

AMGA NEWSLETTER

September 2015 Volume 17, Issue 9

Message from Barbara Baker, Co-President

September turns our thoughts to harvest activities and readying our garden beds for winter. I've noticed bulbs starting to appear at garden stores and my favorite migratory birds visiting the feeders and birdbaths. Yet, this summer seems endless, with our garden tours being as spectacular in August as they were in June. And, in spite of the cooler mornings, the continued sunny days provide a vitality that will hopefully carry us through to the first snow.

The second annual Late Season Plant Sale was a great success. We raised over \$1900. These funds will be used for Master Gardener scholarships and other educational and service projects. Thank you to Lynne Opstad, Sue Looney and Jane Baldwin for organizing the plant sale and to all of our extraordinary volunteers who assisted throughout the day. They provided assistance in setting-up, taking-down, checking-out, conducting workshops, and assisting the public in knowledge about the plants for sale. It was especially gratifying to be able to point out to the public so many master gardeners who had expertise in the gardening area of their concern. A BIG thank you goes to our partners at UAF/ Cooperative Extension Service for supporting this sale through the use of the parking lot, equipment and educational staffing support. The UAF/CES Master Gardening program is a vital community asset.

Mark you calendars for our first fall meeting on September 21st at 7:00pm. Our meeting location continues at the UAF/CES offices located at 1675 C Street. Julie Riley will present a photographic recap of plant propagation techniques covered in the last Advanced Master Gardener course taught by Doug Tryck, of Tryck Nursery. She will also share lessons learned from MG participants and those who took the class will have a chance to share their ah-ha moments. Also, I'll be asking you what your greatest success in the garden was this year, something new you tried, and surprising failures. There is so much to share from our summer of gardening; it will be a lively meeting.

The theme of our upcoming 2016 Master Gardener Conference is "Grow Your Own". We would like each of you to be a part of the conference by helping us create Alaskan seed and recipe packets for sale at the conference. Many of us save seeds or know which are the best to grow. By combining your saved seeds, best seed varieties and culinary skills, we can offer our conference quests an opportunity to purchase kits to create their own Alaskan specialty garden. Seed and recipe kit themes may include Alaska Salad Bowl, Alaska Herb Garden, Alaskan Salsa, Alaskan Vegetable Garden, and Alaskan Edible Flower Garden, based upon the seed contributions. There is an accompanying article by Sue Looney to help you with seed saving. Stay tuned. We will also be asking for your favorite recipes to be included in the packets!

2016 AMGA Conference

GROW YOUR OWN!

From the Soil Up

April 16, 2016

Inside This Issue....

Message from Barbara Baker
August AMGA Garden Tour Photos
AK State & World Record Winners
Treasurer's Report
Growing Young Gardeners: Bat Houses
Plant Sale & Garlic Experience
Why Butterflies Flutter By
Another AK State Fair Winner!
Bird Chatter
Tips for Saving Seeds
Garden Event Calendar

August Garden Tour and Plant Sale Photos Aug. 3, 8, 10, 17, 24

Margery Quick Aug. 3
Photo by Barbara Baker



AMGA Late Season Plant Sale Aug. 8
Photos by Mike Baldwin









Apollo Drive Aug. 10





Sharon Davies Aug. 17 Photos by Tony Flores





Carol Ross Aug. 24

Photos by Tony Flores





Alaska State and World Record Winners

http://alaskastatefair.org/2014-large-vegetable-fruit-record

From 11/26/2014

* World Record (for year shown)

** State Record (for year shown)

42.750 Beet, table * John Evans Palmer 1993 35.000 Broccoli, Romanesco *John Evans Palmer 138.250 Cabbage, Green * Scott Robb Palmer 2012

64.800 Cantaloupe * Scott Robb Palmer 2004

18.985 Carrot * John Evans Palmer 1998

2003 63.300 Celery * Scott Robb Palmer

9' 10.75" Dill weed, length**Pat Tremaine Palmer 2014 67.75" Fennel, length ** Phyllis Kircher Palmer 2014

2007 105.900 Kale * Scott Robb Palmer

2006 96.950 Kohlrabi * Scott Robb Palmer 2009 82.900 Rutabaga * Scott Robb Palmer 2014 15.500 Spaghetti ** Jody Zylstra Wasilla

39.200 Turnip * Scott Robb Palmer 2004 And this year by the first day of the Fair:

2015 24" Sunflower head ** Melanie San Angelo Anch.



Melanie San Angelo grew this 24-inch sunflower - measured petal to petal - that set a new state record at the 2015 Alaska State Fair. [Melanie is Co-Vice President of AMGA.]

Photo courtesy HEATHER A. RESZ/Alaska State Fair WAY TO GO MELANIE!!!

September Treasurer's Report

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Growing Young Gardeners: Bat Houses By Amy Reed, MG



What have you tried to rid your backyard of mosquitos? Tiki torches? Citronella? Dousing in repellent? My family recently embarked on an experiment to exterminate the mosquito population in our yard by installing two bat houses. The average small brown bat can eat up to 600 mosquitos in one hour! Imagine not having to run a Mosquito Deleto at your next garden party!

Bats are the primary predator of night flying insects and provide a vital role in maintaining the balance of nature. Rootworms, cucumber and June beetles, stinkbugs, leafhoppers, and cutworms are just a few of the insects consumed by bats. This winged mammal is sharply declining in numbers due to unwarranted human fear and loss of natural homes. By providing a bat a roost, it will maintain nature's balance, reduce the need for chemical pesticides, decrease yard pests, and provide a teaching tool for children about a vital part of the ecosystem.

Depending on your carpentry skills, you can either make your own bat house or buy one. We bought ours on Amazon—I have also seen bat houses sold in local stores, such as Alaska Mill and Feed. However, if you are handy with a hammer and nails, two wonderful resources for blueprints to build a bat house are www.batcon.org or http://www.epa.gov/greenacres/wildones/handbk/wo-26bat.html

The most successful bat houses are dry, non-drafty roost chambers that are at least 20 inches tall and at least 14 inches wide. The number of roosting chambers is not critical, but the more, the better. Pressure treated lumber should not be used as it will introduce toxins to bats. Avoid any metal mesh in the roosts as it can be abrasive and injure bats. Locate your bat house near a permanent source of water (ideally within a quarter mile of a stream, lake or marsh), about 12 to 20 feet above the ground on a building, tree or pole - a building will offer the most stable temperature. Orient your bat house to get maximum warmth, especially in the morning (southeast exposure). Interestingly, research has shown that bat houses in cool climates should be stained dark brown or black to absorb solar heat. If your bat house is not occupied by the end of the second year, try moving it to a new location.

The bat houses we bought on Amazon are single chamber roosts made from recycled plastic and measure 14" \times 28". We mounted them on a 4' \times 16' pole bought at Lowe's. A four-foot hole was dug in the ground about 30



feet from the house and the pole was cemented in with the bat houses facing southern exposure. Holley Bat Attract Scent drops (3 per house) were placed to attract bats, and according to the directions, the drops must be added every four months. Each bat house is designed to hold up to 40 bats, so that

will definitely make a dent in the mosquito population!

Plant Sale and Garlic Experience From Jane Baldwin

AMGA Plant Sale

AMGA's late season plant sale sold over 900 plants during the 5 hour sale – that's an amazing average of about 180 plants per hour! To plant sellers and to those who donated plants, we could not have done it without you. AMGA knows (and appreciates) what is involved in the rather simple words digging, dividing, potting, tagging, pricing and transporting plants to the sale. Thank you for your support.

Garlic Yes? Garlic No?

Encouraged by a successful 2014 harvest of first-time ever planting garlic, this MG is trying to figure out what she was thinking of when she planted seven different kinds of hard neck garlic? And is now trying to figure out what to do with a 2015 bumper crop of 45 bulbs of Siberian, Duganska, Basque, German Red, Spanish Roja, Montana Nemo and Georgia Fire garlic!

Garlic cloves were planted the end of September 2014 in a cement block raised bed in partially decomposed chopped leaves mixed with used potting soil from a couple of large garden pots of annuals; no fertilizer or other amendments added, and winter mulched with another layer of chopped leaves. Some produced bulbs with multiple typical sized garlic cloves and some produced bulbs with only three or four huge cloves. Great garlic, but this MG reports that she would rather use the space to grow ornamentals and next year hopes to buy local garlic at farmers' markets.

Why Butterflies Flutter-by By Jane Baldwin

Spend a little time watching butterfly behavior in your yard and you will see what you have that attracts them or not. They will fly from flower to flower, briefly touching down to see if it has the nectar they need - if it isn't the right flower, they flutter-by to the next one.

Butterflies' taste sensors are in their feet; they taste by just standing on their food. They taste by sensing dissolved sugars. With no mouths that bite or chew, they have a long straw-like sucking structure called a proboscis. They use their proboscis to drink nectar, juices and water. There are no taste sensors on their proboscis. When not in use it is coiled up like a garden hose. The right nectar sources will keep adult butterflies interested in your garden. Usually they are attracted to bright colors like yellow and red.

Standing on a leaf a female butterfly will "drum" the leaf with her feet to release its juices. When the right match of plant chemicals is detected, she lays her eggs. Most butterflies are picky where they lay their eggs - many are host-specific to particular plants or species. A bit of internet searching will find which butterflies prefer which species.

Butterflies cannot live on sugar (nectar) alone; they supplement their diet by occasionally sipping from mud puddles or wet rocks and earth which are rich in minerals and salts. 'Puddling' is done more commonly by male butterflies who then incorporate the minerals into their sperm. Nutrients are transferred to the female during mating and help to improve the viability of her eggs.

Most butterflies live for two to four weeks with their primary purpose being to mate and produce offspring. Some butterflies overwinter as adults (like monarchs and mourning cloaks) and can live as long as 9 months. We have mourning cloak butterflies in our Southcentral area - they are usually the first butterfly we see in the spring - having over wintered as an adult.

Butterflies are cold-blooded and need sunshine to warm their wings and bodies enough for them to fly. If temperatures fall below 55°F., butterflies may become immobile and unable to flee predators or feed. They are most active during the heat of the day. When it's cloudy or cool, they will often perch with wings open to absorb as much warmth as possible. Cooler temperatures require warming up flight muscles, either by a 'shivering' process or by basking in the sun.

When pupating begins caterpillars create a chrysalis in which they will transform into adults to begin the life cycle again. How long it takes for the transformation to butterfly depends on temperature. In warm climates it may be as little as 10-15 days. In regions with chilly weather, they have to wait to emerge until the weather

warms. Called diapause - similar to hibernation - and can take place in any part of the life cycle. Some may wait for several years inside their chrysalis until the conditions for emerging are right.

Butterflies are important pollinators. In the scheme of importance, they are fourth - after beetles, flies and bees. Butterflies are beautiful creatures, but remember their young are caterpillars who eat plants in order to increase in size many times before the pupating process. Next gardening season, you just might want to think twice about your butterfly population before squishing caterpillars



"Papilio-canadensis-001" by Mdf - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Commons - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Papilio-canadensis-001.jpg#/media/File:Papilio-canadensis-001.jpg

Another MG State Fair Winner!

Manuel Bautista-Garcia, AMGA member & vegetable grower, won the Division Champion in "Veg Heads" with left over vegetables that he couldn't enter anywhere else in the Fair. Good job Manuel!

Photos by Julie Riley





Bird Chatter

***SPICE PEARLS... Cilantro connoisseurs will have a chance to sample 30 different varieties during ABG's seventh annual Harvest Day on Saturday, September 12th, from 11 am to 4 p.m. Julie Riley is looking for MG volunteers to help in the ABG Research & Demo Plots; She has 'Haida' potatoes (seed produced by Greg Kalal), turnips hybridized by Alaska vegetable breeder Kurt Wold, and many varieties of Hmong mustard to show off that day.

Give her a call.

***SAVE THE DATE . . . The next Advanced MG course will be held in Feb/Mar 2016. Entomology, the topic of the first Advanced MG course held in 2009, will be revisited. The planning committee is working with CES' Jessie Moan to develop a schedule and curriculum. Stay tuned.

***FROM A RECENT OBIT IN THE ADN: "Gail is survived by her husband ... daughter... son ... grandson ... beloved baby brother... nephews... niece... found sister... found cousin... and her compost pile."

Now THAT'S a gardener!

***SAVE THE DATE TWO... If you 'Grow Your Own,' pencil in Saturday, April 16, 2016. It's the date for the next statewide Alaska Master Gardener Conference in Anchorage. Even if you don't cook dinner from the garden, the conference promises lots of good information, speakers, vendors and socializing for everyone with a trowel.

***AU REVOIR... When next we meet, we'll be scheduling tire changes and summer will be just a memory. What will we fondly recall as we paste weather stripping around the patio door? Will it be the surprising discovery that Persicaria polymorpha grows 8-feet tall and 4-feet wide and really shouldn't have been planted among the lilies?



Julie reports
her greatest plant
pleasure this season was spending
the summer with
the pot of Ecomis
(Pineapple lily) given
to her by MG Noel
Nelson because she
couldn't identify it
last year.

And the most annoying disappointment? Renee's Garden 'Blue Heaven' lobelia was not the baby-blue color depicted on the seed packet.

Tips for Saving Seeds From Sue Looney

Saving seeds from both vegetables and flowers is rewarding and easy. Information on the type of seed to save as well how to collect, cleaning and storing seeds can be found at http://www.seedsave.org/, http://www. howtosaveseeds.com/, and http://www.seedsavers.org/. These websites have free instructions for saving many types of seeds in easy to follow formats. Instructions on determining germination rate and starting seeds can also be found on the SeedSavers website. One problem I have is remembering what the plant is after it has gone to seed. This happens with flowers with multiple colors or varieties of vegetables. When I am weeding or just enjoying the plants, I tag the plant or branch with a number and take a picture for reference. I make the tags out of old plant labels and a twisty tie. Once the plant has gone to seed and the seeds are ripe, I collect the seeds and place the tag in the bag. When I am ready to clean and store the seed I look up the picture that the tag number references. I keep a record of the different plants I planted and if I don't remember the plant name or specific species I can look it up.



Calendua "Orange Flash"



Open pansy seed pod on the right, closed pod on left

Photos from Sue Looney

Garden Event Calendar

MEETINGS and EVENTS

Tuesday, September 1

Valley Garden Club Monthly Meeting: How to Use Green Manures & Cover Crops, by Ellen Vande Visse of Good Earth Garden School. 10:30 am - 12:15 pm at the First Baptist Church on Leatherleaf and Bogard Road. Details at: http://www.valleygardenclub.com/.

Tuesdays and Fridays, September 1 - 25

Herb Study Group: Join the Herb Study Group in the Herb Garden at Alaska Botanical Garden. Learn to care for the 100 different species of herbs. Bring tools, kneeling pads and a bucket for weeds. 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm at The Alaska Botanical Garden (weather permitting), 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage.

Thursday, September 3

Anchorage Garden Club Monthly Meeting: Anything Goes (Within Reason)- Floral Design by Sheila Parcel. 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Pioneer Schoolhouse, 437 E 3rd Avenue, Anchorage. Details at: http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/anchorage-club.htm.

Thursday, September 10

Alaska Wildflower Garden Club Monthly Meeting: Lets Make It Vegan by Leslie Shallcross of CES. 10:00 am - 11;30 am at the Central Lutheran Church, 1420 Cordova St, Anchorage. Details at: http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/apps/calendar/.

Saturday, September 12

Alaska Botanical Garden: 7th Annual Harvest Day Festival: Enjoy a Farmers Market, Chef Demonstrations, Live Music and Family Fun. Donated Food Goes to Beans Café and Food Bank of Alaska. 11:00 am - 4:00 pm at Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage. Cost: \$7 per person or \$5 with Donation of 3 Cans of Food per person. Members and Children Under 5 are Free. Details at: http://alaskabg.org/events/.

Monday, September 14

**Mat-Su Master Gardener's Monthly Meeting: Harvest Tasting and Sharing. MTA building, Palmer. Details at: http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/calendar-of-events.html.

**Meadow Lakes Bloomers Garden Club Monthly Meeting: Dahlias by Rob Wells of The Persistent Farmer. 10:30. Meadow Lakes Senior Center, Wasilla.

Friday, September 18

Willow Garden Club Monthly Meeting: Harvest Dinner with Open Forum for Questions and Answers About Willow Specific Gardening and Putting Gardens to Bed for the Winter. 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm at Willow Community Center, Mile 69.5, Parks Highway. Details at: http://willowgardenclub.blogspot.com/.

Saturday, September 19

Alaska Rock Garden Society Monthly Meeting: Plant Exchange: Bring a Few Plants to Trade and Take Home Something New. 2:00 pm at MTA Building, 480 Commercial Drive, Palmer.

Monday, September 21

AMGA Monthly Meeting: Plant Propagation: Advanced Master Gardeners Share Techniques to Propagate Plants, Including Seed Germination, Layering and Grafting. 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Anchorage Cooperative Extension Service 1675 C Street, #100. Details at: http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/anchorage/calendar/.

Tuesday, September 22

Alaska Orchid Society Monthly Meeting: Marvelous Miniature Gems of the Orchid World by Mark Phillips of Andy's Orchids. 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm at BP Energy Center, Seward Hy and Benson Blvd. Details at: http://www.wayne-toups.squarespace.com/events/.

CLASSES

Tuesdays, September 8 - 22

UAA Continuing Education: Greenhouse Design: Overview of Greenhouse Construction in Southcentral Alaska. 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Eagle Center, 10928 Eagle River Road, Eagle River, Room 228. Cost \$99. Details at: http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/continuing-education/upload/continuing-education-schedule-2.pdf.

Thursdays, September 10 - 24

UAA Continuing Education: Sustainable Gardening in South-central AK: Beginning Ornamental and Vegetable Gardening Course. 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Eagle Center, 10928 Eagle River Road, Eagle River, Room 228. Cost \$135. Details at: http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/continuing-education/upload/continuing-education-schedule-2.pdf.

September 14 - October 23

UAF Online Course: Wild & Cultivated Berries of AK: 6 Week Class on How to Manage Wild Berry Stands, Field Cultivation and Uses of Fruits, by Dr. Patricia Holloway. 1 Credit, Cost: \$183. Details at: http://elearning.uaf.edu/course-details-fall/?crn=78925.

Friday, September 18

Cooperative Extension Class: Greenhouse Heat: Learn Methods to Heat Your Greenhouse, Including Passive Solar Boxes, Heat Sinking, and Utilizing Thermal Mass Storage. 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm at Cooperative Extension Service 1675 C Street, #100. Details at: http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/anchorage/calendar/.

Thursday, September 24

Cooperative Extension Class: Greenhouse Heat: Learn Methods to Heat Your Greenhouse, Including Passive Solar Boxes, Heat Sinking, and Utilizing Thermal Mass Storage. 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm at Cooperative Extension Service 1675 C Street, #100. Details at: http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/anchorage/calendar/.

Tuesdays, September 29 - October 13

UAA Continuing Education: Greenhouse Operations. 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Eagle Center, 10928 Eagle River Road, Eagle River, Room 228. Cost \$99. Details at: http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/continuing-education/upload/continuing-education-schedule-2.pdf.





August 24th - New trough wall at the ABG Rock Garden. Alaska Rock Garden Society members planting tufa pots, made by members & ABG personnel earlier this spring. Photo by Gina Docherty



AMGA regularly meets at 7:00pm every third Monday of the month, September through May (except for December).

Meetings are held at the Anchorage Cooperative Extension Center 1675 C Street, Suite 100 (access off of 16th Avenue)

Monthly educational programs are free and open to the public. Visitors and guests are welcomed and encouraged.

AMGA Board of Directors

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Volunteer Coordinators: Julie Ginder, Joyce Smith,

Lynne Opstad

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

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AMGA Web Site: www.alaskamastergardeners.org

AMGA Google Group:

https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups#!forum/AkMGA

To send concerns or information to the AMGA directly, mail to: \emph{AMGA}

P.O. Box 221403

Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

If you have questions or want to make address or email corrections, please contact Jane Baldwin at:

ak.jbaldwin@gmail.com

Newsletter Submission Deadline

The deadline for submitting an item for publication in the following month's edition of the AMGA newsletter is the 20th of every month. Items arriving after this date may or may not be included.

Educational or garden related articles, Bird Chatter, calendar items and announcements are always welcome.

For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact: Cooperative Extension Office 1675 C St, Suite 100 Anchorage, AK 99501

Phone: 786-6300 Fax: 786-6312



