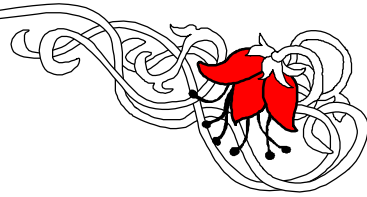


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 8, Issue 5

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER May 2006

Master Gardeners in Action

Julie Riley, Horticulture Agent, Anchorage

Master Gardeners are involved in an impressive number of volunteer projects this year. Below is a list of some of these activities. My apologies to those Master Gardeners I've left out.

Garden Clinics/Displays Sears Mall Spring Garden Show–

What a grand success! Master Gardeners Roberta Landgren, Linda McCarthy-Beckworth, Elizabeth Hays, Alice Campbell, Cindy Johnson and Christy Smith spoke with almost 500 gardeners and sold over \$300 of publications.

Earth Day Celebration at BP Exploration– Brigitte Ressel and Lupita Weese helped put together a marvelous display on composting. They were busy for the entire event and recorded 71 contacts.

Alaska Womens Show– Amara Liggett, Judy Wedemeyer, Brigitte Ressel, Cindy Johnson, Roberta Landgren, Ski Olsonoski, Della Culver Barry, Marilyn Klawunder and Martha Jokela staffed this display at the Sullivan Arena. The space was small and included home economics and 4-H in addition to horticulture!

Fur Rendezvous, Sears Mall– Larry Puckett put in 30 hours and met a few interesting people who weren't necessarily gardeners. Edith Goodgame, who completed the MG via correspondence, volunteered 23 hours. Others who made the display possible include Ann Spahnholz, Amara Liggett, Herb Spencer, Elizabeth and Drew Holt, Margarete Keicher, Linda McCarthy-Beckworth, Lupita Weese, Verna Paluba, Roberta Landgren, Marilyn Klawunder, Martha Jokela, Della Culver Barry, Linda Ewers and Anita Williams. For all the effort, there was not a lot of traffic at the display and unless CES can get a better spot, we won't be setting up here in 2007.

For a list of upcoming displays/shows/garden clinics see "Volunteer Help Needed". Roberta Landgren has been doing a bang-up job as Garden Clinic Coordinator.

Horticulture therapy

Anchorage Pioneer Home– Sarah Black and Chloé Renshaw are meeting with their garden club on a regular basis. They will be assisting residents on the nursing home side to grow a raised bed patio garden of flowers and vegetables.

Garden for the sight-impaired– Jamie Snyder is interested in designing a garden for the blind and is currently pursuing options for a location. Cindy Johnson is also interested in helping.

Youth projects

Alaska Botanical Garden School field trips– Master Gardeners are assisting with field trips (grades 2-6) on Tuesdays and Thursdays, April/May (and Sept/Oct).

Junior Master Gardener– Master Gardeners will be assisting instructor Pat Ryan (MG) with the Alaska Botanical Garden summer program.

Boys & Girls Club garden club, Eagle River– Mary and Ron Klassen are currently working with their after-school garden club and will be instrumental in helping to build, plant and maintain a raised bed garden for the summer.

MOA Parks & Recreation class– Lupita Weese will be assisting with "Backyard Botanicals" in June a series that includes gardening and garden crafts for kids from ages 6 to 16+.



AMGA April Meeting: Beautiful Lawns

By Jo Anne Banta

Sixty percent of today's college students choose their school by the appearance of the campus, so April's guest speaker works diligently at keeping UAA's lawns green and gorgeous. As Operations Director, Chris Mizelle is in charge of 60 acres of lawns, turf and trails. Together with his three permanent and eight temporary employees, he over-see what serves as a backdrop to the flowers, trees and 40 buildings on the University campus.

The lawns are Kentucky bluegrass, cut to 2 ½ inches since rocks reside at the 2" height, and some of the buildings' windows cost as much as \$7,000. This time of year, the campus grass is simply "swept," not thatched, then spread with 16-16-16 and left alone to let nature take care of the moisture. By mid to late May and monthly throughout the summer, the crew uses a feeding of 22-11-11 and adds dolomite lime to bring the soil to a PH of six. Patching, as needed, is done by hydroseeding.

Chris says the best defense against the "yellow things" is a healthy lawn. They bag their early grass clippings in order to get rid of the dandelion heads. Thereafter, the clippings go back into the soil. Mower blades are sharpened weekly. For moss problems, our speaker advises a fertilizer with iron, applied in the fall

UAA's last fertilizing is done September 15; its last lime, by September 30. They use pelletized lime in the fall when they aerate the entire campus. We were told always to broadcast lime and fertilizer in a straight line, no curves. In the winter, only pure mason sand is used on the sidewalks since calcium chloride products kill grass.

Other words of wisdom from Chris: Rental agencies carry aerators; geese hate the plugs left by aerating (This got us on to another topic, see below.); mow your lawn in straight lines and cross-cut next time to avoid soil compaction. Use kitty litter to dry "squishy" places, being sure to rake it off; and use a 4 to 1 ratio of topsoil to sand when filling holes – grass will come up through it.

During the meeting, volunteer coordinator Linda Klinkhart was again lining up gardeners for the Pioneer Home planting/care and for the Botanical Gardens entry planting. Contact Linda at gek@gci.net to sign up. Annie Nevaldine showed her 2007 calendar – a real beauty. Be sure to buy yours through AMGA so we see 20% of the profits. The 4-H Clubs are once again selling the \$30 basket and bedding plant coupons; these are available at the Extension Service and can be redeemed at Bell's or P&M. Della Barry showed Alaska's newest gardening book, Kachemak Cultivating from Seaside to Summit. A Debbie Hinchey idea; it was written by the Homer Garden Club and published by the Alaska Federation of Garden Clubs. It is beautifully illustrated, a wonderful gift idea. (I bought one for a gift, and a friend from Cordova grabbed it

before I could give it away.) Contact Della at dellab@alaska.net or at 907-279-1306 to purchase one. Amelia Walsh was the door prize belle: not only did she win the Complete Vegetable Book, she brought the beautiful Alaska-climate tomato plants that were given away to nine lucky winners.

Regarding geese (above) and the avian flu, Julie told us what to look for: three dead migratory waterfowl in any one location or any dead raptor should be reported to ADF&G. Predatory birds, in particular, are the first to die.

MASTER GARDENERS IN ACTION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Special gardening groups

Among community gardeners– Cindy Johnson is hoping to work with this group of new gardeners at the McPhee Street Community Garden. The Anchorage Master Gardener Association has already supplied seeds.

Potato Lovers Bash– This is the first time I ever asked anyone to cook. Della Culver Barry and Judy Wedemeyer donned aprons and boiled beaucoup pounds of potatoes for the taste test trials that were part of this 5-hour program.

Classes and Presentations

Classes taught through **Anchorage Community Schools** included dahlias by Bud Dubay and strawberries & raspberries by Patty Joyce Nedland. Both MGs developed Powerpoint presentations for their classes. Bud also gave his talk at the **Alaska Womens Show** and Patty Joyce will be presenting again during **UAA's Staff Development Day** on May 10. Mary and Ron Klassen gave a presentation during a special garden program at an **Eagle River Church**. They also developed a series of display boards for the event.

Myths and Misinformation From Mel Monsen

Last month's Bird Chatter claimed that IRT is no longer available – this is not true! I just received my order in the mail last week. It is also available at Alaska Mill and Feed.

Here is a link for people interested in ordering:

<http://www.johnnyseeds.com/catalog/product>

The mulch alert story is also an urban myth. No mulch is allowed out of the hurricane area. Here are links on this myth:

<http://www.snopes.com/inboxer/household/termites.asp>

<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/2006/3-8/mulch.html>

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/Urban/termites/mulch.htm>

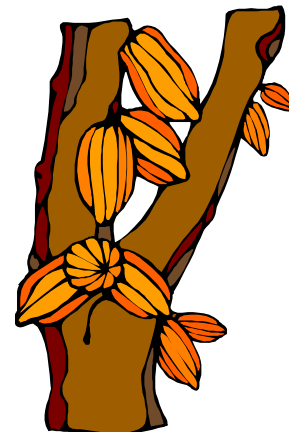


For Chocolate Lovers Only

By Jo Anne Banta

Did you know that the only difference between milk chocolate and dark chocolate is powdered milk? that wrapped chocolate will keep four to five years? that all chocolate is grown within 15 to 20 degrees of the equator?

Last winter I took a tour of the smallest Willie Wonka factory in the world – from tree to finished product. Bob and Pam Cooper of Kona, Hawaii, have their own cacao (pronounced “ca-COW”) farm and their own chocolate processing facility. While large processors employ thousands (Hershey has 16,000 employees.), the Coopers do nearly all their own work. (Pam told me she hand-wraps thousands of chocolate bars each year.) They produce about 24,000 pounds of chocolate annually and have the capacity to double that.



The cacao trees grow in even rows, their huge leaves varying in color. We soon learned, however, that the cacao is “selectively deciduous,” that the more mature leaves turn yellow to brown and begin to drop, being replaced by new gorgeous pink-red ones. This is called “flushing.” The dead leaves are left where they fall as habitat for the tiny midge fly that is their pollinator – important because the flowers last only a matter of hours.

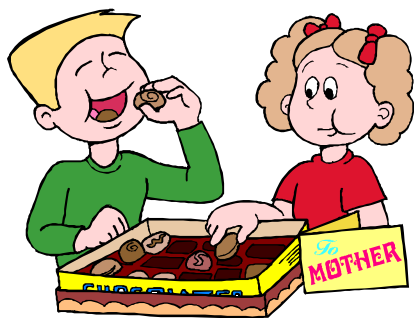
A cacao tree has a life span of 40 to 60 years. It takes four years for them to mature and begin producing pods. Voracious water users, they slurp up some 50 inches annually. While in Venezuela, for example, this comes naturally, Bob must often irrigate, even at their 800 foot elevation. The Coopers sometimes have a \$1,000 water bill. The trees, which will reach a height of 50 feet, are kept pruned to 26 feet for ease in harvesting. Wind protection, too, is important since the large cacao leaves will snap off if whipped to a 90 degree angle.

The cacao pods themselves, looking like yellow to pink elongated acorn squash, have weird growing habits – they pop out just about any place: directly off the tree trunk or anywhere along the limbs. Pods mature in 150 days and are harvested every two weeks throughout the year to prevent over-ripening. Once we had seen the trees, Bob cut a cocoa pod for us. (This brought out the geckos, much to the delight of the children who had been on the tour.) Inside are 30 to 40 wet, slippery beans growing from a central “placenta.” The flavor must be developed (“incited”) through fermentation/sweating and drying. Sweating is done for six days until the temperature reaches 122 degrees. The beans are then sun dried for 22 to 28 days while their 50 percent moisture content is reduced to 7 percent. Above seven percent they will mold, and mold is the first enemy of flavor. From here they are cleaned, roasted, winnowed and conched, until the luscious flavor we know as chocolate emerges.

While most of the chocolate that we eat is a blend of varieties coming from many growing areas, the Coopers pride themselves on producing only 100% Hawaiian chocolate. Besides their own farm, they have 65 other growers to whom they have sold trees and from whom they buy harvested beans. The beans are delivered as they come from the pod, wet in buckets – and thus the operation continues, as Bob and Pam busily process the usual 2,000 pounds of beans per month.

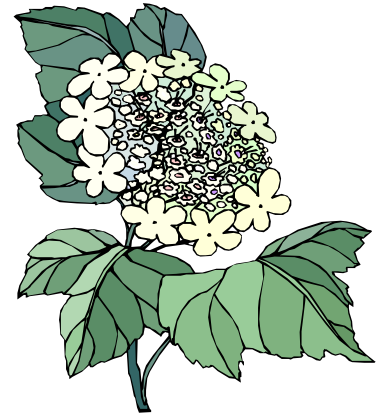
The sweet aroma of chocolate drifts throughout the small processing plant, itself a maze of gleaming stainless steel machinery. At the end, a long stainless arm swirls gently through a large vat of warm liquid chocolate. As we left, Bob, molds in hand, was getting ready to pour some of the many quarter-pound bars that Pam will soon be busy wrapping.

Should you be lucky enough to get to the Big Island, don't miss the guided tour of The Original Hawaiian Chocolate Factory. If you are a real chocoholic, you will want to go to www.originalhawaiianchocolatefactory.com and place your order. Their dark chocolate is the healthy kind, 58 % cocoa; and, besides the melt-in-your-mouth ¼ pound and 1 pound bars, they sell a variety of other chocolate products. You may also call toll free at 1-888-447-2626 or use the phone/fax 808-322-2626.





Hydrangeas For Alaska by Mary Jo Burns



I'm looking to add shrubs to my landscape to reduce maintenance. Shorter types of shrubs with year around interest would work well. In my search I found a couple of great books at the Library, *Hydrangeas for American Gardens* by Michael A. Dirr and *Growing Shrubs and Small Trees in Cold Climates* by Nancy Rose, Don Selinger, and John Whitman.

In *Hydrangeas for American Gardens* I found information about the different species of Hydrangea and how they perform, size, color and general growing information. The other book *Growing Shrubs and Small Trees in Cold Climates* has a special section on Hydrangea. The chart of tested varieties with all the important information on height and color and cold hardiness in Fahrenheit was easy to find. Also, they included a five star rating system that is subjective but done by field experts. There are four different species with a 'favored varieties list' under each. I'll give a brief review of these.

Hydrangea anomala (climbing or vining Hydrangea) ssp. *Petiolearis* - 5 stars: White. 30' height, 10' wide, -25°F hardiness. It blooms on old wood. The flowers are 6-8 inch flat clusters of scented flowers.

Hydrangea arborescens (smooth Hydrangea) 'Annabelle' - 4 stars: white flower color, 5' tall 5' wide, and hardiness of -35; These plants bloom on new wood. They thrive in partial shade and have a deeper green foliage in such a location.

Hydrangea macrophylla (big leaf Hydrangea, Hortensia) 'All Summer Beauty' 4 star rating, color Blue or pink blue, 4' tall 5' wide, -20°F hardiness. There are many more cultivars listed in the book.

Hydrangea paniculata (Panicle Hydrangea) 'Brussels Lace' 4 star rating, Ivory color, 7' tall, 7' wide, -35 hardiness. 'Grandiflora' or 'Peegee'*** (this is one I have had for several years now). White, 10' tall, 6' wide, and hardiness to -35)°F. These plants bloom on new wood. They seem to grow best in full sun. Mine is only 2' after 4 years. The moose prune it for me. It flowers on new growth.

'Pink Diamond' - 3 stars, Ivory, 9' tall 9' wide, -35°F.

I won't go on with all the others here. You can read the book if you'd like more information.

Armed with all this information, I went back to the *Hydrangeas for American Gardens* book to see what he said about all these varieties. *Hydrangeas for American Gardens* is a newer book just published in 2004. In the section on "Hydrangea macrophylla", I read where extensive breeding of some cultivars listed as very hardy in the other book was developing good mildew resistance and other desirable traits. Bailey Nurseries, Inc., St. Paul, Minnesota, discovered a plant with special remontant (reblooming in the same season) and began developing it further. A plant patent was obtained for this plant, 'Endless summer' ('Bailmer') to protect the rights to it. Many were released in 2003, more in 2004. Now I see it listed in Fritz Creek's Catalog and Margaret at Alaska Mill and Feed says they will have it this spring for sale. So now we are all in on the latest information. Isn't that fun? Of course, this isn't the end of the story because now 'Endless Summer' is being propagated and crossed, with the "rest of the story" to come in the following years.

This is what is written about 'Endless Summer': Mophead flower type, pink to blue color, medium green foliage, 3' to 4' tall, Blooms in June. 'Endless Summer' is remontant, which means it could get an early frost that kills the buds (or a moose could nibble them) and then still bloom about 10-12 weeks later from new shoots. For continuous color, one could remove half the flowers, allowing the remainder to dry on the plant while the new shoots are producing flower buds for the later show, in October, if weather allows. Fritz Creek catalog calls it a zone 4, and 5' tall. Moist, well-drained soil, mostly sun is recommended. It is for sale for \$28 in a 1.5 gallon pot.

Others for sale in the Fritz Creek Catalog are:

'Annabelle' *aborescens* - rated ****, large cluster of flat, white flowers and large green leaves.

'Limelight' *paniculata* - Cone-shaped flower, bright green in spring and pink, burgundy and green in fall, 7' tall, Zone 2, 2 gal pot - \$22.

'Little Lamb' *paniculata* - unique, compact form, small, full panicles of tight white florets. 7'tall, Zone 2 gal. Pot for \$22.00

'Peegee' *paniculata grandiflora* - rated ***, 6' tall, Zone 3-4, 1 gal. Pot \$10.00

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



HYDRANGEAS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

'Pink Diamond' *paniculata grandiflora* - ***rating. More upright habit, white flowers turning reddish pink in summer, 7' tall, Zone 2, 2 gal. Pot \$22.00

Alaska Mill and Feed will have 'Endless Summer', 'Diamond Pink' and 'Peegee' for sale. I don't know the size and price at this time. This is not a book report or a plug for these nurseries. I hope the information is of interest to you. There certainly was more information in the books mentioned than I could digest. Now, at least, I know enough to be able to purchase hydrangea with confidence. Notice, I didn't say I will purchase one. I'm still thinking about it. If you have any feedback or further information, I would appreciate feedback.



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News by Margaret Simon

"What is Spring? Growth in everything." – Gerard Manley Hopkins

While Rosemary is enjoying Hawaii, I am writing this and nurturing green seedlings, I wonder who's having more fun?

International Lilac Society Considering Anchorage for Convention Site in Future

Dana Klinkhart received a communication both by phone and in writing from master gardener Sharon Davies, who has been in contact with the International Lilac Society. The information indicated that they wanted to schedule a convention here.

Sharon asked that a communication be sent inviting gardeners to communicate with her when their lilacs are blooming so that she can photograph them. She is only interested in sending information to the national society to show them what great lilacs grow here. She asks that gardeners contact her when the lilacs in their yard are soon to be in bloom. Her number is: 277-5547. When asked for some personal info she indicated that she is a retired teacher, has taken the MG course and her garden is the feature garden on the cover of Lenore Hendla's garden book.

Bill Campbell, once again, visited the Peninsula and gave gardeners a wealth of information about growing potatoes and potato late blight. As gardeners we must be responsible and ever vigilant to problems such as blight and pay attention to what we are doing and what is happening in our soil. The following web site www.lateblight.org has lots of great info regarding late blight.

If you're a 'lazy' gardener like me (lazy translates to not enough time to do everything- like hill potatoes!), try planting your potatoes under tyvar. It's a one-time shot. Prepare the soil, fertilize with 10-20-20, cover with the tyvar (in which you have cut slits about 18" apart) and plant your potato 3-4 inches deep. Voila! Once you see potatoes popping through those slits, water 1" a week. When the tops die back in the fall, remove them, peel back the tyvar and harvest! Can't be much easier than that when it comes to potatoes!

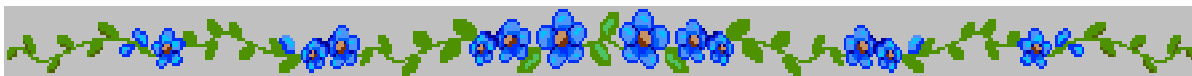
Interested in Turf Grass or Alternatives?

Chris Mizelle's presentation at the April AMGA meeting sparked a lot of interest in lawn care. Please get in touch with Julie Riley if you are interested in any of the following, 230-7339, afjar@uaa.alaska.edu.

- 1) a June field trip to Palmer to visit the variety trials at the Agricultural & Forestry Experiment Station on Trunk Road.
- 2) a June field trip to Eagle River to view Master Gardeners using native grasses in place of the traditional Kentucky bluegrass and red fescue mix (two sites).
- 3) a July field trip to the UAA campus to see the lawn care equipment Chris Mizelle described.
- 4) a hands-on workshop on how to sharpen a lawn mower blade (and other tools). Also contact Julie if you can teach this class.

If you would like to try something new this year that's easy on the eye and good for the palate, try growing some Asparagus Peas (*Tetragonolobus purpureus*). My seed source is Thompson and Morgan. Like sweet peas, asparagus peas like a head start since they do not germinate well in cold soil. They have no tendrils so appreciate some support. The foliage is blue-green, the flowers a pretty red. They are worthy of a hanging basket or tucked in your flower bed. Five to seven hours of direct sunlight is recommended. Pick the four-lobed pods when they are 1 inch or less and no bigger than 2 inches. Steam them and serve with butter to experience a different taste treat.

Frank Hubbard said *"A bee is never as busy as it seems. It's just that it can't buzz any slower."* Unlike the bee, we are as busy as we seem. We know how short summers are! Here's to a fantastic growing-everything season, for every one!



Bird Chatter

– A record number of 259 Master Gardeners joined AMGA for 2006. The AMGA Board of Directors credits the new renewal form developed by Blythe Campbell for bringing in so many members.

– Master Gardeners that went to Juneau for the Southeast Alaska Gardening Conference include Della Culver Barry, Mary Jo Burns and Christine Cikan. Perhaps the June AMGA newsletter will contain gleanings from the program. Hint, hint.

– The AMGA Board of Directors is pleased to have Carol Ross as its newest member.

– MG and photographer extraordinaire Annie Nevaldine is already selling her 2007 Alaska Garden Flowers calendar. The Himalayan blue poppy once again graces the cover. Twenty-five percent of sales made at MG events go to AMGA.

– It's been many years since Master Gardeners have worked with residents living at the Anchorage Pioneer Home. This year new MGs Sarah Black and Chloé Renshaw will be helping the Pioneer Home garden group with their raised beds. When you're working on the flowers at the front entrance, peak through the fence on the east side of the building to see what they're up to.

– Martha Galbreath will be representing Alaska at the Northeast Regional Master Gardeners Conference in Newport, Rhode Island June 5-8, 2006.

– The 2007 Statewide Master Gardeners Conference will be a topic of discussion at the May 22 noon meeting of the AMGA Board of Directors.

– New Master Gardeners in Cordova are already making plans to get started on their volunteer work which includes writing a script for an invasive plants play, presenting the 4-H Talking Plant to second graders, developing a new community garden and testing the mineralization of Copper River Delta silt. Thanks to MG Neva Nolan for making this happen.

– Apple growing Master Gardeners Dan Elliot and Kevin Irvin were featured in the April '06 issue of "Good Fruit Grower" magazine. Both are active members of the Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers.

– Are you aware of the problem plaguing alders in Southcentral Alaska? If not, you need to subscribe to Anchorage's CES listserv. Contact Dora at 786-6300 or fdew@uaf.edu to get on board.

– DIG UP YOUR PURPLE LOOSESTRI FE is a mantra you are going to hear this spring and summer. Replace with Blazing star, *Liatris*. There are a couple of species to choose from. The spiky magenta flower blooms late summer/fall just like purple loosestrife and it won't escape into natural areas.

– Purchase Alaska certified seed potatoes for spring planting. If you shop early, there will be seed available at garden centers that was produced in areas free from late blight last summer.

– On April 20 the first site that Google brought up in a search for Master Gardeners Anchorage was from iVillage GARDENWEB: The Internet's Garden & Home Community.

– Please send Gina your horticultural recipes. A decision was made during at the Jan AMGA meeting to include this as a regular column in 2006.

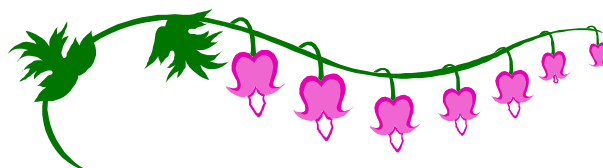
– Hyacinths were in full bloom on April 21 at State Farm Insurance on 6th and A Street.

– Remember future generations. Plant a tree on Alaska ARBOR DAY, Monday, May 15.

– Check out the new 39 cent stamps, "Crops of the Americas": beans, squash, peppers, corn, sunflowers

In my garden there is a large place for sentiment. My garden of flowers is also my garden of thoughts and dreams. The thoughts grow as freely as the flowers, and the dreams are as beautiful.

~Abram L. Urban



I never had any other desire so strong, and so like to covetousness, as that one which I have had always, that I might be master at last of a small house and a large Garden.

~Abraham Cowley, *The Garden*, 1666



MG Volunteer Opportunities

Clare House Garden Party

May 19, 2006 BP Atrium

This event supports Clare House, the temporary emergency shelter for homeless women with their children. Volunteer tasks at set-up include off loading plants from trucks, pricing plants, covering tables, filling the atrium with plants, assisting with set up of silent auction tables. (from 1 – 5 PM)

During the event volunteers are needed to assist customers with carrying plants to the check out and to their vehicles, monitor the silent auction tables, restock the atrium, manage the hold and sold rooms and assist with clean-up. (from 5- 9 PM)

Catholic Social Services is also looking for MG volunteers to donate two hours of their time as a silent auction item to benefit Clare House. This would mean going to the purchaser's home to provide suggestions on planting, types of plants, etc. MG Blythe Campbell has already volunteered. Is anyone else interested?

Please contact Linda McDevitt, Volunteer Manager, Catholic Social Services, 297-7706 fax 272-7370, linda.mcdevitt@cssalaska.org and let Julie know that you've volunteered.

Garden Clinics/Displays

Saturday, May 6– Mother's Day Spring Garden & Craft Show, Northway Mall (tentative)

Sat-Sun, June 24-25– Alaska Botanical Garden Fair

August 24-September 4– Alaska State Fair, Palmer

Roberta Landgren is in charge of organizing volunteers for these events, 250-1081 or mrdata@arcticnet.

Anchorage Youth Hostel

Master Gardener Pat McGee is hoping to find someone who would like to mentor a 15 year-old teen who is interested in planting and maintaining the flowers at the hostel, 700 H Street, and at another location nearby. This would be a good job for someone who lives near downtown. Contact Pat at 243-3456.

Channel 11, KTVA spot

Here's your chance to be a television star for 3 minutes. Someone is needed to film a spot on the Norma Goodman Show on May 19 at 2:00 p.m. Call Julie for details.

Junior Master Gardener

The Alaska Botanical Garden is hoping to find 2-3 volunteers to assist Instructor Pat Ryan for each of the 6 sessions of the Junior Master Gardener course that will be taught June 12 – August 2. Classes meet MTW for three hours/week, either in the morning (9-12) or afternoon (1-4). Call Julie and ABG 770-3692. These groups are a lot of fun!

ANCHORAGE - PACIFIC NORTHWEST COMMUNITY TREES CONFERENCE May 17 - 19 (W-F) Millenium Hotel.

The conference brings together citizens, arborists, urban foresters, planners, landscape architects, and public works and land managers every other year to discuss ways to develop and maintain successful urban & community forestry programs. Speakers will share their expertise in managing urban trees and forests and working with community forestry organizations. Speaker JAMES URBAN is a nationally recognized expert in urban trees, tree preservation, and urban soils. His research, articles and lectures have set the standard for the profession of landscape architecture in this area. TOM HOLZ, civil engineer, has gained national attention promoting zero impact development techniques that prevent storm water runoff from impacting streams. Register before May 1 for \$125 or on/after May 1 for \$150. The complete program and registration forms are available at www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry or from patricia_joyner@dnr.state.ak.us.

Kenaf Fiber – A New Basket Liner

[From an email 'ad' to amga@gci.net]

Kenaf fiber, derived from Hibiscus cannabinus (a relative of cotton and okra), is cheaper than coco fiber, and is reported to retain more moisture. Studies by the University of Minnesota have shown that foliage plants had superior size and dry mass when grown in kenaf. Trailing petunias grown in kenaf outperformed petunias grown in coco fiber by increased vigor and flower coverage. The liner is thinner and easier to cut and place in baskets than coco. The tight weave creates smaller holes, which increases water holding capabilities in the basket.

Information about this product can be found at: www.thinkmint.net/liners

Editing Service Available

Mona Christian from Petersburg, AK, has started up an editing business. She has offered to edit papers, newsletters, etc. for any gardening group interested - the first few months will be gratis. She can be reached by email: chelan@aptalaska.net

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 Line 786-6312

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!



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**Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Inc.
Anchorage Chapter
University of Alaska Cooperative Extension
P.O. Box 221403
Anchorage, Alaska 99522-1403**

Non Profit Organization
US Postage Paid
Permit #107
Anchorage, Alaska

2006 Gardening Calendar

May 6-June 12

May 6

- Annual Arbor Day Sale - Society of American Foresters

10:00 AM - 6:00 PM Locations include: REI, Carrs-Huffman, Carrs-Abbot Loop, Carrs-Muldoon, Carrs- Eagle River, Carrs-Wasilla (5/15 only), Carrs- Palmer. Seedlings: white spruce, lodgepole pine, paper birch, Siberian Larch, blue spruce, Scotch pine, \$1 each or 6 for \$5. If seedlings are still available sale will continue May 13 and May 20.

- Landscaping with Native Plants- Alaska Mill Feed & Garden Center, 1501 E. 1st Ave., Anchorage; 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM -Are you interested in learning more about native plants in Alaska? Meet Verna Pratt, one of the area's foremost experts on the subject. Share her knowledge and learn to incorporate native species into your rock garden or perennial flower bed. There is no charge for this program, but class size is limited. Due to the popularity of this class, pre-registration will be required. Contact: 276-6016

- How to Create Container Gardens - Lowe's Home Improvement, 333 E. Tudor Rd, Anchorage; Starts at 1:00 PM; Create a small garden with a planter and seasonal plants.

May 6 -31

4-H Spring Garden Fundraiser Cooperative Extension Service, 2221 E. Northern Lights, #118 Anchorage District 4-H Leaders Association is selling coupons for Bells Nursery & P&M Garden Services. Coupons may be redeemed for a flat of annuals (\$30) or a 12" hanging basket (\$40) of fuchsias, geraniums, campanulas, begonias, petunias or whatever strikes your fancy! Checks payable to Anchorage South Rotary. (Coupons expire June 30.)

Contact: CES, 786-6300

May 8 -9

King Career Education Center - Plant Sale 2650 E. Northern Lights Blvd, Anchorage

May 8: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

May 9: 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Fuchsias, lobelia and geranium baskets, impatiens, petunias, pansies and lobelia. Contact Adam Reid 278-9631 for more information Website: www.asdk12.org/schooldetails.asp?ID=805

May 9

Rose Garden Hedge Pruning Centennial Rose Garden, Delaney Park Strip (west end) 7:00 PM; Alaska Rose Society hand-on workshop. Public invited to learn more about pruning. Bring pruner, leather gloves and warm clothes. E-mail: dhinchey@alaska.com

May 10

Alaska Botanical Garden Spring Cleanup Day 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM Volunteers needed to help set up the nursery, remove mulch from flower beds and do light trail maintenance.

Website: www.alaskabg.org

May 11

Weed Warriors Hilltop Chalet, 7015 Abbot Road 6:00 - 8:00 PM Organizational meeting for weed pulling volunteers focusing on Anchorage parks. Educational segment presented by Jamie Snyder, Cooperative Extension Service. Contact, Margaret Timmerman, MOA, 343-4217

May 13

- Gardening Without Invasive Plants - Alaska Mill & Feed, 1501 E. 1st Ave., Anchorage, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM; Julie Riley with the Cooperative Extension Service will offer insight into invasive plant species and how they impact the natural habitat in Alaska. Learn which species are on the DO NOT PLANT list and are fast becoming real problems in the area. Class is free of charge, but pre-registration is required. Please call to register. Contact: 276-6016

- Build and Grow - Lowe's Home Improvement, 333 E. Tudor Rd., Anchorage, 10:00 AM

- How to Create Container Gardens - Lowe's Home Improvement, 333 E. Tudor Rd., Anchorage, 1:00 PM; Create a small garden with a planter and seasonal plants.

- Lobelia Basket Workshop

Location given with advance registration 10:00 AM - 12 noon Make your own lobelia basket. All materials provided. Sponsored by the Anchorage Garden Club. Preregistration required, \$50. Message can be left at 566-0539. Website for registration form: http://communitynews.adn.com/main.wsi?group_id=49

May 15

- Alaska Arbor Day - 3500 W. Northern Lights Blvd. 2:00 PM Celebrate at the Anchorage Garden Club's ceremonial tree planting. This year's location is Turnagain Elementary School. Contact: 566-0539

- Anchorage Master Gardener Association meeting: Flowers, A Few of My Favorites - Presented by Rita Jo Shultz of Fritz Creek Gardens; Cooperative Extension Service, 2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd, Anchorage, 7:00 - 9:00 PM Public welcome. Contact: 786-6300

May 17

Compost & Compost Tea Clinic - National Outdoor Leadership School, Palmer, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. Come experience all the stages of making compost from making a hot new pile to applying the finished project. Learn how to brew and apply compost tea as a drench and a spray. Take home a free sample. Preregistration required, \$15. Contact: 907- 745-0758 E-mail: info@goodearthgardenschool.com

May 17-19

Pacific Northwest Community Trees Conference Millennium Hotel, Anchorage - Conference for citizens, arborists, urban foresters, planners, landscape architects and public land managers to learn ways to develop and maintain successful community forestry programs. Fee, \$90-150. Registration: 786-6300 or andew@uaf.edu Website: www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/community/news.htm

May 19

- Clare House Garden Party - BP Atrium, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM - Catholic Social Services benefit for Clare House, a shelter for homeless women and children. Purchase hanging baskets, window boxes & perennials. Silent auction including unique gardening related items. Appetizers, music by Skookums. Advance tickets \$25 or \$30 at the door. Contact: Catholic Social Services 297-7719

- Garden Basics class - In the Garden Nursery, 3021 DeArmour Rd, Anchorage; Starts at 10:00 AM. Free class for the new or new-to-Southcentral gardener. Space is limited, so call Lorri at 346-4246 to register. [Repeats May 20th at noon] Website: www.inthegardennursery.com

May 20

- How to Create Container Gardens - Lowe's Home Improvement, 333 E. Tudor Rd., Anchorage Starts at 1:00 PM. Create a small garden with a planter and seasonal plants.

- ABG Annual Plant Sale & Membership Drive

Alaska Botanical Garden nursery 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (Members only) 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM (Public) Includes plants for sale by the Alaska Rock Garden Society and the Alaska Rose Society. Garden club information available. Presentation by Julie Rile on "Staking and Supporting Flowers", 10:30 AM, 12 noon, 1:30 PM. Website: www.alaskabg.org

May 21

- Gardening with the Joyful Nature Spirits - Evangelo's Restaurant, Wasilla . A one-hour workshop within the *Metapalooza*. Contact: Good Earth Garden School, 907-745-0758 E-mail: ellen@goodearthgardenschool.com

(May 21st cont.)

– **Alaska Native Plant Society - Plant Walk** - Eagle River Nature Center, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM. Andy Anderson-Smith presents a slide show and a nature walk at the Eagle River Nature Center; Website: www.aknps.org

May 23

– **Alaska's Wild Orchids** - Alaska Orchid Society presentation by local wildflower authority Verna Pratt. Central Lutheran Church, 1420 Cordova St, Anchorage, 7:30 PM. Public invited. Contact: 248-1644

– **Herb Study Group at ABG** - Alaska Botanical Garden herb garden, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM. Join volunteers in planting and caring for the ABG herb garden. There are almost 100 species of herbs in the garden. Continuing every Tuesday at noon through September. Contact: 345-1562

May 23-Sept 16

– **ABG Discovery Duffles** - Families and groups with kids can check out a duffle bag containing a book and variety of activities for kids ages 4-9. Ask a staff member or volunteer in the ABG Nursery. There is no charge but you will need to surrender a driver's license while you have the bag. Website: www.alaskabg.org

– **Tuesdays in the ABG Herb Garden** - 12:00 – 2:00PM; Join the Herb Study Group in planting and caring for the herb garden. There are almost 100 species to learn about..Contact: 345-1562

May 24

Yoga Techniques for Gardeners - In the Garden Nursery, 3021 DeArmoun Rd, Anchorage; Starts at 6:00 PM. Join yogi Jane Tibbetts for some techniques for using yoga to make your gardening more enjoyable. Space is limited; call Lorri at 346-4246 to register. Website: www.inthegardennursery.com

May 26

Creating Exciting Annual and Perennial Containers - For the new or new-to-Southcentral gardener. In the Garden Nursery, 3021 DeArmoun Rd, Anchorage; Starts at 10:00 AM. Space is limited call Lorri at 346-4246 to register. [Repeats May 27th at noon]Website: www.inthegardennursery.com

May 26 & 27

Annie Nevaldine & Friends – Plant Sale - 4960 E. Fifth Avenue, between Pine and Boniface Friday: 5:00 – 9:00 PM Saturday: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Featuring perennials including astilbe, clematis, dianthus, filipendula, gentian, iris, larkspur, ligularia, lilies, primula, shrub roses, thalictrum and trillium. Annuals, including acidanthera. Raspberries. Garden hats, gloves, metal garden art and baskets. E-mail: alzina@acsalaska.net

May 27

– **Alaska Rock Garden Society - Plant Sale** - Snowfire Garden, Mile 5. 2 Fairview Loop Road, Wasilla 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. In addition to plants suitable for the rock garden on sale, there will be a map of gardens available for tour that day. Contact: 907-376-5390

– **Valley Garden Club Plant Sale** - Burchell High School, Wasilla 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM A variety of plants will be offered for sale, including annuals, perennials and more. Contacts: 907-892-6599 or 907-745-0993

– **How to Create Container Gardens** - Lowe's Home Improvement, 333 E. Tudor Rd, Anchorage Starts at 1:00 PM. Create a small garden with a planter and seasonal plants.

May 31

Composting Clinic and Other Organics! Steller School Peace Garden, Anchorage Time TBA. An evening festival focusing on organic gardening. Contact: Alaska Community Action on Toxics, 222-7714.

June 01

Inspirations of a Flower Show - Anchorage Garden Club program given by Letti Delk. Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd and Eagle, Anchorage Starts at 7:30 Public Invited. Website: communitynews.adn.com/agclub

June 02

Primrose Class - In the Garden Nursery, 3021 DeArmoun Rd, Anchorage; Starts at 10:00 AM. Join Sally Arant in discovering the wonderful world of primroses for our area. Space is limited, so call Lorri at 346-4246 to register. [Repeats June 3rd at noon]

June 03

– **Anchorage Garden Club & Alaska Rose Society - Plant Sale** - 3734 W. 35th Ave., Anchorage 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM. Combined plant sale includes hardy perennials, roses, and annuals. Contact: 566-0539

– **Wildflower Garden Club - Plant Sale** - 7435 Old Harbor Road, Anchorage 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. All kinds of plants for sale including wildflowers. Email: sallyk@gci.net Website: communitynews.adn.com?group_id=684

June 3 - Aug 26

Shop in the Garden - Alaska Botanical Garden Nursery & Gift Shop; ABG and American Horticultural Society members get 10% discount on gift shop sales. [Gift shop hours: 1:00 PM-7:00 PM Wednesdays; 10:00 AM-4:00 PM Saturdays] Website: www.alaskabg.org

June 06

NOLS Gardens Field Trip - National Outdoor Leadership School, Palmer; Join the Valley Garden Club for a trip to see this nearly-Sustainable Growing System. Take a close-up look at this exemplary non-toxic gardening system that feeds 500 clients each summer. What are the results and problems from 7 hears of raising vegetables, flowers, and herbs with compost and compost tea? Contact: 745-0993

June 7 – Aug 30

– **Guided Tours of the Alaska Botanical Garden** Wednesdays, 1:00 p.m., meet at the ABG entrance for a docent led tour. Call ahead (770-3692) for groups of 15 or more. Website: www.alaskabg.org

– **Docent on Duty at Alaska Botanical Garden** Wednesdays from 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Website: www.alaskabg.org

June 08 & 09

Pesticide Applicator Course, Initial Certification - Cooperative Extension Service, 2221 E. Northern Lights, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM. Certification class for licensed pesticide applicators for categories 2, 3, 4, 7, and 9. Preregistration required, \$30. Contact: CES, 786-6300

June 09

Wildflowers for Northern Climates - In the Garden Nursery, 3021 DeArmoun Rd, Anchorage Starts at 10:00 AM. Space is limited; call Lorri at 346-4246 to register. [Repeats June 10th at noon] Website: www.inthegardennursery.com

June 10

– **Build & Grow: Desktop Set** - Lowe's Home Improvement, 333 E. Tudor Rd., Anchorage; Starts at 10:00 AM

– **Bell's Open House / Garden Fair** - 13700 Specking Ave, Anchorage 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Preview 2007 trial plants and vote on your favorites. Representatives from garden manufacturers, growers, brokers, will be on-hand. Website: www.bellsnursery.com

June 12 – Aug 2

Junior Master Gardener Camp - Alaska Botanical Garden, 9:00 AM – 12:00 or 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday sessions. Hands-on activities for kids ages 7-11 with a focus on botany, horticulture and ecology. Led by Patrick Ryan, certified JMG Specialist and Master Gardener.. Enrollment is \$125 per child. Contact: Cynthia, 770-3692 E-mail: cynthia@alaskabg.org