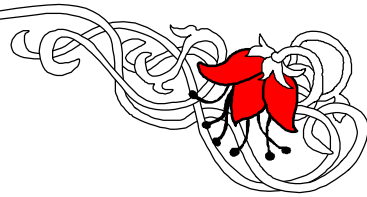


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 4, Issue 5

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

April 2002

FROM THE PRESIDENT BY MARY SHIER

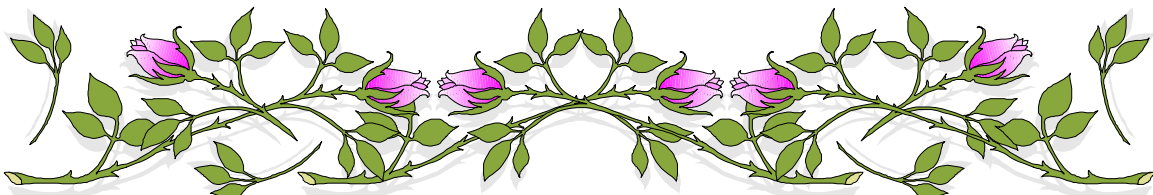
What a wonderful time of year! Hubby fired up the greenhouse so it's time to get some of those seeds started and transfer the early plants started in the house to the greenhouse shelves. I've been itching to do some seeding ever since receiving the newest seed orders and our seed exchange evening.

It's a good thing that I keep an on-going list of all my seeds. It would be mind boggling otherwise, considering that I have seeds left over from several years. Another handy use for having a computer: I enter them by name, variety, vendor, date, color, height, distance apart and number of weeks needed before June 1st. The program then calculates the date to start the seeds. I also have columns for jotting down the day seeded, date of transplanting, and tracking any important notations such as: "needs light to germinate" or "3 months in cool conditions" which sometimes is overlooked. It's also a good idea to highlight these instructions on the seed packet as well. There are times I need all the help I can get. Entering information very soon after receiving the seeds is beneficial before storing, for as you know: out of sight, out of mind.

Once I have all entries entered, the list can be printed out in any manner I wish. I usually hide the columns not needed at the time, such as vendor and date bought, etc., to eliminate using so much extra paper, but still maintaining all the information necessary. It's always a good idea to "print preview" the data to catch the possibility of having the last one or two columns print on a separate page. Oh, that is frustrating! The printer can't be shut down soon enough to stop it printing.

It's also handy to print out a page of what needs planting each month separately so they can be added to the corresponding month in your Master Gardener Garden Journal. Then, as you turn to each month, there's the list of seeds you need to plant. Place the journal with or near the seeds, and when the time comes, grab the seed container with one hand, tuck the journal under your arm and head to the seeding place.

Isn't it a terrific feeling to have soil under your fingernails once more?





**ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION
ANCHORAGE CHAPTER GENERAL MEETING
MARCH 18, 2002
DANA KLINKHART, SECRETARY**

The general program meeting of the Master Gardening Association began at 7 pm. Pat Halloway from the Georgeson Botanical Garden at UAF had planned to be our guest speaker, however, she was unable to fly to Anchorage as scheduled due to canceled flights following the record snowfall. Julie Riley stepped up to the plate with a slideshow presentation on "Common Flowers, Unusual Species". Using a creative format with two slide projectors, Julie brought us all back to the garden with a wonderful show of our favorite perennials that were juxtaposed with unusual 'cousins' or species. Gardeners topped off the evening by sharing their experiences with the same plants. Margaret Love was the recipient of the door prize, a primrose basket. Refreshments and conversation completed the evening.

**AMGA CONFERENCE "CAN YOU DIG IT!"
MAY 10 - 11, 2002
HAWTHORNE SUITES**

The Alaska Master Gardener Conference, hosted by the Anchorage Chapter of the Alaska Master Gardeners Association, will be held at the Hawthorn Suites in Anchorage, and features a slate of Outside and local speakers on topics including perennials, garden design, arborsculpture, greenhouse gardening, gardening with children, roses, peonies and many other topics. Featured speakers include:
Dan Heims, Sharon Lovejoy, Shane Smith, Steve Schmidt, Richard Reames, Marion Owens,

In addition to these out of town speakers, Julie Riley, Debbie Hinchey, Annie Nevaldine, Judy Wilmarth and Dana Klinkhart, and Harry Engel will make presentations.

If you haven't received a registration form, contact the Cooperative Extension Office, or download a printable copy from the AMGA web site:

corecom.net/~gardener/Calendar/AMGAcalendar2002.html

or just go to the home page: corecom.net/~gardener & click on "Calendar"

**SOUTHEAST ALASKA MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE
MAY 2-4, 2002**

Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners Association (with Alaska Cooperative Extension) will host a biennial Gardening Conference 2002 May 2 - 4 at Centennial Hall in Juneau. Conference 2002 highlights three featured speakers, nine workshops, a trade show, and tours of some outstanding local gardens. The American Primrose Society also will be holding a show and plant sale at Centennial Hall. Glacier Gardens is the site of the Thursday evening 5/2 reception.

Featured speakers include Jim Hole (co-owner of Hole's Greenhouses and Gardens, Ltd., Alberta, Canada, and garden writer for several Canadian periodicals) speaking on hardy plants and new varieties; Micaela Colley (horticulturist & entomologist, farm manager for the research farm operated by Seeds of Change) speaking on seed saving and the importance of genetic preservation; and Ciscoe Morris (Seattle University's grounds and landscaping manager, and TV and radio show gardening personality) speaking on perennials for shady/wet climates.

Workshop leaders (all from Alaska) will lead workshops entitled: Ideas gleaned from gardens across America, flower arranging, restoration planting including ground covers, biblical gardens at the Shrine of St. Therese, island garden -- growing and preparing Southeast Alaska's finest vegetables, ornamental trees and shrubs, and a Q & A session.

Advance registration (by April 19) costs \$65, or \$80 for late registration, and one-day rates are available. For details on the program and speakers, as well as registration forms, visit the conference website: www.spectrumdesignonline.com/gconf or call the Extension Office, (907) 465-8749, to obtain a mailed program brochure including registration form.

**AMGA APRIL 15TH MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT:
"BEHIND THE SCENES OF ENGLISH GARDENS"**

SPEAKER: RITA JO SHOULTZ, FRITZ CREEK GARDENS, HOMER

Rita always has interesting slides & usually brings plants for sale at the meetings.

The 2002 AMGA Directories should be ready by April 15th - don't miss Rita's great program and pick up your Directory while you're there. You might even win a door prize! See you then!



BLOOMING INDOOR SUCCULENTS

BY CAROLYN PAUW BARDEN

WSU Cooperative Extension Master Gardener

House plants that don't read the calendar: this past autumn the flowers that smothered my Thanksgiving Cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*) were as bright as Carmen Miranda's lipstick. It was a real holiday decoration-for Halloween-because by mid November all of those blossoms has shriveled and fallen to the floor as prey for marauding kitten paws. My Christmas Cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*) has a few blooms on it now, in mid-February, and you should have seen it last July.

These house plants are wonderful, reliable plants, but they often bloom at times that disagree with their holiday names of Thanksgiving and Christmas cactus. I've had some of my flowering succulents for more than a quarter of a century-hauling them from house to house over the years-and they are old, old friends. My plants are free spirits that bloom and bloom, but only on their own schedule.

I grow a variety of similar succulents, including *Schlumbergera* in various forms, *Epiphyllum x ackermanii* (Orchid Cactus) and a *Hylocereus* "Queen of the Night". I got this one twenty-two years ago from the Volunteer Park Conservatory, in Seattle. The park doesn't grow the mother plant anymore, but the daughter is flourishing for me. The *Hylocereus* is huge (8 feet or more) and quite homely when not blooming. Mine is one that has buds the size of softballs and water-lily like flowers as big as dinner plates with an aroma that shouts louder than a Wagnerian singer: "Here I am, insects. Come and pollinate!"

"Daughters" of succulent houseplants are easy to create. They root eagerly from cuttings and you can create lots of plants from one small one if you try. Cut off a few inches of leaf end and bury it halfway in damp sand. Keep it moist and in a bright window. Voila, new plant!

One reason that I have so many of these plants in my collection is that they are EASY to grow as well as to propagate. Despite all the advice from greenhouse experts, I just give them the same care as my foliage plants and let them bloom when they are ready. Don't be fooled by the common nickname "cactus" in their names-Schlumbergeras don't want to be dry as a bone like a saguaro.

All these indoor bloomers like at least bright light if not a full sunny southern exposure. If your indoor growing space is dark and dreary, you will have difficulties getting them to bloom. Even though I put my succulents in an uncurtained south-facing window for the winter months, I think the reason they bloom best for me in summer or early autumn is that they spend May through September outside on a porch enjoying the air and light with a bit of shade from the hottest sun.

Most of these blooming "cactus" seem to be epiphytic plants (air dwellers) from the crotches of trees in the tropical forest where they get lots of rain, but it drains away fast.

My succulents get a commercial potting mix with extra sand worked in. Water them often but don't let water sit in the saucers to rot the roots. (This is sound advice for almost all houseplants.)

Late February is a great time to tune up all houseplants for the spring growth spurt. Through winter, fertilizer gets applied very sparingly (if at all) but when the light strengthens and days lengthen, growth starts again. At this time of year, I fertilize all houseplants with a very weak solution of low-nitrogen water-soluble plant food. Throughout summer, I fertilize often, but weakly, so that no one's roots are burned by too strong a solution. in clean soil. But I believe that the flowering succulents could go for a long time with no supplemental feeding and still do quite well.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



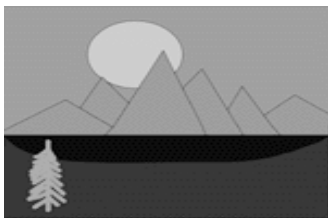
Don't Eat Your Houseplants....

The following is a list of the most common poisonous houseplants, compiled by Wayne Vandre, from a 1986 Anchorage Daily News article:

Common name	Scientific name	Toxic agent	Type of poisoning	Poisonous parts	Symptoms
Azalea	Rhododendron occidentale	Andromedotoxin, arbutin glycoside	Internal	All	Nausea, vomiting, vertigo, breathing problems
Galadium	Caladium cortulanum	Calcium oxalate, asparagine	Internal	All	Severe mouth & throat irritation
Calla Lily	Zantedeschia aethiopica	Calcium oxalate	Internal	Leaves & rhizome	Burning, swelling of mouth & throat
Castor bean	Ricinus communis	Ricin	Internal	Seeds & leaves	Mouth & throat burning, stomach pain, seizures (1-3 seeds can be fatal to a child)
Crown of Thorns	Euphorbia milii splendens	Unknown irritant in sap	Dermatitis, internal	Sap	Skin & eye irritations, swelling of mouth & throat
Cyclamen	Cyclamen persicum	Alkaloids	Internal	Bulb	Stomach cramps, vomiting, diarrhea
Donkeytail	Sedum morganianum	Unidentified glucosides	Internal	All parts	Vomiting, diarrhea, respiratory depression
Dumbcane	Dieffenbachia species	Calcium oxalate, asparagine	All parts	All parts	Irritation, burning of the mouth, tongue & lips
Elephant ear	Colocasia species	Calcium oxalate, asparagine	Internal	All parts	Burning & swelling of the mouth, vomiting & diarrhea
English ivy	Hedera helix	Saponic glycosine, hederagenin	Internal	Leaves	Excitement, difficulty breathing, coma
Flamingo flower	Anthurium species	Calcium oxalate, asparagine	Internal	All parts	Severe irritation to throat & mouth
Hyacinth	Hyacinth orientalis	Alkaloid	Internal	Bulb	Intense stomach cramps, vomiting & diarrhea
Hydrangea	Hydrangea macrophylla	Hydrangicyanogenic glycoside	Internal	Leaves & buds	Vomiting, diarrhea, rapid breathing
Jerusalem cherry	Solanum pseudocapsicum	Solanine alkaloids	Internal	All parts, esp. unripe fruit & leaves	Stomach pains, low temperature, paralysis, dilated pupils, circ. & resp. depression
Lantana	Lantana species	Lantanin alkaloid or lantadene A	Internal	Green berries	Stomach irritation, muscular weakness, circ. collapse
Milk bush	Euphorbia trigona	Unknown irritant in sap	Dermatitis, internal	Sap	Skin & eye irritation, tongue swelling, vomiting
Narcissus	Narcissus species	Alkaloids	Internal	Bulb	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, trembling, seizures
Oleander	Nerium oleander	Oleandrin, nereoside	Dermatitis, internal	All parts, green or dry	Extremely toxic; a single leaf is considered potentially lethal. Symptoms begin several hours after ingestion: dizziness, drowsiness, fast pulse, cold extremities, abd. pain, vomiting, weakness
Philodendron	Philodendron species	Calcium oxalate	Internal	Leaves & stems	Burning of the mouth, vomiting, diarrhea
Sedum	Sedum acres	Unidentified glucosides	Internal	All parts	Vomiting, diarrhea, resp. depression
Tulip	Tulipa species	Tulipen	Internal	Bulb	Vomiting, diarrhea

What to do in case of internal poisoning:

1. Call your physician or Poison Control Center immediately!
2. Identify the plant eaten – common name or other identifying characteristics.
3. Relate how much & which parts of the plant were eaten.
4. Estimate how long ago it was eaten.
5. Give the age & weight of the individual.
6. Note the symptoms observed. Unusual symptoms should be carefully described.
7. Be sure to save the specimen & take it with you to the hospital!



NOTES FROM A STERLING MASTER GARDENER
By ROSEMARY KIMBALL

..Oh why did I ever buy that gallon-sized ligularia which is hardy only to Zone 4—and that's Sunset's Zone 4 to boot!!! Because it has pretty wavy gray-green leaves that's why. And because I was "infected" by running around with Charlie Kempton and Carol Norquist from Anchorage. We were all at the Western Winter Study Weekend of the North American Rock Garden Society in Medford, Oregon, in late February. We'd cut a couple lectures and gone with Carol whose car stops at rock shops, nurseries and used book stores. A costly three hours.

I admit to joining NARGS last year simply because they were holding the study weekend at the Empress Hotel in Victoria, B.C. The presentations and energy were so wonderful that I renewed my membership. The botanical binomials in the air were thick as gnats. The recent quarterly is all about Alaska and if you know a member, borrow the copy. The bird on the front cover with the Portage poppy is a wheatear.

And, if you didn't hear Dr. Finn Haugli, curator of the northernmost botanical garden in the world at 70 degrees north latitude, Tromso, Norway, you missed something. He gave two presentations at the Oregon weekend: the first on the development of the garden as a whole and the plants therein, and the second on primroses. A very good speaker with lovely slides—and his next stop was Anchorage in early March! He does have some advantage over us in that the Gulf Stream warms Tromso in the winter and an average low is +18F and the summer a mild +65F. And there is a horsetail problem in Tromso too.

Intellectually, you know when you get back from vacation there is going to be snow on the ground. It's Alaska. It's mid-March. But a month with the crocuses and daffodils tends to dull one's eyes to reality. There was

an 8-hour wait in Seattle for the plane to leave Anchorage to get to Seattle to pick us up because of the record snowfall! In a way, that knee-deep snow is a good thing after going to the Winter Study Weekend and dreaming rock gardens for the last four weeks. There may be the enormous psychic energy generated by the Weekend but that will ebb to manageable proportions by the time the end of May rolls around and the ground thaws. Snow is good.

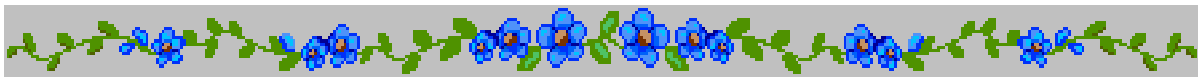
I stopped by One Green World Nursery (www.onegreenworld.com or 1-877-353-4028) in Mollala, Oregon, to get some plants before I came north again. They have a goodly selection of plants that have originated in Russia, so I got a male and female Sea Berry (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) which is native to Central Asia and have more vitamin C than a lemon ever thought of having. I was also able to get the elusive Autumn Olive (*Eleagnus umbellata*) which is a cousin to our native Silverberry (*Eleagnus commutata*) which has edible fruit full of lycopenes for aging eyes (mine).

On the 'home scene': the landscape-oriented community presentations this spring have worked out well and with good attendance. One more still to come in April and that is Rita Jo from Fritz Creek Nursery and that's always a winner.

A friend wrote, "Have you started any seeds yet?" Have a few things going but I'm trying to control myself this year and not have so many 'Oh, I think I started these too early' seedlings. We all know what those are, but the madness is hard to shake off—which reminds me I really ought to start those pansies....

PHOTO BY ROSEMARY KIMBALL





Bird Chatter

- At a recent Mat-Su Master Gardener Association meeting, Dan Elliot described *Primula auricula* as an overdressed magpie. Hally Truelove picked up this thought and said she might pair it with the black & white columbine, "Magpie".
- Consumers wishing to check out which foods contain genetically engineered products can go to Greenpeace's web site: www.truefoodnow.org

"Gardening is not like some secret recipe that's hard to figure out. Gardening is more like your grandmother's cooking - it combines intuition and information with a lot of fun. In the long run, what makes a garden special is the love and nurturing you put in it."

Wildflower expert Kim Hawks

"BLOOMING SUCCULENTS" CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3:

What these plants don't like is repotting. They are happiest when their roots are pot-bound. My Queen of the Night sulks and won't bloom for at least two years whenever I have to move it to a new pot. She teeters there in an impossibly small, out-of-scale pot like a frumpy old lady in too-small high heels. I have to tie her canes to the railing to keep her from being blown over by summer winds. The others mostly hang from the rafters and so it doesn't matter that there is a huge plant in a small pot.

You can see some of these plants in public conservatories where you get the feeling of Victorian décor and plant selection. For specific plant questions, you can call the Master Gardeners at (206) 296-3440 for King County, (253) 798-7170 for Pierce County and (425) 357-6610 for Snohomish County.

[reprinted with permission from the author]
From: *Weekly Regional Garden Column*, March 3, 2002
<http://gardening.wsu.edu/timely/index.htm>

UAA Gardening Class Offered: Introduction to Organic Gardening

[rescheduled]

Ellen Vande Visse, instructor
Friday, April 12 from 6:30-9:30pm
Saturday, April 13 from 9am-4pm
CRN 30884 HME A001-041 \$99

Held in the Diplomacy Building, corner of Tudor and Tudor Centre Drive, Room 531

Covers Alaska growing conditions and organic growing methods such as soil preparation, organic soil amendments, pest management and composting.

Gardening Calendar

April 1st

Early registration deadline for Alaska Master Gardener Conference, Held May 10 & 11 at the Hawthorne Suites in Anchorage. Contact Dana Klinkhart at: klinkhart@gci.net

April 3rd

Community School Course: Seed Starting - Presentation by Blythe Campbell, Master Gardener - Hanshew Middle School, 7pm - 9pm; 10121 Lake Otis Pkwy **contact Community School Coordinator at 267-0234

April 4

Anchorage Garden Club: "Color in the Garden" by Sally Karabelnikoff, Pioneer Schoolhouse located at 3rd and Eagle at 7:30 pm -Public welcome.

*Community School Course: Seed Starting - Presentation by Eva Hancock, Master Gardener - Rabbit Creek Elementary, 7pm - 9pm; 13650 Lake Otis Pkwy **contact Community School Coordinator at 742-5722

April 8th

Community School Course: Perennial Gardening - Presentation by Blythe Campbell, Master Gardener - Hanshew Middle School, 17pm - 9pm, 0121 Lake Otis Pkwy **contact Community School Coordinator at 267-0234

April 11th

Community School Course: Perennial Gardening - Presentation by Eva Hancock, Master Gardener - Rabbit Creek Elementary, 7pm - 9pm, 13650 Lake Otis Pkwy **contact Community School Coordinator at 742-5722

April 13th

Community School Course: So You Want to Build a Pond! Presentation by Dana Klinkhart, Master Gardener - Baxter Elementary, 11am - Noon, 2991 Baxter Rd **contact Community School Coordinator at 742-1781

*Community School Course: Raised Bed Gardening - Presentation by Dick Juelson, Master Gardener - Baxter Elementary, 1pm - 3pm, 2991 Baxter Rd **contact Community School Coordinator at 742-1781

*Spring Garden Show at the Sears Mall: CES Master Gardener Clinic and other Anchorage area gardening clubs. Mall at Sears, 10:00am - 7:00pm

April 15th

Community School Course: Elements of Design in Annual Flower Beds - Presentation by Alice Samuelson, Master Gardener - Baxter Elementary, 7pm - 9pm, 2991 Baxter Rd **contact Community School Coordinator at 742-1781

*Anchorage Master Gardener Association meeting: "Behind the Scenes of English Gardens" - Speaker: Rita Jo Shoultz, Fritz Creek Gardens, 7:00pm, CES, 2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd., Ste. 130

April 16th

Community School Course: Herb Gardening - Presentation by Ali Fitzgerald, Master Gardener - Wendler Middle School, 7pm - 9pm, 2905 Lake Otis Pkwy
**contact Community School Coordinator at 277-3591



April 17th

Community School Course: Care and Handling of Cut Garden Flowers Gardening - Presentation by Sharon Hoffbeck, Master Gardener - Rabbit Creek Elementary, 7pm - 9pm, 13650 Lake Otis Pkwy **contact Community School Coordinator at 742-5722

*Community School Course: Starting and Maintaining a Raspberry Patch - Presentation by Alice Samuelson, Master Gardener - Baxter Elementary, 7pm - 9pm, 2991 Baxter Rd **contact Community School Coordinator at 742-1781

April 18th

Community School Course: Vegetable Gardening - Presentation by Erna Rousy, Master Gardener - Baxter Elementary, 7pm - 9pm, 2991 Baxter Rd **contact Community School Coordinator at 742-1781

*Community School Course: Spring Flower Arranging - Gardening - Presentation by Sharon Hoffbeck, Master Gardener - Rabbit Creek Elementary, 7pm - 9pm, 13650 Lake Otis Pkwy **contact Community School Coordinator at 742-5722

April 19th

Early registration for Southeast Alaska Gardening Conference - Held May 3 & 4 in Juneau. See web site at: <http://www.spectrumdesignonline.com/gconf/program.htm> or contact CES at 786-6300 for a registration brochure

April 20th

Hazard Tree Evaluation - Main speaker Robert Wheeler, CES Forestry Specialist - 9:00am - 5:00pm, Campbell Creek Science Center, 6881 Abbott Loop Rd; Registration fee: \$20, pre-registration required, call CES at 786-6300

April 22nd

Home Landscape Renovation - Instructor: Julie Riley, Extension Horticulture Agent; 7:00pm - 8:30pm, CES conference room 130; FREE, but preregistration is required. Call 786-6300

April 23rd

Community School Course: Hillside Rose Gardening - Presentation by Tom Throop, Master Gardener - Bear Valley Elementary, 7pm - 9pm, 15001 Mountain Air Dr **contact Community School Coordinator at 345-0434

April 25th

Community School Course: Raised Bed Vegetable Gardening - Presentation by Dick Juelson, Master Gardener - Campbell Elementary, 7pm-9pm, 7206 Rovena **contact Community School Coordinator at 742-5579

*Community School Course: Garden Maze - Presentation by Sue Lincoln, CES Horticulture Program Assistant - Gruening Middle School, 7pm - 9pm, 9601 Lee St, Eagle River **contact Community School Coordinator at 694-2458

*Herb Study Group: "Herb of the Year, Echinacea," and "Basil" - 7:30pm, CES Conference room 130

April 29th

Community School Course: Elements of Design in Annual Flower Beds - Presentation by Alice Samuelson, Master Gardener - Baxter Elementary, 7pm - 9pm, 2991 Baxter Rd **contact Community School Coordinator at 742-1781

April 30th

Community School Course: Starting and Maintaining a Raspberry Patch - Presentation by Alice Samuelson, Master Gardener - Baxter Elementary, 7pm - 9pm, 2991 Baxter Rd **contact Community School Coordinator at 742-1781

May 2

Anchorage Garden Club: "Container Gardening" by Irma Schreiner, Pioneer Schoolhouse located at 3rd and Eagle at 7:30 pm - Public welcome.

MAY 2 - 4 (Juneau)

Southeast Alaska Gardeners Conference (see article page 2)

May 10 - 11

Alaska Master Gardener Conference, "Can You Dig It!" (see article page 2)

May 18

Anchorage Garden Club: Lobelia Basket Workshop at TBA 10am - 12pm \$45.00, Pioneer Schoolhouse located at 3rd and Eagle at 7:30 pm - Public welcome.

The Newsletters are sent for publication on the 1st of every month. All efforts are made on the part of the editor to ensure a timely delivery to the readers. However, circumstances often vary, and newsletters are often not delivered as anticipated. If you have not received your newsletter, please check the AMGA web site Garden Calendar or contact the Cooperative Extension for information regarding current events.

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:

Alaska Cooperative Extension
2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd.

Anchorage, AK 99508

Phone: 786-6300

Fax: 786-6312



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**Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Inc.
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University of Alaska Cooperative Extension
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