding](#) | [Beech leaf disease](#)
- ▲ **August 1:** [Making a mosquito bucket trap](#) | [Feeding Friendly Insects: Pick plants](#)
- ▲ **September 5:** [Top 5 rodent exclusion tips](#) | [Feeding Friendly Insects: Get ready to plant](#)
- ▲ **October 3:** [Winterize your home orchard](#) | [Feeding Friendly Insects: Fall is for planting](#)
- ▲ **November 1:** [Understanding indoor cockroaches](#) | [Invasive tawney field cockroach](#)
- ▲ **December 5:** [IPM for clothes moths and pantry moths](#)

Register Here



<https://tinyurl.com/FirstFridayWebinar>

"We're going to need a bigger truck"

By Cheryl Clearo

This year's sock drive exceeded my expectations. In addition to the eight bags I took to FedEx in October, on November 30, I dropped off 15 more bags for delivery. That's a whopping 23 bags. Very impressive but leave it to the Master Gardeners to outdo themselves once again. Not only will these donations end up providing comfort to our pet "children" (in the form of pet beds), but it also keeps hundreds of socks out of the landfill. Job well done, everyone.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

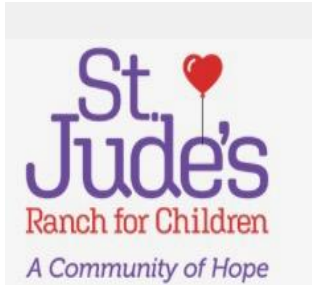
Cheryl
Reduce, reuse, recycle



Recycling in the Happy New Year

By Mary Townsend

Tired of making New Year's Resolutions that you can never keep? Well, here are three that are sure to start 2025 off right:



Greeting cards: You may save some cards for sentimental reasons, but rather than toss the rest, why not give them new life by mailing them to Saint Jude's Ranch for Children? They accept all Christmas cards, except those from Hallmark, American Greetings, and Disney (these are copyrighted) for their children's art projects. They also accept cards for other occasions.

All you have to do is cut off the front of the cards, making sure there's no writing on their backs, and mail them to St. Jude's Ranch for Children, 100 St. Jude's St., Boulder City, NV 89005. If you have any questions, call 702-294-7100. Here's a tip: to avoid being added to their mailing list, don't include your return address on the package



Ink cartridges: If you're not happy with your current recycling options, why not support the NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation? Here is how they describe themselves:

The NJEA Frederick L. Hipp Foundation for Excellence in Education makes it possible for public school employees to receive grants that will help them bring creative ideas to life. The only foundation of its kind in New Jersey, the Hipp Foundation supports initiatives to promote excellence in education.

First, gather 4 or more cartridges, pack them in any box, and get a free UPS mailing label at planetgreenrecycle.com to print out free a UPS label. To ensure that the Hipp Foundation gets the credit for your donation, use **Program ID Code 31808**.



Unwanted Jewelry: Marty's Place is a senior dog sanctuary dedicated to ensuring that no senior dog dies alone. While they do adopt out many of their dogs, they provide comfortable lodgings for the ones that stay behind. In April they run a fund raiser by selling donated jewelry.

How to donate? Mail your donation to Marty's Place, 118 Rte 526, Upper Freehold Township, NJ 08051. For questions, call 609-259-1278. Or even easier, give them to me, Mary Townsend, and I'll deliver them for you.

You can make a difference in 2025!

Master Gardeners Share

From John Blankemeyer



“As seen on Burton Ave in LEH. Happy Holidays!”

Master Gardeners Share

From Noreen Baris



“Merry Christmas from Hawaii!”

Master Gardeners Share

From Kate MacDonald



“I was surprised by this unusual bloom on my African violet this morning. Looks more like a pansy. I have had this plant for years, and it normally has plain pink blooms.”

Announcements

North Jersey Orchid Society

Rutgers University SEBS

Floriculture and Teaching Greenhouse

Annual Show & Sale

January 17-19, 2025

Friday Noon – 5 PM, Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

Free Admission & Free Parking
Breathtaking Orchid Displays
World-Renown Vendors
“Ask the Orchid Doctor”

Cook Student Center
Rutgers University
59 Biel Rd
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Visit us online at njorchids.org
Contact us at njorchidshow@gmail.com




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Cheryl will be collecting block styrofoam beginning Monday, January 13 through Friday January 17. Deadline for drop off is by 1 pm on the January 17. Foam must be put in garbage bags and left in the Helpline room.

See attached list below for what is accepted and what is not.


Thanks for helping to keep the stuff out of the landfills.



MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP

STYROFOAM* RECYCLING PROGRAM

OPEN TO ALL MONMOUTH COUNTY RESIDENTS



ACCEPTED:

CLEAN PACKAGING MATERIALS FROM:

- ✓ TELEVISIONS
- ✓ APPLIANCES
- ✓ COMPUTERS
- ✓ FURNITURE
- ✓ FOAM COOLERS

NOT ACCEPTED:

- ⊘ PACKING PEANUTS
- ⊘ FOOD PACKAGING
- ⊘ COLOR STYROFOAM
- ⊘ PACKAGING WITH TAPE OR LABELS

Visit www.middletonnj.org/styrofoam to find out how to recycle food service styrofoam & packing peanuts.

Styrofoam* can only be recycled if brought to the Middletown Recycling Center (52 Kanans Lane) or the Middletown Train Station Recycling Center (Main Parking Lot of Train Station off Middletown-Lincroft Road). Do not put Styrofoam* in your blue curbside recycling cart.

MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
52 KANANS LANE, MIDDLETOWN, NJ 07748 ☎ 732-615-2109 🌐 WWW.MIDDLETOWNNJ.ORG/RECYCLING

*Styrofoam is a trademark brand of Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) Owned and Manufactured by the Dow Chemical Company.



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.)

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

HAPPY★NEW★YEAR

February

- 6:** General Meeting
10:30 am, Auditorium
- 17:** President's Day
Ag Center Closed
- 19:** BOD Meeting
9:15 am, Conf. Rm
- 25:** Newsletter Deadline

