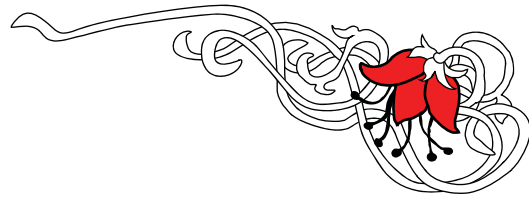


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 14, Issue 2

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER February 2012



Message From the President

A Nickel's Worth from Madame President LaFleur-meister

You know, I like the sound of the above heading! Me, Nickel LaFleur - President of the best group of Master Gardeners' in all of Alaska! Sweet! It reinforces my belief that "One person can make a difference!" I can remember getting home from my 1st Master Gardener's class, eager to dig into the mound of materials when I found AMGA's fabulous Annual Directory. I need to stop here to send out a huge THANK YOU to Sandy Harrington for pouring her heart & soul out to produce a top-notch resource for us year after year! She's given the job up for 2012 but we know she'll do what she can to assist. Which brings me back to the AMGA Directory and the last sentence of our Objectives: "and to foster, promote, and disseminate gardening information in Alaska." I'll provide follow-up on our Objectives later in the newsletter but for now would like to ask your assistance in moving towards promoting partnerships that will assist us in being a visual asset to the beauty of our communities. Asking that you bring your energies and talents in whatever avenue it works so you can 'make a difference'.

A huge thank you to Board members who have completed their duties, as well as to the newbies, who pleased me to no end by offering to take on important positions.

Thank you, Cindy Walker, for serving as Treasurer. Mary Shier will be available to assist you in taking over the books.

Huge kudos and appreciation to Jill Shepard for willing to be Secretary, a job I think is the most difficult in an organization.

Yahoo, zippity do dah - Barbara Baker and Annie Nevaldine will be fabulous Co- Vice Presidents and thanks to Lynne Opstad who stepped up to handle the Volunteer Coordinator position.

Thanks to Kathy Munk - 'the Munkster' who offered to fill the Membership position that Barbara Baker has done a terrific job on and is available to help oversee another smooth transition of duties.

Standing applause for long-time member, Judy Christiansen, who has been called upon to mentor us all through our duties.

Hats off to Dana Klinkhart and Mary Shier for their work on the Board and now a couple of the spearheads for the 2012 Annual Conference in April.

Deepest gratitude and gratefulness goes to Gina Docherty for serving as Secretary on the Board as well as for her continual efforts and devotion in producing a high quality newsletter year after year.

Hugs and kisses to Mary Rydesky for all the computer technical work she devotes to AMGA and her never ending willingness to get what we are trying to accomplish put in an easy to read format.

And finally, to past President Jane Baldwin whose shoes will be impossible to fill, I say THANK YOU for turning over a healthy, happy group of gardeners. I'll do my best to form partnerships where we all win!



Treasurer's Report

Checking Bal 12/28/11	2095.71
Correction	-180.00
Corrected Check balance	1915.71
Expenses	-710.76
Deposits	+160.00
Bal 1/31/12	1364.95

Deposits to Savings (Renewals & Donations) 1820.00

What's the Buzz? By Pat Anderson

Enthusiastic Colette Marshall, local beekeeper for 12 - 14 years, and V.P. of SouthCentral Alaska Beekeepers Assoc. (SABA) gave a power-point presentation, "How Sweet It Is" to eager Master Gardeners at the January Meeting.

Colette explained how Alaska is unique in beekeeping due to our short season. Bees arrive into Alaska in mid-April, and the honey flow is over the first week of August. The queen bee comes in caged with a feeder jar, fertile, ready to lay eggs and will lay from 1200 to 1500 eggs a day. She is totally taken care of by the drones whose job also is to mate with queens, and then die. Approximately 90 million sperm are deposited in the queen's oviducts; about 7 million are stored in a special pouch in her body called the spermatheca. This sperm will be used during the life of the queen to fertilize her eggs. It is best to have the queen color-marked, so she can be easily seen in the hive. The worker bees are all female, and a hive can grow up to 80,000 bees. Bees 'Waggle' dance to communicate floral sources to each other! Worker bees 'Waggle' both the direction and distance of the food source, as well as the sun's position.

L.L. Langstroth of Ohio, USA, in the mid 1800 introduced the modern hive, by discovering 'bee space' which is 3/8". That gives the bees just enough space to pass between the top, sides and bottom of the frame. He also constructed a hive with movable frames that were spaced equidistant from each other. This concept revolutionized beekeeping.

Colette defined the basic hive set up here in Alaska, how the bees arrive, and what you do to get the hive started. She usually orders Italian and Carniola Bees. She detailed how the bees must be fed sugar and water until pollen and nectar sources emerge. They are also fed pollen patties which are placed across the top of the frames. There is a box at the bottom of the super which is narrow, and the pollen on the bees leg hairs get knocked off into the pollen box when they enter the hive. Every pollen has its own color: you can tell which tree or flower the pollen came from by its color. Pollen can be taken by people with allergies to help them become resistant.

Supers are the boxes that ten frames fit into, which hold the comb. The hives should be checked every 7-10 days. Colette works with her sister, Brenda, and both women are outfitted with complete bee suits. They do not use smoke to calm the bees, but a spray that bees like that contains lemon grass. The queen is always located to make certain she is perky and producing. Each frame is checked for larvae and capped brood: if there are large queen eggs, they are eliminated. We only want one queen! The hives are tended to quickly and smoothly so the bees are not upset.

There are diseases and pests sometimes that infect bees. American Foulbrood and European Foulbrood bacterium can infest the guts of bee larvae. Chemicals can be used to treat stressed colonies. The newest threat to bees is the Colony Collapse Disorder, where worker bees abruptly disappear. The cause or causes for 'CCD' are not yet known, but hypotheses include environmental change-related stresses, disease, genetically modified crops and pesticides. This is a huge concern because 35% of our nation's food supply depends on bee pollination.

Honey is nature's miracle, it never spoils and you can put honey on a cut to draw out germs and heal the wound more quickly! There are other bee products besides honey: wax, royal jelly, and pollen, which can be used for human consumption and other products.

Colette received a rousing round of appreciation applause as she ended her sweet talk! As a special treat, she shared samples of her honey collection for MG's to taste! Her favorite is a thick honey from Greece. She explained that much honey we buy at the store can be diluted, and is not a pure product.

At the end of the summer, Colette makes her bees available to people who over-winter bees. For those she cannot give away, she vacuums into water and quickly drowns them humanely.

For MG's interested in having their own bee hives, Colette provided SABA's website which is www.alaska-bees.com. They also have courses available in March for 'newbees' going into bee-keeping. This website tells you the approximately cost, the equipment needed, and recommended books. The SABA meets monthly at the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Wasilla. www.gobeekeeping.com is another good website.

Founding Gardeners by Andrea Wulf

Reviewed by Joette Storm

Our nation's Founding Fathers are intrinsically linked with politics, but rarely are they thought of as farmers and gardeners. A gardener's view of early U.S. history finds political and economic meaning in the husbandry decisions of the likes of George Washington, John Adams, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, the Founding Gardeners.

Andrea Wulf's exhaustively researched book pairs the revolutionary leadership's interest and skill in gardening and farming with their desire to break the economic bonds with Great Britain. All four men were hands on farmers, some with large plantations and land holdings, others with modest family farms. They all enjoyed working in their own fields and experimenting with seeds, grafting and pruning.

Washington admired native plants that he observed during his military campaigns. He sent specimens to Mount Vernon with detailed instructions for incorporating them into his landscape designs. He even attempted to plant northern species during the winter.

Jefferson took native plants to France as ambassador and sought species from English gardens for his own plantation. He and Adams made more than one tour of gardens and estates during diplomatic missions to England. They surveyed farmers, farms and crops while canvassing the northern states debating economic policy with their peers.

Their 1789 botanical tour was said to plant the seeds of the Jefferson's republican party.

Continued on page 4

Master Gardener Focus: Greg Kalal By Cheryl Chapman

Unexpected and unintended fame rode to Master Gardener Greg Kalal in a snow machine saddle, though lousy soil had its place as well.

The Fort Richardson Army dentist and wife Kathryn had bought 10 acres of land at Trapper Creek for snow machining; four years later the borough put its next-door so-called agricultural parcel on the market.

"I wanted a good neighbor," says Greg, "and decided the best neighbor to me would be me."

And that quickly the Kalals went from 10 to 80 acres, from snow machine to tractor.

But their new farm never had seen even a trowel. A birch bowl company had gone through and mined out the big trees, but other than that, the place was what Alaska and high winds, water and ice had made it: chaos.

"There were piles of alders everywhere, so we started clearing to see what we had," Greg says, "which was a thin layer of silt over gravel 8 inches down."

He dug out soil and took it to Jeff Smeenk, the horticulture specialist with the University of Alaska Fairbank's Cooperative Extension Service's state office in Palmer. The pH was 3.8 - highly acidic. "Jeff said, 'Hey, you've got potato dirt there,' " and so began the Kalal's potato enterprise.

Jeff had been trialing potatoes for years for taste, suitability for Alaska, disease resistance, etc., and Greg left the office with a handful of seed potatoes.

"I had the idea of growing novelty potatoes - red, white and blue potatoes," he says. "I decided my profit would be having fun with it."

Farming wasn't entirely foreign. Greg's uncle and cousins still run his grandfather's family farm in Iowa, where he spent time as a child.

"My dad was an Air Force chaplain, so we were always on the move," he says. "I attended three different high schools as a senior, so I was always glad to settle for awhile at the farm," which raised corn, soybeans, hogs and chickens.

Greg's patriotic potatoes got a grip on him. After 27 years in the Army, he thought about retiring and using his GI bill for a UAF degree in soil science. "That's when Jeff steered me into the Master Gardeners," says Greg. "Make sure you like it before you commit," he told me."

He did like it, completed the 2008/2009 class and kept thinking about potatoes, how many, many potatoes there are, all different - just in 2012, more than 200 varieties are officially being trialed in Alaska, and home gardeners might add even more numbers. Greg moved from the butter and salt of tabletop potatoes to the field rigors of seed potatoes.

"Seed potatoes" are not "potato seeds." Seed potatoes are the eyes. When planted they come true. A Red Pontiac seed potato will churn out more Red Pontiac potatoes, as will a Shepody or a Magic Molly or any other variety propagated vegetatively. But potato seeds come from potato flowers. They're little green tomatil-

lo-like pods (potatoes are in the tomato, eggplant and nightshade family, the Solanums) and lord knows what will come up from them: Potato seeds pick up unknown genetic material from pollination.

"This is why most everybody works with seed potatoes," Greg says.

A potato isn't always just a potato. That healthy-looking spud at the grocery can be fine for the oven but is very possibly crawling with Outside potato viruses that can taint soil for years.



"For the most part, potatoes brought into the state are treated with chemicals so they won't sprout before people can use them," says Greg. "The worst thing in the world people can do is plant those potatoes. We don't have a lot of the diseases up here that they do Outside, and we don't want them."

Alaska seed potatoes must be clean. No exceptions. A seed-potato plot can't be used again for four years, so Greg and Kathryn move their 20 varieties each year. A tool such as a potato digger even has to be sterilized before it can be used on another plot, and table stock and seed potatoes can't be grown next to each other.

Alaska potatoes are sweet as a kiss thanks to the cold, which turns starches to sugars. "Diabetics need to be aware of this," Greg says. "Also, the high sugar content can make the potatoes turn black when they're fried" -- the sugar caramelizes.

He's still working closely with Jeff, and with the man known worldwide as "Mr. Potato," Bill Campbell, the potato disease control specialist and potato breeder at the state-run Alaska Plant Materials Center in Palmer.

Seed potatoes have a run of eight years - eight generations, starting at Generation 0 - and after that must be restarted at Generation 0 because they peter out. "The younger the generation, the bigger and more numerous the potatoes," Greg says.

He's working now with a variety so new it has neither name nor number but is part of an experimental group called "party potatoes." It's a dressy potato, about the size and shape of a standard red potato but splashed with rose and gold. The flesh is crisp, golden, sweet and filled with rose starbursts.

Greg is known nationally as a go-to person for potato exotica. A West Virginia county agent contacted him for an antique potato, the White Rural New Yorker, requested by a local gardener whose grandmother had favored it.

Magic Molly, a Campbell-bred potato, deep purple inside and out, suited for frying, baking or boiling and loaded with antioxidants, went to a Missouri gardener.

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Perennial Plant of the Year *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Jack Frost'



Each year the Perennial Plant Association selects one perennial for the prestigious Perennial Plant of the Year designation. This year's winner, *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Jack Frost', beat out 430 other nominations. 'Jack Frost' first introduced in 2000 by Walters Gardens in Michigan where it was discovered as a sport

of *Brunnera* 'Langtrees', a rather nondescript Siberian bugloss. The exceptional silver coloring of 'Jack Frost' leaves draws in gardeners looking for shade-loving perennials. Many gardeners in Southcentral Alaska have given it a try. At last month's Anchorage Garden Club meeting, however, most reports were that 'Jack Frost' was not winter hardy. If this is a perennial you have grown, please get in touch with Julie Riley to let her know how it performed, jariley@alaska.edu or 786-6300.

Meet the Speaker: Linda Chalker Scott



I'm an associate professor in the department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture at Washington State University. I'm also an Extension Specialist in Urban Horticulture, meaning that I have a global classroom rather than one physically located on a college campus. I'm trained as a woody plant physiologist and I apply this knowledge to understanding how trees and shrubs function in urban environments. This

is a fancy way of saying I enjoy diagnosing landscape failures - sort of a Horticultural CSI thing.

I'm a native Washingtonian, but I spent my academic life at Oregon State University and then moved to Buffalo for my first university position. I moved back to Seattle in 1997 and worked at University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture. In 2001 we were fire-bombed by ecoterrorists (and yes, the irony of the greenest center on campus being targeted by ecoterrorists is not lost on me) and I lost my ability to do lab work. During this time I developed a more applied research program and in 2004 I began my Extension position with WSU.

Upcoming Events

AMGA Monthly Meeting

Monday, February 20th - Judith Brendel will give a presentation on "Perennial Partners", using height, color and texture to create a more picturesque garden. CES, 7 p.m. This is a pot luck and seed sharing event. Bring your extra seeds, a potluck dish, and be prepared to have a good time! (Rita Jo Schultz was unable to be here and Judith was gracious to step forward - Thank you!)

2012 Master Gardener Conference April 14, 2012

The Anchorage AMGA will be hosting the annual Master Gardener Conference this year. The event will be held at the Anchorage Senior Center, where there is plenty of free parking! The title of the conference is "Gardening Realities", a knowledge based approach to gardening in Alaska. Our Keynote and featured speakers will be Linda Chalker Scott from Seattle (www.puyallup.wsu.edu/~linda%20chalker-scott), and Marion Owen from Kodiak (marionowen.wordpress.com). There will be a Friday night, April 13th "Meet and Greet the Speakers" at the Green Connection, with limited space available. Kudos to the Green Connection for donating the space!



It promises to be an outstanding conference! More details to come.

The conference committee is diligently planning this event. We are currently looking for vendors, door prize donations, and helping hands. If you are interested in helping to be a part of this, please contact Dana Klinkhart to volunteer. Phone: 346-1631 - email: Klinkhart@gci.net

Founding Gardeners.... cont from page 2

All four yearned to return to their land when the political debates that formed the basis of early government became wearisome in the Philadelphia heat. Their diaries provide an often overlooked peek at how they viewed the struggle for independence and their hopes for the new republic.

Jefferson was even prepared to have the southern states separate in order to preserve an economy of peace and agrarianism rather than be hinged to the more industrial north which he viewed as more aggressive. Like many an aspiring entrepreneur he thought mass planting of sugar maple would mean economic prosperity for the states and freedom from dependence on British sugar.

At 400 pages, *Founding Gardeners* demonstrates that gardeners in the 1790s had much the same concerns and desires as we do today. And they didn't use chemicals.



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

Another dull month had an interesting spot in it. The front of January gave us the public "performances" of the people vying for the CES head down here. There were three candidates: Jeff Smeenk from Palmer, Michael Woods from Illinois, and Lydia Clayton from Lewiston, Idaho. The presentation was to be a power point presentation on food security in Alaska. Besides the usual CES faces there were local hay growers and a fair number of Master Gardeners from down here and a bunch of people I didn't know. I don't know when the final result will be announced. Stay tuned...

January was still a slow month. Margaret Simon wrote mid-month and she hit our lives on the head..."There certainly isn't much more going on here either, other than shoveling, sweeping, and plowing snow. At any rate it does provide me with some exercise. I have done three seed orders and it is rather startling to see the price increases. I felt wealthy and enjoyed specialty items when I spent \$100 on my past seed orders; now it seems I hardly get the basic needs for that! Still beats dropping my money at the bar, I guess. At least, I may have something to 'show off' later. Ordered from Baker Creek Heirloom for the first time. (www.rare-seeds.com) Had two personal handwritten comments from the packer and the computer person. Thought that added a nice personal touch. Must be a real down-home business."

And where would I be without others' quotes! This from Kathy Wartinbee who, with Carmel and me, will be bugging out in March. "Let's see. It's 70 degrees, the garden is ready to be planted ... in my dreams! But, we are having a heat wave. It's +1 already and the day is young. I'm late in ordering seeds but most of them are ordered from print catalogs as well as online ones. I like to look at what is new for 2012. I look at prices. It seems as though most of the order turned out to be veggie seeds. Flowers I usually buy from garden centers. Theirs always look much better than what I can do.

"I also have ordered praying mantis cases. Territorial (<http://www.territorialseed.com/landing>) has a great page on beneficial insects. Another place that offers all kinds of critter control is ARBICO (<http://www.arbico-organics.com/>). Soon it will be time but at the moment, I'm going to have a cup of tea and read a book."

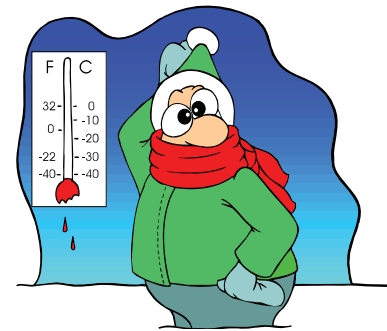
I like that attitude. I also like Arbico's (Arizona Biological Company) print catalog as there is so much more information than just what you find on line.

Janice Chumley snuck away to Costa Rica and Barb Jewell escaped to Mazatlan. Sitting here looking at the snow on the roof of the garage I evilly wish them mosquito bites where they can't reach to scratch...but wish I had those bites too.

Revenge is being plotted though. Carmel Tysver, Kathy Wartinbee and I are going to the Western Winter Study Weekend of the North American Rock Garden Society in Everett, Washington, in early March. We have our tickets and all sorts of web sites for nurseries and fabric stores. The thing I like best about the weekends, besides the vendors with all sorts of plants for me to send to a lingering death, are hundreds of pictures of plants, flowers, landscapes and gardens. I simply go there for the pictures. I can sit for hours--and I do--and watch them.

I, personally, have gotten some catalogs this year. I'll browse through them but I'm no longer in the gardening mode so I won't order seed as I've still got a big box of them to use up. I did have a friend in Wisconsin send me her Thompson and Morgan catalog. I really liked the fact that they'd increased the dimensions of the booklet. It makes it easier to handle.

One of the windstorms down here blew my remote temperature sensor out of the bird feeder into the snow at the far edge of the side deck. Fortunately it was vacuum packed and just keeps sending. It's been interesting to watch how the temperature fluctuates with the air temperatures. When the air temperature first dropped precipitously with the clear skies, there was a 50 degree! difference in the air and the buried sender. Slowly the sender temperature descended but never got below 10°F, even when it was -25° in the mornings which just goes to show what a nice snow cover does for plant survival.



One thing I noticed about January's cold snap was that people stopped wishing you a nice day and started saying that you should stay warm.

MG Focus: Greg Kalal... cont. from page 3

King Edward's flesh blushes pink, and it's noted for its flavor, floury texture, and suitability as a container plant, so it may soon be moving onto decks and patios.

The Kalals have recently expanded from potatoes to *Rhodiola rosea*, a worldwide natural performance-enhancing herb, in their soil that's so gravelly and deprived that not even weeds will grow. "I look at it every now and then, but that's all I do with it," says Greg. "The *Rhodiola*'s doing great" and is being trialed statewide as a possible new commercial crop. They're also keeping an eye on 40 peonies that may become part of the nascent Alaska peony industry.

Their crops have been free of pests, and so far the Trapper Creek moose haven't developed a taste for potato salad. So far.

"There are reports coming out of Nikiski now that their moose have discovered potatoes," Greg says. "We'll deal with it if we have to."



Bird Chatter

-- New MG Rachel Christy is also a commercial peony grower. She was just elected to the Alaska Peony Growers Association (APGA) board of directors at their winter conference. Alaska Blooms Peony Farm is located in Meadow Lakes.

-- Becky Fox-Krogstad (MG 91) is turning her 1.5 acre garden in Turnagain into a cut-flower 'farm' with peonies as her specialty. She's already planted 100 peonies and is planning on putting in another 50.

-- The USDA defines 'farm' as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the year (www.ers.usda.gov).

-- Julie Riley is currently reading 'Small Farms are Real Farms' by John Ikerd.

-- Cheryl Shroyer (MG 05) was seen stomping to the beat of the Carhartt Brothers' elevator music. The band, including Pat Ryan (MG 84) and Bill Yeagle (MG 11), performed to a delighted audience as the elevator rode up and down between floors at the Anchorage Museum's First Friday event last month.

-- Robbie Frankevich impressed 74 hort industry attendees at the Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conference with his presentation 'A Parade of Perpetual Bloom' detailing his use of bulbs and perennial flowers at Alyeska Resort.

-- A two-hour New Peony Grower School held the morning before the Alaska Peony Growers Conference in Girdwood reached maximum capacity of 40 people. Before the conference was over, presenters Jan Hanscom, Polar Peonies and Marji Illingworth, North Pole Peonies, had another 40 people registered for their Feb. 18 program in Fairbanks.

-- Sandra Danilition joined the Anchorage CES as office manager right before Christmas. Please introduce yourself to her as a Master Gardener next time you're in the office. And if you haven't met Nina Markossian, administrative assistant, say hello to her as well.

-- Jim Roberts was the only person not of the female persuasion at last month's Herb Study Group meeting but he didn't seem to mind. He showed off some fine hard-neck garlic he had grown.

-- New MG Melanie SanAngelo has a picture of her MG certificate posted on her Facebook page!

-- 'Being a Master Gardener is one of my proudest accomplishments'-- a quote by Terry Wilson (MG 09) to be included in the next edition of CES's statewide Program Highlights.

-- Does anyone know where eryngium leaves can be obtained in the dead of winter for a Vietnamese recipe that Annie Nevaldine recently read? Or does she have to wait to make this dish till summer when her eryngiums are prospering?

MG Volunteer Projects

The new class of Master Gardeners is already busy helping others. Pamela Eldridge is posting pictures of trees and shrubs to alaskaplants.org. Dohnn Wood is trying to get a community garden or two organized in East Anchorage before it's time to plant. He also helped Debbie Hinchey with the new Alaska Children's Services Garden Club and has himself signed up for two speaking engagements on vegetable gardening. Bob Taganahan is working on the community garden at St. Anthony Catholic Church. Rachel Christy video-taped presentations at the Alaska Peony Growers Conference. Bill Yeagle is dreaming of growing greens under the snow. Brittany Messman is interested in producing YouTube videos. And Julie is promoting Carroll Samuelson's garden as one that needs to go on tour this summer.

Wanda Sutterer is scheduling Master Gardeners to staff our Fur Rendezvous display at the Dimond Mall, February 29 - March 4. Believe it or not, during Rony people are anxious to talk gardening. There are usually about 1,000 people that visit the Cooperative Extension Service table to ask questions and pick up gardening publications. I'm sure new MGs would welcome Advanced MGs to share a shift with them. Help is also needed setting up in the evening on February 28 and taking down on Sunday, March 4. Wanda can be reached at aksourdoughs@yahoo.com or 602-1890.

ABG Conference, Fri & Sat, March 9 & 10 Alaska Botanical Garden Annual Meeting & Spring Conference, Anchorage

Featured speaker is Eliot Coleman, author of *The Winter Harvest Handbook* and *Four-Season Harvest*. Master Gardeners Jane Baldwin and Dohnn Wood will be talking about specialized vegetable gardening techniques along with Debbie Hinchey. Julie Riley will be giving a presentation on herbs. Wild edibles, ethnobotany, beneficial insects and dividing perennials are some of the other topics on the agenda. Early-bird discount for registration is March 1st. Check the ABG web site for details, www.alaskabg.org.

Brenda Adams to Teach New Class on Northern Garden Design at Homer Campus

Have you seen gorgeous gardens and wanted yours to look that way, but didn't know where to start? Is your garden overwhelming you and taking too long to maintain? Or would you like guidance on how to design and build an inviting, easy to care for retreat for you and your family? Then enroll now in a new class called Northern Garden Design and Implementation.

National award-winning garden designer, Brenda Adams, will teach this two-day, in-depth, how-to class. You'll leave the class with confidence that your gardening goals can be achieved and with a sense of direction on how to do it.

When: March 31st and April 7th, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Where: Kachemak Bay Campus of Kenai Peninsula College.

What: Course number is OSE AC019.
Fee is \$80

Gardening Magazines & Associations

The 2011 Master Gardener class reports reading more gardening magazines than any other Anchorage class. See what piques their interest below.

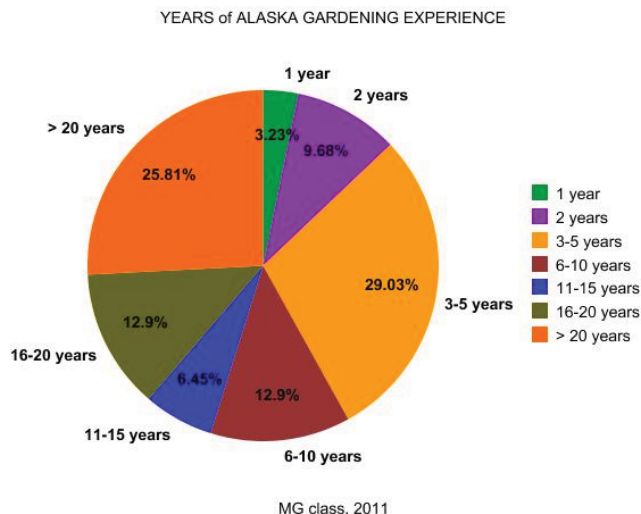
- Horticulture (6 people)
- Fine Gardening (4 people)
- Organic Gardening (3 people)
- Mother Earth News (2 people)
- Better Homes & Gardens (2 people)
- Tennessee Gardner
- American Gardener
- Tropical Plant Technician
- American Dahlia Society Bulletin
- Garden Design
- Acres USA
- Sunset

About a quarter of the class (26%) belonged to Alaska Botanical Garden (ABG) when they enrolled. After a talk by ABG Executive Director, Julianne McGuiness, others joined. Bill Yeagle, ABG Volunteer Coordinator, was one of the 30 to complete the MG course in December. Other horticultural associations MG are involved with include the American Dahlia Society (Mayra Morrow) and the Alaska Peony Growers Association (Rachel Christy). Rachel was also just elected to the APGA board of directors. Her peony farm, Alaska Blooms Peony Farm, is located in Meadow Lakes.

New MG Class Expertise

Over 25% of the new Master Gardener class have more than 20 years experience gardening. Wow. Almost half have experience with organic gardening and although as a group, they are very interested in vegetables, more were experienced raising flowers.

Experience, MGs 2011
 Perennial flowers--81.2%
 Vegetables-- 65.6%
 Raised beds--59.4%
 Organic gardening--48.5%
 Composting--46.9%
 Growing apples--21.9%



Garden Event Calendar

Tuesday February 14th

Central Peninsula Garden Club - Tomato Infatuation + Herbs - 3 local culinary experts will demonstrate several special tomato and herb creations. Kim Foley, Susan Bradley, and Warren Finley. 7 p.m. - Cook Inlet Aquaculture Assn. building on K-Beach Rd, between KSRM and Bridge Access Road intersection.

Saturday, Feb. 18

Alaska Rock Garden Society meeting, 2:00 p.m. MTA building, Palmer - "Factors Affecting Cold Hardiness" presented by Julie Riley, CES. www.args.org

Monday, Feb. 20

AMGA meeting - POT LUCK and SEED EXCHANGE! Judith Brendel will give a presentation on "Perennial Partners". She will talk on using height, color and texture to create a more picturesque garden. 7 p.m., CES.

Tuesday - Wednesday, Feb. 21 - 22, 2012

Produce Growers Conference, Palmer - As details become available, more information will be available at <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/aghortland/>.

Wednesday, February 29

New Varieties of Trees and Shrubs - Patricia Joyner, Community Forest Program Coordinator, will talk about uncommon but proven species of trees in Anchorage that you can use to add diversity to your landscape. 5:45 p.m. Announcements and Moose's Tooth Pizza; 6:00 to 7:00 Presentation, Anchorage Cooperative Extension office located at 1675 C Street.

Thursday, March 1

Anchorage Garden Club, "Backyard Habitats" - Bonnie Lembo will talk on how she developed a backyard habitat. Open to the public. Meet at the Pioneer School House - 437 E 3rd Avenue-Lower level. Voice Mail 907-566-0539.

March 1

Early Bird Registration deadline: Alaska Botanical Garden Spring Conference "Cultivating Community", March 9 & 10, See article on page 6.

Friday, March 2, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

Herb Study Group meeting, "Herb of the Year: Roses", presentation by Leslie Shallcross, Health, Home & Family Development faculty, UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Anchorage. Leslie's focus will be on the fun and fascinating ways to utilize rose petals and hips. Group meets at UAF Cooperative Extension Service office, 1675 C Street, Anchorage, 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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Email: amga@alaska.net (NEW EMAIL)

AMGA Web Site: www.alaskamastergardeners.org
 (The Newsletter will be on-line in living color!)

To send concerns or information to the AMGA directly, mail to:
 AMGA

P.O. Box 221403
 Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

If you have questions or want to make address or email corrections, please contact Barbara Baker at:
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Greg Kalal, known nationally as a 'go to' guy for potato exotica, is the featured Master Gardener in Cheryl Chapman's "Master Gardener Focus" article on page. 3.