
• **Committee Description:** The committee members plant and maintain the Perennial Garden at the Mercer Educational Gardens and provide education to the public and Master Gardeners related to the garden’s specialized topic. This garden provides the opportunity to educate the public and MGS about its four distinct growing environments—shade, sun, dry, and wet—and the plant materials that thrive in them. Color, texture, and seasonal interest are of particular importance in the garden.

• **Perennial Garden Goals:** To excite, encourage, and inspire the public and Master Gardeners about the use of Perennials in the garden and to educate them about the right plant, right place, right growing conditions, and plant needs through responsible gardening techniques.

• **Summary of This Year’s Accomplishments:**
  - A game, GoodGuys/Bad Guys, was enlarged and improved upon by Suzanne Keeler for the 2012 Insect Festival.
  - Our Perennial Garden participated once again in the “Great Sunflower/Bee Project.”
  - New plants were added to each bed and the bed inventories were updated again.
  - We donated plants in the spring to the plant sale from the Perennial Garden and hosted the Plant Sale Committee fall demonstration of digging, potting, and overwintering of plants for the 2013 plant sale.
  - The Perennial Garden was hosted by Bruce Young and Pam Betterton in the summer evening program at MEG. Proper pruning of fall perennials was demonstrated.

• **Chairs for 2013**
  - Bruce Young and Kathleen Yurwit will continue as Co-Chairs of the Perennial Garden for 2013
  - Bed Chairs are as follows:
    - #1 & 6 Diane Bartfield, assisted by Maureen Amter and Sally Flynn
    - #2 Bruce Young, assisted by Pat Lagunas, Theodora Wang
    - #3 Tom McGeachen, assisted by Angelika M, Linda Pickering, Ann Summer, Claudia DeFino, and Ann Vaurio
    - #4 Kathleen Yurwit, assisted by Sandy Robinson, Betty Sherman, and Alice Dabrowska
    - #5 Suzanne Keeler, assisted by Maureen Amter and Sally Flynn

• **Goals for 2013**
  - **Plant inventory**—Update inventories of each bed twice a year, in the spring and in the fall.
  - **Photo books**—Update the photo books to reflect spring, summer, and fall photos for each plant. The co-chairs will share one book and the second book will be divided into the separate books for each bed and given to the appropriate bed-chair.
  - **Signage changes**—Order new signs for the new plants. Move the small Perennial Bench Garden sign to bed 5 near the entrance as well as purchase similar signs to indicate the bed number for each bed.
  - **Insect festival game**—Update the game to reflect different immature and adult stages for each insect.
  - **Bed diagrams**—Make bed diagrams to identify the location of each plant.
  - **Continue monthly bed tours and plant talks**
  - **Field trip to a perennial garden**
- Introduction of new plant material for plant diversity and seasonal changes

  Our approved budget for July 2012 to June 2013 is $350 with a remaining balance of $350.
Master Gardeners of Mercer County
2013 Annual Report for the Perennial Garden Committee
Submitted by Kathleen Yurwit and Bruce Young – Co-Chairs on 12/1/13


- **Committee Description:** The committee members plant and maintain the Perennial Garden at the Mercer Educational Gardens and provide education to the public and Master Gardeners related to the garden’s specialized topic. This garden provides the opportunity to educate the public and MGs about its four distinct growing environments – shade, sun, dry, and wet – and the plant materials that thrive in them. Color, texture, and seasonal interest are of particular importance in the garden.

- **Perennial Garden Goals:** To excite, encourage, and inspire the public and Master Gardeners about the use of Perennials in the garden and to educate them about the right plant, right place, right growing conditions, and plant needs through responsible gardening techniques.

- **Summary of This Year’s Accomplishments:**
  - Our Perennial Garden participated once again in the “Great Sunflower/Bee Project.”
  - New plants were added to each bed and the bed inventories were updated again by Pat Lagunas.
  - On 5-28-13 Tom McGeachen offered a presentation on the use of WORD to diagram our beds. We then made diagrams of each bed indicating the name and location of each plant with the assistance of Tom McGeachen and Alice Dabrowska.
  - On 7-17-13 the Perennial Garden was hosted by Bruce Young, Ann Summer, Ann Vaurio, and Tom McGeachen in the Midsummer Evening Program at MEG. Proper mulching and fertilizing were demonstrated.
  - Our game, GoodGuys/Bad Guys, was enlarged and improved upon by Suzanne Keeler for the 9/7/13 Insect Festival. In addition to insects, we added toads and frogs. Bill B, Angelika M, Ann Vaurio, and Kathleen Y hosted the game.
  - Kay Danbury, guest speaker, gave an outstanding presentation of the Fruits of Fall at our 10-2-13 meeting.
  - On 10-5-13 the Perennial Garden was hosted by Bruce Young and Tom McGeachen in the Community Outreach Program, “Putting the Garden to Bed.”
  - **Chairs for 2013:** Bruce Young and Kathleen Yurwit will continue as Co-Chairs of the Perennial Garden for 2014
  - Bed Chairs are as follows:
    - #1 Bonnie Patterson, assisted by Guinn Roberts
    - #2 Bruce Young, assisted by interns
    - #3 Tom McGeachen, assisted by Angelika M, Linda Pickering, Ann Summer, Claudia DeFino, & Ann Vaurio
    - #4 Kathleen Yurwit, assisted by Sandy Robinson, Betty Sherman, and Alice Dabrowska
    - #5 Bill Bailey, assisted by Maureen Amter and Sally Flynn
    - #6 open

- **Goals for 2013**
  - **Plant inventory**—continue to update inventories of each bed
  - **Photo books**—continue to update the photo books to reflect spring, summer, and fall photos for each plant. The co-chairs share one book and the second book has been divided into the separate books for each bed and given to the appropriate bed-chair.
  - **Signage changes**—new signs for the new plants have been requested.
  - **Insect festival game**—continue to fine tune game
  - **Bed diagrams**—continue to update the bed diagrams
  - **Monthly bed tours and plant talks**—continue the educational focus on perennial plants
  - **Field trip**— arrange tours of MG perennial gardens in the East Windsor area in the spring
  - **Introduction of new plant material for plant diversity and seasonal changes**
  - **Demonstrate different types of mulch for wintering over the beds in the fall**

- Our approved budget for July 2013 to June 2014 is $350 with a remaining balance of $337.

- **Committee Description:** The committee members plant and maintain the Perennial Garden at the Mercer Educational Gardens and provide education to the public and Master Gardeners related to the garden’s specialized topic. This garden provides the opportunity to educate the public and MGs about its four distinct growing environments – shade, sun, dry, and wet – and the plant materials that thrive in them. Color, texture, and seasonal interest are of particular importance in the garden.

- **Perennial Garden Goals:** To excite, encourage, and inspire the public and Master Gardeners about the use of Perennials in the garden and to educate them about the right plant, right place, right growing conditions, and plant needs through responsible gardening techniques.

- **Summary of This Year’s Accomplishments:**
  - Our Perennial Garden participated once again in the “Great Sunflower/Bee Project.”
  - New plants were added to each bed and the bed inventories were updated again by Pat Lagunas.
  - On 5-28-13 Tom McGeachen offered a presentation on the use of WORD to diagram our beds. We then made diagrams of each bed indicating the name and location of each plant with the assistance of Tom McGeachen and Alice Dabrowska.
  - On 7-17-13 the Perennial Garden was hosted by Bruce Young, Ann Summer, Ann Vaurio, and Tom McGeachen in the Midsummer Evening Program at MEG. Proper mulching and fertilizing were demonstrated.
  - Our game, GoodGuys/Bad Guys, was enlarged and improved upon by Suzanne Keeler for the 9/7/13 Insect Festival. In addition to insects, we added toads and frogs. Bill B, Angelika M, Ann Vaurio, and Kathleen Y hosted the game.
  - Kay Danbury, guest speaker, gave an outstanding presentation of the Fruits of Fall at our 10-2-13 meeting.
  - On 10-5-13 the Perennial Garden was hosted by Bruce Young and Tom McGeachen in the Community Outreach Program, “Putting the Garden to Bed.”

- **Chairs for 2013:** Bruce Young and Kathleen Yurwit will continue as Co-Chairs of the Perennial Garden for 2014
  - Bed Chairs are as follows:
    - #1 Bonnie Patterson, assisted by Guinn Roberts
    - #2 Bruce Young, assisted by interns
    - #3 Tom McGeachen, assisted by Angelika M, Linda Pickering, Ann Summer, Claudia DeFino, & Ann Vaurio
    - #4 Kathleen Yurwit, assisted by Sandy Robinson, Betty Sherman, and Alice Dabrowska
    - #5 Bill Bailey, assisted by Maureen Amter and Sally Flynn
    - #6 open

- **Goals for 2014**
  - **Plant inventory**—continue to update inventories of each bed
  - **Photo books**—continue to update the photo books to reflect spring, summer, and fall photos for each plant. The co-chairs share one book and the second book has been divided into the separate books for each bed and given to the appropriate bed-chair.
  - **Signage changes**—new signs for the new plants have been requested.
  - **Insect festival game**—continue to fine tune game
  - **Bed diagrams**—continue to update the bed diagrams
  - **Monthly bed tours and plant talks**—continue the educational focus on perennial plants
  - **Field trip**—arrange tours of MG perennial gardens in the East Windsor area in the spring
  - **Introduction of new plant material for plant diversity and seasonal changes**
  - **Demonstrate different types of mulch for wintering over the beds in the fall**

- Our approved budget for July 2013 to June 2014 is $250 with a remaining balance of $220.09.

Committee Description: The committee members plant and maintain the Perennial Garden at the Mercer Educational Gardens and provide education to both the public and Master Gardeners. This garden provides the opportunity to educate the public and MGs about its four distinct growing environments – shade, sun, dry, and wet – and the plant materials that thrive in them. Color, texture, and seasonal interest are of particular importance in the garden.

Perennial Garden Goals: To excite, encourage, and inspire the public and Master Gardeners about the use of Perennials in the garden and to educate them about the right plant, right place, right growing conditions, and plant needs through responsible gardening techniques.

Summary of This Year’s Accomplishments:
- Our Perennial Garden participated once again in the “Great Sunflower/Bee Project.”
- New plants were added to each bed and the bed inventories were updated by Angelika Muehleisen.
- The Co-chairs opened a Google Photos Website and Gmail account for the Perennial garden for monthly photos of each bed. This will be a solution to the problem of digital photos which are expensive to print.
- Maureen Amter and Ann Summer created small animal signs for a children’s game matching plant names to certain plants. It has been a big hit for the children’s mailbox activities.
- Tom McGeachen measured all of the gardens so that the dimensions are accurate for our Garden Bed Chairs.
- Tom McGeachen sprayed the Perennial Garden with a deer preventive product for the entire season, protecting the gardens all year. He volunteered to do the same for the entire MEG garden.
- Bill Bailey asked that the Perennial Garden be expanded so that the approach to MEG is nicer. He and Maureen Amter took on this project and have filled in the area with plants and created a lovely approach.
- Bonnie Patterson brought in slate for garden signs and Tom McGeachen put the numbers on the slate with white paint. They are a wonderful addition to the garden.
- On 6/19/15 Jane Murphy and Karrie Prager opened up their home gardens for viewing to the PG members to share perennial plant information and experiences.
- On 7/15/15 the Perennial Garden hosted the Midsummer Evening Program with Bill Bailey, Teresa Lazer and Tom McGeachen.
- On 9/12/15, our Insect Festival game, Metamorphosis, was a hit again this year at the festival. Designed by Ann Vaurio and Ann Summer, it was hosted by Bill Bailey, Ann Vaurio, and Fiona Tyndall.
- On 10/7/15, Linda Pickering and Ann Vaurio presented a program about Latin and Linnaeus at Extension for the entire MG membership.
- Our programs this year were exceptional, including aggressive plants, weeds, Latin and Linnaeus,
• Ann Summer created a plant exchange for within the group for use after Plant Expo and during the winter months for house plants.

Challenges for this year:
• Our Perennial Garden has been working to figure out the changes in the shade and sun because of the demise of our shade tree. At first, a branch was removed, now the tree will be coming down. We are considering ways to revamp the gardens’ offerings in all of our beds.
• Our Bed 2 has been problematic because we over-fertilized and were not careful enough with aggressive and invasive plants. We are getting this under control, but it is a goal to make sure this bed is replanted and thriving.
• We have created plans to counter the problem of increased drought for the 2016 season.
• We need an inventory of plants that have and have not worked. This is under way, but it is one of the things we need to do in 2016.

Plans for 2016:
• **Plant inventory** – continue to update inventory.
• **Photo Books online** – create photo log with Google Docs as an archive for the Perennial Garden.
• **Signage changes** — new signs for new plants are requested by Kathleen Yurwit who keeps the list of needed signs.
• **Insect festival game** — continue with our new Metamorphosis game for 2016
• **Monthly bed tours and plant talks**--continue the educational focus on perennial plants and expand bed tours to include perennials in the other gardens at MEG
• **Field trip**-- arrange tours of PG member gardens as we did in 2014 and 2015
• **Introduction of new plant material** - for plant diversity and seasonal changes with a shopping trip to Russell’s Wholesale Nursery in May or June
• **Revamp Bed 2** – Work through the winter to come up with a plan for Bed 2.

Our approved budget for July 2015 to June 2016 is $250 with a remaining balance of $77.53. After we have assessed the needs in April, we will be requesting additional funds in May as the difference in shade has caused problems in many of our garden beds. We also will request more funds for 2016-17, for a few reasons: 1) The Perennial Garden has the lowest budget of any garden at MEG and, at this point in our history, relying on plant donations has not kept up with our goal of having a demonstration garden. 2) Our changing shade condition has cause a number of plants to die off in a number of our beds, so we need more funds for plants than we have in the past. 3) We will need a couple of structural additions to our beds, including an obelisk.
Rutgers Master Gardeners of Mercer County
2016 Annual Report -- Perennial Garden Committee
Submitted by Karen Prager & Ursula Wooley – Co-Chairs on 12/20/16


Committee Description: The committee members plant and maintain the Perennial Garden at the Mercer Educational Gardens and provide education to both the public and Master Gardeners. This garden provides the opportunity to educate the public and fellow MGs in and outside of New Jersey about four distinct growing environments – shade, sun, dry, and wet – and the plant materials that thrive in them. Color, texture, and seasonal interest are of particular importance in the garden. With the demise of a large tree, we are in transition regarding these environments. Next year we will attempt to plant a new tree in order to continue to educate the public and ourselves about New Jersey growing conditions in zone 6B/7A.

Perennial Garden Goals: To excite, encourage, and inspire the public and Master Gardeners about the use of Perennials in the garden and to educate them about the right plant, right place, right growing conditions, and plant needs through responsible gardening techniques, including composting, mulching, deadheading, weeding and other thoughtful garden practices.

Summary of This Year’s Accomplishments:
- Our Perennial Garden participated once again in the “Great Sunflower/Bee Project.”
- New plants were added to each bed and the bed inventories were revamped by Chung Ho, as well as routinely updated by him.
- We continue to strive to figure a best practices for our garden regarding photographs. Printing series of photos proved too costly, some garden beds requesting $100 for photos which were not recompensed. We put some photos online through the website we created last year, however, we still strive to find a home for our collection on the RMG website. Work in progress.
- We reused the small animal signs for a children’s game matching plant names to certain plants. It has been a big hit for the children’s mailbox activities.
- Tom McGeachen introduced a weather station aspect to our gardening. By checking on a website that give details of the rainfall, we could see how badly we needed to water during the season.
- Tom McGeachen sprayed the Perennial Garden with a deer preventive product for the entire season, protecting the gardens all year. Tom is trying out a new product for deer prevention and we hope the results will be even better. Stay tuned.
- Last year, Bill Bailey asked that the Perennial Garden be expanded so that the approach to MEG is nicer. He and Maureen Amter took on this project and have filled in the area with plants and created a lovely approach, which has been enhanced greatly this year.
- In June, Bonnie Patterson opened up their home gardens for viewing to the PG members to share perennial plant information and experiences. We went when the azaleas were in bloom and some visited a nearby garden with magnificent azaleas.
- In mid-July, the Perennial Garden participated in the Midsummer evening program with a number of our gardeners present, including helpers: Tom, Bill, Teresa and Karrie.
- In September, our Insect Festival game, Metamorphosis, was a hit again this year at the festival. Designed by Ann Vaurio and Ann Summer.
Rutgers Master Gardeners of Mercer County
2016 Annual Report -- Perennial Garden Committee
Submitted by Karen Prager & Ursula Wooley – Co-Chairs on 12/20/16

• Our in house, Plant Talk programs this year were exceptional, including composting by Sylvia Stengle, soil and organic matter (SOM) by Kathleen Yurwit, PH for plants by Ann Varo, Evapotranspiration by Tom McGeachen, plants that boast 3 season flowers by Teresa Lazar and Ruth Larsson (with planning by Lan-Jen Thai, plants for clay soil by Bill Bailey, herbaceous perennials by Linda Pickering.
• Stones placed around the garden, through Nancy Putnam’s help, improved the gardens immensely.

Challenges for this year:
• Our Perennial Garden has been working to figure out the changes in the shade and sun because of the demise of our shade tree. This continues to challenge – and a tree planted nearby may be helpful.
• We need an inventory of plants that have and have not worked. We were going to do that, but have not yet.
• Prizes for Insect Fest spinning wheel game would be fun for kids and serve as a reminder of what they learned.
• Photos on Google were not greatly utilized; hope to have a pictorial of the beds in March.
• Perhaps better to follow just 1 plant through the season.
• There was a discussion about the new database, and we will provide database training in the spring.
• Karrie pursued the suggestion that the hose near the PG garden be moved. She was told that it would be considered in the spring.
• Bill suggested that we plant a different plant when one is lost.
• We discussed placing something under the gravel in the paths such as a plastic liner. It was mentioned that stone dust rather than gravel is easier to kneel on when weeding.
• Water and weed scheduling sign up for next season will stay the same. It was suggested that we sign up for 3 different weeks instead of 2.
• Spring buying spree will be in May and date will be decided at our first meeting in March.

Plans for 2017:
• Plant inventory – continue to update inventory, add a section of plants that failed and why.
• Photo Books online – as soon as possible move books to the RMG website.
• Signage changes — new signs for new plants are requested by Kathleen Yurwit who keeps the list of needed signs.
• Insect festival game — continue with our new Metamorphosis game for 2017
• Monthly bed tours and plant talks--continue the educational focus on perennial plants. Topics discussed include drought resistant plants, watering systems for vacationing gardeners, plants for year-round color, and intermingling plants with vegetables, both decorative ones and non.
• Field trip-- arrange tours of PG member gardens as we did since 2014
• Introduction of new plant material - for plant diversity and seasonal changes with a shopping trip to Russell’s Wholesale Nursery in May or June
• Revamp Bed 2 – Work through the winter to come up with a plan for Bed 2.

Our approved budget was increased for 2017. We presented a case at the Executive meeting to increase our budget and it was. We thank the executive board. However, it was not as greatly utilized as we expected. Bed 2 needed massive overhaul which we did with gifts and borrowing from other gardens and a total of $47 of new plants from Russell’s, at great prices. The bed also bought an obelisk which was needed for interest over the whole 6 garden beds, that was under $50. Everyone was very happy about being able to buy different more interesting and rarer plants. But the cost to the MG program was minimal.
**Active PG Committee Members:** Maureen Amter, Stephanie Anatale, Bill Bailey, Naomi Brahinsky, Darlene Chamberlain, Michelle Delahanty, Sally Flynn, Patricia Frawley, Sue Gange, Katie Girandola, Geri Hartig, Lynne Harwood, Gayle Henkin, Chung Ho, Rosanna Innes, Eileen Kelly, Lynda Lee, Ruth Larsson, Tom McGeachen, Angelika Muehleisen, Jane Murphy, Kathy Murtaugh, Anastazja Panek-Tobin, Bonnie Patterson, Linda Pickering, Karen Prager, Sandy Robinson, Louise Senior, Betty Sherman, Sylvia Stengle, Ann Summer, LanJen Tsai, Fiona Tyndall, Ann Vauro, Theodora Wang, Mary Wagner, Ursula Wooley, and Kathleen Yurwit. **Active until she moved to Minnesota:** Teresa Lazer. **Inactive Members apparently wish to remain on the rolls:** Carole Armel, Pat Beckman, Carol Bencivengo, Roe Ciuffina, Alice Dabrowska, Stephanie Foy, Suzanne Hickman, Sharon McGinness, Linda Park, Guinn Roberts, Bruce Young.

**Visitors in July to a one-hour Plant Talk by Gayle Henkin:** Andre Butts, Robert Coyner, Carol Marquis, Joanne Pannone, Nancy Putnam, David Soncrant, Jack Watro.

**PG Committee Description:** The committee members plant and maintain the Perennial Garden at the Mercer Educational Gardens and provide education to both the public and Master Gardeners. This garden provides the opportunity to educate the public and fellow MGs in and outside of New Jersey about four distinct growing environments – shade, sun, dry, and wet – and the plant materials that thrive in them. Color, texture, and seasonal interest are of particular importance in the garden. With the removal of large boughs from a large maple tree, we are in transition regarding these environments. We hoped to plant a new tree, but the maple will remain, and we will deal with the reduced shade. Next year we will plant more deer resistant perennials in order to continue to educate the public and ourselves about New Jersey growing conditions in zone 6B/7A.

**Perennial Garden Goals:** To excite, encourage, and inspire the public and Master Gardeners about the use of perennials in the garden and to educate them that right plant, right place is a mantra that applies to them. We will learn about the right growing conditions for the plants we deal with and plant needs through responsible gardening techniques, including composting, mulching, deadheading, weeding and other thoughtful garden practices. We feel we did reach the goals for 2017 including the Summer in the Garden evening co-sponsored by the Community Ed Committee. We also feel that we easily complied with the goals for RMG of MC.

Our committee has a 10-15 minute presentation each month which we call “Plant Talk.” These are presented by PG members to the PG membership. However, in July 2017, Gayle Henkin presented a one hour program on bees in the garden which was open to the entire PG membership. We should have applied for CE credit since everyone was invited on the membership roles. It was an outstanding talk, and 7 people who are not PG members attended.

**Summary of This Year’s PG Accomplishments:**
- Our Perennial Garden participated once again in the “Great Sunflower/Bee Project.”
- New plants were added to each bed and the bed inventories were revamped by Chung Ho, as well as routinely updated by him. Bed 3 revamped it’s planting to more deer resistant plants.
- We continue to strive to figure the best practices for our garden regarding photographs. We plan to follow one plant in each bed through 3 iterations, new sprouts, interim stage, full bloom. We will include a slide show of the plants for each bed at our last meeting of the season. We may produce a binder, which will be available to MEG visitors at Plant Expo, Evening in the Garden, and Insect Fest. Work in progress.
- We reused the small animal signs for a children’s game matching plant names to certain plants. It has been a big hit for the children’s mailbox activities.
- We were very pleased with the Water-Weed schedule activity. Members signed up for the slots, came to water and weed in the gardens, and sent emails – nearly weekly, of the status of the
garden after their visit. It helped very much in keeping the gardens well watered and at their best all year.

- Tom McGeachen continued to spray the Perennial Garden this year with a deer preventive product for the entire season, protecting the gardens all year.
- We hoped to have a new tree to replace the one that is doing so poorly, but we were told that we cannot as the maple will remain. We are going to try to plant a yellowwood seed and hope to have a tree in 10 years that would provide the shade we need and not cost a penny.
- In July, Gayle Henkin gave a plant talk on bees which was extremely well attended, which we advertised and which garnered a half dozen non-members to visit the PG committee.
- In mid-July, the Perennial Garden participated in the Midsummer evening program with a number of our gardeners present. Very successful, everyone appreciates the ice cream.
- In September, our Insect Festival game, Metamorphosis, was a hit again this year at the festival. Designed by Ann Vaurio and Ann Summer.
- Our in house, Plant Talk programs this year were excellent, including clematis growing by Bill Bailey, plants that are new and upcoming by Darlene Chapman, bees by Gayle Henkin, drought resistant plants by Tom, tree stilts by Bonnie, biochar by Ursula, and how to add fragrance to the garden by Bill Bailey.
- We were gifted with a gift certificate for Russell’s for nearly $200. We will use that next year.

PG Challenges for this year:

- Our Perennial Garden has been working to figure out the changes in the shade and sun because of the cutting back of our shade tree. This continues to challenge.
- We need to figure out whether we want to educate ourselves with pictures of various stages of plants or the public. We are starting by taking one plant in each bed and photographing it at 3 stages. Kathleen will put together a slide show of the 18 slides that will generate. We want to decide if we should make a book that will be kept in the library for others to see and what that would look like. It would be ultimately a useful tool for determining which are plants and which weeds in the spring.
- Photos on Google just didn’t work. We are still wondering if we should try to teach how to do this to each other.
- We need to figure a permanent sign system for the wooden signs that are so welcome for Insect Fest. We currently have photos on wood but they don’t last the winter and many were lost over the last winter. These are expensive and time consuming.
- We hope to get some photos on the website eventually.
- We discussed placing something under the gravel in the paths such as a plastic liner. It was mentioned that stone dust rather than gravel is easier to kneel on when weeding. Still need to work on this one.
- Spring buying spree will be in May and date will be decided at our first meeting in March.

Plans for 2018:

- **Plant inventory** – continue to update inventory, add a section of plants that failed and why.
- **Experiment** – plant two of the same plant in each bed and change the soil conditions to see if we can improve the performance of a particular plant. Thus consider our findings in various reports to the group.
- **Photo Books online** – we are still hoping to get onto the RMG website.
• **Signage changes** — new signs for new plants are requested by Kathleen Yurwit who keeps the list of needed signs.

• **Insect festival game** — continue with our new Metamorphosis game for 2018

• **Monthly bed tours and plant talks** -- continue the educational focus on perennial plants. Topics discussed include drought resistant plants, watering systems for vacationing gardeners, plants for year-round color, and intermingling plants with vegetables, both decorative ones and non. We were very successful with one talk that we could invite the entire MG population to. We hope to do that again this coming year.

• **Field trip** -- arrange tours of PG member gardens as we did since 2014

• **Introduction of new plant material** - for plant diversity and seasonal changes with a shopping trip to Russell’s Wholesale Nursery in May or June

• **Stay on budget.** Our budget was increased for 2017, and we plan to stay within our means.
PERENNIAL GARDEN COMMITTEE
Rutgers Master Gardeners of Mercer County
2018 Annual Report -- Perennial Garden Committee
Submitted by 2018 Co-Chairs Karen Prager & Ursula Wooley


PG Committee Description: The Perennial Garden (PG) garden functions as an educational display garden for the general public. Committee members design and redesign, choose perennials, plant and maintain the PG at the Mercer Educational Gardens site to provide education for the public as well as fellow Master Gardeners. In our gardens, we consider four distinct growing environments – shade, sun, dry, and wet – and the plant materials that thrive in them. Color, texture, and seasonal interest are of particular design importance when crafting our beds. The PG is made up of six garden beds of differing sizes. MGs sign up to work on beds or serve as floaters to help where needed. In the last few years, the removal of large boughs from a large maple tree, we find ourselves in transition regarding these aforementioned environments. Next year we will plant more deer resistant perennials in order to continue to educate the public and ourselves about New Jersey growing conditions in zone 6B/7A. In the future, planting a new tree would help guarantee maintaining our growing environments. At this time, the maple will remain, and we devote energy and renewed plans to deal with the reduced shade.

RMGoFM C Mission Statement and Goals:

a. Mission Statement of RMGoFM C
To excite, inspire, and encourage the residents of Mercer County to participate in the rewarding experience of responsible gardening and pest management.

b. Goals of RMGoFM C
To expand the public’s knowledge of responsible gardening and pest management through horticultural and environmental programs and through community service activities.

We believe we have respected the Mission statement as we reached the RMGoFM C goals for 2018. We welcomed visitors to our gardens including Plant Expo where we had our garden plants easily identified at the start of the season, the “Summer in the Garden” evening co-sponsored by the Community Ed Committee, and through Insect Fest where many visitors saw our gardens in full bloom. During the year, MEG gardens are open, and when PG members come to water and weed, we see people in the gardens nearly every time.

Accomplishments and Challenges

Summary of This Year’s PG Accomplishments:

- New plants were added to each bed and the bed inventories were revamped by Chung Ho, as well as routinely updated by him. Bed 3 revamped its planting to more deer-resistant plants.
- We each planted a Pussy Toes plant in our beds in June and compared results in October.
- We continued to photograph the plants at various stages in their development. We plan to follow one plant in each bed through 3 iterations, new sprouts, interim stage, full bloom. We will include pictures of the plants on the PG inventory.
- We reused the small animal signs for a children’s game matching plant names to certain plants. It has been a big hit for the children’s mailbox activities.

2018 PG Committee Annual Report.doc
PERENNIAL GARDEN COMMITTEE
Rutgers Master Gardeners of Mercer County
2018 Annual Report -- Perennial Garden Committee
Submitted by 2018 Co-Chairs Karen Prager & Ursula Wooley

• We were very pleased with the Water-Weed schedule activity. Members signed up for the slots through SignUpGenius, came to water and weed in the gardens, and sent emails – nearly weekly, of the status of the garden after their visits. It helped enormously in keeping the gardens well watered and at their best all year. The gardens were quite glorious in 2018, and this was a huge boon.

• Tom McGeachen continued to spray the Perennial Garden this year with a deer preventive product for the entire season, protecting the gardens all year. Tom suggested at our November (last of the year) meeting that we all move to deer resistant plants as the deer decimated so many plants despite his efforts. However, we decided we would not plant all deer-resistant plants, but continue to consider each bed as a unique entity.

• Bed 1, under the leadership of Kathleen Yurwit, changed all of its plants to create a different plant environment – nearly all succulents, for the public.

• In September, Gayle Henkin gave a Plant Talk on native bees and nematodes and other pesticides that was extremely well-attended, which we advertised and which garnered a half dozen non-members to visit the PG committee. Perhaps next year we should have a wider audience?

• In mid-July, the Perennial Garden participated in an Evening in the Garden program with a number of our gardeners present. Very successful, everyone appreciates the ice cream.

• In September, our Insect Festival game, Metamorphosis, was a hit again this year at the festival. Designed by Ann Vaurio, Ann Summer Lan-Jen Tsai and Ruth Larsson

• Our in-house, Plant Talk programs this year were excellent, list of programs above

• We were gifted with a gift certificate for Russell’s for nearly $200 last year and still have $45 remaining. We will use that next year.

PG Challenges for this year:
• Our Perennial Garden has been working to figure out the changes in the shade and sun because of the cutting back of our shade tree. This continues to challenge.

• We need to figure out how best to share out photo collection with the public. We already started by taking one plant in each bed and photographing it at 3 stages. It’s a huge project to get it up on the website, and despite the efforts to have everyone take photos, too few pictures are available. Still, we hope to get some photos on the website at the earliest convenience for the web team.

• We need to figure a permanent sign system for the wooden signs that are so welcome for Insect Fest. We currently have photos on wood but they don’t last the winter and many were lost over the last winter. These are expensive and time consuming to rotate in and out. Thinking about this.

Educational programs – no power point presentations at any time
Each month, our committee sets time aside for a 10-15 minute presentation on horticultural topics. The committee discusses these choices in March and votes on them, and committee members volunteer to tackle the subjects. We refer to these educational lectures as “Plant Talks.” Most months, these Plant Talks are presented by committee members to the PG membership. This year we covered the following topics:

April: New flowers for 2018 (Bill Bailey)
May: Dirt! – or Soil, for the fussy. (Kathleen Yurwit)
June: Propagation (Karen Prager)
August: Incorporating Native Plants into the Perennial Garden (Bed 3)
Sept.: Overwintering Plants (Catherine Horgan)
      How Native Bees May Help Save Our Crops and Avoid using Neonicotinoids (Gayle Henkin)
Oct.: Preparing Beds for Winter

When a topic is of more global interest, we invite the entire MG community. In June 2018, Karen Prager invited the membership for a 45-minute Plant Talk on Propagation. In September 2018, we invited
the MG membership again for two talks. Catherine Horgan presented a talk on overwintering plants and Gayle Henkin presented a one-hour program on native bees and pesticides. We applied and were approved for CE credit for the double program in September. We sent minutes from the September meeting to the entire MG community through OneList.

Our member Gayle is a devotee of bees. At the last symposium she bought and gave out sunflower seeds to those who wanted to grow them for the Great Sunflower Project and ID and count the pollinators. We have at least 4 members who responded to Gayle to say that they are tracking bees for this project – and while Gayle is the impetus, we are claiming education because she’s a PG member and gave seeds out at our meeting as well!

In addition, we educate each other on our gardening adventures through Bed Tours. Each month a different bed will discuss the plans, successes and failures of their work. These member-to-member talks help educate us on each other’s horticultural advancements and thus we are better able to talk about the plants with the public when we have Community Education presentations.

Lastly, this past year, our committee members engaged in a rudimentary experiment, planting Pussy Toes (Antennaria parlinii) in each of the six beds to see what growing conditions were best suited to this native. Three of our plants died; but those that survived showed that in our gardens, contrary to horticultural advice, the plants in the sun did the best.

Plans for 2019:

- **Plant inventory** – continue to update inventory, add a section of plants that failed and likely reason.
- **Experiment** – follow up our pussy toes experiment with something new next year. Will discuss at initial 2019 meeting in March.
- **Add Photos to Online inventory**
- **Signage changes** – new signs for new plants will be requested (Kathleen Yurwit keeps the list of needed signs.) We would like enough seasonal signs to could change out in different seasons, which would add to the educational aspect of our beds. For example, in summer we could have some deadheading signs; in winter we could explain that plants are not cut back so birds will have fodder during the winter months.
- **Insect festival game** – continue with our new Metamorphosis game for 2019
- **Monthly bed tours and plant talks** – continue the educational focus on perennial plants. We were very successful with our June and September talks to which we invited the entire MG population. We hope to figure out another one next year.
- **Field trip** – arrange tours of PG member gardens as we did since 2014.
- **Introduction of new plant material** – for plant diversity and seasonal changes with a shopping trip to Russell’s Wholesale Nursery in May or June.
- We plan to plant more deer resistant plants.
- **Stay on budget** – Our budget was increased in 2017. We stayed within the budget in 2018, and we plan to stay within our means in 2019.
- **Newsletter** – Karen plans to write up the Propagation talk for a spring newsletter.
- **Leadership** – Karen and Ursula welcome a new co-chair, Sylvia Stengle who will bring new insights to the PG
- **Experimentation** – We will discuss and plan for another internal experiment, some plant to try out or perhaps an experiment in soil amendments.
- **Photos** – We hope to get some of our photos up on the website, when this becomes doable.
- **Watering & Weeding** – We will continue to do our Water-Weed activity as it is 100% better having the plants watered regularly, than when we were less diligent.
• **Public projects** – We will present a program at MEG in June as part of a Community Education program this summer involving most of the gardens at MEG. Kathleen Yurwit will be organizing this event for our committee. We also hope to participate in the Great Sunflower Project once again.