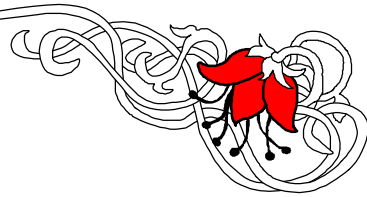


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 5, Issue 2

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

January 2003

FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY MARY SHIER

There's a great event coming up in February in Seattle which motivates Northern gardeners: The Northwest Flower and Garden Show. Have you ever attended? It's totally fabulous. There is always a theme and numerous garden venues displayed by various greenhouses, garden centers and/or growers which show outrageous bloom for the time of year, plus color and design giving inspiration to the winter worn gardener.

After stimulation takes place there are plant vendors as well as hard goods vendors with tons of product to sell to the hyped up gardener. Yes, there have been a few Alaskan gardeners who have been caught up in the hype of this function. Thank goodness AK Airlines knows us well, as I have heard stories of fellow gardeners who have been spellbound and bought tons of plants to bring back. In the still winter weather here? Yes! Not mentioning any names but, bath tubs in hotels have not been useable by humans because of plants put in them, on hold, until transport time home.

And if that doesn't do it there are speakers all during the day and into the evening every day of the show which runs Wednesday thru Sunday. Speakers range from local to national and subjects are varied. Our own (well, used to be) Jim Fox was a speaker a year or two ago and now he's program manager. Jeff Lowenfels will be doing a presentation on 'Teaming with Microbes'. I hear that Marion Owens from Kodiak is also one of the speakers this year. And, the latest is that Julie Riley and Annie Nevildine will be doing a program. WOW!

I spoke with Julie the other day to find out a bit about their agenda. Their talk will be titled 'Everything I Know I Learned From Gardening: A Psychologist and A Horticulturist Discuss the Mirrors of Life and Gardening.' There will be slides, a skit or two, and enlisted audience participation. Quite a few sayings/truisms comparing life in general to gardening. They have given plants psychological disorders and gardeners psychological behaviors and will match personalities to plants. For example: anti socialism in a human could be compared to say a daylily which only opens for a day so therefore has problems with long term relationships.

Julie and Annie came together a while back, long timers in the gardening community, one being a horticulturist and the other a psychologist, both being interested in plants and one growing a lot of plants with psycho terms in the names, such as Cosmos Psyche. Well, you know how minds stray every once in a while and get carried away? I think this was the case here but the result was an in depth study of humans and plants and how much they have in common. Huh, did I say that? Are we like plants or are plants like us? Maybe Julie and Annie will tell us.

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PLANNING AHEAD FOR THE 2003 GARDEN SHOWS

BY BLYTHE CAMPBELL

I intend to travel to at least one big garden show in 2003 – most are early enough in the year that there are no gardening distractions here. I guess if you're starting petunias or artichokes or something else that has to be babied in February, you'll need to find a good plant-sitter. I know my family wouldn't take long to kill a flat of seedlings.

Here's a roundup of some of the upcoming garden shows. Many of them are on Alaska Airlines routes (did you know they now fly to Miami???) so you can use, or earn, frequent flyer miles. Call up another gardening friend and talk he or she into going with you. Don't make the mistake of taking a non-gardening spouse. Rob ran me through the Northwest Flower and Garden Show in two hours one year.

February 19-23, 2003, Northwest Flower & Garden Show, Washington State Convention Center, Seattle. www.gardenshow.com. Check out the Seattle Super Saver hotel rates at www.seattlesupersaver.com. Hotel packages with discounted show tickets are available from several hotels – see the garden show's website for details.

March 2-9, 2003, Philadelphia Garden Show, Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia. www.theflowershow.com. The convention center is a short walk or taxi ride from center city hotels – splurge on the Four Seasons. The flower show rate is a mere \$295 per night.

March 19-23, 2003, San Francisco Flower & Garden Show, Cow Palace, San Francisco. www.gardenshow.com. The Cow Palace doesn't sound like a very romantic place for a garden show, but I guess it's agricultural, and it's only 15 minutes from Fisherman's Wharf.

June 12-15, 2003, VanDusen Botanical Garden Flower & Garden Show, Vancouver, BC. Okay, it's a little late in the year but there are many beautiful gardens to see in the area. <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/parks/parks&gardens/vandusen/calendar/flowergarden.shtml> - yes it's a very long web address. I typed "garden show" "Vancouver" into the Google Search Engine and it was the first listing. Much easier!

I hope to see you at one of these shows next year.

FROM THE PRESIDENT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

We have a chance to find out at our next Master Gardener meeting January 20th. Julie and Annie will fine tune their program on us at that time. Even if you plan to attend the show in Seattle, you'd better sit in on this evening as well as it will be a bit different than the one planned for Seattle. Here comments will be more personable since they know us and vice a versa. They can get away with remarks that would mean squat to out of state people. This could be real interesting.

Don't miss this evening you may find out that 'secrets of life can be found in the garden.'

PS: Northwest Flower & Garden Show website is www.gardenshow.com/nw/

**ALASKA STATEWIDE
MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE
FEBRUARY 1ST, 2003
FAIRBANKS PRINCESS HOTEL
(Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge)
4477 Pike's Landing Road
Jade Room; 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM;**

Speakers and Topics:

Cass Turnbull -Seattle's Plant Amnesty, "Basic Landscape Pruning of Trees and Shrubs"

Don Dinkel - Wasilla (of giant cabbage fame), "Propagating Alaskan Native Plants" and his recent research on strawberries

Marion Owen -Kodiak, co-author of Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul, - growing healthy starts, "Seeding is Believing"

Deborah McCorkle - Fairbanks, herbalist, "Herbal Remedies from Your Garden"

Michele Hébert -UAF's Cooperative Extension Service, "Floating Gardens: the New Hydroponics"

George Wilson - Fairbanks, "Safety in the Garden"

Grant Matheke -UAF's Georgeson Botanical Garden, "Drippers, Spitters, Dribblers and Spinners: Water-Conserving Irrigation Systems for Home Gardens"

Download registration form from the AMGA web Calendar page



UNIVERSAL BOON TO THE SALAD BOWL

[Reprinted with permission from Texas A&M University web site]
<http://plantanswers.tamu.edu/publications/vegetabletravelers>



Lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*) is without doubt the world's most popular salad plant. Both its common and its Latin name are based on an easily noticeable characteristic—it has a heavy, milky juice. The word “lettuce” is probably derived from the Old French *laitues* (plural of *laitue*), meaning “milky,” referring to this plant. The Latin root word *lac* (“milk”) appears in the Latin name *lactuca*.

The ancient Greeks called lettuce *tridax*; the old Persians, *kahn*. Although its culture was widespread in ancient times, it is neither so old nor was it so widely grown in prehistoric times as a number of other garden crops.

Lettuce Often Found Wild

Cultivated lettuce is closely related to the wild lettuce, *L. scariola*, from which it was doubtless derived. Wild lettuce is now widely scattered over the globe, but it originated in inner Asia Minor, the trans-Caucasus, Iran, and Turkistan.

According to Herodotus, lettuce was served on the tables of the Persian kings of the 6th century B.C. In the 5th and 4th centuries B.C., other great Greek writers described and praised its virtues.

Lettuce was popular among the Romans about the beginning of the Christian Era, and had been brought to a fairly advanced state of culture and improvement. In the first century after Christ, Roman writers described a dozen distinctly different sorts, some of which were fairly common.

Common garden lettuce (*L. sativa*) was known in China in the 5th century, if not earlier. In addition, a form of “stem lettuce” is native to China. The so-called asparagus lettuce and others with long, narrow leaves and tall, thick, succulent, edible stems are of this type. They are grown in America only as curiosities.

As in the development of the cabbages, the primitive forms of lettuce were loose, leafy, and sometimes “stemmy” types; the looseheading and firm-heading forms occurred much later.

Cos lettuce (*romaine*) forms an erect, compact rosette of elongated leaves, approaching the character of a head. It is relatively tolerant to heat and evidently was developed in a moderately warm climate. The old records and its name indicate an Italian origin.

Light-green, dark-green, and red-spotted forms of *romaine* were described in 1623. The type was common in Italy in the Middle Ages and is said to have been taken to France from Italy in 1537 by Rabelais. Toward the end of the 16th century it was still rarely grown in France and Germany. It is grown to a minor extent in America, but deserves more attention for home gardens.

Firm-heading forms had become well developed in Europe by the 16th century, but when they first were developed is unknown. The oak-leaved and curled-leaf types, and various colors now known, were all described in the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe.

Columbus evidently carried lettuce to the New World, for its culture was reported on Isabela Island (now called Crooked Island) in the Bahamas in 1494. It was common in Haiti in 1565. When it was introduced into South America is not known, but it was doubtless soon after the discovery. It was under cultivation in Brazil before 1650.



GARDEN GRANTS MADE A DIFFERENCE

BY MICHELE HÉBERT

TANANA DISTRICT LAND RESOURCES AGENT

Gardening can be a wonderful tool for turning kids on to school. Above all, gardening is fun and can be a lifelong companion as a hobby or career. A grant program of the Tanana Valley Master Gardeners in Fairbanks can help make gardening experiences more possible.

Michele Hébert, Land Resources agent for the Tanana District, worked with the local Master Gardener Association to develop a school gardening grant program for teachers in and around Fairbanks. The program is modeled after the successful National Gardening program and offers up to \$150 dollars for applicants to purchase materials to support a gardening program.

"The children enjoyed watching the development of their transplants. As the garden grew, so did their sense of accomplishment. Thank you for providing the grant that made this experience possible and a success."

Rex Ann Hall, grant recipient

The school garden grants program started in 1998 with 6 schools. By 2002, the program had funded 42 teachers with funds for school gardening projects. The funding projects have varied from a traditional vegetable garden outside a third grade classroom to handicapped growing benches for special need kids. High school students grew plants for the senior center; elementary kids grew plants for school beautification and the Alyeska Pipeline. Preschool children at Headstart grew potatoes and tomatoes. High school students cleared trees to put in a historical potato patch. Two teachers started an after-school gardening program where over 100 willingly participated.

A school garden is a wonderful way to bring hands-on science to the classroom. There are so many benefits from involving kids in gardening. Nurturing plants from seed to harvest leads to increased confidence, self-esteem and pride. Children become empowered and motivated by the realization that hard work and patience produce concrete, satisfying results. The garden provides a place for groups of youngsters to cooperate, solve problems together and share the fruits of their labor. As the skills of problem solving and cooperation are so tenuous globally, this experience is a critical one for our future leaders.

Kids learn about what a difference flowers can make to a site. Youth gardens can beautify and transform the school and allow children to become actively involved in improving their own communities. Members of the community, in turn, respond with increased local pride and support for the gardening efforts.

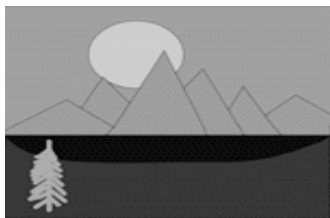
Vegetable gardens improve nutrition, and teach about self-sufficiency and where food comes from. Kids work together to select crops, maintain the garden, harvest the rewards and eat truly fresh produce. The garden sets the stage for discussing, investigating and responding to local and global food and hunger issues. Issues concerning food production, food distribution, agriculture technology and land resources can be integrated into the garden program. This experience offers children the opportunity to actively address some of this problem locally and realize that they can be part of the solution.

"Project Life - this teaches many world-related skills including taking responsibility for plant care, working with others, cleaning etc."

Brenda Sadler, Special Educational Instructor, grant recipient

There are the entrepreneur skills learned from raising plants and plant products for sale. All kids enjoy the pride that comes from being part of a profitable business. Scientific concepts take on new meaning when raising plants. In the classroom kids learn about parts of a plant, effects of light, water and temperature, stages of growth and at times the role of pests. Kids learn that science has real life applications. All the subject areas can be enriched from

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**CENTRAL PENINSULA
MASTER GARDENER NEWS**
BY ROSEMARY KIMBALL

Just when I think nothing is happening around the peninsula, I make a call to Janice, our Ramrod and find out all sorts of stuff. The Master Gardener class for this year is going to be offered twice, one in Kenai/Soldotna and one in Seldovia. The mid-peninsula one will have 20 hours in January and 20 hours in February.

Homer gets a couple of good things too. Tom Jahns will be teaching a course on Greenhouse Gardening through the KPC Kachemak Bay Campus on Wednesdays Feb 12 through March 5th. Check with the college to register and get the location and schedule. Ed Berg with the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge will be teaching a course on Lichens that will include field work as well as class work. This will also be taught through the Kachemak Bay Campus in Homer. April 5th and 19th from 10 am to 5pm each Saturday. Once again check with KPC or the Homer campus to register and obtain details. That is enough to make me drool and wish Homer weren't so far away!

If any Peninsula MG's are interested in working on an Herbarium involving mounting and labeling contact Janice at the CES office 262-5824.

And in the neat Christmas presents division: from my neighbor, some marking pens that are the same size as the very small-pointed Sharpies but are black paint, waterproof and sunproof. He got them from an art supply catalog listed in the back of one of the hort/garden magazines. Sharpies are waterproof just fine but I found out they weren't sunproof they year I was doing personal pea trials with 8 different varieties. I ended up with 8 unmarked varieties. I also got the book *This Organic Life; Confessions of a Suburban Homesteader* by Joan Dye Gussow. It is a good read about their garden on the banks of the Hudson River and with good recipes to boot. Sweet potato latkes are on the menu for tonight.

The trees at Pioneer Park were wrapped by the Parks Department in soldotna and they did a real nice job. It defies moose munching.

Moose have been evident around our house. Hares have not! Even at my neighbor's drive which has lots of larch-munching hares, there is only one runway apparent. It seems to be a super "down" year here.

And, the gardener's mantra "wait until next year" is shot. Next year is here now and have a good one.



LETTUCE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

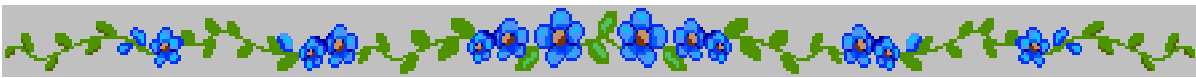
Lettuce was doubtless among the first garden seeds sown in every European colony on this continent. Loose-leaf lettuces are still popular for home gardens because they are so easy to grow. Since, however, the loose-leaf form is highly perishable after harvesting, it is now rarely grown in the United States for sale except in greenhouses.

Most of our present commercial lettuce is of one strain or another of the New York variety or of the several Imperial strains. Although they differ in adaptability and behavior in the field, these Imperial and New York strains appear much alike to the final consumer. They are erroneously called "Iceberg" lettuce. Iceberg is a variety with red-tinged leaves and no commercial importance.

Disease-resistant Strains Developed

One of the outstanding plant-breeding accomplishments of modern times is the development of the Imperial and related strains of lettuce. These were developed for resistance to mildew and brown blight, diseases that were rapidly wrecking the huge lettuce industry of the Southwest about 15 to 20 years ago. Now nearly all of the lettuce grown in the Southwest is of these Imperial strains. Generally they are not well adapted to the East or South.

Lettuce is an annual plant that requires a relatively cool climate for good leaf and head growth. Hot weather causes it to become bitter and hastens the elongation of its stem into a tall seed stalk. The stems or "cores" of head varieties elongate too soon if grown in too warm weather, either preventing heading or causing the heads to be loose and of poor quality. Head lettuce is exacting in its climate, soil, and cultural requirements.



Bird Chatter

- The Alaska Pest Management Web Page is up and is in the process of being registered with the servers. This site is for agriculture in Alaska and will be expanding and changing regularly. Check it out at <http://www.alaskapestmanagement.com>
- A link to the All America Selections winners <http://www.hcmga.org/AAS2003.html>
- A male cicada can sing a "love song" up to 100 decibels. Louder than a vacuum cleaner!
- Only termite colonies have a queen and a king.
- A honeybee hive can produce up to 100 lbs of honey in a year. It would take worker bees to visit 60 million flowers to collect nectar to produce 2.2 lbs of honey.
- Giant water beetles swim with their rear and middle legs and catch prey with their front.
- Fleas lift off 20 times faster than a space rocket.
- The biggest fly in the world is the size of a thumb. [Secret Worlds of Bugs: A Close-up View of the Insect World by Chris Maynard]
- How do MGs keep busy in winter? Alice Samuelson can be seen dressed as a snowflake during the Ski for Women race. There's a picture of her in the ADN publication "Alaska Guide to Winter."
- Original poetry from Verna Pratt as seen in her holiday greeting card:
*As snow and ice adorn the hills,
 And frost bedecks the trees.
 Let memories still linger on,
 Proud plants before the freeze.*
- From the book "Making more plants" by Ken Druse, Rosemary Kimball stumbled upon this tip: When rooting willows in water, it was discovered that the reserved 'willow water' may be used to moisten dry medium as a root stimulant. An article in a magazine once talked about rooting rhododendrum cuttings. They had a formula for making willow water to increase the rooting success, which amounted to putting a bunch of willow cuttings into a bucket of water and soaking it for about a month or so. Then using the water in the medium to root the stubborn cuttings.

SOME PLANTS HELP EACH OTHER

Collaboration helps hot spring species stand the heat. US researchers have discovered that a type of grass and a fungus survive extreme temperatures by working together. The fungus belongs to the *Curvularia* genus and lives entwined around the roots of hot spring panic grass. The two can survive temperatures of up to 50 degrees centigrade at the Lassen Volcanic and Yellowstone national parks. But neither species survived at that temperature when separated in lab tests. US Geological Survey researcher Russell Rodriguez said that it is not yet clear how the collaboration works. He speculates that the two could benefit each other either exchanging protective chemicals. Alternatively the fungus might conduct heat away from the plant along its network of cells.



Calories Burned During Common Gardening Activities

The following list notes the calories burned for 30 minutes of an activity, calculated for a 180 lb. person. A person weighing more burns more calories than what is shown, and a person weighing less burns fewer.

Sleeping	36
Sitting quietly	40
Watering lawn or garden	61
Mowing lawn (riding)	101
Trimming shrubs (power)	142
Raking	162
Bagging leaves	162
Planting seedlings	162
Mowing (push with motor)	182
Planting trees	182
Snow thrower (walking)	182
Trimming shrubs (manual)	182
Weeding	182
Clearing land	202
Digging, spading, tilling	202
Laying sod	202
General gardening	202
Chopping wood	243
Gardening w/ heavy powertools	243
Mowing lawn (push mower)	243
Double digging	344



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
FROM SUE LINCOLN

Happy New Year to everyone! We have some great opportunities, both old and new to provide educational outreach for Anchorage Gardeners. In addition to the below listed opportunities, don't forget about Fur Rondy. I will be putting together a schedule soon. Look for it in your email, on the web; www.corecom.net/~gardener, in the AMGA newsletter and for those who do not have email, in your mailbox.

For those of you who will be staffing garden clinics (garden shows, Fur Rondy, etc.) please remember anecdotal information must not be given out. All information must be research based. This is a liability issue. If a client insists on "home remedies" please refer them to the library.

For those of you interested in working in the office, the phone will be a bit busier this year. We will be taking all horticulture related calls whether they be growing questions, pest questions etc. This is a wonderful opportunity to really get down and dirty in learning about what is happening in Anchorage gardens. I guarantee you will learn a LOT!

I'm looking forward to another successful volunteer season working with all you!

Mothers Day Garden Show

May 9-11, 2003, 10a – 6p, Northway Mall Garden Clinic – need master gardeners to staff a booth. This is a new Show. It is held on Mother's Day weekend. If there is not enough interest in staffing this event, we will decline the invitation... I would need 4 master gardeners per day – two 4 hour shifts per day (10a – 2p and 2p – 6p)

GARDEN GRANTS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

math when determining fertilizer rates to English while keeping a garden journal.

The program has had many generous sponsors that have donated funds to support the program. These funds have also allowed more teacher grants to be funded, introducing more kids to gardening. The Alaska Farm Bureau, Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District Board, the Optimus Club of Fairbanks and the Leiberman Family have provided funds. We are truly grateful for their donations. For additional information about the school gardening grant program, contact Michele Hébert.

"They were amazed to learn that carrots and potatoes grew underground and how big they got."

Bob Marok, 2nd grade teacher

Gardening Calendar

January 15 – May 7, 2003

Advanced Gardening Principles: Wednesdays 4:00p – 7:45p; AGRI A294B; Instructor: Sue Lincoln; Mat-Su Campus; Prerequisite: Modern Home Gardening – AGRI A139 (Contact CES: 786-6300)

January 16 – May 8, 2003

Greenhouse Operations and Management: Thursdays 7:00p – 9:45p; AGRI A240; Instructor: Sue Lincoln; Mat-Su Campus; (Contact CES: 78606300)

January 20

Alaska Master Gardener Meeting: "Everything I Know I Learned From Gardening: A Psychologist and A Horticulturist Discuss the Mirrors of Life and Gardening.", Speakers: Julie Riley & Annie Nevaldine; The January meeting includes the Annual Elections and Member Potluck. 7 p.m., Cooperative Extension Service, Conference Room 130, Carlton Trust Bldg., 2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd. Bring a friend and a dish of something yummy! Call Mary Shier, Chapter president, for info: 345-1562.

February 1

Alaska Statewide Master Gardener Conference: Fairbanks Princess Hotel (see article page 2)

February 17

Alaska Master Gardener Meeting: "Dahlias", Speaker: Garnett Morrow; 7 p.m., Cooperative Extension Service, Conference Room 130, Carlton Trust Bldg., 2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd. Call Mary Shier, Chapter president, for info: 345-1562.



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

Mail: 4006 DeArmoun Road
Anchorage, AK 99516

Phone: 345-4099

Email: gardener@corecom.net

AMGA Web Site: www.corecom.net/~gardener

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

For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact:
Cooperative Extension Office
2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99508
Phone 786-6300
Fax Line 786-6312



January 2003: time to pay your dues!!!

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