

UVM Extension Master Gardener - Bennington Chapter Steering Committee Minutes and Update

October, 2020

Steering Team

Deborah Benoit, Co-administrator - Social Media

Joni Charbonneau, Treasurer, Social Media

Mia Clark, Education Coordinator

Dottie Sundquist, Chair, Regional Rep

Martha Beauchamp, Irene Goyette - Plant Sale

Heather Hamilton, Dottie Sundquist - Old First Church Marker Garden

Lynnette Novick, Dottie Sundquist - Fisher Pollinator Garden

Dottie Sundquist - George Aiken Wildflower Trail

Irene Goyette, Dottie Sundquist - Yellow Barn Community Garden

In Photo: Mia, Irene, Joni, Lyn & Martha



~ **NOTE:** *UVM Extension Master Gardener requirements and guidance*

Please be sure you have completed the training required of you and have read the guidelines listed below. For links and more information, refer to Beret Halverson's July 30th email.

- State of Vermont Training on COVID 19
- UNH Extension Training on volunteering during COVID 19
- Guidelines for ALL VOLUNTEERS during COVID-19
- Guidelines for ALL PROJECT LEADERS during COVID 19

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Regional Events

- State Conference Nov 5&6: Seed Saving, Soil Health, Building a Resilient Landscape and another topic TBD
- The Conference requested \$100+ from Chapters - we agreed to send \$250 from the Bennington Chapter (Rutland gave \$500)

Project Updates

George Aiken Wildflower Trail

EMG and trail leader, Jackie Marro, and husband Tony work tirelessly in their devotion to the trails. The last two years have seen a lot of disturbance with removal of compromised pine trees. A small group of diligent volunteers are revitalizing the trails with plants and mulch. As of August 2020, all former trails have been refurbished. This summer the Bennington Museum connected with the North Bennington outdoor sculpture show and the result is a delightful installation of sculpture in the upper meadow and by the brook. In addition, Jackie Marro made 18 stenciled benches inspired by the Museum's quilt collection and also laminated inspirational messages posted throughout the trail system. A

children's storybook trail and interactive spots are additional reasons to go to the museum and check out the trails.

Interns and EMGs alike may earn volunteer hours helping at the trails. Contact Jackie jcminvt@hotmail.com and ask to be added to the GWAT work schedule. Be sure to mention you are a member of the Bennington Chapter of UVM Extension Master Gardeners.

Old First Church Marker Garden

Heather Hamilton is the solo Project Leader as Dottie has stepped down. Heather over-wintered the astilbe that was replaced in August 2019 with rudbeckia (at the request of Susan Wright, partnership liaison of the Village of Old Bennington).



We planned to sell the plants at the 2020 spring sale until the pandemic thwarted those plans. Then the large flowered Mount Hood daffodils, with their very long leaves, suffocated half of the astilbe at the Marker Garden.* Silver-lining? Heather replaced the damaged astilbe with those she over-wintered. Upshot: the damaged astilbe responded well to Heather's green thumb and the healthy plants are now ready for the 2021 spring annual plant sale!

**Dottie claims this as her design flaw. Not only is it prudent to create a succession of bloom but one must also take into account the growing habits and needs of the plant thereafter. "I had not thought through the energy needs of the bulbs to promote next year's growth. As the astilbe attempted to grow, the leaves of the daffodils shaded them and some of the plants were starved of light. Next time I will choose a smaller daffodil!"*

Fisher Pollinator Garden

Lyn Novick, Co-project leader with Dottie Sundquist, visited the garden a few times during the spring/summer to clean/weed. Immediate future plans are on hold due to the pandemic. *Update: Lyn is stepping down from the role of project leader as well as her involvement in EMG. Her knowledge and dedication over the past ten years will be missed. Lyn was a strong member of the Steering Committee and always ready to lend a hand. She wishes to remain on the mailing list to stay current with our plans. We look forward to seeing Lyn at gardening events!*

Best to you Lyn and thank you for your many years and hours of volunteering for the Bennington EMG Chapter! You will be missed!



Yellow Barn Farm

We have a new name:

Gardens at Yellow Barn Farm (Victory - Demonstration - Community)

Victory - the East Arlington Federated Church minister, Kathy Clark, joined forces with our yellow barn project to pool local volunteers. The decision resulted in a wonderful draw to the garden with 7 additional volunteers at varying levels of involvement. We offered produce to the Summer Lunch Program on Tuesdays in July and August and in the fall we will make deliveries to the Arlington Food Shelf and Meals on Wheels. Every other Friday, we deliver produce to the East Arlington Federated Church's table at the Arlington Farmers Market and folks make contributions to the

Summer Lunch program in exchange. (Monies from this fund purchased an irrigation system).



Heather Hamilton is the resident vegetable guru and has guided the volunteers with a seasoned hand. She tracked the amount of produce delivered and sent a weekly report to the UVM EMG Vermont Victory Garden contact. Heather's knowledge and commitment to the garden is unparalleled. Many people were fed due to her strong

guidance and the work of many grateful volunteers.

Heather's first harvest of radishes is pictured on the header of the UVM EMG state conference advertisement - a clear testament to ideas coming to fruition! Pretty great : the project application for the Gardens at Yellow Barn Farm was submitted in January 2019. In August 2020, the first harvest photo is on the state conference header. You just never know

where an idea will find its place in this world. Dreams do come true!



Demonstration - Dottie Sundquist is open to and keeping a growing list of ideas. Share your thoughts! We look forward to hosting large group workshops in 2021 when we hope COVID and the State of VT & UVM Extension will permit social gatherings.

Community - A local Arlingtonian, Roger Hanson, is very active at the garden and committed to organizing individual plots for 2021. He built the three raised beds, tirelessly watered the garden, and donated fencing with both solar and battery operated electric wire. We have it on good word from the head of the Arlington Water Department that a 200' frost pipe extension will be in place "before the snow flies" so next year we will only need a 50' hose!

Master Composter

Dan Strohl, Intern in the Master Composter course, volunteered to work on the Yellow Barn project. We now have signage in the compost area and we are set up for a larger garden next year.



Plant Identification Walk

2020 Intern Nancy Felix is working on identifying native plants along a walking path around the field's perimeter.



Nancy has a Masters Degree in Plant Ecology and is excited for the opportunity to follow her passion following her retirement as an orthopedic surgeon. We look forward to 2021 as she continues to realize her idea for a plant identification walk.

Plant Sales

Spring Plant Sale was canceled due to Covid 19.

Fall Plant Sale Here is the excellent news from Martha Beauchamp and Irene Goyette, Plant Sale Co-chairs: *As spring approached this year, it became obvious that the plant sale was not going to happen at the Farmer's Market in late May as it had for many years before. When a local retired teacher/ peony grower offered the chapter the opportunity to dig and sell her peonies, daylilies and other plants, it was just too good of an offer to turn down. Irene and Martha went into planning mode. Irene put together the beautiful online order form for our Trial Dig for you folks and your friends and neighbors. Thankfully we were able to discover and work out the kinks at the Trial Dig so the Public Sale dig two weeks later went so much smoother.*

In all, we sold 203 plants to 29 people and made approximately \$1,400. With the \$230 already collected from selling our "fostered" plants, the Chapter has raised around \$1,630 for scholarships and speakers for 2021. Many thanks to all of you who helped. It could not have happened without you! The best news is that our plant benefactor, Rose-Marie, wants us to dig again in the spring and fall of next year and even had a great idea of a tag-your-own peony educational session at her place. So even if it's not feeling safe to return to the sale at the market, we know we can do a 2021 Spring Plant Sale.

John G. McCullough Free Library Garden

A new project was designed for the west flank of the McCullough Library in the center of North Bennington due to the efforts of three Interns (Becky Manning, Nancy Felix, and Julia Rhodes led by Project Leader Martha Beauchamp). The project was to develop a demonstration herb garden to serve as a teaching resource to enrich library programming on healthful cooking, nutrition, native plants and pollinators. It received approval from UVM Extension. While COVID-19 halted a number of plans (no pollinator garden and no links with food security efforts this year), great progress has

been made. Soil, mulch, a watering system and a planting design to capitalize on the western sunny and eastern shady meant that as the season got rolling, the herb and vegetable plants/seeds began to thrive.



(So did the weeds!)

The project is strongly partnered by Librarian Jennie Rozicki and the mulch plus many of the plants and seeds were donated.

Events. The garden was introduced to the public on August 15th, a Growing Herbs Indoors demonstration was held September 19 and a garlic planting demonstration is slated to coincide with the Rooted in Vermont Week in mid-October. *Photo - Bennington Banner*

Farmers Markets - UVM Extension Master Gardener Table

The Bennington and Arlington Farmers Markets are perfect venues to reach the public. We have a wonderful trifold, a tent and materials for anyone who wishes to roll up their sleeves. Manning the table garners you 4 hours in one day toward recertification. Plan a display on the topic of your

choice and earn even more hours! **Let Dottie know if you are interested!**

We need someone to come forward and organize the sign-up for Farmers Markets volunteers. In the past, a summer calendar was available and everyone signed up in the spring. 5 weeks= 20 hours! If you are a person



who could build a sign-up sheet on google docs/sheets, please let Dottie know. Again, deskwork = volunteer hours! Include who to contact, where to get materials, schedule...talk to Dottie!

2020 Calendar of Events

We hope to reschedule the 2020 events for 2021:

- Potluck 2020 Intern & 2019 Volunteer Recognitions
- Spring Plant Sale
- “The Pollinators” Movie
- Compost Law - Paula Kamperman, Outreach Program Manager at Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance
- Invasives Habitat Restoration Area in Sandgate
- Dene Farm - Hildene postpone to fall 2021

Future advertising ideas

Advertise EMG course & chapter scholarship

Add a QR code on signs - suggest to Beret

Congratulations !

To Martha and Irene for earning their EMG certification after just one year!
We are so thrilled that you have joined the Bennington Chapter!

