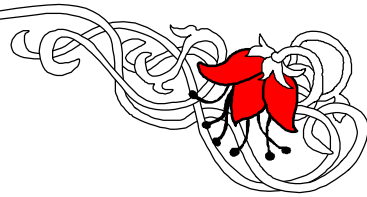


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 4, Issue 11

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER November 2002

JUELSON'S RAISE WHOPPERS!

BY JULIE RILEY



June and Dick Juelson have added another winning crop to their gardening repertoire. This time it's gigantic onions. It's quite a feat to raise 5 inch 'Walla Walla's'. How do they do it? By starting with onion plants instead of sets. They order theirs from Dixondale Farms (<http://www.dixondalefarms.com>) and ask for a May 1st delivery. "When you plant sets," Dick claims, "they're dormant and it takes a while for them to start growing. Plants are ready to grow as soon as you put them into the ground."

Dick also gives a few more growing tips. "If you want large onions, space the plants 4" apart; if you want scallions plant 2" apart and harvest before they start to form a bulb." Onions are heavy feeders. At planting, Dick recommends making a trench 4" to the side of your row in which to place fertilizer. He also recommends sidedressing with fertilizer each month. And don't skimp on the water! Plants like to be watered every day when they're dry.

The Juelson's store their onions in their basement tied up in nylon stockings. June says this technique of hanging them from the ceiling works great! Some of the varieties Dick and June grew in '02 beside 'Walla Walla' include 'Red Torpedo Tropea', 'Red Burgermaster' and 'Yellow Sweet Spanish'. When choosing varieties look for those that are LONG DAY. They're more likely to perform well under Alaskan growing conditions.



INSECT TRIVIA DID YOU KNOW?

Thrips are the only insects that lack claws on their feet.

Springtails do not use their legs to jump. They curl the end of their abdomen under them and flex it against the surface.

You can tell the temperature by a cricket's chirp. Like all insects, cricket metabolism is affected by temperature. A fast chirp rate indicates a warm temperature; a slow chirp rate indicates a cooler temperature. Apparently one can predict the temperature in Fahrenheit of the North American snowy tree cricket by adding 40 to the number of chirps heard in 13 seconds.

The longest insect in the world is a walking stick found in Borneo. The body is 12.9 inches long; with its legs it is 20 inches.

The heaviest insect is the goliath beetles found along the equator in Africa weighing nearly a quarter of a pound. (Lets hope McDonalds doesn't find out!)

The smallest insect is probably the feather-winged beetles. Some are less than 200th of an inch long.

Ever wonder why insects are always on their back when dead? Well, in case you were on the edge of your seat: it's because their back has a greater surface area and is more stable. The insect curls its legs under it when it dies, creating an uneven surface. This fact frustrates scientists and collectors when trying to mount these interesting critters.



*Two-legged creatures we are supposed to love as we love ourselves.
The four-legged, also, can come to seem pretty important.
But six legs are too many from the human standpoint.*

- Joseph W Krutch, The Twelve Seasons

THANK YOU MASTER GARDENERS FROM SUE LINCOLN

I want to publicly thank all of the master gardeners who have contributed to the increased knowledge and gardening practices of Anchorage gardeners. Through their dedicated volunteering, Anchorage gardens will grow healthier and be much more productive.

MENTORING

We are in the beginning of a new Master Gardener Course. We have approximately 50 new master gardeners in the making. If any of you who have finished your hours would like to become a Mentor to someone in this new class, please let me know. Training will be provided.

RECORDING HOURS

In the next few weeks, I will be sending out a notice of the hours I have in the computer for you. Please submit your updated hours as soon as possible so our records are accurate.

SUE'S HOURS

My hours are really around the clock until the Master Gardener course is over. Please be patient! I **WILL** answer your voice message or email message. – it may take me 1-3 business days.

Monday: 8a – 1p
Tuesday: 3p – 5p (unavailable during MG Course time)
Wednesday: Not in the office
Thursday 3p – 5p (unavailable during MG Course time)
Friday: 9a – 11a (variable)





GARDENING IN TASMANIA

BY DENISE ELDER, MG



Tasmanian blue gum flower



I recently traveled to my homeland, Australia. My first stop was Tasmania, the main island about 200 miles south of the continent. It is a very picturesque and historic place—very rural. Tasmania was first settled in 1803, and was originally a penal colony, so most of the early settlers (and convicts) came from the British Isles. There are a great many old stone buildings throughout the state (built by convict labor) that are listed with the National Trust, and there is, fortunately, a strong movement to preserve as much of the past as possible.

Tasmania, with its moderate climate, is very different from the rest of Australia. It's more like a little bit of England. There is a lot of agriculture, with superb wineries, premium cheese makers, and a host of other cottage-industries making chocolates, jams, cured meats, etc. The island is also well known for producing sheep with super-fine wool. The climate is a bit like the US Pacific North West—lots of rain, and moderate temperatures. I can remember being in elementary school and allowed out of school one day because it snowed—none of us had ever seen snow before! Tasmania also grows hops (Aussies definitely like beer, so there will always be a demand for that product!) and used to be the major supplier of apples to the UK before the start of the European Common Market.

Both my brother and sister live on the North-West Coast. There, the soil is a rich chocolate color; it is some of the richest farmland in Australia. I love to drive along the coast looking at the farms with all the varied colors of the crops in carefully tended plots perhaps sitting next to a field of deep chocolate soil waiting to be planted. On the coast side, the waves will be crashing, and there will be signs warning motorists to watch out for Fairy Penguins, as there are many rookeries along the coast.

My sister lives at Latrobe, in a former Church of England rectory, built in the mid-1800's, and listed on the National Trust. It is a magnificent building, with fireplaces in almost every room, furnished with beautiful antique furniture, and Helen always has cut flowers from her garden in gorgeous vases throughout the house. Coming in the front door, you walk down a hallway into the vestibule, complete with organ, and notice the huge cupola high up in the ceiling. Standing there, you feel you should only speak in whispers, but my sister will break the ice by playing the organ very dramatically and we'll have to 'Guess that Hymn!'... It is always lots of fun and very entertaining to visit the House on Hamilton Street!

Helen's garden is just magnificent, and when I was there (early [Australian] spring), tulips, daffodils and other bulbs were all in bloom. The house lot goes from one street to the next, so my brother-in-law built a beautiful ornate wrought-iron double gate for the back street entrance. He did such a good job with the gates that people would ask from what park did he "pinch" (steal) them? He then put in a brick driveway and courtyard to the house. My sister has continued the work, and has put in brick pathing throughout her garden so you walk around the various garden beds. She has a lot of rose bushes, innumerable peonies, iris, violas, pulmonaria, lamium, dianthus—to name just some of the plants that we can grow here. But, she also had a magnolia tree in bloom, and many other plants, such as wisteria and camelias that don't over winter for us, plus many other plants, including some Australian natives (plants, that is—the Australian native people are Aborigines, and are *never* referred to as natives).

I noticed *viola hederacea* in a few places in Helen's garden—it's commonly called Australian native violet. I first saw it for sale here (Anchorage) about 5/6 years ago—and it was labeled 'Tasmanian Violet', so I bought one for sentimental reasons. I continue to buy a small plant every year. It is an ordinary sort of plant, with small, pale lilac flowers, but can get a bit invasive. I put it in a pot in a tall stand on the walkway to my front door, and let it spill over the sides. I've seen it growing in warmer climates in Australia, and the hotter the weather gets, the less it tends to wander!

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INDOOR GARDENING WITH SPROUTS

By MICHELE HEBÉRT

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The weather has definitely stopped the harvest of fresh vegetables outdoors. For the gardening enthusiast you can still garden indoors and have fresh vegetables all winter long by growing sprouts. It is easy to do, takes little space and provides 'just grown' nutritious crops all winter long. The dry sproutable seeds are easy to store and their volume and nutritional value increase many times over when sprouted.

What's in a sprout?

Sprouting is changing a dried seed into a fresh vegetable. Almost all seeds can be sprouted successfully. The dried seed contains a supply of stored carbohydrates, oils and proteins to nourish the seeds. When put in the right conditions the seed will sprout and live on its own food supply until it has grown enough to have roots and leaves.

As the seed sprouts, the starch is converted into simple sugars and the protein into amino acids. Sprouts also contain enzymes and vitamins A and C. Chlorophyll, the green pigment, is added to the sprout when it is exposed to light.

Sprouting methods

Sprouting is a simple task requiring very little time or expense. It only takes two to five days to sprout most seeds to eating size. Measure seeds and pick over, removing those that are broken. Wash well and soak over night. Small seeds such as alfalfa need only to be soaked for 4 to 6 hours. There is more than one method that works. The type of seeds and the amount of sprouts your family will consume will determine which method you use.

Most seeds can be sprouted with the jar method — alfalfa, red clover, mung bean, wheat, rye, triticale, lentil, pea, radish, fenugreek, garbanzo bean, soybean, other grains and legumes. Use a clean, wide-mouth quart jar. Add 1/4 cup of seeds. Use 1 to 2 teaspoons of seed for alfalfa or clover. Cover the seeds with at least three times the volume of warm water. Soak for 4 to 12 hours. Drain thoroughly by inverting the jar at an angle. Leave the jar on its side in a warm, dark area. Rinse the seeds 3 or 4 times daily, draining thoroughly each

time. Rinse soybeans more. On the last day move into the light to develop chlorophyll.

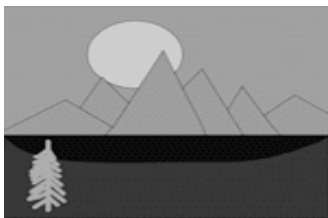
The colander method works well for large seeds such as garbanzo, whole peas, and beans. Soak the seeds over night in a bowl, covering the seeds with 3 times the water. Rinse thoroughly and place in the colander. Rest the colander in a bowl or plate to catch any draining water. Rinse 3 to 4 times a day. Cover the colander with a towel to reduce evaporation and hold warmth. Sprout in the dark.

For gelatinous seeds such as cress, flax, chia and mustard the sprinkle method is recommended. Do not pre soak these small seeds. Use a glass dish or pie plate. Cover the bottom of the dish with a small amount of water. Sprinkle the seeds evenly over the water and let stand a few hours or overnight. The seeds will absorb the moisture and adhere to the bottom of the dish. Cover the container with a loosely fitted piece of foil or a plastic bag. Do not close the bag to allow for circulation. Place the dish in the dark — cupboards work well. Sprinkle a small amount of water over the seeds as required to keep them from drying out. Once a day is usually sufficient. When the sprouts are the length you want, place them in the light to develop chlorophyll.

Mung beans are one of the more popular sprouts used in oriental dishes. If you want long, straight, thick more tender sprouts use the following method. Measure seeds and rinse in hot water. Soak in a jar 18 to 24 hours, changing the water if it begins to ferment or smell bad. After soaking, place in a commercial round sprouter or a # 10 can with holes punched in the bottom. Cover the bottom of the container with a damp paper towel to prevent roots from growing through the holes.

Spread the soaked seeds evenly on top of the damp paper towel one layer deep. Place another damp towel on top of it. Now place some kind of weight on top — a plate with weights on top of it. The weights force the sprouts to grow thick, crisp and straighter. Water 4 to 5 times a day through the towels. After 5 to 7 days put the bean sprouts into a large bowl and rinse well. The green hulls will come to the top and you can scoop them off.

When buying seeds for sprouting, buy good quality, untreated seeds sold for growing sprouts. The older the seeds the lower the germination rate. Health food and grocery stores are a good source for sprouting seeds. Store seeds in a dry, dark, cool place.



CENTRAL PENINSULA MASTER GARDENER NEWS: COMMUNITY GARDENING LESSONS LEARNED

BY JANICE CHUMLEY

What a long and rainy autumn we are having. The slugs are still active due to lack of consecutive hard frosts. Most gardens are cleaned and winterized as to what the gardener sees fit to do. I have been an active gardener in the Kenai Community Gardens for the past five years now and would like to share some of the lessons I have learned in "community gardening".

The Kenai Community Gardens is a large, fenced, windy area located by the airport in the city of Kenai. Approximately 45 garden plots that are approximately 500 sq. ft. are available on a first come first serve basis and free for the asking. They are rototilled yearly, and did I mention fenced? With these amenities I wondered why some stayed vacant. Over the years I have learned why and also learned why some folks come back year after year.

The city provides a water line, you provide a hose. They warn you about weed control, you really should pay attention. The variety of weeds and their tenacity is amazing. I have learned that when gardening with the public some folks will be out pulling chickweed, hempnettle, corn spurry, red sorrel, shepards purse, etc., and then there are other gardeners that believe that these plants are "green manure" that will enhance the soil and consequently they enhance your weeding time. At harvest time you can see them rooting through the green hills of chickweed looking for the potatoes or cabbage. I can't help feeling a bit smug for all my weeding labors as I harvest my plot without having to search for anything.

Over the years I have met and learned from many gardeners in the community gardens and have seen some gardening tricks I and many other gardeners now use in our own plots. The first is from Bill; he showed us

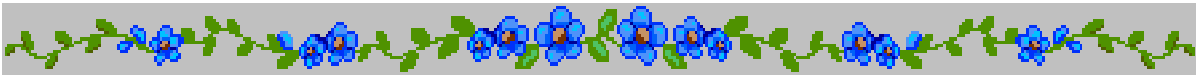
the wonders of ty-par. This road building fabric is available from building supply companies in large rolls. For about \$45.00 you can buy a sheet that will cover your whole garden. Cut or burn holes in it to plant through, bury the edges and your weeding time is drastically reduced. It lets water through but not light so the weeds are suppressed, except around the holes. It works great for potatoes, and all the things you put in as starts. With things you plant from seed the hand weed method is still the way to go.

The second handy idea came from Mr. Vogel, a retired farmer from Oregon. He had big a garbage can set in his garden and kept it filled with water and sometimes a bag of manure at the bottom of it: the homemade compost tea. He used this water storage to hand water his starts so it was warmed by the sun and not such a temperature shock to the seedlings as what comes out of the hose. You find that most garden plots now have a garbage can sitting in them in the spring.

Then there is the wind trick. As I mentioned this is a windy area. It comes off the ocean and has nothing to slow it down so it is rather blustery. A Master Gardener named Sue had the great idea to take gallon pots, cut out the bottom and secure into the ground creating a wind block around the seedlings. The size of the pots not only helped for wind blockage but also serves as a collar when the plants are larger and the root maggots are starting to show their damage. Her IPM tactics have helped her avoid the major insect pest in the community gardens. While she takes extra time in preparation and planting, her efforts show in a garden that is a show-piece in the community gardens.

And finally there is Florence, my hero. Florence is a spry eighty-something gardener that can outwork most of us. She produces an amazing quantity and assortment of vegetables that are shared throughout the community. Florence has a knack for growing things and is always willing to share her ideas as well as her bounty. I hope she lives forever.

There are many lessons to learn from gardening in a community garden. Like nothing can be done about vandals, but you can overcome weeds. Fertilizer really does help and you can always learn from the people you meet who have that same desire to grow things that you do. So should you ever find yourself in the central peninsula for the summer with itchy fingers, get a garden plot and see what you can do. It's always a learning experience.



Bird Chatter

- Mike Rheinschmidt is now Chairman of the Anchorage CES Advisory Council. Other Master Gardeners on the Council include Martha Galbreath, who also serves on the Cooperative Extension's Statewide Advisory Council, Dana Klinkhart and Jonnie Lazarus.
- Master Gardener Fred Delaney passed away on September 19 of a heart attack at age 54. Fred could always be counted on to help with garden clinics and at his memorial service his family included a photo of him doing a clinic in 1998.
- Fifty gardeners are enrolled in this year's Master Gardener course with hopes to complete their final exam before Thanksgiving.
- The same topics are found on the Master Gardener Course syllabus, but a 15th session has been added this fall.
- Garlic Queen Mary Shier may soon be known as the Leek Lady. She reported her largest leek to be 67 inches tall at harvest time.
- Master Gardener Gary Schneider is still pulling in Grand Championships for his absolutely perfect garlic at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer (August '02).
- Annie Nevaldine and Julie Riley will be speaking at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show on February 21, 2003. Their topic... "Everything I Know About Life, I Learned From Gardening": A psychologist and a horticulturist discuss how gardening mirrors life. Look out, they want to practice on us before heading off to Seattle!
- Thanks to Nancy Beck for donating her collection of gardening magazines to the new Master Gardener class.
- Overheard: On Saturday, October 12, PBS's "This Old House" mentioned Master Gardeners.
- Wasilla Master Gardener Bill Caswell and his wife Dawn celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in September. They were honored at a dinner by many friends and relatives and received a special letter of recognition from CES Director Tony Nakazawa along with a Certificate of Appreciation for their Master Gardener efforts.

TASMANIA CONT. FROM PAGE 3

Helen also had 'Chrysler' roses growing up towards the windows at the back of her garage (it's definitely NOT your normal garage!) The Chrysler cars that were being restored inside the garage have now moved on—just a lovely memory, but she still has the Chrysler roses!

As I'd cut down all my perennials before I left home, it was just wonderful to walk around the garden with Helen, having her point out all sorts of little surprises coming up in her spring garden. She had so much in bloom already, but you could tell the best was yet to come. She has such a large garden, with trees, shrubs, and the brick paths winding around to help form a beautiful vista whichever way you looked. What an inspiration!

ANCHORAGE HORTICULTURE COALITION

The Anchorage Horticulture Coalition is still meeting on a regular basis. Actions that the group foresees working on during the next six months include:

—Acting as a watchdog on behalf of horticulture during the development of the Municipality's 2003 budget.

—Building support for any bond on the spring ballot which includes funds to recover the Municipal Greenhouse whose glazing replacement is long overdue.

—Providing voter education before the April 1, 2003 mayoral election.

Other possibilities include working with the Anchorage Assembly to include verbage which includes horticultural amenities as part of the Municipality's Charter; working with Assemblywoman (and MG) Janice Shamborg to try to prevent developers from clear-cutting lots unnecessarily; and trying to figure out some way to bring in additional revenue for city horticulture.

The Coalition's meeting days are variable. If you'd like to get involved, please contact Coalition Chair Annie Nevaldine (333-2100) or Julie Riley at Cooperative Extension Service (786-6300). The City's horticulture needs your support.



INTERNATIONAL MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE

The 2003 International Master Gardener Conference is being held at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center, close to Cincinnati, Ohio, June 18-21. Featured speakers include Holly Shimizu, Victory Garden Host, Executive Director of the U.S. Botanic Garden in Washington D.C. and herb grower extraordinaire; Tracy DiSabato-Aust, author of "The Well-Tended Perennial Garden"; and Dr. Lonnie Thompson who led an expedition to Alaska this past spring to study ancient weather patterns.

The full agenda for the Conference is available by contacting Sue Lincoln at CES, 786-6300 or by web at <http://mastergardener.osu.edu/imgc2003>. If you need a pep talk, contact Martha Galbreath. She attended last year's conference.

DWARF SIBERIAN PEA HEDGE AVAILABLE

Last spring two dwarf Caragana hedges were removed from the Herb Garden at the Alaska Botanical Garden. The shrubs were potted up and are available for sale. Jonnie Lazarus is offering "a great deal" to anyone who might be interested. She has 66 Caragana frutex 'Globosa' which has a perfectly round shape and grows only 2' tall. She also has 49 Caragana pygmaea which has a wispy weeping form, thorns and grows 2-3' tall. Both are extremely winter hardy. It's quite unique to find such dwarf shrubs. If you're interested, please contact Jonnie at Jonnie@chugach.net or the ABG office, 770-3692.



FREE TO A GOOD HOME: "CAN O' WORMS"

MG's Nancy Beck and Mary Moline have out grown their Can 'O Worms and each have one to give away. You haul. There might even be some worms left.

Nancy Beck: 344-9897 (moline@alaska.net)
Mary Moline: 333-4419 (ndbeck@alaska.net)

Gardening Calendar

November 7

Anchorage Garden Club: "Making Anchorage More Livable Through the Landscaping of Public Spaces - Looking at the Park Strip, Midtown Park, Fairview and other Public Places" by Elise Huggins; 7:30 p.m., Pioneer School House basement, corner of Third & Eagle, contact 566-0539

November 13-14

UAF CES: "3rd Alaska Noxious and Invasive Plants Management Workshop" - Purpose: To bring participants up-to-date on projects statewide, develop citizen involvement and identify weed management tools; \$35 fee for Individual both days, \$20 one day; Millineum Alaska Hotel, 4800 Spenard Rd; Contact CES: 786-6300 (Registration due by October 31st)

November 18

AMGA Meeting: "Video of Abkidgz Garden Restoration" by Erma MacMillan; 7 p.m., CES rm. 130, Carlton Trust Bldg, 2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd. Contact 345-1562

November 19-20

Anchorage Garden Club: "42nd Annual Holiday Flower Show" at Wells Fargo Bank, C Street & Northern Lights - Open to the public for entering

January 30-31, 2003

Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conference, Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge. Gardeners are welcome to attend this statewide professional conference. Contact CES for more information, 786-6300.

February 1, 2003

Alaska Master Gardener Conference, Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge. More details will be given as information becomes available.



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

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Anchorage, AK 99516
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Email: gardener@corecom.net

AMGA Web Site:

www.corecom.net/~gardener

For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact:

Cooperative Extension Office
2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99508

Phone: 786-6300
Fax Line: 786-6312

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