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

**June 24, 2011**

In attendance:  Peggy Becker, Jamie Burgess, John Carlson, Marisa Fede, Fern Martin, Chantal Foster, Maureen Gillis, along with InternsSusan Allison, Lois Bukowiec, Karen Rottner and Jim Woodworth

**Thanks to Maureen** for a delicious beverage, and for helping us keep our figures!

**Minutes** have been posted to<http://mcmgcg.weebly.com/>

**Garden Observations:**

It was a beautiful evening if a little buggy in the garden and several observations were made:

* Tomatoes are doing well, but require more stringent suckering and tying – use green tape for tying in box – please give a run through at each visit to the garden
* Eggplant look sickly, will be replaced with donations from Jamie, Maureen and Chantal
* Cucumbers need replanting as well, Chantal will secure a six-pack
* Garlic looks good and will be harvested in the coming month, Marisa has volunteered to lead the process. Garlic scapes have been mostly harvested, but check to see if there are any left – they make delicious additions to meals (use like a scallion)!
* Pole Beans will be planted on one side after peas are harvested and cut (not pulled!)
* Jamie will reseed some carrots along the fence, and thin chard in the coldframe to make room for those crazy melons, and mulch with some licorice root – it gets very dry in there.
* Now that we have a lovely selection of herbs, let’s not forget to include some with each harvest – or even in between harvests – Chef Mandy at SVDP really appreciates them!

Maureen passed around an updated harvest log – very impressive, with lots more to come!

**Financials:**

Maureen indicated we are in good shape still, with an approximate $600 balance; however, there are a few outstanding expenditures and she will be purchasing a step stool for harvesting peas/pole beans to avoid any accidents.

**Old Business:**

* Durham Library Outreach 6/16 – well received by the audience. Thanks to John for handling solo!
* Prep and Plant Garden days in May – great turnout by our group, thanks to all who participated – despite some pretty nasty weather.
* Herbs – Marisa and Susan updated us on their progress in getting all the herbs on “the list” into our garden. At this point, we are only missing dill which will be provided by Jamie, Marisa will bring some sweet marjoram and Susan has some coriander. The herbs are quite a lovely addition to the garden border, nice work! It was also suggested we laminate the herb sheet prepared by Susan and keep it along with other reference pieces where the guest book is located on the outside of the fence.
* The TY Donors sign has been installed along the fence – looks good!

**New Business:**

* Outreach Opportunity – July 21st at 2:00 – Boy Scouts from Burma – Susan Allison and Karen will lead this effort, beginning with contacting Vicky for more information and passing it along to the group via email to see who else may be able to assist.
* Maureen passed along TY notes from SVDP along with their annual report.
* Soaker Hoses – it was agreed we would switch out a soaker hose (in barn) for the sprinkler hose. Jim will take care of this on Monday, and will also look at what is available in the barn to extend our soaker hose capability to outside the fence. We will need additional connectors to make this happen, Jim and John with look into it.
* Garden Calendar Sign-up was passed around for July and August, there looks to be good coverage for July, **please communicate to the group** what was accomplished for each visit either via the website or by email so we all know what has been done and what needs to be done. This becomes even more important as things begin to mature!!
* MG Office Picnic – Friday, July 15th from 3 – 6 pm. RSVP to Vicky and bring a dish. This is a fun event, a good opportunity to meet the office staff and other MGs working in the center.
* Durham Fair/Haddam Neck Fair – it’s getting to be that time. Jim has volunteered to do the setup and lead for these fairs and will keep us apprised of what our group may need to offer.

Open Discussion: It was noted that harvesting bags have been replenished in the box, but don’t be shy about bringing more since we will be using them up quickly in the coming weeks. Maureen bragged to the group about having caught 14 voles in her own garden using mangoes as bait – very impressive! The voles do not seem to be bothering our crops just yet, but keep an eye out for them. We haven’t been successful in catching much (Jamie caught a mouse!) with our traps, so perhaps they have moved elsewhere?! Wishful thinking. . .

Meeting ended at 8:10 pm, and we are all hoping for some sun! **Next meeting scheduled for Friday, July 29 at 6:30 pm**, Chantal will bring refreshments.

Submitted by,

Chantal Foster