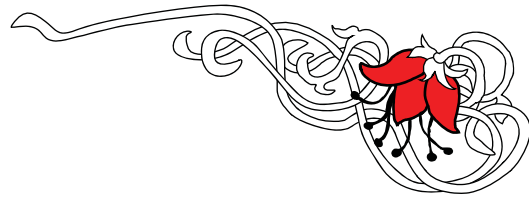


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 13, Issue 3

# ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER March 2011



## Message from Jane

"No winter lasts forever;  
no spring skips its turn."

Hal Borland

The March (vernal or spring) equinox will occur on March 20, 2011 at 23:21 UTC (3:21 PM Alaska Daylight Time), marking the beginning of spring in the northern hemisphere -- with 12 hours and 13 minutes of daylight.

Wa-hoo! What kind of March weather will we have? For what it's worth, the historical averages for March 20th are highs in the 30°s and lows around 18-20°.



March of course brings St. Patrick's Day on March 17th. Four-leafed clovers are valued for the good luck they are said to bring. Now a team of researchers has identified a gene responsible for turning three-leaf clovers

(*Trifolium* spp.) into four-leaf clovers. While 'tis true such knowledge will help plant breeders develop new and improve existing plants, somehow it seems a bit disheartening to imagine finding four-leaf clovers everywhere. Where's the fun in that? What do you suppose the leprechauns say about that?

St. Patrick's Day and things green led me on to musing about a green flowered garden. Some folks plant gardens or specific garden beds featuring white flowering plants or blue flowering plants or yellow, etc. Could it be done with green flowering plants?

I could think of a few green flowered plants:

Bells of Ireland (*Moluccella laevis*), relatively easy from seed;  
Lady's Mantle has chartreuse flowers;  
hops vines seem to have green flowers.  
There are several primroses that have green flowers ('Green Lace', 'Francesca') or flowers with green edges.

For more, a google exercise was required to find the following plants with some hybrids or cultivars that have green flowers. Some sound pretty intriguing:

Hellebores; Euphorbia; Echinacea; Rudbeckia; Zinnia; Celosia; Gladioli; *Cobea scandens*; Nicotiana; *Amaranthus caudatus* Love-lies-bleeding; Columbine; Daylilies;

Asiatic lilies with tinges of green; Chrysanthemums; Gerbera; Tulip. Also *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Limelight' (listed as zone 3-9); Clematis, a double green one called 'Florida Plena'; and even a Delphinium cultivar 'Green Twist'.

A few more harbingers of spring:

March 1: Sutton's Greenhouse plans to open as usual

March 12: ABG Spring Conference, 8:30a - 5:15p. Still time to register! Agenda and registration form at [www.alaskabg.org](http://www.alaskabg.org)

March 25-26: Statewide Master Gardener Conference, Fairbanks. It's not too late to register - see agenda and registration form online at <http://www.interiormaster-gardeners.org/>

If March is your birth month: the Daffodil is your birth month flower.

March Birth Trees, according to Celtic Astrology:  
Which tree did you fall from?

March 1 - March 10: Weeping Willow Tree;

Mar 11 - Mar 20: Lime Tree;

Mar 21: Oak Tree;

Mar 22 - Mar 31: Hazelnut Tree



## AMGA Treasurer's Report

Checking Account 1/25/11 balance: \$5342.46

Income (dues & donation): 360.00

Expenses -438.47

Transfer to new CU 1 Savings Acct: -3140.00

Checking Account 2/24/11 balance: \$2123.99

## February Meeting Highlights GBG By Julie Riley

## Seed Potatoes for Alaskan Gardeners By Julie Riley

The February AMGAA meeting was a combination potluck, seed exchange and presentation by Dr. Pat Holloway on the Georgeson Botanical Garden (GBG). AMGAA recently donated \$500 to the Georgeson Botanical Garden Foundation after Fran Durner brought it to the attention of the AMGAA Board of Directors that the GBG was in financial trouble because the University of Alaska Fairbanks has pulled back funding for the garden.



Dr. Holloway thanked AMGAA for its contribution and stated that the Georgeson Foundation has reached about one fourth of its goal. The foundation needs a \$2 million endowment to support the operation of the garden. About half of the Master Gardeners in attendance at the meeting had visited GBG.

The Georgeson Botanical Garden first opened in 1989 on the site of the UAF Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The Alaska Rail Road runs right past it. Dr. Pat Holloway was founder of the Garden and serves as the Garden's director as well as Professor of Horticulture, in the Department of High Latitude Agriculture at UAF.

The garden is named for Dr. Charles Georgeson who came to Alaska in 1898 to establish the state's U.S. Agricultural Experiment Stations. The Fairbanks experiment station began in 1906. Dr. Holloway presented information on the researchers who made major contributions to horticulture after Dr. Georgeson. Dr. Arvo Kallio's work at the UAF Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station in the '40s and '50s produced the 'Early Tanana' tomato and 'Pioneer' strawberry. Dr. Don Dinkel's research at UAF included work with plasticulture in the '60s and '70s. Today trials and experiments continue at GBG, but the Garden also hosts many visitors and a children's garden.

One of Dr. Holloway's graduate students is cataloging the numerous species of bumblebees that inhabit the fields nearby. The Garden serves as the northern most trial location for the Hardy Fern Foundation.

Volunteers are an important part of GBG's functions. Master Gardeners plant hundreds of trial annuals in a single afternoon. Pat was especially thankful for two gardeners who, for 12 years, have evaluated plants in the annual trials, measuring plant heights and bloom time. The Herb Bunch manages the herb garden and each year highlights a new herb. She mentioned that trial results can be found at the gardens new website, [georgesongbg.org](http://georgesongbg.org).

Pat invited everyone to stop by this summer for a visit although she said the garden would look different. There will be no annual trial beds because the greenhouse that has been utilized to start seedlings for the garden is being torn down to make way for a new Life Sciences Building. Plans are to direct-seed wildflower seed mixes and vegetables that don't need to be planted as transplants.

Many Master Gardeners at the meeting signed up to receive the Georgeson Botanical Garden newsletter via email.

The certified seed potato you'll soon be purchasing from garden centers or greenhouses starts its life in a test tube at the Plant Materials Center (PMC) outside of Palmer. The PMC is part of the Alaska Division of Agriculture which, oddly enough, is part of the Department of Natural Resources in this state. It is Bill Campbell that makes sure that the potatoes grown for seed are free from the nasty diseases that seed potatoes can harbor.

Greg Kalal, Master Gardener/farmer/dentist-in-a-previous-life, has started growing seed potatoes and this spring will be offering for sale first generation white 'Rural New Yorker'. Most gardeners never get to grow 'first generation' potatoes because the seed potato producer pays \$30/pound for itty-bitty little tubers that they take and grow on to make more tubers to sell. By the 8th generation seed growers have to start all over again and purchase generation zero potatoes from the Alaska Plant Materials Center.

In order for a seed potato farmer to sell certified seed, his/her potato field needs to be inspected at least two times during the growing season. Bill Campbell walks up and down the field looking for the slightest deviation from normal growth that could indicate that disease is present. These diseases are viruses such as Potato Virus X and Potato Virus Y that you don't want in your home garden crop. Last year Alaskan produced seed potatoes were in short supply but hopefully this year purchasing seed will not be a problem.

It was Greg's wife Kathy who picked out 'Rural New Yorker' at one of the UAF Experiment Station field days. "It was the prettiest flower in the field," Greg recalled. "Kathy went right to it." This is only the second time in my career where I have run into someone who is drawn to a potato flower's beauty. (The other person is Bill Campbell.) According to Greg, the 'Rural New Yorker' flowers were bigger and more profuse than any of the other potato flowers in the field.

My half-hour Internet search on the cultivar turned up a 'Rural New Yorker No. 2' so apparently there was a number one at some point in the potato's history. Most of the references that popped up on 'Rural New Yorker' were from the early 1900s. Apparently this potato was hot-stuff back in Wisconsin where it was described as being an important commercial variety in 1912.

I'm not sure if you'll be able to find white 'Rural New Yorker' from any source except Greg Kalal so if you'd like to try this potato with the beautiful flowers, I suggest getting in touch with him. Greg is in the AMGAA Directory and attends most Master Gardener meetings. He was seen at the February potluck passing around a plate of potato cookies and is trying to figure out a name for his farm that relates to Frank Zappa's 'Montana', a song about raising a crop of dental floss.



**Master Gardener Focus:  
Kathy Feathergill-CALVIN and Dea Calvin  
Forget-Me-Not Nursery  
by Cheryl Chapman**



Gray late February: Potter Marsh crackles with ice. Deep snow pillows the verge of the Seward Highway, but southbound trucks loaded with spring already are turning left at Indian onto Forget-Me-Not Nursery Way.

Oprah can answer for a lot, including, this particular year, 1,800 pelargoniums that by the last week in February have settled into

the warm greenhouse at Dea Calvin and Kathy Feathergill-Calvin's Forget-Me-Not Nursery. By Memorial Day those Regals, zonals and ivy geraniums will be filling out pots, containers and ready-to-hang basket with reds and purples, pinks, whites and corals. Other plants will follow, some 50 different varieties of flowers alone.

But back to Oprah, and Dea and Kathy's 40-year marriage. Dea worked on the slope, fished, built timber-framed houses. Kathy was a commercial painter, 40 years of commercial painting, "and I was so sick of painting," she says.

They'd moved from a tree-shadowed cabin in a hollow to their current sunny spot in 1995, and "holy cow," says Kathy, "Suddenly we could grow all kinds of things. Flowers."

And here comes Oprah again: Kathy was watching when Tom Cruise told Oprah he'd become an actor to follow his passion. All people, he said, should follow their passions too. So what, Kathy wondered, is my passion? And the answer rose up in her heart.

When her husband walked in the door, she said, "Dea, I want to start a nursery."

They opened in 1996.

"For a commercial operation, we began with a small greenhouse, though it was large and luxurious for us," says Dea, who designed and built it. "I was happy because I figured if nothing sold, I was going to plant it all in our yard.

"We had all kinds of things that had to be grown indoors - tomatoes, gourds, cucumbers, watermelons, a few flowers. And everything sold. We couldn't believe it! We actually made money - not a lot, but enough to keep going.

"The next year, we doubled the number of flowers, and people came and bought them all again! It's like Las Vegas here in May and June."

Kathy and Dea were not initially plant people, so you must picture a Cupid-like Green Man with a bow and arrow, potting them both later in life. Kathy, who moved to Alaska from Illinois in 1969, had generally positive feelings about flowers, though neither her parents nor grandparents gardened. Dea grew up on a homestead in the Matanuska Valley and swore when he left at 18 that he'd never grow or harvest anything else in his life.

"Growing flowers is the last thing I ever thought would happen," he says.

"We didn't know anything when we started out," says Kathy, who completed the Master Gardener course in 1998/99. "We grew every single thing from seeds; we'd never heard of plugs or liners. But we got better every year, and the plants show it. It's an art."

"We learned by doing, so we know first-hand what will work in Alaska," says Dea. "We grow roots. We grow plants. The blooms are the bonus."

In 2001 they quadrupled the size of their greenhouse, which, after the geraniums, will next house plants for the mix-'em-up baskets that Kathy designs. She has a photo file of plans -- recipes, she calls them -- for combinations that need the same pH, amount of sun or shade, of food, of water.

"I love creating baskets," she says. "It's my favorite thing, and this seems to be the year of the container."

After the baskets, the table stock will arrive, and the annuals. There are shrubs, trees and perennials, to boot.

"We try to have typical things like pansies," says Dea, "But a lot of what we have isn't typical."

They're looking at Begonia "Go-Go," semi-double tuberous begonias with triple the blooms, and Lobelia "Techno," which won't swoon in heat. "Calibrachoa 'Dreamsicle' is to die for," says Kathy, "And there's Rhodochiton (purple bell vine) and Lophospermum (creeping gloxinia), a fabulous blue Anagallis 'Skylover,' Salpiglossis (painted tongue), Schizanthus (butterfly flower), lots of Nemesisias, the mound-forming cinerarias, a new Lobularia 'Snow Princess' ..."

With luck, the famous Forget-Me-Not Nursery tulip sailboat will bloom again. "We mulched it, we danced on it, we told it, 'Do good and come back,'" Kathy says.

"That's 16,000 bulbs you're dealing with," says Dea. "We grid everything out on the computer, then lay the template down and do it."

They're getting into weddings this year. Might as well. Dea and Kathy now have four honorary grandchildren from people who've fallen for each other at their nursery, and are looking forward to more. And they're experimenting with table beds.

"Everybody's getting older," says Dea. "There are back problems. Knee problems. Gardeners whine to us and we whine right back. With table beds, everything is up and you don't have to do that infamous lean."

As much as Dea and Kathy love meeting hopeful gardeners, they urge them to think about the soil first, and only then the flowers.

"I've seen people walk out of here with a wagon full of beautiful geraniums, begonias," says Dea. "And they get them home and set them on top of dry, rocky hardpan, and they die. Everything that happens to plants hinges on that bed."

Continued on page 5



## Master Gardener in Thailand

by MG Janie Taylor (Feb 19, 2011)

Sawadee ka, thon chau. Hello, how are you? Greetings from beautiful, tropical Thailand.

As we move towards the end of week 4 here on the tropical isle of Koh Lanta I am just itching to plant something in this gardener's paradise.

We decided to hunker down in one spot this vacation and have gotten to know the local markets, coldest beer on the beach, and various favorite food vendors close by.

I have also located a lovely little nursery just down the road and could not resist purchasing 2 blooming orchids to grace our porch at the oh-so-affordable price of 50 baht each. (\$4.00 total)

Already growing on the property here at The Red Snapper, where our bungalows reside: lemongrass, ferns, kafir lime trees, frangipangi, bananas, bird of paradise, jasmine, all sorts of palms and gorgeous huge leafy plants, stands of bamboo, and of course a couple of coconut palms. I've made a very nice lemongrass/kaffir lime/ginger tea.

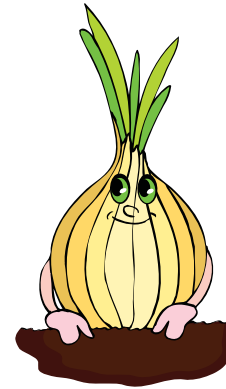
I've been daydreaming about little changes and additions I could make to our landscape here at The Red Snapper. A nice little veggie and herb garden..... maybe a spicy, mixed chile hedge, hmmm..... some rocks and shells to define the pathways. They do lots of fun things with lighting here... handmade lanterns of all shapes and sizes, uplighting, candles, torches, various illuminations for walkways. I could go to the nursery and buy a selection of luscious plants to be tucked here and there for color and contrast, and scent, scent, scent. Certainly something fantastically scented very near the porch where we have our morning coffee and while away the hours reading.

What a compost I could have, with the warm weather and all the fruit and vegetable scraps coming from the restaurant kitchen along with the ubiquitous leaves that are constantly littering the walks and get raked up daily. It would be ready in no time at all in this humid heat.

I have no idea what the insect/pest situation is here. We do have 4 or 5 geckos that work on the bug problems in our bungalows. I saw a snake slide through the other day and occasionally a little frog will pass through our porch. Some huge flying, buzzing, fuzzy black insect-type flew into the room one day and gave me a jolt.

As my daydream continues I have to add a few things... a couple of cashew trees....papaya and mango... more citrus....and I bet there are lots of variety of bananas to be had. And, just think of all the plants I have yet to learn about! **OMG!** All these luscious things.

It's a good thing it will be time for me to start seedlings when I get home....scratch the itch. See you in March!



**Dixondale Onions**  
by MG Janie Taylor

Last year I finally got my act together to order onion starts from Dixondale Farms out of Texas.

Master Gardener Dick Juelson told me about this company years ago and how much success he had growing their "long day" onions. Long day onion types are specifically for long daylight summers like we have in Alaska. With the addition of two more 4 x 8 raised beds I was able to dedicate one of them solely to onions. I ordered early (January) and had them ship 8th of May.

The onion sets arrived right on time and as you recall, it was an exceptionally nice and warm May last year so I promptly planted them, about May 12, giving them an early start. There were very good planting and care instructions that came with the plants. You can sign up for their free online newsletter "The Onion Patch" which I find very informative, including articles about growing, harvesting and caring for your onions, as well as great recipes.

The onions are sent as small dormant plants that once planted in the right conditions take off pretty quickly. I added compost, composted manure and bone meal to the beds beforehand. They suggested planting the onions 2" apart if you wanted to thin out and eat early onions leaving them 4" -6" apart to flesh out. I was pretty good at keeping the weeds at bay and at the end of the season I had a good crop to harvest.

I ordered two variety packs: one a storage onion variety and the other a sweet onion variety to be eaten fairly quickly (within a month or 2) which meant I was able to try about 8 types of mixed yellow, white and red onions. This year they are only offering one Long Day Variety Sampler that includes both storage and sweet onion varieties.

One bunch is approximately 5 dozen plants @ 10.75. You can order up to 10 bunches and get **FREE SHIPPING!** Some long day varieties they offer are Big Daddy, Copra, Walla Walla Sweet, Red Zeppelin, and Mars to name a few. They also have leeks.

I heartily suggest you all give them a try. You can order from their website, mail order, fax or phone. Garden on!

[www.dixondalefarms.com](http://www.dixondalefarms.com)



## Central Peninsula Master Gardener News by Rosemary Kimball

The February started out with nice snowfall down here which has given us knee-high snow on the ground and a soil temperature of 26°F which is well within the normal winter range. The last day of February brought a low temperature of -11°F. To quote Queen Elizabeth II somewhere along the way, "we are not amused".

Asking around here about what's going on in various lives and I got this from MG Barb Jewell. "Just dreaming of going to Seattle and seeing spring flowers next month." Sigh. Take me with you, Barb!

MG Margaret Simon just got back from a couple weeks in Hilo on the Big Island and says that everything was going nicely.

MG Marion Nelson was more in the here and now. She's shopping locally and got a grow light fixture at Home Depot to play with. She's also hit 6-8 catalogs and is looking at soil block makers.

I had it with the flying livestock that was harbored in my worm composter so I took the whole project into the 40°F root cellar and shut the door. For the remaining ones, upstairs and down, I have traps. They seem to really like fermenting stuff like red wine. I leave a small jar with 1/4 inch of wine downstairs. First I zap the ones hanging around outside the jar and then clamp a lid on the jar and shake them down where they drown quietly and I presume happily. I've found that if I leave a partially drunk glass of wine in the living room I have a high protein drink the next morning. Every little bit helps.

For some reason we have had a flock of crossbills down here in Sterling twittering since mid-February. It gives a false sense of impending spring. I don't look for the season to mellow until the Ides of March. There's something that happens about then where the air becomes mellow even though the temperature is still as normally cold as ever.

So what's happening down here, garden wise? Not very much...yet.

### Horseradish

Want to unzip your scalp and clear your sinuses? Have some very fresh horseradish. Guaranteed! Horseradish is the herb of the year; go to [www.iherb.org](http://www.iherb.org) for more info. It is a cousin of our broccoli and grows very well up here. It can make a nice back-of-the-border planting with its attractive leaves. There is also a variegated horseradish that my MG neighbor Mark has grown: *Armoracia rusticata* 'Verigata'. It took it a couple years for the plant to mature and the variegations to appear and it's a really attractive plant. Try [www.parkland-perennials.com](http://www.parkland-perennials.com) for a source. There are all sorts of things that would look pretty in front of it. It's easy to grow:

get your root and put it into the ground. It likes fairly neutral soil, adequate water and sun. (My husband ran over a dormant root with the rototiller and we had two dozen plants so beware of what can happen.)... When grating the rule of thumb for dealing with the roots is to wear gloves, stand up wind and don't rub your eyes or pick your nose. Go here for more info: <http://simplyrecipes.com/recipes/>, [www.horseradish.org/](http://www.horseradish.org/) and enjoy the pain.

### Bounce those Fungus Gnats out of your Life

In some very interesting new research by Kansas State Professor Raymond Cloyd, published in *HortScience* 45: 1830-1833 (2010), it was discovered that Bounce® original brand fabric softener dryer sheets were quite effective in repelling fungus gnats.

As it turns out, the Bounce® sheets that make your clothes smell so good, contain linalool, benzyl acetate, beta-citronellol, and hedione...very effective chemicals against fungus gnats. If you've grown plants from seed, you have no doubt run into fungus gnats, which are tiny black flies that live on the surface of moist potting soils. Fungus gnat larvae eat developing seedlings, some even before they emerge from the soil.

The recommendation was to sow your seed, then cover the pot with a Bounce® sheet and secure it with a rubber band. The sheets will allow light and water to pass through while keeping the fungus gnats out. Once the seedlings are large enough, the covers can be removed. Good air movement and keeping the soil surface dry are also very important in controlling fungus gnats.



Winged Fungus Gnat  
Photo from Wikipedia.org

### Master Gardener Focus: Kathy Feathergill-Calvin... cont. from page 3

The nursery has free handouts on perennial and vegetable bed preparation and care, starting when the birch leaves start to bud and hitting high gear when the leaves are the size of a quarter.

Start small, they advise. Don't jump at Versailles and try to plant everything at once. Enjoy every stage, and keep records, make notes, sketch bed layouts, note what works and what doesn't, what you liked and what wasn't so great, except for the aphids.

And never, never be afraid to be creative. Follow your passion.





## Bird Chatter

- MGs and AMGAA members seen at the 2011 Northwest Flower & Garden Show: Fran Durner, Susan Brusehaber, Judy Christianson, Amelia Walsh, Robbie Frankevich, Cheryl Shroyer, Camille Williams, Linda Fleener, Gina Docherty, Jane Baldwin, Debbie Hinchey, Julie Riley and Mary Shier. Who else endured the unseasonable cold, snowy weather?
- Overhead upon hotel check-in in Seattle—"Does our room have a balcony? Plants like being on the balcony better than being inside." Turned out it was too cold to put plants out.
- Will flowers be sprouting up in unusual places in Anchorage this season? MGs were seen attending a presentation on how to make 'Guerilla Gardening' seed balls.
- Jane Baldwin learned that her sister-in-law is neighbors with Ciscoe Morris, a Seattle gardening icon who spoke at the Anchorage MG Conference in 2007.
- King County Master Gardeners provided 100s of hours of volunteer support for the 2011 Northwest Flower & Garden Show, a show first. Way to go MGs!
- The Northwest Flower & Garden Show's newspaper, in addition to the presentation schedule and exhibitors, included ads for urinary incompetence and vein health. Yikes, what does this say about the show's demographics?
- The Georgeson Botanical Garden in Fairbanks will include only direct-seeded flowers and vegetables this summer because the UAF campus greenhouse is being torn down to make place for a new building.
- The bid which won the contract to replace the old UAF greenhouse will only build 'half' a greenhouse. It does not include all the features necessary to make it functional, such as benches.
- If you want to grow a giant cabbage, plant seeds of 'O-S Cross' the first of March.
- The last slide of Ciscoe Morris' talk at the Seattle Flower Show, showed Ciscoe (with a trowel through his head) wearing his Alaska Master Gardener "In the Zone" vest.
- According to one of the panelists in the seminar, "The Garden Show: Plant Explorers", Alaskans who have greenhouses all grow tomatoes and marijuana and guests are served worms in a cup after dinner. (but they're cool people)
- Gina Docherty won a T-shirt at Ciscoe Morris & Meeghan Black's "Stump the Experts" when she asked "How do you get rid of horsetail permanently". Their answer? MOVE!

### Gardening Trends to Embrace

Suggested by Lucy Hardiman, garden designer, consultant, writer, speaker from Portland, Oregon during a panel at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show.

- Planting diversity
- Green roofs, green walls
- Rain gardens
- Water saving plantings
- More art in the garden
- If you have a lawn, don't water it and let it go brown
- Right plant, right place
- More mixed borders (perennials, trees, shrubs, bulbs)
- Fewer trade-marked plants

### Riley's Northwest Flower & Garden Show Favorites

- Favorite new perennial: *Dracocephalum grandiflorum* 'Alatai Blue' (8 X 12 in. mound)
- Favorite new vegetable variety: 'Satsuki Midori' cucumber
- Favorite new way to eat a vegetable: Harvest tips of pea vines
- Favorite phrase: Bloated compost pile
- Favorite presentation title: What the Cluck!?
- Favorite business title: City People's Garden Store
- Favorite seed business tag-line: 'Unbeetable Quality'
- Favorite news spot on TV: Primroses planted in a pothole
- Favorite purchase: garlic shredder (ask Mary Shier to explain)
- Favorite item almost purchased: radish-top hat
- Favorite gardener poet: Marge Piercy

## Report on the Northwest Flower and Garden Show From Fran Durner

The sweet scent of flowering plants - hyacinth, daffodils, primrose, muscari, cyclamen, etc, etc, - filled the air immediately upon entering the Northwest Flower and Garden Show in Seattle. Held at the end of February this year, it ordinarily attracts a large contingent of Alaskans eager for a mid-winter break and tantalizing taste of what's to come. It's also a great place to pick up ideas from 24 full-size and fully realized display gardens as well as a chance to come home over-loaded with long sought after plants and garden paraphernalia.

This year I was pretty good and only brought home two types of bronze foliage *Rodgersia* - *aesculifolia* 'Rubrifolia' and *podophylla* 'Rotlaub', (thanks Sally Arant!) - a red-leaf *Rheum* 'Ace of Hearts,' two dahlia tubers, red 'Spartacus' and orange/red "Show-N-Tell," a coppery color fern, *Dryopteris erythrosa* and a wild looking voodoo lily, with a sinister name, *Sauromatum venosum* that's covered in burgundy and yellow markings. I think I see a color scheme here.

And the seminars! Over 120 of them! Five full days of non-stop opportunities to learn, ask questions and be entertained. From the always funny Ciscoe Morris and Marianne Binetti who practically had people rolling in the aisles to the learned Panayoti Kelaidis of the Denver Botanic Gardens, who talked about agaves and yuccas in the garden withstanding -20 degree weather! When asked what he thought about those plants making it through our Alaskan winters he said, "Oh, I don't know, go ask your Verna Pratt and that fellow Jaime Rodriguez." I kid you not, he said that. Verna? Jaime? Whaddya think?

My favorite garden, well, there was something wonderful to see and smell in every one of the display gardens. Back again was the huge and fabulous 100+ year-old Japanese Lace Leaf Maple. I don't know how they manage to transport it every year but it is absolutely wondrous. There were also numerous displays of wall gardens from a 12-ft-high modular unit with a built in drip irrigation system, to smaller fabric "Wooly Pockets" that allow a gardener to pop in pots or fill with soil and plant and then tack to a vertical support somewhere.



One of the best parts was meeting and talking to 18-yr-old Courtney Goetz of Gig Harbor who designed her first garden space using recycled materials for her high school senior project. "I just went to a salvage yard and had so much fun!" she said. From using a metal container crate for a garden shed/shelter with a greenhouse of recycled doors and windows perched on top, to a rain chain of old keys (It works!) to a gatepost of plastic water bottles contained by wire mesh and old radiators as fence material, it was creative and fun. The design also won her two gold medals at the show. To anyone who might think that only us old farts are into gardening, welcome to the next generation!

18-yr-old Courtney Goetz of Gig Harbor created a garden design using recycled materials for a senior project at school and won a gold medal at the NWFGS for her effort. Photo by Fran Durner

**High Country Wildflowers for Beginners**  
**June 10 - 12, 2011 \$330**

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

**High Country Wildflowers: A Closer Look**  
**June 14 - 16, 2011 \$330**

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

**Denali Wildflowers: A Family Seminar - new this year!!**  
**June 17 - 19, 2011 \$235 per person**

June brings a rainbow of colors to Denali's landscape. Bring your children or grandchildren and discover the beautiful world of Denali's wildflowers. Through hiking and exploration, we'll learn about what grows where and why, and how these plants survive in the subarctic ecosystem. This course will include active learning, floral arts and crafts, and stops to smell the tundra roses! This seminar is specifically designed for families with children 8 years and younger.

These courses are based out of the Murie Science and Learning Center Field Camp, located 29 miles inside the park along the Teklanika River. The Field Camp includes rustic tent cabins and a common dining tent. Optional professional development credit is available from the University of Alaska Anchorage. Group size is limited to ten participants, so register today! Please visit [www.alaskageographic.org](http://www.alaskageographic.org) or call 907-683-1269 for more information.



The Anchorage Chapter of the Alaska Master Gardeners Association welcomes letters, opinions, articles, ideas and inquiries.

To contact the editor:  
Phone: 345-4099  
Email: [amga@alaska.net](mailto:amga@alaska.net)  
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:  
AMGA  
P.O. Box 221403  
Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

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

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

## Garden Event Calendar

**March 3, Thursday**

Anchorage Garden Club - "Fruit Trees for South Central Alaska"  
Presented by Dwight Bradley, Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers; Pioneer School House, 437 E. 3rd Avenue, Anchorage; 7 pm

**March 7, Monday**

Alaska Native Plant Society - "National Park Service Research"  
Amy Miller will speak on the National Park Service research including the relationship of climate to past spruce beetle outbreaks, and changes in vegetation patterns in southwestern Alaska. The public is invited. 7:30 pm - Campbell Creek Science Center, 5600 Science Center Drive, Anchorage

**March 7, Monday**

Mat-Su Master Gardeners - "Romancing the Stones: From Cobblestones to Wild Rocks" by Sally Koppenberg. 7:00 pm Location: MTA Conference Room, 480 Commercial Drive, Palmer

**March 10, Thursday**

Wildflower Garden Club - "Primroses, the Small and the Tall of them." 10:00 am, Central Lutheran Church, 1420 Cordova Street, Anchorage

**March 11, Friday**

Alaska Botanical Garden - "Annual Meeting" "Planting Villages: How Gardens Make Good Neighbors" Keynote Speaker: Roger Swain, known as "the man with the suspenders" is most famous for hosting the television show "The Victory Garden" on PBS. Cost \$10 / free to ABG Members. 6:30 pm, Anchorage

**March 12, Saturday**

Alaska Botanical Garden - "5th Annual Spring Garden Conference" [www.alaskabg.org/Events/SpringConference.html](http://www.alaskabg.org/Events/SpringConference.html) for info; 9am - 5:30 pm; UAA/APU Consortium Library, 3211 Providence Drive, Anchorage

**March 21, Monday**

AMGAA Meeting: "Foliage and Texture" by Robbie Frankevich. 7 p.m., 1675 C Street, Suite 100, Anchorage.

**March 22-24, Tuesday - Thursday**

"Sustainable Agriculture Conference & Organic Growers School"  
Topics for the SARE conference will include root cellars and extending crop availability, funding opportunities, CSAs around Alaska, agriculture research from around the state, small fruit and berries and the rhubarb industry. Location: Princess Riverside Lodge, 4477 Pikes Landing Road, Fairbanks

**March 25-26, Friday - Saturday**

**FAIRBANKS**

"Alaska State Master Gardeners Conference" Open to interested gardeners as well as Master Gardeners statewide. For more information, contact Sharon Corbett: 488-1701 email [corbetts@acsalaska.net](mailto:corbetts@acsalaska.net) or Stephanie Meath: 457-2306, email [smeath@alaska.net](mailto:smeath@alaska.net) Wedgewood Resort, 212 Wedgewood Drive, Fairbanks

**March 29, April 5, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm; April 9, 10 am - 3 pm**

American Society of Landscape Architects, Anchorage Chapter - "Garden Design Workshop": \$225 per person or family / team. For reservations and more information contact: Laura Minski at 222-2859 or by email at [lminski@corvus-design.com](mailto:lminski@corvus-design.com). Meeting Location: BP Energy Center, 900 E. Benson Blvd., Anchorage

**March 30, Wednesday**

**TREerific Anchorage - "March presentation"**

A presentation led by Peter Briggs. Details coming soon. Meeting and presentation begin at 6:00, pizza donated by Moose's Tooth at 5:45. Meeting 6:00 pm; CES Office, 1675 C Street, Suite 100, Anchorage

**April 4, Monday**

**Alaska Native Plant Society - "Aleutian Plant Life"**

Leah Kenny speaking on USFWS plant work at many islands throughout the Aleutians, including information on a recently written plant guide for the Near Islands. The public is invited. 7:30 pm - Location: Campbell Creek Science Center, 5600 Science Center Drive, Anchorage

**April 7, Thursday**

Anchorage Garden Club - "Rock Garden Construction" Presented by Carmel Tysver, Alaska Rock Garden Society. 7:00 pm - Location: Pioneer School House, 437 E. 3rd Avenue, Anchorage

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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This Japanese lace leaf maple is over 100+ years old and has been a repeat show stopper at the NWFGS. Read Fran's report on the show on page 6.

Photo by Fran Durner

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Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Inc.  
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