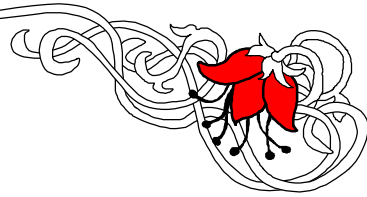


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 5, Issue 11

# ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER November 2003

## From The President by Mary Shier

Okay, I just heard the word - out of roughly 200 members, only seven responded to our editor's request for feedback on your garden results for this year. Mind you, not everyone has email, but still I can't believe it. A most unusual gardening year and no one wants to talk about it!!!!!! Why is that so? Are you ashamed of your gardening abilities for this year? Or do you feel it's a of lack of abilities? Ah ha! That must be it. You've failed and don't want to admit it. Oh, yes, the secret's out now. Never mind the growing conditions.

Well, I don't mind shouting from the roof tops that my gardening year was the pits - the pits! the pits! Yes, the pits! I have never had such a #@#\* poor gardening season. I know I did everything as I normally do, plus some, and had everything going according to schedule. But, as thorough as I thought I was, I still ran up against .....THE ELEMENTS!

Yes, I know a lot of you did also. Why can't you just fess up? Oh, I'll bet you think you're the only one who had a bad year. Well, that ain't so. This year was a tough one for most of us. There may have been a few who overcame the atrocities, always is. So how come you don't want to brag? How about just sharing with the rest of us your secrets of success?

We started off with winds the latter part of May. Had just a little rain in June according to my garden journal records and then no rain until well into August, which was too late to do any real good. Add the exceptional heat to that and it gives us yet another unusual summer - one enjoyed by heat lovers and despised by Northern gardeners. That's not to say I don't enjoy a bit of warmth now and again.

Try as I may, I couldn't give my gardens enough water to make up for what Nature provides. Maybe because whatever moisture I gave them half evaporated in the heat before getting to the plants. Normally when it rains the weather is cooler and moisture gets to where it is intended to go. Not so this year.

Hopefully a few more will respond after reading this newsletter - it's still not too late. Sharing gardening experiences are always welcome. We would even be pleased at the successes and congratulate those fellow gardeners if only we knew who they are. (As long as you share your techniques...)





## Bulbs Bring Dreams of Spring

By Dana Klinkhart

How do I select the best bulbs? How deep should they be planted? What is the most important aspect to successful bulb production? Should I mulch? When should I divide? Cathy Feathergill Calvin from The Forget Me Not Nursery answered all those questions and more this month at the October program meeting of the Master Gardeners Association. Nearly 30 members attended Cathy's informative and entertaining presentation on growing bulbs. Cathy shared tips on preparing the soil, providing drainage, selecting the best bulbs and planting techniques. The slide show brought colorful images of many different forms of bulbs. The active audience participation offered tips and personal experience in gardening with them.

Picture this: 20,000 bulbs planted in the form of an American flag. This will be the sight to see in late May. Forget Me Not Nursery has added this feature to their location in Indian this year. Mark your calendar. The evening came to a close after a LOT of visiting and snacking on fresh apples and dip from New York and sweet harvest treats. Donated door prizes included a Phalenopsis orchid from Deborah Riser, two Paphiopedilum (mottled-leaf) orchids from Sally Karalbelnikov and a garden plaque from Jane Baldwin.

### Announcements:

- ? Ed Hume seeds will be available again this year. Contact: Judy Christianson
- ? The Mentoring Program is training 'seasoned MGs' to support 'new sprouts'. Contact Sue Lincoln

### Coming in November:

A Violet Presentation by Pat Addison is planned for **Monday, November 17<sup>th</sup>** at 7 pm at the Cooperative Extension Service. The Master Gardeners Association program meeting will feature the experience of Pat's thirty years of growing African Violets. Pat thinks it must be a family obsession. Her dad grew them and her sister hybridizes them. Don't miss this chance to hear what is going on the world of African Violets.

Trees are not known by their leaves, nor even by their blossoms, but by their fruits.

-Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204)

Garden catalogs have started to arrive!!!

## How did your Garden Grow?



Last month, the editor sent out an email asking MG's how their gardening went this year. The invitation to respond is still open. If you feel inclined to share your experiences in the newsletter, please email or snail mail your responses.

We'd love to hear from you! For those of you who do not have email, here is the note that was sent out in October:

*Dear Master Gardener,  
It's time for another question about how your gardening went this year: any successes, failures, profound realizations, lessons, good/bad experiences, epiphanies, new plants tried, etc. Also, if you feel so inclined to write a short 'essay', paragraph, whatever, it's always welcome. It's a challenge filling up the 'white space' in the newsletter, so even ideas are always welcome. Please take a moment to reflect on how your gardening went this year, & send it back to me. I will hopefully use it for next month's newsletter. Gina  
p.s. Don't forget that new master gardeners get credit for writing articles for the newsletter!*

• I took the time this year to install a drip irrigation system to take care of the baskets and tubs that I have on the deck, I should have done it years ago. By the way I still have roses, Dahlia's and Glad's in bloom on my South side deck. There is no cover but they have not been hit with frost as yet. Also the roses and Dahlia's near the foundation on the South side are still at it! Jim Roberts

• I bred my 5 year old Samoyed this past January and was hoping and praying that she might finally grow up. But none the less I put up my chicken wire fence around my garden. I worked really hard planting peas (her favorite), potatoes, zucchini, onions and lettuce. I placed plastic domes over my garden and even got great comments from neighbors. So far so good, but then my boyfriend and I went on the first kayaking trip of the summer. He bought two of my puppies (from my older dog) who were 18 months this summer. After a sunny trip in PWS (very unusual), I came back to no garden. I think vegetarian Samoyeds run in the family. Next year they will be 2.5 years, but the puppy I have will be 18 months!!! I think I will grow devil's club next year. Denise Saigh

• It has been the BEST Alaska summer ever... and it's still going great as the middle of October approaches. I can't begin to express how much more I know after completing my Master Gardening Class and putting it to practical use

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



## Volunteer News!

From Sue Lincoln

**W**ow! What a fast and furious summer! You have completed a very busy year! Congratulations! The following chart shows you just how busy you were! Thank you to all who have contributed to the increased knowledge of horticulture in Anchorage!

EVENT	HOURS	CONTACTS
AK Botanical Garden	56	6
Community School	42	47
Misc events	47.5	92
Hort Phones	174	63
State Fair	275.5	1656
Trade Shows (MG Garden Clinics)	462	1516
<b>Total</b>	<b>1057</b>	<b>3380</b>

These numbers look great! However, they are bit low. Remember, when at a garden clinic, a presentation, a community school class, or out in the field with a bunch of kids, it is very important to get an accurate count of those in attendance of your presentation. Our 'contacts' and 'hours' numbers are low; some of the tally sheets weren't completed or turned in. It is very important to the Cooperative Extension Service to report the number of volunteer hours that are used in education as well as the number of people who have benefited from your knowledge. YOU get credit for these numbers as well!

There will be an hours and contacts update form coming to you in the near future. Please look at it, check all the information for accuracy. Please be sure to check your address, phone numbers and e-mail as well as the event and hours/contacts made there.

Please be patient with us. We are revising our database. We are diligently working to ensure accurate information and to ensure everyone is credited with the hours that they have earned. Even if you have completed your 40 hour commitment, any volunteer hours you have put in doing maintenance at the Pioneer Home, Alaska Botanical Garden, or elsewhere should be included in your hours.

Looking forward to another great volunteer season!

## Sprouts to Blossoms Master Gardener Mentor Program

We had a great turnout at the informational meeting to learn about being a mentor to the new master gardeners graduating from the course! Thank you for all who came to volunteer their time helping another master gardener bloom to their fullest extent!

A training session will be held November 19 at 7p in the CES conference room 130. Anyone who has completed their 40 hours and would like to become a mentor is invited. Requirements of a Master Gardener mentor are:

- Completion of their 40 hour commitment

- Desire to 'be there' for a blossoming master gardener

- Commitment to mentorship until the mentee completes their 40 hours or 1 year.

Mentorship success goes both ways. There are wonderful, positive experiences for both the mentee as well as the mentor.

Not sure about being a good mentor? There will be lots of information and support for you as you proceed down this unploughed row. As you advance; look behind you and see what is sprouting!

Contact Sue at 786 6315; [fnsml@uaf.edu](mailto:fnsml@uaf.edu) if you are interested in becoming a mentor!

Sue



## American Peony Society Celebrates 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

by Judith Wilmarth, "The Peony Lady"

The American Peony Society celebrated their 100th anniversary this year of 2003. We were very pleased to be able to attend the Convention and Exhibition at The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chanhassen, Minnesota. The MLA is a beautiful landscaped property containing many collections of plants, two of our favorites being lilacs and peonies.



It was quite gratifying to finally be able to introduce ourselves and to meet many of the peony growers with whom we have corresponded over the past 12 years. Many of these folks are families that have dedicated their lives to bringing new peony varieties to market or have been instrumental in the distribution of peonies worldwide. Most also supply peony stems to various wholesalers and markets, making wonderful bouquets easily available.

The show tables were crammed with thousands of wonderful peonies. The fragrance in the halls was like an exotic perfume, and the colors were much richer than pictures can capture. Needless to say, our lists of 'wanted peonies' for future plantings increased dramatically. Some of the flowers that we especially enjoyed were: 'Command Performance', 'Tourangelle', 'Show Girl', 'Ann Cousins', 'Candy Stripe', 'Elsie Pickett', 'Norma Volz', 'Red Grace', 'Rozella', 'Shawnee Chief', 'John Harvard', 'Many Happy Returns', 'Dolorodell', 'Candy Heart', & 'Lorelie'. Even a new unnamed seedling peony in a light green shade, caught our eye.

The Don Hollingsworth family displayed an awesome collection of 100 different peonies, every shape, form and color imaginable.

The members of the Minnesota Peony Society (Tim & Karen McCauley & friends) were very friendly and helpful. Through their efforts and connections, we were able to visit several growers' fields and plantings, a must if you're ever in the area. Lavern Dunsmore spent a day shuttling us around and acquainting us with the area, which has to be one of the nicest parts of this USA, and Dr. Kent Crossley gave us a hands on tour of his extensive plantings and was very kind to spend so much time with us.

We even had the opportunity to help exhibitor Carol Adelman prepare her flowers for the exhibition tables, it was quite a learning experience.

If you really have an interest in peonies, do try to attend one of their conventions & exhibitions, you will not be disappointed. Or join The American Peony Society, 250 Interlachen Rd., Hopkins, MN 55343. \$10.00 a yr. brings you 4 quarterly bulletins filled with other growers (hobbyist, collectors & commercial) experiences & joys with peonies.

Happy Gardening,  
Judith Wilmarth





## Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

October is such an ugly month. No seed catalogs arriving, Pioneer Park is drab, the soil temperature is down to 40°, the compost pile is down almost 100°, the yard is a mess with all the summer detritus that we were going to pick up later and before it snowed and later was last week! But it's still going to snow. That's the good news and the snow will hide all the junk until late April.

October is a good time to travel, however and see all the crops harvesting and harvested Outside. I took 11 days off and went to Oregon with a friend, Mary, and let me tell you about Pearl's Fruit Stand on Highway 35 just out of Hood River! We hit the apples and pears there big time. With red comice pears at 69 cents a pound who can resist! Mary took back a box of apples and ambrosial honey (not pasteurized and the flavor of the comb was still there) that weighed just under the 50-pound limit. I brought back two just a hair under the limit. I put the heavy winter squash in my roll-on which weighed 30 pounds. Does gardening in Alaska skew the way one looks at food?

One of the neat places that navigator Mary discovered was a botanical wayside sign on the road between Crescent City, CA and Cave Junction, OR. The car I was driving was a very accomplished turner-arounder and it turned around very easily for botany. To my surprise the site was a bog of *Darlingtonia californica*, a carnivorous bog beauty. What surprised me about the site was that it was so unlike the Darlingtonia State Wayside on the coast just north of Florence OR. There you go through some really tall fir trees and the environment is dampish. At this new-to-me site we were in pines and manzanita but with a confused azalea blooming and 'pretty' is always appreciated.

It is good to be back, though and waiting for winter. Soup's on. Stop by.



## KENAI KUDOS

Hello,

My name is Larry Klawunder. I'm a volunteer at the Kenai Peninsula Food Bank Garden. This year I assumed the responsibility for the Food Bank garden.

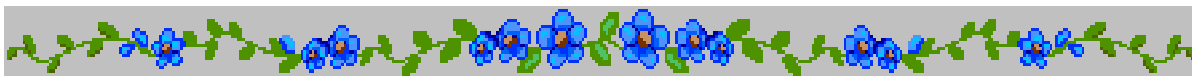
The reason I'm writing to you is to support the Master Gardener Program. Much of the assistance I received this summer was from Master Gardeners in the area. Granted most needed their 40 hour community service commitment, but many have stated a willingness to help next year.

I especially value the knowledge and willingness to help and answer my questions, of the extension service staff here on the peninsula, Tom Jahns and Janice Chumley. They are invaluable to me and the gardeners here on the peninsula and the program does a great service.

I wish to express my thanks for all of this through you to the UAF Extension Service. Thanks to you all.

Larry Klawunder (the garden guy)





## Bird Chatter



- During the Day of Caring Mary Shier was seen in a wheel chair directing volunteers and weeding the Pioneer Home beds. Mary is now in her walking cast. Is it also hot pink???

- Cleona Gross (now of the Southwest) was in town and was also seen at the Pioneer Home planting and cleaning beds on a warm fall day.

- Heard after the master gardener class with Wayne Vandre: "What a wonderful speaker, I could listen to him all day and night."

- Judy Christianson bought Plantskydd on Friday. Of course moose showed up Friday night to eat leaves on lilacs, but did not eat the tips. She sprayed on Saturday afternoon. Moose were back in her yard Sunday. Three moose came into the yard, sniffed the plants that had been sprayed and walked on without touching a single tip. YEH!

- In the Nov-Dec Organic Gardening is a formula for creeping Charlie control. Mix 1/4 cup borax, 2 to 3 teaspoons Ivory soap with one gallon hot water. Then Spray the mixture on the weed. Will not kill grass.

- Forty-five gardeners started the Anchorage Master Gardener course this fall. Three people live in Girdwood.

- Not only was Wayne Vandre seen standing on a table during his MG presentation, Fred Sorensen stood on a chair pretending to be an alien. Why is it the new class gets to have all the fun?

- Sue Lincoln received a mushroom specimen that looked like a very large dog bone.

- MG Mel Monsen reported that the Sargent Cherry his family planted from the batch of "test seedlings" distributed by CES in '91/'90 has finally bloomed this year.

- The flower slides which have been missing from the Master Gardener office for a couple of years have resurfaced. THANK YOU, THANK YOU.

- The Chocolate Moose Candy Company is revising the package its premium chocolate covered BEAR BERRIES (blueberries & cranberries) come in. They checked with CES to make sure the drawings on the box were botanically correct. Way to go!

## Looking Forward to Next Year

My daughter, Julie, wants to be a foreign exchange student next year and we want to earn some extra money. We are available for hire for yard work next spring. Julie is also available for babysitting; she is Camp Fire Certified. I do sewing/mending, and I make yummy peanut brittle, which is a wonderful Christmas treat/present. It's all for a good cause. Phone and email in the directory. Linda Slack

## "HOW DID YOUR GARDEN GROW" CONTINUED...

this summer. I think Vita Sackville-West put it most appropriately when she said, "The more one gardens, the more one learns; and the more one learns, the more one realizes how little one knows!" Thanks for the tour of your garden this summer and hosting the pot luck, Nickel LaFleur

- My asparagus survived last winter only to be weed wacked in the spring (I didn't remember it was there), but it grew back. I planted an apricot tree thanks to the Pioneer Fruit Growers Association, it grew about a foot, hope it survives. I had to replace my male kiwi vine, then found it eaten. Blamed my rabbit all summer, till I found the cat munching on it a few weeks ago. I apologized to the rabbit, stupid cat. The mint finally crossed a line I couldn't ignore so it had to come out. It was replaced by a variety of perennials that have nicer flowers. The slugs never came so I couldn't use my egg shells to try to deter them (I'm not complaining here, by the way). I was extremely pleased with my garden this year, of course, there's lots I'm going to change next year anyway! Linda Slack

- It was absolutely my worst garden year ever. None of my cole crops seemed to do well. My kale was half the size of last year as was my cabbage and broccoli. Carrots did not reach the size I expected though my granddaughter loves the small ones and thinks I planted them just for her. Most of the flowers did fine. I think the excessive heat had a definite effect on growing conditions this year. I also had a scab problem on my potatoes as well. I have never seen such scab in my entire life. Was like what I envision small pox would be. I rotate my crops yearly and buy seed potatoes so I don't have a clue as to where it came from. They are just gross. I have to peel my potatoes for the first time ever. YUCK. I'm really looking forward to next year. Mary Shier

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



- I caused to have taken out 15 gallons of growing media from the beds in the greenhouse and replaced it with 15 gallons of 2-year-old compost and the tomatoes took off running! I had a 20-oz Cabernet and a bunch of 16-oz Northern Exposures! Never have had tomatoes that good. If they liked the compost last year, wait 'til next year. The new compost is ready to go. Rosemary Kimball

- We had a lot of critter-problems this year: found root maggots in my kale, greenhouse over run by aphids, dogs ate the cabbage, blossom end rot on the tomatoes, moose running through my 'invisible fence', bug holes in leaves, & slugs galore. On the positive side, however, I made 6 gallons of salsa out of the good tomatoes, and we got our gravel path put in around the raised beds, so no more weeds & mud to contend with. A big problem surfaced when we found out the state was taking back their easement, where my woodland bed was located. Since I'd 'reclaimed' a weed infested portion of my perennial bed, the problem resolved itself, since I had a nice new revitalized 'empty' bed to move my plants into. I hope the shade tolerant plants tolerate being in full sun. And since we had such nice weather this fall, I was able get rid of a lot of worn out plants, and move some that had outgrown their positions to better locations. Gina Docherty



### GARDEN TRIVIA

? ???How about this.... The nursery rhyme Ring Around the Rosey is a rhyme about the plague. Infected people with the plague would get red circular sores ("Ring around the rosey..."), these sores would smell very badly and common folks would put flowers on their bodies somewhere (inconspicuously), so that it would cover the smell of the sores ("...a pocket full of posies..."), People who died from the plague would be burned so as to reduce the possible spread of the disease ("...ashes, ashes, we all fall down).

? ???Cranberries are sorted for ripeness by bouncing them; a fully ripened cranberry can be dribbled like a basketball.

? ???Cranberry Jello is only sold in November and December, and is the only jello flavor that comes from real fruit, not artificial flavoring.

## Gardening Calendar

### Nov 7

Anchorage Garden Club: "Garden Design" presented by Erma MacMillan; Pioneer Schoolhouse, lower level; located at 3rd and Eagle Streets; 7:30 p.m. Programs are free and open to everyone.

### Nov 13

Wildflower Garden Club Workshop - "Orchid Repotting Clinic," 10 a.m., Wayne Toups will be guiding with his orchid expertise; Bring your orchids. Contact Sally, 333-8237

### Nov. 17

Alaska Master Gardener Association monthly meeting: "African Violets", with Pat Addison. Meets 7 p.m. @ the CES, Conference Rm. 130, 2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd. Call 345-1562 for info.

### Nov 18-19

Anchorage Garden Club: 43rd Annual Holiday Flower Show at the Wells Fargo Bank, 301 W. Northern Lights Blvd., Free & open to the public.

### December:

There is no AMGA meeting schedule for the month of December. Happy Holidays!

**Don't forget: Please send in calendar items so they can be posted in the newsletter and on the MG Web page.**



### Happy Thanksgiving!!!

The Anchorage Chapter of the Alaska Master Gardeners Association welcomes letters, opinions, articles, ideas and inquiries. Contact the editor, Gina Docherty, at:  
 Mail: 4006 DeArmour 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  
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***Inside this issue....***

From the President  
Bulbs Bring Dreams of Spring  
How did you Garden Grow?  
Volunteer News  
Sprouts to Blossoms MG Mentor Program  
American Peony Society Celebrates 100 Yrs.  
Central Peninsula MG News  
Kenai Kudos  
Garden Trivia

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