

Master Gardeners of Bergen County

April 2020 – mid-month update

A change in volunteer requirements and activities for 2020

25 volunteer-hour requirement and RCE events suspended

The baseline 25 volunteer-hour requirement for 2020 has been suspended since traditional volunteer opportunities have been shut down. More information will follow as it becomes available. In addition, all in-person events, classes, programs, club meetings, camps, and other group activities organized by or under the auspices of Rutgers Cooperative Extension are suspended through at least August 14, according to Brian Schilling, RCE director. This date is subject to change based on future university, state, or federal direction.

Webinars will count for up to 10 education hours for 2020

You can use up to 10 hours of webinars to fulfill your 2020 MG education requirement. Examples of acceptable webinars are those on indoor and outdoor gardening of flowers, shrubs, trees, and vegetables; landscape architecture and garden design; and “how to” webinars, for example, pruning, composting, or recognizing plant diseases, to name a few.

Webinars may be offered by cooperative extension services, botanical gardens and organizations, and colleges/universities as well as individuals with gardening and plant expertise. See “Online resources” immediately below for some webinar ideas.

If you’re unsure if a webinar will count toward education hours, contact [Donna Karpel](#). **Note:** Online garden tours are not acceptable.

Online resources

Rutgers Cooperative Extension will sponsor an “Earth Day at home” free webinar series beginning Monday, April 20 and every Monday through June 29. Each webinar will be a one-hour interactive event beginning at 6:30 pm covering small actions that together reduce negative impacts on the environment. “Get to the root of soil compaction” is the topic for the April 20 webinar.

To join you’ll need a computer, tablet, or smartphone with speakers. Click [here](#) for the list of webinar topics and registration information. You must register to participate.

The **Ecological Landscape Alliance** is sponsoring free webinars for the gardening community at noon Wednesdays through May. The next one is April 22 and the topic is “Save the pollinators.” Click [here](#) for the list of webinars. Then, click on each webinar for a description. Following the description is the registration link. You must register to participate.

The ELA webinars began earlier this month. Visit YouTube to see the past webinars. For the “Adventures with oddities – strange and noteworthy native plants” (April 8), click [here](#). For “Pollinator ecology” (April 15), click [here](#).



(More online resources on page 2)

Penn State Extension is offering its library of [online courses](#) at no cost through April. You must register by April 30. Once on the Penn State Extension website, you can use the filters on the left side of the screen to search webinars by categories.

Visit the **Rutgers Agricultural Extension Service** [community garden series](#) for videos and fact sheets. The AES offers two recent articles of interest in its online newsroom. Click [here](#) to read why gardening is important during the COVID 19 pandemic. Click [here](#) to learn how to choose the right location for your vegetable garden.

Check out the **Rutgers Plant and Pest Advisory website** where you'll find an online newsletter. It contains information intended for commercial growers, but you may find items of interest.

Rutgers Gardens plant sale is online this year

Rutgers Gardens is unable to hold its traditional Spring Flower Fair plant sale at the Log Cabin this year. Instead, Rutgers Gardens has arranged for an online plant sale. This is part of Rutgers University's efforts to promote and sustain home gardening and food security during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Click [here](#) for the online plant shop where you'll find instructions on how to order. After your order has been submitted, you'll receive a confirmation by email. Staff at Rutgers Gardens will email your invoice with a secure link to process your payment online. Depending on the number of orders, this might take a little while. After payment, staff will contact you to schedule a pickup time after May 7.

Rutgers Gardens is offering vegetables, including 84 varieties of tomatoes and 39 varieties of peppers; sun-loving and shade-loving annuals; herbaceous and woody sun-loving and shade-loving plants; ferns; hanging baskets; and succulents and tropical plants.



Rutgers University photo

Sad news

Jay Van Kempen, husband of Diane Van Kempen, Class of 2019, passed away April 11. You may contact Diane at 1103 E. Ridgewood Ave., Ridgewood NJ 07450 or dvankemp@gmail.com.



Coming up... our favorite tools

Tell us about the garden tool you can't live without. Why do you love it and why is this tool special to you? Send your brief explanation and a photo in jpg format (optional) to [Miriam Taub](mailto:Miriam.Taub). We'll run your favorite tool stories in a future *Potting Shed*.

One of Janet Schulz's favorite tools