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

**September 23, 2011**

In attendance:  Peggy Becker, Jamie Burgess, John Carlson, Cherry Czuba, Marsha Dowling, Chantal Foster, Barbara Glista, Tim Grilley, Fern Martin along with InternsSusan Allison and Karen Rottner

**Thanks** to Chantalfor the snacks and Susan A. for the delicious veggie juice!!!

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

**Garden Observations:**

* Tomatoes are done
* Peppers still coming along
* Second planting of beans still producing
* More eggplant to come, but very slowly

Chantal didn’t have a harvest sign-up calendar, but Susan A. said she would harvest on or around September 26th. We will also probably need another harvest (beans/eggplant/peppers) before the first clean up date – perhaps around October 2 or so.

**Financials:**

We are in good shape with a balance of $516.24 balance, but will use some of this for compost – see below.

**Old Business:**

* Thanks to those who participated in outreach at the Haddam Neck Fair. Everyone agreed traffic at the fair was down significantly from previous years, possibly due to the storm.
* For those who are interested, the Active Certification Form is due (to Vicky) on 9/30. The link to the form on the UConn Website is as follows: <http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/documents/letterfaqsandagreementrev1sept3.pdf> the last page of the document is what needs to be filled out and submitted. The link for the website to input your volunteer hours online is as follows: <http://www.uconnmastergardeners.com/login/index.php?action=unauthorized>

 Use a registration code the first time you login.  The code is midd727.

**New Business:**

* Volunteers are still needed for the Durham Fair – Tim has offered to help out, if anyone else is interested, please contact Jim or Vicky
* Garden Calendar – see above. Need someone to harvest around 10/2. It was decided we would wait until the official first clean-up date to start the process.
* Looks like there will be good participation for the first Garden Close Date on October 8 beginning at 9 am. We discussed amending the soil in the beds as well as around the perimeter of the garden. Fern will check into obtaining some aged horse manure, and it was suggested we use some of our funds to purchase additional compost. Maureen and Chantal will contact T&C to see what we can get.

**Open Discussion:** There were many lively discussions during the meeting, including Susan’s bedbug eradication process, more MG liability questions (with assumed answers!) and most important – garden production. Without the aid of a tallied production calendar and comparison to previous years, it was estimated that our production this year was lower (significantly?) than last and the garden, even taking into consideration weather issues, is not producing at an optimum level. The culprit is believed to be the soil – sandy and light, not providing the nutrients needed despite the “above optimum” results declared by the soil test. Therefore, it is thought we need to get serious about amending the soil in the beds. Fern will look into the horse manure and Maureen and Chantal will check out compost from T&C. If anyone else has a good compost/manure contact, let us know!

A note on John’s hip – he will be having it replaced on 10/25 – so he probably won’t be at the second garden clean up date (!), but we expect to see you on the 8th, John! Good luck!

Meeting ended at 7:45 pm. **Next meeting scheduled for Friday, October 28 at 6:30 pm**, Jamie will bring refreshments.

Submitted by,

Chantal Foster