

## **Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Association of Cabarrus County**

### **January 3, 2017 Meeting Minutes**

- Our first meeting of 2017 was called to order by Wendy Tate at 9:35 a.m. in the auditorium of the extension office.
- Lauren passed out the newly created 2017 Extension Master Gardeners Handbook then sent around several flyers announcing upcoming events and workshops that will provide opportunities for volunteer and educational hours.
- Chris Fletcher introduced the guest speaker, Sam Fleming.
- Sam is VP of “100 Gardens” project and works setting up aquaponics systems at area schools. He became involved in these ventures due to the vision of Ron Morgan, a local architect, urban planner and visionary. Ron visited Haiti after the 2010 natural disaster where 200,000 lives were lost. Ron asked how we can teach people to grow food on this stripped out island and also help the local economy. The answer seemed to be to send hydroponic farms to Haiti with the vision being 100 gardens. The project had to use what was available on Haiti, (no national power grid therefore had to be solar), had to be soil-less, sustainable and be able to recycle minerals. Sam showed slides of the global loss of seafood species in our oceans. It is expected that by the year 2048 one hundred percent of seafood will be in collapse and we will have mass extinction all over the world. In response to over-fishing fish farms were started in 1970 primarily in Asian countries. The Tilapia was the fish of choice for farming and aquaponics due to the following advantages: they are vegetarian, more efficient than cows and pigs, the cost to raise, feed and maintain is low, they mature and reproduce quickly, and they are e-coli free and are a good source of protein. Tilapia waste pollutes the water however using them in a closed system allows plants to be fertilized by the mineral waste returning clean water to the fish. The unrecognized benefit was that people were learning science, some technology and engineering. Aquaponics can be done on many scales: 1) backyard/home scale, 2) Commercial scale, or

3) facilities can be installed in areas with limited or no access to fresh produce, and 4) ideal for installing in large metro area because it is space and water efficient, and requires no soil. Sam organization will be opening a hydroponics specialty store named "Seeds on 36<sup>th</sup>"; the opening will be in March at 200 E 36<sup>th</sup> St. Sam commented that many of us had visited in 2016 at Myers Park HS where the culinary program has a aquaponics garden. He has requested our help with two other venues. He needs volunteers for Garinger HS and Jackson Youth Development Center. At Jackson the aquaponics greenhouse is set up and they have three acres of land. The request is for teaching a three hour class to cover plot preparation, vegetable transplants, gardening principles, etc... You must speak with Sam to be vetted by him as this is a secured facility. Please email your interest to: [Sam@100gardens.org](mailto:Sam@100gardens.org). A big part of these opportunities is showing these children that you care to be present and engaged. Jackson is GAP certified and is allowed to use what they grow at one meal per day. Additionally, they have earned a USDA Best Practices Award.

- Renee Hedrick was enthusiastically thanked along with her Xmas party committee for all their work making our annual party so much fun and rewarding. In her ever present thoughtful way, she provided all attendees with their picture which she had taken that evening.
- The November meeting minutes was motioned to approve by Debbie Smith and Aurora Ormsby seconded.
- The treasurer report of expenditures and balance was given by Gerri Harris.
- Joe Ormsby spoke on behalf of VP Field trips, CeCe McFayden, as he was unable to attend an info/training day for incoming officers he would be passing his list of trips and contacts to her today. A trip suggestion sheet was passed to gauge this year's interest and assist CeCe with planning. It was noted that when a trip is announced the carpool information needs to be provided as well stating a time and location to meet each other.
- Chris Fletcher, VP Programs, has Jamie Swofford scheduled to be our February speaker. Jamie is a former Charlotte chef turned farmer in Cleveland County providing fresh produce to local restaurants.

- Wendy encouraged all members to think about being a speaker at our meeting in order to share their knowledge and expertise. A presentation could be an hour or five minutes. You never know who you could help with what you know.
- Aurora Ormsby requested any pictures that you would like to have included in the associations Scrapbook be sent to her or Lauren.
- Renee Hedrick, who coordinated the collection of donated goods, reported that six pick-up truck loads of goods had been delivered to Lumberton. She read thank you notes from Virginia Shelley and a second from Lumberton Mayor Bruce Davidson.
- Lauren spoke about several upcoming volunteer/educational opportunities. The MG class beginning January 18<sup>th</sup> running each Wednesday for the following 17 weeks. Please feel free to attend any class; she will email a list of topics and the date they will be presented. The class will be attending the Blueberry Pruning workshop on 2.15.17. Please see the flyer for registration information for this free workshop. Then Davidson County MG's are having their 6<sup>th</sup> annual MG conference on 2.2.17 the fee will be \$35. Lauren has a leadership role in a multi-county symposium to be held 3.7.17. (Cost is \$98). Doug Tallamy, Professor and Chair of Dept. of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at University of Delaware in Newark, is the guest speaker. This event is a city-wide project that will be working with Extension agents to create an "agro expo conference" and will feature subjects such as cover crops, cut flowers, lawns, grains etc. lasting 5 hours. Lauren needs volunteers to assist at this event from parking and registration, classroom help and other tasks as asked. Either volunteer/educational or dual hours may be earned. Please watch email for future details and contact Lauren to be added to the sign-up sheet.
- The Extension office will be closed 1.16.14 for Martin Luther King Day Vickie Julian earned the most Edu hours in 2016 and Renee Hedrick gave the most volunteer hours at 177.1 Wendy said she would like to see the newsletter get off the ground shortly. Got an idea? An article? Send it to Wendy or Lauren.

- Scott Maxwell asked if anyone wanted to speak for an hour at the Home and Landscape Show that will be January 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>. There is a sign-up sheet to staff the booth at the show. These volunteers will also be judging the hardscape booths. Also, houseplants are needed for our booth and Set-up day is Thursday the 26th. Currently, the speakers are Wendy Tate and James Polk. Herb Fest will be April 22, 2017 and this event committee will have its first meeting on Thursday January 5th. Mary Quay provided a list of plants that do well at this annual fundraising sale. Please contact her if you would like the list. Renee said that LOMAX is really full and she needs some helping moving plants outside. Please contact Renee if you can help.
- Watch your email and The Best Dirt for updated information on all of these events and upcoming trips and UNCC Winter Walk
- Kitty tickets were drawn and prizes awarded
- 37 members in attendance
- Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectively submitted,

Karo Nerenberg