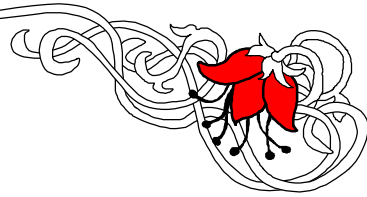


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 5, Issue 10

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER October 2003

From the President by Mary Shier

Summer days have reached that point again.... time to roll it up and store it away for the winter. It seems like it's just been a blink of an eye since we seeded and transplanted outside. It's time for chores that I like least of all.

Before tools are put away, there are a few necessary tasks to do in the garden. Pulling out annuals, cutting back perennials, harvesting the last of the vegetables are some of the main items. If you compost then you'll want to incorporate all the green material into a new batch including leaves from the yard if you rake rather than use a mulching mower. Be sure to cut off the remaining seed heads prior to shredding, just in case there's not enough heat to do them in.

Oh hey, maybe some of the cuttings from the garden can be used in an autumn door or table display. The later blooming plants or dried flowers, like sunflowers, look nice, especially if you include some colorful stems of leaves. Don't toss out anything you can recycle into an attractive arrangement. There's nothing better than to be creative with your own home grown items and having something different than anyone else on the block. Now, this is a fun thing.

Everyone knows you're supposed to clean up your tools at the end of the season: get the dirt off and oil the handles before storing, clean and put pots away (note the spot you store them so you'll not have to search next spring). I tend to put these things off until the last minute and sometimes I luck out and miss getting them done totally. 'Bad Gardener!'

There are so many more fun things to do such as plant bulbs before the ground freezes or putting together pots of bulbs to be forced for blooming during the drab winter months. The thought of looking forward to these bright bursts of color during the darker months makes this a priority on my 'to do' list. Maybe that's why I drag my feet on the others.

Oh, don't forget to mark the spot where you put new bulbs or plants in the garden. It's better to know in the spring where you shouldn't dig. And, as I have been reminded by my helpful partner, don't forget to finalize notes in your 'Gardeners Journal' for the year.

Happy clean up!





Masters Gardeners receive Warm Welcome By Dana Klinkhart

The first program meeting for the season opened at Jane Bibee's "Orchid Patch" on Monday, September 15th. Nineteen gardeners viewed, handled and tested the unique scent of Jane's fine orchids. The CATTLEYA, VANDA, PHALAENOPSIS and DENDROBIUM orchids were included in the list for us to enjoy. Ideas for potting, propagating and watering orchids were introduced as well as suggestions for addressing their need for particular temperature and light. The Sunset Western Garden Book of 2001 reported the orchid family to be probably the largest in the plant kingdom. The generous selection of orchids on display at "The Orchid Patch" verified that there were more to collect and grow than most of us would have ever imagined. Following refreshments and a fellowship, gardeners left with ideas and prizes. Door prizes included 'pass-along' peonies donated by Judy Wilmarth and a green houseplant donated by Rosemary Kimball.



[PHOTO BY MARGARET SIMON, KENAI]

"I love this one." "This one is my favorite- I love it." "I had to have it. I love this one." Jane Bibee delighted the Kenai contingent with her enthusiasm while showing off her 'patch of orchids' at the September 15 master gardening meeting in Anchorage. From mini to mammoth, from white blossoms to chartreuse, the variety of orchids was overwhelming. Everyone should have a passion for at least one thing the way Jane does for orchids! Thanks for sharing, Jane.

From the "Ask a Master Gardener" Files...

*Dear Master Gardener,
I would like to know what bulbs are appropriate for planting in the Anchorage area. I have some tulip bulbs and some hyacinths. Would it be ok to plant them in whiskey barrels this fall for next year's growing? MJ*

MJ:

Many bulbs do well in our area. Hyacinths can be if you're downtown. Tulips, daffodils, snow drops, crocus, Siberian Squill to name a few are winter hardy in the ground. I wouldn't think they'd survive in containers out in the weather. If you're in town you are in a different zone than I am on lower hillside and the only way is to give it a try with a few and put the others in the ground. (MS)

MJ:

Unless you plan to bury those whiskey barrels for the winter or store them where it maintains a cool temperature 35-40 degrees I wouldn't do it. Bulbs need a cooling period to bloom but having the whole barrel exposed above the soils is not a good idea. There are some years you could do this and they may survive. Scilla, tulips, alliums, daffodils, crocus, ranunculus(protected), anemones, small fritillarias, grape hyacinths - most of these are spring bloomers. Summer bulbs include asiatic lilies and alliums. (Good luck, JC)

MJ:

Yes, [you may plant in barrels] but insulate the barrel with lots of snow, bags of styrofoam peanuts, leaves, mulch, sod, burlap or any old clothing (in hefty bag) that is not good enough for goodwill. I have had luck with many different kinds of bulbs, including tulips and hyacinths. The package will say the zone, but the local greenhouses generally order the ones that do well up here. Wow, they will look beautiful! (Happy planting! LJ)

MJ,

Tulips are very appropriate for this area. They are a delicacy for the moose in the spring however. Daffodils, crocus, chionodoxa, scilla, alliums, iris reticulata (miniature iris), & fritillaria are a few others that do well here. Hyacinths are 'iffy' in our zone - they may do well planted in certain, warmer areas, with good drainage & full sun. They will need winter protection, either from snow fall, or mulch. Moose won't touch daffodils.

Bulbs need to be planted in the ground, as this will protect them from the cold. Planting them in a whiskey barrel is not a good idea, as the sides of the whiskey barrel are too exposed, & they may not do well. You could always try it tho - I've had ferns growing in an exposed container (fairly large) for several years & they survive very well. (GD)



What is a fava bean?

By [Chelsie Vandaveer](#)
September 4, 2003

Source: [Killerplants.com](#)

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In the third millennium BCE, the fava bean (*Vicia faba* Linnaeus) was cultivated in many locations in the Middle East, North Africa, and as far north as central Europe. Archaeologically speaking, it is as if the fava suddenly burst upon the agricultural scene. This bean is actually a member of the vetches, plants usually cultivated as animal fodder and to rebuild worn-out soils. ("*Vicia*", *Hortus Third*, Staff, Liberty Hyde Bailey Hortorium, Cornell, 1976)

Fava beans have four main varieties or lineages, plants with desirable traits which people selected and cultivated. *Vicia faba* var. *faba* (or major), broad bean, has wide pods and is cooked and eaten as a 'vegetable' before the pods mature and dry. The horse bean (*V. faba* var. *equina*) is grown for animal forage.

Vicia faba var. *minor*, tic or pigeon bean, and *V. faba* var. *paucijuga* are raised to maturity. The seeds or pulses are cooked and eaten or used in animal feed.

Of the main varieties of fava beans, there are landraces or local types, plants that grow better in one area than they do in another or have slightly different traits. Fava landraces are perpetuated by farmers that need reliable plants; the seeds handed down from parents to children for generations. ("*Diversity of Farmer-named Faba Bean (Vicia faba L.) Varieties in Morocco: A Scientific Basis for In Situ Conservation on-farm in Local Ecosystems*", M. Sadiki, L. Belqadi, M. Mahdi, and D. Jarvis)

The fava is an ancient crop and a mystery. Small fava seeds were discovered at an archaeological site in northern Israel dating to 6500 BCE. But there is no archaeological evidence showing how humans domesticated this crop; no one has discovered any intermediate types of seeds. ("*Vicia faba (Broad Bean, Faba Bean, Horse Bean, Tic Bean)*", Hamish Robertson, *Biodiversity Explorer*, I ziko Museums of Cape Town, 2003)

All close relatives of the fava have fourteen chromosomes, fava has only twelve. It cannot hybridize with any of its relatives and did not descend from any of them. Where the fava came from is obscure for no wild fava has ever been found. It is presumed that in the intervening centuries, the wild fava went extinct. ("*Vicia faba L.*", F.J. Muehlbauer and Abebe Tullu, *NewCrop*, Purdue University, 1997)

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What is L-dopa?

By [Chelsie Vandaveer](#)
September 2, 2003

Source: [Killerplants.com](#)

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The Windsor bean is one of the many varieties of the fava bean (*Vicia faba* Linnaeus). As a favorite dish, this bean was cultivated in the garden of Fritz Hoffmann, owner of Hoffmann-La Roche Limited. In 1913 a Roche biochemist, Marcus Guggenheim analyzed Windsor beans from Hoffmann's garden. He isolated dihydroxyphenylalanine or dopa. The amino acid was thought biologically inert and little attention was paid to the discovery. ("*Therapy for Idiopathic Parkinson's Disease*, Irena Rektorova, MD, *European Parkinson's Disease Association*, 2002)

Almost a century earlier, James Parkinson published an article concerning his observations of three patients suffering from palsy. Parkinson was the first to carefully describe the symptoms of the men, all over age 50. His 1817 *An Essay on the Shaking Palsy* was so astute that today the disorder carries his name, Parkinson's disease. ("*The Story of Shaking Palsy*", *History of PD*, Mayo Clinic)

Dopa has two forms: dextrorotary or D-dopa and levorotary or L-dopa. The molecules are stereoisomers or mirror-images of each other. In 1938, animal and human studies found an enzyme that converted L-dopa into dopamine. But it would not be discovered until 1960 that people with Parkinson's disease had severe dopamine deficits.

Research discovered the body converts the amino acid tyrosine into L-dopa; L-dopa is then converted into dopamine. Without the neurotransmitter dopamine to serve a damping effect on neural transmissions, muscles become tense and tremble.

Even though lack of dopamine is the problem, it cannot be given as a treatment. Dopamine cannot cross the barrier between the bloodstream and the brain, but L-dopa can. The enzyme L-dopa decarboxylase changes L-dopa into dopamine in the basal ganglia of the brain.

Since 1966, L-dopa has been the standard treatment to alleviate the symptoms of Parkinson's, but it is not a cure. As the disease progresses, L-dopa eventually fails and causes a host of adverse side-effects. ("*Dopamine*", William S. Messer, Jr., *Medicinal and Biological Chemistry*, University of Toledo, 2000)

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HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

by Linda J. Slack, Master Gardener



Maybe Mike Doogan is right- spending a week digging dandelions from the Denali Park roadside isn't everyone's idea of a great vacation. But, for a gardener like me who hasn't seen much of the park, it was perfect! It was an extra bonus that they gave me an extra 3 days camping and bus ticket in return.

I arranged a ride with a fellow Dandelion Digger from Anchorage. We arrived in Denali Park on Sunday, July 15, and met Wendy Mahovlic, Re-vegetation Technician at Denali for the past 5 seasons, who is also known as the Dandelion Queen. She is in charge of the Dandelion De-Veg Project, and her enthusiasm is contagious. She explained the goal of the project is to stop the spread of non-native dandelions from along the gravel portion of the road. They are invasive and crowd out native species. She keeps careful notes on where the dandelions are and refers to these notes when scouting locations for next spring's digging. Timing is crucial to the success of this endeavor-one dandelion can spread 250 seeds if we don't get to it first. She has noticed much improvement since the project started

Besides the dandelions already present in the park, seeds come in on car and bike tires, on people's shoes and on backpacks. The park busses are washed daily, which helps reduce the spread. The park also no longer uses gravel or dirt from outside park boundaries in new construction. It all helps keep Denali native and beautiful.

We camped at Savage River Sunday night and boarded the park bus early Monday morning, heading for Wonder Lake, our base camp. All I can say is WOW. The trip was awesome! I saw a bear with 3 cubs, moose, caribou, Dall sheep, a fox, a wolf, beavers, eagles. The weather was mostly sunny, but high clouds hid the top of the mountain. It was afternoon before we pitched our tents so there wasn't time for any work. We had dinner, enjoyed the Ranger talk, and explored the campground. There were lots of wildflowers in bloom (next time I'm bringing Verna Pratt with me, or at least the guidebook!). The scrubby alder and willow surrounding my tent was thick and lush. It was a good thing I didn't have clippers with me, the urge to clean up the winter killed branches rising above the green would surely have gotten me into trouble!

The plan was for us to cover the last 9 miles of road, from Wonder Lake Campground to Fannie Quigley's Cabin in Kantishna. We split into 2 groups, dropping off one group and driving ahead and parking the van for them to pick up down the road. We leap-frogged this way the entire way. It did not feel like 9 miles. We dug both the native and non-native dandelions. Wendy explained the difference to me, but it was so subtle and time-consuming we did away with them all. We made note of where we stopped each day, working about 5 hours each day. On the third day, a group of young people from the Denali Discovery Camp (put on by the Denali Foundation), joined us in our quest for dandelions. There were about 10 kids, ages 12-14 and 3 adults who helped us dig for awhile in Kantishna. The area needed a lot of work, and it was fun having them around.

The weather cooperated the entire week. Denali was visible 3 glorious days in a row. There was rain one night, and it softened up the ground and made digging easier.

It was fascinating to observe the tourists coming and going during the course of the week. Some would take that long bus ride in and then get back on the bus and leave immediately. Most others would stay overnight and leave in the morning. There were people from all over the world, it was wonderful. There was even a group from the Czech Republic, one of who was an expert on the taxonomy of dandelions!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News

By Rosemary Kimball

..and that was the month that was. This one started with a bang: attendance at the first fall meeting of the Master Gardeners in Anchorage at which FOUR of us put in the ritual appearance to keep our affiliation. Our two Ramrods, Margaret and I started the day with a trip to Recluse Gardens in Wasilla where Rhonda gave us the \$5 tour. The Kolima Rose which was a neat-appearing ground cover last year is growing like a flat spiny kudzu vine and that is always nice to see. It had clusters of white flowers with yellow centers. This year she will be making vegetative cuttings so start looking for it next spring. She sent us over to Mount Bornman, a rock garden that her husband Jeff built for some people down the pike. From there we went to the Palmer Visitor's Center to admire their garden with the neatly-labeled noxious weed, purple loosestrife. Eeeek. On to dinner and then the trip to the Orchid Patch. What a nifty obsession. After spending the night in town we went to Gina's garden and then up to Mary's. It was a very satisfying trip that we are planning to repeat next year with another stop in the Valley at someone our Ramrod Janice knows. It was wonderful to be able to "talk plant" for the trip.

I got back to find that my red begonia in the basket by the back door had been nailed by the 16° F temperature the night before and had bled to death all over the white chair underneath. I'll miss that obliging plant. I found out too that Cerinthe can make a nice flower arrangement and it will go ahead and mature and drop its seeds on the table. Since the seeds are so pricey for such a fecund plant I've scraped them into an envelope for next summer's bloom.

Even with the 16°-24° nights my compost pile is cooking between 140°-160°. It must be all that good rabbit "dressing" as a neighbor from Maine politely calls it. (Is that where the term side dressing comes from?) I've run out of room in the bins and I still have stuff to shred! Wealth!

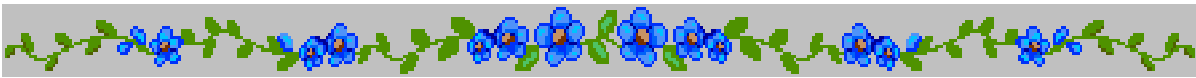
I caused to have taken out 15 gallons of growing medium in the greenhouse and replaced it with 15 gallons of compost and grew the biggest tomatoes ever. One weighed in at 20 ounces and there are several one pounders ripening in the laundry room. If the plants liked this year, wait until next year.

I have a friend that grows European cucumbers and keeps a pot-side tally of production. Usually she gets about 45 fruit per plant. This year she has one rebellious plant that has put out 110 fruit and is still producing! It was treated the same as all the other plants but somehow it had a mind of its own. She's wanting it to finish so she can shut down the greenhouse but at the same time wanting to see what it will finally finish at. The variety is Carmen from T&M.

The 16° nights have changed the smell of the air to souring foliage. I got a whiff of the Hawaiian plant maile while standing at the edge the the duck pond garden. It was so out of place that it was a scent I had to track down. My husband had weed whacked the grass on the edge of the pond and many years ago we'd transplanted a grass I gotten that was supposed to flavor vodka in Russia. That was the smell. Unfortunately it is so interspersed with the pond grass that the vodka will have to remain unflavored another year unless I want to weed the trollius patch for it.

The fungus gnats that have been somewhere else all summer are making their parade between my face and the computer screen again. Squoosh one and another picks up the route. I've got to get the 1/4 of sand on my house plant gnat gnurseries to make reproduction less pleasant.

Just think...the new catalogs will start arriving soon.



Bird Chatter

Master Gardener Erika Keinlen and husband Jeff had a little girl born Aug. 22 at 12:35 am: 7# 7.5 oz, 19.5" long. Congratulations on the new "sprout".

Thanks to efforts of Master Gardeners at clinics there are over 300 people who have expressed an interest in this fall's Master Gardener class which starts October 14.

According to the Alaska Agricultural Statistics Service, greenhouse and nursery receipts make up 68% of the state's agricultural crop receipts in 2001.

During Juneau MG Ed Buyarski's talk on primroses last month to the newly formed Primula club, Mary Jo Burns suggested every one grow Primula florindae because it's so easy.

The Cooperative Extension Service display at the Palmer State Fair won 3rd place. Thanks to all the Master Gardeners who helped staff the booth.

Not only does Judith Wilmarth grow peonies, she has fruit trees growing in her greenhouse! Judy's husband successfully grew several types of grapes, plums, apples & apricots, as well as kiwi fruit.

Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop.
-Ovid, poet (43 BCE - CE 17)

He who builds to every man's advice will have a crooked house.

Danish proverb

I do not envy the owners of very large gardens. The garden should fit its master or his tastes just as his clothes do; it should be neither too large nor too small, but just comfortable. If the garden is larger than he can individually govern and plan and look after, then he is no longer its master but its slave, just as surely as the much-too-rich man is the slave and not the master of his superfluous wealth.

Gertrude Jekyl

Peony Information

from Judy Wilmarth

For information regarding the peony trials at U of A/Fairbanks see:

www.uaf.edu/salrm/afes/pubs/agro/%2035-1.pdf

Also, there is an opportunity for a potential peony grower: There is a market available in supplying cut flowers to wholesaler in the US & for export.

If anyone is interested in growing peonies for this market please contact Dick Houtenbos: dhoutenbos@wanadoo.fr

Our (Alaska) peonies bloom later than the fields in the lower 48, and wholesalers are looking for stems in July for their NY and other markets. Generally they want specific cultivars in large quantities.

Too big for me, after all I like all kinds and could never be happy growing just 2 or 3 types.

"Summer Vacation..." CONT FROM PAGE 4

I was disappointed I couldn't arrange to go on the Wildflower and Native Grass Seed Collection trip was on August 19-22. The seeds collected will be used to re-vegetate around the new construction at the entrance to the park, and other areas. I will definitely be there for Dandelion De-Veg 2004. It's held the same 2 weeks every year timed when they are in bloom, and before they go to seed.

The knee pads and mosquito hat I brought with me were must-haves, but one thing I will do differently next year is bring real food. All I had was freeze-dried backpacking food left over from summers past. That stuff just isn't very good. The bear proof food lockers were great, the roofs are planted with native vegetation! I'll bring my fishing pole, too. There was a pair of loons nesting on the not-too-far shore, it was so peaceful. I'll bring more film, too. Hope to see you there!





Message from Sue Lincoln

Volunteer Hours Reporting

It's that time again for the Cooperative Extension Service to prepare and submit annual reports. I need everyone who has volunteered this year to send me their hours who haven't done so. The last time hours were updated in the data base was March 2003. You can either send them on the form in your volunteer notebook or you can email them to me. Please be sure to indicate the date, event, hours spent volunteering and the number of community contacts (people) you helped. If you gave a presentation, how many people were in attendance? If you talked to a group, how many people did you speak to? What was the topic of your presentation/talk?

Mentorship Training

The information meeting was a great success. For those of you who have completed your forty hour commitment and would like to take a new master gardener under your 'leaf', but couldn't make the September meeting, watch the newsletter, your snail mail box as well as your e-mail box for further information on an upcoming training session.



For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact:

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2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
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Phone 786-6300
Fax Line 786-6312

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!)

Gardening Calendar

Oct 2

Anchorage Garden Club: "Swags and Wreaths" - Pioneer Schoolhouse, lower level; located at 3rd and Eagle Streets; 7:30 p.m. Programs are free and open to everyone.

Oct 9

Wildflower Garden Club Workshop, "Forcing Bulbs for Indoor Winter Use" - Debbie Hinchey will lead a hands-on workshop on potting bulbs for winter pleasure. Meet at 10 a.m., Central Lutheran Church, 15th Ave. & Cordova. 277-7150

Oct 14 - Dec. 4

Anchorage Master Gardener Course - 12:30 - 3:30 p.m., Cooperative Extension Service; Requires 40 hours of volunteer service after 40 hours of training.

Oct 20

Alaska Master Gardener Association: "Bulbs", with Cathy Feathergill Calvin. Meets 7 p.m. @ the CES, Conference Rm. 130, 2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd. Call 345-1562 for info.

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





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