

Anchorage Chapter



Volume 7, Issue 2

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER January 2005

From the President's Corner By Dana Klinkhart

Do you feel like spring is a thousand miles away? Do you wonder when those longer days will become a reality? Would you trade that cup of hot cocoa for a glass of iced tea in the garden? Is there a hunger for connecting to the world of sprouts and green vegetation? Well, you are in luck! On Monday, January 17th at 7 pm your Alaska Master Gardeners Association has planned an event that promises to get those gardening brainwaves flowing. Thanks to one of our own Master Gardeners, Mary Shier, we will be treated to a presentation on **'Growing Your Own Tomatoes'**. What varieties of tomatoes does she grow? Which are listed as her favorites? What special ingredients and techniques does she recommend for success in growing those tasty morsels? She will have the answers and more, for sure.

Mark your calendar now! New members and guests are always welcome. We hope that our new MG's will make this their first program meeting of many. Refreshments, door prizes and lots of fellowship are always a big hit with those in attendance. It is also at this time that we will be electing four nominees to the AMGA Board of Directors. Four new directors will join the board for two years. They will work as a team with the four remaining board members to organize, plan and prepare the programs, tours, educational presentations and general business of your Master Gardeners Association. These eight dedicated gardeners are joined by Julie Riley, our horticultural agent, to bring AMGA and the Cooperative Extension Service energy and ideas to foster gardening in our community. Break out of the dark of winter on January 17th and enjoy the first activity and presentation in 2005. You will be glad you did!

Have you renewed your AMGA membership for 2005? Your \$15 goes a long way to cover the costs of publishing monthly newsletters and promoting gardening education. You'll want to have your application in prior to January 31st to meet the publishing deadline for the annual directory. The membership forms are easily available for downloading from our AMGA web site at: www.corecom.net/~gardener Please include your ideas for educational programs and tours for 2005 on your renewal. Your suggestions will inspire the program committee in their search for the best possible program and tours for you for the coming season.





COLLEGE OF RURAL ALASKA

**Cooperative
Extension
Service**



UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

1930–2005

CES Celebrates 75th Anniversary

Alaska started its Cooperative Extension Service in 1930 under the leadership of Charles E. Burnell, the University of Alaska's first president. At that time, the university was known as the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines. Today, Cooperative Extension is part of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the state's land grant university.

Other Cooperative Extension programs started in the lower 48 states beginning in 1914 with federal funding. These early programs offered practical education for rural residents who could not go to the land grant colleges. The first programs were about agricultural topics and later expanded to include home economics and 4-H.

The goal of Cooperative Extension has always been to meet people's practical education needs. When Cooperative Extension started in the

lower 48, America was an agricultural and rural country. As the country changed from rural to urban and people's needs changed, so have Cooperative Extension's programs.

When Alaska started its Cooperative Extension Service, the first programs were in agriculture, home economics, and 4-H. The first district extension office opened in Palmer in 1936 where it worked with the early colonists. As Alaska grew and changed so did the Cooperative Extension Service.

Today, Alaska is an urban state with widely separated rural communities. Cooperative Extension's programs have evolved to meet the varied needs of the state's diverse communities. Cooperative Extension's roots are in agriculture, but today the educational programs in greatest demand are in water quality, gardening, and commercial horticulture. According to Bill Bulter, Associate Director of Cooperative Extension, two of Extension's most recognized programs are 4-H and Master Gardeners.

4-H programs were once referred to as "kids and cows" because of the strong agricultural link. Today's 4-H programs focus on things like community service, natural resources, and outdoor recreation. Traditional programs in home economics included sewing, food preparation and preservation. People's changing lifestyles have created demand for programs in personal finance, parent education, healthy diets, and energy efficient housing.

With an expanding clientele to serve, Extension's program to train volunteers was developed. The first Master Gardener course in Alaska was taught in Anchorage and Eagle River by Wayne Vandre in 1978. One of the students in that class was Judy Christianson who, 27 years later, is still active as a Master Gardener today.

In 1986, Master Gardeners in Anchorage got together to incorporate as a non-profit organization, the Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Inc. (AMGA). The group was organized to enhance and supplement the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardener program...and to foster, promote, and disseminate gardening information in Alaska. In 1991 Anchorage became the first Chapter of AMGA and the Central Peninsula and Tanana Valley Chapters followed soon after.

It is Master Gardeners who substantially increase the number of people reached by the Cooperative Extension Service today. A history of the Cooperative Extension Service in Alaska would not be complete without mention of the wonderful work done by the thousands of Master Gardener volunteers who have helped Extension to fulfill its mission.





**REPORTS FROM HOLY CROSS MISSION
KOSEREFSKY P.O., YUKON RIVER, ALASKA, OCTOBER 1, 1899**

[Submitted by Lyn Sinnema, MG, who researched this @ the library]

Dear Sir:

It is with great pleasure that I forward the following account of our experiments this season. I trust you will excuse its meagerness of detail, as I have been absent a great part of the summer and could not follow up personally our agricultural endeavors as I should like to have done. Moreover, all the old workmen and school boys were away catching and curing salmon. Add to this the unfavorable weather, first a short, hot drought, and then until now a long and cold deluge. This year Alaska surpassed herself for rain. An early spring is what we had this summer. So quickly and suddenly did the snow and killing frost come that it was a question whether we could get the crops safely housed. But by the 23rd of September all was secure. The Yukon ice is expected inside of a week and already there is skating on the lakes.

The results of the garden of the boys' school was:

1. Potatoes. -Early Rose, 1 acre. Seed, small potatoes planted whole. Yield 200 bushels, medium or large, according to soil; largest 17 ounces.
2. Turnips. - Early Flat Dutch, good ground, excellent; largest 8 1/2 pounds, circumference 39 inches. Munich Purple, good ground, excellent; largest 7 pounds, circumference 30 inches.
3. Ruta-bagas. - Long Imperial. Crop fair.
4. Beets.- Bastian Extra Early, rich soil, rather poor; largest three-fourths pound.
5. Carrots.- Early Scarlet Horn, rich soil, good; largest three-fourths pound. Early French Horn, rich soil, good; largest three-fourths pound. Ox Heart, rich soil, good; largest three-fourths pound.
6. Onion.- Large Red Wethersfield, new ground, small. Will do for sets next year.
7. Radishes.- Early Scarlet Top, rich ground, record breakers, juicy. French Breakfast, rich ground, excellent.
8. Cabbage.- Early Hanson, rich ground, good. Suffered from early drought.
9. Cauliflower.-Earliest Erfurt, good soil, excellent; 2 feet 9 inches circumference. Early Paris, same as above.
10. Lettuce, Endive, Rosemary. - All did very well.

I should mention that the gardens were cleared of snow eight or tens days sooner than usual by the use of wood ashes or earth scattered thinly over the surface of the snow in the beginning of May.

In the fall of 1898 we planted healthy plants of domestic strawberries and rhubarb, raised here from seed. The rhubarb all survived and flourished; of the strawberries only about one-half, or less, lived through the winter. Wheat sown last fall was completely winterkilled; our seed was too old, I believe. Native berries were not abundant this year; it was too rainy. The Indians gather bushels of berries every fall for winter use. The raspberry is very prolific. I believe our native berries and hardly fruits could be improved by proper care. We are very anxious to try the cultivated blackberry, but I fear that the plants will not arrive in good condition from the States. Perhaps seeds would be better; that is, if the mail would deliver them in time.

Timothy grows luxuriantly here, but we have not broken ground for it for lack of horses and machinery. Winter hay, gathered on the frozen lakes, is cut when the ice is solid and is easy to harvest. The scythe glides over the ice so easily, and the grass remains green long into the winter. Cattle are very fond of it. They can feed on it until Christmas, about which time the snow covers it completely. I do not believe, however, that it can be very nutritious. Our cattle at present consist of one bull, two cows, one heifer, and one bull calf, all native born except one.

Not having any horses we are thinking of trying our dogs for light plowing. It has been done up the river, and we shall in our next report give you a description of this rather unique method of plowing. For breaking new ground we have heretofore used the mattock, but it is a slow and laborious proceeding. Our gardens, which have the reputation of being the finest in the Yukon Valley, cover less than 4 acres, including those of the Sisters. They have been wrested from the woods, brush and moss by hard toil. Now that we see that gardening can be made a success, we have hopes of causing the natives to take it up. With their cellars full of potatoes they need not fear the periodical fish famines, not to speak of the benefit to their health an addition of vegetables to their diet would produce. Our boys and girls are quite proficient now in the art of gardening, some of them having gardens independent of ours.



GARDENING IN THE WET

Part 2 – Slugs, Bugs, and Other Problems

By Jo Anne Banta



Anchorage gardeners don't know what slugs are. In Cordova they have a huge black slug (officially, *European Arion ater*) that devours everything. It is the size of a large cigar, six to eight inches long when stretched out, as large as a mouse when curled up. It can be killed only by burning, and parents go broke paying their children ten cents each for slug-picking.

Luckily, that variety had not invaded our neighborhood before we moved, so I had only regular slugs to deal with – lots of them. Each spring I faithfully laid three-inch rounds of tarpaper throughout the garden areas. Early every morning, I was out turning and spraying with my bottle of ½ and ½ ammonia and water. I usually stopped counting slugs after 50. Marigolds? The slugs loved them. Tulips, lettuce, anything that grew close to the ground got devoured, even rhubarb leaves. No sense in putting out beer; it got diluted with the next rain.

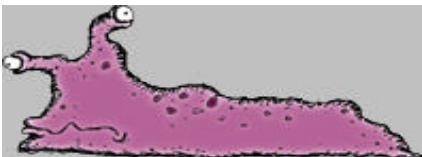
Here in Anchorage I still have my ammonia spray, but a bottle lasts a lot longer. I find slugs more easily in the evening here, and I've even gone back to using crushed eggshells as a deterrent around my hostas. (This trick did not work with soggy eggshells.)

Bugs, on the other hand, seem to like the Anchorage climate better. I never saw a delphinium defoliator, a stink bug, a cottonwood leaf beetle, or thrip "in the wet." Aphids and spider mites often came in on nursery stock, and we did see an occasional weevil. I quit trying to grow turnips and radishes because of the root maggots, and I "vaselined" the stems of cabbage sets to keep them safe from cut worms. Another troublesome pest was a small green worm, probably an imported currant worm, that infested the occasional raspberry.

Fran Flint, the moss maven, would love Cordova. There is moss everywhere. Yes, it is beautiful; and if I still lived there, I would try to incorporate it into my landscape. In the vegetable garden, however, it can be a pain. I spent lots of time scraping moss off the boards of my raised beds. It grew everywhere. It infringed on the soil and crept up the sides of buildings. The lawn had to be limed continually, to little avail.

Invasive plants? Indeed. When Julie Riley spoke of buttercups as being invasive, she was not kidding. Buttercups spread like crazy in our area: in the garden, in the lawn, on the dirt road, anyplace and everywhere. If one could just stop the buttercups and salmonberries from invading, gardening in the wet would be much easier.

Last, but not least, there were the blue jays. Here we have neat little tweetie birds that flock to the feeders and entertain us with their antics. In Cordova, we had beautiful but hungry Steller jays. They ate the squirrel food and the strawberries; they dug up onion sets, and came swooping down and snapped off tulips with two-inch stems. Keeping the mossy squirrel stump full of food solved some of the problem. I also learned that placing a few plastic strawberries in the garden before the berries came in season saved the crop.



Yes, I miss the smell of the ocean, I miss the beauty of Prince William Sound on a sunny day; but I don't miss the slugs, the buttercups, and problem gardening "in the wet."

(Next month, 3rd and Final Part – Vegetables, Berries and Trees)



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

You know that ugly month called February? Your seed orders are arriving but it's too cold and too early to start stuff in the greenhouse. You've read everything in sight. Well, it's not going to be as ugly as it could be because we have the perfect antidote to winter blahs! The Master Gardener Conference will be February 11 and 12 at Kenai Peninsula Community College. The conference will start after lunch on Friday, which will give everyone a chance to travel to the mid peninsula in the daylight and will end at 4-ish on Saturday. You have the option of attending a half day, a whole day, or both days! And we are having some very exciting speakers! There will be all sorts of talks on trees, big and little, fruit, flowers, and vegetables. This will give you a chance to do some 'pre-summer exercising' of those little gray cells....and there will be door prizes!

Included in this newsletter is the registration form and brochure. This will also be available for printing on the AMGA web site (www.corecom.net/~gardener) Grab a friend and come on down.

Our featured 'not-to-be-missed' guest speaker will be Diana Reeck from Collector's Nursery in Battle Ground, Washington. If you haven't been to her web site, GO! (www.collectorsnursery.com) I got my soldanella there. I saw it blooming on a bench and fell instantly in love and Diana was kind enough to look it up to see if it would "do" in Alaska. It does well and I haven't killed it yet! I've been to Collector's twice to pick up a "will call" order. That's the easiest way to gain access to a nursery that hasn't opened for the season! I've been to Heronswood and Gossler Farms that way too.

Our first park ramrod, Merle Dean Feldman, was back to the peninsula in early December for a flying visit and six of us got to have lunch with her and talk plant for two whole hours. It was heaven. I'm lucky enough to have kids in Portland so I get to visit her in Yamhill every spring or fall. I'll see her again when I go out to the Western Winter Study Weekend of the North American Rock Garden Society (ain't that a mouthful!) at the end of February.

Other than visiting and planning, not too much is happening. I had to laugh at one of our dedicated seed starters down here for a remark she made on receiving her Stokes catalog about 'not having anything much new that was interesting. We do have a tendency to get rather blasé. Think spring.

Abbot Loop Community Park Gets Greener United Way's Day of Caring September 15 2004

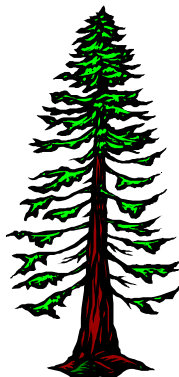


With the support of over 60 volunteers, 27 large birch and spruce trees and over 100 shrubs and perennials were planted in the new Abbott Loop Community Park on United Way's Day of Caring 2004. Volunteers learned proper planting techniques, picked up tree information brochures, got their hands dirty, and created a greener

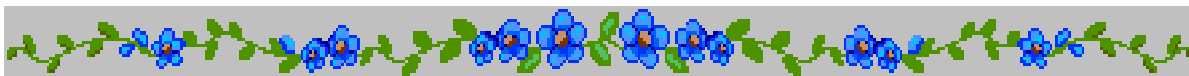
park in the process. Alaska Pacific University's 'Sustainable Communities' class volunteered their time to learn proper tree-planting techniques and used their newfound skills to guide volunteers throughout the day. Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich supported the effort by planting a birch tree and delivering honorary awards to members of the advisory committee that developed the park master plan. More than 25 businesses also supported the event through donations of labor, materials and supplies.

The project was organized jointly by the Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department and the Alaska Community Forest Council. The project was a demonstration planting intended to provide a community service and generate interest for the formation of an Anchorage citizens group - Anchorage TREErific.

A general membership meeting for Anchorage TREErific is scheduled for January 11th, 5:30-7:30pm at Russian Jack Chalet. For more information, contact Emily Creely - ecreely@hotmail.com or Monique Anderson - msanderson@landdesignnorth.com.



Asociety grows great when old
men plant trees whose shade they
know they shall never sit in.
- Greek proverb



Bird Chatter

- Annie Nevaldine's garden will be featured in the spring edition of **Perennials**, published by Better Homes & Gardens. The pictures were taken three years ago by a photographer from Outside.
- The favorite garden perennials of the 2004 MG class are peony, delphinium, lily, tulip and bleeding heart.
- A color, pocket-sized guide of Selected Invasive Plants of Alaska, published by the USDA Forest Service is available from Cooperative Extension Service. It includes 26 species of weeds including the following garden plants: oxeye daisy, orange hawkweed, tansy, Japanese knotweed, butter & eggs, Washington orchid, Siberian pea and mayday tree.
- There is still time to register for Roseann Leiner's class, "Leaves in Our Lives." The five session series meets Wednesday's starting, January 12 from 12:00 -2:00 p.m. Call CES for registration information. The class can also be taken for 1 credit.
- **Ed Hume Seeds** will once again be available to non-profit groups and schools. Contact Judy Christianson at: 344-6617 or judymel@gci.net
- Gardeners aged 65+ can register for University classes with a fee waiver of only \$5!! Consider taking "Leaves in Our Lives:Food" from Roseann Leiner. Contact the CES office for more information.

Holy Cross Mission CONTINUED FROM PG. 3

Passers-by have been much surprised to see us excavating cellars without meeting frozen ground, as seems to be the case everywhere else, especially where the ground is covered with moss. A well dug in our yard 25 feet deep was entirely free from frost to the bottom. The reason of it is very likely this, that the ground here has been cleared for ten years, which allows the summer heat to gain some every year on the frost beneath. Graves in the woods nearby have been cut 6 feet through soft earth without any sign of frost.

This year the field mice have done considerable harm. From one nest the boys took about one-half bushel of small potatoes; and now they invade the storehouses also, doing much mischief. Grouse, geese, and ducks are plentiful just now, and so are muskrats and other small quadruped. Deer were exceedingly scarce last winter, as also were salmon this summer.

Yours very truly, Prof. C. C. Georgeson, Sitka, Alaska
Raphael J. Crimont, Superintendent Holy Cross Mission



CONGRATULATIONS NEW MASTER GARDENERS

Forty-four Master Gardeners completed the course this past year and will be joining the Anchorage Chapter of the Alaska Master Gardener Association in 2005. Congratulations and welcome to everyone below.

Sonja Arduser
Katie Belcher
Maren Carey
Christine Cikan
Bob Clements
Courtney Cox-Akers*
Linda Coy
Anne Marie Curtis
Anna Davis
Betsy Dunaway
Bob Dyal*
Linda Ewers*
Kit Gurule
Linda Gustafson
Lois Hall
Drew Holt
Elizabeth Holt
Teresa Holt
Kathy Honeysett
Ginny Jacober
Jerry Jenkins
Margarete Keicher

Carla Kelly
Nancy Larson
Bonnie Lembo
Mary Marshburn
Mary Martin
Dottie McDewitt
Chris Mizelle
Neva Nolan
Ginger Payton
Yvonne Perkins-Williams
G. Gordon Pyle
Brigitte Ressel
Keith Rogers*
Beth Schlabaugh
Phyllis Schmidt
Michelle Semerad
Cheryl Simmons
Cynthia Spencer
Ann Spohnholz
Rita Wade
Lupita Weese
Susan Young

~~*Have not completed exam by press time.~~

SUSTAINABLE HORTICULTURE ENTHUSIASTS COURSES

JANUARY- Organic Gardening Course at UAA
Thursday evenings from January 13 through April 28 at Eagle River/Chugiak branch of UAA. "Organic Gardening", Agri A138, 3-credit. Call 694-3313 or on line www.uaa.alaska.edu Wolf Link

FEBRUARY- Organic Garden Methods at Mat-Su College
Tuesday evenings for five weeks. Agri 138 is a 1-credit course from Feb 1 through March 1. Register through www.uaa.alaska.edu Wolf Link

MARCH 5- Gardening with Nature Class
A unique workshop for the gardener who seeks ways to blend spiritual connection with the Earth with conventional horticultural practices. 9am to 5pm. Call 907-745-0758 to register.

APRIL 7, 14, 21- Whole Foods as Good Medicine
How to navigate through the confusion of diets, essential fatty acids, and food processing to maximize your vitality and immunity. Meets 3 Thursday evenings 7-9PM in Palmer. Call 746-7701 for registration and directions. \$30
[more information available @ corecom.net/~gardener]



MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Garden Club Revisions

With the coming of the new year, Anchorage area garden clubs change officers. A Master Gardener is needed to revise the list of garden club contacts that CES makes available to the public. This information is also included in the AMGA Directory and on the AMGA website. See Julie for information on getting started.

History project

Anyone interested in researching historic gardening events in Alaska for a presentation that Julie Riley is giving in February, can contact her at 230-7339. This would also include the early history of Anchorage area greenhouses, nurseries and garden centers.

Community School Classes

The deadline for scheduling classes for spring quarter is early February. Please contact Julie if you have an idea. If you schedule your own class, please let Julie know as soon as possible so that she doesn't schedule other Master Gardeners to teach on that same date.

ABG Docent Program

The Alaska Botanical Garden is putting together a new docent program and is hoping to train Master Gardeners who are interested in giving tours of ABG this summer. Contact Barbara Miller at ABG, horticulture@alaskabg.org; 770-3692 and let Julie know if you get involved.

4-H Talking Plant

There will be a training/organizing session for those Master Gardeners interested in making Talking Plant presentations in 2005. The training will be Thursday, January 13 from 4:40-5:30 p.m. in the CES conference room. NOTE: this is a date change from the originally scheduled time.

Junior Master Gardener

Pat Ryan is looking for two Master Gardeners to work with him in his first grade class room at Trailside Elementary. After Jan. 1st he will pick a regular day each week to do JMG activities with his 18 students (3 hour sessions). Anyone interested in working with Pat can contact him at ryan_patrick@asdk12.org. If you'd like to talk to MGs who worked with Pat last year, get in touch with Julie.

- Master Gardener help will also be needed to help Pat with Junior Master Gardener classes this summer at the Alaska Botanical Garden. There will be four classes that will meet once a week for 6 weeks, 3 hours each. Keep this in mind.

Kids Gardening Books

A Master Gardener is needed who could type up an annotated bibliography of children's gardening books. Approximate time: 3-5 hours. Call Julie, 786-6300.

First Grade Guest Speaker

Trailside Elementary School first grade teacher Pat Ryan would like a guest speaker on how to propagate African violets. After January 3, 2205. Contact: ryan_patrick@asdk12.org.

ABG Spring/summer classes

The Alaska Botanical Garden would like to offer regularly scheduled classes for adults in their outdoor classroom (Junior Master Gardener space) this summer, either on Wednesday nights or Saturday. Classes could be on any topic, but ABG would like to target beginning gardeners for many of them. Please call Julie to talk over your ideas. Jody Willing at ABG (770-3692) would like to get a schedule together after the first of the year.

Gardening Calendar

January 17

AMGA meeting: "Growing Your Own Tomatoes", with Mary Shier. 7 p.m., CES, Conf. Room 130, Carlton Trust Bldg., 2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd.

January 26 & 27, (Wednesday and Thursday)

Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conference, Lake Lucille Lodge, Wasilla. Registration: \$90; trade show space \$120/\$150. For details contact CES in Anchorage, 786-6300 or Palmer 745-4469.

February 11-12

Alaska MG Conference, Soldotna, AK. See article below, and registration form.

February 21

AMGA meeting: "Garden Photography", with Annie Nevaldine. 7 p.m., CES, Conf. Room 130, Carlton Trust Bldg., 2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd. [see article page 1]

February 21-25

CES 75th Anniversary brownbag lunch programs, 12-1:30 p.m., CES conference room.

March 25

AMGA meeting: "Landscaping for Small Spaces and Tract Homes", with Erika Keinlen. 7 p.m., CES, Conf. Room 130, Carlton Trust Bldg., 2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd.

April 7

Hazard Trees, presented by Dr. Bob Wheeler, CES Forestry Specialist, 6:30-8:30 p.m. CES conference room. Free, but call to register, 786-6300.

April 16

Sears Mall Garden Show, 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Trailside Elementary School Wish List

- 1) Large houseplants that can be used for propagation such as jade, African violet, ivy or anything else that roots easily in water.
- 2) Old seeds that are no longer viable and can be used for art projects.
- 3) A rolling seed starting light rack.
- 4) A monetary donation that would buy terrarium plants, etc.

Contact: ryan_patrick@asdk12.org.

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: amga@gci.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

Phone 786-6300

Fax Line 786-6312



Alaska Master Gardener Conference:

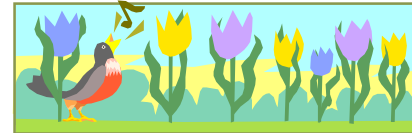
THINK SPRING!

The Alaska Master Gardener conference is scheduled for February 11 & 12 (1/2 day Friday and all day Saturday) at Kenai Peninsula College in Soldotna. Speakers will include Diana Reeck of Collectors Nursery in Battleground, Washington. Sandy and Suzanne Williams, Master Gardeners from Juneau speaking on vegetables; Bill Campbell, Alaska Plant Materials Center on potatoes; and Julie Riley on growing and enjoying herbs.

Information will be available from the Anchorage CES office or you can call CES in Soldotna directly, 262-5824. Brochure & registration form included in newsletter and on the AMGA web site, corecom.net/~gardener

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If you haven't renewed your AMGA Membership, this will be your last newsletter.

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