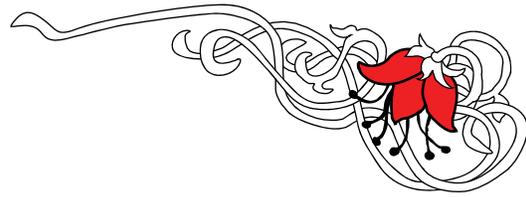


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 13, Issue 1

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER January 2011



Message From Jane

Happy New Year! 2011! Clean page. Fresh start. Dare I say it? New Year's Resolutions for the garden. Some where I read "New Year's resolutions go in one year and out the other". . . If you don't like resolutions, then MAKE A PLAN. The weather's been nippy, but it's the perfect time while cocooning indoors to plan ahead for your garden. Our season is so short, that once it arrives, we don't have time to waste in planning. And, as long as it's as cold as it has been you won't actually have to do anything for a while yet. Turn over a new leaf (pun intended) and set some positive, reasonable & achievable goals.

RESOLVE TO:

- (1) Label everything.
- (2) Order garden seeds early & order only enough for this year's garden space.
- (3) Start seeds indoors.
- (4) Plant a vegetable that you've never grown before.
- (5) Continue learning more about gardening because the more you know, the more you need to know.
- (6) Visit other gardeners' yards to see what they are doing & welcome visitors to yours.
- (7) Compost, compost, compost & mulch, mulch, mulch.
- (8) Encourage beneficial insects & pest predators by minimizing or eliminating the use of broad-spectrum insecticides and herbicides.
- (9) Walk through your garden every day to keep in touch with what's happening and what might need attention.
- (10) Appreciate your garden more. Stop obsessing about perceived shortcomings. Gardens can be a source of great peace, joy and comfort, a place to relax and enjoy instead of letting it become a dreaded labor-intensive chore.

I would be remiss if I didn't express my appreciation to all of you for your support and participation in AMGAA programs and tours this past year. We all benefit and learn from our shared gardening enthusiasm and experiences. Hoping to see you at the January 17, 2011 meeting!

2011 AMGA Board Nominees

You should soon be receiving an electronic ballot for the open AMGA Board positions via email or snail mail. Don't forget to vote! Here is a list of the nominees for the 4 open positions:



Judy Christianson

Judy has been a master gardener since 1978, and helped establish the AMGA. She is currently serving on the board, but not as an officer. She has served on the board over the years in many positions including president. With Mary Shier, she co-ordinates the Pioneer seeding, planting and maintenance and has been her main project for over 20 years.



Sandra Harrington

Sandra Harrington has been a Master Gardener for 30 years. She has been the annual directory editor and membership committee chairperson for the last seven years. The garden that she shares with her husband, Dave has been on the Alaska Botanical Garden Tour and the Garden tour for the Alaska Youth & Parent Foundation. When she's not gardening or tending to indoor plants, she spends much of her time in the studio working as an artist and designer.



Annie Nevaldine

Plants have been on Annie Nevaldine's radar screen since a very young age. According to her mother's entry in Annie's baby book under "Baby's first words," her second word was "flower" (following "hot"-and preceding both "mama" and "dada!"). Obviously destined to become a master gardener and lover of all things flora, she enjoys cultivating plants, teaching about them, and taking their portraits.



Nickel LaFleur

Nickel LaFleur joined Master Gardeners in 2002 after living in Kodiak and working in the aviation industry for over twenty years and quickly found her 'calling' - to be a 'plant nerd'. She loves making garden art. She is one of 38 certified arborists in Alaska & owns a small landscape business. Nickel achieved National Flower

Show Judge accreditation in 2009 and is currently working on requirements for her Advanced MG status.

New MG Class Graduates

Forty-four new Master Gardeners join the ranks of AMGAA this month. Congratulations to the following Master Gardeners who completed the class in December. Elisa Mattison and Kristine Jorgensen will be taking their exam soon. Bobbe Seibert switched over to the on-line course and sends greetings to the rest of the class from Nicaragua.

Eric Anderson
Beth Baker
Kiatcha Benson
Judy Bunkers
Jessica Bush
Sheila Cockrell
Aurora & Matthew Courtney
Liesa Crowley
Patty Deren
Megan Erickson
Ellen Farrell
Alice Friend
Adele Gallagher
Nicolette Gross
Vania Hawkins
Clint Hess
Margaret Klatt
Keven Kleweno
Laura Kotelman
Jean Lapp
Karen Leis
Paul Marmora
Kim Moats-Barnes
Kathy Munk
Raye Ann Neustel
Nancy Norvell
Dennise Piche
Sheryl Prewitt-Ronan
Marge Quick
Dick Ridgway
Jody Rossignol
Becky Saleeby
Susan Saltmarsh
Richard Sanders
Sabine Schwarz
Christine & Trent Sexton
Barbara & Steven Simkins
Martina Steinmetz
Joyce Stenberg
Sharon White-Wheeler
Michael Zechman



Journal of Integrated Pest Management By Michael Baldwin

For those of you interested in pests and learning more about insects and integrated pest management there is a new on-line resource for you!

In October the Entomological Society of America released the first issue of its newest periodical - the Journal of Integrated Pest Management. According to a press release from the ESA, the Journal of IPM will be published quarterly, and available online for free! It will be publishing articles in all pest management disciplines, including entomology, nematology (i.e., worm-ology!), plant pathology, weed science, and other subject areas. In particular it will be organized around providing profiles of insects, emerging IPM issues, and science based recommendations on pest-control and pest-management topics based upon the principles of integrated pest management. Continued on page 5

Making a New Acquaintance By Annie Nevaldine

Being of a certain age, I believed that I'd thoroughly familiarized myself with the agricultural crops that are offered for American tables. Now I wonder. When was the last time I met a new member of the produce department, one I'd never seen before? What will I do with it? How long did it take me to decide impulsively to live dangerously by purchasing the last two on the shelf without having any idea how I'd prepare or consume them? My answers are, respectively, "I don't remember," "I don't have a clue," and "One nanosecond."

Now home with the produce, I promptly did some rigorous google research. Descriptions of my purchase are both accurate and humorous. David Karp compared them to "a cross between a giant lemon and a squid," while Liz V. was reminded of an "odd citrus octopus." The writer at instructables.com surmised that "Monsanto has genetically engineered a cross between calamari and a lemon," resulting in the mutant fruit. "They'll never really win a beauty contest," *grant_in_arizona* predicted, but added, "they have charisma." (Don't we say that about our beloved moose?)



Native to northeastern India and southwestern China, and now grown in the US, the fruit is like "a lemon without the sour or bitter." A member of the citrus clan, it is more reminiscent of lemon than of lime, orange, or grapefruit. Unlike all its cousins, though, it has no flesh or juice and the pith is not bitter. I don't get it--a fruit without pulp or juice? All rind and pith, no sour or bitter? Really? Yep, it's true.

Have you figured out my new friend's name yet? Its official binomial is *Citrus medica* var. *Sarcodactylis*. A citron, its common names are playfully descriptive: Buddha's hand, fingered citron, goblin fingers, creepy cephalopod, and five finger Mandarin.

Charismatic qualities of Buddha's hand citron include its purported ability to bestow good fortune and to engender wealth, happiness, and longevity. Wouldn't that make a great New Year's or birthday gift?

Now that I know its name and qualities, what do I do with Buddha's hand citron? Its traditional uses include aromating rooms, closets, and clothing, decorating altars for religious ceremonies, and fragancing cosmetics. But I am interested in its culinary uses; after all, I did purchase it in a grocery store, not at Bed Bath & Beyond, the Buddhist temple supply store, or Chanel's manufacturing plant.

Given my Italian heritage, I am no stranger to "regular" (read: non-Buddha's hand) citron, and I figured that I could use Buddha's hand citron similarly. I have now candied seven hands--yes, seven whole hands, not just seven individual fingers--and have a larder full of tender, moist, chewy dice for use in breads (think panettone and Italian Easter bread), biscotti,

Continued on page 5

Master Gardener Focus: Mel Monsen By Cheryl Chapman



Mel Monsen enjoys time in his garden with his cat.
Photo by Rob Cardillo Photography

Some people retire.

Some people launch.

Master Gardener Mel Monsen is in that second category, and though cake and fellow groundskeepers at UAA may have bid him farewell Sept. 7, the Monsen gardens on Lower Hillside likely broke out in a rash of blooms to celebrate his homecoming and next experiments, his essays, as Michel de Montaigne would say, with plants.

Plants find themselves doing surprising things for Mel, even -perhaps especially - those that "don't grow here." They grow for Mel, and outdoors, to boot: cantaloupe,

tomatoes, sweet corn and cucumbers. His secret? He may talk about raised beds and drip irrigation, row covers and IRT, or infrared transmitting plastic, but it comes down to this: He's done his homework for years. He's joined garden clubs. He's gone through the Master Gardener course. He asks questions. He reads, and mines the Internet.

"I didn't think up this stuff," he says. "Someone else did. I just learned about it and got to use it."

He and his wife, Lisa, designed and built their home on a half-acre in 1991 and moved in the next year. Mel had planned the gardens as meticulously as they'd created their house, and he and a Bobcat installed a comprehensive framework for beauty and use in a matter of months, though the June 27, 1992, eruption of Mount Spurr threatened - briefly - to delay the grass sodding. Mel took a firm line with the volcano.

The plan included 22 raised beds on gravel pads, gravel paths, trellises, high fences (moose can be too appreciative), a deck pond with yellow *Iris pseudacorus*, dwarf Perry's Baby Red water lilies and a now-15-year-old goldfish, a rose garden, a rock garden, vegetable gardens, a fruit orchard of pie cherries, apples and Summercrisp pears (he doesn't like Summercrisps, it turns out), tapestries of ornamental trees, rhododendrons, azaleas, a thicket of crabapples on one side of the back yard (usually, zoo animals benefit, but this fall friends picked 30 gallons of crabs to make cider), a rosy-pink Rudolf crabapple on the opposite side, perennials, bulbs, annuals, 20 kinds of lilacs, blueberries, cranberries, lawns that invites toe-wiggling, a kit greenhouse where daughter Elizabeth's sandbox and play area used to be, and seed and homemade suet stations for the birds.

Technology helps a bit. He uses drip irrigation on a timer for the beds, and the cold frames, hooked to humidifiers, are programmed to open automatically every two hours for puffs of moisture, "which really helps things root, especially rose cuttings." The greenhouse, with its dwarf nectarines, peaches and purple and green seedless grapes (Einset and Interlaken, respectively), reports electronically inside the house. Otherwise, it's all Mel, whose degree may be in fisheries and who commercial fished until 1993, but whose passion is gardening.

The native Alaskan was born in Kanakanak, near Dillingham. His Norwegian grandfather, also a fisherman, came in the 1890s, and in 1902 married his grandmother, who was Scots, Aleut and Russian. Mel grew up in Kanakanak in a fishing family, though he remembers his mother's father, an Italian who lived in Brooklyn and raised grapes for wine.

"It may be genetic rather than by example that I love plants so much," he says. "My mom tried to garden a little bit, but it's hard to garden in Kanakanak."

The trick to successful Alaska gardening, he says, is to warm the soil, stretch the season and use cold-friendly varieties such as Czech Stupice heirloom tomatoes and Precocious sweet corn. "It's trial and error," he says. "I must have tried 25 varieties before I found the Stupice."

He's a believer in IRT plastic on top of the soil because it can raise soil temperatures 21 to 28 degrees; it also eliminates weeds, because it blocks the light wavelengths that weeds need. His raised vegetable beds all have a southern exposure. He plants seedlings through slits cut in the plastic, lays down plastic bottles filled with tea-tinted water to soak up warmth during the day and radiate it back at night, and tosses lightweight row covers over the beds to protect baby plants from chill and wind. Mel has picked red-ripe tomatoes by July 8.

"There's some harvest every year," he says, "But some years are better than others."

The most exciting research for plants suited to Alaska is being done far from the state, he says, in Canada and at the University of Helsinki in Finland, though the collapse of the Soviet bloc put Siberian varieties on the horticulture radar as well.

"Most apples, cherries, roses and all rhododendrons for Alaska are foreign-bred, from Canada or Finland," he says. His pink Martin Frobisher rose, for instance, is Canadian; his white climbing Polstjarnan, or Polestar, rose, is Finnish.

But it's the underappreciated, underused native plants that are his latest involvement. Mel is growing Alaska native hawthorns from Ketchikan, crabapples from Valdez and Whittier, and Douglas maples from Haines in pots to propagate.

"These all are very good ornamental plants, but we don't see them available up here," he says. "There's more and more interest in the native plants because our market is so small that no one does breeding for our conditions. There are lots of opportunities."

Storey's Guide to KEEPING HONEY BEES by Malcolm T. Sanford & Richard E. Bonney

A Book Report by Pat Anderson

This book is BEE-utiful!! - and reflects the realities of beekeeping in the 21st century. Bees have been studied for centuries, however there is still much that scientists and beekeepers are still learning about what is perhaps one of nature's most complex creatures. There is a great drawing of the anatomy of a honey bee which has been called a "flying Swiss Army knife" because of its complex structure. All of its amazing systems and development are explained.

The book begins with the novice beekeepers preparation and commitment with basic tips for getting started raising bees. It guides you along and encourages you to have a plan and to assess the costs. However along the way you learn the history of beekeeping and get interesting memo inserts from other beekeepers and their problems/solutions, which makes the reading so interesting.

I learned that the honey bee is not native to the new world. Bee hives were brought to Virginia from Europe in 1622. The modern beekeeping era began in 1851 by LL Langstroth who discovered the significance of the exact space that bees need which led to the invention of the movable frame hive. Honey bees will not build comb across a gap of 3/8 inch - proper bee space! From that the 'supers', the special hive boxes that sit on top of each other and the frames which hold the brood and honey which slide into the supers were developed.

The book states that if you keep bees, you will get stung - because it is a fact of keeping bees. The reactions of people who have allergies and other health issues from being stung are detailed.

Getting a successful beekeeper as a mentor, and learning the laws of the state from usually the Department of Agriculture is highly encouraged. Joining a local club and learning from others is recommended.

The make-up of colonies is fascinating with descriptions of each bee's duties in the caste system. I was surprised to learn that Dr. Karl Von Frisch won the Nobel Prize in 1973 for his study on honey bee "dance language" - which described the 'dance' that bees do for communication in the hive for the location of a food source or other information! Bees also react to sound, taste, scent and are not colorblind!

It is amazing that scientists can now train honey bees to detect unique chemical molecules! A remarkable 95 % accuracy rate, compared with 71% in bomb-sniffing dogs! The bees training uses classical Pavlovian behavioral conditioning (focusing on their proboscis extension response), and increasingly more powerful and less expensive techniques detect and analyze the results.

Great information on how to manage your bee colonies with tips and examples of taking the honey crop are explained in detail. Other bee products such as beeswax, pollen, propolis (bee glue), royal jelly, venom and honeydew enlarged my understanding of bee supplements. I enjoyed learning about pollination and commercial pollination such as in the incredible almond orchard harvests in California, and its potential elsewhere in the US.

Learning about the diseases, mites and viruses and pests that bees get was an eye opener. But the incredible potential of using hygienic bees that detect disease was exciting reading! The hygienic bees study is based on two genes which are inheritable. Beekeepers must be aware

and help protect the colony against the brood diseases. There are book resources, beekeeping supply houses, websites etc. listed in the back of the book.

Note: This book covers zones 6 - 11, however the basics of beekeeping are the same except Alaska has the shortest season for bees, and the packages are usually purchased from outside by February. The queen is the largest bee and is marked with a color so she can be easily recognized. In Alaska the colonies are either overwintered for a fee in a heated conex, or die because of the harsh northern climate.

South Central Beekeeper's Assoc. meets at 6:30, the 4th

Monday of the month at Eagle River, at the VFW building. Vice President and Anchorage beekeepers for 10 years Colette and Ed Marshall are available for information at 338-2966 and would be happy to mentor new beekeepers. They said to be certain new beekeepers take a two week class that begins in March.



Aliens in the garden? No, beekeepers Colette & Ed Marshall in Pat's yard. Photo by Pat Anderson.

International Gardening News

Giant Snails Seized

CHANTILLY, Va. (AP) - Talk about snail mail! Customs agents at Washington Dulles International Airport seized a package of Giant African Land Snails. Officials say there were 14 slimy creatures, about the size of a child's fist and can grow to nearly eight inches long. Authorities say the snails were carried by an arriving passenger from the W. African nation of Ghana. The snails are banned in the U.S. because they can severely damage crops.

Landing Lights for Bumblebees

ScienceDaily (Nov. 17, 2010) — Gardeners could help maintain bumblebee populations by growing plants with red flowers or flowers with stripes along the veins, according to field observations of the common snapdragon, *Antirrhinum majus*, at the John Innes Centre in the UK. (Full story found at: www.sciencedaily.com)

Gene Discovery Holds Key to Growing Crops in Cold Climates

ScienceDaily (Sep. 10, 2010) — Researchers have shown for the first time that a gene -- known as *Spatula* -- limits the growth of plants in cool temperatures, possibly helping them adjust to cool conditions. Researchers believe that by manipulating the gene, they could produce the opposite effect -- enabling development of crops that grow well in cold climates. Scientists studied the *Spatula* gene in a weed known as thale cress and found that when levels of the gene were low, the plant leaves grew almost twice as much at lower temperatures as they would normally. Being able to improve crop growth under cool conditions -- in which growth would typically be slow -- could help ensure the availability of food supplies for future populations.



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

Christmas eve morning in Sterling was -25° . Bah humbug. I sent out my monthly "what's happening?" panic e-mail to our core MGs. Barb Jewell was packing to go to Seattle and make her annual pilgrimage to Molback's in Woodinville to "drool at all the varieties of poinsettias". Kathy Wartinbee sent this, "Used the email specials and ordered a bunch of seeds. Most of them are here already. Other than that ... waiting for spring". And this from Margaret Simon, "The pump went out in my Aerogarden so I can't even tell you that I've been having fresh herbs. I did pick up a package of paper whites and they are sprouting. Eventually maybe I'll have a fresh flower smell in the house". And then I heard from Janice Chumley, our Ramrod: "Let's put the bug zapper down and start to think about now that the Solstice has passed and we are slowly gaining light, what we would like to do with it. Do you know of all the upcoming events to get gardeners dreaming? Tom Jahns, (the head honcho at CES down here) will be teaching his last Master Gardener class before he retires on February 15th. Tom is teaching an in-depth soils class at the Aquaculture Bldg. on Saturday January 22nd, it is free, no need to register just show up from 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM. I plan on attending, perhaps you can too? Last year I tried to order shallots to plant and somehow Johnny's misplaced my order and they never arrived, but I did purchase some seeds (not sets) from Thompson & Morgan which promised shallots by August. Much to my surprise they actually did produce some shallots, not great ones, but I will be trying them again this year and starting them indoors first".

I'm following Cheryl Chapman on the live-trap-that-SOB route - I found where the hare had been getting in and out of the garden and the damage has been prodigious. I put hardware cloth vole screens around my plants figuring since I didn't have hares in the garden last year I wouldn't this year. Boy! Was I wrong. The Sea Buckthorn has been majorly munched, but knowing those trees, they will come back from sprouts and roots with no problem but there went my production for this year. Yellow raspberries juiced with sea buckthorn make the most wonderful drink for breakfast. The cherry tree, which formerly had a width of at least four feet and a height as tall as I am last summer, has side branches that are about 8 inches long now. Its height is now at my shoulder. I don't understand how the animal could have gotten up there without a ladder! The Centennial Crab is history. Never mind the former wee apple trees. If I catch the bugger, it will not emerge from the trap alive.

The greenhouse chicken has started laying and I found a collection of 15 frozen eggs. When an egg freezes it turns the yolk solid so it cannot be used for baking or scrambling. The egg can be thawed and boiled though for whatever you want. (One quarter cup vinegar and some salt should be added to the water to coagulate the whites that ooze out during the cooking process.) There is an East Indian recipe for a hard boiled egg curry that I'm going to try with them.

My worms are doing their thing wonderfully. I've gotten my first four gallons of beautiful castings and another four are ready to be decanted. My fly crop is alive and very well and

I've even picked up a slightly larger target. I zap several times a day. I told you it was going to be a loooooong winter.

And finally, FYI, the difference between rabbits and hares: Rabbits are born naked with their eyes closed for the first 10 days; hares are born furred with their eyes open. Rabbits have white meat; hares have dark meat.

A New Friend....cont. from page 2

canoli, and my all-time favorite, St. Joseph's day cream puffs. It also adds an arresting surprise to a tossed green salad.

The serendipitous by-product of all this candied citron is the remaining syrup, which I bottled for sweetening and flavoring tea, water, seltzer, and punch; adding tang to marinades; drizzling on cakes and quick breads; and infusing liqueurs or mixed drinks.

Uses for fresh Buddha's hand citron include shaving the zest or slicing the fingers (pith and rind and all) for sauces, salads, green vegetables, and baked goods. Fresh citron can be added to or substituted for lemon in dishes such as meringue pie, marmalade, curd, lemonade, etc. Citron lends a flavor distinctive from and slightly more subtle than lemon.

Unfortunately for us Alaska gardeners, Buddha's hand citron is not a hardy perennial. Unless grown in the greenhouse or as a houseplant, our supply comes from the grocery.

Little did I know one morning when I walked into the store that I would decide to risk a purchase on an unknown fruit, and end up with a fast friendship. I'm gratified to know that I haven't lived so long yet that I have no new things to learn and acquaintances to make.

Journal of IPM....cont. from page 2

Intended for professionals, such as farmers, manufacturers/suppliers of pest management products, educators and pest control operators, the goal of the journal is to publish science based articles written to non-scientific readers. After a quick read, the articles did not seem to be overly technical and were quite readable for this non-scientist.

The half dozen articles in the first issue range from a description of a recent outbreak of a moth and its cutworm caterpillars that caused crop damage, destruction of turf, and pet illness in Michigan to a new model of IPM decision making when plant-pest interactions and economic outcomes are unknown or uncertain.

The article on the cutworm caterpillars might be worth checking out. A little web-wandering revealed a 2009 State of Alaska Division of Agricultural report indicating that moth discussed in the IPM journal (European Yellow Underwing; *Noctua pronuba*) has been found in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska since 2005 and was expected to be found in Interior by the end of the decade (Yikes - that's NOW!)

All you have to do is to follow this link:
<http://esa.publisher.ingentaconnect.com/content/esa/jipm>
On the IPM journal website just click on the link for Volume 1, Number 1, October 2010, and you will be taken to a table of contents for the journal. Pick an article, click on the title and soon you'll be reading some of the most current IPM thinking. If you have some time, and you're looking for a little something different, but garden related, to do this winter—go check it out!



Bird Chatter

-- Fifty thousand poinsettias were produced in Southcentral Alaska this past year. Now that the holidays are over, you can throw yours away and help support the greenhouse industry again next year.

-- Thanks to Master Gardeners, Dora's "Pennies for Beans" raised \$58.50.

-- Master Gardeners also donated 207 pounds of food to the Alaska Food Bank in November. Thank you Jane for hauling it over to the Food Bank's facility.

-- Rita Jo Shultz writes, "I just got my flyer from Pantone, the world leader for color trends. The new color for 2011 is HONEYSUCKLE and is almost a strong melon look".

-- Joining AMGAA this month is Eric Anderson whose mother Pat is very proud of him for becoming a Master Gardener.

-- The value of volunteer time in Alaska is \$20.71/hour, \$828 for a 40 hour commitment. The university is getting a real deal.

-- Charlotte Jensen passed away December 12, 2010. She was a strong supporter of Cooperative Extension Service and spent so many countless hours volunteering in our community that Charlotte's family put 'volunteer' under profession on her death certificate.

-- A highlight from the November AMGAA meeting was to learn that Debbie Hinchey's Star Magnolia bloomed last summer.

-- Pat Anderson, Camille Williams and Marge Olson have been dubbed 'Gardeners in the Hood'. The trio landscaped a neighbors eyesore corner one weekend when they were out of town.

-- Thanks to Greg Kalal for jazzing up Julie and Leslie Shallcross's Eat Local display at the CES Open House by contributing some of his beautifully colored potatoes.

-- Twenty-seven percent of those who signed the guest register at CES's Open House November 29 were Master Gardeners—not bad given 130 Master Gardeners had already visited the office!

New Anchorage CES Office

Anchorage's CES office on 16th and C Street has a new name, the UAF Outreach and Extension Center. According to Dr. Fred Schlutt, Vice Provost for Extension and Outreach and Director of the Cooperative Extension Service, 'The facility will be UAF's central presence in Anchorage. While Extension will be the anchor tenant, other UAF programs could follow. As an Outreach Center, the facility will be used to bring science-based information to the citizens of Anchorage and Southcentral'.

Volunteer Help Needed

Below are a few volunteer projects to get new MGs started on their 40 hours or give MGs from previous years opportunities to finish up. Contact Julie Riley if you can help, 786-6300 or afjar@uaa.alaska.edu.

AMGAA Newsletter Help

A Master Gardener is needed who can provide calendar items for each issue of the Alaska Master Gardener Association, Anchorage newsletter. AMGAA President Jane Baldwin has suggestions on where to check. Gina usually needs copy edited and emailed to her about a week before the end of each month.

Anchorage Garden Events Calendar

Someone is needed to compile a gardening calendar of events for 2011. This is a big job, about 20 hours. It requires emailing, calling all the garden clubs and using last year's calendar to check on garden related events, including spring plant sales and garden tours that would be open to the public. The information is used in the AMGAA Directory, the AMGAA newsletter, the AMGAA website, the Garden Snaps Map website and the Anchorage Daily News. Believe it or not, many events/activities for 2011 have already been planned, but the calendar requires continual revisions/updates until about May 1st.

Alaska Botanical Garden Garden Bed Data Entry

Alaska Botanical Garden has a project that requires collecting information on the species planted in their garden beds. The way I understand it, you'd need to spend time at the ABG office this winter adding the information into their data base.

Gardens Needed for Spring Garden Tour

Anchorage's Community Councils are hosting a national conference called Neighborhoods USA and one of the tours that they want is of gardens. The tour is starting downtown with the Town Square/hanging baskets and ending up at the C Street Community Gardens with a potluck at the CES office. Is there anyone who lives in the downtown area to Northern Lights and west of the Seward Highway who would be willing to open up their very early garden (Thursday, May 26) to visitors from out-of-state? The tours take place between 5-7 p.m.

January Hort Conferences

This year's commercial horticulture conferences, the Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conference and the Alaska Peony Growers Conference are being held in Anchorage January 26, 27 & 28 at the Hilton. On the agenda are a couple of good out-of-state speakers that may appeal to home gardeners.

Dr. Harvey Lang, from Syngenta Flowers, will be giving three presentations at the Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conference. He will speak on 'Greenhouse Production of Flowering Annuals', 'Greenhouse Production of Hanging Baskets' and 'New Flower Varieties on the Market'. One of your own, Master Gardener Jason Coe, will report on 'Using a Solar Panel Hot Water System for Greenhouse Heating'. Jason was a recipient of an Alaska Division of Agriculture Innovation Grant last summer. This conference also includes two talks on small fruits by Agricultural Research Service researchers from Palmer.

The keynote speaker for the Alaska Peony Growers Conference is Roy Klehm owner/operator of Klehm's Song Sparrow Farm and Nursery in Wisconsin. Roy will be presenting 'Variety Selections for Peony Cut Flower Growers' and 'Growing Tips & Strategies'. This conference is a must for anyone considering going into commercial peony production. Mari Wood and Sue Lincoln have both cleared property in the Mat-Su Valley and will be planting in 2011.

If you have not seen a copy of the conference agenda try CES at www.uaf.edu/ces/ or the Alaska Peony Growers Association web site, www.alaskapeonies.org/. Registration for each conference is \$125 and includes a lunch and coffee breaks. Registration is being handled by the CES business office in Fairbanks, but you can get a copy of the brochure at the Cooperative Extension Service offices in Anchorage and Palmer.



Advanced MG Core Graduates

CONGRATULATIONS to the Master Gardeners who completed all 12 hours of the Advanced Master Gardener core course on Soil & Soil Amendments. Eighty percent of those who responded to the course evaluation said they now have a greater depth of knowledge of soil organisms, cation exchange capacity, mineralization of organic matter and immobilization of nutrients. Fifty-five percent said they are now more likely to use organic fertilizers after taking the course.

The Master Gardeners who completed the core course, must take an additional 8 hours of classes on gardening and complete 10 volunteer hours to become an Advanced Master Gardener. Those who completed the Advanced MG requirements in 2009, will become Advanced Master Gardeners II. A Ceremony of Achievement for those completing the Advanced MG requirements will be held at the September AMGAA meeting.

Plans are to set up a couple of field trips/classes this winter on soils and soil amendments. These programs will be open to all who are interested.

Master Gardeners completing the Advanced MG core course in November include the following. Those with an asterisk (*) are Advanced Master Gardeners I.

Pat Anderson*, Jane Baldwin*, Jo Anne Banta*, Brenda Carlson, Cheryl Chapman*, Gina Docherty*, Fran Durner*, Julie Ginder*, Leonard Grau*, Eva Hancock, Sandra Harrington, Elise Huggins, Tamea Isham, Franny Junge, Greg Kalal*, Ruth Kircher, Dana Klinkhart*, Nickel LaFleur*, Mel Langdon, Sue Lincoln*, Margaret Love, Ginny Moore, Loretta Mumford, Marge Olson*, Lynne Opstad, Andy Phouksouvath, Maureen Pintner, G. Gordon Pyle*, Catherine Renfro*, Carol Ross*, Erna Rousey, Mary Shier, Joette Storm, Amelia Walsh*, Camille Williams*



Garden Event Calendar

January 3, 2011

Alaska Native Plant Society: Where Trees Live: Biogeography of North American Trees including the laws of biogeography and how micro climates affect range distribution. 7:30 pm, Campbell Creek Science Center.

January 15

Alaska Rock Garden Society Meeting: "Other Nice Mustards" 2pm; Location: MTA Conference Room, 480 Commercial Drive, Palmer

January 17

AMGAA Annual Meeting & Board Elections; 7 p.m, CES; Program : To be announced.

January 26 & 27

Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conference, Anchorage. www.uaf.edu/ces

January 27 & 28

Alaska Peony Growers Conference, Anchorage. www.alaskapeonies.org

January 29

KENAI Central Peninsula Garden Club - "Soils Workshop" 10:00 am - 4:00 pm - Tom Jahns will instruct this all-day, advanced level soils workshop. For more information, contact Marion Nelson by email at mmkn@ptialaska.net Location: Cook Inlet Aquaculture Bldg., 40610 Kalifornsky Beach Road, Kenai

February 21

AMGAA Meeting / Potluck - Bring food and seeds to share. 7 p.m, CES

February 23-27

SEATTLE "Northwest Flower & Garden Show" - This year's theme is "Once Upon a Time..... Spectacular Gardens with Stories to Tell". www.gardenshow.com



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

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

If you have questions or want to make address or email corrections, please contact Sandra Harrington at: dsharr@ptialaska.net

Deadline for Newsletter submissions is the last weekend of the month, earlier for months when the 1st falls on a Monday. The newsletter is sent out to be printed on the 1st day of the month.

For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact:
Cooperative Extension Office
2675 C St, Suite 100.
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: 786-6300
Fax: 786-6312



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HAPPY NEW YEAR

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