



Anchorage Chapter



Volume 10, Issue 10

# ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER October 2008



## Autumn Color- Why do leaves change color in the fall? Submitted by Beth Schlaubaugh



Who doesn't enjoy the color of an autumn leaf? Did you ever wonder about the changes a deciduous plant goes thru every fall? Why does a maple leaf turn bright red? Where do the purples and bronzes come from? To answer those questions, we need to understand what a leaf is and what it does for a plant.

Leaves produce the food (glucose) for the plant. The plant uses sunlight to convert water, and carbon dioxide gas into glucose through the process of photosynthesis.

The leaves of trees and other plants contain three main groups of pigments: carotenoids including carotene (orange) and xanthophyll (yellow), anthocyanin (red), and the photosynthetic pigment, chlorophyll. As the most abundant pigment, chlorophyll masks the other pigments and gives leaves their green color in spring and summer. In autumn deciduous plants stop photosynthesizing to prepare for winter. The declining intensity of sunlight, increased darkness and cooler temperatures of fall cause the chlorophyll to move out of the leaves and into the branches,

trunk and roots of the plant. The orange and yellow pigments that are always present in the leaves then become visible.

The brilliant reds seen in fall leaves are due to elevated sugar concentrations that become trapped in the leaves. Leaves containing primarily anthocyanins will appear red. Orange leaves contain equal amounts of both anthocyanins and carotenoids, and yellow leaves have carotenoids but little or no anthocyanins. The brown color of leaves seen in oaks is due to the absence of these pigments and the presence of the chemical tannin. Other chemical processes produce brilliant purples and bronzes.

Weeks of cool, bright, sunny days and chilly frost-free nights create the brightest colors. In Germany, a sugar maple turns a dull yellow, while in New England an identical sugar maple will turn a yellow so intense it's almost fluorescent. Though several factors influence this phenomenon, the key is climate. The intensity of leaf color is also dependant upon the acidity of the chemicals in the leaves, and the quantity of trace minerals like iron, magnesium, phosphorus and sodium.

After deciduous leaves turn color, they inevitably drop. To ensure the plant's continued survival and to protect tender leaf tissue from winters freezing temperatures and drying air, the plant seals off its twigs and drops its leaves. During the short days of winter, there is not enough light or water for photosynthesis. The tree rests, and survives on the food it produced during the previous summer.

Photo from Wikipedia



## September 15, 2008 Program Highlights

**Rita Jo Schoulz of Fritz Creek Gardens,  
from Homer, Alaska**  
By Jane Baldwin

Rita Jo is always entertaining and full of good information. Her pictures and talk touched on late season plants, winter prep, and bulbs. As she said, ask ten gardeners a question and you will get ten different answers! No wrong answers, just ten different ways of doing things. AND, she brought along a selection of plants!

To some of her good gardening connections she posed the question "What do you do to ready your gardens for winter?" Some of the answers included: "Moose Protection, Moose Protection, Moose Protection"; wiltproof evergreens; mulch; don't cut down perennials, but let them serve as mulch and winter interest; use empty vegetable gardens to heel in until spring the perennials you didn't get planted.

On late season gardens, Rita Jo had pictures from Fritz Creek Gardens and different places around the world. Many of the plants from other places would do well here - or she suggested plants that could be substituted for the same effect. Some later season plants mentioned included: Joe Pye Weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*); *Filipendula* 'Kahome', a rosy-pink, shorter and bit later blooming *Filipendula*. Monardas mentioned were 'Beauty of Cobham', a shorter plant, to about 15" and Jacob Cline, a taller plant. As late season plants, she recommended *Lysimachia* 'Alexander', a non-invasive form of *Lythrum* (loosestrife), a very nice bronze-leaved plantain (*Plantago*?), several ornamental grasses and the fall foliage of *Viburnum*.



Of interest was Rita Jo's picture from her garden showing a border of a golden grass (didn't catch the name) whose growth hid the ripening foliage of spring muscari bulbs edging the pathway. The photo is from the Fritz Creek Gardens website.

Fritz Creek is now carrying spring bulbs and Rita Jo had some interesting 'factoids' to share: In Holland they grow tulip bulbs mostly in sand. The rule of thumb for planting bulbs is to plant them 2-1/2 times deeper than their width - except tulips need to be planted deeper because they will heave up in the soil as opposed to daffodils whose roots pull them down deeper and deeper. Species tulips will come up year after year and naturalize. Some of the fancier, non-species tulips will bloom for a couple of years and then become smaller and smaller. Voles stay in the top 3-4" of soil, so you should liberally mix in sharp gravel (not pea gravel) in the top couple inches of your soil to keep the voles away from bulbs.

If you haven't been to Fritz Creek Gardens, be sure to plan a trip for next summer - it's worth the trip. Check out their website and keep checking as spring approaches to see what new plants will be found at Fritz Creek in 2009. <http://www.alaskahardy.com/>

P. S. You can also order online and have your order sent by mail or same-day service to Anchorage, Soldotna and Seward through the Homer Stage Line and the Seward Bus Line.

## October AMGA Meeting: Master Gardeners' Gardens of Summer 2008

Bring your 2008 garden photos to share with the group. Images can be in the form of prints or power point. If you have digital photos to show, Julie Riley will put them into a presentation format. You must get them to her by or before October 16. She will be out of the office October 1-10. If you have a laptop to bring, you don't need to worry about sending the photos to Julie. Just bring your laptop to the meeting and they can plug it into the CES LCD projector. We will not have time to open images one by one. If you have any questions about this, contact Julie Riley @ 786-6300.



Photo by Fran Durner  
Master gardener Julie Ginder and Kathy Zins listen in as flower entries are judged during the Anchorage Garden Club annual flower show,

## MGs in the Anchorage Garden Club Flower Show

Master Gardeners are involved with many garden club activities in Anchorage. Camille Williams was up all night staging the Anchorage Garden Club's Flower Show which had the theme this year of 'Under the Big Top'. Martie Black crafted a Ringmaster out of clay, complete with clothes and a cummerbund. Marge Olson was interviewed by Channel 11 for the event. Fran Durner posted pictures on the Anchorage Daily News gardening blog (which you can still see).

Jane Baldwin won a Merit Ribbon (rosette) for her perfect John Cabot roses. Herb Spencer went for the unusual and entered arugula flowers. He states they were so beautiful, he'll grow them again next year (and just might eat a bit of the arugula, too). Julie Riley showed up after the entries had closed with Weigela 'Red Prince' and Elderberry 'Sutherland Gold' and collected the above tidbits when she went back to pick up her vase.



## Pumpkin Fun Facts

Submitted by Beth Schlabaugh

- The name pumpkin originated from "pepon" - the Greek word for "large melon."
- Pumpkins are grown on every continent except Antarctica they have been cultivated in the Americas for 10,000 years.
- Botanically pumpkins are a fruit not a vegetable.
- Pumpkins are members of the vine crops family called cucurbits.
- Pumpkins produce male and female flowers both are edible.
- Pumpkins can cross-fertilize with other cultivars of squash for example-summer squash.
- In 2006 the U.S. pumpkin production was valued at \$101.3 million.
- The average yield of a pumpkin crop is ~ 2000 pumpkins / Acre.
- 90 percent of the pumpkins grown in the U. S. are raised within 90 miles of Peoria, Ill.
- Joe Jutras, Rhode Island, grew the world's largest pumpkin, weighing 1,689 pound on September 29, 2007.
- Alaska largest pumpkin was grown in 2006 by Nikiski grower J.D. Megchelsen. It weighed 1,019 pounds.
- Pumpkins are 90 percent water. One cup of cooked pumpkin contains: 49 cal., 2g protein, 12g carbs, 3g fiber, 3.7g calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc, selenium, niacin, foliate, potassium and vitamins A, C & E.
- One ounce of dry pumpkin seeds provides 7grams of protein, equal to a similar sized serving of meat.
- The largest pumpkin pie ever made measured 12 feet, 4 inches wide and 4 inches deep it weighed over 2,020 pounds. It used 900 pounds of pumpkin, 300 pounds of sugar, 155 dozen eggs and took over 5 hours to bake.
- Using pumpkins as lanterns at Halloween is based on an ancient Celtic custom brought to America by Irish immigrants. The tradition originally started with the carving of turnips. When the Irish immigrated to the U.S., they found pumpkins a plenty and they were much easier to carve for their ancient holiday.



- Colonists sliced off pumpkin tops; removed seeds and filled the insides with milk, spices and honey. This was baked in hot ashes and is the origin of pumpkin pie.
- Pumpkins were once recommended for removing freckles and curing snake bites. The seeds help avoid prostate cancer in men.
- In early colonial times, pumpkins were used as an ingredient for the crust of pies, not the filling.
- Pumpkin has been made into soups, stews, bread, pickles, pies, puddings, ice cream, and even beer or ale!



## Garden Superstitions Submitted by Linda McCarthy

Here are a few garden superstitions...you may believe them or not.

- Homes were decked with holly and mistletoe berries to ward off evil spirits, a pagan belief now firmly a part of the Christian holiday season ritual.
- A braid of garlic keeps vampires away.
- Carry an acorn in your pocket to bring good luck.
- Ivy growing on a house protects its inhabitants from witchcraft and evil.
- If you catch a falling leaf on the first day of autumn you will not catch a cold in the coming winter. (THIS I HAVE to try!)
- Plant rosemary by the doorstep to keep witches away.
- Four leaf clovers bring good luck and they offer protection from magic spells and jesting fairies.
- To dream of a vegetable garden indicates increased prosperity with hard work and patience. (Duh!!) 
- To dream of a flower garden foretells peace, love, and comfort.
- To dream of a weedy garden signals neglect of spiritual needs.



## A Gardener's Worse Fears Submitted by Linda McCarthy

Alliumphobia -	fear of garlic
Anthophobia -	fear of flowers
Apiphobia -	fear of bees
Arachnophobia -	fear of spiders
Batonophobia -	fear of plants
Bufonophobia -	fear of toads
Dendrophobia -	fear of trees
Entomophobia -	fear of insects
Lachanophobia -	fear of vegetables
Melissophobia -	fear of bees
Mottephobia -	fear of moths
Myrmecophobia -	fear of ants
Ornithophobia -	fear of birds
Ranidaphobia -	fear of frogs
Rupophobia -	fear of dirt
Scoleciphobia -	fear of worms
Spheksophobia -	fear of wasps

This information is from Hortus Miscellaneous by Lorene Forkner and Linda Plato, Sasquatch Books, 2007

## MG Photos From Julie Riley

Master Gardeners planted and maintained the ABG entrance beds again this summer. Working hard are Pat Anderson, Judy Jett, Jane Baldwin, Theresa Piech, and ABG Executive Director Julianne McGuinness. Beth Schlaubaugh supervised from the sidelines because of a broken ankle.



The beds were designed as a Kitchen Garden and included vegetables, edible flowers and herbs. ABG Volunteer Coordinator Jean Gilson helps to harvest produce that will be given to the Food Pantry of Alaska.



A wood duck house with a green roof was given away as a door prize at a Master Gardener meeting in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Perhaps the topic of the evening was "landscaping to attract birds" or maybe it was "designing green roofs"?



Photos submitted by Julie Riley

## Central Peninsula Farm Report From Kathy Wartinbe in Soldotna



Let's see ... What did well this year?

Everything was late but the slugs. The things that did the best were the slugs. While everything was late, they showed up on time and enjoyed just about everything.

The peas didn't start blooming until late August and the pods were slow to fill out. Then along came mom moose and baby. Mom's nose couldn't reach through the fence to get the peas but baby's did. Baby got most of the pea vines pulled through the fence. That's ok with me. I wasn't going to be able to use them. They might as well have them especially baby. Winter can be very tough on them.



The cabbage did well. Mom moose liked the OS cross. She's learned how to flip off the rings around the cabbages. The rings that were around the cabbages are now around the roses. So far the rings around the roses have stayed.

The carrots have been smaller. I haven't dug the beets but am hoping for something other than red root hairs.

The Brussels plants are shorter than last year but some of the sprouts are fairly large.

The zucchini plants were a bust, even those that were protected. But the good news is mom and baby moose don't care for zucchini.

We have dug a few potatoes and they were smaller than usual but there are some there. Pulling the potatoes and the carrots are a job for tomorrow if it's sunny. The flowers were slow too.

Dinner tonight was a small bit of red salmon, a small bit of halibut, coleslaw, and a tomato tart. The tart tasted very good. I thought I'd share the recipe with you, so here it is:

### **TOMATO TART** From Patti Wood

9" pie crust  
Basil/Garlic Pesto  
One Onion  
4-5 Tomatoes  
Shredded Mozzarella  
Fresh Thyme  
Salt and Pepper  
Parmesano/Asiago Cheese

Set oven for 375°. Roll out pie crust to fit a 9" pie plate. With a pastry brush, dab Pesto lightly on bottom of crust. Slice onion and cover crust. Sprinkle with Mozzarella Cheese. Slice tomatoes  $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick and arrange in a spiral, overlapping as you go until you have covered the top in a pleasing fashion.

Add thyme, salt and pepper. Grate Parmesano/Asiago Cheese and sprinkle over top.

Bake for 30 min.; checking that the crust does not get over brown.



Photo from Wikipedia

### **Lingonberries** by Rosemary Kimball

It's time to pick lingonberries (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*), our answer to the packaged cranberries that will be coming on the market soon. We get lingonberries for free if you don't count frantic white sock bites.

The name comes from the Swedish *lingon*. The *vitis-idaea* means the "grape of Mount Ida" (in Crete, where Jupiter was hidden as a baby.) The plant, a member of the heath family, is unusual for up here in that it is green all year. Lingonberries are a cousin to the traditional cranberry and blueberries. Being circumpolar, it is found all over Alaska in somewhat shaded areas with acidic soil.

If you order Swedish pancakes you will get butter, tinged pink with lingonberries. Fifty years ago, while working in a pancake house, I'd actually give a small scoop of the sauce with the crêpes from a gallon can in the refrigerator. Those days seem to be gone.

And the berries are good for you! Really good. They contain lots of vitamins and minerals, Omega 3 fatty acids in the seeds, and are good to combat urinary infections. They don't spoil because of their high concentration of benzoic acid, a food preservative.

A fast, easy, sauce is to take 1 cup of sugar and 1 cup of water and bring to a boil for 5 minutes. Add 4 cups of lingonberries and once again bring to a boil for 5 minutes. (You will notice the size and shape of the bubbles changing as the sauce nears finishing.) It is wonderful with meats or thinned down over ice cream. Lingonberries make a very good liqueur, but that is another story...



## Bird Chatter

-- Some MGs just feel at home in their gardening garb. Jane Baldwin's son went to take her out for supper and Jane thought she was ready to go until Bill pointed to her knee-pads and shook his head, no.

-- Many thanks to Lupita Weese who has recently resigned from the AMGA Board of Directors.

-- MG Erma MacMillan's fabulous home and garden was featured in the last issue of Alaska Home magazine.

-- In October Julie Riley will be sharing info on the refugee farmers' market project at the national Master Gardener coordinators meeting in D.C. Master Gardeners who helped with this year's project include Cheryl Chapman, Marnie Isaacs, Cheryl Simpson and Susan Lang.

-- And speaking of Washington D.C., the turf on the Delaney Park strip looked much better than the turf on the D.C. Mall.

-- Did you know that horseradish flowers are quite fragrant? Thanks to Lori & Troy Zaumseil for pointing this out!

-- Famous quote from yesteryear made by Oliver North's attorney Brendan Sullivan during the Iran-Contra scandal: When pressed to stop objecting on North's behalf during a congressional hearing Sullivan responded, 'Well sir, I'm not a potted plant. I'm here as the lawyer'.

-- Master Gardeners in Fayetteville, Arkansas, collect monarch butterfly caterpillars to sell at the farmers' market for \$5 a piece.

-- The Alaska Botanical Garden (ABG) has hired a new volunteer coordinator. Megan Pfeiffer will replace Jean Gilson who is leaving to go back to school in October. Get those hours into Jean if you volunteered at ABG this summer.

-- Clean-up of the gardens at ABG were halted when Rick Sinnott closed the garden due to bear/moose-kill activity between the ABG fence and Tudor Road.

-- The 2008 MG course starts October 15 and includes a new 3-hour class on organic gardening. The article Michelle Semerad wrote for the AMGA newsletter on the product Messenger a few years ago will be included as a handout.

-- Have you wondered about those two-foot tall purple sticky traps hanging from trees in Anchorage? Emerald ash borers are reported to be quite fond of purple. Let's hope the traps don't attract any. Emerald ash borer has become a big problem in the Midwest where the insect kills more species than just Fraxinus.

-- The Central Peninsula MGs are planning to bring up author and dead-head queen Tracy DiSabato-Aust some time in late April/early May.

-- MG Sharon Hoffbeck's Floral Design Workshop brought rave reviews and a rallying for Sharon to teach another class.

-- Has anyone noticed that root maggots are especially fond of broccoli compared to other members of the cabbage family? If so, please send Julie Riley a note.



-- Mary Shier won a grand champion purple ribbon at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer this fall. Her husband Glen was quite proud although he wasn't quite sure if the ribbon was for tomatoes.



### Sincere Condolences

Pioneer gardener Frank Wince passed away August 8th, 2008. Our deepest sympathies go out to his widow, Lynn Wince, MG.

Frank was raised on a corn and soy farm in Illinois. After 14 years in the military, he came to Alaska. He loved gardening and raised many vegetables, including tomatoes in his greenhouse. Their raspberries won blue ribbons at the Fair. Frank loved dogs, and knew every dog in the neighborhood. He walked his neighbor's dog every day for 15 years because it had arthritis. He loved going to the MG meetings until he became too ill to attend. He was a good man and will be missed.

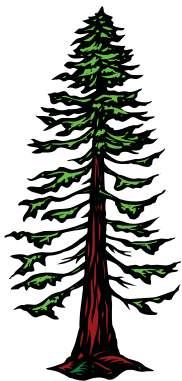
[Photo: Lynn Wince's overwintered Calla lily, by G.Docherty]

### Anchorage's First Municipal Forester Hired

Anchorage TREErific is pleased to inform you that a candidate has been chosen and hired to be Anchorage's first Municipal Forester! The hiring process was just completed at time of this newsletter and we hope to be able to have the Anchorage's new Municipal Forester at our October 22nd meeting at the Sr. Center.

A special thank you goes to Monique Anderson, Parks Superintendent for her diligence in seeing this through. It's been a long time coming! So, yippee, yahoo -- we welcome our new Municipal Forester and we look forward to working with you!

# Garden Event Calendar



## Protecting your Trees and Shrubs from Moose

By Nickel LaFleur, Certified Arborist and Anchorage TREErific member

After getting your tree properly planted (not too deep, not under a utility line, etc.), there is a good chance you will need to fence it in. Generally, moose will not munch on spruce trees but everything else seems to be fair game and needs protection. Various methods of protecting trees have included: attaching bars of Irish Spring

soap on a rope and hanging it on branches; saturating a cotton ball with wolf urine and putting that inside an Easter egg and hanging it up in a tree; stringing moth balls up through the branches; wrapping wads of human hair around various parts of the tree, or spraying it with blood meal (Plantskydd) to name a few. Other methods include: putting a mesh bag over a small tree or wrapping it in burlap; or finally, fencing the tree in.

Unless you have an orchard to protect, fencing in each tree individually will most likely be what you will end up doing. With the size of a moose and a layer of snow covering, a fence height a minimum of 10 feet is recommended. When fencing in the trees, I've found the use of netting or an open wire fence is a lot less intrusive on the landscape than the orange construction fencing or panels of burlap. Chicken wire, stucco wire, plastic fencing, and netting are some of the materials that could be used. I saw someone build a cage out of PVC piping wrapped in netting placed it around the tree in the winter and removed it in the summer. It has been suggested that a cage made out of wood that has panels close together enough where a moose can't slip his head through would also work. This method avoids having to use the netting or wiring.

Finding something sturdy and tall enough to use as fence posts has been a challenge for all of us. My recommendation is to use 10 foot lengths of rebar that can be purchased at most local hardware stores. Then get a tall ladder and a fence post plunger and pound the rebar into the ground far enough from the tree so the branches will not be protruding out for a hungry moose to eat. I use small nylon tie straps to secure the netting to the rebar and cut off the excess tailings to make it look tidier. Also, by starting your wrapping material about waist high and bringing it up and over the rebar poles, it doesn't take away your ability to pile snow around the area this winter.

As far as I know, there is no perfect method of protecting your trees that will work every time so keep trying until you find one or more that works for your situation. Trees, the backbone of our landscape, are worth it!

Do you have any suggestions and/or ideas on protecting your trees and shrubs that you would be willing to share? Email us at [TREErificAnchorage@yahoo.com](mailto:TREErificAnchorage@yahoo.com) and we can compile the suggestions and write an update later.

Anchorage TREErific will be having our next educational meeting on the 22nd of October at the Senior Center located 1300 East 19th. Meetings are from 6 pm to 7-7:30 pm. We take a couple months off to enjoy the holidays and will bring in the New Year at our January 28th, 2009 meeting. Come and join us!

### October 2, Thursday

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

### October 9, Thursday

Wildflower Garden Club meeting, 10:00 am, "Wintering Our Tender Perennials", presented by Amelia Walsh, Master Gardener. Amelia will share her secrets for overwintering dahlias and geraniums and how to protect rock garden plants such as Lewisia, Primula, and Saxifrage. Meets at Central Lutheran Church (15th and Cordova Street), contact Liz Rockwell 277-7150

### October 15, Wednesday

Alaska Rose Society meeting, 7:00 pm, program topic to be announced, meets at UAF Cooperative Extension Service, 2221 E. Northern Lights, room 130. Contact Debbie Hinchey at 278-2814 or see [www.alaskarosesociety.org](http://www.alaskarosesociety.org).

### October 15 - December 5, Wednesdays and Fridays

Anchorage Master Gardener Course, 12:00pm - 3:00pm. Participants receive 40 hours of training and then provide 40 hours of volunteer service. Those placed on the course interest list will receive registration materials in September. Cost: \$100, contact UAF Cooperative Extension Service in Anchorage 786-6300.

### October 20, Monday

Anchorage Master Gardener Association meeting, 7:00 pm, Master Gardeners' Gardens of Summer 2008 [See related article on page 2] Cooperative Extension Service in Anchorage at 2221 E. Northern Lights, room 130, contact 786-6300.

### Wednesday, October 22

Anchorage TREErific meeting, Senior Center at 1300 E 19th; Pizza to arrive at 5:45 pm - meeting at 6 - 7:30 pm. For more info, contact Nancy Beardsley at 343-4288 or email [TREErificAnchorage@yahoo.com](mailto:TREErificAnchorage@yahoo.com)

### November 6, Thursday

Anchorage Garden Club meeting, 7:00 pm, "How not to Kill Yourself in the Garden", Pioneer Schoolhouse, 437 E 3rd Avenue (3rd & Eagle). Contact AGC hotline, 566-0539 or check <http://communitynews.adn.com/agclub>.

### November 13, Thursday

Wildflower Garden Club meeting, 10:00 am, "Wonders of Rhubarb" presented by Julie Riley, Extension Horticulture Agent. There will also be an Alaskan Thanksgiving potluck to follow. Everyone should bring a dish made from something truly Alaskan: fish, wildlife, berries, or vegetables you have grown. Bring recipes to share. Central Lutheran Church (15th and Cordova Street), contact Liz Rockwell 277-7150.



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

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AMGA Web Site: [www.alaskamastergardeners.org](http://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  
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Protecting your Trees and Shrubs from Moose



Extension Agent Julie Riley presented a poster on last year's refugee farmers' market project at her national association meeting in North Carolina and at a USDA meeting in Washington D.C.



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