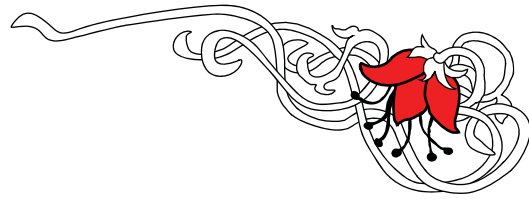


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 12, Issue 7

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER August 2010



Message From Jane By Jane Baldwin

Weather or Not: Our gardens grow on: talk about your lush and green, we've got it this year. I did a bit of whining earlier this summer about not being able to keep my garden beds watered, but not so recently! My woodland, water-loving primula are loving the rain. One *P. florindae* plant's flowers are 3-1/2' tall and the plant is huge.

Our very cloudy and somewhat cool summer has produced some of the most incredible displays of flowering shrubs and plants I've ever seen. Last month I waxed poetic about lilacs. This month, I have no words to describe the peonies flowering around town for the past 3 or 4 weeks: absolutely incredible. The past week has seen the mock orange flowers around town pop. I have an unpruned, allowed to grow free-form, mock orange that tops out at about 10-12' that is currently indescribably beautiful and fills my yard with the smell of orange blossoms. And when I'm not smelling the mock orange, I'm smelling the nutmeg like scent of the *P. florindae*s. There's something about a still, overcast, humid evening that really triggers the scents of flowers. It's not the same on a sunny warm day.

Has the wet stuff falling from the sky slowed progress on your want-to-do list? With August soon to be upon us is anyone besides me beginning to fret a bit about not having enough time left to get things done? Guess we'll just do what we can, and there is always next year. And in the meantime, I hope you all are taking time to smell the roses.

Being held captive indoors has also caused my brain to meander a bit. Thinking about garden labels. Thinking about sawfly larvae. Even got to wondering how tall COULD a tree grow. On that one I found that researchers have put a theoretical height limit of about 426 feet - seems that it might not be possible for a tree to drag water up much higher. Who knew? So what does it do when it gets that tall? Get fatter instead of taller? Think a couple of California redwoods are still the tallest trees (and probably the oldest) in the world; seem to remember something like 375' tall, but I could be off on that.

Still at least another six weeks of gardening time, and garden tours ahead, so it's not over yet - see you in a garden.

MG Google Group online: AMGAA Master Gardeners in Anchorage Alaska

<http://groups.google.com/group/AkMGAA>

Up and running (thank you Mary Rydesky) since the first part of July, it's a 'party line' style web location for sharing MG related information. Participate by following directions for 'joining' the AMGAA Master Gardeners in Anchorage Alaska google group. Notices to MGs about matters of MG interest and summer MG garden tours can be found on this site. Messages can be posted and you can reply to posted messages. Or, you can read other MGs postings. Things I learned this past month from the AMGAA google group:

Slugs: 'slug boards' about the size of a for sale sign, 1/4 to 3/8 inch thick work better than anything thicker, for slug hiding places which can be turned over and slugs squished or otherwise dispatched (thanks Rosemary). I've since switched out my slug boards.

Rhubarb Spray keeps rabbits gone bad away (thanks Cheryl Chapman). Read the Rabbit War thread on the AMGAA MG google group site on how to prepare rhubarb for spraying. Basically you boil it, steep it, strain it and spray it. Rhubarb leaves are poisonous (remember the oxalic acid), so don't spray it on edible plants or on plants that pets might nibble on. Cheryl says it works to deter the rabbits until it rains and then it needs to be reapplied.

Aphids#1: I was so intrigued with the rhubarb spray that I did a bit of internet exploring and found several mentions that this same rhubarb approach was good for Aphids, in addition to rabbits. Now I'm wondering if it would keep moose from chomping on tulip flowers since rhubarb is up and growing pretty early in the season.

Aphid#2: I also learned that another a gardener from the Valley reported whirring lambs quarter in a blender with water, steeping, straining and spraying on plants and spreading the slush around the plants was THE CURE for aphids.

Continued on page 2

Garden Labels By Jane Baldwin

Labeling and identifying my plants is a constant battle. I tried writing names on pretty river washed rocks with a white paint pen, but I kept picking up the rocks to weed and setting them down somewhere else. Tried metal labels (costly) and the plants died and I couldn't reuse the label.



My labels mysteriously disappear, visit neighboring plants, relocate themselves to garden paths or great distances from original placement. Some folks say mischievous magpies do it, but I suspect my spring clean up raking and mulch removal has something to do with it. Although

I did see a magpie fly off with one of my silver beaded dragonflies that I had stuck up on my fence.

A couple of new practices seem to be helping me keep labels in place. I put the label in the same place each time (to the rear and slightly right of center), burying the label deeply leaving only 1/2 to 1" visible. In some cases I double label, completely burying one in the same place for each plant (left side towards the rear). If the visible label does disappear, I know that I can still find a label by digging up the buried one.

Printing on labels: Writing in pencil lasts longer than writing with a permanent marker. A small labeling machine with sticky tape on a plastic marker lasts the longest for me. On some labels the stickiness failed after five winters, but the labels were still legible. Last year I treated myself to one of the labeling machines (a Brothers I think) and began a rather laborious labeling effort (I'm not done yet, but that's a winter TV-watching project).

Recycling Options

#1: Plastic labels written in pencil can be erased and reused.

#2: Recycle garden market pack labels - blank reverse side is favored. Sticky machine labels cover labels with printing. I've been known to spray paint the printed side with brown to avoid the distraction of those white labels visibly sticking up all over my garden. . .

#3: Venetian Blinds. The 1" inch variety seems to be the best size. Cut them to label size using utility scissors and round off the top corners. Write in pencil or permanent marker; the sticky machine label adheres nicely and lasts the longest. Put them on your 'to find' list for garage sales.

#4: Labels can be cut from other plastic products like gallon milk and juice containers, flat lids from coffee cans or from disposable containers like cottage cheese, yogurt and margarine, etc. Some you can write on with pencil or ball point pen and most will take the sticky label tape.

#5: Make metal labels from aluminum soda cans. The edges are sharp initially, so be careful. Using utility scissors, cut down one side, starting at the top opening (this first cut is the worst). Cut down to the bottom; then around the bottom and then around the top; open out the sheet. Fold it in half and then in half again (crease marks for four labels). Work each crease back and forth to separate or cut them with utility scissors. Fold the long edges over narrowly to within about 1/8" of the short edges. Scoring the fold line with a table knife or ball point pen makes the folding easier. Using needle nosed pliers or other pliers fold the long edges over and crimp; then fold the short edges over. Punch a hole near one short edge with an ice pick or other sharp object (a nail works). At this point you can do a couple of different mounts. With a relatively stiff piece of wire (coat hanger weight) use the needle nosed pliers to bend an end into a "C" shape; insert through the tag hole and close the "C" shape. Bend the wire so that you have a straight stiff end to insert into the ground. You can use a more flexible wire (even a twistem) and secure through the hole. With this method you could either attach the wire around a stem or attach the wire to a long galvanized nail and insert into the ground. Write on the tag with a ball point pen, pressing hard to emboss into the aluminum. This one I'm gonna try soon, or maybe this is another winter tv-watching project. . .

MG Google Groups.. cont. from page 1

MG rapid response rescuer: Wedding flowers had been designed and ordered that included Lady's Mantle. When the fresh flowers arrived to be assembled the day before the wedding: NO LADY'S MANTLE! The stressed mother-of-the-bride contacted AMGAA. A quick plea to MGs for Lady's Mantle went out on the new AMGAA google group site and within two hours Claire Chan reported that wedding prep party had just left her place with their arms full of Lady's Mantle and smiles on their faces. Nice (and quick) save, Claire! This google group site is gonna be fun. Try it, you'll like it!

Extension Highlights

The Refugee Farmers' Market Program is in full swing! Fresh International Gardens has been selling at farmers' markets in Anchorage on Wednesdays and Saturdays. This Saturday, they will be selling at two markets! The Spenard Farmers' Market is located in the parking lot of Chilkoot Charlie's and will be open from 10am to 3pm. Center Market is at University Center by the Natural Pantry and is open from 10am to 4pm. Come meet the gardeners and check out the beautiful and delicious vegetables they are growing! This program is supported by the UAF Cooperative

Master Gardener Focus: Carmel Tysver By Cheryl Chapman

For Carmel Tysver, it started with the dirt: There



wasn't much at the new Tysver home in southeast Anchorage 26 years ago. The comfortable two-story backed up to a wild bog and sat on a 4-foot pad of peat that didn't exactly say "welcome" to the delphiniums, Oriental poppies, campanulas, Aquilegia, violas and pansies she'd grown up with in Palmer.

There was, though, a rock wall - her mother had had a rock garden along with her flowers, and the vegetables for the family. Carmel also had noticed hypertufa troughs lush with plants in Upsala, Sweden, and at the Northwest Garden Show in Seattle. She decided to solve her soil problem by rising above it. Today the Tysver property is a mosaic of flower-jeweled hypertufa containers, rock gardens and drilled tufa draped with saxifrage, primulas and blankets of purple sweet-smelling thyme.

"All the spaces for trough gardens are full now," she says, "but I'm still trying to figure out where to put another."

Carmel, who pioneered hypertufa troughs in Anchorage and teaches how-to classes regularly at the Alaska Botanical Garden, has done three so far just this year. Most anything can be used as a mold for the Perlite, polypropylene fiber, peat moss and cement that's stirred together and dries to a substance that looks like cement but is much lighter, permeable, and stands up to Alaska weather.

Back then she also had been reading about a lightweight, porous, pale gray rock called tufa that could be drilled or carved, dreaming about how interesting such natural forms could look among her containers. In Brisco, British Columbia, there was a tufa mine. The owner



sold tufa by the piece.

With the 26th Tysver wedding anniversary coming up, the Jade, her husband, Neil, deviated to another stone: "We need to go to Brisco this year and get you some tufa," he told her.

"He spoils me rotten," said Carmel. "Who else would offer to go get two tons of rock?"

And so the Tysvers headed south in a pickup truck, pulling a trailer, and "I got to pick out every piece I wanted," says Carmel. "The first piece weighed 450 pounds, and we put it over the axle." Loaded and tarped against rain - wet tufa is tufa that's not going anywhere -- the Tysvers started home, the trailer sagging, the pickup straining through downpours, snow and a thrown bearing.

"We unloaded it a piece at a time," Carmel says. "The front walk used to be much wider."

A nurse who cares for cancer patients, Carmel has brought her passion for container gardening to them as well with tabletop greenery, closed bowls with charcoal in the bottom that require little care or watering. "I like succulents myself," she says, "but there's a lot to be said for carnivorous plants."

Her own small plantation of vegetative carnivores lives in an old silver-plate punchbowl microbog in the sun-room: a pitcher plant, miniature papyrus, sundew, and two species of native Pinguiculas, or butterworts. There are few gnats in the Tysver household.

A striking potted tree with bright green leaves reaches for the ceiling in the living room.

"A Buddhist nun in Lhasa gave me three seeds of what she called the Sacred Tree of Tibet," she says. "I planted them and when they sprouted, gave two away, but I think it's actually a vine. It's not poisonous. The cats eat it."

It may be that what the neighborhood children call "that weird tree" in the Tysver living room is a descendant of the Bodhi Tree, *Ficus religiosa*, that the Buddha was sitting under when he attained enlightenment. That tree's progeny are cherished and propagated today in Buddhist monasteries and gardens around the world.

The Tysver gardens always are works in progress with amazing things popping up. Some are planted; some plant themselves.

"We had 74 blossoms of bog orchids this year from the swamp," says Carmel. "I walked and counted them every day to be sure nothing happened to them."

A blooming tufa rock out front, a 45-pounder, supports a community of saxifrages, *Platanthera dilatata* (a white bog orchid), and a draba. Elsewhere, *Bulbocodium vernum* (spring meadow saffron), more saxifrages, sweet alyssum, pink and blue *Penstemon* (beard-tongue), gentians, species tulips and primulas enamel their designated spaces. Iris rub shoulders with *Primula cortusoides*.

Continued on page 6

The Dreaded Sawfly By Jane Baldwin

Sawflies are a group of insects related to wasps and bees. Their name is derived from the saw-like ovipositor the adult female uses to lay eggs. Adult sawflies are small, inconspicuous wasp-like insects that do not sting. There are many different species of sawflies and each one seems to be host-specific - that is, each species seems to prefer specific plants or groups of related plants. Some sawfly larvae are slug-like, appearing slimy, unsegmented and translucent, greenish to black, while others appear wax-covered in some of their developmental stages. Larvae of different species may be leaf rollers, web formers, leaf skeletonizers, leafminers, shoot borers, or cause plant galls. A number of different sawfly species do damage in our gardens. Sawflies overwinter as pupae in soil or under debris. Larvae feed for about 2 weeks. Different sized larvae pupate over a period of several days and adults appear in 10-11 days (with the exception of the overwintering population). Adults can be seen flying around and laying eggs on the leaf margins of plants during the day. Chances are those small 1/4" blackish flies you may see in your yard or the small black flies that gather in the center of some flowers are probably sawflies of one kind or another! We have lots of different sawfly pests around, but the two on my mind are the ones that hit my columbines and roses.

Columbine Sawfly - *Pristiphora aquilegiae*



The Columbine sawfly larvae devours the leaves of columbines in late spring/early summer. They begin feeding on the leaf edge and eat inward leaving only the mid-veins. Numerous larvae can occur on a plant and can rapidly defoliate an entire columbine plant, leaving only the veins of the leaves remaining, looking like match sticks. A European insect, it was apparently introduced into the Ottawa area of Canada about 1964, collected in New York in 1985 and in Maine in 1988 and has now spread to many other states. The adult sawfly is wasp-like and about 1/4" (5-6mm) long with a glossy black body, head and antennae.

The caterpillar-like larvae are 1/2" (5-10mm) long, leaf green in color and hairless.



Young larvae have a brownish head capsule which becomes greenish as the larvae grow. Columbine (*aquilegiae* sp) is the only known host.

I've always grown columbine, but think

it's been about 7 to 8 years since I first noticed severe columbine damage - to the point where I got rid of all of mine about 4 years ago because I couldn't control it. I planted a couple this year, and so far, so good, but I'm watching closely.

Roseslug Sawfly -- *Endelomyia aethiops*

Not really a slug, but a sawfly larvae - and apparently there are three species of roseslugs. The European roseslug sawfly (*Endelomyia aethiops*) is the one that seems to most closely resemble the light green larvae seen on local roses. The other two roseslug species are the Bristly Roseslug sawfly (*Cladius difformis*) and the Curled Roseslug Sawfly (*Allantus cinctus*). The three species are all similar in color (light green), but are distinguishable: the Bristly Roseslug Sawfly having bristle-like hairs covering the body, and the Curled Roseslug Sawfly that curls up the body when at rest. The Roseslug Sawfly larvae feed on the surface of leaves (usually the underside of the leaf), leaving behind the outer papery translucent surface layer of tissue that turns brown and has a scorched parchment like appearance. This damage



Bristly Roseslug *Cladius difformis*
on underside of leaf
Photo by Wikipedia

interferes with photosynthesis and weakens the plant, leaving it susceptible to other pests and damage. Think I had my first symptoms of lacey leafed sawfly damage last year and this year it was pretty severe. Debbie Hinchey thinks the roseslugs appeared locally about 4 maybe 5 years ago.

Different species have different numbers of generations each year: the Columbine sawfly appears to have 2 or 3 generations a year. The European roseslug may have only one generation per year, with at least two for the Curled roseslug and as many as six generations for the Bristly roseslug. Thus, effective control needs to be on-going effort, not a onetime effort.

Control measures include hand picking larvae, if feasible before severe damage occurs. Larvae can sometimes be dislodged with forceful water spraying - be sure to direct spray to both the upper and under sides of the leaves. Horticultural oil, insecticidal soaps, and neem oil can be used to control sawflies. Insecticides labeled for sawflies and perennials/ornamentals use (such as imidacloprid, acephate, carbaryl, spinosad, permethrin and bifenthrin) should help to control sawflies if applied when the larvae begin feeding, with the best results realized if used when larvae are very young. It should be noted that *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT) will not control sawflies.

Apply insecticides only when larvae are actually present, before infestations reach critical levels. Always be careful to read the label directions fully before applying and follow directions completely.

We should support natural enemies of sawflies by responsible insecticide and pesticide use. Insects such as parasitic wasps, insectivorous birds, small mammals, predaceous beetles, etc. assist in keeping sawfly populations lower. Remember that insecticides and pesticides are frequently indiscriminate and may target beneficial insects as well. Restraint in such use allows beneficial species to assist with your control efforts.



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

Dragon Fly Days, at the front of July, was wonderful. The Master Gardeners, along with others, brought John Hudson and Bob Armstrong of Juneau, co-authors of "Dragonflies of Alaska" up for a learning weekend. The events were well attended--total for both days was 269 people!-- and everyone learned lots about the bugs. They found 13 of the 35 Alaskan species in the brief time they were here, even with the weather marginal on Saturday.

Our Sterling neighborhood has had a bit of good luck. A Kenai beekeeper was given an animal control citation and had to move her four bee hives...to neighbor Mark White's top deck. On a dry day my raspberry bushes just hum with activity. I hope she brings them back next year when the honeyberries are blooming.

I came across a garden chemical that had been sitting on the shelf for several years and decided to try it out. It's called Ornamec and kills grass in established plantings. There are over 500 plants listed that can be sprayed over without damage to anything but the grass. I've added a new plant because when the grass died the established planting was horsetail. Oh well.

We lost our big nursery, Kenai River Nursery, to bankruptcy last year and the contents were auctioned off mid-month. I wish I could have figured out how to haul off and store the 70 bales of Pro-Mix that was one of the lots. Sigh.

I planted "aphid alley" (peppers and eggplants with cukes and basil for interest) in the greenhouse and then went to order the praying mantis egg casing. Everyone was sold out until next year. The aphids must have known that because they moved in in droves earlier than usual so now I go out with my Safer's bottle a couple times a day and hose them down. The aphids that fall to the ground just saunter over to the tomato leaves that touch the dirt and establish residency there.

I stuck a thermometer into the soil where the tomatoes are and the temperature was 63° and then I watered with well water which is 39°. The temperature immediately dropped to 45° and stayed there on a sunny day for several hours. That was an eye opener and I'm now watering from a big garbage can while exhorting the plants to grow as there are only six, no five, no four more weeks.

I have a tomato variety that I just labeled "4 oz. greenhouse" planted in a big pot as well as the center growing bed. The plant in the pot is way ahead of the other one. It set fruit earlier and more of them. That also was an eye opener. Wait 'till next year....

Being in the middle of the world meant that MG Kathy Warfinbee and I did our annual trek to Homer to the Homer garden Club's weekend. The speakers were Erica Glasener of Georgia, who spoke in person and Elliot Coleman of Maine, via an internet hookup. Coleman's talk was on 4-season gardening and had some ideas that could translate to up here. And we also visited six gardens. The best one, we thought, was a Swiss chalet with 20-year-old kiwis. Male kiwi flowers are delightfully fragrant.

After summer in May, we've had 1-1/2 inches of rain in July for what someone said passes for summer this year. Oh well, wait 'till next year.

Birds Eat My Bugs! Debbie Hinchey



I realized about a month ago that I did not have leaf rollers (a moth caterpillar) all over my garden like in the past few years. Then I noticed that chickadees were working the few rolled up leaves I did have and eating the worms - and maybe the pupae, too.

Next, I noticed how badly the rose slugs were attacking my roses. (Rose slugs are not a slug, but another type of sawfly larvae specific to roses.) There were sometimes over five of them per leaflet! I would smash the ones that I saw, but there were hundreds all over the bush. They are often difficult to see and come in various sizes - maybe different ages. They are a yellowish-green and often line up with the veins of the leaf that are the same color.

These larvae do not eat the leaves entirely; just skeletonize them by eating out all of the green in between the tiny veins. They do not mind eating from the top, bottom, or edge of the leaf.

On the Anchorage Garden Club's July 25th Garden Tour the rose slug damage was easy to see at the Centennial Rose Garden (located near the west end of the Park Strip). Some people asked if BT would work, but looking at the Missouri Botanical Garden (MBG) website, it says that BT does not work on these critters.

At the Centennial Rose Garden there are some bushes without much green left on the leaves. One poor bush is particularly susceptible and there is no green left on any leaf, only the pink flowers adorn the bush.

We (the Alaska Rose Society) are not suppose to spray any poisons (insecticides, fungicides, etc.) at this public garden. My personal opinion objects to spraying more poison into the environment anyway. I just hope that something will come along to get these rose slugs - that just arrived in Anchorage no more than five years ago.

The MBG site also says that there are many natural predators that can attack them like parasitic wasps, predatory beetles, fungal and viral diseases, small mammals and insectivorous birds. The site encourages supporting these enemies of the sawflies by responsible pesticide use - which I interpret as DO NOT spray anything. You just do not know what else you are killing when you go after only one critter.

Well, the system seems to already be working! The Black Capped and Boreal Chickadees are thick in my yard. They and Yellow Warblers are now eating the rose slugs. I also see Nut Hatches and Juncos but I have not seen them actually eating "bad guys." (They may be eating the seeds that have developed from all of the plants that many people would have dead headed.)

This gives me more strength to resist spraying poisons into the garden and tolerate the damage.

P.S. The yellow warblers are now eating aphids off of the Thalictrum!!!! Yeah!!!!



Bird Chatter

No Bird Chatter this month...

Movie Trivia

What recent movie has singing & dancing slugs as some of the main characters?

Answer: Flushed Away

Which recent movie has a main character named "Primrose"?

Answer: Greenfingers

(Somebody has been watching movies in the rain instead of gardening!)

A book is like carrying a garden in your pocket.
- Chinese Proverb

Swiss Chard Recipe From Kenai

13 to 14 oz. chard (about 1 large bunch)
1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
3 Tbs. pine nuts
Kosher salt
1 Tbs. minced garlic
1 Tbs. cold unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces
1/4 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
1/4 cup thinly sliced fresh basil leaves (8 to 10 large)

Pull or cut the stems from the chard leaves. Cut or rip the leaves into 2- to 3-inch pieces and wash and dry them well. Rinse the stems and slice them crosswise 1/4 inch thick.

In a 12-inch nonstick stir-fry pan or skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the pine nuts and cook, stirring constantly, until lightly browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer the pine nuts to a plate, leaving behind as much oil as possible.

Return the pan to medium-high heat, add the chard stems and a pinch of salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until shrunken and beginning to brown lightly, 6 to 7 minutes. Add the garlic and cook just until fragrant, about 15 seconds. Add the chard leaves and 1/4 tsp. salt. Toss with tongs until just wilted, 1 to 2 minutes. (If using a skillet, you may need to add the chard in batches, letting the first batch wilt before adding more.) Remove the pan from the heat, add the cold butter pieces and stir just until the butter has melted.

Using tongs, immediately transfer about half of the leaves and stems to a serving plate and arrange. Sprinkle on half of the Parmigiano, basil, and pine nuts. Layer on the remaining leaves, stems, and pan juices, and garnish with the remaining cheese, basil, and pine nuts. Serve immediately.

nutrition information (per serving):

Calories (kcal): 480; Fat (kcal): 45; Fat Calories (g): 400; Saturated Fat (g): 12; Protein (g): 11; Monounsaturated Fat (g): 18; Carbohydrates (g): 15; Polyunsaturated Fat (g): 11; Sodium (mg): 690; Cholesterol (mg): 35; Fiber (g): 6;

MG Focus: Carmel Tysver cont from page 3



Cotoneaster ("buggy") espaliers the west side of the house behind white, yellow and orange Icelandic poppies, a Sitka white rose, orange freckled lilies from Carmel's childhood home in the Mat-Su and aromatic tarragon from France.

Hypertufa troughs, each a composition, define the west side of the path with a miniature bleeding heart (*Dicentra peregrina*), a native of northern Siberia, white moss campion grown from seed, *Hosta "Tiny Tears,"* native *Bistort* (*polygorum Bistortoides*), shooting star, eidelweiss poised to bloom, white and blue *Aconitums* and a flood of creeping purple thyme that the magpies pluck like eyebrows.

A long raised bed of mostly native plants lies between the back yard and the bog spiced with native red columbine, pasque flowers, white fireweed and a few dwarf fireweed, knikknik (a tundra slope plant), blue eyed grass, *Grass of Parnassus*, alpine daisies, native coral bells, death camas, Eskimo potato, white *Bistort*, a couple of native junipers, a wealth of sedums, anemones, white *Troillius*, *Potentilla*, white and blue iris both, cow parsley ("blew in") and horsetail ("my best crop this year").

A fenced compound keeps out moose but not magpies, who upend pots in the cold frame for sport. Carmel is "bound and determined" to have blackberries and has a row started inside the wire, close to the bed of medicinal plants, strawberries and horseradish.

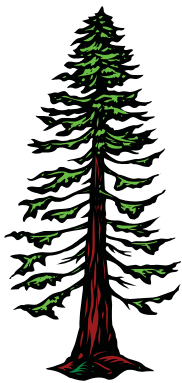
Aloft, "We have the only tree house in the neighborhood," she says.

In addition to her own rock and trough beds, Carmel has been working with the Alaska Rock Garden Society at the Alaska Botanical Garden to create new rock gardens after a welcome windfall. She has not been the only one to visit Brisco: Someone else in Anchorage got two tons of tufa as well but then had to move unexpectedly.

They donated the whole load to the ABG.

Mushroom & Fungi Identification Workshop

When: Friday, Saturday & Sunday, August 20-22
Where: Extension Office, 809 S. Chugach #2, Palmer
Description: Do you know your mushrooms? Which are safe to consume? How do you identify them? Dr. Gary Laursen, UAF Research Professor in Mycology with the Institute of Arctic Biology, will present this three-day course on identifying and using Alaska mushrooms and fungi. There will be classroom lecture, field forays and exploring fungi using microscopes. Minimum participants, 15; maximum participants, 25
Cost \$100, \$20 for book (optional). Call 745-3360 to register.



A Nickel's Worth of Tree Tips By Nickel LaFleur ISA certified arborist

For me, the overcast rainy days we've had this summer have been ideal for working on and around the trees and shrubs. It's also a good opportunity to really look around at the landscape to see what is and is not working.

When planting trees, don't plant them too deep! Make sure the tree has a flare on the bottom. The root system should start in the top inch of soil. If the tree is potted, don't plant it any deeper than it is in the pot.

A hole dug for the tree should be shaped like a saucer. Dig it wide but no deeper than the root ball. Better to be planted too shallow than too deep. Amending the soil in the saucer is not necessary; making sure the existing soil is turned up and not compacted is important.

Remove ALL material around the tree before planting it. Do not leave it in burlap or a wire basket, neither the wire basket nor the burlap will decompose in our Alaska soils. This is something you must ask the ones planting your trees and insist on! Better yet, when getting the estimate on the 'tree planting ASK if they remove the burlap and basket; if they say no, find another contractor. Trees are the longest living organisms on earth and the proper planting you provide will determine the number of years your tree will be around.

If the tree has soil around its roots, don't carry the tree by the trunk - support it by its root ball.

If it is a grafted tree, the grafted area is not what you use to determine its flare. Use the flare from the root stock. This is the flare that needs to be above ground level. Cut off the shoots that come up from the root stock to encourage growth to go into the grafted cultivar.

When planting trees, they don't necessarily need to be staked. The root ball and the slow soaking of the ground around the planting should be enough to keep the tree supported. However, if you live in a windy area, staking may be done but should be taken off the tree within a couple of years and checked each year. Use arbor tape (material dog leashes are made from) and never wire. Wire and trees don't mix so don't use it, please.

If you string lights in your trees, take them out in the spring. Much like light decorations are taken off the house, they need to be taken off the trees, too.

Don't use your tree for sign posts by nailing into or against them. The bark of the tree is needed to help with its system of transporting sugars and water from the leaves to the roots. When you wound the tree, it spends a lot of its energy with the healing process that it would have otherwise spent on producing leaves. This causes the tree some stress and everyone knows that 'bugs' attack trees that stressed either due to lack of water or mechanical damage. This doesn't have to happen.

Trees need to be watered, especially their first three years while they are acclimating to the environment. Use a soaker hose around the perimeter that is left on all night for at least one day a week. Having the ground area a soft spongy condition is a good way for the tree roots to be able to reach out.

Garden Event Calendar

August 6-10, Friday - Tuesday

Tanana Valley State Fair, Fairbanks

August 9

MG field trip, 7pm; MG Erika Kienlen. Watch emails and/or google group site for address and directions.

August 16, Monday

MG Valley field trip, 7pm: (1) Fruit trees and perennials at Dan Elliotts; (2) Rock gardens and more, Florine Carney at Snowfire Gardens. Watch emails and/or google group site for directions. Think car pooling and early departure.

August 20-22, Friday - Sunday

Mushroom & Fungi Identification Workshop; Cooperative Extension Service, Palmer Office. Dr. Gary Laursen, UAF Research Professor in Mycology with the Institute of Arctic Biology will present a three day course on identifying and using Alaska mushrooms and fungi using classroom lectures, field forays and exploring fungi using microscopes. Cost: \$100, \$20 for book (optional). Registration required; call Palmer CES at 907-745-3360 for details. Registration and payment deadline August 13.

August 20-22, Friday - Sunday

Kenai Peninsula State Fair

August 21, Saturday

10am to 5pm

Plastic Garden Pot Recycling; Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road (one block south of Tudor, Anchorage). The following plastic garden pots, trays and cell packs will be accepted:

(1) #2 HDPE pots; (2) #5 PP, #6 PS and #7 other pots, cell packs and trays. Rinse or remove all soil from containers. Remove metal hangars. Stack like pots to save space. Pre-sort pots before arriving (there will be 2 bins at event). Only bring pots during the event; no pre or post event drop off! Recyclers are welcome to take pots home for re-use.

August 23, Monday

MG field trip, 7pm. Rock garden, roses, hanging baskets, cannas, ginger and cactus and more. Pat Ryan's gardens. Watch emails and/or google group site for details.

August 26-September 6

Alaska State Fair, Palmer

September 4-5, Saturday - Sunday

Kodiak State Fair



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@alaska.net (NEW EMAIL)

AMGA Web Site: www.alaskamastergardeners.org

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

To send concerns or information to the AMGA directly, mail to:

AMGA

P.O. Box 221403

Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

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 Jane
MG Google Groups on line
Garden Labels
MG Focus: Carmel Tysver
The Dreaded Sawfly
Central Peninsula MG News
Birds Eat My Bugs!
A Nickel's Worth of Tree Tips
Garden Event Calendar



Carmel Tysver, hypertufa pioneer, and her gardening friend enjoy the sun. Carmel is the featured master gardener in the MG Focus article, on page 3.

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

Non Profit Organization
US Postage Paid
Permit #107
Anchorage, Alaska