

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

January 2007

From the President's Corner

Dana Klinkhart

The snow dropped in just in time for the holidays. The gardens have been insulated with a blanket and smiles have been recorded on the faces of winter sports fans. And so it goes. Nature has given us her best behavior once again. The structures in our back yard stand beautifully dressed with the snowfall.

As our new year rolls around, we'll have our annual election of four new board members. With this event in mind, let me introduce you to eight gardeners who have taken the master gardening course and gone on to volunteer their time and energy to your association as board members this past year and longer:

- Marge Olson was a graduate of the class of 01/02. In addition to her community service, she has been on the board for three years as Vice President.
- Patricia Anderson joined the AMGA after taking the class of 03/04 and she has served this past year as a cosecretary.
- Anita Williams has been a master gardener since 02/03 and she has shared her talents with Patricia as co-secretary.
- Sue Lincoln became a master gardener in 95/96. Sue served as an assistant horticulturist with Cooperative Extension and has been supporter of gardening as a master gardener since 95/96. Sue served as treasurer of AMGA for the past two years.
- Carol Ross' history as a master gardener began when she took the master gardener course in 84/85. Carol has generously stepped in to fill a vacancy on the board as a director for this past year.
- Marguerite Barnard had no sooner taken the master gardener course in 02/03 when she was elected to the board of directors. Marguerite found the board so to her liking that she has served for the past four years.
- Linda Klinkhart was elected to the board for two consecutive terms. Linda has filled the position as our Volunteer Coordinator and managed to keep over 200 gardeners on a path of service in our community. Linda has been a master gardener herself since 01/02.
- And then there is me, Dana Klinkhart. I ve been around since the turn of the century. (Hmm, that's a sobering thought.) Having taken the master gardener course in 99/00, I found the association such a great place to volunteer that I have served as secretary for four years and your president for the past three years. It has been a pleasure to be associated with the Master Gardeners Association.

The members of our board of directors have joined a long list of gardeners who have brought their skills and energy to our community. Our newsletter and web site editor, our coordinators for the Pioneer and Botanical Garden projects and our membership/directory coordinator are just a few more of those dedicated volunteers. The mentors and teachers deserve our applause as well. As we start this New Year, let's find a moment to let them know that we appreciate them.

Happy New Year to you gardeners. I'll look forward to seeing you at our next meeting on Monday, January 15, 2007.





Sunset on the Nevaldine Gardens by Annie Nevaldine

Nearly a year ago Marge Olson asked me to speak at this month's meeting about "The Seasons of the Nevaldine Garden." Never did I dream that by the time this month rolled around I would already have spent my last spring, summer, and fall with this garden and that I would be in my last winter with it.

Yes, I 've actually decided to move to another home. I have such a complex mix of conflicting and incompatible emotions that my mood lately has been a little (well, okay, a lot) mercurial. I am excited about the new home I 'll occupy in March and I look forward to the fresh beginning that the move marks. Yet it is with so much sadness that I abandon these gardens in which I 've invested 27 years of my back, my heart, my soul, and my identity.

I first visited Alaska in 1978, and on my third day in the state I knew that I needed, not just wanted, to live here. The following September I moved to Anchorage and bought this home where I have gardened ever since. Besides a lawn, the property had only one lopped-off dead black spruce tree, one young Colorado blue spruce tree (which is now very tall and majestic), and a pot of nasturtiums which soon succumbed to frostbite.

The first small garden built the next spring contained mostly vegetables and strawberries with just a few flowers interspersing them. Little bit by little bit, year by year, existing gardens were enlarged and new gardens were constructed. More and more flowers were added, first annuals and then perennials. I quickly lost interest in growing my own food and favored flowers almost exclusively. Currently the only food crops in my gardens are asparagus, raspberries, chocolate mint, and a few edible flowers.

I didn't know how to design gardens so I never had a plan. My gardens simply evolved. That two adjacent plants brought out the best in each other was chance. That beds took on pleasing shapes was dumb luck. That there was any coherence at all among the plant material and the gardens was not due to any vision or foresight of mine, but just to evolution. I have always gardened only as the spirit moved me which, fortunately, it often did.

The presentation on January 15 will be bittersweet for me. In the process of sharing the seasons of my gardens with you, I'll also be reminding myself of them. I have spent 108 springs, 108 summers, 109 autumns, and 109 winters. I'll be reminded both of all the pleasure I have taken over the years and of what I'll lose and miss when I leave.

As I leave this property, I hope for a beautiful sunset. There's an adage that, paraphrased, claims, "Red sky at night, gardener's delight." I only hope that some new owner(s) will take as much delight in the legacy I m leaving behind as I have enjoyed while tending it and loving it.



Big Brown Eyes and the Clematis by Annie Nevaldine

I didn't have the heart to shoo away the moose that was decimating the tall *Clematis alpina* vine in my front yard one evening. I had spent the entire day second-guessing a decision I had made early that morning.

On my way to work, I stopped at a liquor store where I had been assured there would be empty boxes for the taking. I was planning to defrost my filled-to-the-gills non-frost-free freezer while we were having double-digit subzero temperatures. The boxes would contain the food in the great outdoor freezer for a day or two while the electric one thawed.



The liquor store is in an impoverished neighborhood. Despite the signage prohibiting loitering, all year round the store's parking lot and sidewalks host loiterers, broken-down folks, panhandlers, the homeless, drunk, high, unkempt, sad-looking, underdressed, undernourished, many undoubtedly chronically mentally ill.

As a woman, I feel vulnerable in the world in many ways. As a result, I tend to be quite aware of my surroundings, and this morning was no exception. I gathered boxes and carried them to my station wagon with my ears wide open and with my eyes scanning the parking lot. Hypervigilance and I are old friends.

While I was carrying my third load of boxes to the car, I dropped one. As I bent down to pick it up, a man whom I had failed to notice materialized from nowhere and offered to get it for me. After he picked it up, I reached to take it from him. No problem, he said, I'll carry it to your car. He added his box to the ones already in the car, and then I loaded mine. I smiled at him and thanked him. Then came the solicitation, the hustle. I'm looking for work, I just have to pick up a prescription for my wife who's seven months pregnant, I'm not a drug addict, I just need help.

Big brown imploring eyes tugged at my heart strings. Was this an honest display of humility or was this a scam? My vulnerability as a lone woman engaged my fear radar. Eyeing the deserted parking lot, I felt unsafe and drove off without as many boxes as I needed and without underwriting the cost of his pregnant wife's medicine.

As the day wore on, I was not at peace. Had I done the decent, moral, kind thing? What is the decent, moral, kind thing? I believe that we are our brothers' and our sisters' keepers. I contribute to nonprofits whose missions assist the needy, yet I did not donate cash directly to an individual who asked. Was his wife or unborn baby in jeopardy because I failed to contribute to the medication cost? I could easily have spared \$5, or even \$100. I am not destitute. After all, I have a so much food that I need a freezer to keep it all from spoiling.

Late that evening at home after boxing the contents of the freezer and placing them in the back yard, I discovered a two-year old moose noshing on my mature clematis while its mother worked over the weeping birch next door. I couldn't run it off. I had already refused to assist one being with big brown eyes that day. My conscience couldn't take any more disquietude. How could I aggressively take food out of the mouth of yet another big brown-eyed being?

About this, I had no moral or ethical angst. I enjoyed standing at the window for twenty minutes or so, marveling at the hardiness of creatures— animal and plant— that survive in protracted subzero weather. I watched with a glad heart and a spirit of generosity as the youngster devoured the entire clematis. Eat up, baby, I thought. The hardy clematis will regenerate from its roots next summer while you warm your belly tonight with its tall top growth from the outdoor freezer. You do it no harm. The clematis is no less hardy without its stems and leaves yet you are more hardy for their nutritive value to you.

If only the man with the big brown eyes would magically reappear, I'd assist him and his pregnant wife, even if he doesn't have one, or even if she isn't pregnant. As it is, I can only hope that he will be helped indirectly with a contribution I make to a charity that serves the poor. I have no less food in the freezer and am no more hungry for making a donation, while the indigent are so much less hungry as a result. And I sleep better at night for having fed both the human and the moose.

As for the clematis— it'll be so full and floriferous in July that I'll never remember that the young moose pruned it for free.



Some Master Gardener's Favorite Tools

(A Continuation from December's AMGA Newsletter: "Christmast Gift I deas from Master Gardeners")



Marge Olson:

I always love the Mudd gloves. They are the ones that have cotton back but look like the palm has been dipped in plastic. In our cold ground they insulate the hand from cold and wet. I enjoy a subscription to a gardening magazine. One with lots of pictures for ideas. A plant holder would be nice. I like the free standing ones that hold three or more pots. I also like signs or objects to be hung on the fence as decoration.

Marguerite Barnard:

I love my electrical heating pad for starting seeds. I would like a really good book on propagation of plants from cuttings, i.e. special, out of the way plants that need a certain way to get going. I love Mann Leiser's old books but my eyes get a little cranky at the fine, typewriter font.

Moisture meter, pH meter, a three point which extends cultivator, (mine is bright red and really wonderful to use on a slope, saves my back). Small holders for garden tools which can be attached to the house so that I have a shovel and garden rake close by no matter where I am. Long narrow spade with sharp, blunt cutting edge for edging or for use in cutting grass deeply when its on the wrong side of the black rubber-like edging.

When I was recovering from my shoulder and foot operations, I found a cane very helpful for leaning over the flower beds while stretching out which is how chiropractors teach one to bend over without hurting your back.

A good pair of industrial strength knee pads, the kind contractors use. I also have a pair of leather gloves with long cuffs which go almost to the elbow, the kind one uses for carrying firewood, for work among the raspberries, roses and for pruning lilacs and such.

A good rainhat with a chin strap so you can keep working in a light rain or a wind. I have a Canadian Tilley which is guaranteed for life, I think, and comes with an instruction book which resides in the inside roof of the hat. I think you can get them online. They have vertical grommets for ventilation. Wonderful for fishing also. Since I have a short neck the narrower brim clears the back of my shoulders so it doesn't get knocked off when I look up into the trees, etc. and still keeps my glasses dry.

An inexpensive, Wal-mart type, polar fleece zippered jacket with a hood which keeps you warm when the winds blow. Paid \$20 for mine at K-Mart ten years ago and it is a life saver. It's got pockets. Made in the Arab Emirates, Ha!

The garden bench kneeler is really nice, especially after you've stayed on your knees too long because the flower bed was so interesting and time just flew by. Help in getting up is *priceless* at those times.

Canadian garden books for northern growers, of course. White Static Cling for insides of windows—got mine at AK Mill and Feed. They had Cardinals "N" Dogwood and Bird 'N' Garden Angels. There are Butterflies, Hummingbirds, More Hummingbirds, Chickadees, etc. Pretty cute. They can be removed for window washing if put on correctly.

This is not all, but I have to get to work.

Judy Wedemeyer:

I have used this [unusual] product, [Microfleur microwave flower press], for drying maple and oak leaves from Maine and they did beautifully. I have not tried flowers but suspect they would do great also. [The technique] is very quick and [the leaves were pressed] FLAT! This is an Australian product but I ordered mine from the Gardenscape in Canada. It is pricey (\$55-59 for the large size) but worth it. Dries things quickly. Also saves space in storing and transporting them.

http://www.microfleur.com.au/default.htm

Gardenscape Ltd. 2010A Queen St. East Toronto, ON M4L 1J3, Canada 1-888-472-3266 (toll free)

 $email: \underline{info@gardenscape.on.ca} \ with \ questions$

www.gardenscapetools.com

http://www.gardenscapetools.com/pages/acc11fleur.htm

Denise Saigh:

Here are some things I either love or can't do without:

- Heavy duty plastic tool caddy (in 2 or 3 sections)— I put all my hand tools in it, plus a cordless phone if I happen to be on 'phone duty'.
- Heavy-duty foam-plastic knee pad (mine doesn't have the hand rails, and I can put it in the tool caddy)
- Fiskars snippers (very small). Will gave me a pair years ago, and I thought they were very wimpy... however, they are as sharp as can be, and now I couldn't be without them for anything requiring precision.
- GOOD pruners
- Small under-shrub rake. Everyone thinks mine's hilarious, but it certainly works well for me in the garden for all sorts of things.
- Stretchy green plastic tape to use for tying up plants (sorry, but I don't have a new package with the manufacturer's name, but I have bought it here locally)
- Plant supports (preferably tall)
- Gardening gloves (of course)
- Hand cream
- AND, the ultimate, way-out gift would be a MULCHING MOWER! (To be truthful, I never use ours— Will does the lawns and edges, and I do the garden beds.)





Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

Once again my husband and I have had our annual "discussion" about the size of our Christmas tree. We are lucky enough to have 40 acres for tree selection and every year is the same— Me: "I f we move it to the center of the room we could have a larger one"; He: "We've got to be able to get it in the door." I have to admit that this year I was glad we didn't have that bigger one. Ten feet and

clipping to fit was good enough.



In Europe, after the window boxes are finished, evergreen bows or some other decoration

will replace flowers for the winter. A Soldotna business, Northcountry Fair, has done the Alaskan version of that. Liz has put spruce bows in her summer 15-inch flower baskets and has added the wee white lights for the season. It's pretty.

Nothing much has started down here yet. I haven't heard of any seed orders sent for or received. We do have our first speaker, Brenda Adams of Homer for the third Thursday in January but that's about it.

We now have an adequate snow cover thanks to the white Christmas and the soil temperature is remaining in a favorable range for perennial roots. I was

wondering what was going to happen after we had nearly an inch of rain down here earlier in December. Where there was ankle-deep snow the water was absorbed but at my neighbor Mark's chicken coop, 3/4 of the 10x25 foot coop was flooded more than ankle deep. He'd mined the manure last summer except in the very back and that's where the birds were huddled, out of the lake. Fortunately I have tall boots because it was really "interesting" in there when I went to feed them, until it froze again.

An interesting note while wandering through the T&M catalogue was that the seasons for their broccoli was 55 or 100 days. Naught in-between! One of the things I 'm ordering from Stokes is big packages of mustard greens for two gardening friends on the Big I sland. I was reading Kathy Oshiro's book on growing fruits in Hawaii and she said that an organic remedy for their nematodes is mustard greens! My friend Harry had a bitter melon of some age that had an ugly growth above the ground, credited to the local nematodes, as big as my hand.

If you grow onions go to: http://dixondale.commercev3.com for a good selection of long day onions. My neighbor, MG Mark, grows them and orders from here and has been pleased with the selection and service. I 've been pleased with his onions. Mark has also gotten two new light fixtures...one big, one smaller up from Beverly's Violets (Beverly Hendricks 338-4510) in Anchorage. I 'm already factoring them into my life when I start seeds in the spring. It's nice to have a gardening friend with toys this close!

The Bohemian wax wings were around until the New Year this winter. We watched them feed on the European Bird Cherries (otherwise known as May Day trees) out our window. They started at the top and are working their way down. Unfortunately they've just about eaten up all the berries and I 'm sure our allure will then fade.

This is now the year that we meant last summer and fall when we crowed/lamented "wait 'till next year"! Deal with it. Happy New Year and may your thumbs be as green as your dreams.







- The number of poinsettia's produced by Southcentral Alaska growers this season totals 61,100.
- Master Gardeners Amelia Walsh and Rita Jo Shoultz (Fritz Creek Gardens) were both quoted extensively in the Fall 2006 issue of **Alaska Home** magazine– Amelia on mulching and Rita Jo on planting bulbs.
- The **Better Homes & Gardens** Dec. 06 issue includes an article on Willow gardener Les Brake titled "Fire on I ce."
- The first garden catalog to arrive in the Anchorage Extension office- **Raintree Nursery**.
- A Master Gardener who drives to the Mat-Su Valley to shop for plants is needed to sit on a marketing panel at the Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conference. Please contact Julie, 786-6300.
- Nickel LaFeur will be entertaining one of the speakers for the Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conference. Mary Alyce Koebler (from New York) will be speaking on IPM in the greenhouse and best management practices.
- The Anchorage Audubon Christmas Bird Count tallied 46 species and 16,878 birds. Highlights include the sighting of a red-wing blackbird and short-eared owl.
- Brilliant, correct non-gardening use of the word 'mulch'- "In the ripe teenage MULCH of his bedroom, among the guitar magazines, discarded shirts and socks..." (From Saturday, by I an McEwan, 2005, Anchor Books, NY, p.30).
- Jeff Lowenfels will be speaking on compost and the soil food web at the Northwest Flower and Garden Show in Seattle on February 17 & 18. Jim Fox (previous Alaskan gardener) will be speaking February 14.



A snowflake is one of God's most fragile creations, but look what they can do when they stick together! ~Author Unknown

Wherever you go, no matter what the weather, always bring your own sunshine. ~Anthony J. D'Angelo, *The College Blue Book*



2007 Alaska State Master Gardener Conference

March 16 & 17, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge

Conference fee: \$100 Friday Banquet: \$30

Speakers:

Eva Shaw

Les Brake

Tracy DiSabato-Australia Linda Toomey Michele Hebert Bob Bors Julie Riley Grant Matheke Pat Holloway

Registration

Name:		1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	
Address:			
City:	_State:		
Day Phone:	N	light Phone:	

Preregistration Fee: \$100.00 Friday Banquet: \$30.00

Registration Fee received after March 1, 2007: \$125.00

Please enclose check or money order with registration to: Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley, P.O. Box 72248, Fairbanks, AK 99707 by March 1, 2007. Receipts will not be mailed. Your receipt and conference materials will be available at registration.

Registration will be available on site on Friday, March 16. Conference will open for registration at 8:00 a.m. on Friday and begin at 8:00 a.m. Saturday and close at 5:00 p.m. each day. The banquet will begin at 6:30 p.m., Friday in the Jade Room.

All sessions will be in the Edgewater Room. There will be a vendors market upstairs in the Copper Room both days and during the banquet. Snacks and lunches both days are included in conference fee.

For further information contact: Virginia @ vld@acsalaska.net or (907) 451-8478.





TREErific Q & A Written by a couple of TREErific members for AMGA

Q: I love snow but am concerned that the deicing salts I am using are harmful to the trees and shrubs on my property, is that true? From: Patty L.

A: With all the snow we have been getting lately, and more in the forecast, trying to find a place to store all of it is becoming challenging. This time of year it's important to think about our trees and landscaping especially if you have been using a deicer to keep your walkways and driveways clear. The most commonly used deicers contain sodium chloride, the same thing as table salt, to melt the snow and ice. Salt can be harmful to plants and trees as it accumulates in the soil. It can lead to reduced vigor, later leaf out, dieback or stunted growth, moisture stress, and it can even affect the availability and uptake of soil nutrients. Therefore it is important to keep snow containing the salt away from your arboreal friends, especially the salt intolerant ones. Also, as the snow melts and begins to pond up, vehicles that drive through these puddles create a harmful mist of salt and water that can drift onto nearby plants and trees. Consider eliminating the use of these deicers for the sake of our plants, trees and groundwater. If that isn't an option, try to reduce your use by replacing it with sand, or a combination of sand and deicer. Another method is to spread the deicer before the snow event, that way it's already in place and can form an ice and snow fighting solution as the snow begins to fly. There are also different kinds of deicers available such as Calcium Chloride, Magnesium Chloride, Calcium Magnesium Acetate and Potassium Acetate, and each has their own advantages and disadvantages. Whatever you choose to do, be careful out there while enjoying your winter activities, and think happy thoughts of spring!

For more information on caring for our trees & shrubs, join Anchorage TREErific on Wednesday, January 24 at Russian Jack Chalet where Stephen Nickel, a Certified Arborist with the Alaska Community Forestry Program will be talking about how to select a high quality tree, what to look for and avoid. We are a nonprofit group and welcome new members. If you want to know more or be included in community projects we are involved in, contact us at TREErificAnchorage@yahoo.com.

Gardening Calendar

Thursday, January 11

Anchorage Garden Club meeting presentation on "Beneficial Insects" by the Cooperative Extension Service, Pioneer School House, 3rd & Eagle. 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan 11

Preliminary public hearing on Delaney Park Strip Master Plan at the MOA Park Commission meeting. The final public hearing before the Park Commission is February 8 and then the plan goes before the Planning & Zoning Commission in March/April.

Monday, January 15

AMGA monthly meeting: "Seasons in the Nevaldine Garden" - Presentation by Annie Nevaldine. 7 p.m., Cooperative Extension Service, 2221 E. Northern Lights, Room 137 - Contact 786-6300

Mondays, January 22- Feb 19

Leaves in Our Lives & FUNGI taught by Dr. Roseann Leiner, Horticulture Specialist, 12:00 noon – 2 p.m. Extension conference room #130, \$8 for non-credit. Preregistration required. The course can also be taken for credit.

Wednesday - Thursday, January 23 & 24

Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conference, Lake Lucille Inn, Wasilla, \$90. [For more info., call CES: 786-6300]

Monday, February 19

AMGA monthly meeting: TO BE ANNOUNCED

Refreshments: POTLUCK

2007 Calendar Items

AMGA@gci.net to be posted in the AMGA newsletter.

Newsletter Articles for February

The editor will be out of town from January 13th until February 6th. Please send articles you want published by the first of February so the newsletter can be sent out ASAP when she returns. Thanks!



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



"Backyard Soldiers" in Dana Klinkhart's Winter Garden

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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

Alaska Master Gardeners Association Renewal Form 2007

It's time to renew your membership in AMGA. The information listed below is the information that you have provided from previous membership renewals. Please review and correct the data that is no longer accurate. Return this form with your payment of \$20 to renew your membership in AMGA for 2007. This form must be received by **January 31**, 2007 in order to have your name included in the directory and to have your newsletter and email bulletin sent to you in a timely fashion.

Current Information (Please print changes)						
«FIRST» «LAST»						
«ADDRESS»						
«CITY» «STATE» «ZIP»						
«PRIMARY PHONE»						
«Email»						
«Year of MG Course or Non-Voting Membership»						
Return your payment and this completed form to:						
Alaska Master Gardeners Association (AMGA) Anchorage Chapter P.O. Box 221403 Anchorage AK 99522-1403						
Your program and tour ideas for the Master Gardener Program Committee:						
«FIRST» «LAST»						
Program/tour suggestion:						
Name and contact information of suggested resource:						