

Extension Master Gardeners of Platte County
Wednesday, March 18, 2026 - Chapter Meeting 6:00 pm
Mid-Continent Public Library - Platte City

In Attendance:

Carolyn Vellar	Scott Wilkerson
Bryan Woodring	Julie Weisz
Mary Jane Kuehn	John F. Smith
Debbie Johnston	Brianne Steffel
Sharon Mac Donnell	Rich Canning
Glenn Reinhart	Cindy Boersma
Lorna Earnest	Kimberly Oxley
Susie Ahearn	Laurie Stuckey
Linda Crow	Lesley Rausch-Derra
Todd Higgins	

Carolyn Vellar Update -

Carolyn welcomed everyone to the meeting. She and Scott provided yummy St. Pats cookies.

Debbie Johnston Update -

Debbie asked everyone to please record their volunteer hours promptly in VMS due to end of month reporting to Todd. Reminder EMGs need a minimum of 20 volunteer hours and 6 education hours in 2026. Interns are required to complete their 30 volunteer hours by December 31, 2026.

AS A REMINDER - These are the categories that should be used in VMS. **None or Not Listed is not a valid Local Project.**

Chapter Administration - self explanatory

Education - horticulture related continuing education classes, videos, or training. This would include training shared at our Chapter meetings.

EMGPC Greenhouse - any activity related to the Platte City Greenhouse

Garden Helpline - responding to emails from the platemgs@gmail.com email address

Intern Activities - horticulture related activities for INTERNS only.

KC Northern Mini RR - activities that take place specifically for this project.

MGGKC Project Support - if you volunteer at an MGGKC event or project you would log your hours here.

Outreach Activities - creating table top displays at events, attending chapter sponsored events, presentations, helping a neighbor etc., volunteering in a garden other than Platte Co Community Garden.

Platte Co Community Garden - activities that take place specifically at this garden.

Program Development - activities related to program development for the Chapter

Youth Programs - any program, project or activity developed for and delivered to youth ages 5-18 years old. All youth programs must be age appropriate and include both an education and hands-on component related to the purpose of the event.

Based upon input from the January Chapter meeting, the EMG Platte Co website has been updated in the member only section to include a monthly calendar view. In addition, all Chapter meetings minutes are available in the member section.

At the January meeting, members stated that they receive **too** many emails. The leadership team has been instructed to send all emails with the EMGPC in the subject line so that the emails will be easier to see or search to find. This includes SignUpGenius Emails notifying you of volunteer opportunities.

On Feb 11 an email was sent to all members asking to complete a survey on volunteer opportunities in 2026. The response was due on March 1. On February 25th a reminder email was sent to those members that did not respond. These emails came from the plattengs@gmail.com.

- In 2026, we will be using SignUpGenius to notify members of program volunteer opportunities. Without your input as to your interests, we will not be able to notify you of volunteer opportunities (it is not possible to put every volunteer opportunity on the member only calendar). If you did not receive these emails or no longer have them in your inbox, please let Debbie Johnston know (debrajohnston056@gmail.com) so that the email can be resent. Your response is very important.

Greenhouse Update -

Mary Jane Kuehn stated we have approximately 5,000 plants growing in the greenhouse for the May 2nd / 3rd plant sale. We are at the point that the plants need to be maintained on a daily basis. Mary Jane is sending SignUpGenius emails to those who have shown interest in volunteering at the greenhouse, but we can always use more help. Only select Master Gardeners have the code to open the greenhouse so coordination is required. Many volunteers will be needed for setup / sale days / cleanup for the plant sale. Please volunteer.

Platte Co Community Garden Update -

Glenn Reinhart provided an update regarding what they plan to grow in the garden this year. Glenn and Lorna Earnest met with St. Terese pantry to understand what to grow, when and how to deliver produce.

The team is working on weed prevention since this is a major issue at the garden. They are using silage tarps this year (they have been out for 3 weeks). They have some holes because of the large hail last week, but Glenn took a look underneath and they appear to be doing their job of breaking up the soil and preventing weeds! They plan to install weed mats / mulch on the highway side of the fence to prevent creeping into the garden.

Glenn and John Smith will be going to KC Community Garden to pick up seeds. Laurie Stuckey mentioned that she had seeds if Glenn is interested.

There was discussion regarding when cleanup should be done for the large native bed. Mary Jane stated that cleanup can begin after April 1. The chop and drop method should be used. In a few weeks the stalks will disappear.

Speakers Bureau Update -

John Smith stated that the next meeting of the speakers bureau will be April 18th at 1:00 at the Platte City library. They plan to assist those creating presentations with the required power point template that is on the share drive.

John hopes by this summer they will be able to advertise on the website a biography of the members of the speakers bureau and the topics that are available so that we can begin to educate the public on horticulture and gardening.

Youth Activities & Frank Vaydik Park -

Scott Wilkerson provided a lot of information on these programs at the Chapter meeting. Because of the amount of information, he sent his talking point document out separately to all EMGPC members. The information is copied here to stay with the Chapter meeting minutes.

Youth Activities

- Platte County R3 High School Science Club participated in a Hydroponics workshop January – March 2026
 - Assisted EMGPC planting annuals & Mums
 - Planted annuals for their two gardens at PCR3 HS
- PCR3 Voyage Program Requested EMGPC help starting plants for their gardens at PCR3 HS grounds
 - We are working with the teacher to schedule dates and activities
 - Planting tomato seeds for germination (on CV & SW heat mats and grow lights)
 - Planting various seeds in milk jugs for plants that will go in the Science Club's raised bed
- Why are these important?
 - Northland Career Center will move to their new campus early summer 2027
 - PCR3 is not required to honor our lease or continue to lease the greenhouse to EMGPC
 - We would like to have access to the NCC classroom we have used for plant sales and trainings on a permanent basis
- Additional youth activities will be programed for PCR3 should the District Superintendent and Board support that

- Six (6) youth classes will be presented to the home schooled youth at the Kansas City North Community Center September-November 2026.
- Youth activities will be programmed at Frank Vaydik Park initially for the native plants project and in 2029-2030 at the EMGPC children's and community teaching gardens.

Frank Vaydik Park Programs

- Native Plants
 - EMGPC has committed to working with the Kansas City Northern Railroad to transition 2.5 acres of mixed grasses and weeds in the vicinity of the railroad. This is envisioned to be a 7-10 year program.
 - Phase I is 7,500 square foot area that is approved to proceed before a cooperative agreement is signed
 - 290 milk jugs were planted with 33 varieties of natives December – January and are winter germinating. About 40% have germinated.
 - KCNRR is funding purchase of some annuals so there will be color there during the World Cup
 - A grant was submitted to Monarch Watch for 5 flats (200 + plugs) for common milkweed, butterfly milkweed, and swamp milkweed. If approved they will ship early May 2026
 - A grant is being submitted to Lowes Hometown Hero's program. If approved this will provide up to \$2,500 to purchase native plugs for fall 2026 planting
 - Ridership at the railroad exceeds 60,000 annually
 - The Line Creek Community Center is next door and can support inside education programs
- EMGPC Children's & Community Teaching Gardens
 - As part of the agreement to support KCNRR native plants gardens EMGPC requested land to establish gardens that will support our education mission
 - The gardens will be established 2029 – 2030
 - EMGPC will raise \$40,000 - \$50,000 to fund establishment of the gardens
 - The requested gardens have been approved by KCNRR & KCMO Parks and are added to the 10 year plan now being developed
 - The draft cooperative agreement between EMGPC, KCNRR & KCMO Parks is under review and has been sent to all EMGPC active members for comment
- Why are these important?
 - EMGPC doesn't have a "home"
 - The Platte Community Garden is not guaranteed for the future
 - Michelle Ford is planning to retire
 - A new director may have a different vision
 - Adjoining property is now for sale and may further limit access to the gardens
 - The site of the gardens limits public visibility and access
 - The gardens at Frank Vaydik Park will be at least 60'x120' providing ample space for education and production for donation

- We are recommending a 10 year agreement with two additional 10 year extensions.

Due to a lengthy discussion on all topics, the presentation that was going to be presented by Laurie Stuckey will be held at a future Chapter meeting.

Todd Higgins Update -

Todd plans to offer an in person EMG class at Metropolitan Community College in the fall.

He stated that there is a lot of change with the Master Gardener Program that is keeping him very busy. One big issue is digital accessibility. All EMG websites and anything posted on a public site (Facebook / Instagram) will have to comply with the Federal Americans Disability Act (ADA) that is effective April 24, 2026. The Leadership team will be attending a zoom meeting on April 6, from 6-7 pm to learn more. This session will be recorded for those who cannot attend. However, this is MANDATORY that we modify the EMGPC website to be ADA accessible.

Todd shared that the speakers bureau are welcome to use any of **his** presentations.

Todd talked briefly about the opportunities at Michael Gunn Garden. Todd and Carolyn will be visiting the K State Olathe Horticulture Center soon to review possibilities that might be used at the Michael Gunn Park.

Todd is responsible for determining if the Chapter is capable of taking on new projects. He must approve them prior to commitment. He reminded us that our purpose is to EDUCATE. It is fine that we grow food for the pantry, but we must educate too.

The 2026 Missouri Master Gardener Conference
June 4-7, 2026
Springfield, Missouri
Seeds to Table: Cultivating Health & Sustainability
Registration not open yet

He briefly touched on PEARS (a system where we will be required to report all public events). He is hoping that Marilyn Whitacre (his secretary located at Platte City Library) will handle the input into the system since he is the only one with access at this time. It will mean that whoever hosts the events will need to sit down with Marilyn as she inputs the required information.

ACTION ITEM -

Scott Wilkerson will schedule a meeting for all members to discuss the draft cooperative agreement that he sent to all members on March 17th.

Submitted by:
Debbie Johnston
Secretary EMG of Platte County

Approved by:
Carolyn Vellar
President EMG of Platte County