

**Master Gardener Foundation of Yakima County Meeting
Followed by Yakima County Master Gardener Program Meeting
Minutes July 12, 2023**

The Foundation Meeting was Called to Order by President Dan Fortier at 10:30 am. 22 MGF Members were present and signed in at the Foundation meeting. MGF Board members present were Dan Fortier, Rick Russell, Dick Larson and Sheila Gunderson, meeting the requirements for a quorum. In the absence of the Recording Secretary, Carol Barany agreed to record the minutes of this meeting.

There was a call for additional Agenda items, but none were noted.

There were no additions or corrections to the minutes of the June meeting noted, and it was moved and seconded that those minutes be approved.

NEW BUSINESS

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Gilbert Plascencia was on vacation, but emailed President Dan Fortier his report. There was approximately \$103,000 in the Solarity account. The Vanguard account saw a rise in value to approximately \$140,000. An invoice for plugs and plants from the Annual and Basket teams from the 2022 plant sale for approximately \$3200 was paid. Five Master Gardeners applied for \$100 scholarships to the 2023 Advanced Education Conference. There is more money left in this fund for additional scholarships.

It was moved, seconded, and approved that an invoice for \$3,000 for developing the new website be paid. This is a one-time charge. Annually, \$300 will be paid to maintain the website.

GREENHOUSE

Camille Smith is looking at new potting soil mixes for next season. It was agreed that the current mix, though cheaper than the other mixes we have used, dries out too quickly. Diana Pieti wondered if buying potting in soil bulk rather than bagged would be an option. Phyllis Pugnetti wondered if adding a compost blend to the current mix would improve water retention. It was agreed that moving bulk soil from the parking lot to the greenhouse by wheelbarrow would be inconvenient. Also, adding elements such as compost to the current potting soil blend could be inconsistent, resulting in a slightly different mix each time it was done. Camille will continue to explore other possibilities.

MOA

Currently on Patty Ratzlaff's desk. She continues to work with the City of Union Gap and should have it wrapped up by the next meeting.

WASHINGTON RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Ken Tolonen explained that Yakima Master Gardeners have associated with the Council through the North Yakima Conservation District for some time. The Council has gone through

a number of administrators in recent years, and last year, our dues of \$100/year were not collected. It was moved, seconded, and approved that Yakima County continue to maintain their membership in the council, and that dues of \$100 be paid.

ANNUAL PICNIC

The outdoor picnic in Ahtanum Youth Park on August 2, 2023 beginning at noon has been widely advertised in our newsletter and in weekly reminders. Members will bring dishes based on the last letter of their last name.

OLD BUSINESS

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The last time this committee met was in 2015. At the next Executive Board Meeting, Dan Fortier and the Executive Board members will set a date for the next meeting of this committee. It will be a lengthy meeting. All Master Gardeners will be invited to participate in making a Five-Year Plan addressing the strengths, weaknesses, goals, and challenges of our group.

This concludes the Foundation portion of our meeting, which was adjourned at 10:45.

The Master Gardener Program meeting was called to order at 10:45.

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Patty Ratzlaff was on vacation and her report was given by John Strong. Patty appreciated all the photos in the newsletter about our very successful Master Gardener tour.

She asked that any Master Gardeners interested in making a display for the “Sharing Success” section of the 2023 Advanced Education Conference contact her. Michelle Murphy from the Youth Team confirmed that her team would be creating a display.

GIVE PULSE

Julie Hunziker reported that most entries have been vetted and approved. A training session for using the program will be given in September. To increase attendance at the

training, Julie is considering offering incentives or prizes. There is always something to learn about using this program correctly. The best advice Julie can give to Master Gardeners about recording hours in Give Pulse is to “slow down and check your work.” Reach out to her or Patty if you have questions or challenges. Julie acknowledged that while some members may continue to have challenges with the system, it is vital that we all record our volunteer hours accurately and completely so WSU can recognize how effective and essential our local program is. She cautioned against recording hours only until the required number of hours was reached. Record all hours. Jenny Mansfield asked if new interns were meeting their requirements. Julie reported that individual mentors would have that information, and were responsible for guiding their assigned trainee.

Diana Pieti commented that she sees very few new trainees in the Demonstration Garden. She wondered if the program was asking too much of from this group, and that perhaps the minimum number of hours required in this venue be lowered. Could this help with retention? John Strong pointed out that many of our new recruits are still actively working full-time day jobs. Most of our volunteer opportunities are offered during the week day. Camille stated that program veterans must be flexible to meet individual needs of new members. One way to do this is to offer volunteer opportunities on Saturdays. Diana Pieti suggested that at the future Strategic Planning Meeting, to improve retention, mentors should be reminded to remain vigilant in nurturing and supporting new trainees. Phyllis Pugnetti noted that when the gardens had closed for the season and the greenhouse was not in full operation mode, she invited trainees needing volunteer hours to her home to work on the Seed Library.

DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC

In Margaret Morris’s absence, Ken reported that a small group of loyal clinicians was staffing the clinic. Many openings remain.

FARMER’S MARKET

The Farmer’s Market will run through 10/22/23. The website sign-up sheet will be corrected to reflect this closing date. Ken reported that the new site was busy, lots of vendors, very noisy because of acoustics. The team will soon need to replenish the supply of brochures and handouts that are given to the public at the booth.

CLASSES

The Tomato Pruning class held in the Heirloom Garden on July 2, 2023 attracted 60 people. Most people heard about the class from the posting in the Sunday Yakima Herald next to the gardening column. Some said they heard about it at the Farmer’s Market. Our State Representative, Curtis King, was in attendance at the class. Tomato Pruning class will be offered this Saturday, July 15 in the West Valley Food Garden.

YOUTH TEAM

Michelle Murphy reported that their booth at the Farmer's Market was going well, although she would like to be located closer to the Master Gardener Clinic table at the Market. This month's youth activity at the Farmer's Market will be making a 'Seed Bomb'.

Gini Obert reported on the Youth Team's activity at Selah Middle School. She said it was a terrific place to be, enjoying support of teachers and administration. A substantial financial grant to the school has allowed a watering system to be installed. Two teachers, along with members of the Youth Team, maintain the garden projects over the summer while school is not in session. This makes it possible for students to plant in the spring, and come back to school in the fall ready to harvest crops which are used in Family Life cooking classes. Gini said 2023 is the 'Year of the Bean' with a variety of beans intensively planted along a fence. In the hoop house, with automatic watering, ground covers are being grown for propagation. Gini would like to offer succulent propagation. She would like Master Gardeners to teach classes such as propagation techniques, how to sharpen tools, and how to use a shovel. Kids do not see these tasks as "work", but "fun". The students moved 2 truckloads of soil, made raised beds, and decorated school halls with gardening posters. Since these gardening classes are elective rather than required, kids are very happy to participate. There is a possibility that the Selah Middle School program could be a pilot program nationally.

HEIRLOOM GARDEN

No report

DEMONSTRATION GARDEN

Diana Pieti reported that there has been a large and dependable "Team A" each week, with additional Master Gardeners coming to help occasionally and making up "Team B". The garden bed in the entry to the park has been covered in black plastic in an attempt to solarize the invasive weeds, including field bindweed. This project took the team away from the main garden, but they will return now that the entry project is complete. The Rose Garden has been barked for weed control. The water issues have finally been resolved by Colonial Lawn and Garden. Expect a large bill for their services.

FOOD GARDEN

Camille reported that the garden most recently produced 30 lbs. of peas. The Early Girl tomatoes are large enough to serve as examples in Julie Huntziker's Tomato Pruning class this Saturday, July 15. The team is expecting a great harvest this fall.

KAMIAKIN GARDEN

Debra Byrd not present. It was noted that work day has been moved to Wednesday. John Strong helped get a drip irrigation system running to water 17 raised beds, plants are doing well.

SOCIAL MEDIA/FACEBOOK

No report

SPEAKERS

Carol Barany reported that requests for speakers are being filled as they come in. We turned down a request to speak at the Central Washington State Fair this fall because the venue does not lend itself to 30-45 minute presentations. Most people walking through the Ag Building are not willing to sit for that long.

COLUMBINES

Carol Barany reported that new writers are needed, especially for the Yakima Magazine. When Carol began writing for the Magazine in 2010, there were 5 issues/year. For the last 3 years, the Magazine comes out monthly. Since 2014, she writes 2 columns/month for the Sunday paper. Many months find her too busy to do a story for the Magazine. We need new voices.

Though it was not an agenda item, Diana Pieti asked about the garden being created in front of the North Yakima Conservation District office on S. 16th Avenue. Apparently, it is a Heritage Garden.

For the good of the order, the Master Gardener Program portion of the meeting was adjourned at 11:30.