



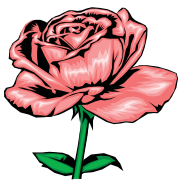
ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER June 2008



From the President Beth Schlabaugh

Feeding, fertilizing, spraying, staking, watering and weeding, it's a vicious cycle! With two busy toddlers I just don't have time. I consider my gardens "Extreme Alaska Gardens" if a plant needs to be fussed over it either dies out or doesn't get asked back to the party. While I do have a passion for buying hot new plants, I've begun to leave the bulk of the garden to a few great "work-horse" plants, the real backbones of my garden.

The following are a few of the plants have taken all of the abuse that I've given them year after year. They always shine. I know that I'm not the only person with limited time for their gardens; if you don't already have these plants in your garden maybe after reading my notes you'll give one of these a try.



Roses- Not as fussy as most folks think, the Rugosa hybrids are basically fool proof, the richly scented Moje Hammerberg and Blanc Double de Coubert are garden favorites.

Peony- A great plant in my yard, I know that many MG's grow these and have much more experience and knowledge of them. I have some beautiful Japanese anemone hybrids, but my old fashion Sarah Burnhart blooms and blooms!



Crocus- The harbingers of spring in bright happy colors, mine are a rich royal purple. They naturalize politely and even winter hungry moose leave them alone.

Lily of the Valley- In the shade or in the sun, I love this plant and have three cultivars. Glossy green leaves and a heavenly scent when in bloom are a bonus. A pretty ground cover under my roses, a great naturalizer, plant it where you don't mind more.



Lilies- So many shapes, and colors and sizes. They are perfect for nearly every area of the garden, many are lightly fragrant an added benefit

Bee Balm- Big and Beautiful, a colorful addition in the fall garden, the bees love it, it grows quickly and spreads politely.

Dianthus- Considered an annual by most, this little flower is a carefree wonder in my border, it will die out in patches every 3-5 years or so, but well worth the money for an "annual", every bit as lovely as its true perennial cousins.

Yarrow- Drought tolerant, does well in poor soils, comes in a range of colors, and is a great "fill in plant" especially with like colored lilies. Need I say more?



Johnny Jump-ups - A nuisance plant for many, mine escaped from a house warming pot several years ago, now they reseed between my pavers and look charming every year. I don't have to do anything and they are pest free, a great deal!

AMGA Meeting: Getting a feel for your soil May 19, 2008 By Jane Baldwin

Soil is what grows your garden and dirt is what's under your bed. . . hmm. Jeff Smeenk's (UAF Extension Horticulture Specialist, Palmer State Office) program presented MGs with a lot of information and much to think about while getting in touch with our garden dirt...er, make that soil. And MGs who brought in soil samples were able to do some hands-on soil testing at the meeting.

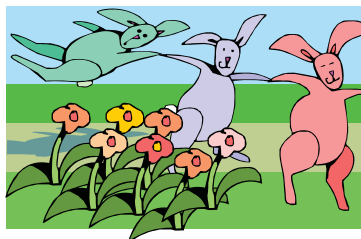
Soil texture, pH, nutrient content and the organisms living in the soil to process and make the nutrients available to your plants - all will make your garden grow. Sounds simple, aye? The texture of your soil (the little particles of sand, silt and clay) is but one aspect of what makes your garden grow. Know your soil's pH and the N-P-K content. (O.K. MGs, dredge it up out of the recesses: nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium content). Accurate soil testing will give you the soil N-P-K ratios - and the pH.

Jeff shared results of soil testing with a number of testing products commercially available. Results for pH were generally very broad categories, indicating little more than alkaline, acidic or neutral readings with little refinement on the number range. Similarly, results for the N-P-K readings were not very helpful, for the most part providing only very general indications. Results were much the same for the relatively inexpensive "meter" type testing devices available. Confidence in test results would seem to increase with the increasing cost of testing product.

Interesting to note that when purchasing garden soil locally, you could ideally expect to get a basic one-third ratio of peat, sand, loam, but that the pH, N-P-K, and texture can vary from cubic yard to cubic yard because the sources for the "ingredients" may vary from mix to mix depending upon where (location) the material comes from. Material in the Anchorage bowl comes from various sites as they are being developed. Indigenous soil could be very different in Muldoon or Turnagain or the Hillside or the Valley. Ingredients from multiple locations might also be used in a particular mix. Best bet is to have the soil tested once it's delivered and before it's dispersed into your garden beds. UAF extension provides an N-P-K soil test for about \$40.00.

Don't turn up your nose if your garden soil isn't the "right color". The color of good garden soil can vary depending upon its make up. Is it sandy loam or is it silty loam or is it a silty-sandy loam, and how much clay does it contain and where did it come from? And of course, always remember the benefits of increasing the amount of composted material in garden soil.

MG Summer Field Trips



You asked for more field trips and do we have field trips in the month of June!

Reminders for visiting gardens: 7- 8:30 p.m.; courteous neighborhood parking and no dogs please.

June 9th:

Tryck Nursery
3625 Rabbit Creek Road

Directions from southbound New Seward Highway: Take DeArmoun Road exit; turn right & drive short distance to Old Seward Hwy. Turn left and continue on Rabbit Creek Rd about 1/3 mile to Tryck Nursery sign; parking is limited in driveway; use care parking along the side of the road.

June 16th:

(1) *Lasagna Gardening*
Amy Olmstead (MG)
6946 Apollo Drive
333-3394

Directions from E. Tudor Rd: Left on Patterson (.2 mi); left on Madelynne (.2 mi); right on Apollo (.3 mi)

(2) *Perennials, succulents, garden art*
Mary Nan Cunningham
1735 Dolina Circle

Directions from East High School (Northern Lights & Bragaw) North on Bragaw (.3 mi); right on Reka Dr. (.3 mi); left on Dolina Cir.; house is on the corner of Reka & Dolina.

June 23rd

Lilacs and perennials
Sharon Davies (MG)
1510 P Street
277-5547

There are several access points to the Inlet View area, at 15th, 13th & 12th, with Inlet View school grounds, one-way and non-connecting streets.

From 12th & L Streets:
Go West on 12th Ave, left on N Street; right on W. 15th Ave; left on P Street.



**AMGA 2008 Conference
In The Zone
Success!**

The 2008 conference was a great success. We would like to thank the guest speakers, all of the volunteers, the vendors and all the door prize donors. Your contributions to the conference helped to make it a successful experience for everyone.

Special thanks go out to all the wonderful speakers:

- Larry Hodgson
- Ciscoe Morris
- Sara Williams
- Dana Klinkhart
- Sue Lincoln
- Julie Riley
- Jeff Smeenk
- Alex Davis
- Dr. Steve Brown
- Rosemary Kimball
- Ed and Collette Marshall
- Carol Norquist
- Jamie Rodriguez

Special thanks to Patrick Ryan for being such an entertaining Emcee!

Extra special thanks to Julie Riley for 'pinch hitting' for the speakers that were unable to attend at the last minute.

And special thanks to Amelia and John Walsh, Susan and Don Brusehaber and Steve Gray and Mary Susan Goocey with the Mann Leiser Memorial Greenhouse for providing garden tours on Mother's Day.

Everyone contributed a lot of time and effort to make this conference one of the best we've ever had. We hope to continue bringing great speakers to Anchorage and holding outstanding conferences in the future.



Ciscoe Morris with Nickle LaFleur and her glass (mosaic) slipper
Photo by Fran Durner



Patrick Ryan's "Elvis" entertained Conference attendees
Photo by Fran Durner



Mel Monsen swaps "bee" stories with Ed Marshall during lunch
Photo by Fran Durner



Larry Hodgson seated with Linda Klinkhart and Amelia Walsh
Photo by Fran Durner



Larry Hodgson, Julie Riley and Sara Williams confer at the podium
Photo by Jane Baldwin

Anchorage Woodlot Update

Opened Friday May 30th

Hours: 9am to 7pm daily

Location: We are now at the corner of C Street and 100th Avenue, just south of Dimond Blvd.

The biggest change to the woodlot that you will see is that there is now a charge: \$8.00 per pickup load or \$6.00 per yard

The Anchorage Woodlot has operated for the past several years under funding provided by a federal appropriation (or earmark); however, due to recent budget constraints and increased focus on earmarks in Alaska and elsewhere, the District is implementing a self-support approach, in an attempt to continue woodlot service to the community.

The ASWCD will charge a minimal fee to cover operational expenses such as employees and material processing. We hope to keep charges to a minimum, and, should future funding become available, we'll try to reduce or eliminate residential charges.

Because the Municipality and especially MOA Street Maintenance are allowing us to use this site we do not have to pass on the cost of land to the users, a substantial savings. To further keep costs to the current minimum we're charging, please be as tidy as possible - more mess means higher operational costs that will have to be passed on to you. Together we can operate a self-sustaining, on-going, and valuable option in our community for both wildfire mitigation and for biomass utilization.

All incoming material to this site is processed into material suitable to be used as landscape mulch, on trails, in soil erosion projects and construction projects, within equestrian and livestock areas, or for addition to your compost piles. All material is provided FREE to the Community, so be sure to come back before the end of the season to pick up your brush in a different, more useful form.

The community is also welcome to pick up any logs for use as firewood or other creative uses people have found, such as making wooden bowls or chairs and benches. The ASWCD also has passed ASTM testing to provide playground fiber.

For questions or more information, please contact the District at 907.677.SOIL (7645).

Ryan Stencil
Operations Manager
Anchorage Soil & Water Conservation District
E-Mail: aswcd@aswcd.org

"Zip Harvest" Seeking Garden Writers

Colin Stanley Arno writes:

I have become involved with a project sponsored by Accusoft (www.accusoft.com) called ZipHarvest (www.zipharvest.com). We are seeking folks who want to contribute articles pertaining to gardening and sustainable living. The site will feature articles, forums, blogs, with both a gardening section and a cooking section. It is our aim to attract Cooks, Master Chefs, Avid Gardeners,

Master Gardeners etc. to the site.

Contributors can be from any state. Any submitted content will be checked before being posted. For non profit organizations, we will carry features, possibly regular contributors; the blogs and forums will be open to all but featured articles can be added to and updated throughout the season. This venture is starting with a focus around the vegetable Garden and the desire to get people to grow. It will expand to all aspects of the garden, landscape including tree care, environmental issues, etc. We can take photos, audio, video clips also.

This project is being done as a way for us to use the internet to initiate change one person at a time. "Grow On" (Please forward this to folks who might be interested in joining our efforts)

Colin Stanley Arno, (Horticulturist).
carno@zipharvest.com

Ohio MGs Honored

Marge Olson submitted the following announcement she received from Ohio state University.

Extension Master Gardener volunteers are serious about horticulture -- taking their passion for plants and the environment and passing it on to those they touch through education and community activities. Last year, volunteers committed more than 100,000 hours to community services, impacting more than a quarter of a million residents.

In honor of their hard work and dedication, Ohio Governor Ted Strickland has declared May 18-24, 2008 as Master Gardener Volunteer Program Week. The proclamation recognizes OSU Extension's efforts in promoting the Master Gardener volunteer program and recognizes the leadership and educational development the program affords to individuals interested in gardening.

"We are really excited to be celebrating the successes of the Master Gardener volunteer programs throughout Ohio's counties," said Pam Bennett, OSU Extension State Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator.

The volunteers participate in a variety of activities, including conducting educational programs for consumers on best gardening practices; developing demonstration gardens highlighting best management practices; conducting research on plant varieties recommended for Ohio; working with neighbors in a community garden setting; teaching people how to plant, maintain and harvest a vegetable garden in the city; and continuing to provide outreach for OSU Extension.

"The grassroots efforts taking place in the counties are deserving of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program Week recognition. Volunteers are quietly making a difference in their communities focusing on a variety of quality of life issues," said Bennett. "Volunteers often do their projects with little or no funding; therefore, partnerships are a large component of each program in each county."



South Central Master Gardener News

By Rosemary Kimball

I think Master Gardener Conferences just get better and better! I do, however, find that listening to speakers from cold climates cost me money as I want to try to kill some of the things they talk about. The best speaker for that was Bob Bors at the Fairbanks conference last year and I've just ordered two more Hascaps and two more autumn olives (oddball fruits). I'd hate to have them "stored" over the summer at One Green World in Oregon. Now if the weather at the end of May would get above the mid to high 20s I could plant them out.

May is a raucous bird month. The varied thrushes are the first to come and call from the top of somewhere. Our neighbor used to go in to answer the phone when they called, so they have been named the telephone bird in the hood. Then came the robins shouting "my territory", also from the top of the trees. Juncos and white crowned sparrows came quietly to the feeder. We even had a pair of--I hope nesting-- pine siskins. We haven't seen a flock of them in a long time. The nut-hatches have paired up and must be nesting as we



don't hear them calling from the woods. They do show up at the feeder and haul sunflower seeds away rapidly. The new jay family will now eat from my husband's hand and this year's fledgling showed up the other day.

And then there are the ducks.... My neighbor, MG Mark White, called and said he'd bought me six ducks: three Cayuga and three Khaki Campbells. It was a harried day when he called and I really wasn't happy...until I went over the next day to feed his birds and the ducks were so CUTE that all was forgiven. They are pigs with webbed feet when it comes to feeding. They moved from his house to our house and can go out as a group--always as a group--into the garden for the moment. I also have three banties in the coop and it is really funny to see the brat banty hen herd the ducks around. The banties feed first and then the ducks start darting in to get a mouthful. I went to the feed store to get the flock some grit and there were three large Pekin ducklings (buy two, get one free) that looked like they needed to take a car ride home with me. You know where that went!

Mark and I did our annual Valley Stomp with MGs Carol Bruni and Kathy Wartinbee in tow. We

outdid ourselves and went to Alaska Mill and Feed, traditionally our first stop, and 11!! nurseries in Palmer and Wasilla. We left my house at 7 AM and got back just past midnight. Mark had bins that his lilies had come in and everyone had a bin and when the bin was full it was stacked and we had extra floor room for more. The mantra, when I braked or turned a corner was: "Don't shift the load". We ended up at Florene and Doug Carney's for a private tour of their gardens. Leaving there, we stopped at the Double Musky for appetizers and drove home. There were a few of the nurseries that we won't bother with next year but one, Gray Owl in Palmer, will become a permanent stop. If you haven't been there, make a special effort to go. (Besides they had a mature Cayuga drake in with their goats.) Lunch at the Colony Kitchen is good too.



The next week brought new MG Fran Durner to the peninsula and with Kathy Wartinbee, we toured our six local nurseries. There were three I'd not been to before and will certainly go back to next year.

Right now, my acquisitive nature is fully satisfied. We stopped by MG Margaret Simon's garden and it looked nice even though her lilies, hops and peonies were only a promise. We also went down to the Homer Garden Club's meeting where Kris Mulholland from Anchorage presented a program on how and what clematis will grow here. That was worth the trip even with gas at \$4.35 a gallon.



Use Grass Clippings as Mulch

Julie Riley, Extension Horticulture Agent

Grass clippings make the perfect mulch for annual and perennial flower beds. They break down over the season or can easily be incorporated into the soil the following spring without having to worry about creating a nitrogen deficiency. Just make sure you haven't used a weed 'n' feed type product on your lawn. These materials contain an herbicide that can't tell a petunia from a dandelion.

You'll only need an inch of clippings, but to prevent weed seeds from sprouting, make sure you have a solid cover. Use more than an inch and you'll likely get an odor, especially if you don't dry the clippings first. Drying clippings is too much work. Better to start a compost pile with any excess.



Bird Chatter

No Bird Chatter this month....

MG Volunteer Opportunities

Nature Conservancy native landscape project.

This small garden at their L Street office is in need of adopting. When I explained that Master Gardeners don't weed & water for their 40 hours, Shelley Morgan (276-3133 ext 115) assured me this project could be much more. They are looking for someone who can label the plants. They have a map. You would also work with Nature Conservancy staffers to determine if some natives in the garden should be weeded out, i.e. yarrow and which new plants should be incorporated into the plan. If gardening with native plants appeals to you, please give me a call so we can figure out how to make this project a go, 230-7339 cell.

They would also like to find someone who can design and implement a drip irrigation system for the beds. To view the project go to the Nature Conservancy at 715 L Street.

Dragonfly Garden revitalization.

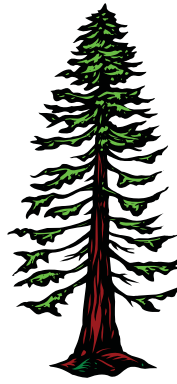
A couple of years ago a group of Girl Scouts planted a garden to attract dragonflies at Balto Seppela Park in Turnagain (off Wisconsin Ave.) The Natural Resources Conservation Service helped them to select plants for wet areas. The small garden is in need of revitalization. Please contact me, if you'd like to check out this project.

Alaska Botanical Garden Fair.

Put Saturday and Sunday, June 21 & 22 on your calendar. Master Gardeners will be staffing a booth with IPM staff. Shifts are Sat, June 21--11-1:30, 1:30-4, 4-6 and on Sun, June 22--11-1, 1-3, 3-5 with take down. Someone is also needed to help IPM staff take the materials over to ABG on Friday afternoon. If you can help, please contact Chloe Renshaw at renshawcm@yahoo.com or 272-2878.

ABG Interpretive Signs

The Alaska Botanical Garden is still looking for someone to design 3 interpretive signs for potatoes, calendula and kitchen gardens. It should be easy to find information. The trouble will be winnowing it down for the signs. They will be placed at the entrance garden. I can give you some leads and Beth Schlaubaugh has ideas too. Please let me know if you are interested.



Anchorage TREErific
Presents:

UAA Tree Tour

Wednesday, June 25
5:30 to 7:00 PM

Come learn about the many interesting trees and shrubs that are growing on campus and maybe get some ideas for your home landscape. You might be surprised at the variety of options we have available to us here in south-central Alaska! The tree tour will be lead by UAA Landscaping Horticulture Manager and certified arborist Pat Leary. Meeting location to be determined.

For questions, email:
www.TREErificAnchorage@yahoo.com
or call Nancy Beardsley at 343-4288.

GARDENING QUICK TIP From Beth Schlaubaugh

I'm always on the look out for "quick tips" and creative new ways to utilize tools in the garden. I know that many of you reuse plastic take out containers as seed starting trays. I'd like to share with you another use that I've found for those containers.

We have all tried different methods to fill the bottom of large planters with materials other than soil as soil makes the pots too heavy to move. I've found that if you reuse the divided plastic trays that fruit and veggies come in and then "drop" these trays into the pots you get a great lightweight display. The large circular trays fit nicely into 11"-13" diameter pots. A more rustic feel can be achieved by inserting the oblong trays into old rectangular baskets. In high wind areas you may need to add a brick in the bottom of the pot for added weight.

Here are the steps to try this at home.

- First you need to puncture or drill weep holes into the bottom of each section. It's easiest to set it bottom down on a piece of scrap wood and drill the holes through.
- Use a standard potting mix; if you are into water crystals, feel free to use them. These trays are like several smaller pots; you need to keep an eye on them because they'll dry out faster.
- Plant a single plant in each section (most trays have 5 or 6). The tray sections are about 4" deep, so shallowly rooted plants like annuals and directly sewn herb do very well in them.
- "Drop" your tray into its pot or basket and enjoy!

I've since use this technique for some of my family members who are a little "gardening challenged". I can pick two or three different plants with coordinating or contrasting colors and texture, the trays are symmetrical so it is easy for them to assemble. I have found that this is a quick easy way to have a nice colorful "planned" arrangement in a container.

Garden Event Calendar

June 5, Thursday

Anchorage Garden Club meeting, 7:00 pm, "Tips for Entering a Flower Show", Pioneer Schoolhouse, 437 E 3rd Avenue (3rd & Eagle). Contact AGC hotline, 566-0539 or <http://communitynews.adn.com/agclub>.

June 9 through July 30, Mondays, Tuesdays or Wednesdays

Junior Master Gardener summer program for kids ages 7 to 11, 9 am-12 pm or 1 pm-4 pm at the Alaska Botanical Garden, instructor Pat Ryan. Cost: \$125, call 770-3692 for registration information.

June 12, Thursday

Wildflower Garden Club meeting, 10 am, Contact Liz Rockwell 277-7150.

June 16, Monday

Anchorage Master Gardener Association meeting, 7:00 pm, field trips to 1) Amy Olmstead's at 6946 Apollo Drive to see "Lasagna Gardening", and 2) Mary Nan Cunningham's at 1736 Dolina Circle to see "Perennials, Succulents, Garden Art". Contact 786-6300.

June 19, Thursday

Alaska Botanical Garden: Midsummer Gala in the Garden, 5:30 pm-8:30 pm. Includes children's activities, reservations required. Tickets \$50/each, \$100/family, early ticket purchase encouraged, 770-3692.

June 19-25

National Insect Week

June 21-22, Saturday and Sunday

Anchorage Botanical Garden's 9th Annual Garden Fair, 10:00 am -6:00 pm, Saturday and 10:00 am-4:00 pm on Sunday. Special guest speaker, Brent Heath, of Brent & Becky's Bulbs, sellers of popular and uncommon bulbs. For more information, 770-3692.

June 23, Monday

Anchorage Master Gardener Association meeting, 7:00 pm, field trip to Sharon Davis's garden to see "Lilacs and Perennials" at 1510 P Street, contact 786-6300.

June 24-27, Tuesday - Friday

Floral Design Workshop, 10 am-1 pm, taught by Sharon Hoffbeck at the UAF Cooperative Extension Service (CES) in Anchorage, suite 130. Designed for the beginner; students will create a floral display to take home each day. Cost \$110, pre-registration required. Contact CES, 786-6300, fn dew@uaf.edu.

June 26 through August 14, Thursdays

Alaska Botanical Garden Secret Garden Tours, eight week series, choose either 4:00 pm-5:30 pm or 5:30 pm-7:00 pm. Eight plus secret gardens include a natural oasis, urban wildlife habitat, a relaxing retreat, cabin and woodland gardens and more. Must be an ABG member. Cost: \$120, tickets are limited, early registration encouraged, 770-3692.

June 28-29, Saturday and Sunday

Alaska Botanical Gardens Parade of Ponds, 11:00 am-5:00 pm, come visit backyard water features and ponds. Cost: \$15, contact ABG 770-3692.

July 10, Thursday

Wildflower Garden Club Fieldtrip: Tour of Independence Mine and Surrounding Area. Verna Pratt will be the field guide. Participants should meet at 9:00am at the Fred Meyer South side parking lot on Muldoon Road and car-pool from there. Dress for the weather and be sure to bring a camera, notebook, and a sack lunch. Be prepared to do some hiking! Contact 277-7150.

July 11, Friday

Lighthouse Garden Tea, Theme: Dragons Fly, 3:00 pm-7:00 pm. Beautiful gardens, a pond, views of Eagle River, food, wine, music. A benefit for Alaska Botanical Gardens. Cost: \$30, reservations required, 770-3692.



Master Gardeners Work the AMGA Table at the Sears Mall



Photo by Fran Durner
Master Gardener Lupita Weese helps to set up the MG booth at the Sears Mall Spring Garden Fair on Saturday, April 12, 2008.



Photo by Fran Durner
master Gardener Jeannine Lyerly sorts seed packets given out for free at the Master Gardener table at the Sears Mall Spring Garden Fair on Saturday, April 14, 2008.



Photo by Fran Durner
Master Gardener Martha Jokela, right, helps a customer pick out a gardening book at the Sears Mall MG booth during the Spring Garden Fair on Saturday, April 12, 2008



The Anchorage Chapter of the Alaska Master Gardeners Association welcomes letters, opinions, articles, ideas and inquiries. Contact the editor, Gina Docherty, at:

Mail: 14051 Fejes Road [new mailing address]
Anchorage, AK 99516

Phone: 345-4099

Email: amga@gci.net

AMGA Web Site: www.alaskamastergardeners.org
(The Newsletter will be on-line in living color!)

For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact:
Cooperative Extension Office
2221 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99508
Phone: 786-6300
Fax: 786-6312



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

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