

Anchorage Chapter



Volume 9, Issue 4

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

April 2007

From the President's Corner Dana Klinkhart

Is it April? Hmmm, how can I tell! As I pulled on my ski hat and lifted my skis from the back of my car this week, I wondered how many of us have struggled to make the best of the still cold conditions while tending to the new sprouts under lights. The beautifully groomed trails continue to bring skiers to the hillside, including this gardener. Those little 'no maintenance' birds called chickadees have been happily chirping in the tree tops, maybe they've secretly known something that the rest of us don't. Maybe they've figured that spring is on its way. Surely they couldn't sing so if they weren't assured that a feast of bugs and seeds would soon arrive. Their music sounded hopeful anyway. And maybe their message is 'just sing and be patient.'

The Alaska Botanical Garden Spring conference brought many gardeners together to find inspiration at the great classes that were offered. We met at the UAA/APU Consortium Library to register at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 31st. The sun was out to welcome us all and as we gathered for our classes there seemed to be excitement in the building. Gardeners probably love to see their gardening friends at an event just as much as they love to learn about gardening. They were treated to both on that day.

After having challenged my thought processes for what seemed to be forever, the computer class for preparing slideshows in PowerPoint finally came together at the ABG Conference. There is an interest with gardeners in developing slideshows with their digital images, as several people were turned away for lack of space. With technology being what it is, I needed to spend a generous amount of time investigating and experimenting before being comfortable teaching others about preparing a slideshow. Students work from different computer platforms at their homes and with different levels of expertise. Some have Macs and some have MS Windows based machines. In truth, they both work well, if just a bit different. Slideshows were successfully created with a relatively new feature called 'photo album'. If there continues to be an interest in this type of instruction with technology, Master Gardeners could offer more training for our group. Interested?

My reservations were made last year for a road trip to the southwest. My skis have been put away for the season and those chickadees will just have to sing their song without me. My airplane is waiting. So how does that old song go? You know, the John Denver song?



*"My bags are packed and I'm on my way!
Don't know when I'll be back again.
I'm leaving on a jet plane."*

I'll see you in May!





The Fragrance of Israel

By Pat Anderson



Last year in the Spring, Master Gardener Elizabeth (Beth) Holt purchased a new pair of hiking shoes, a new camera and flew 29 hours to arrive for a three week stay in Israel. She stayed for two weeks in Tzfat, located in Galilee which is a religious and an art town of about 28,000 people. She stayed with a 'friend of a friend' who takes care of four Down's

syndrome children. Her host has since started a non-profit organization to accommodate more such handicapped children into her home.

Pictures of palm trees, fig trees, a huge tree full of ripe oranges, typical date trees, and large, old and gnarled unnamed but interesting trees were presented. Beth entertained us with other pictures of beautiful flowers, fragrant flowering bushes and hedges and flowering trees that were anonymous, but so beautiful they fed our flower-hungry appetites for sun and flora. Pictures of wall-painted murals, blue (for good luck) doorways and art, narrow winding stone streets, stone stairs and stone buildings added to the flavor of this beautiful Northern 'coolest' Israeli city located by the hills of Galilee.

She attended the graveyard of Kabalistic Rabbis also located in Tzfat. Located there was a 'prayer tree' that was full of prayers written on anything that could be rolled up and placed in the tree. She had sent a prayer earlier with a friend, but could not find it in the tree because so many prayers had been placed there. Of interest: stones were placed on the graves instead of flowers.

On the last week of her trip, Beth and her traveling companion moved to Jerusalem where she was very fortunate to get a room at a last moment's notice at Denny's Bed and Breakfast at \$40.00 per night. She had called a friend in Anchorage, Lee Olson (husband of Marge Olson), who had been to Israel a few years earlier. Lee then called Denny, requesting accommodations to which Denny obliged. We noticed that Denny had geraniums outside his establishment, a practice very similar to this great state of ours. Beth placed prayers in the Wailing Wall, where some birds were found nesting in the large crevices.

A sign photographed in Jerusalem advertised, "Eric of Alaska, Hair cut the way you like it". It seems that Eric, an Alaskan Aleut, married a Jewish lady in Alaska, moved to Jerusalem with his family, and gives haircuts "the way

you like it". Lee Olson said that he had met many other bed and breakfast owners in Israel who were also from Fairbanks. It's a small world after all.

It was amazing to hear that two weeks after Beth came home to Alaska, the Hezbollah sent missiles into Tzfat, a peaceful part of Israel that had never been disturbed in that way before.

Beth finished her presentation by saying that the majority of flowers and flowering shrubs and trees she saw were fragrant. She said she was looking deeper into the true fragrance of Israel, as one would do by stripping down the leaves on a branch of Rosemary, enjoying the full essence and formation.

International Polar Year, 2007-2009



March was the beginning of the 4th International Polar Year (IPY), a campaign of intense, internationally coordinated research to gain new knowledge about Earth's polar regions. During this time the University of Alaska will be focusing its attention on the Arctic region.

The First International Polar Year (1882 - 1883) was inspired by Karl Weyprecht, an officer in the Austro-Hungarian navy, who argued that polar expeditions should be driven by scientific research instead of exploration. Eleven countries participated in 15 Polar expeditions during the first IPY, heralding a new age of scientific discovery.

A few goals for the 4th IPY proposed by the UAF IPY Subcommittees for Research, Education and Outreach include the following:

- Engage in collaborative initiatives, especially international coordination on comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, team projects in research and education.
- Develop an educational "pipeline" approach comprising effective K-12 polar education that is culturally responsive and addresses younger generations ...
- Make "arctic expertise" visible, accessible, and relevant to decision-makers and planners, from the local to the global through outreach and communication to stakeholders and people of all ages and backgrounds ...

For more detail see <http://www.alaska.edu/ipy>, the source of information for this article.



Winter Gardening By Amelia Walsh

In last month's newsletter, Dana was asking about ideas on how to satisfy our growing needs while waiting for spring. I would like to share how I am coping.

It is no mystery or secret that I like to grow things. So after all the garden beds are tucked in, the water fall, fountains and ponds winterized, and the garden art put away, I start my winter gardening.

By that I don't mean shovel the drive way, which in itself is no easy task. I mean 'indoor gardening time' and because of that, now I am rewarded with many blooming things: A huge container planted with tulips has been in bloom for several weeks and it is so springy and uplifting. The hyacinths and paper whites permeate the air with a wonderful fragrance. The lavender is just heavenly. However, the fuchsias and geraniums are very frustrated because I keep them from blooming.

The orchids, Paphiopedilum and Phalenopsis, are spectacular. One of my orchid cacti was just amazing, it produced ninety five vibrant red blossoms, and the cyclamens have not stopped blooming since last fall.

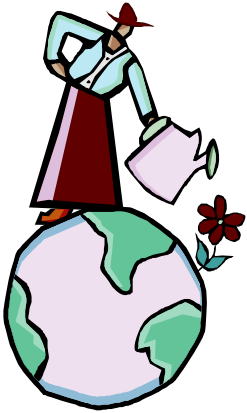
So it does not matter if I'm in the green house, the garage or the house, blooming plants are in abundance.

I hope I have inspired somebody to try some winter gardening. If not, hang in there, the days are getting longer, & it will not be too long before we can do real gardening.





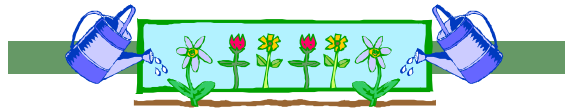
AMGA Membership Hails Far & Wide



It is quite remarkable that AMGA has over 200 members this year given there was no infusion of newly trained Master Gardeners as usual. The Alaska Master Gardener Association currently has two chapters, the Anchorage chapter and the Central Peninsula chapter. Addresses from the Kenai Peninsula include Soldotna, Sterling, Nikiski, Kenai, Anchor Point and Homer. Anchorage chapter members include Eagle River, Chugiak, Indian and Girdwood. I'm not sure where Cordova fits in.

AMGA members Dan Elliott and Norm Levesque both live in Wasilla, realm of the Mat-Su Master Gardeners. Tanana Valley MG President Virginia Damron and Michele Hébert, Tanana Valley Extension Land Resources Agent, have also joined AMGA (again) this year. The farthest flung AMGA member in Alaska is Karla Kolash (from Barrow) who has been seen trying to grow hosta (indoors).

As AMGA members leave the state, some choose to maintain their ties. Past AMGA President Allen Deitz pays his AMGA dues from Boise, Idaho. Michael Webb moved to Astoria, Oregon and Sally Arant to Springfield, Illinois. Both are AMGA members. But Lynn Moore takes the prize for long-distance membership. Her address says she's living in Moscow, Russia!



SPRING GARDENING CLASSES

The following classes will be taught by Julie Riley, Extension Horticulture Agent at the FAIRVIEW RECREATION CENTER. For registration information contact C.B. Stewart, 343-4040, Fairview Recreation Center, 1121 East 10th Avenue. Registration begins after March 25 when the MOA Activities Guide will be published in the Anchorage Daily News or participants can pay at the door.

Basic Vegetable Gardening \$1

W April 4th Noon-2p

Learn which vegetables grow best in our cool climate, techniques for raising warm weather crops, basic soil preparation tips, community gardening options. There is an optional publication you can purchase on the day of class, "16 Easy Steps to Gardening" available for \$4.

Starting Seeds Indoors \$1

W April 11th Noon-2p

It's easy to start seedlings indoors if you have the proper light. Seed starting mixes, which plants to start, care and hardening-off will be covered. Participants will start a few vegetable or flower seeds to take home.

Shades of Blue: Perennial & Annual Flowers \$1

T April 24th 6:30-8:00p

True blue and flowers in various shades of purple bloom in Anchorage gardens spring, summer and fall. This slide show will provide the inspiration for adding new species to your garden.

Camp Maranatha (Big Lake) Seeks Landscape Ideas A Request from Becky Livengood

My husband and I moved up here in 2005 to take the position of camp manager for Camp Maranatha in Big Lake. It has been operated as only a summer camp until 2-3 years ago. It is our job to make it year round. We are the only permanent staff.

Through the years they have had volunteer teams come and work on the camp and since there was no master plan (we are currently working on that) the teams would see the need for flowers and would plant them in any space that needed something.

What we want to do now is have more of a planned out landscape but since neither of us are gardeners (not for lack of desire but of time) we do not know what plants work well in certain areas and also in Alaska in general.

We want to inquire if there would be someone willing to come out and look at the camp and give us some advice as to what would be appropriate for our camp ground. We would appreciate any help you could give.

Terry Livengood is the camp manager. You can call the camp at 892-6697, or Terry on his cell at 715-8549.



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

It's hard work having fun! Where to begin?

My husband and I were supposed to be thawing in Texas and Arizona. Not! We got to Phoenix mid-February to find trees and shrubs in the area brown and many of them probably dead from frosts earlier in the winter. We quickly left for the Big Bend area of Texas to meet friends. There, on the banks of the Rio Grande, looking over at the cliffs in Mexico, the morning temperatures were just a degree or two from freezing. After Big Bend we went to New Mexico and on our way out the temperature outside the tent dropped to 14°. Even with four pound sleeping bags we put on all the clothes we had in a vain attempt to stay warm. 'Nuff said of that little jaunt though we did thaw somewhat on our return to Arizona! Then we came home to Anti-Spring with temperatures to -18° some mornings. In the Anchorage Daily News, Earthweek for the week ending March 23, said that this has been the warmest winter on record in the Northern Hemisphere. A friend in Switzerland said their flowers and shrubs are blooming a good six weeks early. May we ship some of our cold to them, do you suppose? Was Alaska included in the statistics?



We got home from our "thaw" on Wednesday evening and Thursday afternoon I was on the flight to Fairbanks with Soldotna MG Kathy Wartinbee, bound for the state MG conference and the Winter Festival.

About those, another WOW! The ice carvings were gorgeous, night and day and the conference speaker line up was wonderful— in particular: Les Brake of Coyote Gardens, Willow; Tracy DiSabato-Aust (see the Timber Press catalog); and from the University of Saskatchewan, Canada's largest agricultural experiment station, Dr. Bob Bors, who spoke three times. Rosemary's recommendation: Any time Dr. Bors is a featured speaker, GO. He is developing small fruits for northern climates and his work is germane to Alaska. One of Dr. Bors' talks was on

propagation (Hint: When rooting starts in water add a couple willow stems). Since I heard him about five years ago speak on different small fruit varieties, I have gotten some of the plants he talked about, and now I am interested in starting from my own stock rather than shelling out the \$20 for a gallon pot since I have both time and room to start more. (Honeysuckle roots easily with bottom heat in the spring. They can also be layered.) Very highly recommended is the book "Plant Propagation" by Alan Toogood, editor-chief.

And speaking of the ADN, go to their new blog: www.adn.com/talkdirt

I did check our garden soil temperature where there is good snow cover and six inches down the temperature is 30° which is normal for the time of year. There is hope.

And from intrepid reporter Margaret Simon:

From Astrantia to Rogersia to Smilacina...

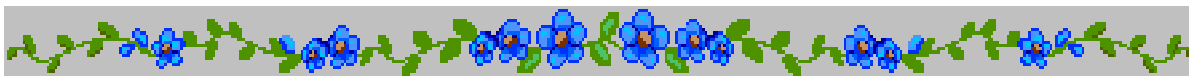
Teena Garay of Homer gardening fame, shared her enthusiasm and offered encouragement to try gardening in the shade to those attending the March MG winter lecture series. A variety of slides showed the many possibilities, especially for foliage as well as blossom. I was personally surprised to hear of a comfry that one could consider planting: *Symphytum* 'Axminster Gold.' Teena assured us it would not spread. Can we really trust this comfry?

If you have never considered the primula family, you may want to do so. There are so many varieties and many colors that it could be a very versatile addition to your 'darker' spots.

MOA Community Gardens Revamped

If you are a gardener without a plot of soil, consider the Municipality of Anchorage's community garden plots. The Parks & Recreation Department promises increased services at its C Street and McPhee Street Community Gardens. The plots will once again be tilled and participants will receive a monthly newsletter. Gardeners will also be able to keep their same plot in 2008 without having to stand in line the first day of registration. Plot fees have gone up since George Patrawke and Martha Galbreath gardened at C Street, but so has everything else. Thirty dollars will get you 10' X 20' or 15' X 15' feet of garden soil with access to water. Gardeners renting more than one plot will receive a break in price.

The new guidelines for becoming a community gardener are available at www.muni.org/parks/gardenplots.cfm. Gardeners have been able to sign up for plots since April 2, so don't delay.



Bird Chatter

- Les Brake's definition for moose: Pigs on Stilts.
- The statewide Master Gardeners Conference put on by the Tanana Valley MGs drew 115 attendees. AMGA members included Rosemary Kimball, Kathy Wartinbee, Martha Galbreath, Carol Ross, Jill Shepherd, Dan Elliott and of course conference chair, Virginia Damron.
- Virginia Damron reports that 25% of Master Gardeners who came to the conference were from outside the Fairbanks area.
- Conference speaker Tracy DiSabato-Aust stated 6-8% soil organic matter is ideal for herbaceous perennials. (Most Anchorage area topsoil purchased contains 12-15% organic matter by volume.)
- The 4th International Polar Year began last month. Given as cold as March was, let's hope we don't have polar temperatures this summer.
- "Becoming a Master Gardener" is the April cover story of the magazine, *NARFE Retirement Life*, published for retired and current federal employees.
- The first issue of *MasterGardener!*, Washington State University Master Gardener program's new publication, www.mastergardeneronline.com includes an article on the myths of aerated compost tea. Subscriptions are available for \$10.
- Extension Horticulturist Julie Riley was quoted in the Anchorage Daily News as saying "go out and plant your garden under clear plastic after Easter". Not quite. Her suggestion was to start shoveling snow off your vegetable garden after Easter.
- Sally Arant may be gone but **In the Garden** is alive and well. The business, run by AMGA member Lorri Abel with help from MG Suanne Sikkema, has moved to a new location at 7307 O'Brien Street. Check out their web site inthegarden.com for details.
- A BIG THANKS to Sandra Harrington for another beautiful job on the AMGA Directory! The 2007 issue includes 218 members.
- Only 12% of AMGA membership does not list an e-mail contact. Twelve percent of the membership has also not taken the MG course.
- Remember to participate in the first-ever AMGA Membership Survey. Responses are **due Monday, April 23**.
- Mike Reinschmidt called to say that Gail Hooyer (MG '99) passed away on March 30. Carolyn Finley also passed away this winter (MG '93).
- The Cooperative Extension Service has had a regular spot on KTVA's Channel 11, Norma Goodman Show for over 25 years. Norma, known as "Alaska's First Lady of Television", passed away March, 21.

- Please revise Denise Fouts e-mail address in your AMGA Directory to read dfouts97@aol.com. Watch for contact information for new members Susan Brusehaber and Shel Hensley next month.

MG Volunteer Opportunities

Contact Julie Riley, 786-6300.

Spring Garden Show at Sears Mall, Saturday, April 14

This is traditionally a high energy event and lots of fun. MGs are needed to staff the MG display and answer questions from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., 1 – 4 p.m. and 4 – 7 p.m. Help is also needed to set up at 9 a.m. when the mall opens. Thanks to Lupita Weese and Elizabeth Hayes who have already volunteered!

Alaska Woman's Show, Fri – Sun, April 20-22

There are two 3.5 hour shifts scheduled each day, 11:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. and 2:30 – 6:00 p.m. Last shift helps Julie take down.

McLaughlin Youth Center greenhouse

A Master Gardener is needed to help work with teens in their Greenhouse.

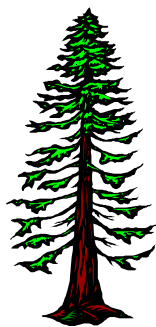
4-H Talking Plant

Thanks to Linda Coy for handling Eagle River and Kathy Honeysett for offering to take requests that come in for Anchorage. The program will not be advertised to every second grade teacher this year. Individual requests will be handled on a can-do basis.

Ute prayer

*The Earth is always a good teacher –
and especially in spring.*

*Earth teach me stillness
as the grasses are stilled with light.
Earth teach me suffering
as old stones suffer with memory.
Earth teach me humility
as blossoms are humble with beginning.
Earth teach me caring
as the mother who secures her young.
Earth teach me courage
as the tree which stands all alone.
Earth teach me limitation
as the ant which crawls on the ground.
Earth teach me freedom
as the eagle which soars in the sky.
Earth teach me resignation
as the leaves which die in the fall.
Earth teach me regeneration
as the seed which rises in the spring.
Earth teach me to forget myself
as melted snow forgets its life.
Earth teach me to remember kindness
as dry fields weep with rain.*



TREErific Q & A

Written by a couple TREErific members
for AMGA

Q: What is the history of Arbor Day and
when is it celebrated?

From: Kevin J.

A: In 1854, the father of Arbor Day, Julius Sterling Morton moved to the Nebraska Territory from Detroit. Through his position as editor of Nebraska's first newspaper, he spread his passion for trees through various articles and editorials. Mr. Morton later became secretary of the Nebraska Territory, furthering his ability to impress upon others, the importance of trees.

It was on January 4, 1872 that J. Sterling Morton proposed that April 10, 1872 be the first tree planting holiday and Nebraska's State Board of Agriculture agreed. As incentive to participate, prizes were to be awarded to communities and individuals who were able to properly plant the most trees on that day. When the counting was done, more than one million trees were planted on the first Arbor Day in Nebraska!

Thirteen years later in 1885, Arbor Day was named a legal holiday. Nebraska chose J. Sterling Morton's birthday on April 22 to celebrate. This first celebration of Arbor Day as a legal holiday involved a speech made by Morton, large parade of well over a thousand participants and of course a tree planting event!

What began as a need and a love for trees in a small community in Nebraska during the late 1800's has grown into a worldwide celebration of trees and tree planting. Today, most states celebrate Arbor Day on the last Friday in April, this year, it's the 27th.

Due to our cold weather, Alaska celebrates Arbor Day the 3rd Monday in May which is the 21st this year. There are many celebrations planned throughout the state, to find out more about what's going on in your community and how to get involved, contact the Alaska Community Forestry Program by visiting their website at:

<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/community/>

or Contact Anchorage TREErific at:
TREErificAnchorage@yahoo.com

To learn more about Arbor Day, visit:
<http://www.arborday.org>

Get involved.

Gardening Calendar

Thursday April 5

'Terrestrial Orchids' with Sally Karabelnikoff & Verna Pratt; Anchorage Garden Club program; 7:30p.m., Pioneer School House, 437 E 3rd Ave., Anchorage. Contact: 566-0539

Saturday April 14

Sears Mall Gardening Show 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. - MG Volunteers needed - contact Julie Riley, 786-6300

Saturday April 20-22

Alaska Women's Show @ the Sullivan Arena - MG Volunteers needed - contact Julie Riley, 786-6300

Thursday May 3

'Tabletop Fountains' by Sheila Parcel; Anchorage Garden Club program - 7:30p.m., Pioneer School House, 437 E 3rd Ave., Anchorage. Contact: 566-0539

Saturday May 19

*Alaska Rock Garden Plant Sale, Anchorage (details to follow)
*Anchorage Garden Club Plant Sale, Anchorage (details to follow)
*Alaska Botanical Garden PLANT SALE and Membership Drive, 10 a.m. -12 noon for members & those joining, 12 noon - 4 p.m. public welcome. *Members of ABG get a 10% discount in ABG Nursery and eight other nurseries. Garden Clubs will sell plants at the Garden from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Members of the clubs will make presentations and answer questions. Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, 770-3692 <http://www.alaskabg.org/>
*Lobelia Basket Workshop - Anchorage Garden Club presentation - Cost: \$50 - Time and location: details to follow

Saturday May 26

*Alaska Rock Garden Plant Sale, Mat Su Valley (details to follow)
*Anchorage Garden Club, Wasilla Snowfire Gardens (details to follow)

Monday May 21st

Alaska Arbor Day - Anchorage Garden Club presentation - (details to follow)

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





**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK,
April 15 -21**

thank you....thank you.... thank you....thank you....thank you



**Tulips bloom in Amelia Walsh's heated greenhouse
this winter. See related story on page 3**

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***Master Gardeners make the world
a better place.***

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