

From the Potting Shed

March 1, 2025

www.mgofbc.org



Remember when?



Janet Schulz, Class of 1988, and Joel Flagler reminisce during his retirement lunch Feb. 28. Janet was a student in the first MG class that Joel taught from start to finish in Bergen County. See pages 6-11 for photos and stories about Joel.

Meeting news: Tuesday, March 18, 7:15 pm

Ruth Carll Perennials, Annuals, and Ornamentals in the Landscape

Plant life cycles play an important role in landscape design. Ruth Carll, state leader for Rutgers Consumer Horticulture, will discuss how perennials, annuals, and ornamental plants can enhance the landscape. Ruth will share “do” and “don’t” examples and the process for selecting the right plants for the right locations.

We're meeting in person March 18 at 1 Bergen County Plaza, 4th floor, Hackensack. Refreshments at 7 pm, announcements at 7:15 pm; speaker to follow.

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From the President's Desk

By Theresa Schneider, Class of 2016

I'm feeling nostalgic with Joel Flagler's retirement. As Master Gardeners, we are well aware of the ebbs and flows of nature and the changing of the seasons. All things come to an end, and on March 1, the MG of BC will no longer have their partner and mentor in the Bergen County Rutgers Cooperative Extension office.



I'm grateful that we had an opportunity on Feb. 18 to participate in one last class with Joel in his capacity as professor and agricultural extension agent, Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Bergen County.

At the same time, as we say thank you and goodbye to Joel, we welcome newly elected leadership to the association. Maria Bushman is taking over as corresponding secretary from Miriam Taub, and Marylou Moravec is taking over as recording secretary from Keith Mazanec. Thank you to Miriam and Keith for their hard work and dedicated service to the MG of BC. A big thank you also goes out to Jean Friedman for her continued service as treasurer. *[See page 2 to read about our new officers.]*

2025 is turning out to be a year of transition for the MG of BC. As we say thank you and goodbye to old friends, we look forward to welcoming new colleagues and partners, and hopefully soon, the new Bergen County RCE staff.

MG OF BC NEWS

Meet our new MG of BC officers

At our February Zoom meeting, MG of BC members elected the following officers for two-year terms: Maria Bushman, corresponding secretary, and Marylou Moravec, recording secretary. Jean Friedman was re-elected treasurer. Jean has held this position since November 2023 following the death of Pat Vellas.

Maria Bushman, Class of 2019



Maria Bushman

I volunteer at the New Jersey Botanical Garden supporting the Holiday Open House event. In addition to serving as corresponding secretary, I manage publicity on our Facebook and Instagram pages. I also co-chair the Program Committee with my sister, Lisa Yoler.

Together, Lisa and I created a therapeutic horticulture program at Valley Hospital, called Rooted in Healing, where we host a variety of events for patients, visitors, and staff.

I have a passion for gardening and have created a beautiful shade garden in my backyard. Currently, I am focusing on incorporating more native plants into my landscape.

Marylou Moravec, Class of 2024

I've been gardening for decades and until I joined the Master Gardeners in 2024, I was completely self-taught. Getting to know other like-minded people with a selfless interest in helping others was very appealing to me.



Marylou Moravec

My principal interests are in woodland gardens, especially with flowers and ferns. In 2024, I volunteered at the Hermitage as well as the Van Saun Park zoo and enjoyed working with the other volunteers at these sites. In the past I spent years

volunteering at a no-kill animal shelter and as board member and treasurer for a co-op housing community.

Jean Friedman, Class of 2004

A little bit about myself. After I retired from being an accountant I graduated from New York Botanical Garden with a certificate in landscape design. I also took courses in floral design and horticulture. Arnie [Friedman] and I travel and go to gardens all over Europe where we take tours and classes of the gardens whenever we can. I get new design perspectives from visiting gardens and going to lectures.



Jean Friedman

I was a docent for Wave Hill until the pandemic. I also volunteered at Thielke Arboretum and was a chairperson at the Skylands Manor Holiday Open House.

For newly certified MGs: What is a 'continuing education' hour?

By Suzanne Danzig, Volunteer Records chair
Another welcome to our newly certified MGs from the Classes of 2022, 2023, and 2024. You may have questions regarding the maintenance of your certification going forward. I hope this will answer some of your questions.

All MGs are required to volunteer at any of our registered volunteer sites for a minimum of 25 hours each year and record those hours on [Better Impact](#). In addition, all MGs are required to log a minimum of 10 continuing education hours on Better Impact each year.

Here are a few examples of events and programs that count toward continuing education hours:

1. Attending our MG of BC speaker meetings.
These meetings are listed separately on Better Impact under "Continuing Education" as "MG of BC Monthly Meetings/Programs." There is no need to provide any additional information.
2. Attending a meeting of a local garden club, plant society, or arboretum with a speaker or educational presentation. These meetings can be in person or via Zoom. When entering your hours

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(CE hours, continued from page 2)

for these programs on Better Impact, click “Activities and choose “Continuing Education.” You’ll then open the “information” box where you’ll enter the following information:

- Name of speaker;
 - Title of program;
 - Sponsoring organization (university, garden club, etc.);
 - Format (webinar or in person); and
 - Address/town of the in-person presentation.
3. Listen/watch recorded webinars or presentations. Record those hours as you would under No. 2 above.

Check the Potting Shed for the lists of webinars and garden club meetings for ideas to earn CE hours. I hope this clarifies any questions you might have had. Please feel free to reach out to me at suzannedanzig@gmail.com with any questions.

Tip: Don’t wait until the end of the year to enter your hours on Better Impact, enter them as you go.

(Ruth Carll, continued from page 1)

Ruth joined the Rutgers Agricultural and Natural Resources faculty in January 2024. She is an innovative leader in the botanical garden and preservation community.

Ruth has a master’s degree in botany from Arizona State University and was director of programming at [Desert Botanical Garden](#) in Phoenix and later the executive director of the [McDowell Sonoran Conservancy](#) in Scottsdale. She’s the senior naturalist with the Monmouth County Park System.

In her Rutgers role Ruth provides statewide leadership and collaboration across working groups, stakeholders, and RCE departments and specialists to support improving and expanding consumer horticulture outreach, education, engagement, including the Rutgers Master Gardener program.



Ruth Carll

TRIPS AND TOURS

Wave Hill, relaxing above the Hudson River

By Suzy Basu, Trips and Tours chair

Join the MG of BC for a springtime visit to Wave Hill in the Bronx where we’ll enjoy a guided tour of the stunning gardens at the height of their early-May bloom. Our guided tour runs from 10 am-noonish focusing on the seasonal highlights across the gardens, including the Flower Garden, Wild Garden, and the spectacular views of the Hudson River.

Wave Hill trip – Saturday, May 3

View details and RSVP:

<https://calendar.app.google/Co7dkArMFjNrHG9L9>

Schedule

- 9 am: Carpool from Bergen County (optional);
- 10 am-noon: Guided tour of the gardens;
- Noon: Lunch at Wave Hill’s café (optional);
- 1 pm: Departure.

Cost: \$25 per person (covers admission and tour); \$13 for parking.

Transportation: Suzy will organize carpools starting at 9 am for those interested; departure around 1 pm.

Accessibility: The gardens are generally accessible, though some paths may be uneven. Wheelchairs are available for rental.

Guests: You’re welcome to bring a guest to share this beautiful experience. Join us for this peaceful, spring-filled morning among vibrant blooms and good company.

RSVP: Email Suzy Basu at mgofbc.trips@gmail.com to join.

VOLUNTEER SITE NEWS

Big success at the Hermitage maple sugaring event (and other news)

By Bernadette White, site coordinator

Despite the prediction of snowy weather, that didn't stop 68 families from attending the maple sugaring demonstration at the Hermitage Feb. 15.

During the three presentations, approximately 200 adults and children listened to guest presenter Roseanne Weissel and Hermitage grounds coordinator Nancy Moses talk about the process of tapping the trees.

A total of 16 trees were tapped. The key to success is for the weather to cooperate: Day temperatures above freezing and cold nights. Fingers crossed!

A big thank-you to MG volunteers Ed and Cynthia Drennan, Bob Nunes, Penny Readie, Wendy Sowa-Maldarelli, and Suzanne Danzig for helping out on that cold, snowy day.

Other news: MGs who work full-time have asked if we could provide a weekend day for them to accumulate volunteer hours. As a result, we'll be at the site Saturday, March 15 for an initial cleanup. Weekday spring cleanups start Wednesday, March 19. Start time for both dates is 9:30 am. To join us, contact me at btwhite280@gmail.com or call/text 201-960-9277. Bring gloves and your favorite rake.

The Hermitage is located at 335 N. Franklin Turnpike, Ho-Ho-Kus.



Photo by Bernadette White

Wendy Sowa-Maldarelli (in gold jacket) guided attendees to the tent for the presentation-demonstration on the process of tapping sugar maples. About 200 adults and children attended the annual event at the Hermitage. Families received a kit consisting of a tap, tubing, and instructions so they could tap their own trees.

Garretson season begins March 16

By Lida Gellman, site coordinator

Volunteering at Garretson Forge & Farm will begin Sunday, March 16 from 1-4 pm with the annual Pea Day planting. In addition to planting peas and cold weather crops, we'll be cleaning up the vegetable and herb beds.

You also can pick up free vegetable, herb, and flower seeds at the Garretson Community Seed Library on Pea Day. The seed library offers a nice variety of organic and open-pollinated seed.

Thereafter, we meet every Thursday, beginning March 20 from 10 am-2 pm and the second and fourth Sundays from 1-4 pm. Check the calendar on the Garretson [website](#) for any changes to the Sunday hours.

Please join us and help get the season off to a great start. Contact me at lb922@aol.com for more information. Garretson Forge & Farm is located at 4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn.

Teaneck Creek needs volunteers March 22

Teaneck Creek Conservancy needs a half-dozen volunteers to clean up in the Peace Labyrinth (its native plant garden) Saturday, March 22 from 1-3 pm. Rain date is March 29. This will be the first cleanup of the season. You'll learn about the wetland and how to work in shady wet sites and shady dry sites.

The address is 20 Puffin Way, Teaneck. Meet in the parking lot at 1 pm. The Peace Labyrinth is a five-minute walk. Bring hand tools, gloves, water, and snacks, if you want them. Teaneck Creek will supply large tools. Dress in layers. Click [here](#) to register.

MEETINGS/LIBRARY EVENTS

March 3, 4:30 pm: Sundial Garden Club, Hillsdale Public Library, 509 Hillsdale Ave, Hillsdale. Speaker: Paul Kubarych, landscape architect. Topic: Deer-Resistant Plants and Garden Design.

March 7, 1:30 pm: Demarest Garden Club, United Methodist Church at Demarest, 109 Hardenburgh Road, Demarest. Speaker: Lourdes Osorio, Passaic County MG and creator of the Native Plant Channel on YouTube. Topic: From Buzz to Chirps and Flashes: Creating a Garden Paradise for Pollinators. Click [here](#) to visit the Native Plant Channel.



Lourdes Osorio

March 9, 7:30 pm: Garden Club of Harrington Park, upstairs in the Harrington Park Library, 10 Herring St., Harrington Park. Speaker: John Beirne, curatorial director of horticulture and facilities, Reeves-Reed Arboretum. Topic: Tropical Gardening in NJ, Yes It Can Be Done!

March 12, 7 pm: Joint meeting of the Wyckoff Area Garden Club and Oakland Garden Club, Oakland Senior Center, 20 Lawlor Road, Oakland. Speaker: Orrin Sheehan, director of horticulture, [Little Island](#), a man-made park. Topic: Little Island, Pier 55 New York. Refreshments at 6:30 pm.

March 13, 7:30 pm: Garden Club of Teaneck, Richard Rodda Community Center, Room MP2, 250 Colonial Court, Teaneck. Drive up the hill to the rear parking lot. Speaker: Marilyn Figueroa, club member. Topic: A Garden for Health and Home. Click [here](#) for more information.

March 18, 5:45 pm: Ringwood Garden Club, Ringwood Public Library, 30 Cannici Drive, Ringwood. Speaker: MG Lynne Proskow. Topic: A Natural Journey, Bee-ing Curious, and Enjoying Herbs.

March 19, 7:30 pm: Garretson Forge & Farm, 4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn. Speaker: Tony Bracco, [Bracco Farms](#). Topic: After the Harvest - Methods for Preserving Your Crops.

March 26, 7 pm: Glen Rock Library, 315 Rock Road, Glen Rock. Speaker: MG Robyn Lowenthal. Topic: Wellness in the Garden.

March 30, 1:30 pm: Old Tappan Public Library, 56 Russell Ave, Old Tappan. Speaker: MG Lynne Proskow. Topic: A Natural Journey, Bee-ing Curious, and Enjoying Herbs.

See more club meetings in the mid-March Potting Shed.

WEBINARS

All times are Eastern.

March 4, 1 pm: National Garden Bureau sponsors Ask the Experts About Dogwoods and Other Shrubs. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register for this and other upcoming webinars.

March 12, noon-1 pm: AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Garden Planning for a Bountiful Harvest: Tips and Strategies. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.

March 12, 6-7:30 pm: Penn State Extension sponsors Veggie Series: Get the Most Out of Your Garden. Fee: \$10. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

March 12, 7:30-9 pm: Bergen-Passaic Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey sponsors The Wild World of Oaks - Majestic, Iconic, and Indispensable. Speaker Dr. Randi Eckel, founder of [Toadshade Wildflower Farm](#). Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

March 21, 6 pm: AARP Virtual Community Center sponsors Gardening for All Ages, Part 1: How to Start Your Garden. Free. Click [here](#) for more information and to register. AARP membership not required.

A FOND FAREWELL TO JOEL FLAGLER AFTER 38 YEARS

Bergen County is ‘unique,’ he says

Joel Flagler retired March 1 as the Rutgers Cooperative Extension’s agricultural and natural resources agent for Bergen County. Joel arrived in Bergen County in 1987 to replace Dr. Ralph Pearson as RCE agent. Among other things, Joel completed the training of the MG Class of 1987, which Pearson began, and he went on to train the Classes of 1988-2024. He estimated he’s taught more than 2,000 Master Gardener interns during that time.

Joel says his greatest accomplishment was dispelling the myth that Bergen County has no “agriculture.” He discusses a few key points.

Joel on Bergen County’s unique place among the state’s 21 counties . . .

We’re unique because we have the blend of wonderful farms amidst urban development.

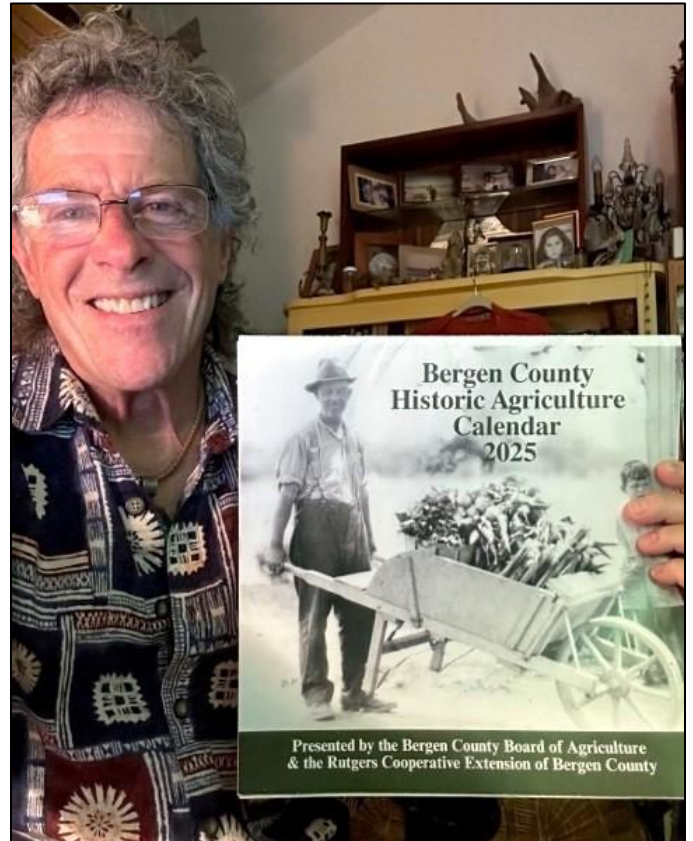
Bergen is the most densely populated county and has a greater sophistication [than other counties] being next to New York and a vigorous consumer base. Bergen County has supplied New York with fruits and vegetables and firewood, and Bergen’s farm markets were a model for the rest of the state. Any new technology was visible in Bergen County before the rest of the counties. We’re a little ahead of the curve.

Joel on ‘agriculture’ in Bergen County . . .

We have plenty of “agriculture,” but it is not measured in simply the number of farms or cows. I have attempted to shine the light on the other aspects of the county’s agricultural profile, including nurseries, garden centers, landscaping, turf management, golf courses and ballfields, and parks and preserves.

Agriculture, of course, includes our wonderful farms that offer market stands, hayrides, fruits and vegetables, ice cream, petting zoo, bakeries, pick-your-own apples, peaches, strawberries. We have top, top, top quality. Top quality has always been a Bergen standard.

Our farms are modern and “cutting edge” while also celebrating our generations-old agricultural roots. They demonstrate a perfect balance of the old values and the new “smart” technology that is available.



Joel Flagler with the historic agriculture calendar he created in time for the 2024 Fall Harvest Festival.

We have seven “preserved” farms and other farms that aren’t preserved. Non-preserved farms are good, but preserved farms — like Demarest Farm, Mahrappo, Sun Valley Farm — they can’t be sold for development.

Joel on the state’s [Farmland Preservation Program](#) . . .

[Joel was one of the first people to promote this program throughout the county.] The state and county chip in and purchase development rights from the [farm-owning] family, so the family gets to preserve their lifestyle. I was able to line up families to participate. One-third of Bergen County farmland is now preserved.

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A FOND FAREWELL TO JOEL FLAGLER AFTER 38 YEARS

Joel's favorite part of the job? The Master Gardeners

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Joel on his favorite part of the job . . .

My favorite part is the Master Gardener program. This was born out of the need to free me from dealing directly with homeowners. My time is supposed to be spent with professionals: Landscape contractors, people who run nurseries. Master Gardeners freed me up from the homeowners. The homeowners go through the hotline, and I'm available for the professionals, those who make their living in agriculture.



Karen Riede and Joel at the 2024 Fall Harvest Festival, Overpeck Park.

When I came in 1987, I recall that agent Ralph Pearson trained one class; he retired in the middle of training them. With the very next class, 1988, I started training them to do what we needed: The hotline, participate in environmental fairs and Earth Day events, and offer community service.

MGs are smart, sophisticated, they know how to communicate. With the right amount of training, I could count on them to be ambassadors for Rutgers

Cooperative Extension. Pretty soon, mayors and freeholders [now commissioners] knew of someone who was a Master Gardener. They helped us spread the word, helped us command a higher budget. I don't think any decision-makers *haven't* heard of Master Gardeners. Our wonderful county Commissioner Mary Amoroso went through the MG training and is a strong supporter and advocate for MGs and Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

Joel on why the Master Gardeners are special . . .

I want us to be proud of our Master Gardener designation and what's special about us. We're part of Rutgers. Rutgers nourishes and nurtures Master Gardeners.

While there are other "garden clubs" in New Jersey, Master Gardeners have a special, distinct role and bring distinct services to Bergen County that aren't available elsewhere. We present Rutgers research-based information. Taking a course at NYBG or joining a garden club is fine, but it's not being a Master Gardener.

Joel on one big change over 38 years. . .

In 1988, the Rutgers factsheets recommended the use of chemicals to fix garden ills. In the early to mid-1990s we started promoting soaps and oils. The whole approach of pest management changed. The objective is now pest management; it's no longer pest eradication.

- Miriam Taub, Potting Shed editor,
with Joel Flagler

By the numbers . . .

In 1900, Bergen County had 1,716 farms totaling 75,760 acres.

In 1960, Bergen had 384 farms totaling 7,456 acres.

As of 2024, Bergen had 42 active farms, which include plant nurseries and equestrian centers, totaling 335 acres of preserved farmland and 607 acres of non-preserved farmland.

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A FOND FAREWELL TO JOEL FLAGLER AFTER 38 YEARS

Many thanks to the Rutgers Cooperative Extension staff who arranged the Feb. 28 lunch in honor of Joel Flagler's retirement. Attending were many local colleagues and friends from the Bergen County Parks Department, Bergen County Board of Agriculture, and Master Gardeners of Bergen County. In addition, Rutgers colleagues were there representing Morris, Union, and Essex/Passaic counties, and the Rutgers University campus in New Brunswick.



The Master Gardeners, Joel's favorite part of the job. Sitting from left, Janet Schulz, Joel Flagler, Theresa Schneider, Joseph Cooper, and Miriam Taub. Standing, center row: Karen Riede, Vivian DeMarco, and Linda DeWolfe. Back row, Keith Mazanac, Dania Cheddie, Peter Cammarano, Betty McDonnell, Andrea Kanoc, Pat Czarnecki, Maria Bushman, and Lisa Yoler.

Photo by Alyssa Glynn, RCE staff



The Rutgers Cooperative Extension staff, from left, Abby Kesley, former senior program coordinator for Bergen County 4-H from 2014-2023, currently state 4-H senior program coordinator; Monique Bliss, 4-H program assistant who recently marked 20 years working with Joel; Joel Flagler; Karen Riede, horticultural assistant from 2017-2024 who retired last September; and Alyssa Glynn, senior program coordinator.

Photo by Miriam Taub

A FOND FAREWELL TO JOEL FLAGLER AFTER 38 YEARS



Above, Mary Amoroso, Bergen County Commissioner and an MG from 1990, presents award certificates to Joel on behalf of Bergen County. **Above right,** Joel is surrounded by his Rutgers Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) colleagues: From left: Jean Epiphany, Morris County agent; Madeline Flahive DiNardo, Union County agent; Amy Rowe, Essex/Passaic county agent; Jim Nichnadowicz, Union County agent and 4H agent; Pete Nitzsche, director of the Snyder Research and Extension Farm and Morris County agent; Karen Ensle, Family and Community Health Sciences educator, Union County; Kathleen Howell, Rutgers Cooperative Extension; and Nick Polanin, chair/program leader, Dept. of ANR.



Above, Bergen County Board of Agriculture members, sitting from left: Dan Perry, Perry's Florist; Ken Aloisio, Bergen County Parks Department; Jim Spollen, Demarest Farms; and Darryl Secor and Emily Secor, Secor Farms. Standing, Adam Strobel, Bergen County Parks Department; Joel Flagler.



Right, Bergen County Parks Department staff, sitting from left: Joel Flagler; Adam Strobel, director, Division of Land Management. Standing, Cynthia Forster, director, Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs; Ken Aloisio, executive director, Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund; Kim Mitchell, landscape architect; Colin Knight, special projects; and Carmen Baca, executive administrative assistant.

Photos by Miriam Taub

TRIBUTES TO JOEL FLAGLER ON HIS RETIREMENT

Colleagues and friends have nice things to say . . .

Mary Amoroso, Bergen County Commissioner



We all know the legend of the Pied Piper. I think we have to call Joel Flagler the Pied Planter of Bergen County because he reached so many of our citizens and taught them the value of embracing, preserving, and enhancing the natural world and putting a spade into the soil.

Mary Amoroso

In the early 1990s, I was working at the Bergen Record newspaper with my colleague Virginia Rohan when we decided to take the Master Gardener course. Our teacher was Joel, and he opened the green world to us. He taught courses to landscape professionals about lawns, trees, ornamentals, natural pesticides. He did seminars for our own Bergen County Parks Department workers and deployed an army of spade-wielding volunteers into our parks.

He did a gardening column for the Bergen Record for a number of years. And, very importantly, he created a local movement in horticultural therapy that connected the disability community, housing authorities, prisons and veterans' groups with the healing and life-saving power of plants and planting. Joel, you've changed the face of Bergen County and connected us to the earth.

Nick Polanin, chair and state ANR [Agriculture and Natural Resources] Department, Rutgers University

I was very fortunate to have Joel Flagler as a mentor when I joined Rutgers Cooperative Extension in 1999. Joel was supportive, motivational, and encouraging in my early years of teaching and program development. He continued to be so throughout my leadership journey from county agent and Master Gardener program coordinator to chair of the ANR Department.



Nick Polanin

Over his illustrious career, Joel has been an inspirational role model to students, Extension colleagues near and far, and many within the green industry. With great pride and sincere gratitude, I wish Joel and his family all the best in this next chapter.

Karen, Riede, Rutgers Cooperative Extension horticultural assistant, 2017-2024, and MG Class of 2017



Karen Riede

Thank you for being not just a boss but a mentor and a friend. Reflecting on your brilliant career, we're inspired by the legacy you leave behind. Take pride in knowing that you made a lasting impact on so many. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement. May it be filled with purpose, inspiration, new horizons, and good health.

Bruce Crawford, manager of horticulture, Morris County Park Commission, and former director of Rutgers Gardens

The best word to describe Joel is passion. You can hear it in his voice when he addressed an auditorium full of landscapers gathered for a North Jersey Ornamental Hort Symposium or talking to a far smaller undergraduate class on campus.

Joel has a passion for plants and for imparting their merits unto his students. That was always evident as we walked around Rutgers Gardens with his HT class, and he would discuss the various benefits of plants.



Bruce Crawford

However, I feel his greatest passion is for people. His interest in taking plants — something we typically find

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TRIBUTES TO JOEL FLAGLER ON HIS RETIREMENT

(Tributes to Joel, continued from page 10)

non-threatening — and using them to improve people's lives through HT is his passion and something he shared with his students.

It is a topic we discussed on camera when he received the Distinguished Service Award from the New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association in 2022. Yes, indeed, Joel is a person of passion!

[Editor's note: Click [here](#) to see the video of Bruce Crawford interviewing Joel.]

Madeline Flahive DiNardo, Agriculture and Natural Resources agent, Union County

Joel Flagler — our Master Gardener muse. Inspiration — you can't help but think of Joel Flagler. When you check a thesaurus, the words motivation, encouragement, creativeness, vision, and idea pop up, words that describe our good friend, teacher, mentor, and colleague. Joel dedicates his career to inspiring people to make positive changes by caring for other living things — plants and people.



Madeline Flahive DiNardo

His dedication to the Master Gardener program in Bergen County and leadership of the fledgling State MG Association motivated many volunteers. The success of the program is a tribute to his vision.

Joel brought the horticultural therapy program to Rutgers University inspiring students to bring the joys of horticulture [and] its therapeutic benefits to people with physical and emotional needs. Joel's enthusiasm for people and plants will always continue to inspire us!



A man and his cake: Joel makes the first few cuts to the celebratory cake, which read "Master Teacher Wonderful Friend Dedicated Colleague Thank You Joel."

Click [here](#) to read a story about Joel from the newsroom of the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station.