**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Middlesex County Master Gardener Focus Group**

**April 27, 2012**

In attendance: Tad Bartles, Peggy Becker, Lois Bukowiec, Chantal Foster, Barbara Glista, Kate Hull, Tom Kalal, Karen Rottner, Sherry Van Liere, Jim Woodworth and (congratulations!) to “Official Interns” Flora Drapeau and Alexandra French

Thanks to Peggy, Flora and Vicky (leftover carrot cake!!) for a lovely spread of rhubarb crisp, eggplant dip, drinks, bread...delicious! The minutes from our last meeting have been posted to <http://mcmgcg.weebly.com/>

Chantal called the meeting to order at 6:30. Calendar was passed around for May and June sign up.

REMINDER: Don’t forget, sign up for office hours and log all volunteer and training hours into the UConn system at <http://www.uconnmastergardeners.com> If you haven’t signed up for the site yet, email Vicky for the initial password. After, you sign in using your email and a password of your choice.

Financials – we have $316.24 in our account.

**Old Business:**

Rain Barrels (Jim and Tom) – The glue isn’t working, will need to try new glue. Fern has some he will check to see if it’s still good and bring in. Meanwhile, Tom will investigate “Plan B” (drilling new holes). It was agreed that we like the current rain barrels (shape, sturdiness, etc) and should fix them if possible rather than ask the Center to replace.

Spinach and Pea Status – We will harvest as much spinach as possible during the coming week, then pull on 5/5 set up day. Growth is irregular; some is bolting, some is lush, some is weak (yet all same variety!). Lettuce (in cold frame) will also likely need to be harvested again in 2 weeks. Discussion about the peas: we need to watch whether they’re clinging to fence and twine them if needed.

Rain Gauge: Chantal purchased and Maureen will bring 5/5; Fern will bring some screws to secure to fenceposts. The CLEAR Weather Station is up and running again (see <http://clear2.uconn.edu/weather/haddamct/>) This lead to a discussion of other helpful sites such as CAES Growing Degree Days (<http://www.ct.gov/caes/cwp/view.asp?a=2831&q=378222>).

Herbs: Tad/Sherry provided a few basil plants; Maureen will keep at her house until planting time. On 4/10, Marisa sowed the cilantro seeds (outside fence) among the garlic and on the West corner.  Heart Seeds estimated germination 15 - 20 days.  Used popsicle sticks as markers.

Tad/Sherry also demo’ed how to make homemade pots from newspaper.

Fish Emulsion-Garlic: Maureen will bring 5/5. Discussion about frequency (once/month for garlic) and general purpose.

Cold Frame: Cover built by Fern and is in barn. Will plant eggplant once lettuce is finished.

**May 5 Set up (9 am):**

* Pull remaining spinach
* Fish Emulsion-Garlic (Maureen provide)
* Tomato Stakes (Maureen to get barn key! Fern to bring mallets etc)
* Set up Soaker Hoses (Jamie: do we need 1 more?)
* Black Plastic for Okra row (Chantal)
* Sow beans (seeds in Office in box)
* Cut some larger holes in cuke trellises to access cukes growing in back (probably can’t set up yet, peas still in the way)
* Sow parsley (Marisa/Susan A); bring Rosemary/lavender (Jamie) (other hebs?)
* Tighten fence

**Reminder:**

Commitments for planting day MAY 19 are:

* If we don’t have leftover blood meal, someone needs to obtain. I’ll check the box next time I’m there (if I remember)
* Fern will obtain tomatoes from Paul and Sandys Too
* Marsha will provide bell and cubanelle seedlings for planting day (need 32 total)
* Tad/Sherry will provide hot peppers (need variety of 12)
* Fern will provide chopped hay
* Everyone: bring newspaper

Maureen and Chantal will bring refreshments for the May Work Days. No May 25 meeting.

Meeting and chit chat ended at about 8:00 pm.

Submitted by,

Maureen Gillis