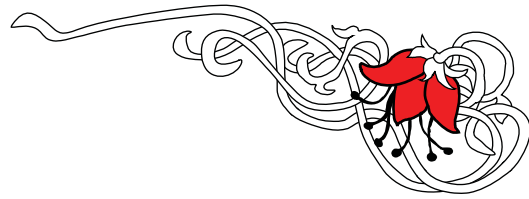


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 10, Issue 9

# ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER September 2008



## Message from the President Beth Schlabaugh

It has been a little over six months since I became the chapter's new president. I thought that I would take some time to review the tasks that the board has worked upon, the ongoing projects and our plans for the near future.

The majority of our activity this past winter and spring was centered upon the Master Gardener Statewide conference that was held in May. Thousands of board member and volunteer hours were spent planning and executing this event. What a success it was! We thank everyone that was involved: board members past and present, volunteers, speakers and attendees.

Throughout the planning of the conference, chapter business had to continue as usual. Board members worked diligently to assemble the upcoming educational and entertaining monthly programs. Monthly door prizes had to be acquired, the newsletter had to be produced, the website updated, volunteers had to be found for all of our chapter's special projects, and our bills had to get paid. Your board members stepped up to the challenge and performed admirably.

During this same time there were special members of our association who also worked tirelessly and added greatly to the association. Dana Klinkhart, Mary Shier, Judy Christianson, and Sandra Harrington have respectively, coordinated the hospitality for the monthly meetings, planned and implemented the planting of the Pioneer Home beds, and maintained the database and produced the annual membership directory. We are in their debt.

Currently, the board is busy reviewing our existing bylaws and board member position descriptions; we are working on acquiring a 501c3 status for the organization and reviewing our financial position.

We have obtained estimates to redesign and update the chapters' existing website, and hope to have the revised site online and operational before the first of the year. Some of the functions of the new site will include a member's only section where volunteer hours can be logged, dues can be paid, the membership directory can be found and special benefits can be accessed. We intend to have a direct link to the national Master Gardener eXtension site, and possibly a real time bulletin board or "chat" room, for interacting with other members.

The above projects will likely keep the board busy through the first of the year. As always the goal of the board is to serve the association and its membership. Please contact any one of us with your concerns. We respect and appreciate your input.

I would like to ask the membership to become actively involved in your association. Do you possess a skill that could be of use to our chapter? We are in particular need of members with the following talents; legal experience, CPA or basic accounting experience, IT skills, database experience, graphic design, editorial, writing or proofreading, event planning, and grant writing. Volunteers are always welcome and we'd love to have your assistance on our projects.

I thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

Respectfully, Beth Schlabaugh

## August Master Gardener Garden Tours By Jane Baldwin

Another month of great garden tours -- it just can't get any better than this - seeing so many gardens this summer with different plants and different styles of gardening - a heartfelt "thank you" to those who so generously opened their gardens to MGs this month.



Above: Carol Ross' Back Yard  
Below: Bear in Outhouse  
Photos by Jane Baldwin



Aug 4 - Carol Ross  
A charming yard, with just enough Alaskan to give visitors to Carol's log-built Big Bear B&B in Mountain View a taste of Alaska: moose antlers, native fireweed and ferns, birch trees and even a miniature outhouse in the backyard with door open and a bear sitting on the throne are integrated into plantings of perennials, vegetables, raspberries, two large strawberry patches, a cherry tree with cherries and a rock waterfall ending in a pond with fish. A path leads one around the corner to a back yard filled to the brim with wandering gravel paths and plantings, native birch trees under-planted with lychnis 'Vesuvius' seemingly naturalized

beneath the trees. Carol uses leaves for garden mulching and very effectively uses foliage texture and color in her gardens. My favorite thing though, had to be Carol's composting operation, hidden behind raspberry bushes beyond the vegetable garden: three old pick-up truck beds, minus axels & wheels, worked just fine and held large piles of rich looking cold composted material - so very old time Alaskan!



Persicaria patch in Sullivan's backyard garden - Photo by Gina Docherty

Aug 11 - Nancy Sullivan  
The upper O'Malley gardens of Nancy Sullivan's have many perennials growing well in the colder upper hillside area: a number of different astilbes, campanula, hostas, columbine, iris, lots of ferns and a number of ground covers in shady areas. Asiatic lilies, hardy geraniums, poppies

and pansies provided bright color spots. A patch of Edelweiss (*Leontopodium alpinum*) in bloom was striking. A fountain was nicely snuggled into a patch of ferns, rue with some blue pansies for color and rustic bird houses on tall poles rimmed the yard.



Driveway Poppies in Amelia Walsh's Garden - Photo by Jane Baldwin



Above - One of Amelia Walsh's Dahlias  
Below - Water Feature in Amelia's Garden  
- Photo by G.Docherty



next year.

Aug 11 - Amelia Walsh  
One look at Amelia's colorful front driveway bed of tall red poppies and bright orange lilies and you just know you're in for a treat! In spite of the cool and unusually late summer, a mid-August visit to Amelia's hillside garden didn't disappoint MGs. She had amazing dahlias, some

wonderful color in plantings like the purple wave petunias highlighted with bright yellow flowers (bidens?). Also of note was a gorgeous flowering astilbe, Maggie Daly and a plant new to me this summer: Betony. Amelia's was a beautiful blue; David Goodgame had Betony in a solid pink, (perhaps *Stachys mac-*

*rantha* aka Big Betony, sometimes listed as *S. grandiflora*, hardy to as low as 30 below, comes in purple, pink, blue and white) Amelia is one creative & EXTREME gardener. They presented a new waterfall feature which was begun and completed within a week of our visit; two new beds constructed and planted within the same week - and preliminary work begun on a new project: a vertical tufa rock garden -- maybe something new for us to look forward to



Chuck Decker's rose-filled carport deck  
- Photo by G.Docherty

Aug 18 - Chuck Decker  
What can one say when you climb the stairs to Chuck Decker's carport decking and find a bazillion potted roses in bloom? It feels like you're in a

different country. Glorious tea roses, grandiflora roses, floribunda roses, miniature roses - red, scarlet, pink, rose, white, orange, yellow, striped, two-tones -- you name it, I'm sure Chuck is growing it. The railing of the deck was lined with pots of blooming miniature roses.



Chuck Decker's Back Yard - Photo by G.Docherty

There were lots of hardy roses in his yard as well, including an Austrian Copper. Chuck winters all his potted roses in his crawl space. My eyes glaze over when I even think about wintering that many pots and when my eyes glaze over I think my hearing and memory also diminish.



Above: Sherry Tomlinson's Garden Arbor  
Below: Tea Party set up for MG's - Photos by Jane Baldwin

Aug 18 -  
Sherry Tomlinson

There is no lawn in Sherry's gardens in the back of her home (a B&B located near the coastal trail). It is totally filled with paths between, through, around and among the plants and seems to peacefully enfold you, shutting out the rest of the



world. There are a myriad of interesting perennials and vines to see including Hops and Virginia creeper, a pond with fish, a vegetable garden and friendly pigeons that fly free but come home to roost in their cage. There is a deck, and a number of nooks

and crannies with seats where one can just sit and enjoy the quiet and green and even two areas where one can be warmed by outdoor fireplaces should the weather be cool. I have a story about the Virginia Creeper vine that Sherry grows. Her vine start came from my Dad who got his start from a friend in 1955. The original plant was one of a small number of trial plants that Baldwin Seed & Feed brought to Anchorage about 1952 from the Pacific Northwest to see if it would survive here. It does - in Sherry's yard and in mine and in a number of other yards around Anchorage.

## Quote, Book Recommendation and Two Plant "Raves"

by Linda McCarthy

"Gardening, reading about gardening, writing about gardening are all one. No one gardens alone." Elizabeth Lawrence

"No One Gardens Alone" is also the name of a biography about Carolina gardener Elizabeth Lawrence (1904-1984) by Emily Herring Wilson...a great read. Even though Lawrence gardened in the south, many of her gardens concepts apply even to Alaska gardens.

### PLANT RAVES

Two new plants I've tried recently are my new "raves." *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Fascination' (Culver's Root) from Alaska Mill and Feed got lots of comments from this year's attendees to the Anchorage Garden Club Garden Tour. These plants are hardy from zone 3-8, grow from 3-4 feet tall and bloom from July to August though some of mine were blooming in late June. They thrive in full sun though I have some also planted in partial sun and they're blooming just as well, require little maintenance, have height, and soft pinkish purple 14" flower spikes...what more could you want?? The plant has a candelabra-like effect when in full bloom with flower spikes on multiple stems.

My other "rave" is *Filipendula purpurea* 'Elegans' (also from AMF) and *Filipendula* 'Vulgaris' (this one came from Coyote Gardens last year). I finally learned how to pronounce the name correctly.....fil-i-PEND-u-la. 'Elegans' is a compact version of this Meadowsweet plant with airy plume flower heads that appear pink. The dark green leaves are attractive even when the plant isn't in bloom. Height up to 28" (though mine are about 36") and spread up to 36". 'Vulgaris' lives up to its nickname "Queen of the Prairie" or "Queen of the Meadow" with stems from 5 -7 feet, large palmate leaves (a branching pattern that spreads like fingers from a hand), and fragrant whitish flowers. Mine got so top heavy with blooms I had to triple stake it. Both are long lived plants that spread but aren't invasive and are good for zones 3-8, sun to part shade.



### Membership Volunteer Opportunity

Sandy Harrington who has worked for the last several years on the membership directory will be stepping down to pursue new opportunities. If you are interested in taking on this project for the organization, please contact Beth @ [alaskadragonfly@hotmail.com](mailto:alaskadragonfly@hotmail.com) for more information.

## HERB/PLANT LORE By Linda McCarthy PART II

(Much of this information is from *The Curious Gardener's Almanac* by Niall Edworthy, 2006, the *Encarta, World English Dictionary*, 1999, and *Hortus Miscellaneus* by Lorene Forkner and Linda Plato, 2007)

The Romans brought nettle seeds to England to help cure ailments resulting from the damp, cool climate. Soldiers used to whip themselves with bunches of nettles to warm up their bodies and improve circulation. Nettles have been used to make soups, clothes, fishing lines, rope, bed linen, to strengthen hair, and as window cleaners (mixed with several tablespoons of vinegar). Nettles used to be consumed with wine because it was believed they were an antidote to hemlock or nightshade poisoning. Nettle tea is packed with nutrients and is used for treating minor abrasions on the skin and is said to relieve rheumatism. Nettles (along with comfrey, lemon grass, chickweed, lavender, sage, rose hip, and red clover) are good for treating burns, minor cuts, rashes or bee stings because they contain histamine and acetylcholine. Dry nettle leaves, crumble then into a powder, add some water, and apply to the affected area. Nettles also help the garden. They are rich in nitrogen and store iron, silica, protein, and phosphate. They can be used as a fertilizer when mixed with water and allowed to "cure" for several weeks. This concoction should be diluted about 10 parts to 1 and used on the roots of plants.

Oatmeal wrapped in a muslin bag, dipped in warm water, makes a good facial or body scrub for oily skin.

Menthol in peppermint is used to soothe the digestive tract and stimulate bile which is essential to good digestion. Peppermint tea may settle your stomach after a large meal.

Rosemary leaves infused in boiling water and cooled will add luster to darker hair. Drunk, the infusion, will clear a head cold. Rosemary is added to soups, apple jelly, roasting chicken, and other dishes. It is also used for muscle aches and neuralgia and to relieve stress.

Saffron, the world's most expensive spice, comes from the crocus plant and was introduced into Europe from Asia Minor. 4,000 flowers are needed to make one ounce of the spice. Saffron is used in cooking to add color and flavor.

Saint John's Wort is used to treat mild depression and anxiety disorders. In Germany it's supposed to be prescribed more frequently than antidepressants. In the 1500s it was used to increase urine, protect against bladder stones, heal burns, ulcers, and wounds.

The roots and leaves of the saponaria or soapwort plant have been used as a soap substitute.

Sorrel is high in vitamin C, has a slightly tart, lemony flavor and adds a spicy or savory taste to salads. It's a basic green vegetable when steamed or boiled and is widely used in France in various dishes.

Dragon's wort is another name for tarragon. We have Russian and French tarragon, but the herb has nothing to do with either country. The plant was brought to Spain by the Moors. Tarragon is used in Béarnaise and tartar sauces and other dishes.

Thyme, as well as calendula, and comfrey is used to treat bruises, swelling, pain, muscle aches and neuralgia and is used as an antifungal agent.

Valerian, from the Latin word, *valere*, meaning to be strong or brave, is used to relieve insomnia and nervous tension. Until the 1940s it was used as a tranquilizer and to treat shell shock.

Called the witch's herb, staunchweed, soldier's wort, and bloodwort, yarrow is used for treating bleeding and healing wounds. *Achillea millefolium* (the Latin name) was supposedly used by Achilles to treat the wounds of his soldiers. It's also good as a face wash for oily skin when you mix some dried flowers with boiling water then let it cool before using. Yarrow is also used for stimulating the body along with parsley, peppermint, and ginger.

Herbs such as basil, tarragon, and chives can be frozen in ice cube trays as soon as possible after picking. Once frozen, transfer the cubes to bags and store in the freezer. Larger-leafed herbs such as mint and parsley can be frozen in bags as they are.

Many herbs have properties that encourage growth in other plants and can protect them from harmful insects, pests, and diseases.

Sage is good grown with cabbages, borage with strawberries, and marigolds (which exude a smell repellent to insects) with many vegetables, especially peas, potatoes, and tomatoes.

"There are no worthless herbs, only the lack of knowledge" Chinese saying

### HAPPY BEDFELLOWS - Plants and Herbs (from *The Curious Gardener's Almanac* by Niall Edworthy, 2006)

These herbs encourage growth or provide protection from insects, pests and diseases when planted with these plants.

Artichoke - parsley  
Asparagus - parsley, basil  
Broccoli - thyme, sage, mint, rosemary, dill  
Cabbage - thyme, sage, mint, rosemary, dill  
Cauliflower - thyme, sage, mint, rosemary, dill  
Cucumber - borage  
Peas - mint  
Potatoes, mint, parsley, lavender  
Squash - fennel  
Tomatoe - parsley

Don't grow fennel by lettuce or tomatoes.  
Zucchini - borage



## South Central Master Gardener News by Rosemary Kimball

It's lots of fun to vote at our precinct in Sterling as the poll workers are gardeners I don't get to see during the year and it's a pretty intense "how-did-your-garden-do?" while registering or leaving.

This was truly the summer that wasn't! There is no one down here that isn't having a fine whine about their veggies. It was cloudy most days and when it did clear, down at the bottom of a 25-foot hill, we got at least two frosts every month. The July 1st frost knocked the potatoes down to ankle high to be followed by the July 28th frost and the two at the end of the first week in August that left our potatoes too short to hill! The zucchini have joined the Squash Protection Program still in the hopes we'll get more than our one 5-inch fruit. The green beans, which have outgrown their row cover, are trying and I can see some of the beans without a magnifying glass. MG Kathy Wartinbee said her peas are just starting to bloom at the end of August. Her potatoes are also small for the summer. No one has zucchini that is happy with life. MG Margaret Simon's count is up to 5 fruits but her plants are eight inches high and a foot across. Kathy's are faring somewhat, but not much, better.

Kathy's future orchard is still in the prepubescent stage so she wasn't looking for fruit and was grateful that the trees were still alive. Everyone here is wondering if they will be any raspberries! My red currants are considering finishing their ripening. I still have 25 pounds of currants in the freezer from last year so I've invited friends in to pick. The sea buckthorn stud muffin really did do his thing so the two girls next to him are going to provide us lots of juice when (if) the fruit ripens. Being from the Russian Far East, they should withstand a good frost without a problem if they have to. The hascap, blue honeysuckle, came through with enough fruit for several pitchers of juice. The wee, new plants are growing well and in a few more years, with three different varieties I should really have a good yield.

For some reason we really haven't had many slugs here, but boy! have the greenhouse aphids made up for that omission. It's pretty bad when you have to hose down the plants with Safer's every time they are watered. Next year is the year of the praying mantis!! And the weeds! They've grown phenomenally but partly because it is so depressing to go down the garden to work on a cool, cloudy day I don't go there. The ducks prefer weeds to the cauliflower that didn't head and the rabbits demand their greenery too.

It was hard to put off MG Kathy Wartinbee's insistence that she provide labor and inspiration for a rock garden I've been talking about building by the back deck and she finally moved me into action. We hauled rocks, sand, crummy soil and she plopped things here and there and insisted that it be made bigger than I'd planned. So it is. I was able to forage amongst the garden weeds and

find my semiaquilegia which had multiplied and divided! The pretty pink Erodium went next to a pretty piece of rose quartz. There was also a mystery allium to bring out of the weeds. It was fun working with someone with ambition and drive but now I want to make my rock garden as pretty as hers.

September is the month of first meetings of this and that and also the Central Peninsula Garden Club. The program for them will be putting the garden and produce to bed for the season.

If the aphids destroyed your basil too, here is Margaret Simon's recipe for parsley pesto which combines well with the little potatoes under those languishing vines:

2 cups firmly packed fresh parsley (I usually grow 'Darki')  
1 tablespoon dried sweet basil  
3/4 cup grated Parmesan  
1/3 cup pine nuts  
3 cloves garlic  
1/2 teaspoon coarse ground black pepper  
1/2 cup good quality olive oil

Process in food processor until desired consistency. (Note: Margaret is a fount of superior recipes!)

An interesting site to visit is the Alberta, Canada, [www.prairiescapes.blogspot.com](http://www.prairiescapes.blogspot.com) Towards the end is a comment about hearing Sara Williams, who spoke at the Master Gardener Conference this May.

Lesson learned this summer: never go in the duck pen barefooted.



### Rosemary's Basic Juice Concentrate Recipe (sampled at the 2008 MG Conference)

Almost fill a Rubbermaid dishpan with rhubarb cut into 4-inch pieces. Use the rest of the space for whatever berries you have on hand: currants of any color, raspberries, service berries, sea buckthorn, strawberries.

In a large pot add 2 quarts of water to the rhubarb/ berry mix and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and let stand overnight. Strain. (I use an old cotton pillowcase, a broom handle and two chairs). To each quart of juice, add 1/2 cup sugar or Splenda. Cap to complete the seal and process in a water bath for 30 minutes.

To use: Dilute the concentrate with 2 to 4 quarts of water. This is an absolutely wonderful thirst quencher on a hot day...and we do have them, but not this year.

late note: I've eliminated the pillowcase and use a big strainer and a big bowl and then my regular strainer and anything that gets through that is beneficial fiber.



## Bird Chatter

(No Bird Chatter this month)

### Across the Bay Garden Discovery from Joyce Palmer

Pleasure for an hour, a bottle of wine;  
pleasure for a year, marriage;  
pleasure for a lifetime, a garden

From "Simple Living", July 2008.

I'm just back from the Across the Bay Tent & Kayak Company near Seldovia at Kasitsna Bay. It's run by Mary Jane & Tony Lustufka from Anchorage. Tony's the main gardener (I encouraged him to become a MG, but he's more interested in doing it on the Big Island, Hawaii, where he winters... pooh). He's got a lovely maze



Mannequin in "Across the Bay Tent & Kayak Co." Summer 2008 - Photo by Joyce Palmer

of herbs, natural plantings, perky perennials and yummy garden greens served up for meals - all watched over by colorful mannequins! Tony says they may even keep the moose away. For information on Across the Bay Tent & Kayak Company, contact 1-907-235-3633 June-Sept and 1-907-345-2571.

### Anchorage Garden Club Flower Show "The Circus is in Town!" Submitted by Fran Durner

Master Gardeners volunteered to help out the Anchorage Garden Club by clerking for judges at the annual Flower Show held at the Alaska Botanical Garden. The cool summer held back a lot of flower entries - there were hardly any dahlias to be seen!

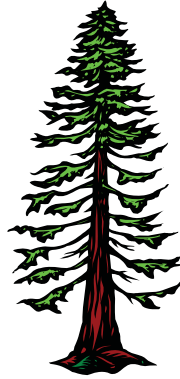
Photo by Fran Durner

Master gardeners Cheryl Simpson and Jan Van Den Top at the Anchorage Garden Club annual flower show held at the Alaska Botanical Garden on Saturday, August 2, 2008.



### Tree Planting Tips - Observations from the Field By ISA certified arborist and Master Gardener, Nickel LaFleur

With so many end-of-the season sales on, now is a good time to buy a tree or two to add to your landscape. In most cases, as long as the ground is not frozen, you can plant a tree. I'd like to offer a few tips to help your trees not only survive, but thrive in our South Central Alaska communities.



Before going to the nursery, decide where you are going to put the tree and what you are looking for the tree to accomplish. Here's where I say: "Right tree, right place." For instance, are you requiring an evergreen to provide shade, a fruiting tree for the yummy smells and fruits, a deciduous tree that produce fall color, or ...?

Do you have ample space for the tree you choose to grow to its full maturity without competing with the overhead electrical lines? Is there access to suitable water to keep the roots moist for its first three years of growth while the tree establishes itself? These are just a few questions you want to have answered in your mind before spending your hard earned dollars at the nursery.

Trees may be purchased in a few different venues: ball and burlap (B&B), bare root, wire cage, or in a container (such as a big black pot). Buying the biggest is not always the best when it comes to trees. Take a look at the size (caliper) of the trunk, the height of the tree and then look at the root ball. The American National Standards Institute recommends minimum root ball standards according to size of caliper and height of the tree. For instance, a field grown deciduous shade tree with a two inch caliper must have a root ball with a minimum of 24 inches diameter if b&b or in a minimum of a 20-gallon pot if containerized.

When planting the tree, make sure not to dig the hole any deeper than the soil on the root ball. If anything, error on the side of having it planted too shallow rather than too deep. Trees should not look like telephone poles when planted but should have a noticeable flare on the bottom. If you cannot find the trunk flare on the tree you choose, excavate away some of the soil around the trunk to find it before digging the hole.

When digging, make the hole more of a saucer shape than a post hole shape. No extra soil amendments need to be added (especially no fertilizer!) other than mixing the soil that is on the root ball with the existing soil in your saucer shaped hole. To help hold in the moisture and keep the lawn mowers and weed whackers away from the trunk, put a couple inch layer of compost around the tree, making sure to keep the compost a few inches away from the trunk. (This is a good time to use that bag of crushed leaves you've been saving) I repeat, do not let the compost cover the trunk. Please pull it back for the root flare to stay exposed. The compost will help retain moisture and keep weed seeds from germinating in the soil. And if you must plant something around the base of a tree (it's recommended that you don't but if you insist, plant only perennials and avoid annuals) keep the mulch away from the base of these plants as well.

# Garden Event Calendar

## September 3, Wednesday

Mushroom Walk with local expert Diane Pleninger, 6:30 pm, meet in the Alaska Botanical Garden nursery, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road. Shop in the Garden open until 7:00 pm. Contact ABG, 770-3692 (administrative offices).

## September 4, Thursday

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

## September 11, Thursday

Wildflower Garden Club Workshop: Making Cards with Pressed Plants. Come learn with instructor Verrna Pratt how to make your own "one of a kind" cards with special pressed flowers and leaves you have collected. Bring your pressed flowers, Elmer's glue, tacky glue, and scissors to the Central Lutheran Church (15th and Cordova Street) at 10am. The club will provide cardstock. Contact Liz Rockwell, 277-7150.

## September 15, Monday

Anchorage Master Gardener Association meeting, 7:00 pm, "Late Summer Gardens & Preparing for Winter" presented by Rita Jo Shoultz, Fritz Creek Gardens. UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Anchorage, 2221 E. Northern Lights, room 130. Contact 786-6300.

## October 2, Thursday

Anchorage Garden Club meeting, 7:00 pm, "Bats", Pioneer Schoolhouse, 437 E 3rd Avenue (3rd & Eagle). Contact AGC hotline, 566-0539

## 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. 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 through 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 plus a mystery presentation by Annie Nevaldine. UAF Cooperative Extension Service in Anchorage at 2221 E. Northern Lights, room 130, contact 786-6300.



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]

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Phone: 345-4099

Email: [amga@gci.net](mailto:amga@gci.net)

AMGA Web Site: [www.alaskamastergardeners.org](http://www.alaskamastergardeners.org)

(The Newsletter will be on-line in living color!)

A good way to see your tree succeed is to have the soil moist before inserting it into the ground. Circle a soaker hose in the planting area and let it run for 24 hours before digging. (It's easier to dig and for the tree roots to gravitate into moist soil). If at all possible, massage the roots and if there are any roots that are encircling, pull them out and make a trench for them to navigate into. It's very important that the roots not be circling when put into the planting hole.

Also, in all cases, when you have the location for the tree established, **remove** the burlap, **remove** the cage and **remove** the twine/string. In Alaska, our soils do not get warm enough for the wire cages to breakdown and it takes years (if at all) for the burlap to break away. Give your tree all the advantages to thrive by removing all the wire and burlap upon planting - period! And unless you live in a windy area, when you plant a tree with an adequate root ball, staking the tree should not be necessary. If you find that it is, (or that your landscape contractor chose to stake the tree) be sure to check it after one growing season to see if it is ready for removal. Oh and be sure not to use any wire to secure it - it's better to use arbor tape or cotton string to secure it.

Keep in mind that the roots of our plants are in the top eighteen inches of soil, all competing for the moisture that helps them to survive. So it's important when you plant your tree (a living legacy) you give it every opportunity to reach maturity by making sure it's not planted too deeply, not going to encroach on overhead power lines at maturity, and has adequate moisture going into its winter dormancy. Once again, no nitrogen based fertilizer should be put in the planting hole, and use mulch a couple feet around the base of the tree to help retain the needed moisture.

For more information on how to plant a tree, go to the International Society of Arboriculture website, email questions to [TREERificAnchorage@yahoo.com](mailto:TREERificAnchorage@yahoo.com) or consult your local certified arborist. And remember the old Chinese Proverb, "The best time to plant a tree ... was twenty years ago, the second best time is today." Have fun creating your living legacy this growing season!



Larch (top cut off after moose injury) buried 3 years ago incorrectly in burlap, cage & twine, with no break down at all of the wrapping materias - Photo courtesy Nickel LaFleur, August 2008

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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Beautiful pink rose seen during the Master Gardener tour of Chuck Decker's Roses in August  
Photo by Gina Docherty

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University of Alaska Cooperative Extension  
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