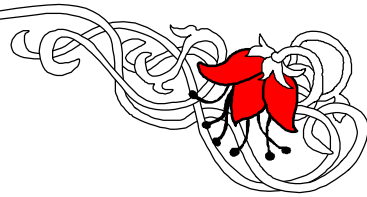


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 4, Issue 9

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER August 2002

FROM THE PRESIDENT BY MARY SHIER

What a summer this has been so far. Almost no rain and **lots** of bugs putting **lots** of holes in plants. We seem to have more bugs than usual and an abundant supply. I don't know about you, but I'm having a terrible time keeping up..... that is..... trying to keep up. On second thought maybe that should be catching up.

I saw the green defoliator worm, several if fact, on my Aquilegia by the back door and sprayed with BT. Checked the others and sprayed them also. Mixed up the Safers Insecticidal Soap to attack aphids on the tomato plants in the green house. Days later I wanted to try Echo-Oil which is supposed to take care of the aphids and (OH GOOD) the eggs. But in trying to mix it found I was missing the instructions on HOW to mix. The 'hang tag' (tag with string which hangs around the pouring spout) was missing. Why in the world would anyone put all the instructions on a 'hang tag' instead of affixing instructions to the container?????? I had to stop all progression and call the catalogue company and have them look up the instructions. Which they did but that cost me time in the yard. Finally I got the information and mixed up a batch and proceeded to the greenhouse. Pumped up the sprayer and pressed the release... nothing happened. I'm ready to...well, you don't want to know. (FYI: I use different sprayers for each type of chemical)

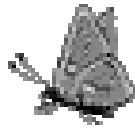
So now it's off to the hardware store to get a new o'ring for the pump shaft. Hubby is going to help me out and goes to his type of supply stores and comes back with his pick, all the while telling me that there are some specialty o'rings which sell for over \$50.00 each. Is that supposed to make me feel good? His pick didn't do the trick so I went shopping on my own. Yes, I know I should have been in the garden doing something productive. Well, several o'rings later I finally get one the right size, and only 19 cents I might add. Not too tight on the shaft and not so fat so that it wont fit into the cylinder. Yea, it works. So what if the aphids have multiplied several times over during the o'ring fiasco. Now I can attack.

I seem to be meeting myself coming and going. I start a project - not a problem. So far so good. Then I need a tool or bug spray or maybe another cup of tea and on my way to fetch whatever or on my return I see any of a number of chores that need my immediate attention: a container which needs watering, a plant needing deadheading, I should have the sprinkler system on that flower bed or drat that dandelion was not there yesterday. Soooooo I stop and take care of what I saw needed doing and then go to the next noticeable item. Some time later I happen to skirt by my original starting spot and notice..... then remember - oh, I was working on that earlier.

It's at this point I think of what I must look like to the wildlife. A large lumbering animal darting about with no purpose or reasoning to my actions. Well so it may seem. I'm sure some look at me and shake their heads with sorrow that I failed to get wings to help me flit around the yard and gardens with greater ease and speed. In my next life.....



DID YOU KNOW?



1. Insects are not attracted to lights at night because of the light. They come too close and are trapped by their own navigation system. Most night flying insects use the light of the moon to aid in navigation. The moon is so far away that its rays are nearly parallel when they reach earth. Insects keep on a straight line by keeping the moonlight ray at the same angle to its eye. The rays of artificial lights radiate in all directions. The only way an insect can keep the light of an artificial light at the same angle to its eye is by flying around the light in a spiral pattern. The insect cannot break the spiral pattern unless the light goes out.

2. Carpenter ants do not eat wood. They excavate the wood in order to make room for their nest. Moist wood is easier to excavate than dry wood.

3. Honey is regurgitated nectar. Honeybees mix nectar from flowers, mix it with their saliva and swallow. When they return to the hive it is regurgitated and mixed with additional saliva containing enzymes that convert the sugars in the nectar to the more digestible sugars of honey. The water is evaporated from the nectar by air currents produced by worker bees rapidly beating their wings.



4. A potential queen bee is fed royal jelly. Royal jelly is bees' milk (a substance secreted by glands in the heads of workers that are less than 18 days old and fed to bee larvae) mixed with extra sugar. The extra carbohydrates in the bees' milk produce larger larvae than those fed regular milk. The larger larvae then produce a hormone that makes it become a queen. Any larvae that grow large enough, regardless of what they eat, will secrete the hormone and can become a queen.

5. Some insects survive winter freezing by producing an antifreeze. The antifreeze consists of glycerol, sorbitol or mannitol. This antifreeze prevents ice crystals from forming in their bodies causing death.



Source: *The Handy Bug Answer Book*
by Dr. Gilbert Waldbauer

PEPPERS, PEPPERS, PEPPERS

aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/vegetables/pepper.html

HISTORY OF THE PEPPER

The pepper, native to the tropics of Central and South America, has probably been cultivated for thousands of years. Archaeologists exploring prehistoric caves in Peru have found the remains of pepper seeds.

South America, Spain, England and the Caribbean all played roles in the introduction of the pepper to North America. Columbus explored the seas in search of a better trade route to the Indies. Dangerous, lengthy overland journeys made spices an expensive commodity for Europeans. When Columbus reached the Caribbean, he tasted a vegetable being grown by the Indians. Its sharp taste reminded him of the familiar black pepper from the East Indies and so he called this vegetable "pepper," as we do to this day. However, Columbus was incorrect as the newly found vegetable was not the pepper of "salt and pepper" (*Piper nigrum*) but an entirely different genus, *Capsicum*.

He brought peppers back to Spain where they were considered an appealing alternative to the more traditional spice. The instant popularity of the vegetable is apparent from the comment of Peter Martyr, writing in 1493 that "...in the New World can be found plants hotter than pepper of Caucasus." (He was referring to *Piper nigrum*.) From Spain the cultivation of the pepper soon spread to the rest of the continent and England. History does not tell us whether peppers reached North America via Europe or the Caribbean.

The first of the English immigrants to the colonies brought the seed of precious vegetables with them to plant in the New World. By the middle of the 18th century, North Americans could import many varieties of flowers and vegetables from England. John Randolph (1727-1784) of Williams-burg, Virginia wrote a treatise on vegetables grown in the New World colonies. In the essays, he referred to "Capsicum...it should be gathered before the pods grow hard for pickles." Research conducted by the National Garden Bureau found that records kept at Mount Vernon indicate George Washington grew a "cayan" pepper.

NOMENCLATURE

While conducting research for this column an obvious nomenclature conflict became apparent. Some folks used 'chili' and others used 'chile' to describe a pepper.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



THE UNLEASHED GARDENER

BY SUE LINCOLN

The best dog in the world died last year. His name was Shadrach and he was a Great Dane. He had a crooked tail, and the wrong color spots for the American Kennel Club registration, but he was a wonderful companion. His only wish was that he could climb into my lap. Many times he tried. I still miss him.

I have a new puppy now. My husband gave her to me for my birthday this year. She is an Airedale Terrier and 18 weeks old. Her name is Bonnie Mae. She has some pretty big paws to fill; but I can tell we will be great friends – she loves to garden!

She's most definitely a tomboy; much like her mistress was when she was younger. I take her into the yard on a retractable leash. She immediately bee lines to flowers in blossom! If I'm not watchful, she will pick an entire bouquet in the time it takes for me to say "hello, neighbor" to the neighbor. I find it intriguing that she likes flower blossoms. I can't say I have ever known a dog that was so fascinated with them. After she has collected her bouquets, we get down to weeding.

I don't need to rake the weeds I pull and leave on the lawn. She very effectively disposes of them one by one. Where she has put them, I have not found yet. I'm sure I will come across a well decomposed pile of compost someday – that will be a treat! My husband says it's compost alright; it's probably those little piles I pick up in her kennel area.

I can't say how impressed I am with her pruning ability. She still only has her puppy teeth, but eventually she gets her branch. Her cuts are a bit ragged now. I can't wait to see what they look like using her adult teeth. Several times now she has convinced me that a shrub should be pruned or that blooming should be put off until next year.

Transplanting is a breeze! She can dig a hole! All I need do is follow behind her with plants in hand and place them into the hole she has dug for me. She does seem to need some practice on size and depth. I think she is trying to convince me to plant trees rather than perennials. I'm sure she'll catch on someday.

I live in a household with two grown sons and one nearly grown son. Trying to get them to help in the garden is dreadful. Bonnie has such enthusiasm it makes the boys' reluctance tolerable. Anyway, I'd rather have enthused and willing help in the garden. Someday, the boys will appreciate and come to know the serenity that comes with tending a garden.





PEPPERS CONT. FROM PAGE 2

We reached several conclusions. Namely, that Chile is a country in South America. Seed companies use chili to designate a 'hot' pepper, and chili is generally an ingredient in ethnic foods. So if you purchase green 'chili' pepper seed, and grow the plants, you will harvest 'chile' peppers for 'Chile rellenos'! Peppers are part of the Solanaceae or Nightshade family which contains over 2000 species of ornamental, medicinal and poisonous plants. This makes the pepper a close cousin to tomato, potato, tobacco, eggplant and petunia.

CLASSIFICATION

There are over 20 species of pepper but only one is commonly known to North American gardeners, *Capsicum annuum*. This species contains the pepper varieties widely cultivated in North America. Although Hortus lists five groups within the *C. annuum* species, we will refer to peppers as one of two kinds—sweet or hot.

SWEET PEPPERS

Bell—This pepper is mostly blocky in shape with three or four lobes on the bottom of the pepper. For years, gardeners could choose only one color of bell, a green that matured to red. Through modern breeding efforts one can now grow bell peppers that mature to an artist's palette of colors including red, yellow, orange, lavender, purple and chocolate. The bell peppers have a crisp, thick flesh and are suitable for eating fresh, or stuffing and baking.

Paprika—When dried and ground, this thin-walled pepper becomes the flavorful condiment paprika.

Pimiento—This heart-shaped pepper measures 3 1/2 by 4 1/2 inches. Fruits have very thick flesh. Strips of this fully mature, bright red, mild tasting pepper are found in stuffed green olives.

Sweet Banana, Sweet Hungarian, Cubanelle—All of these are also referred to as sweet frying or pickling peppers. The shape is long, narrow tapering down to one, two or three lobes. These are thinner-walled than bells and Cubanelle has the thinnest walls of the three. They are usually picked when immature as a light yellow or green. Because they have less water content than bells, they are excellent choices for frying. 'Sweet Banana' is a variety that has withstood the test of time—it was a 1941 All-America Selections Winner. 'Gypsy,' a 1981 AAS Winner is early to mature—only 62 days and performs very well in containers as well as in regular gardens.

Sweet Cherry—Here is a pepper that looks like its name in that it is globe or cherry-shaped and about 1 1/2 inches across. This pepper is harvested when mature green to deep red and is generally used in processing as pickled.

HOT PEPPERS

Cayenne—This pepper is slim and tapered, ranging in length from 3 1/2 to 8 inches. Cayennes are often dried. The hybrid 'Super Cayenne' is a 1990 All American Selections Winner. It

is very productive, early to mature and hot, hot, hot.

Red Chili—The small cone-shape peppers of this type are 1 to 3 inches long and have medium thick flesh. They are often used dried and ground in chili powder. 'Super Chili,' a 1988 AAS Winner is the first hybrid chili. The compact plants were bred for increased yields.

Green Chili—These are the long (7 to 8 inch) green, two celled mildly pungent Anaheim type peppers that are so flavorful in chile rellenos. They turn red at maturity but are nearly always harvested, green, roasted and peeled. They're the kind you'll find in the canned goods section of supermarkets labeled "Green Chile Peppers."

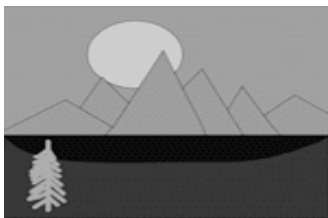
Hungarian Yellow Wax (also called Hot Banana)—This pepper is pungent but still one of the more mild "hots." It is 5 to 6 inches long and picked when an immature greenish yellow color but matures to orangish red. This type is good for pickling or canning.

Jalapeno—Jalapenos are the popular peppers used in many Mexican entrees. They are 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 inches long and have a thick-walled pungent flesh. They may be harvested when immature green or mature red and are good for pickling or canning. There are many varieties of jalapeno peppers with varying degrees of pungency. It has been said that more than 200,000 pounds of jalapeno seed is planted in Mexico annually.

Red Cherry—This hot pepper is only 1 1/2 inches across and shaped like a cherry. It may be used fresh or pickled, primarily pickled.

Red Hot Peppers—There are other *Capsicum annuum* in the Longum Group that add distinct flavor to their native regional cuisines. These vary in plant and fruit size and shape. Smaller plants are attractive in patio containers and hanging baskets. These scorchers such as Chili Tepine, Chile Pequin, Tabasco, and Thai, mature red and zest-up foods. Many additional kinds are available. Small hot yellow peppers like Cascabella and Santa Fe Grande are used primarily for canning and pickling. There is the hot Serrano type that is popular in the Southwest. There is Habanero, said to be 50 times hotter than Jalapeno peppers.

*Won't you come into the garden?
I would like my roses to see you.
-Richard Brinsley Sheridan,
playwright (1751-1816)*



CENTRAL PENINSULA MASTER GARDENER NEWS BY ROSEMARY KIMBALL

I'm sitting here trying to write and listen to "Talk of Alaska" on July 23 and the subject is gardening in Alaska. There ought to be several gardening topics a year on that program!!! At the end the moderator mentioned that this was the first time a gardening program had been done and the phone lines were clogged! And to boot, KSKA needs to ask the Master Gardeners to participate. We're good!

The Master Gardeners from Anchorage have come and gone from the Peninsula. First garden on the tour was MG Margaret Simon's, which is my idea of a perfect and a lovely garden. Whatever Margaret does, Margaret does well and so graciously! Lief Hansen Memorial Garden is nice for this area but, — well, it's what we have and we have volunteers that maintain it and they do a nice job. America is known for volunteerism and so are our public gardens down here. At Margaret's suggestion I

made an 11th hour call to Trinity Nursery and Ron Sexton gave us the Gold Standard tour of the facilities. They have greenhouses (and greenhouse sanitation to die for!) and what was nice was to hear that some of the Anchorage people had shopped there before. We touched at Pioneer Park and finished up at Mark White's rock garden. Mark has a great variety of plants and particularly outstanding was his variegated horseradish. That's not a rock garden plant but at the time it was placed, there was room for the small plant. That was four years ago. Mark had renewed some beds and was working on weeding the main beds. He figures that if people see weeds they can say that they wouldn't have that in their garden and feel good. Technically my garden wasn't on the tour, just refreshments, but knowing how nosy gardeners are I weeded and weeded and weeded. (Guess what I need to do again—WEED)

Off to mix cement for my husband who is using MY cement mixer for mixing cement, not potting soil. Outrageous.

DOCTOR BOB'S NORTHERN GARDENING TIPS: KEEPING AN EYE ON IRIS

BY BOB GOUGH

July 24, 2002 — By MSU News Services
<http://www.montana.edu/commserv/csnews/>

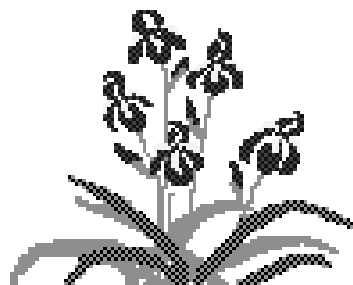
[reprinted with permission from Bob Gough,
Montana State University
Extension Horticulture Specialist]

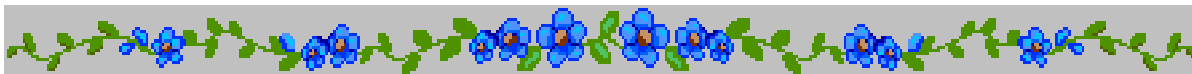
Good gardeners traditionally transplant most things in early spring and early fall, but summertime is just right for moving your tall bearded iris. These hardy perennials with two sets of petals, the standards pointing up and the falls, well, falling down, grow well under our tough gardening conditions and alkaline soils; they deserve a little attention to keep them in peak health. The thick fleshy rhizomes of the iris grow rapidly near the soil's surface and the bed will quickly become overcrowded and decline in vigor unless you thin it every few years.

When flowering is over, deadhead the plants and separate the clumps of rhizomes. Discard the bloomed-out central rhizomes and diseased or damaged rhizomes. Reset only the younger, healthy ones.

Choose a sunny spot and turn in plenty of compost to prepare the new bed. If you use manure, keep it well below the rhizome line. Mix in a few handfuls of a high-phosphorus complete fertilizer, such as 10-15-6, to complete the preparation. Barely cover the new rhizomes with soil and water them in as well. Now, to each rhizome is attached a fan of several leaves. Orient the rhizome so this fan leans away from the center of the bed.

Finally, cut away the top half of the leaf fans to reduce water loss. Your new bed may not bloom the year after transplanting, but it'll make a good show the second year.





Bird Chatter

Depending on soil texture, one inch of water will moisten clay soil to a depth of four inches; sandy soil 16 inches; loamy soil eight inches.

Tiny visitors in town are causing a stir of excitement: Rufus hummingbirds have been seen in South Anchorage, & as far south as Sterling. They seem to like red flowers....

Congratulations to Norm Levesque, member of the 2001/2002 Master Gardener class. The July 26th issue of Frontiersman wrote a wonderful article about him and the roses he grows.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

1. Community School Classes Various areas in the city need Master Gardeners to conduct classes on a variety of subjects:

- Greenhouse
- Perennial
- Composting
- Garden Design
- Floral Design
- Pond/water Gardening
- Trees and Shrubs
- etc., etc., etc.,

2. Home Decorating and Remodeling Show Master Gardener Garden Clinic - Sullivan Arena, August 16-18 shifts:

- Set up: Thursday, Aug 15 afternoon
- Friday, Aug 16: 2 - 5p and 5 - 8p
- Saturday, Aug 17: 10a - 3p and 3p - 8p
- Sunday, Aug 18: 10a - 2p and 2p - 8p
- Take down: Sunday, Aug 18 8p

Seminars are desperately needed! The CES space is generously donated to us. Providing seminars is an excellent opportunity to maintain the success of this show and to provide a much needed service to the community of Anchorage. Suggested subjects include:

- Landscaping
- Organic gardening
- Gardening techniques, etc.

Clinic Coordinator is needed! Design concept for booth is in the works - coordinator will ensure volunteers are scheduled and set up and take down is completed.

3. Hort phones. The following shifts are available:

- Aug 7-9; 1-4p
- Aug 12; 1-4p
- Aug 14-16; 1-4p
- Aug 19; 9 - Noon
- Aug 20-26; 1-4p
- Aug 28-29; 1-4p

4. Anchorage Home and Garden Show - Sullivan Arena - September 20, 21 and 22

Shifts:

- Thursday, Sep 19 - Set Up
- Friday, Sep 20, 4p - 8p
- Saturday, Sep 21 11a - 3:30 and 3:30 - 8p
- Sunday, Sep 22 11a - 2:30 and 2:30p - 6p
- Sunday, Sep 22 Take Down 6p
- Need Clinic Coordinator - Design will be much the same as the Home Decorating and Remodeling show - coordination of set up and take down and staffing is needed.

5. Alaska State Fair! August 22 through September 2, 2002

Shifts:

- Thursday Aug 22: Noon - 5p and 5p - 10p
- Friday, Aug 23: Noon - 5p and 5p - 10p
- Saturdays and Sundays: 10a - 2p and 2p - 6p and 6p - 10p
- Monday - Friday: Noon - 5p and 5p - 10p
- Labor Day: 10a - 2p and 2p - 6p and 6p - 10p.
- Clinic Coordinator is needed. Staffing, scheduling and overall coordinating.
- Set up and Take down will be the responsibility of the CES staff.
- All volunteers will receive a free parking and gate pass.

6. Ski Olsonoski needs volunteers to help with a project leading disabled persons renovating a city block with flowers, etc. Contact Ski at 563-6803 for more information. The project will be conducted during evening and weekend hours. Please note: Hours volunteering with this project WILL count toward your 40 hour commitment!

IN ADDITION - We need flowering or foliage container plants that we can use in the displays for the Home Decorating and Remodeling Show, Anchorage Home and Garden Show and the Alaska State Fair. The design this year will focus on some type of patio planting. If you have pavers you wouldn't mind us using, that would be extremely helpful also.

Call me soon, so you get the shifts you want!

Sue
786 6315



Gardening Calendar

August 1

Anchorage Garden Club meeting, Anchorage Waterways Council" by Holly Kent, 7:30 p.m., Pioneer School house basement, corner of Third & Eagle; contact 566-0539

August 1, 15

ABG Summer Garden Series B: fund raiser for ABG, 6 private garden tours, 4-5:30 p.m., or 5:30-7 p.m., \$60 for series, reservations required. contact ABG at 77-3692

August 3, 10

"Bent Wood Fan Chair," advanced trip art at WoolWood Studio & Gardens, 10:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. The class for experienced woodworking students lets students collect supplies & build a classic twig chair with bent wood fan-style arms, \$150, contact 746-3606

August 8

Wildflower Garden Club progressive garden tour, "Eagle River Gardens", 10 a.m., contact 566-0084

August 8, 22

ABG Summer Garden Series A: fund raiser for ABG, 6 private garden tours, 4-5:30 p.m., or 5:30-7 p.m., \$60 for series, reservations required. contact ABG at 77-3692

August 19

Alaska Master Gardener Association field trip, 7 p.m., Kincaid Park rock garden & Tastee Freeze garden, Jewel Lake & Raspberry Rd., contact 345-1562

August 22 - September 2

Alaska State Fair, Palmer, "It's Bloomin' Fun" Flower and cop entries, Aug. 21-28. Dahlia Show entries Aug. 23; contact 907-746-7154

August 26 - December 15

"Modern Home Gardening" (AGRI 139, 3 CREDITS) 6:30 - 9:20 p.m., Tuesdays. Offered through UAA Community & Technical College, Eagle River Campus, 694-3313. Class meets at Chugiak High. Credit fees plus lab fees. SEPTEMBER REGISTRATION - contact the UAA Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service in Anchorage for information on the Master Gardener course for all, 786-6300

September 5

Anchorage Garden Club meeting, "Willow Art" by Holly Kent, 7:30 p.m., Pioneer School House basement, corner of Third & Eagle, contact 566-0539

September 10

Alaska Rose Society, "Over wintering Techniques," 7 p.m. Central Lutheran Church, 15th & Cordova St., contact Chuck Decker, 243-5976

September 11

"United Way "Day of Caring" clean up at Alaska Botanical Garden, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.; volunteers needed, ABG, 770-3692

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

For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact:

Alaska Cooperative Extension
2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99508
Phone: 786-6300
Fax Line: 786-6312

HELP!!!

Articles, stories, Bird Chatter, etc., needed to help fill in the spaces for your newsletter! Please think about writing for your local MG newsletter. All efforts will be greatly appreciated.
Gina

Newsletter articles are due by the 25th of the month. Copy is sent to the publishers on the 1st.

Inside this issue....

Insect Class 2002

Peppers, Peppers, Peppers

The Unleashed Gardener

CPMG News

Keeping an Eye on Iris

Volunteer Opportunities

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University of Alaska Cooperative Extension
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Anchorage, Alaska 99522-1403**

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