



Anchorage Chapter



Volume 11, Issue 5

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER May 2009



Message From the President Beth Schlabaugh

It's that time of year again! Time to get in the garden & work on all of your spring-projects. To help you complete your gardening chores I've compiled a quick checklist. Follow these simple steps below for a worry free & welcoming garden that will be a joy for the eyes, ears & table.

Spring Gardening Checklist:

1. Inspect the Yard

- Survey your trees to identify any that are damaged & need to be replaced or limbs that need to be removed. Hire a professional Arborist to attend to large trees.
- Remove all old foliage & mulch and add to compost bin. Remember to reapply mulch after soil warms.
- Check all hard-scaping, paths, decks, fences, & arbors for winter damage & add repairs to your list.
- Learn more about the proper way to plant a tree at the Spring Workshop.

2. Examine Garden Tools & Perform Spring Maintenance on Mower

- Service your mower & power trimmer. Change oil & plugs, lubricate parts, check strings & sharpen the mower blades. Check hoses for leaks, dried "O" rings & bent couplings. Sharpen all hand tools including pruners, loppers, & by-pass shears. Remember shovels get sharpened on both sides but hoes only on one.
- Learn how to keeping your tools in tip-top shape. Join us at the Spring Workshop!

3. Prune Trees & Shrubs

- Remove dead, damaged, & diseased branches from woody plants. Thin & trim summer-blooming shrubs such as roses, remember to prune spring-blooming shrubs like lilacs after flowering.

4. Do a Soil Test

- Soil samples can be taken to your local Co-Operative Extension office for testing. Call for directions on how to take the samples, turn-around time, cost, & availability.

5. Prepare New Beds

- Choose a well-drained spot & clear the area as soon as soil can be worked. Or spread a layer of newspaper directly on the ground & apply soil, compost, & other growing medium directly on top to create a

new planting area.

- Garden Design & Layout is just one of our educational classes available at the Spring Workshop. No place for a new bed? We have two classes on container & small space gardening to get you up to date on these great space saving gardening techniques.
6. Plant
- Get your hands dirty! This is the down in the dirt fun that gardeners live for! Now is a great time to try new varieties of veggies or flowers & divide your perennials.
 - Understanding your plant's root system is an important part of safe & successful plant division. Join us at the Spring Workshop to learn more!
7. Start a Compost Pile
- Build or buy a compost bin if you don't already have one. This is a great way to recycle household & garden material & turn it into a beneficial fertilizer for your garden. What to compost? All sorts of plant matter; try equal amounts of "green" weeds, veggie based kitchen scraps and "brown" chopped leaves materials. Water, turn regularly, & continue adding to the pile throughout the season.
 - For the latest information on home composting attend our class on Compost & Composting at the Spring Workshop.
8. Enhance your Garden By Adding A Focal Point Like a Water Feature, Bird Bath, or Garden Art
- Focal points draw the eye, spotlight a great planting, & add interest to your garden. Think vertically! Add visual interest & beauty to your garden with arbors, trellises & hanging baskets.
 - Attend our Class How to Create a Dynamic & Elegant Water Feature for Under \$50, Build your own Copper Garden Trellis or Turn Old Containers & Baskets Into Works of Art. Join Us at the Spring Workshop!

I hope that this checklist will help you with your spring-time projects. You may have noticed that I mentioned the Spring Workshop Hands-On-Harvest. We would love to have you join us. This event is scheduled for Sat. May 9th, 8-5:30p at the Gateway building at the Alaska Zoo. This event is open to all. Choose from over a dozen hands-on classes designed to educate & entertain, lunch is included. We will be taking registrations at the door. For more info. visit:
www.AlaskaMasterGardeners.org or call 786-6300.

AMGA Meeting - April 20, 2009
Topiary Making at Sutton's Greenhouse
By Jane Baldwin

Anna and Patti Sutton, along with help from their friend Mary Nan Cunningham, provided a most enjoyable and educational April evening, complete with refreshments and shopping opportunities in their plant filled greenhouse.



Anna and Patti Sutton and Mary Nan Cunningham demonstrate making moss covered topiaries. Photo by Gina Docherty

A crowd of 40-plus AMGA gardeners were treated to colorful demonstrations on how they create their 'moss topiaries' - how else to describe their delightful garden critters and objects? Various forms, from wire frames to recycled objects, are used to create mystical moss topiaries. Anything that will hold a soilless growing medium is fair game. If you visited the Alaska Botanical Garden last summer you may have seen their moss moose created by using a recycled Christmas reindeer yard decoration as a base and planted with succulents, hardy perennials, and ornamental grasses. They also created a dinosaur for a client, complete with spiky succulents running down the back and tail.



A large crowd watched the process of topiary making at Sutton's Greenhouse. Photo by Gina Docherty

It's early yet this season, but nearly ready to plant were a several large forms for turtles, fish, roosters, snails, rabbits and other shapes like stars, toy trucks, and a miniature dressmaker's form. A recycled 4' tall curvy plastic CD storage tower, camouflaged with moss, now resembles a tree stump and is waiting for plants. These girls are very creative and resourceful!



A moss truck topiary in the making. Photo by Gina Docherty

The topiary process involves wrapping the form with miles of a sturdy plastic wrap, then filling it with potting soil amended with water retentive crystals to maintain adequate moisture. Next, the form is covered with sphagnum moss and held in place by wrapping with florist wire (available at craft stores). For the wreaths, they lined the bottom of one side of the wreath with moss; then made a 'dirt burrito': laying out long strips of plastic wrap, rolling it like a burrito and folded the ends over to keep the dirt in, and then laid it into the wreath frame. It was then covered with moss & secured with florist wire. They used scissors or a knife to make holes through the moss and plastic wrap before inserting plants. Add a few drainage holes on the bottom of the form, and it's ready to go!



A moss moose topiary in the making. Photo by Gina Docherty

They recommend frequent watering, or weekly soaking.

Master Gardener Focus: Dan Elliott by Cheryl Chapman

Spring's about to pop on the Elliotts' five acres in Wasilla. The fruit trees haven't committed themselves, but a warmer breeze teases stiff, gray branches, ruffed grouse drum in the woods, beehives are ready and Dan and Marian are planning a new rock garden behind the anti-moose trellis and a fresh apple orchard between the house and the road.

Fifteen years ago sunshine drew the couple to the south-facing site, drenched with light and perched high above the Palmer hay flats. The big-windowed house is Dan's design, its comfortable warmth, Marian's; the geometry of bounty outside belongs to them both.

Moose like apples. They like apples a lot. That's why the front yard's fruit-tree corridor has pears, pie cherries, apricots (struggling) and plums, and the apples are sequestered out back. "I like apples best too," says Dan. From his hundred-plus trees, he harvests bushels for sale and to give away and also occasionally has sturdy grafts available for buyers. The cider press gets heavy use, and Marian puts up apples in every form known to apple-lovers: jellies, apple sauce, frozen.

The plenty is like the Celtic winter blessing rhyme:

Old apple tree, we wassail thee,
And hoping thou wilt bear,
Hatfuls, capfuls, three-bushel bagfuls
And a little heap under the stairs.

The Elliotts haven't always had fruit, nor have they gardened. "It was incremental," says Dan.

He was born in Michigan, grew up in New Jersey. After graduate school he taught a year in Baltimore, a year at the University of Wyoming, took off to fight fires in Alaska in 1969, and then moved into the wider Alaska life as a guide, a commercial fisherman and an Alaska pipeline worker.

Marian, a teacher herself, was from Brooklyn, N.Y., and met Dan in Anchorage in 1980 while visiting teacher friends.

Their first home was off the road north of Talkeetna, "and it took a full day, going and coming, to take our son to school by snowmachine. That just got too complicated," says Marian.

They moved into Anchorage. Muldoon. ("Boggy," says Dan.) He took a one-night class in grafting, started attending Pioneer Fruit Growers meetings, got hooked and completed the Master Gardener class in 1991. In 1994 Dan found their sunny tract in Wasilla.

Dan does fruit; Marian is strictly flowers, and they've been seriously working on the west flowerbeds since the well went out in 2003.

"We had to dig the whole place up anyway for the new well," says Dan, "So we went ahead with the flowers."

Chickens and one guinea fowl bicker and scratch among dead stalks and leaves of *Thalictrum*, delphiniums, Johnson's blue geranium, primulas, mock orange ("wonderful scent," says Marian), white and yellow irises, yellow aquilegias, *Veronica spicata* ("comes up perfect every year": Marian), *Veronica gentianoides* ("very quiet, that gentianoides": Marian), peonies, 5-foot-tall *Meconopsis*, Asiatic lilies, poppies, *Filipendula*, *Hemirocallis fulva* (the orange cultivar that runs wild along Outside country roads and in grandmothers' gardens), lilacs, honeysuckle, forsythia, *Bergenia*, a weeping pin cherry tree ("blooms first but suckers": Marian) and roses, roses, roses: Therese Bugnet, Prairie Dawn, Heidi Klum, Wasagaming, Hansa, Martin Frobisher, William Baffin, though the last dies back to the ground each winter. A native plant garden starts a little to the west of a

bench tucked into a bower of roses.

The Fat Albert spruce in the rock garden may be a goner. "Any conifer's root zone freezes. We should have sprayed it with Wilt-Pruf," Dan says.

A single primula was tougher and bloomed during a January thaw but now regrets it.

A shade garden in front of the house is packed with plants that like it dim: ferns, bleeding heart, hostas, variegated *Brunnera* "Jack Frost."

Old man's beard (*Clematis Tangutica*), *Clematis* "Blue Boy" and Marian's "very expensive habit of one annual Jackmanii" drape the opening to the main orchards and gardens. Planks bar the entry. The moose got in anyway this winter "and broke the tops out of 13 apple trees," says Dan.

Apples and more apples stretch from the house to the bluff, each trunk with neat white strapping to thwart mice. One year the creatures girdled a prized tree, and Dan did a triple bypass bridge graft. The tree lived to thrive but sits on an open tripod where its single trunk - dead - used to be.

"Many of these trees have two or three varieties of apples grafted onto them," says Marian. "Apples do best here," says Dan. "Cherries do second-best." When Dan teaches an apple class (in one recent week he taught in Willow, Talkeetna and Big Lake), he points out the difference between fruit-tree culture here and fruit trees Outside: The challenge here is to get a tree to live and grow; theirs is to protect the fruit from pests and diseases until it can be picked.

There are crabapples (small); apple crabs (1 inch to 2 inches); and apples (bigger than 2 inches). The Elliotts have some of all. All are standards because dwarf trees can't survive Alaska, but the standards are short, stocky: The cold soils make them natural dwarfs, Dan says.

That's handy because Dan doesn't need a ladder to graft or prune. Now's the season for him to groom his trees, to clip off any thin new branch that's sprung straight up from a horizontal limb because when it leafs out, it'll shade the fruit below.

Alaskans are growing about 300 different varieties of apple, says Dan, but he likes best the desert apples Simonet, Prairie Magic, and the standby Carroll.

Rootstock matters. Ranetka and Baccata are the hardiest, though Dolgo and Bud 118 also have fans. Antonovka sometimes lives, sometimes doesn't.

Space not occupied by apples is filled with tidy raised beds for vegetables, raspberries (red and yellow), three kinds of gooseberries, honeyberries, blueberries, rhubarb, strawberries and Saskatoon berries or serviceberries, and more flowers - roses, *Hemirocallis flava*, or antique lemon lily, Asiatic lilies, Sweet William, *Veronica*, Maltese Cross, *Ligularia* and herbs.

Two compost piles are going all the time near the chicken house. About a dozen chickens made it through winter; a Great Horned Owl moved into the chicken house when times got hard and dined well until the Elliotts caught on.

Garden groups already are visiting. "Only in Alaska would someone go garden touring in winter," says Marian. "They can see the bones," says Dan.

Soon the trees will be perfumed pink and white corridors. People will come from miles. They'll admire. They'll tell the Elliotts how lucky they are to have all this beauty.

Continued on page 7

Ten Most Common Nursery Mistakes And How To Avoid Them Linda McCarthy Beckworth (from Country Living Magazine 2009)

With spring and the beginning of nursery/gardening season, it was interesting to read this article and see how many of the most common mistakes I had committed in the past and how many I could avoid this year!

- **Mistake 1 - Shopping for just flowers and not foliage**
Solution - Before you buy, consider the plant's leaves and structure. Include specimens with spectacular foliage to help keep beds interesting when flowers are not blooming.

- **Mistake 2 - Buying insufficient amounts of a single variety.**

Solution - Depending on the size of the pot and the type of plant, buy at least three containers of a plant, though six or more of a species is preferred for a unified, well-designed look.

- **Mistake 3 - Purchasing unhealthy or diseased plants.**
Solution - Avoid plants with brown, yellow, or wilted leaves which could signify poor health (you probably can't revive them!). Inspect for insect damage like aphids (little green bugs), scale (translucent bumps or blisters) and spider mites (webs). Go for plants with lush, perky, vibrant-looking foliage.

- **Mistake 4 - Choosing flowers in full bloom (who can resist this urge?).**

Solution - Look for healthy foliage and plump buds. Let the plants peak in the ground at your home rather than in pots at the nursery.

- **Mistake 5 - Picking plants with poor root systems.**
Solution - Steer clear of anything that is root bound (roots coming out of the bottom of the container) because tangled roots can suffocate and rob the plant of its nutrients. Leave behind those the underdeveloped roots (you may need to ask the nursery employee to check the plant's roots) to mature longer at the nursery.

- **Mistake 6 - Ignoring the labels.**
Solution - Plant tags contain vital information about the plant's requirements such as water, light, bloom times, height, and spread. It may seem obvious but we have all probably made the mistake of planting a taller plant in front of a shorter one or tucking a dwarf variety toward the back of a bed.

- **Mistake 7 - Not knowing the dimensions of your garden.**

Solution - Have a photograph of the bed you're shopping for and have the measurements of the space when you go seeking plants. I usually imagine my space as much larger than it is and often overbuy and have to squeeze the plants in or move them to another place.

- **Mistake 8 - Failing to use a defined color scheme.**
Solution - All colors are beautiful but not all colors are beautiful together. Don't think of your plants as separate items. Consider plants as parts of the whole bed. Gardens look best with a specific color scheme. Pick one you like and stick to it. If you have cool colors in one bed put the hot colors in a different bed.

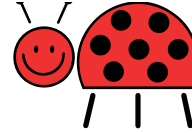
- **Mistake 9 - Waiting too long to put pots in the ground.**

Solution - Try to plant as soon as you bring plants home. Set the pots in the beds and arrange them in a pleasing pattern before digging the holes. If you have to delay planting, keep the plants in a shady area and keep them watered. Plant as soon as you can.

- **Mistake 10 - Trying to do it all yourself.**

Solution - Shop where there is knowledgeable nursery staff and ask a lot of questions if you're buying a new

species to plant. Most nurseries have reference books, like a plant encyclopedia, on hand where you can look up more specific plant requirements than are on the plant label. They will also frequently have a photo of the plant in bloom to check for color. I've bought plants described as "purple" on the tag to find out they are really "red" and don't blend with my other plants.



LADYBUG LEGENDS From Linda McCarthy (Source www.celticbug.com)

- Nearly ALL cultures believe that a Ladybug is lucky. Killing one is said to bring sadness and misfortune.
- In France, if a Ladybug landed on you, whatever ailment you had would fly away with the Ladybug.
- If a Ladybug is held in the hand while making a wish, the direction that it flies away to shows where your luck will come from.
- If the spots on the wings of a Ladybug are more than seven, it's a sign of coming famine. If less than seven, it means you will have a good harvest.
- In Belgium, people believed that if a Ladybug crawled across a young girl's hand, she would be married within a year.
- People in Switzerland told their young children that they were brought to them, as babies, by Ladybugs.
- In some Asian cultures, it is believed that the Ladybug understands human language, and has been blessed by God, Himself.
- In Brussels, the black spots on the back of a Ladybug indicate to the person holding it how many children he/she will have.
- According to a Norse legend, the Ladybug came to earth riding on a bolt of lightning.
- The Victorians in Britain believed that if a Ladybug alighted on your hand, you would be receiving new gloves....if it landed on your head, a new hat would be in your future, and so on.
- In the 1800's, some doctors used Ladybugs to treat measles! They also believed that if you mashed ladybugs and put them into a cavity, the insects would stop a toothache!
- During the Pioneer days, if a family found a Ladybug in their log cabin during the winter, it was considered a "Good Omen".
- In the Spring, if numerous Ladybugs are seen flying around, British farmers say it forecasts many bountiful crops.
- Many Bretons believe that the arrival of Ladybugs will bring fair weather.
- Folklore suggests if you catch a Ladybug in your home, count the number of spots and that's how many dollars you'll soon find.
- In Norway, if a man and a woman spot a Ladybug at the same time, there will be a romance between them.



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

It must be spring. The spruce needles are beginning to drop from the Christmas wreath every time I close the front door. The snow is melting and all the stuff left out that got covered

with snow while we were in Hawaii is there and needs picking up. It's time to face breakup and ankle-deep mud.

MG Barb Jewell faced breakup by going down to Seattle to garden at her daughter's. Sunshine--on certain days--spring flowers all over the place and side trips to Molbak's and Plant World. She started seeds before she left and a friend is minding the watering.

MG Mark White, next door, went to Europe for three weeks and I told him I'd start stuff for him. He left me his list starting with 36 Brussels sprouts!!! That's OK though, because I tossed a lot of his plants into his entryway and moved my tomatoes and starts under his lights.

From MG Janice Chumley, our Ramrod, "I have started tomato seeds, a Siberian fir tomato, supposed heirloom from Russia that I ordered from Tomato Fest (www.tomatofest.com Go there). Always on the lookout for a tomato that does not require a greenhouse. I am hopeful of this one, determinate, 57 days, bushy and from the seller's viewpoint tasty. Also lots of basil is poking up for future pesto and other eating delights. Perhaps with tomatoes? Spring is always a time of hope."

Here's what MG Margaret Simon is doing in Nikiski: "In the garden I'm shoveling/spreading the piles of snow that remain in hopes of finding dirt - real dirt that I can play in. Since I can't really garden yet, I've been painting the walls of the dining room and hall."

And MG Kathy Wartinbee's husband ratted on her. "She is up to her eyeballs in getting things ready for spring & summer. She has planted a bunch of things that will eventually go into various flower hanging baskets. She has already put the young bush beans into hanging baskets that will hang in the greenhouse all summer."



The picture shows Kathy taking all the dirt from her greenhouse beds and working it through a screen. This removes any roots from the previous year's plants and resorts all the soil components. Once she is done with this part she'll add any amendments that are appropri-

ate like fish bone meal, green sand, etc. You will notice that she is wearing a short-sleeved shirt and had to keep the door open since it was so warm inside... it's acting like Spring!!!"

The Garden Club on the peninsula is gearing up for May with speakers and workshops weekly, starting with Tracy Disabato-Aust on May Day. The frenzy culminates in the plant exchange the first Tuesday in June.

There was a meteor cherry, self-fertile and hardy to Zone 3, for sale at Lowes so I got one only to find that it is a grafted plant and who knows what the root stock is hardy to. I'll find out next year. This time I will protect the tree from voles and rabbits during the winter. I looked at the bulbs and clematis that were for sale there and you'd have to know zones before you bought. Most of the small stuff seemed more suitable for Western Oregon or Washington.

And this spring's beauty hint: White ducks should not take baths in breakup mud puddles.

National Wildlife Magazine 39th Annual Photo Contest From John Nuhn of NWF Magazine



Cash prizes totaling \$25,000 plus other gifts will be awarded to winners in Professional, Amateur and Youth divisions, including \$5,000 each for two grand prize winners, one professional and one amateur. You can submit as many as 20 images in any combination of the following seven categories:

- *Backyard Habitats: wild creatures, native plants and natural settings in your yard
- *Landscapes and Plant Life: scenic views and native plants in wild settings
- *Connecting People and Nature: people enjoying the outdoors
- *Birds: portraits and behavior
- *Mammals: portraits and behavior
- *Other Wildlife: portraits and behavior (includes underwater life, reptiles, amphibians, insects and more)
- *Global Warming and Wildlife: portraits and behavior of specific species affected by global warming (complete list of species at <http://www.nwf.org/photozone/categories.cfm>).

- \$25,000 in Cash Prizes
- Two \$5,000 Grand Prizes
- Pro, Amateur and Youth Divisions
- Submit up to 20 Photos
- 7 Categories
- Free One-Year NWF Membership and Subscription to National Wildlife

The deadline for all submissions is July 20, 2009. For more details about the categories, the rules, how to submit your photos and other information, go to <http://www.nwf.org/photozone/enterphotocontest.cfm>.



Bird Chatter

-- AMGA President Beth Schlabaugh and her husband Eric are the proud parents of a new daughter, Lilly, born on Easter Sunday.

-- Gordon Pyle was part of a UAF compost study and created a perfect product with a C/N ratio of 10:1 and a pH of 6.0. And he had tulips blooming on the south side of his house on April 10.

-- The Spring edition of Alaska Home contains beautiful primrose pictures taken by AMGA member Debbie Hinchey.

-- New MG Catherine Schneider was out working in her garden by April 20. About that time, Greg Kalal thought he'd plant peas and ran into frost down 3 inches.

-- Here's hoping this season will be better than last year in which the cabbage placing first in the Alaska State Fair's Giant Cabbage Weigh-Off was a mere 79.1 lbs.

-- Dana Klinkhart is planning to plant four yellow peonies this spring that are touted as being able to stand up in the rain. The cultivar name, 'Singing in the Rain'.

-- An article in the May 2009 issue of Consumer Reports titled "Hassle-free lawns and yards" mentions the Extension Master Gardener program and refers readers to their local Cooperative Extension Service several times.

-- "Front Yard Farming", a class taught by new MGs Joette Storm, Noel Nelson, Diana DeFazio and Leslie Crawford made the front page of the Anchorage Daily News on Easter Sunday.

-- The Mat-Su MGs are hosting the Alaska Master Gardener Conference "Getting Back to our Roots", at the Grandview Inn in Wasilla, March 5 - 6, 2010. Mark your calendar, if you have one for 2010.

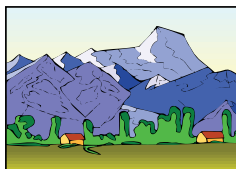
-- The new Garden Snaps map put together as an entrepreneurial venture by MGs Lynne Opstad and Anna Denis was written up in the Anchorage Daily News Alaska Ear political gossip column. If you haven't got a map, you should get one. They'll be available at CES.

-- Horticulture magazine now has a regular, and lengthy, column written by Extension Master Gardeners from around the country. Subheadings by region include 1) What's on your to-do list this month? 2) In what volunteer activities are you participating? 3) What's the biggest gardening challenge in your area?

-- And speaking of Horticulture, Alaska's Les Brake has a regular pictorial column this year featuring a new moss bowl flower arrangement each issue.

-- In the spirit of all things organic you can now purchase cricket poo. The 4-2-2 fertilizer does contain litter.

-- The National Extension Master Gardener survey is up on the eXtension site at: http://www.extension.org/pages/Extension_Master_Gardener#2009_Extension_Master_Gardener_Survey_and_Volunteer_Impacts



Murie Science and Learning Center Denali National Park Wildflower Seminars in Denali National Park with Verna Pratt

June 8-10 - High Country Wildflowers for Beginners
Surround yourself in the vibrant color and bloom of Denali's tundra and taiga forest. With wildflower expert and author Verna Pratt, we will move from the boreal forest to alpine meadows, learning about wildflower adaptations to extreme latitude and high elevation. We will spend our time in the field learning to identify wildflowers by sight, with a hand lens, and with field guides. This is designed as an introductory course to Denali's wildflowers.

June 12-14 - High Country Wildflowers: A Closer Look
Take a closer look at the beautiful blooms of a Denali summer. With wildflower expert and author Verna Pratt, we will explore deeper into wildflower identification by looking at the relationships between different species. We will explore both tundra and taiga as we learn about plant classification and what makes each wildflower family unique. This course is designed to give wildflower enthusiasts a deeper understanding of plant families and their characteristics. Prior wildflower knowledge encouraged but not required.

Both courses include:

- Staying at a field camp located 29 miles inside Denali National Park along the Teklanika River. The Field Camp includes rustic tent cabins and a common dining tent.
- All meals, accommodations, transportation, and instruction are included in a \$320 course fee.
- Professional development credit is available through UAA.

For more information or to register:

- Go to www.murieslc.org, or click on the links above
- Email courses@murieslc.org
- Call 1-888-688-1269.

Courses offered by Alaska Geographic through the Murie Science and Learning Center at Denali National Park and Preserve.

Garden Tips From Jane Baldwin

Hint for Hosta Lovers

If slugs are munching on your hostas, a Michigan MG suggests spraying them once a week with Pam Olive Oil and Garlic cooking spray. Apparently it's been tried with success. (Kalamazoo Co., MI Master Gardener newsletter, March 2009)

Lilies in your garden?

"If you already have lilies in your garden, don't forget to put a few pieces of chalk around the plants. That's just plain blackboard chalk. It acts like a slow release and might be better than bone meal that attracts critters."
-- from Rita Jo Shoultz of Fritz Creek Gardens in the April 29, 2009 newsletter (www.alaskahardy.com)

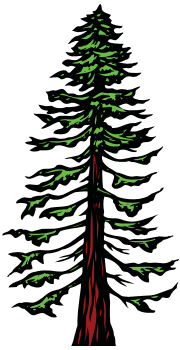
The Garden Snaps Map is out!



The Garden Snaps Map, a new reference for gardeners in South-central Alaska, is now available. The map shows the location of Greenhouses, Nurseries, Garden Centers, Farmers' Markets, Hardscape Suppliers, Public Gardens and Resources. It also has a Garden

Events Calendar, a list of Plant Sales and Garden Clubs and local resources. Produced by Garden Snaps LLC, the map is a great reference for both beginning and seasoned gardeners looking for that new plant. Look for the map at most garden retailers in Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley, Cooperative Extension offices and the Alaska Botanical Garden. Garden Clubs from Homer to Big Lake have been given a supply for their members. Visit the Garden Snaps' web site for a complete list of distributors, a continually updated events calendar, to have your garden club event listed or if you have a gardening related business and would like to advertise on the web site or on the 2010 map. gardensnapmap.com

Celebrate Alaska's 50th Year of Statehood by Planting a Tree for Alaska



The Alaska Division of Forestry, Community Forestry Program would like to invite you to help celebrate Alaska's 50th anniversary of Statehood by planting a tree between May 15 and July 15, 2009. Register your tree(s) with the Community Forestry Program and you will receive a certificate as a reminder of tree and its significance. More information can be found at the Community Forestry Program website <http://forestry.alaska.gov/community/> [The flyer and registration form can be found at the AMGA website, on the

Gardening Calendar page]:

www.alaskamastergardeners.org

Master Gardener Focus: Dan Elliott cont. from page 4

But maybe it's not luck so much. It's like the old story about the farmer showing the minister around, and at every prospect, the minister would gasp, "How the Good Lord has blessed you with all these fine crops!" "How the Good Lord has blessed you with all these fine chickens!" "How the Good Lord has blessed you with all these fine flowers and trees," until finally the farmer said, "Yes, and you should have seen the place when the Good Lord had it all to Himself."



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!)

Garden Event Calendar

May 4, Monday

King Career Center Plant Sale, hanging baskets and bedding plants grown by students in the King Career Center greenhouse, plants sell out quickly. 9:00 am, 2650 E. Northern Lights Blvd, 742-8900

May 7th, Thursday

Anchorage Garden Club: The Benefits of a Water Garden or Pond presented by John Cobb; 7:00 PM, Pioneer Schoolhouse, 437 E Third Street; Voice mail 907-566-0539

May 9th, Saturday

* The AMGA Spring Workshop will be held at the Gateway Education Building at the Alaska Zoo. The Early Registration cost is \$55, \$75 after May 6th. Lunch is included.

*Lobelia Basket Workshop - 7:00 PM, Pioneer Schoolhouse, 437 E Third Street; \$50 Voice mail 907-566-0539 Registration Form: <http://gardencentral.org/asfgc/nss-folder/anchoragegardenclub-forms/>

*Arbor Day tree seedling sale, sponsored by the Society of American Foresters, Cook Inlet Chapter; seedlings in bundles of 20, most species about 8 inches tall, includes lodgepole pine, Siberian larch, Colorado blue spruce, paper birch, white spruce. Pre-ordered seedlings not picked up by 2:00 pm will be sold. 9:00 am - Northern Lights Boulevard and Spenard Road, near REI. Cost \$20 per bundle. For questions, contact Roger Burnside, SAF Tree Sale Committee co-chair, reburnsi@gci.net

May 16th, Saturday

Alaska Rock Garden Society Plant Sale Old Harbor Rd. off Special Plant Sales

*Alaska Rock Garden Society Plant Sale (Anchorage) at Sally K.'s; 9:00 am - 4:00 pm, 7435 Old Harbor Avenue in Muldoon. For additional information call 333-8237

May 17th, Sunday

Rock Garden Clean up at the ABG; 2 p.m. Bring tools, gloves & be ready to work.

May 18th, Monday

*Alaska Arbor Day - 2 pm at Trailside Elementary School

*AMGA Meeting: Ornamental Grasses, by Christine Bingham, MG. 7 p.m. CES, 2221 E. Northern Lights,

May 20 - 24, Wednesday - Saturday

Hiland Mountain Correctional Facility Garden Art & Plant Sale Big Event - Sunday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, 9101 Hesterberg Road, Hiland Road exit off the Glenn Hwy in Eagle River. Follow the signs, 694-9511

May 23, Saturday

*Alaska Botanical Garden Plant Sale, 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm Membership Drive & Grand Re-Opening of "Shop-in-the-Garden", members only sale 10:00 am to 12 noon, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, www.alaskabg.org

*Alaska Rock Garden Society Plant Sale (Wasilla), 3379 Inlet Vista Circle, Snow Fire Garden, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm; map of gardens open for touring that day will be available at the sale. For additional information, Florence Carney 376-5390

*Valley Garden Club Annual Plant Sale, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Boys and Girls Club 3700 E. Bogard Road, Wasilla. For information call 745-7676

May 30, Saturday

Wildflower Garden Club Plant Sale, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm, at Sally K.'s; 7435 Old Harbor Avenue in Muldoon. For additional information, call Sally Karabelnikoff at 333-8237

June 4th, Thursday

Anchorage Garden Club: How to Grow Organic Vegetables presented by Mark Remple; 7:00 PM, Pioneer Schoolhouse 437 E Third Street; 907-566-0539

June 6th, Saturday

Anchorage Garden Club Annual Plant Sale - Voice mail 907-566-0539 for details

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



Inside this issue....

Message From the President
AMGA Meeting: Topiary Making
MG Focus: Dan Elliott
Ten Common Nursery Mistakes and How to Avoid Them
Lady Bug Legends
Central Peninsula MG News
NWF Photo Contest
Bird Chatter
Denali National Park Seminars
Garden Snaps Map
Plant a Tree For Alaska
Garden Event Calendar



Stephen Nowers / Anchorage Daily News
Dan Elliott harvests apples from his orchard on Thursday, October 9, 2008. Elliott grows over 100 varieties at his home off Fairview Loop in Palmer. [Article "Master Gardener Focus: Dan Elliott" on page 3.]

Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Inc.
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