



Anchorage Chapter



Volume 11, Issue 1

# ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER January 2009



## Message From the President by Beth Schlabaugh

I love the term "Four Season Gardening", yet in Alaska it seems like a misnomer. By my count we really only have two seasons with a brief week to ten days in between each that could vaguely be called spring and fall. Yet every time I pick up a fall/winter garden magazine I read an article about "Four Season" gardening.

The days will soon be getting longer and still as I look out my window and see my garden piled with snow I dream of the spring and summer. I know that many people in Alaska garden to make up for the seemingly endless winter the problem being, I love winter. My family enjoys an abundance of winter activities, the cold temperatures don't bother me, and I don't mind driving in the snow. I also think that the winter landscape is beautiful, yet sometimes the barrenness and solitude make me think that something is missing. It must be the fourth season in my garden.

In the warmer months the color, texture, movement, sound and fragrance of my garden combine to form my own little version of paradise (or paradise in progress). However, I'm having a difficult time envisioning that paradise this winter. Now, don't get me wrong, I've incorporated some attractive plants with multi season interest in my garden. The red twig dogwoods *Cornus stolonifera* stand out nicely against our blue house and the white snow. The burning bush *Euonymus alata* has lovely textured bark, and the different evergreens; spruces, cedars and the singular pine add the architecture to my winter landscape. Still some key element in my garden is absent.

While busy with holiday activities last week I realized what my garden was missing. Birds. I hadn't yet set up my bird feeders. That was the color, the movement, the sound that my garden was lacking. I generally try to have the feeders set up by early November giving the local bruins time to get settled into sleep. This year owing to my hectic schedule, I'd forgotten. After naps the boys and I bundled up and headed outside to set up our feeders and anticipated the welcome return of the feathery little fellows that enliven our winter garden.

We feed our birds many different types of food, we have an average sized corner lot  $\sim\frac{1}{4}$  acre and usually set out 8-10 feeders, generally two each of black sunflower seed, thistle seed, peanuts, suet, and a high quality locally produced "mixed" food. This seems to satisfy most of our winter visitors. We try to place the feeders close to shelter in protective areas so the little birds aren't too frightened to eat in an exposed area.

Frequent visitors to our feeders include Red Breasted Nuthatches, Common Redpolls and Black-capped Chickadees (my personal favorites), the Stellar Jays love the peanuts we set out for them and often create a ruckus fighting each other for a prized peanut. Other birds visit our yard too; the Bohemian Waxwings swoop through the neighborhood several times a winter. Their great numbers denude my rose bushes of hips in no time then move on, later to reappear and deal with my neighbors Mt. Ash and crab apple trees in the same manner. The occasional Hoary Woodpecker also makes an appearance at the suet feeder.

If you don't have plants in your garden that can feed the birds in the winter months, you might try installing an inexpensive feeder. I guarantee the sights and sounds will enliven your wintertime and entertain you for a minimum of fuss. While feeding the birds is not exactly what the authors of the articles on "four season" gardening meant when they discussed extending the gardening season, it certainly helps me enjoy another season in my garden.

## January Meeting - Board Position Elections!

Don't miss our January membership meeting. As always, we'll have an entertaining and informative speaker with refreshment, but we will also be electing members to fill our board positions. Interested in serving the Association? Feel free to contact me at 522-5416 for more information. We always welcome new energy!

## Master Gardener Focus:

### Judy Christianson by Cheryl Chapman



In early December the Master Gardeners of Anchorage got together for cookies, tea, ideas for thwarting moose, and clapping and stamping, whistling and cheers for Judy Christianson, who was shocked into tears by the group's 30-year service award - a vase inscribed with her name, "30 years," a trowel.

Thirty years: Not a bad record for a born garden-hater.

Her family trekked to Alaska from Wisconsin in the 1950s, her mom began to plant, and Judy and her sisters went on the weed-and-water detail.

"I hated gardening when I was growing up," says Judy. "But it was how you got to live up here. When you've got five little girls and you come to Alaska, you need food."

The crops did well, and an Alaska volcano obliged in the 1960s with an eruption that rained down clouds of mineral-rich ash.

"It added wonderful nutrients to the soil," she says. "We have photos of two of my sisters sitting on turnips so big nobody recognized them as turnips."

"For a long time the only flowers in my mom's garden were peonies from my father's family gardens," she says. But Judy felt something was missing. When she and her husband, Mel, married, they rented a little house. There was grass and a single tree, but "mowing the lawn and having one tree wasn't enough for me," she says. "I had to have color. We didn't have a lot of flowers when I was growing up, and I decided I had to have flowers."

In 1969, Mel and Judy began building the South Anchorage house they still call home, and she began growing plants from seeds and setting out wild iris.

"There's something about watching a seed grow," she says. "It's like watching a child fulfill its destiny."

Seeds led to plants, plants to more seeds, and then to more plants, so many that they grew into a thriving business for Mel and Judy -- Christianson Landscaping -- which in 2008 celebrated its 32nd year. Judy was in the very first Master Gardener class, taught in 1978 by Cooperative Extension Agent Wayne Vandre, and was part of the original group that formed the Alaska Master Gardeners Association. She has been a regular on Master Gardener Conference planning committees and served as AMG president for two terms, in 1995 and 1996.

Judy is passionate about colors, textures and forms, and matching them to people's needs, the design end of the operation; Mel is more into Bobcats and heavy augers and things that roar. They designed the landscaping at the Sears Mall and installed it in the worst of Alaska winter; Outside Sears executives wouldn't have it any other way. Despite the bitter weather, only one tree died, a mugo pine, but not from the cold but because someone kept peeing on it.

She designed and for years maintained the landscaping at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church on Huffman Road, "though my knees have made me give up gardening at the church." For 10 years, Judy and Master Gardener Mary Shier have organized the Anchorage Pioneers Home community service project, planning the flower beds at the entrance and on A Street, growing seedlings, transplanting the flowers and helping with garden maintenance and clean-up.

"We love working the beds along the building because the residents will have their windows open and talk with us," Judy says.

Sometimes people admire her work too much. Some years ago when she volunteered to plant the beds at the Equestrian Center in June, she arrived to find 100 red begonias and white lobelias simply gone. "Disheartening," she says.

But a bump, not a halt, to giving. Judy is one of the vegetable judges every year at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer, and she also coordinates the Ed Hume Seeds give-aways, in addition to stapling "Plant a Row for the Hungry" labels on donated seed packets (the Alaska Master Gardeners Association provides seeds to schools and other groups needing seeds for gardening projects). And Christianson grandchildren "plant a row for the hungry," and what's grown goes to the food bank.

The Christiansons kept up the tradition of big vegetable gardens, and the potato berm at their home became the stuff of legend. Every spring Judy and Mel planted potatoes; every fall, neighborhood kids came to help harvest the good and pitch the bad into a big tub, ammunition for the annual rotten potato fight, which was followed by a session with the hose, and pizza.

"Almost 40 years of gardening at our home," she says, "and what everybody remembers are the potato fights."

## Odds and Ends: Worm Poop, Ladybugs and Chokecherries By Jane Baldwin



## Gardens West Article Review By Gina Docherty

"Ants & the Battle Royale", Nov-Dec.2008  
By Ingrid Hoff

Terracyle Garden Fertilizer advertisement

I'm going to read anything with the intriguing words "worm poop" in it. So naturally I couldn't resist an advertisement for fertilizer that said "Plants love worm poop". The text of the advertisement said "natural ingredients; does not cause plant burn; made from waste; can pour on soil or spray on leaves; rated most eco-friendly". Has anyone tried it?



The Lost Ladybug Citizen Science Project:  
[www.lostladybug.org](http://www.lostladybug.org)

Certain native species of the ladybug have been declining in numbers over the last 20 years. Although this research project encompasses all species of lady bugs (lady beetles), certain species native to the U.S. are of particular interest because they have become so rare. These include the nine-spotted, two-spotted and transverse lady beetles. In this "Citizen Science Project" adults and children are encouraged to take pictures of any ladybugs they come across and send them to Cornell through the website [www.lostladybug.org](http://www.lostladybug.org) - along with the details about where and when the beetles were seen. This will help scientists identify and inventory the different species across the country. The website provides tips for locating and collecting these insects and pictures to help identify them. So get out your Macro lenses and shoot some ladybugs this next summer!

### Controlling Suckering on Stressed Chokecherry Trees

I've had a problem with severe suckering at the base of two large chokecherry trees. The suckering began a couple of years ago after the trees were stressed first by moose severely stripping the bark. Then the electric company removed about 1/3 of each tree infringing upon the power line right-of-way. I read online about a product called Sucker Stopper RTU. It was described as a growth regulator containing aphthalene acetate (NAA) that apparently works on suckering in some situations. It is designed to prevent suckering and sprout growth on trees such as apples, pears, citrus, olive, redwood and woody ornamental plants.

Early this summer I found the product in a ready to spray form. I clipped the suckers that had already started and liberally sprayed the raw cuts and all around the base of the trees where the majority of the suckering occurs. I consider it a successful initial trial as I had nearly no suckering all summer long. I will definitely use it again next year. The product label and more information can be found on the website for Monterey Lawn and Garden Products at [www.montereylawnngarden.com](http://www.montereylawnngarden.com).

### Another Slug Control Idea

Put slug bait in pieces of black plastic pipe. Cut the pipe into 6-8" pieces, put bait in the pipe pieces and place them in your garden under plants and near slug hiding places. This keeps pets, other animals and birds out of the bait and the bait is protected from rain. You should keep the pipes baited or the slugs will use them for hiding places. (American Primrose Society Quarterly, Vol. 54 #2, Spring 1996)

A recent article on ants in a Gardens West magazine caught my interest. I have a lot of ants living under flat rocks used for stepping stones in my garden. I've always wondered if they were good or 'bad' for the garden, and always assumed they were harmless. They don't seem to bite or come in the house. About the most I've noticed is that they scurry around moving their eggs when their home 'rock' is disturbed & occasionally I find them crawling on my clothes. And they don't bite (so far). Here's what I learned from the article:

Ants build their extensive colonies in the soil & do a great job of loosening the soil and increasing water penetration. (Except carpenter ants) Ants at least 'match' earthworms in turning over the soil.

Ants are also pollinators and are instrumental in seed dispersal. Several plants (such as trillium & violets) rely on ants to distribute their seeds, which is called 'myrmecochory'.

They are also predators. Being omnivores, they aren't particularly picky about what or who they eat. The only bad thing about ants is how they 'farm' aphids in order to feed off the high sugar honeydew that aphids secrete. The winged ants you see around are actually mating males & females that fly away to create new colonies.

Another problem with certain types of ants house invasion, which usually occurs in the spring when they are looking for a jolt of carbohydrates. The sugars, grains, juices & other bits of food are too tempting for a hungry ant. To prevent this, practice good sanitation: keep foods sealed in containers & clean up any spills right away, and make sure there aren't any cracks or crevices where ants can enter your house.

Carpenter ants are not termites & do not eat wood. They simply burrow in damp & rotting wood to build homes. The subsequent tunneling, fungus & rot that occurs speeds up decomposition. This is a good thing in the forest & not so good in your home.

The author describes a carpenter 'ant war' occurring in a public courtyard between 2 planting beds. Two colonies of ants discovered the other & waged a turf war. She used Borax Acid, a laundry additive & also a wood preservative. It prevents & kills rot in wood. Ants won't eat borax alone, so it must be mixed with something they can't resist, like sugar. The recipe: Mix 1 tsp of borax with 10 tsp of sugar, dissolve in 2 cups of water. Put it out in saucers or soak up cotton balls & let them carry it back to the colony & feed it to the queen. There are a number of other controls, including cornmeal, coffee grounds, mint, chili pepper or boiling water. Ants do not have good eye sight; they rely on scent & pheromones to communicate with one another.

From internet searching, I found that ants hibernate 'restlessly' in the winter. Some ants store seeds to eat & some don't. They usually nest under tree bark, deep in the soil, or in the 'space' under a rock.

And the good news? Alaska is the only state without termites.

## The Gifts That Keep On Giving By Judy Wilmarth

During the past few years I have been gifted several peony seedlings that have thrived and delighted. Following, I will share the history, notes and pictures of these wonders from a tiny seed.

2005: During the second week of July 2005, I visited the Georgeson Botanical Garden (GBG) at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks in Fairbanks, Alaska. The main focus of the visit there was to see how their trials for cut flower production in Alaska were coming along.

The GBG had planted 200+/- plants in somewhat raised beds in different layouts regarding the spacing of the plants during 2001 & 2002. I'm sad to say that I missed much of their bloom period which was earlier than ours in Anchorage; most of their peony stems had been dead-headed or were losing their petals. I'm happy to say that their plants were stately and very mature for such a young planting and showed evidence of being productive.

As I visited with Pat Holloway and Jan Hanscom they showed me a group of plants that had been a gift to the garden. The mother plants had growth to about 30" height, fully mature with foliage similar to that of 'Windchimes'. The stems on the plants were quite substantial, and the bushes were very vigorous with many seed heads.

On the ground under and near the plant were many seedlings, which they casually scooped up and put into a baggie for me. They had named the plant 'Jena's Peony' just for their record - keeping, and so I now refer to these as 'Jena's Peony Seedlings'. The roots of these seedlings were about the size of a flat toothpick, 2-3" long, and very fragile. Upon our return home, these were quickly potted up in a mixture of sifted compost & peat mix in 6" x 5" pots. The seedlings had very little foliage on 2-3" stems. After potting they were kept in a mostly shaded area outdoors until fall; in mid October they were stored in a cold cellar during the winter.



Jena's Peony Seedling Early June  
'08 3pot, 1 bud (Georgeson Botanical  
Garden 05 gift, divided '07)

season. In Sept. '07 the largest seedling was divided, producing two divisions with multiple eyes and 1 very small division with no eyes noticed. All parts were potted up into 2 gallon containers. These were held in a cold greenhouse until mid- October and then moved to a cold cellar for the winter of '07-'08. The plants have flourished this year and will not be divided this fall of '08, in hopes to promote seeds on next year's plants.

For more info on GBG Peony trials, see: [www.uaf.edu/sn-ras/gbg](http://www.uaf.edu/sn-ras/gbg) then click on GBG Publications.



P. Veitchii, gift from Les Brake, 2006;  
5 buds on 6/8/2008

When attending a fund raiser for the Alaska Botanical Garden at Les Brake's 'Coyote Garden Tour' held in mid July '06, I noticed some interesting seedlings available. Later, as I had the opportunity to talk to Les, he gave me a seedling from his P.veitchii plant. This seedling was received in a small 4"x 4" pot. That fall I transferred

it to a 6" x 5" pot and over-wintered it in a cold cellar. During the '07 summer season it thrived in a part shade exposure. In Sept. '07 the seedling was again transferred to a larger container and in mid October was stored in the cold cellar for the '07-'08 winter. During this summer season ('08) the plant flourished producing 5 blooms and numerous seeds which were collected during late August.

On a fall visit to Doug Tryck's Nursery, Doug gladly shared some seedlings he had collected near his P.tenuifolia, a red single. The only other peony plant that had bloomed at the same time the previous year was a late windflower, a white single. The most vigorous seedling was transferred to a larger pot in Sept. '07, and then stored in the cold cellar for the winter '07-'08. The spring of '08 produced 4 strong stems and 4 bright red blooms.

### Peony Trivia:

- The Chinese name for peony is "sho yu" which means "most beautiful"

- Colors range from pure white through baby pinks and palest peaches to clear deep pink and darkest rich maroon. There is also a pale yellow but it is rare.

Medicinal: The Greeks believed they could cure over 20 ailments, and every monastery garden boasted a peony bush.

- History: Peonies have been cultivated for over 2,000 years, more for their medicinal qualities than for ornament. The Japanese protect the earliest peony blooms from the snow by protecting them with individual small thatched shelters. Some geishas used to wear special peony colours.

The Chinese also idolised this flower. Peony motifs, particularly bright red ones, can be found on Chinese silks and in their exuberant wood carvings. The common thread is that the flower always denotes luxury and indulgence.



## Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

After the 2008 summer-that-wasn't it is nice to have a winter-that-is! We have a very nice snow cover over our perennial beds and the soil temperature is remaining a "warm" 29° even with temperatures mid-December at zero or below.

Not much is happening down on the peninsula---Life is still in holiday recovery mode. Barb Jewell is plotting her annual trip to Molbak's when she goes to the Seattle to do her Gramma bit. Catalogs continue to trickle in.



Photo by Rosemary Kimball:

The three black ducks are Cayugas, on the threatened domestic fowl list. The brown duck is a Khaki Campbell who will out lay a chicken in a year. The two light brown ducks, Pekins, in the center should be bright white. The tall, skinny fellow, an Indian Runner, is the only drake and too skinny to bother eating.

to have some of the most beautiful compost on the peninsula. The nice thing about ducks is that they usually are finished laying by 9 AM which is especially nice when it is below zero. But I do have two afternoon layers so I check back about 3 PM for eggs number 6 and 7,

I've started on my winter plant attrition. The rosemary died earlier than I thought it would and it was followed by the lavender. I didn't realize the lavender was so gravely ill or I would have whacked it off to make herb honey. With those two out of the way, there is space freed up to put other plants into the ICU. At the last meeting of the Garden Club down here I was given a beautiful yellow and red poinsettia as a farewell gift. Those plants are really vulnerable under my care so I have it in the kitchen bay window where it gets no blast from the outside and I've been talking to it really, really nice.

I put a light in the fowls' foul coop and I am getting seven eggs many days from only 6 ducks! Figure the take for a week or a month and be mindful that I don't have that many handy friends and we do not have a cardiologist here on the peninsula... But duck eggs make absolutely wonderful cakes although I still need to practice on my soufflé technique. I try to keep the coop as clean as possible but ducks are less than fastidious. I know, in the spring when I clean it out and run it through the shredder, I am going

## Frost

Not all frost is white crystals that form on the ground or on your windshield after a cold night. There are several different kinds:



**Air frost** - when the temperature 3 feet above the ground has dropped to freezing, but the ground temperature is higher. Usually happens in the fall when the soil is still warm from summer.

**Ground frost** - when the air temperature is above freezing but the ground temperature is freezing.

**Hoar frost** - white crystals that form on the ground or grass on a cold morning. Hoar frost occurs when water condenses on the grass at below freezing. Water that condenses on the grass above freezing point is dew.

**Frozen dew** - this is different than hoar frost; it is simply water that has condensed onto the grass above the freezing point & subsequently frozen.

## Oaks By Linda McCarthy

There are 600 or more species of oaks (*quercus*), all native to the Northern Hemisphere, though I haven't seen many around our area.

In Roman times the civil crown was a wreath of oak leaves and was the reward for saving a citizen's life. The oak appears frequently in heraldry. In the 13th century, Sir Stephen Cheyndut bore an oak tree on his shield, a play on his name (chene is the French word for oak). The oak was also the badge of the Stuarts and their fate was said to be caused by their having chosen a tree that dropped its leaves instead of an evergreen as their emblem. The Greeks looked on the oak as the symbol of hospitality and they associated it with Zeus, the god of thunder and lightning, to whom the great oak of Dondona, the most ancient oracle of Greece, was sacred. The oak was also sacred to Jupiter, since he was born under one. When Caesar reached Gaul, he found the Druids worshipping the oak. They had an old saying "beware the oak, it draws the stroke" ...they found the tree was frequently hit by lightning and this was taken as a sign from heaven that the tree was sacred. The oak and King Charles are connected with America as the charter that Charles II granted to the colony of Connecticut in 1662 making it independent was hidden in a hollow oak in Hartford when Sir Edmund Andros tried to seize it in 1687. The Civil Engineer Corp of the U.S. wear four crossed gold oak leaves with two silver acorns on their sleeves and the leaf and acorn are used by several branches of the Navy. The Navy chose the oak as it's emblem because the wood was "the father of ships" before iron and steel, being the strongest material for construction. In England and the U.S. the oak is associated with mariners and the acorn represents the source of their strength.

(Adapted from *Through The Garden Gate* by Elizabeth Lawrence)



## Bird Chatter

-- From the bottom of a recent "Ask a Master Gardener" message: *Support bacteria. They're the only culture some people have.*

-- "Start a Gardening Business" website: a recent email from Tracy Jones with a link to a public interest website was sent to AMGA recently. Check out: [www.startagardeningbusiness.co.uk](http://www.startagardeningbusiness.co.uk)  
The site focuses on how to start up and run a gardening business. Although it originates in the UK, the information is universal for gardeners.

-- If you're dreaming of farmers' markets on these cold winter days you might be interested to know that Alison Arians has published the South Anchorage Farmers' Market Cookbook, [southanchoragefarmersmarket@gci.net](mailto:southanchoragefarmersmarket@gci.net).

-- An estimated 11,100 real Christmas trees were sold in the Anchorage/Eagle River area this past season. Remember to take yours to be recycled by dropping it off at Carrs/Safeway in Anchorage or Palmer by January 15.

-- Johnny's Selected Seeds was the first gardening catalog to appear in the CES office in early December.

-- Home Depot on Tudor had their 2009 Burpee's seed rack filled and ready to go for spring on December 15.

- Love those blue gloves! Watch Amelia Walsh divide dahlia tubers on the Anchorage Daily News blog TALK DIRT, dated Dec. 2.

-- A spin off from the November AMGA meeting given by Jane Baldwin--"Try Pinwheels for Moose Defense", a TALK DIRT headline thanks to Fran Durner, ADN blog editor.

-- Julie Riley thought 'Sweet 100', the tomato, not Suite 100, the room, when she heard the name of a new restaurant in South Anchorage.

-- Dutch Boy has a paint color named PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE. And the color is not the magenta color of purple loosestrife, it's purple.

### Random Gardening Definitions

- Green fingers - Something everyone else seems to have plenty of
- Perennial - This year, possibly; next year, unlikely
- Flower bed - Anywhere a dozen or more seeds might land
- Knee - A device for finding rocks in your garden
- Seed catalog - A work of fiction with fantasy photos
- Spade - Highly efficient back-pain generator
- Weed - A good example of the "Survival of the Fittest" theory

From The Gardener's Pocket Companion, by Vicky Bamforth; Pavilion Books, 2008.

## Congrats to New MG Class



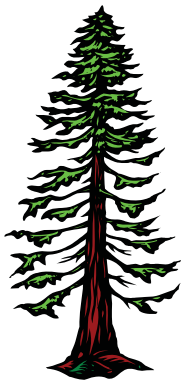
Fifty new Master Gardeners completed the course in December. Mary Rydesky has already completed her 40 volunteer hours. She taught a computer class and created a searchable database of all the printed materials passed out during the MG class. Congratulations to the following new MGs.

Marilyn Barker  
 Kathleen Barnett  
 Janice Berry  
 Nancy Boardman  
 Sherry Lee Bottoms  
 Susan Brusehaber  
 Marsha Burns  
 Brenda Carlson  
 Kathy Centoni  
 Claire Chan  
 Jon Cobb  
 Leslie Crawford  
 Michelle Crawford  
 Diana DeFazio  
 Joan Diamond  
 Selena Dobbs  
 Marlyss Engelke  
 Eric Finkbeiner  
 Joe Finnie  
 Linda Fuchs  
 Maria Gowan  
 Tanya Greenway  
 David Hause  
 April Hight  
 Gregory Kalal  
 Iona Keegan  
 Sue Keeling  
 Charlotte Lamb  
 Mel Langdon  
 Karen Leask  
 Jill Maxwell  
 Gary Muntean  
 Janice Muntean  
 Noel Nelson  
 Lynne Opstad  
 Nancy Pease  
 LaVonne Rhyneer  
 Phyllis Rogers  
 Annie Ronsse  
 Mary M. Rydesky  
 Julie Sargent  
 Catherine Schneider  
 Dustin Solberg  
 Joette Storm  
 Mary Tilly  
 Rob Yates

Ryan Zinn, Marita Waddell, Craig Cannon, and Kristin Ryan will be taking their exam soon.)



## Happy New Year from TREErific Nickel LaFleur



Wednesday, January 28th at 6pm, Anchorage TREErific welcomes our new urban forester, Scott Stringer to join us and give us his impressions of Anchorage and what he has planned for our urban forests.

Our meeting starts at 6 pm, with pizza being donated by the Moose's Tooth to be available to attendees by 5:45pm. Bring along questions you may have for our new forester, and he'll do his best to answer them.

A room for the meeting has been secured at the Anchorage Senior Center, located 1300 East 19th Street and we hope you can join us. Any questions call Nancy Beardsley At 343-4288 or email us at [TREErificAnchorage@yahoo.com](mailto:TREErificAnchorage@yahoo.com)

### 2009 Spring Garden ABG Conference Info

Saturday, April 4th at the UAA/APU Consortium Library. Guest Speaker, Paul Stamets (Details and registration forms will be included in the ABG Spring Newsletter)

Also in the planning stages are more Hypertufa workshops and a talk in May by popular garden author Traci Di Sabato Aust (cohosted by the Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage Chapter). For more information about these events and volunteer opportunities please visit the ABG website: [www.alaskabg.org](http://www.alaskabg.org)

### Viva Las Vegas

If your "weather outside is frightful" consider a delightful visit to Las Vegas and the 2009 International Master Gardener Conference this coming March. According to conference coordinator Ann Edmunds, "Basic registration (\$310) is a great value and will keep your days occupied with 24 workshops and keynote presentations. Plus you'll have access to our Trade Show, Market Place, Silent Auction and Book Nook. You can add in fun-filled "Fit for Gardening" outdoor activities on the beautifully landscaped grounds of the Alexis Park Resort Hotel or a walking tour to the University of Nevada Arboretum."

For full conference details and registration go to <http://www.unce.unr.edu/imgc/>. If you don't have access to a computer, please call the Anchorage CES office to schedule a time to come take a look at the web site, 786-6300. Printing out the program is difficult because there are so many pieces. Registration deadline February 15, after which time a late fee applies.

## Garden Event Calendar

### January 17, Saturday (CORRECTED DATE!)

Alaska Rock Garden Society meeting: "Evergreens for the Rock Garden" by Mark White. Mark is driving up from Soldotna, so meeting will be at UAF Cooperative Extension Service, 7 p.m, 2221 E. Northern Lights, room 130.

### January 19, Monday

Alaska Master Gardener Association meeting: TBA - Meets at UAF Cooperative Extension Service, 7 p.m, 2221 E. Northern Lights, room 130.

### January 26-27, Monday/Tuesday

Alaska Peony Growers Conference, held at the downtown Anchorage Marriott Hotel.

### January 27-28, Tuesday/Wednesday

Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conference, held at the Anchorage Marriott Hotel. Contact CES for details: 786-6300

### Wednesday, February 5

Tree Identification Snowshoe Tour, 1 pm- 3pm. Free for ABG members, \$5 pp for nonmembers.

### February 21, Saturday

Alaska Rock Garden Society meeting: "Douglasia and Drabas", held at the MTA Meeting Room in the Valley.

### Feb 20, 27, and March 6, 20, 27, Fridays

### March 28, Saturday

Organic Gardening Class with with Ellen Vande Visse, Good Earth Garden School, [www.goodearthgardenschool.com](http://www.goodearthgardenschool.com)  
Mat-Su College: Five Friday evenings, 6—8:30pm, plus one Saturday field trip; 1 credit, pass/no pass. Call 745-9746 for information or register on line at [www.uaa.alaska.edu](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu) and follow Wolf Link for Agri 138, Organic Gardening.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**



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

Anchorage, AK 99516

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!)

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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Photo by Judy Wilmarth - Peony veitchii,  
a seedling gift from Les Brake in 2006.  
See Judy's article,  
"The Gifts That Keep On Giving" on page 4.

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