

## **Cabarrus County Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Association**

### **October 3, 2017 Meeting Minutes**

- President Wendy Tate called the meeting to order at 9:30 at the pavilion at Lucky Leaf Farm.
- Meeting Topic: Tour of Microgreen growing operation
- Owner Kate Brun provided us with a history of her operation which started out in a sunroom of her home and now is a 5+ acre site with a 2800 sq. ft. double layered hoop style greenhouse. The single person operation has many features found in big commercial operations: overhead watering, evaporator cooling air handlers, water based radiant heated grow tables, sanitation and GAP certification. Kate grows microgreens for area chefs. Kate grows around ten or twelve varieties of greens: kale, cabbage, corn, broccoli, radish, sunflower, organic sweet pea, and more. Microgreens take one week to grow a crop, which is fresh for about ten days, product is delivered two times per week to the chefs and Earth Fare, and additionally she sells to individuals who are using microgreens for health issues. She does some retail sales for marketing purposes and name recognition. In addition to growing operation, she holds seminars and training activities. She provides educational opportunities to 4-H kids and girl scouts to interact with nature and spark curiosity (old growth hard woods for example). Kate talked about permaculture. She holds day seminars for a fee (some MG's have attended these seminars). She explains her experiment with hops growing due to the many requests from upstart breweries; she passed around a hop and told us of her unrewarding experience. Worth mentioning, there is human grade seed as opposed to bird seed for many of these microgreens. Kate stays abreast with current research; she shares this recent research discovery: the nutrients in microgreens eliminates e-coli. We were able to taste test about five varieties of microgreens that she harvested for us. We saw how she handles composting and the weekly recycling of the growing medium (a proprietary blend), and her efforts to live with wildlife in a country setting while growing and expanding crops

outside the greenhouse. Finally, she does not forget how to have fun: Kate hosts Pizza parties; in the Pavilion she has a Pizza oven. (Both Kate's husband and father are craftsmen; they built both pavilion and Pizza oven). Kate said: "we eat, we listen to music and we have fun". Wendy shared that she has attended this event and it was a good time.

- Renee Hedrick motioned to accept last month's meeting minutes which was then seconded by Scott Maxwell
- Gerri Harris provided a monthly expenditure report.
- Lauren reports that due to drought and a warm winter the insect pressure is high. There are reports of wooly aphids congregating around maple trees in our area. Lauren says she continues to work on her rhubarb project at Piedmont training Station. When asked why rhubarb? She answers: It is not readily available in this area but is in high demand. The knowledge from the trials will aid Barbee Farms when they begin to grow this crop. Mandy Thompson Smith is spearheading a citizen data collection on plants in this county for the City of Concord, the project is called "City Nature Challenge". Lauren said that we should try to support the Wildlife Alliance and their many events whenever possible, mentioning an event on October 5<sup>th</sup> at Davis Theater. Many thank you notes were received after ABD and that it was easy, happy and enjoyable. NCCS Fall Plant Sale is in progress. Find info at this web address: <https://cabarrus.ces.ncsu.edu/cabarrus-cooperative-extension-fall-plant-sale/>
- Scott Maxwell provides an update from the Herb Fest Committee. Vickie Julian is sending out vendor applications, and Nelson May continues to make trips to the arena for accurate measurements. At this time procuring tents for the event is on hold until Robbie apprises Scott if county tents may be available for use or rent. Renee will be sending out a call for decorative plant pots through email. Joe's source for milkweed is no longer viable. Other milkweed sources were discussed; the purchase details will be handled in committee.

- Jackie Ashton of the Nominating Committee asked for nominations to be given to her. The two positions open are: VP of Programs and Secretary, these are two year positions that begin January 2018.
- Mitchell Hagler reports that two monetary grants were given last month: 1) Trinity United Methodist Church for native plants and pollinators in front of the church and 2) YMCA for the “Share the Harvest Community Farm”. Mitchell has sent out forty four letters to area schools to make students aware of our scholarship program and where to find further information. In an effort to get a response this year, Mitchell also wrote an article for The Independent Tribune talking about this scholarship, thinking this is a way for parents to be made aware of this assistances as well.
- Joe Ormsby provided the tour information for both Metrolina Greenhouse and Laurel Hill Farms. These tours occurred October 12<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> respectively.
- Mary Ann Johnson requested assistance to dig up an unwanted bed of perennials that she wanted to donate to the plant sale; these plants will need to be stored at LOMAX.
- Meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.
- 29 members in attendance

Karo Nerenberg, Secretary