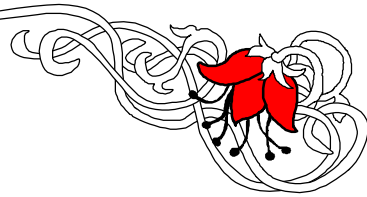


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 4, Issue 10

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER September 2002

**FROM THE PRESIDENT
BY MARY SHIER**

The raspberries are ripe, the zucchini are coming on fast and furious and some plants are over the hill, ready to be pulled for the compost. I can hardly believe we're coming to the end of yet another summer. Why is it they seem to go by so quickly? Must have something to do with my being over 39. (I can't really be beyond that, can I?) The summer season this year has been rather different I think. The lack of rain at the beginning sure created problems. I also overheard a comment from another individual that this year had been his *57th* different winter/summer. I guess none are very much alike here all though we constantly compare. Must be nature's way of keeping us on our toes.

I still learned a few tips during the year that I had not heard of before. I love it when I pick up a new idea to try and have success with it. That's one of the greatest benefits of sharing info with other gardeners. There's always a different way to tackle a job or problem or to cure a situation which has been successful for someone else. By the way, I have found that our summer field trips have been a wonderful way to pick up tidbits of useful data.

I am looking forward to our September meeting. Another optimum time to share with our fellow gardeners. Hope you all remember to bring slides taken of your gardens or prints if you are like me and don't do slides. You did take pictures, right?

Well, it's back to checking out zucchini recipes for tonight. Hey, I have an idea. How about bringing your favorite zucchini recipe along with your pictures to our first meeting? I'm sure you're like me, always expanding ways to cook this overly productive vegetable. See you on the 16th!





GARDENERS TOUR KINCAID AND TASTY FREEZE GARDENS

BY **DANA KLINKHART**

Six hardy master gardeners met at the Kincaid Rock Garden on Monday, August 19. Our rain slickers and umbrellas were all that we needed to prepare for the walk through the gardens. There were mass plantings of annuals and perennials to view and admire. Regardless of the moisture that evening, we enjoyed exploring the garden at Kincaid Park and at the entrance to the "Four Corners" mall and Tasty Freeze. To conclude our evening we gathered at Tasty Freeze for hot chocolate and conversation. And that was an added bonus...sharing with master gardener friends.

OVERHEARD ON A TASTY FREEZE OUTING

BY **GINA DOCHERTY**

After talking about her stomach ailments, one MG described her Dream Garden of a "bed of purple Salpiglosis behind a layer of Tagamet"....(she meant tagetes, or marigolds)

Another MG talked about getting lily pollen on her face which goes well with her brown nose. This led to a discussion of getting pollen stains out of clothing: use a baby wipe! Someone added that they use Oxyclean, which really works great. When Oxyclean doesn't work, she uses a permanent marker & draws flowers around the stains.

One master gardener credited another (who wasn't there) for a sharing his successful way of keeping non hardy roses over the winter. No more storing them in crawl spaces and having white snakes greeting you in the spring: lie them on their side in the pot outdoors, cover them with leaves, and after it snows, bury them in snow. This MG tried it last year, & said the stalks were stronger & healthier than if stored indoors: 5 out of 6 roses survived.

Best tip for killing slugs: use ½ water, ½ ammonia in a sprayer. The ammonia will also harm worms, so be sure to stomp the ground to let the worms know you're coming; they will crawl back into the soil.

Best tip for killing thrips: a sprayer full of insecticide soap, with ½ cup alcohol. It also kills more than thrips.

GARDENING LESSONS LEARNED IN 2002

Question to the readers:

When pulling weeds, dead heading flowers, digging up plants, or tiding up your garden for winter, we all have thoughts on our gardening trials: profound realizations, new lessons learned over the summer, or unique experiences - we could all learn from these. What have you learned this summer?

Responses:

I have a lot of chickweed. When I put in new annual beds this year I used a pre-emergent for chickweed control and it worked great. This years lesson was stay home, the summer went too fast.

Martie

This summer I experimented by putting some sweetpeas in my big container with gladioli bulbs. I had several stakes in place for everything to grow, but I had to do lots of maintenance because those sweetpeas were pretty grabby and would start bending down the glad leaves as they all grew. I had to unwind a few every couple days until they all got good height. I guess those sweetpeas are their own best company!

Michelle

I don't know if anyone else would find this helpful, but I discovered that a clam shovel makes a nifty tool for lifting perennials in a tight spot. The narrow blade makes damaging a neighboring plant less likely. My husband laughed his head off when he saw me using it in the garden. He thought I was digging for clams.

Christine Bingham

After planting over 40 new roses in 2001 with no losses over the winter, I was aghast when I saw that we had mowed down one of them. I was pleasantly surprised to find out that it back with more stems than the original single one. Alas, after the next mowing it was gone again! Now what will happen the second time? It came back and now it has many stems!! I don't know the rest of this story but I am very glad I still have my rose. We also have learned to mark new plantings that are not obvious.

Sally Karabelnikoff

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Once upon a rose

By DANA KLINKHART

On a snowy afternoon in February of 1997, eight-year old Leyna and I were introduced. From that day on we have been matched as Big and Little Sisters in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Anchorage organization. We made discoveries in those first few months about ourselves and about each other. We were excited to learn new things together. Leyna was up for any new craft or activity and we tested our interests and energy each week. Sometimes we would cross country ski or swim, other times we would sew or stamp greeting cards. We baked and we fished for salmon. Movies and a pizza topped our list of favorite things to do but on one crisp fall day, I convinced her to “walk till we drop” on one of our local bike paths. Now walking was not her favorite thing to do. It might have qualified as her least favorite activity but she decided a walk would be o.k. Eight-year olds are usually hungry so I made sure our backpack was filled with her favorites treats. After we had strolled for an hour and eaten everything in the pack, we headed back and passed some brightly colored rose hips hanging from their faded bushes. A handful of hips were gathered as mementos of our afternoon outing. Soon after we decided to try to sprout the seeds and hopefully, grow a rose bush. The ‘hips’ were opened, the seeds separated and placed in moistened soil. Then they were sealed in a plastic bag and placed on the door of the refrigerator.

Winter passed; spring approached and the seeds sprouted. The starts grew well after we transplanted them into Styrofoam cups. When summer arrived and we drove to Seward to fish for silver salmon, we brought our tiny rugosa plant along to give it a home in the flowerbed at the cabin. It was small and grew slowly.

Five years have gone by and Leyna and I have continued to meet nearly every week. We have developed new skills on the computer and on the sewing machine. We have attended five performances of “The Nutcracker Ballet” and baked many cookies. Our rugosa that was fondly referred to as “THE ROSE OF LEYNA” bloomed just this summer. Its first bud opened in July...and it was beautiful! The rose was fragrant, single and pink... and like our friendship, the little rugosa continues to grow.

PICKLES AND SALADS OWE A DEBT TO INDIA

[REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION]

[HTTP://AGGIE-HORTICULTURE.TAMU.EDU/PLANTANSWERS/PUBLICATIONS/VEGETABLETRAVELERS/CUCUMBER.HTML](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/publications/vegetabletravelers/cucumber.html)

Although India has given the world a large number of important food and other crop plants, only four vegetables are among them. One of these is the cucumber (*Cucumis sativus*). The others are eggplant, Indian mustard, and cowpeas.

The English word “cucumber” comes from the Latin name *cucumis*. The Bohemian *agryka*, German *Gurke*, Greek *aggouria*, and our word “gherkin,” meaning a small cucumber pickle, all trace back to an old Aryan word. Sometimes today we facetiously refer to this vegetable as “cowcumber,” not realizing that English writers of 300 years ago called it “cowcumber” in all seriousness.

The cucumber is believed native to the great Indian center of plant origins which lies between the northern part of the Bay of Bengal and the towering Himalayas. It has never been found wild anywhere, but species closely related to it have been found wild in that region of India.

That the cucumber was carried westward from India long before written history is indicated by the profusion of ancient names for it in widely separated lands to the west: Aryan, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Armenian, and others. Contrary to often written claims, there is no proof that the ancient Egyptians grew it.

One old record claims that the cucumber was introduced into China as “recently” as the second century B.C. At the beginning of the Christian Era it was grown in North Africa as well as in Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, and the countries to the east.

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GARDENING LESSONS 2002 CONT. FROM PAGE 3

Don't know whether this is a "new" idea, but I've noticed my "color spot" geraniums do better on the west side of my house (happens to be the "back yard" than the ones on the east side (of course the "front yard"). So when the ones on the east side start looking dreary, I dig them up and trade places with some showy ones from the west side. Before long they are looking bright again and ready to rotate back when the time comes.
Bernadine Raiskums

Gardening is my ultimate excuse for everything. It is better than "not tonight, dear, I have a headache." You can use it in lots of cases: "Oh dear, I couldn't (fill in the blank: make dinner, meet your mother for lunch, do the laundry) I had to weed the pansies." Or, "Oh dear, I was so busy watering that I forgot to (pay the utility bills, clean the toilets). It's a great excuse when you need to run out for a latte or ice cream: "I just have to run get some more plant food." You can also pretend that each dead flower you snap off is a smart come back for your teenagers..."there, take that you know it all 17 year old!"

I also find a peace within myself and with the earth when I am on my knees in the dirt. Things float through my mind that I don't usually take time to think about - childhood memories of sharing gardening experiences with my mom; remembering exactly how good that first new potato tastes each year; hearing birds sing and the wind in the trees; Bible verses that I had not thought of for many years. This summer's was something about having "faith like a mustard seed".

I absolutely love sharing things from my flower gardens. Often I have many holes where I have dug up a plant for a friend or someone who needed it more than I. Gardening is very special to me. The dirt is my spiritual 'get away'.
Madge Oswald

I may have a solution for liverwort infestation. (I was told that was the name of the flat, glossy-leaved "moss" that grows in damp, shady areas of the flowerbeds.) A neighbor took some old baking soda from the fridge and sprinkled it on the dampened moss and it all turned brown and died. Whether this lasts is another question, but it worked for now!!
Shirley Kelly

A lesson learned: Don't locate your birdfeeder (with sunflower seeds) over any perennials or shrubs for the winter. I moved a birdfeeder two feet to the left, for the last two months of the winter, right over a 14 year old rose and a four year old hardy geranium. The rose completely died back to the ground! (but came back from its roots and is now blooming); the geranium (Ballerina) which normally forms a large mound of leaves and blooms throughout the summer, finally threw up some leaves in last June, and put out two flowers.

I've moved the birdfeeder back to its old location and have thoroughly removed all the sunflower seed hulls around both plants. The sunflower seed hulls have an ingredient which retards plant growth - a defense mechanism for the sunflower!
Barbara Hedges



GARDENING—YEAR 2002

#1 Gardening Resolution: Remember that plants do grow! Early in spring, I take photos of different areas of my garden (all perennials, no "good-for-you" vegetables) to try and remind myself that it would all grow. I take more photos in the fall. Somehow, I took no notice of those photos this year, and bought new perennials to put in what appeared to be a bare 12" spot. Now, I can hardly find some of the plants!

#2 Gardening Resolution: Stake; stake early and stake often!! Yes, the 6" delphinium might look mighty silly with an 8' cage, but I've got to remember those fall photos with plants just towering over the cages.

#3 Gardening Resolution: Find better stakes and staking methods. I have about five Oriental poppies "Brilliant" (I believe). They look superb, but then fall over later in the season and just look a mess. A few years ago, I decided I'd had enough of them. As I had grown them from seed, I felt I could be rather heartless. I dug and dug and dug. But, lo and behold, next year they were back! I've since resolved they are here to stay, so I'd better make the most of a golden opportunity, as they really are beautiful. Some years, I've cut them

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GARDENING 2002 CONT.

back after flowering and that produced new growth.

This year, my beloved husband, Will, cut some large tomato cages down one side, and then spread out the cages to resemble a semi-circle, and we somehow staked the poppies so they looked reasonably 'decent'. They will still be among the first plants to be cut down, but I was pleased with our caging attempts. And, we'll do it earlier next year—I promise!

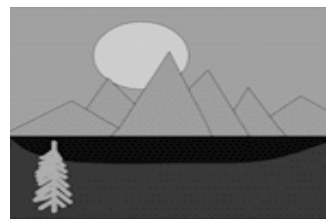
I go on as many gardening tours as possible, just to get ideas, look at different plants and see how other people garden. Everyone has different ideas. One lady used a wire fencing material, painted green, about 3' high, to contain a long border of Asiatic lilies. The fencing blended in with the plants beautifully. So, that's one idea for me to try next year.

I make a list (actually I have a list of *all* the plants in my garden) of those that tend to creep, be totally invasive, or just need to be divided. I have one friend WANTING any invasive plant I want to part with, as she has a very, very sunny spot where she has a problem getting any plant to survive. I have another gardening 'bud' who has ½ acre of cultivated land, complete with everything *except* the Columbia Gorge (which she wants—but that's another story). I'll show her any plants that aren't pleasing me, and with her "acreage", she usually has room on her estate for my castoffs.

I grow all my annuals from seed, and try out new plants every year, along with the tried/true pansies and petunias, etc. This year's winner was "Salpiglossis". I had never grown it before. It was easy, and it has been wonderful in my containers. All my annuals are in containers. I would say that 90% of the people who come to my home comment on Salpiglossis. One friend even wants me to get her some seed next time I order—and she's not even a gardener!

Now, I have to cut back all my plants, clean and sterilize the containers, and before I know it, January 1st will be here and I can start ordering seeds. What a life!

D.E.

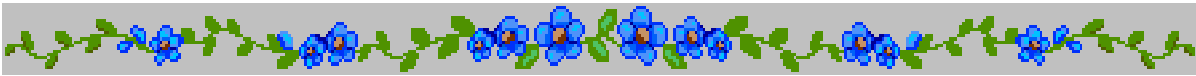


CENTRAL PENINSULA MASTER GARDENER NEWS BY ROSEMARY KIMBALL

By the time these words get printed we should have had our first frost on the Peninsula. The full moon is August 22 and frosts are supposed to happen then. My neighbor up the road and I watch the moon phase for the frost in June and in August but don't write down our observations, so who remembers whether it frosts on the full moon. The timing certainly is right for a frost.

Our weeding parties are slowing down. Surprisingly, chickweed is no longer the dominant weed in Pioneer Park. A stray "daisy", aka a DWC (darned white composite) with ferny leaves is and that's a nice change. Missing, when the weeding stops, will be the camaraderie. The sun has been wonderful but I just wish there'd been a bit more rain. Well water just isn't the same. On a sunny day I've just gone down to the garden just to admire the plants. Now, however, it's down to the garden to pick and Pick and PICK. I have reached the point I don't want to see another ripe strawberry! My husband has 110+ pints in the freezer for his breakfasts for the next year and I have a case of jam. Nice, though, was giving a friend a bowl to take to a meeting in Homer and the people that ate them didn't believe they were grown in Alaska.

I met a nice couple at my neighbor's garage sale and invited them over for strawberries and cake. Since he was a farmer from Fresno (raising currants for Zante and that's a fascinating story!) we gravitated to the garden first off. They had no idea what the mass of red berries was—red currants. They agreed that the strawberries tasted like strawberries should, the peas were sublime and paused when I handed them a broccoli stem to munch. I told them the plants weren't sprayed and they said that was the first time they'd ever eaten out of the garden without washing the food. Do we have it made in Alaska or what!!!!



Bird Chatter

God made rainy days, so gardeners could get the house-work done.

What lives in winter, dies in summer,
and grows with its root upward?

An icicle.

Men are like a fine wine. They all start out like grapes, and it's our job to stomp on them and keep them in the dark until they mature into something you'd want to have dinner with.

- Female Author Unknown

Women are like fine wine. They all start out fresh, fruity and intoxicating to the mind and then turn full-bodied with age until they go all sour and vinegary and give you a headache.

- Male Author Unknown

Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.

- Robert Brault

Top Ten Signs You Hired the Wrong Kid to Mow Your Lawn

10. He shows up with a pair of nail clippers and a Ziploc bag.

9. On the side of his mower you notice the stenciled silhouettes of thirteen cats

8. Stops frequently to nap inside the grass-catcher.

7. Always trying to impress you by stopping the mower blades with his head.

6. You notice him shoving the last of his clothes into the mulcher.

5. He's fascinated by the details of your home security system.

4. Stops every couple of minutes to smoke some clippings.

3. Somehow manages to mow the hood ornament off your Lexus.

2. Turns a goat loose and says he'll be back in three weeks.

1. No toes.

Cucumbers cont. from pg. 3

A Favorite Food of Tiberius

The Romans used highly artificial methods of growing the cucumber when necessary to have it for the Emperor Tiberius out of season. He is reported to have eaten cucumbers every day in the year.

Charlemagne had cucumbers grown in his gardens in 9th-century France. They were known in England in the early 1300's, but the art of growing them was apparently lost there as a result of a long period of war and turmoil. Cucumbers were reintroduced into England from the Continent some 250 years later.

Columbus brought the cucumber to the New World, along with many other vegetables. He had them planted in Haiti in 1494, and possibly on other islands.

Reports of finding the Indians in Canada growing cucumbers in 1535 seem hardly probable so soon after Columbus introduced them into the West Indies. Some form of native squash or gourd could have been mistaken for cucumber. Reports that in 1539 De Soto found the Indians of Florida growing cucumbers "better than those of Spain" are more credible.

Explorers who touched Virginia in 1584 mentioned cucumbers. Presumably they had been spread by Indians after introduction by Spaniards far to the south. They were grown in the first permanent English settlements, in Virginia in 1609 and in Massachusetts in 1629.

Before the American Revolution the eastern tribes of Indians as well as the colonists were growing cucumbers generally. They were grown in Brazil before 1650.

English Variety Nearly Two Feet Long

Most of the distinct types of cucumber grown today were known at least 400 years ago. Present forms range from thick, stubby little fruits, three to four inches long, up to the great English greenhouse varieties that often reach a length of nearly two feet.

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Gardening Calendar

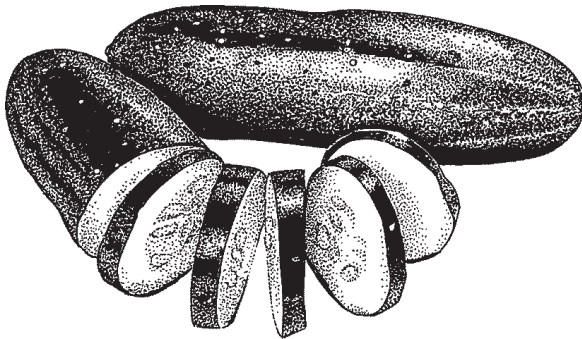
CUCUMBERS CONT.

The most popular European and American varieties now have smooth, dark-green skin. Some Russian varieties are short, thick, and have a rough, netted brown skin. Large white varieties of a thick, irregular shape were grown in France in the 19th century for use in cosmetics. That form is supposed to have reached northern Europe from Spain.

One of the most interesting things about the enormous English "forcing" (greenhouse) type of cucumber is that, as marketed, it is almost completely seedless. Its fruits will develop without any pollination of the pistillate flowers, and therefore without forming seeds.

How, then, does the grower obtain seeds for growing this seedless cucumber? He has only to pollinate the flowers by hand, or put bees into the greenhouse to do the job for him. Varieties commonly grown in America do not have this ability to form fruits without pollination.

The so-called "gherkins" that we buy pickled in bottles or glass jars are simply pickled small cucumbers. The true gherkin, or West Indian gherkin, is a different species (*C. anguria*) that is rarely grown in the United States. It produces a warty (or "prickly") oval fruit about an inch long.



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:

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2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
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Please submit newsletter articles by the last Saturday of the month. It goes to press on the 1st of the month.



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