



Anchorage Chapter



Volume 12, Issue 9

# ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER September 2010



## Message From Jane

Summer (such as it was) is winding down and it could be cause for a bit of melancholy. . or NOT! Seasons pass and the cycle repeats, so summer will come again. Gardeners know this and now we are doing the things in our gardens with an eye towards next spring's rebirth - right? The stuff we didn't have time for all summer. Dividing perennials, emptying pots, beefing up the soil, moving plants around, getting rid of plants that aren't working like we wanted - this is still the fun part of it all - right? Before we move into the not so fun put-it-to-bed chores like picking up, putting away the hoses, lawn furniture, stacking the empty pots, moving garden tools to the back of the shed, moving snow shovels forward, etc. Note to self: Be sure to put potting soil where I can access it in the spring so I don't have to buy more while I wait for the snow bank to melt to get at my reserves.

Things you can still do:

--Prolong that fresh herb flavor into winter months by rinsing fresh herbs, pureeing them with a bit of water or broth in a food processor/blender. Freeze in ice cube trays and store the frozen cube in labeled plastic bags. Good for soups and sauces.

--Gather seeds to save for seed exchanges - or for starting next spring. A simple way is to cut seed stalks, put them in a brown paper lunch sack, label, and pin the open sack to a close line (or equivalent) in your garage, let them dry for a few weeks, collect the seeds and store them in recycled envelopes in a glass jar in your refrigerator. Besides saving flower seeds, I know a family that has saved broccoli seed for spring starting for years.

--Divide perennials. For the huge day lily or any other perennial that turns from one plant into ten like mine did, offer excess starts to MGs using the google group site. Email posting to: <AkMGAA@googlegroups.com> (check out the site at <http://groups.google.com/group/AkMGAA>)

--Have some fun and experiment a bit with propagating (mock oranges, roses, forsythia, potentilla, lilacs, etc.) by bending over a low branch to touch the soil and pin it in place with a rock, garden staple, or a piece of bent coat hanger - and forget about it until next year -- it may well root by next summer.

--Prune some lilac suckers and stick a bunch of 10-12" cuttings in the ground at the back of a perennial bed, burying them one or two leaf/branch nodes deep and forget about them - a number of them will root. You've got nothing to lose if they don't root, and new plants to gain if they do!

--Take a look at your garden, walk around your neighborhood or drive around town and pay attention to what is still flowering and what looks good this time of year. Take notes to consider next spring.

--Except for a couple of late blooming Asiatic lilies, *Primula florindae* and a late blooming day lily, my perennials are pretty well done for the season. But there are some annuals still in full flower & looking good, that I will plant again next year: Clary sage, Tangerine Gem marigolds, *Nemesia* (Juicy Fruit series 'Kumquat') and some gorgeous *Salpiglossis*.

--What's lookin' good right now in your yard? What did you grow this year that you will or won't grow again next year?

--Nurseries are ordering next year's plants now, consider letting them know what you're interested in.



## Dale Marshall's Giant Pumpkin

In only his third year of trying, Dale Marshall of Anchorage may have hit upon the secret recipe for growing giant pumpkins and may have one that will not only break the state record, but may top 1,200 lbs.

The current state record of 1,019 lbs is held by J.D. Megchelsen of Nikiski for a gourd he grew in 2006.

According to the website [www.bigpumpkins.com](http://www.bigpumpkins.com) where both Marshall and Megchelsen keep a running grower's diary, Megchelsen estimated his big pumpkin to weigh in at over 700 lbs and still growing, about a week ago.

Don't forget to stop in at the veggie display in the barn at the Fair on or after Sept 1st to see what weight these giants finally achieve!



## Summer Garden Tours Robbie Frankevich

It seems like just a few weeks ago we were on our way to Forget Me Not Nursery, the first garden tour of the season, to see their tulip display. Now I'm standing in Costco, looking at the shelves of tulip bulbs for fall planting. In a couple of hours I will be at the home of Pat Ryan for the last tour of the season. The 21st garden this summer. That's right. We visited twentyone gardens - what a treat.

We enjoyed gardens from Girdwood to Wasilla, from the Hillside to Turnagain. We got to see rock gardens, perennial gardens, shade gardens, sunny gardens, water features, an orchard, a tree tour, tulips arranged to look like sailboat, a garden split in two - one half for flowers one half for the dog, vegetable gardens, vegetables in containers, even a cactus and succulent garden.

One night we had a potluck, plant swap and garden tour all rolled into one. Another night we had five wonderful gardens, all within walking distance of each other! How do I describe so many fantastic gardens in the space of a newsletter? I can't. Instead I can only say thanks.

Thanks to everyone who shared their garden. It was the highlight of my summer to go on so many garden tours. I am inspired in so many ways. I think I need to start a rock garden, plant some fruit trees and add a water feature. That ought to keep me busy for a while.

Thank you to the gardeners who opened their gardens for an evening: Kathy Feathergill-Calvin of Forget Me Not Nursery, Robbie Frankevich and Alyeska Resort, Jackie Graham, David Sears, Pat Leary and UAA, Sandy St. George, Amelia Walsh, Pat Anderson Marge Olson, Amy Olmstead, Camille Williams, Camille's neighbor Connie Jo Peterson, Debbie Hinchy, Sharon Davies, Nancy Sullivan, Madge Oswald, Erica Kienlen, Florene Carney, Dan Elliot and Pat Ryan.

Start thinking about next year and give us your ideas and suggestions on gardens to visit next summer. See you then!

## Advanced MG Soils Course, 2010 Julie Riley

This fall's topic for the Advanced Master Gardener course is "Soils and Soil Amendments". Classes will be held on Tuesday's from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at CES's new conference room. Because the Anchorage CES office will be moving in October, classes will begin on November 2 instead of in October as originally planned. The class will meet for four weeks ending November 23.

The course will focus on Alaska's cold soils, their physical properties, nutrients, pH, the biological activity, soil-less potting mixes, how pesticides break down in soils and how adding soil amendments affects soil physically, chemically and biologically.

We are fortunate to have a slate of very talented and knowledgeable instructors including Dr. Jeff Smeenk, CES Commercial Horticulture Specialist, Dr. Mingchu Zhang and Dr. Steve Sparrow with the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Dr. Steve Seefeldt with the USDA Agricultural Research Service, also from Fairbanks.

Class participation will be limited to 50 people. The cost of the course will be about \$20. A three-tier priority registration process is described below.

Advanced Master Gardeners who completed last year's entomology core course, their additional 8 hours of CEUs and their 10 hours of volunteer service have registration priority for the "Soils & Soil Amendments" course. Priority registration begins Monday, September 27 and ends a week later on Sunday Oct 3. Advanced MGs must have completed their volunteer hours by this date to be considered for tier 1 registration. (Please contact Julie Riley if you need help with ideas for completing your hours.) MGs who have complete the core entomology course, but not their CEUs and 10 hours of volunteer service will be considered for tier 2 registration which begins Monday, October 4.

If you are a Master Gardener and have completed your 40 hours of volunteer service, you may register beginning October 4. Tier 2 registration ends Sunday October 10. Beginning Monday October 11, anyone who is not a qualified Master Gardener can register. This includes Alaska MG Association Anchorage non-voting members and those MGs who have not completed their 40 hours of volunteer time. Registration will continue until all 50 spots in the class are full. Any Advanced MGs or MGs who have not completed their commitment of volunteer hours can register during tier 3 registration if space is available.

As was the case last year, only those participants who complete all four of the core classes will be eligible to become an Advanced Master Gardener (Soils) and receive a nametag (additional 8 CEUs must also be completed). Those Master Gardeners who have completed the core course/CEU requirement for both years (entomology and soils) will receive 'Advanced Master Gardener, II' nametags. For a full description of how the Advanced Master Gardener program works, please see the program brochure posted on the AMGAA website at [www.alaskamastergardeners.org/](http://www.alaskamastergardeners.org/).

Sharon Hoffbeck is in charge of the "Soils & Soil Amendments" Advanced Master Gardener course registration. Please contact her to register via telephone during your designated registration time. Sharon's phone number is 345-1222. If you have questions regarding the upcoming registration, you may also contact her via email at [sh385@acsalaska.net](mailto:sh385@acsalaska.net).

Prior to the opening of priority registration on September 28, the course syllabus and speaker biographies will be posted on the Goggle Groups site, AMGAA Master Gardeners in Anchorage Alaska. If you are not registered as part of the Group or do not use the Internet, you may contact the Anchorage CES office for a copy.

The suggested text for the course is *The Soul of Soil: A Soil-Building Guide for Master Gardeners and Farmers*, 1999, 4th Edition, by Grace Gershuny and Joe Smillie, Chelsea Green Publishing Company, White River Junction, Vermont. It sells for about \$20.



## Master Gardener Focus: Pat Anderson By Cheryl Chapman



Master Gardener Pat Anderson has a special tin in her kitchen just for different kinds of tea for guests, and comfortable stools to pull up around the center island at an Apollo Drive household where the hospitality meter is commonly set to "Welcome, friend!"

Need gentle advice? It's there. A snack? That, too. An attentive listener? Check.

Plants to share? Here as well. And so it always has been with the Andersons and their gardens.

Gardening is in her blood. "My mom was always in the garden, always gardening," she says. "One of my first memories is of the *Bergenia* she planted on the north side of our house in Portland, and when I asked her, 'Why here, Mom?' she said, 'It likes shade.' She taught me that plants are like people. They have likes and dislikes, and you need to pay attention to these."

When Pat and her late husband, Robert S. "Andy" Anderson, married, they moved into a new house in a Portland subdivision where there were many young families, "and I wanted to put in a garden like my mom had. We had coral bells up and down the driveway, and sweet alyssum for her."

Pat's gardening ambitions grew along with the young Andersons, Eric, Steven and Kathleen. The neighborhood mothers had started a garden club, the Powder Puff Mums, and they homed in on a nearby city park. "We decided to put in trees and a garden," Pat says. "That was 40 years ago, and you should see those trees now!"

As she had seen opportunity in a plain-Jane park, the Andersons saw opportunity in Alaska and headed north to Anchorage with their three children, eventually fetching up at the Apollo Drive house and its sloping, forested 10,000-square-foot lot.

"I don't know, Andy," Pat said dubiously all those years ago. "This yard seems really small."

"Not so much to take care of," he said comfortably, especially since, though he did not mention this at the time, he would stoutly and successfully resist removal of a single one of the 50-some-odd trees. "He said they protected the house from the wind and the weather," Pat recalls. "He was right, too."

Pat and Andy owned and operated Andy's Karamel korn shop in the Sears Mall, which eventually became Andy's Sweets, Treats 'n Eats, "And with the children and the shop, Andy was right, there wasn't time for a lot of gardening" then, she says.

They terraced their lot and belted it crossways with chunks of Eklutna granite to keep it from sliding across the street and into the neighbors' yards. "Then, the state would give it to you for free, though we ruined our pickup picking it up," says Pat. A rock-bordered front bed sweeps the length of their soft green house, filled with flowering hostas August-fragrant and bobbing with honey bees. Anderson bees.

The bees hum in a hive behind the house. "My plan was to put them off in a corner, but the beekeepers said bees were sociable and would be a lot happier in the middle of the yard," says Pat.

They've been a summer experiment, and exactly as successful as the rain has allowed. No more than people, bees don't like getting wet or cold, and just how busy a bee is depends on the weather. This July and August, they mostly lounged moodily around the hive, stuffing on honey they'd made earlier.

The bee condo is a stack of squares ("supers") that comes apart, "and the bottom super is for pollen," says Pat. "Every pollen is a different color: orange or beige or gold."

Stings? "I've only been stung once, by one bee, and that was because I was running the mower," she says. Pat and son Eric have, however, put in a narrow path along the fence for the bee-averse. The Anderson hive has two sorts: Italian, from south of the Alps, and Carniolans, from Slovenia. The queen's name is Blu.

In a good year, the Andersons could have expected 70 pounds of honey or more. This is not that year. Pat is looking at possibly one jar.

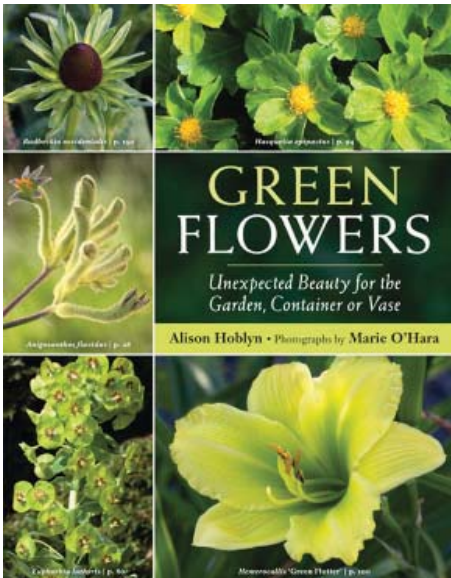
When winter comes, the bees will die. If they were flowers, in Alaska they would be annuals. Some beekeepers try to hold them over by housing them in the bee equivalent of a temperature-controlled greenhouse and feeding them sugar syrup - 100 pounds per hive - but such hothouse bees are vulnerable to viruses and disease.

Bears haven't found the bees, though the neighborhood is a conduit for bruins passing from the Chugach to Baxter Bog and the Chester Creek drainage to the west. The most recent - a blackie - had a set-to with the Andersons' water containers (they fill big garbage cans with water, then let it warm in a utility shed out front before using it on plants). The bears forage the area for trash until the salmon arrive, and to this one, the water reservoirs apparently looked like lunch buckets. The Andersons came out that morning to maul, tipped-over garbage cans, and an urgent neighborhood alert to a wet black bear who was really, really mad.

The Anderson bees are a thread of song stitching together ligularias with leaves the size of a child's umbrella, the lilies, perfumed auriculas alongside a path put in by Eric that hugs the house on the west and north, astilbes, clematis, a Polstjarnan, or Polestar rose, thalictrums ("always aphids in the thalictrums"), a *Rosa glauca* that will be starred with fat red hips, and fragrant forget-me-nots that simply showed up one day next to the compost bins. reminds me always of people I love."

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## Green Plants By Fran Durner



Green is the dominant color in our gardens through grass and foliage, but a green flower - now that makes a gardener stop and take special notice.

Plants with green flowers provide a visual break in a garden border dominated by a rainbow of colors and is also a focal point to rest the eye.

Green has many shades and hues, from dusky gray-

greens to jewel tone blue-greens to chartreuses that sing in the shade. Finding green flowering plants in any garden is unusual and adding them to your collection is a way to inject an otherworldly wow factor.

Here are two books that can help and inspire you to find green flowering plants for your garden:

Green Flowers: Unexpected Beauty for the Garden, Container or Vase by Alison Hoblyn with photographs by Marie O'Hara (Timber Press, hardback \$24.95)

Eighty-four green flowered plants are profiled with care and detail in this attractive hardcover book. Full-page color close-up portraits of each flower are tenderly depicted.

Over half the plants are hardy to Zone 5 or lower although I suspect survival of some of them would be compromised more by the length of our winters than by the temperatures we experience.

What this book lacks in depth it makes up with detail and seductive photos. Except for its relatively average size, *Green Flowers* could be considered one of those coffee table tomes that you leave out in a prominent place for people to discover and enjoy.

If you'd like to dig a little deeper into the lure of green flowers look for Emeralds: 1000 green flowers and 500 choice green foliage plants by Karen Platt. (Soft cover, self-published in Britain, [www.karenplatt.co.uk](http://www.karenplatt.co.uk))

This book goes into depth with extensive lists of varieties of many green flowering plants as well as recommendations for plants with interesting green foliage.

Although each variety is described, with so many plants mentioned you won't find individual photos, so you may have to do a little Google research if your interest is especially piqued by a one of the plant descriptions. Ditto for zone hardiness, which is not listed for every plant.

Platt includes some photos of well-known British gardens and photos from garden shows emphasizing design

with green plants. Platt also includes her own design drawings for creating a mostly green plant garden.

With summer winding down, you won't be disappointed if you include either of these books on your winter reading list.

See Karen Platt's top ten list for Alaska hardy plants that she put together just for us!

### Top Green Flowers for Alaska from Karen Platt [www.karenplatt.co.uk](http://www.karenplatt.co.uk)

Here are the top ten green flowers for Alaska, for Z3 and Z4.

*Allium 'Hair'* is one of the most unusual plants I know, and is welcome in the spring garden as a talking point for its really green tendrils with an intriguing maroon purple heart. It's a designer plant that works well in massed plantings. Z4.

*Anemone nemerosa 'Viridiflora'* (synonym 'Virescens' and often sold as such) a flurry of finely dissected green bracts that does well under the light shade of trees. Easy and vigorous, it grows in shade but does appreciate some sun. It originated with Molly Sanderson in Ireland and is rarely long-lived. Z4.

*Angelica archangelica* will provide some welcome stature. This fast-growing, robust biennial is tall and stately with huge green flower heads in late summer. Grow in moist, well-drained, rich soil in part shade, with protection from strong winds. Z4.

*Aquilegia 'Green Apples'* if you can obtain the seed of this (originally from Ray Brown in England) it is worth growing for its frilly, double flowers, although it often fades to cream. It is reliably hardy and if grown in isolation, comes pretty true from seed. Z3.

Some of the North American *Arisaemas* will reliably go down to Z4, such as the common jack-in-the-pulpit, *A. triphyllum*. *Arisaemas* are a personal love of mine and I would recommend them for all gardens that can provide light shade. The handsome spathes look so good in green.

*Delphinium Green Expectations* Group from Dowdeswell Delphiniums in New Zealand should perform well, but these seed sown plants are variable in color. They look great rising out of a bed of white flowers. Delphiniums hate having wet feet. Z4

*Eryngium agavifolium* is another herbaceous perennial that likes well-drained soil on the dry side to produce its greenish flowers surrounded by spiny bracts. The toothed foliage adds interest on these tall plants. Z4.

*Fritillaria acmopetala* will grow in Z4 and make a fine display of handsome green and maroon flowers. You could also try *F. bithynica*, reputed to grow in Z3 with its narrow bells of bright green having bluish hints and a yellow edge over glaucous foliage.

*Heuchera 'Greenfinch'* not only provides good ground cover with its glossy green foliage but bears spires of small green flowers, sometimes with a touch of pink. Z4. *Primula auricula 'Cressida'* would be my star plant. It's almost a lettuce green with breathtakingly beautiful green flowers. Z4.





## Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

August was not the best of months (until the end, but the sun was an aberration). When it started to rain we didn't get much--only 3.5 inches. But!!! And

that's a BIG BUT. I wasn't the only one that ended up with rotten broccoli heads. The smell of rotten broccoli is truly singular. The protected side shoots, under leaves were fine but the main head was mush. The nice (?) thing was I wasn't the only one whining about that. Misery loved company.

MG Margaret Simon opened her garden to the Central Peninsula Garden Club's Nikiski tour and Margaret's garden is the gold standard down on the peninsula. She also suffered from the summer. Sawfly larvae attacked her red currants and they were naked of leaves. She was nice enough to come out to our place and pick currants because I wasn't going to and we must have 50 pounds on our Holland Long Bunch plants. I hate to see the fruit go to waste but I still have most of last year's crop in the freezer.

Personally, my biggest crops were greenhouse aphids--three colors of them!--, weeds and slugs. I invested in some Nyquil--nighttime? non drowsy? cough?--for a slug trap that Cheryl Chapman wrote about on the GoogleGroup site. If you haven't gone there, do! There are 117 of us signed up and it's a good bulletin board of things to do and interesting posts. Go to <http://groups.google.com/group/AKMGAA> and sign up if you haven't already. (P.S. there weren't any slugs the next morning on my bread soaked with nighttime Nyquil).



We live on a rural road here in Sterling and I walk over to my neighbor's, MG Mark White, to feed his chickens and rabbits on week days. With the very dry weather we didn't have the flush of birch boletus mushrooms. What we had instead was king boletus! In a normal year, out here, I will find one, maybe two, of the kings. This year, I'm up to 47! We've eaten well---every single one of them. The first thing I made when I had four was a risotto. That dish was

what dreams are made of for flavor. Then the orange delicious mushrooms started and I got the day's omelet filling just going out to get the newspapers in the morning. I ended up with enough extras for six! packages of sautéed ODs in the freezer for soup or whatever later. We can eat unbelievably well in Alaska! What made me laugh was Amy Green's quip, "did you know all mushrooms are edible ~ once". I'd like to learn to ID the chicken of the woods. There were oyster mushrooms by Mark's driveway because I could smell their wonderful liquorice scent but search as I might, I couldn't find them.

MG Kathy Wartinbee had capsid bugs of some sort in her greenhouse that skeletonized her cucumber leaves

and rendered the outlook pretty lousy. She was going to rip them out before they were seen by others. She found a tomato she particularly likes--window box Roma - a heavy-producing determinate from Vesey's seeds.

I started practicing birth control in the greenhouse the first of August. No new blossoms were allowed on the tomatoes. I lost it on Friday the 13th and attacked the tomato plants, whacking away at the tops and at non-producing peppers and cucumber vines. The aphid doo/dew was all over leaves which in the gloom of summer caused big spots of black mold. UGLY! Not long after you read this, our house chickens will be greenhouse chickens and we'll be spared their 4:30AM wake up call.

I got a rose from Home Depot two years ago and it bloomed so nicely for me I kept it in the root cellar over the winter. What intrigued me was the shoots coming from the root it was grafted onto which were like a climber. I staked them up this summer to see what the blooms would be like but there was not even a hint of a bud on the 7-foot tall canes. Go figure.

Another summer experiment was planting out scallions in June when they were 3 for \$1 at Freddy's. They've grown huge after I ignored them all summer and they are perfect for the yummy recipe in the Silver Palate Cookbook for scallions as a cooked vegetable. Try it, you'll like it.



### Fiddlehead Ferns: A Recent Outbreak of Food Related Illness Mike Baldwin, MG

For those of you whose minds turn toward gathering and eating wild leafy greens in the

springtime here's something you should keep in mind - Fiddlehead Fern related Gastroenteritis!

This past May at a luncheon in Anchorage there was an outbreak of gastrointestinal distress - symptoms included diarrhea, nausea, abdominal cramps, bloating/gas, chills, headache, vomiting, fever, and for some, bloody stools. The one food in common that everybody who got sick had eaten? Wild harvested fiddlehead ferns.

The fiddleheads had been wild collected, washed and packaged in British Columbia, transported to a distributor in California, bought and shipped to Alaska, and then served at the luncheon.

If you aren't familiar with fiddleheads, they are the unfurled fronds of young ferns that look like the ornamental end of a violin or fiddle (the end with the tuning pegs). A quick internet search on fiddlehead ferns suggested that while a number of fern fiddleheads are eaten, the most common one consumed is probably from the Ostrich Fern.

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## Bird Chatter

-- Those enrolling in the Alaska Master Gardener course will now have a textbook. Thanks to CES Extension Agent Michele Hébert in Fairbanks for heading up this project. Anchorage MG Dawn Bishop-Klewano proofread the entire 460-page manual!

-- Thirty-one continuous days with rain in August. Can you believe it amounted to only about 3 inches and that more than 9 inches is the month's rainfall record? 😞

-- Ski Olsonoski had her cell packs, pots and flats cleaned up, planning to recycle them at ABG. A trip to Seward proved more exiting than Pot Recycle Day. Anyone who is interested in providing them a home can contact Ski at 563-6803. She lives in Geneva Woods.

-- A *Salpiglossis*, Painted tongue, can bring in \$100 if it's a first prize winner in Northrim Bank's purple plant contest. Congratulations to Herb Spencer for growing this year's winner from seed. (The poor guy needed a boost after losing the 'Spencer largest leek competition' to his wife Linda.)

-- Americorp VISTA volunteer Kelly Ingram's last day with CES is September 17. In addition to being in charge of the Refugee Farmer's Market project, Kelly worked regularly with kids at the Boys & Girls Club, helped organize and maintain a 'Veggie's at Work' project and has written a new elementary school enrichment activity to teach kids where their food comes from.

-- CES Horticulture Julie Riley will be spending the month of September packing up her office and taking time off-contract which is required of faculty not finding grant or contract funding to cover 5 weeks of salary.

-- Seen at the Point MacKenzie port expansion construction site, 5 cars of gardeners who crossed the Do Not Enter line. You had to be on the Soil amendments/Soil testing lab field trip to understand how they got there.

-- Have you noticed the beautifully painted Happy Plants van around town? It's owned by MG Colleen Joest, who owns the Eagle River-based interior plant design and maintenance company.

-- Gina Docherty reports finding a snail (not a slug) in the currents she harvested for jelly. We're glad it didn't end up on Shane's toast.

-- Bob Boyer entered a 1-pound apple at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer. Black apricots and quince were among his other entries.



### Condolences

Deepest Sympathy to the Klinkhart family for the loss of Dana's dear mother, Rosemary Wiese, on August 19th. Rosemary, 89, was a lifelong Alaskan, born in Cordova. She was featured in a previous

MG newsletter for the lovely bougainvillea vines in her home.

### MG Focus: Pat Anderson...cont. from page 3

"They were like a gift from God," says Pat, "And I've given them away to many, many friends. Their fragrance Their fragrance reminds me always of people I love."

Pat's lettuce, broccoli, bok choy and other vegetables grow in a row of thigh-high wheeled pots marching down the driveway past the former caramel corn copper cooker, now a fountain next to a sullen rhododendron. She wheels her pots to chase the sun. Down at the street, the stone garden at the corner of the driveway is filled with primulas more than 25 years old, ferns, the sweet alyssum dear to her mother, begonias and junipers. This year, "the rainiest summer on record," Eric installed a drip irrigation system.

Gardens mean friendship, says Pat, and other gardeners on Apollo Drive feel the same. A new young family moved in just around the corner on Saturn and, inspired by the Andersons' yard, started a flowerbed of dianthus, columbine and variegated Aegopodium on their own corner. Before they could finish, they were called urgently Outside, "so all of us in the neighborhood brought plants and completed it the way they'd started out as a surprise for them when they came home," says Pat.

"It was a nice introduction to the neighborhood."

### Fiddlehead Ferns....cont. from page 5

There were a number of reports that suggested even though you can eat a number of different fern fiddleheads, people should be cautious because many are mildly toxic. Symptoms of illness could appear within 30 minutes to 12 hours after eating raw or undercooked fiddleheads, and could last from less than a day up to 3 days.

So, if you are going to collect and eat fiddleheads, as with any wild gathered plant, you should be sure of what you are collecting. The AK Department of Natural Resource, Division of Agriculture's Plant Materials Center has a great publication on fiddlehead ferns you should check out: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/PMCwebsite/PMC-Publications/Fiddleheads.pdf>

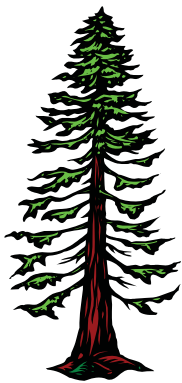
There are other great reference resources to be found on the internet. You can also find some great local resources such as the Cooperative Extension, Alaska Native Plant Society, and a variety of plant guides in the book stores or library that can help you identify wild plants - especially the tasty edible ones.

If you do plan to eat any fiddleheads make sure they are thoroughly cleaned and cooked first, and never served raw. The Alaska Department of Health & Social Services recommends that they be boiled for 10-15 minutes or steamed 10-12 minutes (until tender) before eating. They also recommend discarding water used for cleaning or steaming the fiddleheads.

To read the fiddlehead outbreak report from the AK Department of Health go to [http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/bulletins/docs/b2010\\_23.pdf](http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/bulletins/docs/b2010_23.pdf)

So, next spring, when your thoughts turn to eating wild greens, and those fiddleheads start to emerge in May - Be Prepared!





## Did You Ever Think about Things like This?

Nickel LaFleur -certified ISA arborist

I've been spending a lot of time pruning trees and shrubs this summer. Working on the landscape in this dismal weather has been rather enjoyable. It has given me time to jot down some observations I'd like to share with fellow Master Gardeners.

First and foremost: think about the big picture - about how to be a better steward to our earth.

Did you know that when you pour liquids out on the street in Anchorage, they are not treated or filtered and they go directly into our waterways? So, after you wash your car or driveway or even when you have something left in your beverage cup, take it to the sink to dispose of it and don't pour it into the street. You don't want toxics to go into the same water the fish you are going to eat for dinner lives in, do you?

Think about keeping area around the trees grass free. Trees are perhaps the most expensive landscape item you have on your property so it only makes sense to take some extra time to look at them and see what you can do to make sure they stay healthy. I can't stress enough the importance of water when it comes to your trees - do it! A soaker hose around the drip line of the tree for hours and hours before the tree goes into dormancy for the winter is the right thing to do. It's not too late. Use a sharp knife to shave off three or four inches of grass or weeds that are nearest to the trunk of the tree. Having the grass/weeds away from the trunk ensures that the weed whacker won't accidentally wound the tree while trying to get at the grass. Remove the grass - remove the problem.

Mugo pines... Did you know about the need to 'candle' mugo pines in order to keep them more compact? Towards the beginning of our summer, the mugo pines put on some candles and plucking them half way back will help keep that mugo more compact. Don't cut off the entire candle, rather snip it off  $\frac{1}{2}$  way so the mugo has some growth. This method works great if you candle the mugos each year. And the perfect time to do that is when they break off easily when you candle them. This is not something you do in the fall; it's something to put on your list of things to do for the spring of 2011. It's pretty hard to get them back under control if they are not candled within the first couple years of planting and keeping up with the candling of it on a yearly basis. As we can all bear witness to, sometimes it's best just to pull them out and plant something else...

There are many sources to turn to get the right information when it comes to trees. The International Society of Arboriculture has a website: [www.isa-arbor.org](http://www.isa-arbor.org) Lots of useful information at Trees Are Good website: [www.treesaregood.com](http://www.treesaregood.com)

Remember the old saying that goes something like this: "The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago; the second best time is today." Happy planting!

# Garden Event Calendar

## September Programs for AMGAA

Monthly meetings resume September 20th, 7 pm - in the regular meeting room at CES. As of press time, the CES relocation has apparently been delayed until October. Watch your email for notice of any meeting location changes.

September 15th field trip

NOTE: DATE CHANGE from that listed in directory.

Mushroom hike, Girdwood, 7 pm prompt, with Kate Mohatt, mycologist with the US Forest Service. Meet in the courtyard of Hotel Alyeska, next to the tram building at 7pm. Daylight is a concern, so please be on time.

We will be in the area of Winner Creek trail. Good hiking shoes or boots recommended. To Hotel Alyeska: Seward Hwy to Girdwood; turn on Alyeska Hwy. Stay on Alyeska Hwy until it ends at Alyeska Resort; left on Arlberg Avenue for about 1 mile. Right turn into hotel parking lot. Walk through the Hotel and out the back to the gardens and tramway where we will meet. For information, call Robbie at 783-2382. Think car pooling. And bring your rain gear just in case.

September 20th monthly program: Mushrooms and Fungi with Kate Mohatt, mycologist.  
7pm, Carlton Bldg, N. Lights & Lake Otis.



**NOTE:** Because of the continued parking issue at the CES, consider **CAR POOLING** and save yourself the frustration of trying to find a nonexistent parking space. Hopefully the parking issue will be resolved once the CES gets tucked into their new home.



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

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Email: [amga@alaska.net](mailto:amga@alaska.net) (NEW EMAIL)

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

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

To send concerns or information to the AMGA directly, mail to:  
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Dale Marshall of Anchorage with a pumpkin he believes will hit the 1200 lb mark at the Alaska Midnight Sun Great Pumpkin Weigh-Off on September 1st, 2010 at the State Fair in Palmer. (Story on page 1)  
Photo by Fran Durner

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