Extension Master Gardeners of Platte County
Wednesday, January 21, 2026 - Chapter Meeting 6:00 pm
via ZOOM

In Attendance:

Debbie Johnston	Rich Canning
Claire Bowers	Victoria Hillstrom
Lisa Boyer	Sherri Holland
Brianne Steffel	Carolyn Vellar
Scott Wilkerson	Kimberly Oxley
Jill Ballard	Kevin Blusher
Susie Ahearn	Lorna Earnest
Andres Dominguez	Amy Heithoff
Cindy Boersma	Laurie Stuckey
Linda Crow	Glenn Reinhart

Carolyn Vellar Update -

We started the meeting by Carolyn providing an announcement that this year most of our Chapter Meetings (3rd Wednesday every other month - Jan, Mar, May, July, Sept, Nov) will be held at the Mid-Continent Library in Platte City - 2702 NW Prairie View Rd. Typically we have a zoom meeting in January due to the potential of bad weather and driving at night. Because the Platte City Library was not available for our May meeting, it will be held at the Parkville YMCA - 8875 Clark Avenue.

Please note - the Chapter meeting dates/locations can be found on the EMG Platte Co website https://www.plattecountymastergardeners.org/ then logging into the Member Login tab which has the password of ourgarden1. The leadership team will be trained to ensure important events are posted on the calendar in the future.

We had planned to have Tonisha High share her presentation on houseplants, but she had a conflict at the last minute. In the future, if a representative of the Speakers Bureau shares a presentation during the Chapter meeting, the time should be reported as education rather than volunteer hours.

Carolyn also stated we started our Chapter with 3 people in 2024 and as of Dec 31, 2025 we have 42 members. We have a new intern that we are meeting with next week Sheri MacDonnell to share information about our chapter.

Congratulations to Sandy Jacobs and Bryan Woodring achieved Master Gardener status in December.

Debbie Johnston Update -

Debbie thanked everyone for signing the 2026 code of conduct. We only have 1 person who has not complied to date.

Debbie gave an overview of the Garden Helpline. Currently Debbie and Carolyn monitor the emails coming into the plattemgs gmail account. We would like to have additional volunteers to assist with answering the garden helpline questions. We received approximately 10 requests in 2025. In January we have already received 4. If you would like to assist please let Debbie or Carolyn know.

SPECIAL ATTENTION - Todd Higgins informed us that in 2026 EMG's will be required to have 6 education hours in addition to 20 volunteer hours. We have not previously had this requirement, but since our Chapter has gotten larger, he felt its time to require education. Carolyn regularly provides via email training opportunities.

Platte Co Community Garden Update -

Glenn Reinhart would like to start discussions with volunteers next week about planning spring and summer planting for the garden including focusing on crops desired by the food pantry. We have consolidated three plots and are planning to use methods to control weeds that are always a big problem. He thanked Scott for cutting down the dead peach tree. Lorna Ernest mentioned that she has acquired a loan of a broad fork if Glenn would like to use it to attack weeds. If you are interested in helping at the garden contact Glenn at glenn.reinhart@yahoo.com phone 203-917-8308.

Mini Railroad Project Update -

Scott Wilkerson discussed the cooperative agreement between KC Parks and the RR. He expects to have the agreement complete in February or March. Winter sowing is underway with 290 one gallon milk jugs which will hopefully produce 2 to 3,000 baby plants for Zone 1 which is approximately 7,400 square foot area. We are still in need of one gallon opaque milk jugs and clean cardboard (no tape/no ink). Scott will check with the libraries to see about being a collection point for milk jugs. Mulch for this area will be provided (47 yards) by a RR member that has a bobcat. Scott is not pursuing 4-H assistance in planting because of complications in Platte Co, but instead will reach out to A-plus programs in local school districts for service hours and education opportunities.

Scott also mentioned that he is meeting with Gwen Funk, the Northwest Region Horticulture Specialist and the Platte R3 High School Science Club to tour the greenhouse and participate in hydroponics workshops.

Signup Genius -

Scott Wilkerson reviewed the implementation of Signup Genius for coordinating volunteer activities. Everyone should have gotten an initial email. The system currently is being used through email notifications rather than having a dedicated website presence. Eventually this process will be used for notification of volunteer opportunities for our projects.

Greenhouse Update -

Mary Jane Kuehn was not present, so Carolyn provided the greenhouse update. The spring plant sale will be May 2 and 3rd. The flyer and directions to the greenhouse are on our EMGPC Website. Flyer posting at YMCA's and Libraries will not happen until March/April. We currently have over 5,000 pots of natives, perennials, and herbs growing in the greenhouse. Soon, annuals, tomatoes and peppers will be started. Because seedlings are very picky about watering we have a small group of volunteers currently monitoring. Once everything is germinated and is stronger, Mary Jane will open up signup genius to volunteers interested in watering.

Hours Update -

Victoria Hillstrom (new hours coordinator) provided information on what reports she provides to leadership on a monthly basis (detailed report, summary report, and intern reports). For 2025, our Chapter reported over 3400 volunteer hours and over 300 education hours. Victoria discussed the importance of logging volunteer hours promptly to ensure accurate reporting.

Website Update -

Jill Ballard reviewed the performance of the EMG Website and Facebook performance noting that Facebook reached 1,800 views compared to 116 website hits making Facebook the preferred platform for public information.

Treasurer Update -

Cindy Boersma (new Treasurer) emphasized the need for better financial management. She is looking at 2025 expenses to develop a budget for 2026. This will be discussed at the leadership meeting Jan 28th. She shared the expenses approval process which requires program administrators to seek approval BEFORE making purchases. Once approved and purchased, receipts will be submitted to Platte Co MU Extension treasurer for repayment. Cindy also reminded that our chapter is tax-exempt.

Speakers Bureau Update -

Cindy Boersma provided an update in John Smith's absence. We are in the process of creating a speakers bureau to educate the public on gardening topics. Presentations must use approved resources and PowerPoint templates with the Extension logo. The team plans to practice presentations in Zoom meetings every other month before delivering them to the public. Laurie Stuckey will send existing class materials/presentations that she has developed to Cindy for possible inclusion in the Speakers Bureau library.

Action Items for Leadership Team -

Discussion is needed regarding a better way to communicate to the members of our Chapter.

- One suggestion was when sending chapter wide emails, should use the "EMG PC" prefix in the subject line to improve visibility and organization of chapter communications.
- Add events / volunteer opportunities on the Members Only calendar. This will require Jill to provide Program Leads training to make these updates.

Develop 2026 budget.

Submitted by:
Debbie Johnston
Secretary EMG of Platte County