



Anchorage Chapter



Volume 11, Issue 9

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER September 2009



Message From the President Beth Schlaubaugh

I've always envied those dedicated and organized souls that keep records and maintain garden journals. I've never had the time or the patience to do so. I often have "to do" lists, mostly mental, but as my available time gets to be less and less and my gardens and lawn get more neglected I've decided to give the note jotting a try. Below is a quick synopsis of some garden related ideas that I'd like to remember and some that I hope to address in the next few weeks. I plan to give journaling an honest try over this winter and see if it can help keep me more organized and (hopefully) allow me to be more prepared next spring. If you don't keep a garden journal or records it might be a fun winter project for you too.

Garden Notes:

-I finally got a few of my raised veggie beds planted this year. The cabbages were a flop & didn't produce heads but the "outer" leaves made nice freezer slaw, & cabbage rolls as did the leaves of one of the varieties of broccoli that I planted. It bolted quickly & I missed the main head but the bees loved the flowers. I did really like the production & taste of the "Pac Man" broccoli that I planted; I was able to get 12 plants in three offset rows in my 4'x4' raised bed planters. Note: 12 Brassica plants seems to be the right number in those planters. It worked out excellently with the cauliflower plants, they were close enough that I didn't need to tie leaves for them to stay tight and the heads to be beautifully blanched.

- The boys really loved picking & shelling the peas that we trellised in the large pot. Note: Be sure to add several types of climbing peas & purple pole beans to the children's garden for next year. Possibly do bamboo teepees & train them for a "fort" like I'd seen in a garden magazine, add purple carrots & "Cheddar" cauliflower to the seed list for next spring too.

- This week order fall bulbs from Brent and Becky's & Old House Gardens for fall planting focusing on smaller naturalizers & search out vendor & pricing on "Purple Prince" Lily for next spring purchase-Must Have.

- Get more freezer containers for one last batch of raspberry freezer jam & also look online for a possible recipe substituting honey for sugar. Note: remember to use heavier gauge wire to tie up bushes next year &

install heavy duty eye screws instead of 3" nails so that the strong winds don't blow them down again.

- Look online at the South Central Alaska Beekeepers Association website & decide if we'd really like to invest the time & money into a hive for next year & see if we can get someone to come & look at the site where we'd be placing it to give us tips & suggestions.

- Dig out caging & trunk wrap for the apple trees; hungry critters will be in the garden before long. Ask Julie or contact someone with the Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers about a possible treatment (safe for the kids and dog) for the apple trees for next year. The leaf rollers did so much damage only 1 blossom out of each 5-7 produced fruit. Note: seemed to be plenty more pollinators this season, cross your fingers for another nice warm summer next year.

- Start looking around the area for neighbors that may be pruning their evergreens ask if you can have tree boughs to cover the beds. If all else fails may have to put in a request ad on Craig's list later this fall.

- Call someone from the Bonsai Study group to see if they want the two "Blue Chip" junipers from the side garden. Poor things never did well in that location and are so out of proportion as to be almost ugly, but the glaucous needles are so beautiful and someone with some know-how could really make them into something special.

- Find room inside for more plants & get starts going from the geranium hanging baskets before fall.

- Get a new tomato seed kit & get the Aero Garden up & running!!

- Search out end of the season lawn & garden sales for a new pair of matching benches for the side garden (preferably black "wrought iron").

-Remember to get a new copy of the Invasive Species handbook next time I'm at the CES office, as I've given the old copy to the neighbors who were trying to ID the "red" flower that is all over by their new cabin in Talkeetna. Note for Julie: Orange hawkweed- neighbors have picture from 3 years ago no red, this summer a sea of red...it's moving fast.

-Make a batch of rhubarb shortbread bars & then drop off extra rhubarb to Food Bank of Alaska. Look online for crafting technique for making paper from rhubarb pulp...I know I've seen it somewhere.

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Final 2009 Summer Tours

By Jane Baldwin

[Photos by Jane Baldwin]

July 27th: It was a perfect rainy day to visit Joyce Palmer's rain garden. From a bad drainage situation, which created serious foundation problems, the Palmers applied rain garden information, insight and resources available through the Muni and turned lemons



into lemonade with a lot of hard work. Joyce now has a great example of a working rain garden - as well as several other new garden beds created after tearing up existing landscaping to install gravel drainage fields and re-directing rain gutter runoff. Plantings of Ligularia, Iris pseudocorus, ferns, Hosta, Aegopodium, barely a year in place, are doing well in her mostly shaded rain garden. Joyce used purposeful plantings of Bishop's Weed (Aegopodium) to hold soil from erosion on slopes directing water away from the foun-



ation. It also brings some brightness to deep shady areas. The oyster shell mulch used around trees was also unique. (How many pearls, Joyce?)

August 3rd. After skipping a year or so, we finally managed to have a summer MG potluck - thanks to the hospitality of Don Smith and his administrator Kay Elliot. Kay and Don's primary style of gardening is in colorful containers and hanging baskets. Don mentioned there



were around 85 pots PLUS the hanging baskets. Speaking of hanging baskets, the two roses, red and pink, were gorgeous. The series of adjoining decks that surround their house, filled with blooming pots, made for a perfect potluck gathering. A new 'Don-built' green-

house sits at the back of a side deck. It was built to incorporate within the greenhouse a previously existing planter box on the back yard slope. Don primarily used recycled building materials and windows in his project.

We also held our first successful MG plant swap. MGs exchanged the results of mid to late season perennial divisions. This was a perfect opportunity to try something new in your garden without breaking your budget. If the comments are favorable, we may try it again next year. Needless to say: there was also a lot of good food!

August 17th. Our last garden visit of the summer was to Alla Khadjinova's gardens on upper Hillside. It was perfect timing since her plants were blooming later



in the season than those down in the flat lands. Alla has created several impressive perennial border beds. Especially stunning was the bed fronted with 20+ feet of a gold and green hosta. The repeated use of hostas and other variegated plants brought cohesiveness to the different garden beds. A huge Inula daisy plant seemed very happy. Alla served a black current punch made from her own black currents. The currents were the size of large blueberries! A driftwood garden creature, with the title 'Chupacabra', was obviously created by someone in the household's gardening support crew with a delightful sense of humor.

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Master Gardener Focus: Sandra Harrington By Cheryl Chapman

Imagine for a moment yourself flying, swooping low, rising on warm thermals, over the South Anchorage home of artist/gardener Sandy Harrington and husband Dave. Bank in a tight circle. Notice the green house trimmed in white, a warm hub to rock-bordered beds singing with color, foliage and scent, how the beds curve to embrace the home.

You'll remember that aerial view when you see Sandy's joyous freeform abstract paintings with their energetic swirls, or the structured ones whose straight lines discipline bright hues. The paintings, the garden home are art from the same hand.

"I've had a lot of people tell me my work makes them happy," says Sandy, an award-winning artist who has explored watercolor, fiber art, quilting, drawing and painting.

Golden Tiara hostas have had a quarter-century to settle along the driveway, shouts of apple green splashed with gold. "That is one tough hosta," says Sandy. "It's been run over by a backhoe and came through it fine."

The stunning Rodgersia "Fireworks" - bold pinwheel leaves, pink flower fluffs - seems happier now in a front bed than drooping in a back one, she says. The asters are thriving, too; you'd never guess this is their first year.

"In his book 'Understanding Perennials,' William Cullina says always to take off the flowers in any plant's first year so all its energy goes into healthy root growth," says Sandy. "I'm trying that with the asters - but it was really hard to do. They were so pretty."

"We're letting the ferns come down on the west side, along with the bunchberry dogwood and other natives," she says. "We seem to have less lawn every year, and except for the beds, we're letting more and more go natural."

The Harringtons went to war with tree roots six years ago to put in the bed stretching along the foot of the front yard - "Roots suck all the moisture out" - and notable residents in the hard-won territory include five clumps of daylilies, "Cherry Bells" campanula, rare yellow monkshood with layered frilly leaves like crinolines, a square shallow concrete bird bath ("Chickadees, nut-hatches, Bohemian waxwings"), a tall Paul Dungan abstract ceramic sculpture striated with blue, green and russet, and "too much lady's mantle."

A volunteer orange poppy has seeded itself in the purple allium. "I like things like this," says Sandy. "Surprises." The tall wooden grillwork fence draped with "Bluebird" clematis hasn't always been there.

"I was working in the back yard one day, and Tess, our Australian shepherd who was just 9 months old then, began to bark and bark and bark. I turned around to see what she was barking at, and there was a black bear sitting right behind me, watching me work. "I did everything you shouldn't: I screamed. I jumped up. I ran. I was going so fast when I hit the back stairs I went up them on my hands and knees. "The big fence went in right after that."

A raised bed on the right whispering with ferns and native plants keeps company with the gravel path to the back. The native Snakeskin orchid among the ferns is losing its vigor, Sandy laments, but the dainty Grass of Parnassus with its violet-like ivory flowers is doing well, and so are the native buckbean and watermelon berry, and the European ginger, which adores shade and damp.

Art is integral to Harrington plantings: a pierced rusty piece by Jeff Patrick "for verticality," a small basket filled with agates and the shell of a defunct snail, a steel and rock face, a small steel ball with bronze with a backdrop of Ligularia "Othello."

A potted weeping Norway spruce begs for a pat on the way to the greenhouse, which carries a small plaque: "Dave and Sandy, 25th Anniversary." Inside, robust tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers burst from soil to roof. "Apero is the best of the three cherry tomatoes," Sandy says, "and of the two big tomatoes, the Early Goliath's flavor is unforgettable." The peppers, both sweet, are the green Ace and the scarlet Italian heirloom Corno di Toro. Sweet Success cucumbers are so juicy they pop when chopped.

Sandy grew up in a military family and took her first painting class in Japan when she was 10. She was a studio arts student at Minnesota State University, Mankato, "and when I came up here, I just kept on."

Her grandmother in Minnesota introduced her to plants: "I enjoyed the time with her and her garden so much," and just kept on with that, too.

Sandy winters with art and reading, and summers with gardening and reading. "A book I've recommended to a lot of people is poet Patrick Lane's 'What the Stones Remember,'" she says. "It's a memoir, not an easy book, about a recovering alcoholic and passionate gardener on Vancouver Island. He writes beautifully about gardens and redemption - and from a practical standpoint, lists the plants he's talked about at the end of every chapter."

Three things, she says, she'd suggest to any Alaska gardener: First, take the Master Gardening class that the University of Alaska's Cooperative Extension Service offers. "It gives you confidence and a broader range of things to try." Second, read everything you can get your hands on about Alaska, a place like no other, perhaps starting with Anchorage author Sherry Simpson's "The Way Winter Comes" or "The Accidental Explorer." And third, be patient. Take your time. "So many of us want to try too much all at once, and it doesn't work out and gets expensive.

"I have a rock in my garden with 'Patience' written on it. It makes me stop and think when I'm about to jump right in."

A Gardener's iPod (or musical) Playlist Submitted by Linda McCarthy Beckwith

Final Summer Tours...Continued from page 1

Thinking about the gardens visited and dreaming of INCORPORATING some of these ideas into our own gardens will help to sustain us through the coming winter months. It will be a long 8 months until we can hit the Anchorage garden paths again in 2010!

Our thanks go out to the many gardeners who opened their gardens to the AMGA group. Visiting the different gardens of Anchorage and the opportunities to talk gardening is one of the most enjoyable activities of our group. A few cancellations caused some confusion. Please remember that folks are volunteering their gardens in early February & March in order to meet our MG Directory print deadline. It's difficult for anyone to know what will be happening or what their priorities might be 5 or 6 months later. Cancellations, additions and changes happen. We do our best to notify MGs of the tours through the newsletter and through our email blasts. It is a big volunteer job and coordination task for all involved. The bottom line is if you have email, you should read the AMGA email messages for the most up-to-date tour info, or call a friend who has email before you leave. And don't forget to volunteer either your garden or your time by being part of the Program and Field Trip committee! Many hands make less work.



Can Plants Tell Time? By Linda McCarthy Beckwith

Carl Linnaeus, the renowned 18th c botanist and father of taxonomy, was obsessed with the idea of a flower clock or "watch of flora." He compiled a list of flowers that opened and closed at predictable times during a 24 hour period. In the 19th c it was popular to create circular flower beds laid out in 12 segments to represent the face of a clock with each segment containing flowers that opened at the time represented by its placement in the garden. The resulting garden would contain the following plants from throughout the world.

5am Morning glory vine
6am Daylily and catmint
7am Dandelion
8am African daisy, scarlet pimpernel, red catchfly
9am Genetian, marigold, ice plant, chickweed, moss rose
10am California poppy
11am Star of Bethlehem and sweet peas
Noon Passionflower
1-3PM The garden pauses....use a bench to signify repose
4pm Four-oclocks
5pm Evening primrose
6pm Moonflower, flowering tobacco, angel's trumpet

Take a stroll down a garden memory lane with these songs, artists and years of the recording.

Honeysuckle Rose by Fats Waller, 1929
Room Full of Roses by Sons of the Pioneers, 1949
American Beauty Rose by Frank Sinatra, 1950
La Vie en Rose by Louis Armstrong, 1952
Singin' in the Rain by Gene Kelly, 1952
The Flower Garden of my Heart by Richard Rogers, 1952
A Blossom Fell by Nat King Cole, 1955
Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White by Perez Prado, 1955
Your Love Is Like a Flower by Lester Flatt, 1957
The Green Leaves of Summer by Brother Four, 1960
Please Don't Eat the Daisies by Doris Day, 1960
Where Have All The Flowers Gone by Peter, Paul, and Mary, 1962
Roses Are Red My Love by Bobbie Vinton, 1962
Green Green Grass of Home by Tom Jones, 1965 and Elvis Presley, 1975
Orange Blossom Special by Johnny Cash, 1965
Safe in My Garden, by Mamas & the Papas, 1968
Tip-Toe Through the Tulips with Me by Tiny Tim, 1968
The Lemon Song by Led Zeppelin, 1969
Weren't the Roses Beautiful in May by Nat Stuckey, 1969
Come to My Garden by Minnie Riperton, 1970
Rose Garden by Lynn Anderson, 1970
Dead Flowers by Rolling Stones, 1971
Good Year for the Roses by George Jones, 1971
Early Morning Breeze by Dolly Parton, 1971
Harvest by Neil Young, 1972
Jungle Boogie by Kool & the Gang, 1973
Let It Grow by Eric Clapton, 1974
Jungleland by Bruce Springsteen, 1975
Jungle Time by Neil Diamond, 1976
Rose in My Garden by Karla Bonoff, 1977
Forever Like a Rose by Seals & Crofts, 1978
Life Is Good in the Greenhouse, XTC, 1978
Black Orchid by Stevie Wonder, 1979
Power Flower by Stevie Wonder, 1979
Secret Life of Plants by Stevie Wonder, 1979
Venus Fly Trap and the Bug by Stevie Wonder, 1979 (he seemed to have a "theme" going in 1979)
The Rose by Bette Midler, 1980
Gardening at Night by R.E.M., 1982
I'm Looking over a Four Leaf Clover by Jerry Lee Lewis, 1984
Kiss the Dirt Falling Down The Mountain by INXS, 1986
Flor d'Luna (Moonflower) by Santana, 1987
Summertime Dream by Gordon Lightfoot, 1987
Bed of Roses by Screaming Trees, 1991
Dirt by Alice in Chains, 1992
Pumpkin Head by Dharma Bums, 1993
Kiss From a Rose by Seal, 1994
Sassafrass Roots by Green Day, 1994
Wildflowers by Tom Petty, 1994
Secret Garden by Bruce Springsteen, 1995
Iris by the Goo Goo Dolls, 1998
Red Dirt Girl by Emmylou Harris, 2000
In My Garden by the Swans, 2003
Nature Boy by Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, 2004



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

It's been a fun summer tomato-wise. A friend gave me a bunch of tomato plants from seed that he'd ordered from Tomatofest (www.tomatofest.com). My far away favorite has been the black cherry, a dusky red with a very nice flavor and yield. It's very pretty in a pasta dish contrasted with the red cherry tomatoes.

I got into a praying mantis conundrum. The mantises had eaten all the aphids--ALL. Not an aphid to be seen after they worked the greenhouse. The eggplant that I've had isolated outside came down with a severe case of aphids so I thought I'd just park it in the greenhouse for a week for debugging. Didn't work. The only mantis I could find was dead and dried and the eggplant remained buggy. Next year I'll grow that vegetable in the greenhouse to keep the mantises preying longer.

MG Barb Jewell, with a surfeit of zucchini, is the person to know down here. She makes zucchini bread and gives it away...no unlocked-car-dump-and-run for her. Now that's class!

MG Margaret Simon is taking her garden apart, one raised row at a time and squirreling away the produce in the freezer. She said her root crops really looked good in the "fallish aire" of Nikiski.



I'm always a year behind my neighbor MG Mark White's pot ideas. Last year he had different sizes of terra cotta pots with different types of mints in each pot and they made a very attractive arrangement (also mojitos). I did that this year and have thoroughly enjoyed them. The lemon mint I got at Alaska Mill and Feed, when it bloomed, had lovely pink bracts. It was the same variety of mint found at ABG but theirs had plain, green bracts and

wasn't near as pretty. This year Mark took the lemon balm that we got at Alaska Mill and Feed on the neighborhood nursery stomp in May, and put it in a terra cotta pot. It looks so nice, neat and green. I put mine in the ground where it promptly got swallowed up by my bumper crop of weeds. Guess what I will have in a pot next year... In the meantime I'm cutting my leaves and making lemon balm honey with them.

Mid-August brought a trip to Anchorage to pick up a friend at the airport and MG Carol Bruni and I went via the ABG, a fairly expensive detour, but I brought

Adelaide Hoodless, a rose from the Morden, Manitoba, Parkland series home with me. Then I wondered who Adelaide was that she would have a rose named for her. Wikipedia said she was a Canadian domestic education reformer, responsible for the pasteurization of milk in the country who died in 1910. She also has a school named for her in Hamilton, Ontario.

When you bring in 10 gallons of broccoli for processing it is nice to have a helpful house guest. I steamed, she bagged and it went fast. I had been wanting to try DiCicco broccoli as it is grown for the side shoots. Being naturally lazy, I prefer processing the side shoots because I don't have to cut them apart like the big head. It wasn't all that successful a variety for me as it is more like a broccoli raab, but does do well in a stir fry recipe:

About a pound of small florets
a mashed clove of garlic
1-1/2 teaspoon grated ginger
1 Tablespoon oil
4 Tablespoons of water
1 or 2 Tablespoon of soy sauce

In a large frying pan, sauté the ginger and garlic briefly in the oil. Add the broccoli, water and soy sauce and stir. Cover and steam until the broccoli is just tender, about 5 minutes.

Source: "Food With a Gourmet Touch". Sunset Magazine. c. 1960

P.S. Lowes has the best hose-end repair stuff I've seen. It's the new end plus a hose clamp that you screw in until it's tight. Simple and very effective.

Chickweed

According to Eric Hultèn in "Flora of Alaska and Neighboring Territories" we have 17 different kinds of *Stellaria* growing up here but the one we are most familiar with is our garden chickweed, *Stellaria media*. The name comes from the Latin *stella* for the star-shaped flowers.

Chickweed is a European imported annual but I've seen chickweed growing on Chiloe Island in southern Chile. Nobody, though, can grow chickweed as well as Alaskans in our cool soil conditions.

Chickweed is actually edible and good for you. If you can get past the extreme annoyance it can be added to a salad raw or cooked like spinach. It is a good source of Vitamin C. It is used medicinally in a topical cream for eczema, rashes, chapped skin, mosquito bites and diaper rash. It can be brewed in a tea as a mild diuretic.

I don't remember where I got this nugget of trivia but a healthy plant can produce almost a third of a million seeds in a summer! When you weed it out, bag it or it will sprout roots from every node that has contact with the soil.



Bird Chatter

- The mints in the ABG Herb Garden were fantastic. Several trees had been removed in the area which allowed more sunlight & caused less root competition.
- There was a good turnout for the 1st day of the Fair. Per the crops judges, there was a better showing in the crop department than last year. The mushroom entries were spectacular - lots of entries, including a huge puff ball brought in from someone that measured 15-18 inches around! wow.
- Tip: To keep artichokes on the stalk from 'opening up' try putting a rubber band around the stalk. (note: this trick has not been verified, but worth a try!)
- New AMGA member Richard Gain should be added to your AMGA Directory. He completed the MG course in 1996.
- G. Gordon Pyle was awarded Volunteer of the Month by the Anchorage Parks Department for his outstanding work maintaining the city park in his neighborhood.
- Greg Kalal's Trapper Creek moose has a preference for red cabbage over green. Greg invites everyone to the Trapper Creek Giant Cabbage Weigh-off on Saturday, Sept 12 at 2:00 p.m. If the cabbage have all been eaten, you can visit the reindeer at Wal-Mike's.
- Kathy Feathergill-Calvin's 2010 bulb display extravaganza at Forget-me-not Nursery in Indian will take 3 weeks to plant. She promises a picture of a sailboat. In her spare time Kathy and her husband Dee have started their fourth homestead outside of Seldovia.
- In Homer there is a landscape maintenance company called Lady Lawn Lizards. A percentage of their income goes to support local Iditarod and Jr. Iditarod mushers.
- The Minneapolis/St. Paul Star Tribune reports (8/24/09) that Minnesota Twins fans are giddy to learn that real turf that will be installed on their new stadium field. The Kentucky bluegrass has been grown in Colorado. The Twins have been playing on artificial turf since 1981.
- Annie Nevaldine reports that weedy plantain can be used to sooth bee stings. She did a little web searching after getting into a nest during one of the AMGA field trips.
- Julie Riley was charged by a young bull moose after yelling at it for eating peas at the McPhee Street Community Garden. She hopped into a garden shed and then went and bought \$40 worth of pinwheels.
- Four root maggot infested delphiniums specimens have come into the Anchorage CES office this August. MG & IPM Tech Sherry Lee Bottoms is trying to rear out the insects so that they can be identified. If you have a delphinium stalk that's tipping over or appears rotten, check it out and give Sherry Lee a call, 786-6300.
- Fifty pilots and landscapers attended a workshop on grass airstrips in Palmer given by CES Ag/Hort Agent Steve Brown. Steve also does chickens.
- The Anchorage MG class will run Wednesdays and Fridays beginning October 14, 3:00-6:00 pm. If you have friends interested in the class, have them call the Anchorage CES office to get on the interest list, 786-6300.
- After 20+ years in the Carlton Trust Building, the Anchorage CES office will be moving to a new location, probably in January.

Something Different In the "Other" Crop Catagory

An unusual plant was presented at the Fair in the "Other" entry classification: Asparagus Pea. A seed provided by Thompson & Morgan, they provided the following description:

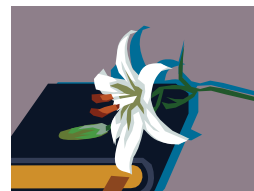
Asparagus pea is an unusual, easy to grow vegetable seed with a unique gourmet flavor. The hint of asparagus goes with virtually any dish. Cook whole at 3cm (1in) long, preferably by steaming, and serve with a little melted butter. No flavoring should be used as this will destroy its own delicious taste.

Another description from the Brooklyn Botanical gardens site: http://www.bbg.org/gar2/topics/kitchen/2004su_asparaguspea.html

Asparagus pea is a scrambling, herbaceous annual legume endemic to the Mediterranean region of southern Europe, where it is a common spring-blooming wildflower in field and scrub. There are records of its cultivation in Sicily from the mid-16th century. Growing around 6 inches tall and 24 inches wide, the plant has small trifoliate leaves, and its deep crimson flowers are borne in pairs.

Anchorage Fall Home & Garden Show

Volunteers are needed to work the Fall Home & Garden Show at the Sullivan Arena, Sept 11-13. Shifts are 11-1:30, 1:30-4:00, and 4:00-6:00. Help is also needed to plan and set up the display on Thursday, Sept 10. Fall is a great time to collect leaves for next year's compost pile. Maybe Dave Jung will loan us a wheel barrow of the beautiful compost he makes. Those of us who attended the field trip to his and Franny's yard this summer, were quite impressed. Call or email Julie Riley if you can help, 786-6300 or afjar@uaa.alaska.edu.



Condolences

MG Mary Shier lost her husband, Glen Shier on August 24. They had been married for 38 years. Glen moved to Alaska in 1956, was co-owner of the DeArmoun Greenery Nursery from 1978 to 1994, and operated a Bobcat rental business for a number of years in the 1980s. He will sorely be missed by all that knew him. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to Mary & her family.

Garden Event Calendar

Message From the President...cont. from page 1

-Let AMGA members know about the great new kid's CD that we got this week. Curious George "Goes Green" is a children's video with cartoon stories about recycling, starting compost, digging for worms & planting carrots etc.. Available at Costco for around \$7- a great way to keep kiddos occupied on a rainy afternoon!

-Get supplies for leaf craft projects to do with the boys, the leaves will be turning soon, maybe try making leaf print cards for Thanksgiving.

Enjoy the rest of the Autumn.

Purple Slime Mold By Jane Baldwin



Purple Slime Mold in Jane's lawn
Photo by Jane Baldwin

In late July I found some truly pretty bright purple slime mold on my lawn. A bit of googling and I see that slime mold is not uncommon here. Fran Durner's ADN blog has addressed it several times. The latest entry, June 22, 2009, talks about her black slime mold. Julie Riley, CES, in Fran's Aug 30,

2007 Talk Dirt blog mentions having seen some bright purple slime mold on turf - mine! Various internet hits describe slime mold as "a shape-shifting group of organisms; closely related to amoebas; come in different colors from yellows to browns to red; some look like dog vomit; comes in different forms; creeping blobs; were once considered to be animals due to their creeping phase; common forms on turf resemble small purple or black balls attached to a blade of grass or a readily noticeable creamy-white, yellow-orange, purple, or gray jelly-like mass situated on the lawn (like mine); feeds on fungi, bacteria, protozoa, other micro-organisms, and decaying organic matter.

According to a Colorado State Extension service web site, "Slime molds are more a curiosity or nuisance than a threat to gardens or lawns. Once a colony starts to form, allowing mulch to dry out, or using a garden or leaf rake in the affected area helps break up the colony and provides some control. Washing the grass down with a forceful stream of water will break up colonies. Mowing also is an effective way to remove slime mold from turf. Like nature's other organisms, slime molds should be looked at for their beauty and enjoyed as one enjoys a mass planting of dianthus or snapdragons." (I like their philosophy!)

P.S. I thought about entering my bright purple slime mold in the recent Anchorage Garden Club's flower show at ABG, but I couldn't seem to find a category that fit...

September 10, Thursday, 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Mushroom Walk at the Alaska Botanical Garden (ABG), with local expert Diane Pleninger, meet at Shop-in-the-Garden. Cost \$5 for non-ABG members, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage, www.alaskabg.org

September 11 - 13, Friday - Sunday, 11:00 am - 6:00 pm

Anchorage Home and Garden Show, Sullivan Arena. Includes UAF Co-operative Extension Master Gardener display. For information Aurora Productions at www.auroraproductions.net

September 14, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Mat-Su Master Gardeners meeting, "Peonies: A New Market for Alaska", presentation by Patricia O'Neil and Amy Pettit of the State of Alaska, Division of Agriculture, held at Matanuska Telephone Association, 480 Commercial Dr, Palmer. For more information, 746-6772 or 745-3537

September 22 - September 26, Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Fall Clean Up at the Alaska Botanical Garden, volunteers needed to help organize the nursery and tool shed, inventory plants, trim perennials, and mulch flowerbeds. Any day and time between 9 am and 4 pm, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road. For more information contact the Alaska Botanical Garden office 770-3692 or www.alaskabg.org

September 21, Monday, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Anchorage Master Gardeners Association meeting, "MG Summer Gardens Recap" by Master Gardeners, held at Cooperative Extension Service, 2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd. For information contact 786-6300

October - May, Mondays, 7:30 pm - 9:00 p.m.

Alaska Native Plant Society meetings held at the Campbell Creek Science Center, 6881 Abbott Loop Rd. For more information check the Alaska Native Plant Society website, www.aknps.org

October 1, Thursday, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Anchorage Garden Club meeting, "Ins & Outs of Flower Arranging", presenter Camille Williams, held at the Pioneer School House (lower level), 437 E. 3rd Ave. For information 566-0539 or www.alaskagardenclubs.org/anchoragegardenclub

October 5, Monday, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Mat-Su Master Gardeners meeting, "Use of Herbs and Flower Essences to Cope with an Alaskan Winter", presenter Dr. Amy Chadwick, held at the Matanuska Telephone Association, 480 Commercial Dr, Palmer. For more information, 746-6772 or 745-3537

October 6, Tuesday, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Central Peninsula Garden Club meeting, alternative energy topic, Cook Inlet Aquaculture Building on Kalifornsky Beach Road, Kenai. For more information, 283-4632, 398-8669 or mmkn@ptialaska.net

October 8, Thursday, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Wildflower Garden Club meeting, "The Wonders of Rhubarb", presenter Julie Riley, UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Central Lutheran Church, 1420 Cordova St., Anchorage. For information call 786-6300



The Anchorage Chapter of the Alaska Master Gardeners Association welcomes letters, opinions, articles, ideas and inquiries. Contact the editor, Gina Docherty, at:

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AMGA Web Site: www.alaskamastergardeners.org

(The Newsletter will be on-line in living color!)

For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact:
Cooperative Extension Office
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Sandra Harrington, Master Gardener and artist, relaxes in her garden with her faithful dog. Sandra is the featured "Master Gardener Focus" for September (see page 3). Sandra creates the AMGA Annual Directory and keeps track of the membership on a monthly basis.

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