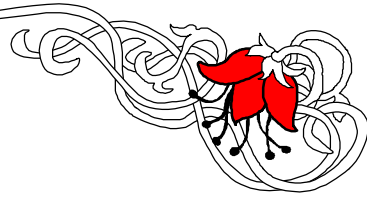


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 8, Issue 1

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER January 2006

From the President's Corner

By Dana Klinkhart

Ring in the New Year 2006 with a program meeting Monday, January 16th. Several six minute television spots previously aired on Channel 7 this past season will show gardens of master gardeners in Anchorage. Mel Monson, Annie Nevaldine and Amelia Walsh's gardens were featured on the 'Smart Gardening' program and we will be seeing these spots for ourselves.

Have you renewed your Alaska Master Gardeners Association membership for 2006? Your application and \$20 need to be submitted prior to January 31 in order to be included in the annual directory. Your renewal form was mailed out in December. If you have not yet mailed it in...bring it along to our January meeting and they will be collected. A form must accompany your dues. If you're not able to locate your form you can pick one up at Cooperative Extension Service or at our AMGA web site at: www.alaskamastergardeners.org.

We hope that our new master gardeners 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 will be electing four nominees to 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 plan and prepare so many of the programs, tours and general business of the association. These eight dedicated gardeners are joined by Julie Riley, our horticultural agent, to bring together the energy and ideas that foster gardening in our community. Break out of the dark of winter on January 16th and enjoy the first activity and presentation in 2006.

Another winter break for gardeners is at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show on February 8-12, 2006.

There promises to be lots to see at this event: thousands of plants and flowers will be in bloom! Take a walk through dozens of amazing display gardens. Attend seminars. Go shopping. If you would like to see the emerging trends of the season, get inspired and learn something new from the industry experts while shopping for that special one-of-a-kind gardening gadget, then this event may just be what you are looking for in February. If you have a passion for gardening and want to join the region's top horticultural talent to celebrate spring, then the Annual Northwest Flower & Garden Show held at the Washington State Convention & Trade Center may be the destination for you.



Happy Gardening 2006!



**Homer Garden Club Publishes Book
Julie Riley, Extension Horticulture Agent**

The Homer Garden Club has just published Kachemak Cultivating from Seaside to Summit. This third edition is so enlarged that it was given a new name. According to garden club president Brenda Adams, gardeners anywhere on Alaska's Southern Kenai Peninsula will find the book useful. I can't wait to get my hands on its 319 pages. The last edition was great- even for Anchorage's growing conditions.

Chapter titles include:

- Local Climate and Soils
- Improving and Caring for Garden Soil
- Starting Seeds
- Perennials Including Bulbs and Ferns
- Annuals Including Container Gardening and Tips for Cut Flowers
- Native Plants
- Herbs
- Vegetables
- Trees and Shrubs with Tips on Attracting Birds with Plants
- Season Extenders
- Pests
- Lawns
- Roses and Grasses

There is also an extensive Glossary, Resources Section and a detailed Index.

Kachemak Cultivating from Seaside to Summit retails for \$30. It is available locally in Homer at The Homer Bookstore, Ulmer's Drug and Hardware, The Wagon Wheel, The Pratt Museum Gift Shop and in Anchor Point at Bev's Northwood Design and Gifts. We'll try to get some of the books to Anchorage to sell at AMGA meetings during the first part of the year.

More than twenty people worked directly on the project - eighteen chapter writers, five editors and three special contributors. The cover art is by local artist Toby Tyler and is printed in full color. Congratulations to Homer Garden Club members for completing such a large project!

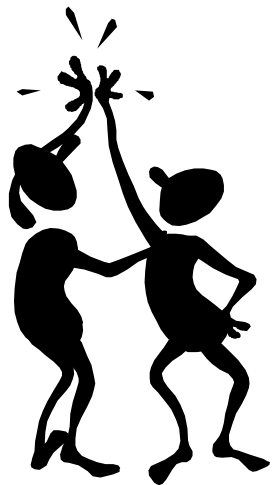


We have descended into the garden and caught three hundred slugs. How I love the mixture of the beautiful and the squalid in gardening. It makes it so lifelike.
~Evelyn Underhill, *Letters*



Welcome New MGs!

- Della Colver Barry
- Sarah Black
- Bill Borchardt
- Rosemary Borchardt
- Alice Campbell
- Leonard "Bud" Dubay
- Julie Dumoulin
- Cathy Garner
- Cindy Hawkins
- Elizabeth Hayes
- Shel Hensley
- Cindy Johnson
- Martha Jokela
- Kathy Kaulitz
- Mary Klassen
- Ron Klassen
- Marilyn Klawunder
- Brenda Krauss
- Roberta Landgren
- Amara Liggett
- Suzy Loos
- Cindy Marincovich
- Linda McCarthy-Beckworth
- Hertha Monroe
- Mary Morehouse
- Patty Joyce Nedland
- Lael Nicolai
- Janice Nyman
- Mary Parker
- Gwen Perry-Crawford
- Chloé Renshaw
- Kathy Renshaw
- Donna Rulien
- Katy Ryan
- Suzanne Saxon
- Cheryl Shroyer
- Jeri Skille
- Christy Smith
- Jamie Snyder
- Herb Spencer
- Kathleen Tarr
- Linda Vick
- Jean Ward
- Linda Watson
- Judy Wedemeyer
- Kyle Wessells
- Allison Wieland
- Michelle Wilson Nordhoff



Dorothy Hardesty completed the coursework and hopes to still be able to take the exam.



Some Reflections on Being a New MG

By Kathleen Tarr

I finished my Master Gardener training in November, and after receiving my certificate, a friend in Georgia emailed:

I never knew gardening was such a big deal in Alaska. We are talking about Alaska, right? Tundra, right?

At a holiday party recently, an attorney asked me for a definition of what it means to be MG-designated. Eager to impress, I muttered some response about how I had to take special classes in integrated pest management, weed control strategies, and diagnosing tree disorders. He reached for some more shrimp and we moved on to another subject.

My gardening-obsessed Uncle Tony wrote from Pittsburgh to say he was very proud to have a niece who's a Master Gardener, the only one in our entire family. And then he asked me to explain once again, exactly what plants I've mastered.

I went to hear Dan Hinkley, the famous nurseryman from Heronswood Nursery in Washington, speak to a Homer gardening group in June 2004: "If we're not out killing plants, we're not doing our job as gardeners."

Now that I'm a bona fide Master Gardener, it simply means I'll continue experimenting and killing plants, only now I will understand more about how to find the correct research and data to explain the scientific causes of their unfortunate demise.

Long before I became an MG, I was tuning into Victory Garden, carefully reading through plant guides, scrupulously choosing the right plant for the right micro-environment, conscientiously recording my gardening modus operandi into gardening log books, and predictably killing off expensive plant purchases, just like Hinkley and other super-knowledgeable plant people had been doing for years.

For me, the long road to future MG fame began on the Kenai Peninsula. Before moving to Anchorage in August 2004, we spent 13 years in Soldotna. There were a lot of gardening firsts for me in Soldotna: I had my first raised bed, my first small vegetable garden, my first raspberry patch, my first Delphinium row, my first slug fest, my first peonies, Himalayan blue poppies, and roses.

When we moved into our home on Redoubt Avenue, one of the city's main thoroughfares that led to three schools, I bought two *Rosa rugosa* at \$8 each from Eagle Hardware for the back yard, but when my husband built a two-tiered raised bed for the front yard a few years later, I reserved half of it for growing Stanwell Perpetuals, a rose I had read about in a back issue of *Fine Gardening Magazine*.

A lot of traffic went by our house, and I wanted to have something unusual, but showy, a mixture of perennials, especially roses, that would bloom all summer. And the rose's scent mattered, but I quickly learned if a rose could endure being in the ground through an Alaska or Alberta winter, it was best if you remained satisfied with that miraculous characteristic alone. In our climate, discovering *any* rose that would actually revive itself in the spring was far more important than whether it also provided you with intoxicating perfume. The magazine said Stanwells were of USDA Zone 4 hardiness, a very light, barely colored pink, and they liked, sunny, airy locations with well-drained soils. One reference book on hardy roses gave them a high rating of 3-Fs for "fragrance," and said they originated in the U.K., possibly bred from a mix of Scotch rose and Damask in 1838.

I spent well over \$125 in May of 1994 and ordered seven roses to be shipped from Heirloom Roses in St. Paul, Oregon. That's when I started what has become part of my summer ritual ever since. In part of my gardening journal, I include a page called "The Rose Report." I recorded how many wheelbarrows of top soil I brought in, how much steer manure I added, the depth of the planting holes, and the growth pattern of the Stanwell Perpetuals. Much to my delight, during the first season, I enjoyed their small, blush-pink blooms. I could also brag a bit because I didn't know anyone else who was growing them.

That same year, for container rose gardening, I bought a Chrysler Imperial, a Sun Flare, a Pinstripe, and a Mr. Lincoln. In my expanding rose mania, diligently, I made another notebook listing: *Roses I Have*.



New Master Gardener CONT. FROM PAGE 3...

For two summers, I marveled at the compact, yet prolific Stanwell Perpetuals, but on March 31, 1996, during one of those moments when all a gardener can do is long for some "poke and prod" yard work— to hover over every piece of dirt just for a chance to see what's come back— I wrote:

Thinking spring. Dreaming of roses to plant on the patio next... Stanwell Perpetuals may be damaged since we had no snow cover this year until February. Lots of very cold days before that. The winters are so long. Someday, I swear I'll have a rose garden in bloom from May until October.

My very next Rose Report began with this: *Roses I Used to Have.*

By June 2, 1996, it was goodbye roses. I watered and watered, but saw no sign of growth on the Stanwells. I recorded what I thought were slight changes in their stem color, a slow return to life, but realized I was delusional. I dug up all seven, brittle, dry, emaciated bushes. I had never bothered to give them any protective mulch the fall before, and without snow cover, the hardy Stanwells had succumbed.

I've been growing roses ever since, keeping my written Rose Report going, at least. In my pre-MG certified days, I killed off Linda Campbell, Harrison's Yellow, Adelaide's Hoodless, Champlain, Prairie Fire, Iowa Belle, Moonsprite, and Aunt Honey.

But on the whole, everything planted over the years in the Canadian Explorer Series has been friendly and kind enough to stick around. I have vowed to plant Terese Bugnet everywhere I will ever live in Alaska— what a magnificently hardy, vigorous, and fragrant rose it is! Terese Bugnet, with its ruffled, double-blooms, was the first rose I planted in my new Anchorage yard; I haven't yet lost one of these shrub rose stars.

In this year's MG training, unfortunately, we didn't get to cover roses, but I learned a lot about invasive weeds and plants. I didn't know *Achillea ptarmica* may be on the plants-to-watch list (it's one I partially dug up and brought with me from Soldotna), and that invasive Bird vetch, *Vicia cracca*, has become known as "kudzu of the north." In MG class, Julie Riley was excited about all the new varieties of apples Alaskans are dabbling in, and if I had the room for an apple tree, I'd probably plant one this year. MG Blythe Campbell came in to talk about flowers and observed that master gardeners have become more sophisticated in their tastes and knowledge.

I noticed recently that Heirloom Roses (www.heirloomroses.com) still sells Stanwell Perpetuals. I found them under "Extra Winter Hardy Roses," listed right before Terese Bugnet. According to their 2002 catalogue, Stanwells are "one of the most hardy and beautiful of roses. A wonderful, strong fragrance. A graceful arching shrub, well foliated with grey-green leaves, serves as a foil to the fully double, quartered blooms of soft apricot to blush pink. Outstanding, always in bloom. Makes a good hardy hedge..."

Rose Report for December 11, 2005:

Temperatures have been above normal. Our street is an ice sheet. Neighbor's grass was showing all week, but snow is thankfully falling this morning. Am wondering if the J.P. Connell rose I planted this summer will make it, since I've never had one of these hardy yellow roses before.

As a new MG, with a fifty pound file of Cooperative Extension Service pamphlets, booklets, and lecture notes to sift through, I'm looking forward to the real, practical application of my 40-plus hours of training. It's been over ten years since I experimented with Stanwell Perpetuals, and now, it's the dead of winter and I'm staring out the window, still wondering about my newly-planted roses. They're all mulched and well-protected, and I'm thankful it's snowing again. Soon, it will be 2006, and I'm wondering what kind of botanical mistakes another year will bring, what gardening faux pas awaits me in Anchorage. With my in-depth MG education, I'm bound to make even more.

MG Advisory/Review Committee Formed

Beginning in January there will be a review of the Anchorage Master Gardener course application, syllabus, registration cost, volunteer projects and management (not including AMGA projects), and volunteer office space. Additional topics for discussion are advanced/continuing training, certification options and a MG mentoring program.

The committee is made up of current AMGA Board members, one MG from the most recent class, someone who completed the course prior to 2005, a Master Gardener who has taken the course via correspondence and a home gardener who has not completed the course.

A special thanks to Marge Olson, Dana Klinkhart, Sue Lincoln, Mary Marshburn, Herb Spencer, Pat Anderson and Sara Bergquist, for volunteering to provide insight during this process.

To shorten winter, borrow some money due in spring.

~W.J. Vogel



Keeping Garden Records By Mary Shier



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

Winter grinds on but at least the days are getting longer. It got really cold in Sterling with a week of 13 to 16 below zero at night in early December while the nights were still increasing in length. We had a bit of snow– not as much as I'd like for insulative purposes– and each new snowfall tells who is around and moving. Until it rained. We just have an occasional rabbit across the driveway anymore. We do have lots of vole/shrew paths however. The voles, herbivores, wiped out my lilies two summers ago and war was declared with warferin since our cat died and wouldn't be mousing in the garden. I checked this fall and didn't find any paths by the raspberries where the nest holes were previously. The shrews, carnivores, I'd like to encourage into the garden in the hope that, like the hedgehogs in my German friend's garden, the slugs would be an appropriate food source. A friend in Soldotna set out traps last summer (peanut butter is the universal bait) and caught 100+ furries which were proportioned 4 voles to 1 shrew. We haven't had lynx in the 'hood lately and I wonder if they need the hares to draw them in to eat the wee beasties?

All plant survival bets are off now because after the below zero weather it warmed up to the low 40s and melted all the snow and left ice where we'd walked or driven. MISERABLE! If it had kept up we'd have had to mow the front yard in January! After sending around pictures of our green grass in December we got 5 beautiful inches of snow to relieve our embarrassment.



Rosemary's granddaughter, Khalia, planting onion sets last March in Troutdale, Oregon

I can't believe we're past mid winter already! It seems like I just cleaned up the gardens a few days ago. I hope I have recorded all the notes and comments in my garden journal that I had intended to do.

Garden journals are a grand resource for references in many ways. I can think of several: 1) Recording what worked well and what didn't, 2) which plants showed good or poor growth, 3) when and where items were planted, 4) Information on weather and growing conditions, 5) when blooming or harvesting took place and numerous other comments of interest. I've kept a journal for several years and enjoy perusing from time to time to review my notes.

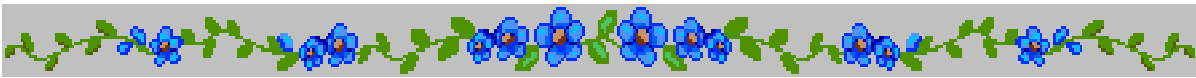
I also insert helpful plant care information received from plant resources into clear page protectors in the back section along with other informative tidbits I've gathered, which I deem to be useful. Sometimes I'll even include in a photo or two.

Aside from journals, I like to keep a list of my seeds - I start the majority of my plants from seed and keep seed from year to year. (Stored cold and dry of course!) I use a spreadsheet to record the name, variety, height, spacing, color, order source, year, and the 'weeks to start before last frost'. I have a formula in the next column giving me a planting date. I can then sort by the planting date and print out a handy copy to use as my seed starting guide. I enter the information whenever I receive a shipment of seeds to keep it up to date. Periodically, I'll go through and note older ones, which need to be used up and/or delete ones, which have been discarded.

I also have a column for notes and remarks. Notes here would be along the lines of whether the seeds need light to germinate or to be chilled prior to seeding. In the 'Remarks' column I record whether I liked them or not, if they were a good producer or not. This is especially helpful for vegetables.

When seeding, I write information on the starting guide sheets as to the day I seeded and when it was transplanted. At the end of the busy period, I enter whatever information I've gathered into the main file for that year.

We will be receiving catalogs soon, if not already and starting to decide what to order and what new varieties to try this year. I love it! I always get suckered into the newest vegetable available, of course. I do have to be careful though, not to order more than I have space to grow. Oh yeah, that can be a problem. Been there done that!



Bird Chatter

- Rumor has it that Mary Shier vacuumed the seed heads off her clematis this fall.
- The following quote is provided by new Master Gardener Michelle Wilson Nordhoff:
If insects were to vanish, the environment would collapse into chaos. -Edward O. Wilson
- Master Gardener Kathy Kaulitz WEIGHED the materials that were passed out in the 2005 class, thirteen pounds of reading material!
- The Tanana Valley Master Gardeners cancel their meetings when the temperatures are -30°F at 5:00 p.m.
- The first seed catalog to reach the CES in Nov. was Twilley.
- The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) has established a new consumer Web site, <http://www.treesaregood.com>. There's no arguing with that.
- *Newsweek* reported in their December 19 issue that the branch of mountain ash is symbolic in Latvian folklore of "well-being at home".
- Ellen DeGeneres considers a perfect day to be "working in the garden" according to an American Express ad.
- Mr. Whitekeys is still using an old photograph of an Alaska Greenhouse marquee that says "Huge Pot Sale".
- If you're crazy about bulbs you might want to consider attending one day of the Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conference even though it's geared to the hort industry. Brent Heath from Brent & Becky's bulbs will be giving two presentations (<http://www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com>). So will MGs Kathy Feathergill Calvin and Robbie Frankevich.
- UAF has decided to use CES volunteers as "performance based budget indicators".
- Perennial Plant of the Year for 2006 is *Dianthus gratianopolitanus* 'Firewitch'. There will be a spelling test on this at the next AMGA meeting.
- An easy way to incorporate lime into your potting soil is to mix in crushed oyster shell available from your chicken food supplier.
- Julie Riley is blushing from Gina Docherty's Christmas gift, a Gardening Au Naturel calendar featuring Kitsap County Washington Master Gardeners with two things in common- a passion for gardening and a noticeable lack of clothing (all genders included).
- Kathy Tarr reported what might be a first for any Alaska gardener....for Christmas, she received a rhinestone studded garden trowel! It's black and has rhinestones decorating the handle. This luxurious tool is made by a company called Domestic Queen. She believes all new MGs should acquire one.

MG Volunteer Help Needed

Invasive Plants Display- Master Gardeners are needed to help staff an Extension display at the Alaska Forum on the Environment, February 6 - 10, 2006. The event is located at the Egan Convention Center. Jamie Snyder is handling the scheduling. Please contact her at fnjms2@uaf.edu or by calling 743-9448.

Fur Rendezvous Display- February 17 - March 5, 2006. Details on where the Cooperative Extension Service display will be located have not yet been worked out. MG Roberta Landgren will be in charge of scheduling but shifts cannot be determined until location is finalized. There will be another "call for help" but if volunteering at this event is a priority, or if you aren't able to be contacted by e-mail, you might want to let Roberta know now that you're interested. She can be reached at 562-5064 or mrdata@arctic.net.

Spring Community Schools Classes- Any one interested in teaching adults (or youth) through Community Schools should start thinking about a title and date. Spring quarter classes are held March through May BUT the deadline to schedule a class is in early February. Remember up to 10 hours of class preparation counts toward your 40 hours of volunteer time and even more if you prepare handouts or a Powerpoint presentation. Contact Julie Riley and she will help you with your planning (786-6300; afjar@uaa.alaska.edu).



Potato Information Sought

What kind of information would you like to hear during a talk entitled "Potatoes in the Kitchen"? CES is planning a full day on potatoes, Saturday, February 25 called POTATO LOVERS BASH. Julie Cascio from the Palmer CES office will be providing the home economics information and is asking for your input.

Julie Riley is also searching for songs about potatoes or even a B class movie on the topic. All suggestions can be sent to her at afjar@uaa.alaska.edu or by calling Julie at 786-6300.



From the "Ask a Master Gardener" Files

Q: Why even though I water all the lawn, and I put fertilizer and seed, nothing grows over those spots? I think pigeons are eating the seeds. By the way, I live in the dessert. JS

A: What is your dirt like? You probably need some top soil. You have to keep the seed wet every day for about 2 weeks, otherwise the seed won't germinate. I wouldn't fertilize until the grass has been mowed once at least. GD

A: Do you live in a northern desert, like in Alaska? Is there any way to filter the sunlight on your lawn so it doesn't get too much? Plant a bush/tree maybe to help hold the soil and shade the lawn? L.J.

A: What kind of seeds? Lettuce? Grass? If you hate cactus, you need to come to Alaska. I'm no help. I immediately think of recipes... You could try protecting the seeds with a temporary covering of floating row cover until they've sprouted or otherwise become unattractive to pigeons. Maybe it is the wrong stuff you're trying to grow? Or maybe there is caliche underneath the soil. If you live in the Tucson area, there is a really good nursery called Desert Survivors out in the northwest (southwest?) part of town that has all sorts of stuff that will grow happily in the desert. A few nice trees or shrubs with the desert in between would look nice and provide some shade for your house. There is also a neat cactus nursery in north (?) Tucson that has cacti. The nurseries can also give you good help, advice and suggestions for your particular area and its problems. If you live in the Phoenix area, I don't know any nurseries except out at the botanical garden by the zoo. That's when you need a phone book or an internet search for desert nurseries. R.K.

REPLY to RK: Thanks for the solutions that you gave me but I hate dessert landscape; I live in Las Vegas and all the people put huge boulders on the front lawns and cactus ...see I'm originally from Mexico and I hate cactus. I just see them every where ..but I think I'm gonna use your first idea, I'll put some thorns over my seeds and hope those damn pigeons prick themselves and stay away from my lawn...again, thank you very much for your help. bye.... JS



Gardening Calendar

Monday, January 16

CES Office Closed, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Monday, January 16

Anchorage Master Gardener Association meeting, "Television segments from **SMART GARDENING** featuring Alaskan Gardeners Mel Monsen, (warm season vegetables), Amelia and John Walsh (rock gardening), Annie Nevaldine (lilies), Carmel Tyser (hypertufa), and Don Dinkle (giant cabbages)", 7:00 p.m., CES conference room, 786-6300.

Mondays January 23 through February 20

Leaves in Our Lives: Diversity, 12-2 p.m.; Topics include plant resources encountered in daily life such as food, fiber, shelter, energy, medicine, moss, ferns algae and aesthetic value. Taught by Dr. Roseann Leiner, CES Horticulture Specialist, CES conference room, \$8, preregistration required with CES at 786-6300. A full course description is available from CES. Those interested in taking the course for 1 college credit meet until 3:15 p.m. Contact Alice Friend on how to register with UAF, 786-6325.

Wednesday, January 25

Creating a Presentation, 6:00 -7:30 p.m. Tips on teaching for Master Gardener volunteers or anyone else who gives presentations. Taught by Marianne Kerr, CES 4-H & Youth Development Agent. CES conference room, 786-6300.

Tuesday, January 31

Dahlias for your Garden, at Turnagain Community School or February 7 at Inlet View Community School. Bud Dubay, Master Gardener, fee, \$8, (includes dahlia tuber), register in advance with Community Schools at <http://www.akcommunityschools.org>. (The entire listing of Community Schools classes were printed in the Community Cache inserted into in the Anchorage Daily News on January 1, 2006.)

Monday, February 13

Growing & Selling Christmas Trees in Alaska, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Alyeska Resort, Girdwood. Special guest presenters Chal Landgren, CES, Oregon State University CES and Robert Wheeler, CES Forestry Specialist, UAF. Preregistration required \$50 (includes lunch), contact CES for a registration brochure, 786-6300.

Tuesday – Wednesday, February 14 & 15

Alaska Greenhouse and Nursery Conference, 2006, Alyeska Resort, Girdwood. This event is geared to the interests of Alaska's horticulture industry, but home gardeners may be interested in hearing the bulb presentations by Brent Heath from Brent & Becky's Bulbs, Gloucester, Virginia. Preregistration required, \$100 or \$50 for one day (includes lunch), contact CES for registration information.

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.alaskamastergardeners.org
(The Newsletter will be on-line in living color!)

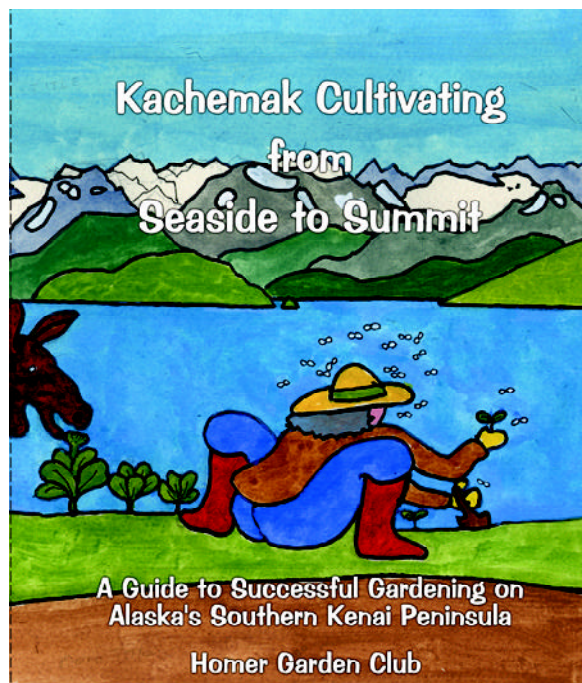
For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact:

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

Phone: 786-6300
Fax: 786-6312

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Homer artist and garden club member Toby Tyler created the beautiful color cover for Homer Garden Club's recently published book. See related article on page 1.

**Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Inc.
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