

Extension Master Gardeners of Platte County
Wednesday, May 20, 2026 - Chapter Meeting 6:00 pm
Hosted by Mary Jane Kuehn at her home

Attendees:

Carolyn Vellar, President	Brianne Steffel
Cindy Boersma, Treasurer	Linda Crow
Lesley Rausch-Derra, Secretary	Julie Weisz
Mary Jane Kuehn, Program Director Plant Sale and Greenhouse	Lorna Earnest
Scott Wilkerson, Program Director Youth Activities and KC Northern RR	Susie Ahearn
John Smith, Program Director Speakers Bureau	Beth Windsor
Rich Canning	Claire Bowens
Emma Smoczynski	Kimberly Oxley
Kevin Blusher	Sherri Holland
	Kimberlee Ried
	Laurie Stuckey

Garden Tour: Mary Jane Kuehn gave us a tour of her native gardens and explained her plants and planting strategies. Her garden was lovely and her expertise was impressive. We then moved into the house for the remainder of the meeting. Note: the tour has been approved for educational hours.

President Carolyn Vellar Update: Carolyn Vellar welcomed everyone to the business portion of the evening and thanked Mary Jane for the educational tour and hospitality.

Treasurer Update: Cindy Boersma reported that we have a balance of approximately \$20,000 right now. We started with \$7000. We received a donation of \$105. Cindy now has a line-item report from the Extension Council.

Plant Sale Update: Scott Wilkerson reported that we have netted approximately \$17,000 after taxes from the plant sale. Mary Jane Kuehn reported on the feedback from the post-mortem meetings on the plant sale. The high-level synopsis is that plants grew too fast and got too large. It costs us money to repot plants, so will start sowing later for next year's sale. We also had more plants than we could take care of or had space for, so will need to cut back on plant numbers. Leftover plants were offered to members to take. She does not need any help in the Greenhouse in June as the leftover native plants will be taken to the railroad this month.

Some suggestions for improvement at checkout were to color code with dots the plant categories or use barcodes.

Community Garden Update: Lorna Earnest gave the update for Glenn. The tarps used to get rid of weeds worked well and all plots are looking good. They've planted early spring vegetables and are currently harvesting radishes and onions. A new 20 ft long suspension system was installed. On May 7th, the YMCA coordinator visited the garden and was very supportive of the program. Work times are Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9:30-11:30am. Lorna offered that she is there almost daily so if folks wanted to come outside of those times they can contact her.

KC Northern Miniature Railroad Project Update: Scott Wilkerson reported that there are approximately 1500 native plants ready to be planted and 15+ yards of mulch to be dispersed in Frank Vaydik Park as part of Phase I of the project. Planting will take place on May 30 and 31 with additional workdays on June 6 and 7th if needed to finish. Scott is also reaching out to the Skyview Boardwalk Square Lowes and the Scouts for voluntary assistance with the planting. We received ~170 milkweeds plants as part of a grant from Monarch Walk. A grant application has been submitted to Lowes for native plugs for fall planting.

The proposed contract with the KC Northern Railroad is being rewritten. The contracting party with them has to be the Platte County Extension Council, as they are a legal entity and provide oversight for our chapter financials as part of their general mission to support Extension programs. The University of Missouri Legal, Office of Risk Management, and Platte Extension Council attorney must review and approve the contract before it may be resubmitted to KCNRR and KCMO Parks and Recreation.

Youth Programming: Scott Wilkerson reported that the Platte County R3 High School Science Club had plantings in greenhouse and students took them home before the Plant Sale. They also learned about hydroponics in the greenhouse.

Scott supervised the Voyager program's planting of tomatoes in the raised beds next to the greenhouse.

Scott Wilkerson was approached by Dr. Aaron Duff, Director of Secondary Education for the Platte County School District, about partnering with the District on a "seed to jar" salsa/pasta sauce concept where students would get real world experience in running a business that grows the ingredients, develops the product and markets it. EMG would train students in growing the produce. Todd Higgins has tentatively approved the program as has Juan Cabrera-Garcia, Asst. Professor and State Extension Specialist, Horticulture. As this partnership could involve other extension groups, a second meeting to include Todd

Higgins and Dr. Shatomi Luster-Edward, Director of the Urban West Region of MU extension is planned.

The Northland Career Center is moving to a new campus in the Spring of 2027 and the greenhouse will then belong to the Platte County R-3 School District. This partnership with the school district may mean EMGPC continues to lease the greenhouse and that the District covers the cost of the lease.

The Platte County 4-H has access to raised beds at Mimi's garden. EMGPC held a gardening class for them, with more classes requested. Prior to additional classes as requested, a list of classes, content, dates and times will be provided for ongoing review and approval to include as an EMGPC program. Members volunteering will have to be cleared to work with youth through the University of Missouri program. We are donating some tomato plants to the 4-H group.

Note: Todd Higgins must approve any programs that our Chapter members participate in, i.e., Platte County Community Garden, Plant Sale, KC Northern Miniature Railroad-planting native plants, 4-H, Platte R-3 and KC North Community Center – teaching youth gardening activities, etc.

All Other Business: Kristey Andrews has offered a garden tour of her home for EMGs. This has been approved by Todd as educational hours. Post meeting note: the date for the tour is Wednesday, June 24th at 6:30 pm. 10905 N Hull Avenue, Kansas City, MO. Please bring an appetizer.

The next meeting is July 15th at 6 pm. Post meeting note: Instead of the Platte City Library, the meeting will be held at Lesley Rausch-Derra's home and she will give a tour of her backyard orchard.

The meeting concluded at 8:05 pm

Submitted by:
Lesley Rausch-Derra
Secretary EMG of Platte County

Approved by:
Carolyn Vellar
President EMG of Platte County