



Anchorage Chapter



Volume 6, Issue 4

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER March 2004

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER by Dana Klinkhart

What's a gardener to do with all that free time in the winter? Why order seed catalogs of course. And order I did. Nearly every day for two weeks in February a catalog came in the mail. Each was a treasure delivered from the postman. Each brought pages of vivid pictures of garden supplies and plants of every description. The colorful 'wish books' provided hours of browsing. I tagged pages with sticky notes marking plants, seeds and tools that tickled my interest. Some sources offered on-line ordering and others provided tempting 800 numbers for a fast and easy placement. Snail mail was also a choice. Should I order seeds? Or should I risk ordering starts or full-grown plants? Or maybe I should just check our wonderful local sources and see what they might have in the wings to please gardening enthusiasts. Well folks, I did a BIT of everything. A few of the ideas gleaned from my sources include:

Annuals

- 'Red Gem Marigold'- *Tagetes tenuifolia signata* joins the Lemon and Tangerine varieties. Territorial Seeds
- 'Citrus Cocktail'- *Calendula officinalis nana*. This extremely dwarf and compact annual is 8 inches high. Thompson Morgan Seeds
- 'Jungle Gold'- *Impatiens auricoma* is an orchid-like, shade loving gold/orange cultivar that will produce dense 18 inch plants for the shaded patio or bed. Burpee Seed Company

Perennials

- Clematis 'Rutel'- This hybrid is zoned for 3 -8, sports dark red flowers with near-black anthers and is supported on a six-foot vine. Look for them at local vendors this year
- 'Christmas Candy'- Hosta hybrid is zoned 4-9 and has apple-green leaves splashed with bright white centers and lavender flowers. www.dutchgardens.com
- 'Hellas' Sea holly- *Eryngium planum* is zoned for 3-8, with thistle-like metallic-blue foliage and egg-shaped blue flowers, 30 inches tall, is new this year. J.W. Jung-Seed Co.

Bulbs

- 'Miss Lucy'- Liliium This Oriental hybrid is zoned for 4-8. The 7-8 inch blossoms of white petals tinged with soft pink is a serious double producing 18 petals on each flower. www.dutchbulbs.com

Shrubs

- 'Endless Summer'- Hydrangea macrophylla is hardy to zone 4. This mop head will bloom pink in alkaline soil and blue in an acid Ph. This could really be interesting. Bailey's nursery indicated they plan to ship to vendors in Anchorage this year. www.baileynursery.com

Vegetable

- Ildi Grape Tomato is new and said to produce a cluster of 50 (½ oz size) yellow tomatoes for a salad treat. It matures in 65 days from transplanting. Veseys Seeds



Have I just about exhausted you with my enthusiasm? That garden in my heart just keeps on growing and blooming. The catalogs are dog-eared and the local nurseries think I'm stalking them. It's hard to be patient while waiting for spring. So until spring I'll just -
share seeds of thought on gardening with others.



February Meeting Report

By Mary Shier



Horticultural Field Education Hands-On Classes

By Barbara Miller, ABG Horticulturist

Our evening on the 16th started out with our annual potluck - tons of food, all different and delicious. Hard to believe there were any leftovers.

Marianne Kerr, the 4H & Youth Development Agent, having a certificate of 'Certified in Volunteer Administration' was our speaker. Her background in helping others to train people with ways of creating and delivering led to the topic for the evening: 'How to talk to different groups of people'.

One thing we learned was that adults take in and remember best while doing along with listening, as opposed to remembering least when only reading. There was a bit of interaction between listeners and the speaker through out the program, which brought to our attention points 'to do' and 'not to do'. There was useful information for both experienced as well as potential speakers.

Our president, Dana Klinkhart, led the general meeting in which Linda Klinkhart, volunteer coordinator, announced that a person is needed to spearhead planting and caring for ABG entrance beds. After a bit more discussion door prize time came around and Nickle LeFleur turned out to be the winner of one of Lois Hole's wonderful gardening books.

Our evening ended with seed exchange and viewing a small number of member's pictures from last year while munching a few desserts and chatting a bit.

Blue Honeysuckle Information

Dr. Bob Bors spoke at the recent Greenhouse and Nursery Conference. One very interesting topic was Blue Honeysuckles. Dr. Bors was kind enough to forward his known suppliers of Blue Honeysuckles:

<http://www.onegreenworld.com/Pages/AboutUs/hours.html>
<http://www.raintreenursery.com/>

I'm told that the Company in Alberta also ships to the US:
<http://www.dnagardens.com/>

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Do you love a beautiful garden and wish yours could be as wonderful as the ones you see in magazines and gardening books? Have you spent tons of money on perennials each year that never return in the spring? Are you tired of investing money into your landscape with no return on your dollar? Well, the Alaska Botanical Garden wants to turn your brown thumb green by offering just what you will need to achieve your garden dreams. This summer, we hope to offer classes at the Garden that will educate the want-to-be perfect gardener with demonstrations and actual hands on, get "down in the dirt" experience. But whether or not these classes will be offered will depend on the number of responses we receive from potential participants.

ABG is proposing a series of six, three-hour classes at the Garden. Each session will cover a different topic, beginning with a short lecture and the usual handouts and then proceeding to the real learning experience of actually doing and practicing what you have just learned. Class size would be limited in order to personalize the learning experience between the students and the professional guest speakers we would schedule to enrich the sessions.

Participants would acquire techniques that these speakers employ in their own gardens, as well as experiences (good and bad), and personal opinions. The groundwork for each class would be spearheaded by ABG's Horticulturist and all fieldwork would be done in the beds at the Garden.

Class topics would closely correspond to the activities and maintenance warranted at that particular time of the season beginning with soils and planting, and followed by fertilization and pest management, plant propagation, pruning and winterization. Special emphasis will be placed on using the proper tools and techniques to achieve the desired goals. Students will be able to take what they have just learned home to their own yards and begin their path to having that beautiful garden they have always wanted.

Here is how you can get involved in this new educational opportunity at ABG. Please call us and provide your input. Show us that there is a need and interest to go forward with plans to offer such classes. Your comments mean a lot to us and the staff strives to create new and innovative programs for members and visitors to the Garden. So call the office as soon as possible and give your thoughts on this fabulous garden learning experience, 770-3692.



Bloom-In Alaska & Sally K Nursery

Presents **Dennis D'Allessandro**, an Orchid Hunter!

You've have seen the Orchid Hunter programs, read *Orchid Fever* and *Orchid Thief*. Now meet a real Orchid Hunter, Dennis D'Allessandro. See photographs and hear amazing stories of Dennis' adventures trekking through the rainforest and being arrested in Borneo for his passion.

Dennis D'Allessandro began growing orchids over 20 years ago. In 1977, he moved to southern Ecuador where he was curator of the orchid collection at Orquideario Predesur, a botanical garden dedicated to the cultivation of the native orchid species of Ecuador.

Since then he has collected and cataloged over 1000 specimens in both Ecuador and Asia. Over 80 species were new to science.

Dennis now divides his time between Ecuador where he maintains an orchid nursery in the town of Vilcabamba, and the U.S. where he is the owner of Gypsy Glen Orchids in Beaver, Pennsylvania.

During the last 3 years Dennis spent over 6 months in Borneo and Vietnam studying orchid habitats and visiting orchid nurseries. Many nights were spent in the bush eating wild food and days were spent trekking through the rainforest. The temperature and humidity can be unbearable, and leeches cover your body.

There will be two programs. The first program will be Orchid Hunting in Borneo, i.e., the queen of lady slippers, *Paphiopedium sanderianum*. See also pictures of Popow Orchideen's Nursery in Germany. He was talked about in the book, *Orchid Fever*, in the chapter on The Orchid Raids.

The second program will be Orchid Hunting in Ecuador. See pictures of orchids in the jungle; see also pictures of the largest Orchid Show in Latin America - 2004 Orchid Expo in Quito, Ecuador. (February 2004)

Dennis will have orchids species for sale that he discovered and were named after him. He will also have other orchid species and *Paph. sanderianum*'s. Also, there will be blooming orchids for sale. A door prize of a blooming orchid will follow each program.



Program: Borneo
When: Sunday, April 25th
Time: 2pm-4pm
Where: Loussac Library
Wilda Marston Theater
3600 Denali Street
Price: \$12 per person at the door \$10 in advance

Program: Ecuador
When: Monday, April 26^h
Time: 6pm-8pm
Where: Loussac Library
Wilda Marston Theater
3600 Denali Street
Price: \$12 per person at the door \$10 in advance

Call Deborah now @ 248-7425 to purchase advance tickets or for further information





A Peek at Alaska's Gardening Past Submitted by Jane Baldwin

Anchorage Daily Times, October 3, 1918, page 8
"Experiment in Tobacco Raising"



Beautiful Alaskans on the Go By Marge Olson

Neither rain nor snow nor dark of night could keep Alaskan gardeners from their appointed trip to Seattle for the 2004 Northwest Flower & Garden Show. After bags are dropped in our rooms, it is off to Cold Water

Creek, Pike Street Market for carmel apples and dried flowers followed by a lunch at Von's. We spend time pouring over the seminars provided free by Sunset Magazine to decide what talks we want to hear. Two years ago we were novices and thought you just walked in and listened to the talk of your choice. Wasn't it nice that you had a place to rest on all those chairs lining the hallways. We figured out about waiting in line and did get into a few. This year free tickets were available one hour before the talk.

Those of us who know, enter on the 4th floor after walking through the Freeway Park and bypass all those standing in endless lines at the entrance 4 floors below. Bursting through the entry doors on the 4th level, brandishing 5 day passes unrecognized by those who worked there, our senses were assaulted by the fresh flower smell and color. The large chartreuse manmade tree in the center of the hall added a touch of whimsy. The 4th level contains the landscapes and the vendors. However, if you wanted to attend a seminar you had to race up the escalator to the 6th level to get your ticket. The 6th level has 3 seminar rooms, food court, flower show and children's exhibits. Then down to the 4th floor marketplace to shop. Booths with everything imaginable for sale line both sides of each aisle. First to the booth that sells \$7 plastic woven bags to carry all of the stuff that you collect walking down the aisles. I brought home catalogs, snail killer, fertilizer and lots of ads. Did I mention the dried pods that I just had to have, books, birdhouses, pots and so on? The bag got taken to package check and I started anew. Sometimes you see something fabulous but don't buy it and then spend the rest of your days trying to find the booth again. The ski bridge was filled with tables to rest at and be serenaded by Bronn Journey who played the harp from 9am to 9pm. It was a quiet space lined with container plantings. On the other side of the sky bridge there were MORE vendors and the plant section. Every year I vow to not bring home as many plants but they are green and growing and I buy.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Juneau. Growing of tobacco in a region of icebergs, brown bear and wild goats sounds a bit fanciful, but it is a reality in a land of many wonders. Thirty miles from Juneau, on a ranch owned by one Jack Johnson, near the mouth of the Taku River, tobacco has been planted in the valley within sight of an iceberg. The plants have grown three feet high and have leaves thirty inches long.

Their planting, however, was an accident, for Johnson in buying some seeds, found the tobacco seeds among his order and more for fun than expectation of success, planted them.

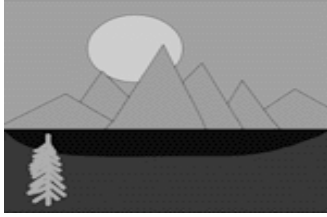
Tobacco growing, however, according to natives, was common among them before the advent of many white men. Some of them tell of planting tobacco seeds in little boxes, later transplanting it to the open spots where ashes had been scattered or old logs burned, then of hanging up the leaves and curing them with smoke from alder wood. Some of the aged natives even assert that cured tobacco was mixed with dried alder bark and burned shells, the ingredients then ground fine and used as snuff.

Anchorage Daily Times, October 22, 1918, page 4
"Vegetables for Hospital Will be Raised
on Federal Tract of Land"

On the acre tract on the Federal block at the corner of C and Third Streets, vegetables will be raised next season for use at the Anchorage Hospital. The plot of ground is expected to yield enough garden truck to supply the hospital for a year. Plows and harrows have turned over and broken up the soil of the tract, and it will be fertilized this fall. It will be plowed and harrowed again in the spring, and then planted. The work of preparing the ground has been done by a force from the Maintenance of Way Department.

Tips from the Past: A Miscellany of Garden Wisdom by Bernard Schofield Submitted by Sue Lincoln

- Don't have a dibble? Try the neck of a beer or wine bottle!
- Olive 'stones' set around garlic at planting will help them grow.
- To get a great crop of beans, prepare the bed as usual, but add a generous amount of hair (human or animal).
- *If violets bloom at autumn time,
Whose soil they grow on will surely die.* -
Traditional Saying
- *I think it must be rather nice
To live by giving good advice;
To talk of what the garden needs;
Instead of pulling up the weeds.*



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News by Rosemary Kimball

Any speaker that can keep 50+ people in their seats for two hours without a squawk is pretty good! That's what happened when Kearlee Ray Wright spoke about his "water feature". He has built himself, in the last 6 years, a quarter acre series of ponds, streams and waterfalls. He has a permit from F&G to keep trout and he has an underwater camera to show them.

Kearlee covered the very basics of pond development: planning (use a garden hose to set your outline and then spray paint it on the ground) shaping, lining, grading, rocking, planting grading, fish, pumps, water purification and circulation, maintenance and mistakes and how to fix them. He had all sorts of valves and pipe for show and tell and we inhaled every word. If you ever need a speaker, I'd recommend him highly —and he volunteered tours of his facility. You in Anchorage might consider a field trip down to the peninsula again next summer to see his setup. I can sum it up in one word... **WHOW!**

Our next presenter, in March, is Pepper Johansen. She will give a presentation on a neat home vertical hydroponic system she devised. She has a commercial hydroponics operation in north Kenai, grows great tomatoes, melons, strawberries, the list goes on and on. This will be a neat specialty garden concept.

The new Master Gardener class on the Peninsula has started with over 40 people signed up. We may get a formal group together down here after all. For some reason we don't seem to be the joining kind. But the good news is that my neighbor, Mark, is taking the class, as is his cousin...finally. Some of us are making plans for their 40 hours of community service.

I'm packing, at the end of February, to meet Carmel Tysver and Debbie Hinchey in Portland, OR, for some serious nursery/garden hopping before the Western Winter Study Weekend of the North American Rock Garden Society in Eugene. What I know about rock gardens would fit on the head of a pin, but this, my third study weekend, should be as fascinating as the first two. It will be fun to go with other gardeners to nurseries and open gardens and have someone to "talk plant" with. We will be stopping by Merle

Dean Feldman's (I have 30 pounds of gardening magazines for her) to see her new sales and garden area. I then go on to Newport Beach, CA, and a woman, overhearing my travel plans, told me to go to Roger's Nursery. I asked my son, who lives there, if he'd heard of it and his reply was that it was a "candy store for horticulturists" and it was on the agenda...Nice kid.

Last notes: Do a web search on moss gardens for entertainment. The soil temperature is up to 33°F. Unbelievable! If that holds up, all our snow will go directly down and not melt and run off.

Beautiful Alaskans... cont. from page 4

I went to hear Mary Keen from England 3 times, Ciscoc Morris's lectures were so funny I didn't want to miss any. I enjoyed the slides on Dutch designers and we all loved the Beyond Barriers about fences. The Baker Stage was open to everyone with plenty of seating available. They had a lot of hands-on demonstrations and we ran in there every time we had a minute. We attended 4 to 6 seminars each day and shopped in between talks. Our final seminar was Outrageous Containers by Brian Minter of B.C. who created fantastic planters in 20 minutes.

The 4th level also contained the gardens. It is incredible the way they bring in full size trees, boulders, ponds, buildings and create landscapes so inventive and full of ideas. No one can go away without some inspiration. It was with a heavy heart and many suitcases that we headed to the airport to drive security crazy with our purchases. It may still be winter in Alaska but we have Spring in our hearts.

New Plants for Sale at ABG in May

Some truly new and wonderful plants are coming to the Alaska Botanical Garden nursery for ABG's Annual Plant Sale & Membership Drive, May 22nd. Mark your calendar! The nursery will be open from 10am to noon for ABG members only and from noon to 4pm for the public.

Some of the new plants featured will be annuals and perennials: *Clematis*, New Zealand Hybrid Delphiniums, Hostas, *Alternanthera*, Marguerite Daisies, *Osteospermum*, *Dracaena australis*, Geraniums and *Perilla* 'Magilla' and herbs grown @ the ABG.

More details and information coming in next month's newsletter - stay tuned!



Bird Chatter

- Thank you to Cathy Sage for her large donation of books to the Cooperative Extension Service. The books can be found in the CES Volunteer Office and include a wide variety of topics including herbs and flowers.
- Leave it to a gardener to put tomato plants in a six-pack cooler. Word has it that Mary Shier transported plants to her Community Schools class this way!
- The Anchorage CES Office will be closed for spring break on Friday, March 19.
- The Municipality of Anchorage is looking for gardeners and businesses to adopt the 1,000 hanging baskets the city puts up each summer. A donation of \$75 covers the cost of materials for one basket. If you are interested in participating, contact Municipal Volunteer Coordinator, Kathy Anderson @343-4287.
- Thinking of what to grow for the 2004 City of Flowers theme, "The Aurora—a Blast of Northern Color"? If lime green comes to mind, try *Nicotiana* 'Lime Green'. You might have to start your own seed indoors (and soon). For real hot spots in town, *Zinnia* 'Envy' is supposed to be back in style.
- The 7th Biannual Southeast Master Gardeners Convention and Trade show is coming up May 14th and 15th in Juneau. Check the web site at seakmastergardeners.org for all the details and registration information plus many articles to help you beautify your home and garden.

Did you know...

that damselflies and dragonflies have two pair of wings that flap independently of each other? And that lepidoptera species (butterflies and moths) have hooks that hold the front and back wings together and beat as one? Beetles have two sets of wings, but only the lower two flap.

Volunteer Opportunities

- All community schools are wanting Master Gardeners to give classes.
- Women's Show: Sullivan Arena, April 23, 24 and 25:
- 15th Annual Catholic Social Services Garden Party. BP Atrium May 28, 2004
- May 28: 5p-9p
- OFFICE HELP - HORT HOTLINE
Call Sue Lincoln for info: 786-6300

Garden Tips from Susan Miller - The Garden Gate

Use branches as stakes for decorative containers. Cut material from your garden, or purchase kiwi vine, curly willow or hazelnut branches where you buy cut flowers. Placed properly, the branch usually supports the plant without additional need for ties. If you do need a tie, use raffia or ribbon for a more attractive look.

Dear Gardening Friends,

This morning one of my Amaryllis bloom stalks decided to head for the window which sent me scrambling for a stake. In looking for a green stake and some ugly tape I remembered that a forked branch from a deciduous tree or shrub made an excellent and attractive stake. A branch from a Birch (or whatever is close at hand) enhances any pot and looks particularly natural and attractive mixed with spring blooming bulbs and plants. If needed, use a bit of raffia or ribbon to tie the plant to the stake.

I was down in Seattle last month and noticed that building containers filled with spring bloomers had a group of branches added to the center. The branches added height and texture and looked natural (well pretty natural) with the plant material - sort of a winter version of summer grasses.

Potted plants abound in greenhouses and markets at this time of year. As our longing for Spring color increases, you are sure to bring home a plant or two. One of the best and longest blooming plants to look for are Cyclamen. Set in a bright, cool window Cyclamen will bloom for you all Spring. Regular watering and fertilizing is all that it needs beyond good light for months of bloom. Choose plants with healthy foliage and lots of flower buds developing in the center of the plant.

Now the nice thing is that Cyclamen are a great plant for outside once that elusive Summer arrives. They love our cooler temperatures, actually they need those cooler temps to grow and bloom well. Typically we think of Cyclamen as shade plants, but, like Begonias and Impatiens, they can handle full sun (in Anchorage) once acclimated/hardened off to the higher light. The white Cyclamen I grew in containers on the west side of my house last summer bloomed up to frost.

So when you are looking at picking up a bit of color for your home know that when you choose Cyclamen you get double value, an inside plant for Spring - and outside plant for Summer.



Job Opening: Horticultural Assistant- Alaska Botanical Garden

40 hours per week-May 1 to Sept. 30. Flex hours but usually 9 to 5, Tues. thru Sat. Garden maintenance; watering, weeding, planting...as needed, interaction with volunteers, visitors and groups, nursery work and sales, work special events like Garden Fair; all in the Garden under varying environmental conditions. Must have experience in garden maintenance, knowledge of plant materials, and a good attitude when dealing with the public and visiting groups. Call the ABG office for further information, 770-3692.

TEAM COORDINATOR WANTED..

To team with Madge Oswald and other master gardeners for the 2004 preparation and planting of the entrance beds at the Alaska Botanical Gardens. The beds have already been designed and the selected flowers are growing at the municipal greenhouse. This activity has taken place during the last week in May in previous years. After the initial planting other volunteers will sign up to water, weed and deadhead for one week during the summer. Madge reports this is an immensely rewarding project for high-energy gardeners. Interested? Do you have questions? Call or e-mail Dana at 346-1631 or klinkhart@gci.net.

CHUGACH MANOR SENIORS SEEK HELP

The houseplants in Chugach Manor's public spaces need care. Carey Redo is looking for a Master Gardener volunteer to stop by and water once a week. The residents have plants in their garden room and balcony. Water is easily accessible.

Chugach Manor is at 1281 E. 19th across from the Anchorage Senior Center. Carey can be reached at 272-1418 or careyinak@aol.com. Thank you.

Help Wanted

Mr. Norman Pichler, 563-6475 would like a master gardener to prepare his garden beds and plant them this spring. He is willing to pay. He lives in the vicinity of the Tudor Dog track. He will have everything you need; starts, etc., Call him M,W,F after 11a T,Th at a reasonable time in the morning into the evening. He is disabled. Please call him directly as this is not an 'official' volunteer activity.

FREE....

Heavy steel bathtub currently in the front yard at Debbie Hinchey's, 1474 Virginia Court. It needs two people to move as it's very heavy but great if someone is looking for a water feature basin. Free to first two people who can pick it up.

Gardening Calendar

March 11, Thursday

Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Conference, Bob Gorman of the Cooperative Extension will be speaking on Fruit and Insects. 7 pm, at the Cooperative Extension conference room 130. Call Paul Laviviere 276-3074 for more info.

March 19 -- April 1

Artique Show "In Full Bloom", Invitational art show with a botanical theme, open to the public, percentage of sales benefit ABG, Artique Ltd, 314 G Street, M- F 10 am - 6 pm, Saturday 10 am - 5 pm, Sunday 12- 5 pm. Opening reception Friday March 19 5 pm - 7 pm.

April 6, Tuesday

Alaska Botanical Garden Annual Meeting- come hear a progress report on the gardens, meet ABG Board members and staff, enjoy light refreshments, and try your luck at winning a fabulous door prize. BP Energy Center, 900 E. Benson Blvd, 6:30 pm-8:30 pm. 770-3692

March 4, Thursday

Anchorage Garden Club meeting, "Apple Trees", a public education program that is open to all. River Bean from the valley will talk on how to grow apple trees in Southcentral Alaska. Pioneer schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle, 7:30 pm-9 pm. For more info: 566-0539.

March 9, Tuesday

Alaska Rose Society meeting, "Photographing Roses" by Norm Levesque, 7 pm Central Lutheran Church, 15th & Cordova Contact: Don Daniels 346-1143.

March 15, Monday

AMGA Meeting, "Shade Gardening" by Sally Arant, 7 p.m. CES Conference Rm.130, 2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd. Call 346-1631 for info.

April 1, Thursday

Anchorage Garden Club meeting, "New plants for 2004" a public education program that is open to all. Margaret Donatello will talk about the newer plants on the market. Pioneer schoolhouse, 3rd & Eagle, 7:30 pm - 9 pm, 566-0539.

April 13, Tuesday

Alaska Rose Society meeting, "Spring Pruning Roses" by Chuck Decker, 7 pm Central Lutheran Church, 15th & Cordova Contact Don Daniels 346-1143.



The Anchorage Chapter of the Alaska Master Gardeners Association welcomes letters, opinions, articles, calendar items, 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:

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

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Fax Line 786-6312



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SPRING IS COMING!!

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