

Anchorage Chapter



Volume 8, Issue 3

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER March 2006

The Annual Northwest Flower and Garden Show by Marge Olsen

By the time February rolls around a gardener is ready for green growing things. The Annual Northwest Flower and Garden Show fills that bill and like the lemmings, hundreds of Alaska gardeners join the migration to Seattle. It was 1:50AM on February 7th that we flew off for 5 days of gardens and flowers and all the goodies that go with them that you can't do without.

We stay at the Summerfield Suites right next to the convention center in the center of Seattle. However this is Tuesday, so first we head down the street to Cold Water Creek, Pikes Street Market and a few other favorite shopping places. Wednesday morning, it is out the door, across the street and up the stairs to the freeway garden and that puts us right outside the 4th floor of the convention center where we join the others in line. With camera in hand along with our program we race for the line to get tickets for the seminars.

The entrance hall is lined with beautiful flower arrangements but we race ahead to see the quaintest gazebo made from gnarled tree trunks with a roof of moss. A large 4' high snail with a flower in her mouth stands guard beside the gazebo. I sure could see this in my garden.

Sunset Magazine offers 119 seminars and we try to go to 5 or 6 a day. I wanted to hear Laurie Olin who was raised in Fairbanks and is a very distinguished Landscape Architect. Always support your own. He gave a slide show about the bringing natural landscape into our cities. He created a mountain out of a large building in downtown Salt Lake City by planting trees on decks up the outside walls of a convention center. He used a huge crane to lift the trees in place but the most amazing was the meadow on top. Six nurseries had been growing plants for the meadow landscape at the very top and the plants arrived all at the same time. They created a human chain of people standing on the stairs and handed the plants one by one to the very top. It was an awesome sight. Next speaker that I wanted to hear was Timothy Walker who is the Director of the University of Oxford Botanical Garden which serves as a national reference of 7000 different types of plants. He was a dynamic speaker and he had us in stitches with his stories told in a delightful British accent. There were about 23 seminars given each day so making a selection was difficult. They all were great. On the Monrovia Stage there was one particular seminar that I loved. Dan Robinson dug up a 6' by 6' Japanese Maple from a client's yard to bring in and show us Artistic Pruning. It was lovely and full. Dan proceeded to show how to trim. First dead branches fell to the ground. Next to go were branches that looked diseased. It was getting a little bare looking. The grand finale was any branches that crossed or grew to the inside of the tree. Oh my gosh, I sure hope the owners weren't there. They would have had a heart attack. A much smaller more artistic tree will be returned to the owners.

In between seminars we raced around to the Market place where aisles and aisles of goodies are for sale. Always vowing not to buy too much, I did bring a large empty suitcase that was crammed when I left. Best advice to give on the market place is that if you like an item and want it, grab it now. The first time I went I was given that advice but I was barely 20' in the door and I fell in love with a heavy iron frog. I decided to pick it up on the way out because who knew what other treasures I would find. You guessed it – the pile of frogs were gone never to be seen again. Learning from that disappointment I grab it when I see it. We always check to see what Tom Jahn has made. He creates chairs and tables out of branches that are very unique. He uses polished river stones for the seats. Love his work.

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Volunteer Experiences

By Linda McCarthy

A volunteer works without being paid. A volunteer is also someone who does something, sometimes undesirable, without being forced to do it.

As a new Master Gardener, graduating class of 2005, I needed to volunteer those "40 hours" and the Fur Rhondy seemed an opportune time. I worked 3 shifts for a total of 18 hours and while most of the questions related to slugs, pests, and planting, some were quite unusual. These are some experiences from my volunteer time and some recounted experiences from other volunteers.

One woman stopped by the tables to ask if we could help her find her lost husband. Another asked what kind of plant would grow over her dead and buried "Ben" bunny...would trollius? Several women stopped by to pick up flyers and ended up telling us their life and medical history and that of their children AND their spouses. Several people stopped by wanting to enroll in classes at UAF or to change classes.

One small boy stopped by when he saw the fishing handouts. He was the "family fisherman." I gave him copies of how to can and freeze fish, but the one on smoking fish caused the most excitement. His eyes became extremely round, he paused and slowly held out his hand for the flyer and said..."do fish really smoke....with their mouths?"

Elizabeth Hayes and I were entertained by an older Irish gentleman, Thomas, (pronounced "Toe Moss") who stopped by several times during our shift and spoke Gaelic. He told us of his immigration from Ireland when he was 14 and recounted some of his life experiences. As he was leaving he looked us both over and said to me "she (meaning Elizabeth) is the much better looking one of ye two."

Larry Plunkett seemed to get the most oddities on his night shifts. One gentleman stopped by and told Larry he "had his ice skates ready." When Larry fell for the bait and asked why, the gentleman replied..."that volcano is gonna blow, we're gonna have an ice age...and I'm gonna skate on out of here." Another person regaled Larry with stories about running out of oil and power and told him "to be sure and unplug his TV.....it still used electricity even if it was turned off because it was plugged in!" Larry was also witness to the mall security officer forcibly evicting a person from the mall. I wasn't so lucky when one man passed out on the bench across the aisle from me.

For those of you who haven't volunteered, there are still several home shows and the fair coming up...I'm sure there will be openings and you're in for some "interesting" volunteer experiences!

Hawaiian Palm Trees

By Nickel LeFleur

While in Hawaii on vacation in early December, I spent a few days with an arborist educating myself on the care of the Hawaiian palm tree.

Biologically, a palm is more like a blade of grass than a hardwood tree. It is a 'monocot with one or more unbranched trunks with one terminal bud'. A palm tree has only one growing point so it should never have its stem cut in hopes of achieving a branching-effect. A palm does not have growth rings, so its age is determined by its size. An old palm tree could reach up to 150 feet in height.

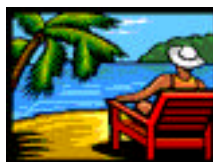
Conduction of photosynthesis is done through the fronds. The stem stores starch and 'develops all the vascular bundles needed for life'. The roots of a palm develop from stem internodes at the base of the trunk. Since the roots lack secondary growth, they are continually being replaced with each living about three years. Unlike most trees, circling roots in container-grown plants is not a problem for palms.

When selecting a palm, look for one whose root ball has a radius of at least six inches greater than the trunk. The planting hole should be about eighteen inches larger than the trunk. Root pruning eight weeks before transplanting is recommended to stimulate new growth. They prefer not to be planted any deeper than originally were and adapt better when no soil amendments are added.

Palms do best in a well-drained soil with an available supply of adequate water. After transplanting a palm, use flexible braces to give it the needed support. Unless planted in a very windy area, remove the braces in approximately eight months when the roots are established. Spraying micronutrients following transplanting helps prevent micronutrient deficiency which is common to palms.

Interestingly enough, pruning is not done for the well-being of the plants but rather for safety and attractiveness, but because of the possible danger of it fruit falling, palm trees are some of the most expensive trees to maintain.

There are two ways to approach the tree to prune it: the use of a cherry-picker or to climb it. Weighing costs, most palm tree owners have the arborist climb the tree using spikes on their shoes equipped with a belt with safety chain enclosed. The use of a small saw is recommended over a machete to minimize any damage to the living tissue around the petiole base. Cutting fronds from below is done to minimize ripping fibers down the trunk. After pruning each tree, a disinfectant is used on the arborist's spikes and saw to minimize the chance of carrying a disease to the next.



The life cycle of a palm is fascinating. I know I look forward to my next

"classroom" visit.



What palm has more uses than any other plant?

By Chelsie Vandaveer

November 20, 2001

KillerPlants.com

[Reprinted with permission from the author]

The coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) [co cos' nu sif' er a] brings to mind tropical islands; vacations in the sun with slow warm days, seductive nights, and tall palms swaying in the breeze. But few would ever think of the coconut as an economic plant. The coconut is considered the single most useful "tree" on Earth. Palms, though, are not trees, but are related to grasses. They do not produce wood; the trunks are composed of bundles of strong fibers.

Coconuts fall into 2 major varieties, niu kafa, a wild type and niu vai, a cultivated type. The niu kafa coconuts are found on many small islands and coral atolls where no humans cultivate them.

Niu kafa coconuts are angular and elongate; the husk is unusually thick. The seed is small, only about 6 inches, and ovate (egg-shaped). The niu vai coconuts are varieties that have been selected by humans for their size and quality. The fruit is spherical; the husk thin. The seed is up to 10 inches in diameter, yielding more meat and liquid. These have been carried by humans around the world.

A coconut supplies as much protein as a quarter pound of beef. Copra, or the meat of the coconut, is often sold shredded and sweetened. Copra is the source of coconut oil. Coconut oil ranks third in world production of vegetable oils (soybean and peanut oils rank first and second). This oil is used in thousands of products ranging from candy and bakery goods to shampoos, soaps, lotions, and synthetic rubber. Coconut sap from the inflorescence makes a type of molasses, and when fermented is called a "toddy".

The outer trunk supplies a lumber called "porcupine wood" used in the construction of homes and furniture. The frayed roots can be used for toothbrushes. The trunks are used to make drums. The husk (coir) is resistant to seawater and is used to make ropes for rigging on ships. When pulverized, coir is used horticulturally in potting media for propagating plants. Charcoal made from the coconut shell is highly absorbent of noxious gases; it is used in air and water filters and in gas masks. Coconut fronds are used in thatching, basketry, and woven items. It has been estimated that the coconut palm has more uses than any other plant on Earth.



PACIFIC NW FLOWER SHOW CONT.

I also bought one of those long pruning saws that you wear in a scabbard so at least I will look good as I massacre my trees. After crossing the sky bridge where Bron is playing the harp for your listening pleasure there is another Market Place. This is where the plants and flowers are for sale. I bought a corokia pyracantha bush, golden sumac, bulbs, seeds and a few plants that I thought I could cram in my suitcases.

Lest you think that all we do is buy, buy, buy, we also check out the gardens that have been created with full grown trees, water features, buildings and tons of rock brought in to build the most incredible landscapes. They used a lot of Himalayan birch which I think should grow here if we could find someone who has brought them in. Straight and tall with peeling white bark. A sight to behold. Rock fountains with a hole drilled thru them spilled water over the sides. Very popular. A stained glass gate. Wow! A mosaic mirrored wall sculpture – I want to try that on a smaller basis. Dan Robinson brought in 1300 year old tree trunks surrounded by boulders and grasses. Double Wow! He was working on a bonsai tree to make it blend in with the older dead trees. You don't come away from here without tons of ideas.

The finale was to run into Ciscoe Morris (who has a gardening radio show in Seattle) in the plant area. I told him that I had seen his picture in the Kitsap County Master Gardeners Nude Calendar for this year. He said – "Just call me Mr. November".

Selecting Apples with a Purpose in Mind

The following groupings of apples are provided by MG Dan Elliot. These are only some of the apples Dan and his wife Marion grow in their Wasilla orchard.

Crab apples

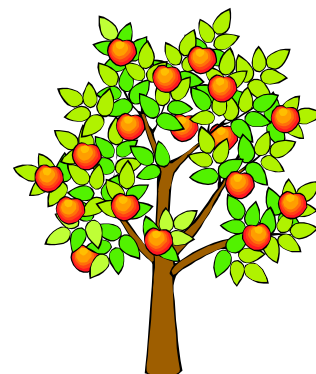
Rescue (larger size)
Chestnut
Whitney
Centennial
Trailman
Noret

Multi-Purpose Apples

Rescue– cider, eating
Westland– pie
Norland– eating
Parkland– good all around
Carrol– eating
Heyer #12– pies
Yellow Transparent– sauce

Dessert Apples

Carrol
September Ruby
State Fair
Oriole
Zestar





Success Stories from 2005

by Julie Riley, Extension Horticulture Agent

4-H Talking Plant Presentations

The plant doesn't really talk. It's a plastic model Master Gardeners have been using for the past 20 years to teach basic botany. Last year's Master Gardener 4-H Talking Plant activity was extraordinary. During April and May 65 presentations were given to 1,392 second grade students. It took 78.5 volunteer hours to make it happen. Along with giving class presentations, Kathy Honeysett coordinated the schedule and spent a total of 46.5 hours on this project. Other Master Gardeners who participated included Nancy Larsen, Linda Coy, Lois Hall and Kit Gurule.

Presentations were given in Anchorage, Eagle River, Chugiak and in the military base schools. One class was taught completely in Spanish— thanks to Lupita Weese whose first language is Spanish. Alaska National Public Radio even visited a classroom as part of segment they were doing on the Master Gardener program. Linda Coy developed an annotated bibliography of children's gardening books that was distributed to teachers who requested a guest presentation.

The Anchorage School District Community Resources office requests that before the 4-H Talking Plant program is advertised to second grade teachers, we anticipate being able to handle all requests that might possibly come in. This requires a strong commitment from 3-4 Master Gardener volunteers. In past years, approximately 50 classrooms have requested the program on an annual basis. The 65 presentations made last spring set an all time record.

Teacher evaluations were extremely positive and included comments such as "My students were very engaged in the learning", "Excellent connection to our plant unit", "Kids loved being involved with building the plant— this definitely helped keep their attention", "It was a success".

Hmong Refugees learn to apply gardening skills to Alaska's climate

Anchorage welcomed its first Hmong refugees last winter. Thailand had closed its refugee camps which had been in operation since the Vietnam War. I had worked with Hmong gardeners in Milwaukee over 20 years ago. The Hmong are an agricultural people who used very intensive cultivation methods on terraced slopes in the mountains of Laos.



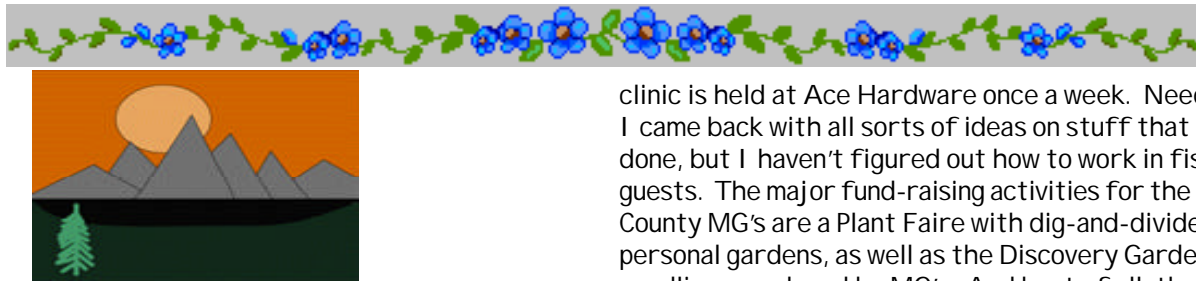
Catholic Social Service's Refugee Assistance Program's contacted the Extension office hoping to find "gardening angels" for the refugees. They had already signed up 10-12 families for garden plots at the McPhee Street Committee Garden. In April I gave the group a slide presentation showing Hmong gardeners growing vegetables in Wisconsin. I brought in basil which I knew they used in cooking and spoke of the need to grow it indoors. Working through an interpreter, I talked about which crops would grow in Anchorage and those that would not.

"Hmong families gardening at McPhee Street Community Gardens."

The families needed gardening tools and AMGA donated \$100 to buy them. I took two young people to the garden centers to figure out best how to spend the money. We bought hoes, trowels, and a hose. The McPhee Street garden plots were choked with weeds. The gardeners needed someone with a rototiller. The first person I called was MG Erna Rousey. It was her husband Jimmy, who answered the phone. I had never met him before, but I launched off explaining the situation. Jimmy said, "I was in Vietnam. I'll be there."

The day the rototiller arrived, the men lined up waiting for a chance to use the machine. The women chopped weeds with all their might and picked rocks as Erna helped. I demonstrated using wide beds slightly raised, and all the gardens were laid out this way. One of the community gardeners said, "They'll have to put up a fence to keep out the dogs and moose." I mentioned this to the interpreter. When they were done getting the soil ready people left or so I thought. They returned shortly with machetes and a fence of sapling trees and dead branches was constructed within a half hour.

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South Central Master Gardener News

By Rosemary Kimball

Being a Master Gardener is lots of fun and gets you to do special things and go special places. I have a friend in Anacortes WA (there really was a woman named Ana Cortes!) going through the MG training now and I was able to participate in some of their activities. We toured the Washington Bulb Company's production greenhouses and shipping facilities to see where all the daffodils, Asiatic lilies, tulips and Dutch iris that are in Freddy's and Safeway come from. At the beginning of the season, as soon as there is a hint of color, the buds are harvested by hand from bulbs grown in the ground in huge greenhouses. Later in the season, after the greenhouse-raised flowers go by and the fields are warm, the buds are picked from that source. They are sorted, packed and stored at 33 degrees until being shipped out in refrigerated containers to where ever. The flowers come to Alaska by barge which really "Wowed" me as that is quite a bit of time. But come up they do and having seen all the labor that went into the final product, they would be inexpensive at twice the price. One of the three guides said that the flowers are coming on in the field three weeks earlier than wanted this year as the winter has been warm and very wet. The cost for greenhouse-produced flowers is greater than the field-grown ones and the company needs to recoup the cost of production before the fields start producing. What really made me cry on the tour were totes of buds, flowers and bulbs that were being thrown away as not commercially salvageable. I wanted them badly. That night Carolyn and I went into Mount Vernon to hear Dan Hinkley talk about marriages of plants in the garden, meaning some go together in very nice ways and make the garden "sing". His pictures were lovely as usual. He had a computer whiz remove certain plants from the pictures to show the difference of 'with and without' which was really good as one picture was worth many words.

The next day I went with my friend, Carolyn Cochran, to her MG class. To be accepted into the program, one applies (we've all done that) then writes an essay on why you wish to become one, THEN gets interviewed. I understand now why she was so excited at being accepted. The topics for the day were Skagit-Valley specific and included stuff like how one works off the 60 hours to become a full-fledged MG. The fledging MG's are known as "Interns" and are paired with a "Mentor" throughout their learning and field training. There is a must-do of 25 hours of the required time in the Discovery Garden, a demo garden maintained by the CES. Much of the rest of the time would probably be spent in clinics that are regularly scheduled during the summer. In Anacortes, the

clinic is held at Ace Hardware once a week. Needless to say, I came back with all sorts of ideas on stuff that could be done, but I haven't figured out how to work in fishing and guests. The major fund-raising activities for the Skagit County MG's are a Plant Faire with dig-and-divide from personal gardens, as well as the Discovery Garden and seedlings produced by MG's. And best of all, the MG's work as docents, navigators and tour guides, for a price, for the Tulip Festival. Rough duty, no? To keep one's MG status there must be 25 hours a year of participation.

So now at the end of February I'm off to the Chinese Garden in Portland, OR. Having a wonderful time. Wish you were here...



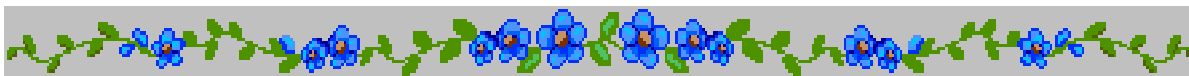
A picture of the Chinese Garden in Portland. The three pillars from Tai Lake form the word for mountain.

SUCCESS STORIES CONT.

The following week we were supposed to plant, but the weather had been beautiful and most of the plots had been already planted. Erna came by to help again. The families had planted mustard greens, peas and cilantro; no melons, corn or pumpkins. A demo plot was set up to show "American" gardening techniques— planting in rows, crops like broccoli and brussels sprouts and the use of clear plastic for tomatoes. We scheduled a field trip to the Alaska Botanical Gardens. Linda Gustafson and Erna came along to help drive. Along the trails we talked about Alaska's native berries and ferns. Without an interpreter, none of it would have made much sense.

The Hmong gardeners harvested their first crop of mustard within three weeks. I was honored when one of the gardeners gave me a plastic bag packed full of greens. We met on Fridays until the first part of July. By that time a second crop of greens had already been planted. The plots were meticulously weeded and thinned and weekly meetings were no longer necessary.

One day, Cindy Johnson, who was teaching English to the Hmong, dropped by the Community Gardens. This last fall Cindy completed the Master Gardener course and is ready to assist any new Hmong gardeners that want help this spring.



Bird Chatter

- Past AMGA President Marty Black's birthday was February 20 and her husband took her out to dinner– to the AMGA potluck. Wes cooked wonderful shish kabob as their contribution.
- When someone called the CES office to ask what was happening at the February meeting, Dora said, "It's the annual covered dish meeting". "You mean we're supposed to put an annual in a dish and cover it?" came the response. Say 'annual' to a gardener and they automatically think of flowers.
- The pistil of a flower is now called a carpel, Dr. Roseann Leiner told students in her "Leaves in Our Lives" class.
- The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the tomato is legally a vegetable in 1893.
- The Anchorage Economic Development Corporation has developed a campaign to debunk the myths about shipping to Alaska. Anchorage consumers are encouraged to download and email these facts to shippers who charge high shipping rates (or won't ship) to Alaska, www.aedcweb.com. The only quarantine on shipping seeds and plants from other states is on seed potatoes and tomato transplants. (And it's voluntary.)
- Thank you MG Linda Watson for adding the Ikenobo I kabana Study Group to the list of garden groups.
- British garden author Christopher Lloyd passed away in January at the age of 84. He was a prolific writer and published approximately 10 garden books in his lifetime.
- In the January issue of *Vanity Fair*, French actress Catherine Deneuve said her favorite occupation is "playing in the garden" and that if she were to die and come back as a person or thing it would be as a "lime tree".
- During February's "Tuberous Begonia" presentation Pat Anderson confessed she does a better job spraying lemon pledge on her begonias than on her dining room table. [Jojoba oil is the active ingredient in the E-rase product she mentioned for powdery mildew.]

Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn.

~Quoted by Lewis Grizzard
in *Kathy Sue Loudermilk, I Love You*

2006 Pacific Northwest Community Trees Conference

May 17-19 at the Millenium Hotel. Featured speaker will be James Urban, Plant Editor for Landscape Architecture Magazine, and nationally recognized expert on urban trees, tree preservation and soils. Conference information can be found at:
alaskamastergardeners.com/calendar

MG Volunteer OPPORTUNITIES

- **4-H Talking Plant** will be offered to all second grade classrooms starting the end of March after spring break. A training/coordination meeting is scheduled for Tuesday March 7 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Please RSVP if you plan to attend. If you're interested in doing the talking plant but can't make the training, please give Julie a call too, 786-6300 work; 230-7339 cell.
- **Community School Classes.** Teach a topic for adults or youths. The upcoming quarter covers the prime spring months, late March, April and May. Your ideas need to be submitted to Community Schools now. Julie can help you plan what you'd like to teach. Most classes are held in the evenings, M-Th for 1 to 2 hours. Kids gardening classes often work best if scheduled right after school. Think spring and any topic will do.
- **Alaska Women's Show, April 21-23, 2006.**
Presentations are 50 minutes in length and are offered on the hour from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday through Sunday. Topics to fit this year's theme include window boxes, landscaping, gourmet salad greens, herbs. Other ideas can also be entertained. The DEADLINE IS NOW.
- Volunteers are needed to staff a small display during the three-day event. The show is open from 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Shifts: 11 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.; 2:30 – 6:00 p.m. The last shift on Sunday will need to help Julie take down.)
- **Spring Garden Show at Sears, April 15, 2006**
This is a busy display compared to Fur Rondy– most of Anchorage's garden clubs participate. Two/three Master Gardeners are needed for shifts, from 10 a.m. -1 p.m., 1 – 4 p.m. and 4 – 7 p.m. with take down. Two people are also needed to help set up at 9 a.m. Please contact Roberta if you can help, (home 562-5064 or mrdata@arctic.net).
- **Earth Day exhibit at BP Exploration, April 19, 2006**
To fit with Earth Day's theme it would be great to have an educational display on composting. Is anyone interested in developing a tabletop display? Volunteers are also needed to staff the exhibit from 8:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. The display can be set up after 4 p.m. on April 18. Contact Julie at 786-6300 or 230-7339.
- **Alaska Pioneer Home** is looking for 1-2 Master Gardeners interested in working with their new garden club in the nursing home wing. The group will meet twice a week during the day throughout the year. They have access to a greenhouse and a wonderful outdoor raised bed garden area. You would work along with one of the Pioneer Home staff members, and if twice a week is too much, once a week or every other week would help.
- **Susitna Elementary School, K-6**
The school is engaged in a gardening project and one of the second grade teachers is interested in Master Gardener help. Kids could start seeds indoors and plant potatoes outside to be harvested in September. The scope of the project has not been determined yet. Call Julie if you'd like to get involved.



- **Horticulture Hotline, M thru F, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

The gardening calls are starting to come in at the CES office. Please contact Julie if you'd like to answer gardening questions over the telephone as part of your volunteer service. A group training for the horticulture hotline is TENTATIVLY scheduled for Tuesday, March 7, 1 – 2 p.m.

- **Alaska Botanical Garden, ABG Fair.** Donna Basinger is hoping to find two volunteer coordinators to help with the ABG Fair scheduled for June 24 & 15, 2006. These jobs both begin right away. 1) **SPEAKER/DEMONSTRATION COORDINATOR** - choose theme and topics, find speakers and presenters, make schedule, mail parking passes, write thank you notes (the office has a list of potential speakers and topics) 2) **CHILDREN'S VILLAGE COORDINATOR** - Choose botanical craft projects for children, secure supplies (the office has many books). Please contact Donna at ABG if you are interested, 770-3692, events@alaskabg.org and let Julie know you are going to putting in a big chunk of volunteer time in this capacity.

- **Boys & Girls Club** in Eagle River has a gardening club and would like Master Gardener assistance either as a one time guest speaker or on a regular basis. Kids range in age from K- 6th grade.

- **Kids in the Garden: ABG School field trips.** Susan Brusehaber is hoping to find Master Gardeners who can assist with one of the 4 rotations that school groups will be doing on Tuesdays and Thursdays during May and September. Your task would be to lead a 40-minute field trip around the garden. Classes are scheduled from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Volunteers would need to come a bit earlier. If you can't commit to the regular schedule, even participating once would help a lot. Susan is a retired elementary school teacher and can be reached at 694-9772 or sbrusehabe@aol.com. CC: Julie too.

- **Clare House Garden Party**, May 19, 5-8 p.m. Catholic Social Services is gearing up for its 16th annual Garden Party fund-raiser. Clare House is a temporary, emergency shelter for women with their children that become homeless for whatever reason. Master Gardeners have a long history of helping answer questions, distributing publications and hauling plants for customers. (The \$25 entrance fee is waived.)

- This year they are hoping Master Gardeners can go one step further and donate two hours of time as a silent auction item to benefit Clare House. This would mean going to the purchasers home to provide suggestions on planting, types of plants, etc. The event takes place in the BP Atrium.

AMGA Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for submitting articles, announcements, address changes or photos is the 25th of each month. Exceptions to this will be made on a case by case basis. This is to ensure that the newsletter can be sent to the printer by the 1st of each month.

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!)

Gardening Calendar

Tuesday, March 7

* Volunteer training for the CES Horticulture Hotline, 1 – 2 p.m., in the CES volunteer office. Please RSVP, meeting is contingent on interest, 786-6300.

* Volunteer training for the 4-H Talking Plant, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m., in the CES conference room. Please RSVP, meeting is contingent on interest, 786-6300.

Thursday, March 9

Wildflower Garden Club meeting, 10 a.m., Central Lutheran Church, 15th & A, "Reducing Winter Injuries to Your Perennials", Julie Riley, Extension Horticulture Agent, 786-6300.

Friday & Saturday, March 10 & 11

Sustainable Agriculture Conference & Organic Growers School, Westmark Hotel, Fairbanks. Program agenda and registration information available at CES offices.

Tuesday & Wednesday, March 14 & 15

Alaska Potato & Vegetable Growers Conference, Mat-Su College, rooms 204 & 206, \$35 both days; \$20 one day. Agenda and registration form available at CES offices.

Saturday, March 18

"Growing Vegetables in Alaska", Julie Riley, Extension Horticulture Agent, 10- 11:30 a.m. Alaska Mill Feed & Garden Center.

Monday, March 20

Alaska Master Gardener Meeting: "Applied Organics" - Tom Hoosier of Applied Organics will talk about using compost tea as a fertilizer.

Saturday, March 25

"Cold Climate Homebuilding Techniques", Rich Seifert, CES Energy & Housing Specialist. 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Topics include ventilation, cold climate retrofit, roofs, and indoor air quality. CES conference room in Anchorage. Program is free, but pre-registration required.

Tuesday, March 28

Pesticide Safety & Education Conference, all day. Contact Dora Wainwright at CES for details, 786-6300.

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Thursday, April 6

Master Gardener training starts in Cordova thanks to MG Neva Nolan.

Tuesday, April 11

"Dahlias for Your Garden", 7 – 8:30 p.m. Bud Dubay, Master Gardener, Inlet View Community School, see <http://www.akcommunityschools.org/classes.asp> to register.



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

FREE Invasive Plants Book

Master Gardeners can receive a free copy of **Invasive Plants of Alaska** by contacting Jamie Snyder at CES. This 300 page, spiral bound book includes 72 species with color photographs. Some of the plants described are common weeds and garden flowers. Others are rare and just now spreading. Still other are not present in Alaska, but are likely to arrive soon. Jamie can be reached in the CES office at 786-6300 or jamiesnyder@fs.fed.us.

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Dutch Iris being inspected prior to harvesting and shipping to retailers like Fred Meyers.
Photo by Rosemary Kimball

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