

Master Gardeners of Bergen County May 2021 – Mid-Month Update

MG virtual meeting – Tuesday, May 25 via Zoom

Announcements at 7:20 pm; program to follow

Bruce Crawford - A Designer's Love Affair with Trees

Click [here](#) to join the meeting before 7:20 pm
This is our annual meeting with the MG of Passaic County

When we evaluate and contemplate our gardens, one plant that we often consider last is the tree. Trees are the plants we should be considering first, said Bruce Crawford, state program leader for home and public horticulture with the NJ Agricultural Experiment Station and one of our favorite speakers.

In his presentation, Bruce will evaluate and discuss the many ways trees enhance both our garden and our community. Whether it's for moderating the climate, carbon sequestration, or soothing our souls after a hectic day, trees enhance and add value to our homes in ways we often fail to consider, he said.

A longtime proponent of unusual and fun plants, Bruce had his own design/build garden design business for nearly 25 years that specialized in plantings for year-round interest. One of those gardens was published in Fine Gardening magazine. From 2005-2020 Bruce was the director of [Rutgers Gardens](#). Last summer, he became state program leader for home and public horticulture.

Bruce has been an instructor in the Landscape Architecture program at Rutgers University since 1987. He says he has yet to find a plant he doesn't like.



Photo by Miriam Taub

Bruce Crawford when he last spoke to the MG of BC in 2019.

MG volunteering resumes!

Rutgers Cooperative Extension is resuming in-person, outdoor volunteer activities when RCE guidelines are followed. However, as announced several months ago, the Master Gardener volunteer requirement is suspended for 2021 and you aren't required to participate in any volunteering this year.

RCE guidelines apply to volunteering at any MG volunteer site that has been registered by its site coordinator as having met site guidelines. Site coordinators will be instructed how to register their sites.

In brief, the RCE guidelines for MGs are:

- Volunteer activities are limited to a maximum of 25 people per site, which includes volunteers, site coordinator(s), and staff, as applicable.
- On each day you volunteer, you must complete an RCE Covid-19 Health Screening [Form](#) to get a green check mark, which will permit you to enter the volunteer site. Take a screen shot of the check mark

with your phone or print and bring a copy of the form with you. Your site coordinator will look at the check mark on your phone or on the form. **Note:** If you're not feeling well and/or answered "yes" to any of the questions on the Health Screening Form, please do not attend the activity. No one is permitted to ask your vaccination status.

- Masks must be worn and social distancing of 6 feet must be observed at all MG volunteer sites.
- Attendance will be recorded for contact tracing purposes.
- In addition to your mask, bring hand sanitizer, tools, and food/beverage. Food will not be provided at any volunteer site and sharing of food isn't permitted.

Please view this brief [video](#) on YouTube about the RCE guidelines for MGs and you can read the RCE guide

(Continued on page 2)

MG volunteering resumes!

(Continued from page 1)

for MGs, which was attached to the email with this Mid-Month Update. A tutorial may be scheduled to review the Rutgers guidelines for MGs. As more information becomes available, we'll notify you via the *Potting Shed* or email.

Site coordinators will contact their volunteers as each site is registered and ready for activities to resume. If you're interested in volunteering at a new site, visit the Volunteer Sites [page](#) on our new website and then click on the "Volunteer Sites PDF List" for the names, description, and contact information for each site.

Joel Flagler, Bergen County RCE department head, explained that the rules were created to protect volunteers and give them the option of participating in outdoor activities this year.

Keeping track of your volunteer hours

Please keep a record of your volunteer hours (date, volunteer site, and number of hours) on paper until you're directed to enter the information on Better Impact, the new online reporting system for MGs statewide. In the future, tutorials will be scheduled with instructions on how to use Better Impact.

Asimina triloba - a delicious ornamental for your garden

Bruce Crawford, program leader in home and public horticulture at Rutgers, has chosen the pawpaw tree (Asimina triloba) as his May plant of the month.

By Bruce Crawford

One of the positive developments from the pandemic is the renewed interest in gardening and, in particular, growing food. I have always been astonished at how many children do not know how their food is produced, other than it magically appears on grocery store shelves. Obviously, their parents did not share a passion for growing food and hopefully that will continue to improve once the pandemic is behind us. Some fruits are not only tasty and nutritious but have an attractive ornamental appeal. For years I have been touting the beauty and benefits of pawpaw trees, botanically called *Asimina triloba*. Perhaps now, this tree's time has finally arrived... Click [here](#) to read more.



Rutgers University photo

The pawpaw tree's fall color in the shade.

WEBINARS

May 18, 7-8 pm: Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County sponsors A Guide to Growing Beautiful Roses. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 20, 10-11 am: North Carolina Cooperative Extension sponsors Pollinator Habitat - Conservation and Restoration. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 24, noon-1 pm: Penn State Extension sponsors Home Food Preservation - Introduction to Preserving. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 27, 6:30-7:30 pm: Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County sponsors Delicious Edible Flowers. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 28, 11 am: National Garden Bureau sponsors Hardy Hibiscus. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

May 31, 6-8 pm: North Carolina Cooperative Extension sponsors Common Insects and Diseases in the Garden - An Organic Focus. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

June 2, 6:30-7:45 pm: Penn State Extension sponsors Gardening for All Seasons - Container Gardening. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.



Who am I?

Melody Corcoran, Class of 2016, found this flower at a local arboretum. The flower is about 1 square inch with a stem of 14-18 inches. If you can identify this plant, send an email to [Miriam Taub](mailto:Miriam.Taub@nytimes.com) with its name. It will be ID'd in the June *Potting Shed*.

Photo by Melody Corcoran

Days, and then click on each event for more information and the cost. Children under 12 are free and don't need to be preregistered if accompanied by a preregistered adult.

THIS AND THAT

Don't go spring-crazy at the nurseries

Advice from Margaret Roach, garden blogger: Don't blow your budget on spring flowers; instead, consider buying plants for year-round interest. Read her [suggestions](#) in the New York Times of May 9.

Arnie Friedman 'on the air'

Arnie Friedman, Class of 2004, was a recent guest on the Montvale in Motion cable TV show. He was interviewed by host Tony Salerno. Click [here](#) to view the 12-minute interview with Arnie.



Arnie Friedman

GARDEN TOURS

'Roses to Rock Gardens' tour June 11-12

Van Vleck House & Gardens in Montclair will sponsor its annual fund-raiser — Roses to Rock Gardens — from 11 am-4 pm June 11 and 12. This year's theme is "Garden Getaways." The seven private gardens on the self-guided tour are in Montclair and Llewellyn Park. Tickets are \$40 for members in advance or \$50 at the door and \$50 for non-members in advance or \$60 at the door. Click [here](#) for more information and to purchase tickets.

The tour begins at the Van Vleck House, 21 Van Vleck St., Montclair, where you'll pick up your guidebook with the garden addresses and descriptions. Masks and social distancing are required.

Garden Conservancy Open Day June 12

The Mountsier Garden in Nutley, a two-acre garden for all seasons that has been created and fine-tuned for more than two decades, will be open to the public from 10 am-4 pm June 12 for preregistered guests only.

Capacity is limited; no walk-ins are allowed; and no paper tickets or cash payments will be accepted on-site. Masks and social distancing are required.

Online registration will begin in late May for this event. Click [here](#) for the list of the Garden Conservancy's Open

Wanted: Cute photos



Send us a picture of your favorite garden gewgaw, decoration, (or whatever you want to call it), and any story that goes along with it. We'll run the photos in upcoming *Potting Sheds*. Email to [Miriam Taub](mailto:Miriam.Taub@nytimes.com).

Get your gardening answers here

Do you have a burning question about gardening or horticulture? Would you like a local opinion on how to care for your indoor or outdoor plants? Send your question to [Arnie Friedman](mailto:Arnie.Friedman@nytimes.com). If your question is chosen it will appear in the next *Potting Shed* with the answer.