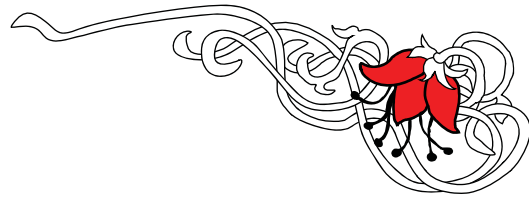


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 13, Issue 5

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

May 2011



Message From Jane

Finally! Don't you just love the increased activity of the season? I left my Rodale's organic garden book of the 1970s to gather dust on my shelf and converted my veggie garden space to mostly flowers. However, with the recent popularity of container-gardening, just can't resist trying a few things that go beyond the norm of tried and true varieties and planting methods. It's a lot of fun and great learning opportunities.

Dried Soup Beans: I was tickled at the results of my dried soup bean challenge. I grew (in pots) and harvested enough heirloom dried bush beans (such pretty colors) to make a couple of pots of mixed bean soup. I did have to pull a couple of the plants into my garage for about 10 days to finish drying the beans. I may try some more this summer if I hurry up and order some 50-65 day maturation heirloom varieties -- but will use bigger containers as watering was a problem with the smaller pots drying out too fast. The best dried bean producer was not a bush bean, but the half runner Cannellini bean. If you're too impatient to wait for the dried bean stage, most can be eaten young like green beans.

Celery: For the past two summers I've grown celery in painted red 3-lb coffee cans - intended as ornamental, celery foliage is really striking in bright red pots. They grew well, but I also experienced a little difficulty maintaining a good moisture level for celery. With uneven watering, the celery was a little tough, but diced and frozen in 1 cup portions, it worked fine in soups and stews and lasted through the winter.

Potatoes: I've grown potatoes in tall pots for a couple of summers -- layering them in as they grow with dried leaves (against some seasoned gardening advice) and been rewarded with a surprising number of potatoes per pot. Not only easy to harvest (tip the pot over on a tarp!), but also almost fully finished compost to use. There will be more German butterballs (favorite new potato) and a few Magic Mollies (a decent potato and some fun shock value when served for Thanksgiving mashed potatoes) again this summer. It's a great small scale way to try some of the many potato varieties now available.

Tomatoes: I've discovered the tomato 'Stupice' has produced a reasonably tasty outdoor grown tomato for me for the past couple of summers. Using a couple of garden stakes for support and surrounding the plants with clear plastic (open top and bottom) created a sort of mini-greenhouse effect and increased the number of tomatoes that fully ripened.

Kale: This summer's experiments are with 6 varieties of kale (7 if you count the loose-leaf cabbage Tronchuda aka Portugeuse kale or sea kale) and peanuts. Fretting about the kale germination rate, I started too many kale seeds (what's new?). On April 18th (34 degrees) I stuck a few excess seedlings in a garden bed thawed only to 1-1/2". A couple of 24-26 degree mornings later they were still standing, although I couldn't discern one iota of growth. Pondering their survival, I wondered if cool weather plant seeds germinated between damp paper towels inside (70 degrees) to root sprout stage, could then be planted outside since plants actually grow in "cool" weather. Roots sprouted in 3-4 days, and were planted outside April 23rd. On April 28th, covered with a clear plastic deli-salad bar container with soil thermometer reading 40 degrees, little green leaves broke through the soil. Will see what happens. The regular seedlings are 5 times as big and waiting to be hardened off in a couple of weeks before planting out. The first seedlings planted out? 12 days later they are still standing and actually showing the beginnings of new leaf growth.

The peanuts - what can I say? I only had two out of 8 germinate. They are now about 4" tall and are awaiting their fate. Anyone else have some gardening experiments to share?



Treasurer's Report



Checking Acct. Balance 4/11/11	\$1558.53
Expenses	- 1004.99
Deposit	+158.39
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April 18th AMGAA Meeting Report Mulch

By Gina Docherty

On the line of continued soil improvement and plant health, the topic of April's AMGA meeting was Mulch and Biochar. Despite some major audio-visual glitches, Jane Baldwin successfully discussed using organic mulches in your garden and Julie Riley discussed Biochar.

Here are a few tips from the experts:

The best mulches are free - grass and leaves. There was much discussion on types of mulches from speakers and attendees, including leaf mold and wood chips, which are also free providing you want a large amount dumped in your yard from an commercial arborist. Jane provided a nice handout on the use of grass clippings and how to make leaf mold, and showed samples of her lovely leaf mold. Sue Lincoln brought a sample of the compost she made with her inside compost machine, NatureMill. She's definitely ahead of the ball game by composting her kitchen scraps all winter and having usable compost in the spring!

Julie Riley discussed the concept of Biochar, which is an organic matter that is burned slowly with a restricted flow of oxygen; the fire is then stopped when the material reaches the charcoal stage. This material is full of crevices and holes which helps serve as 'life rafts' for soil microorganisms. The carbon compounds form loose chemical bonds with soluble plant nutrients so they are not as easily washed away by rain and irrigation. Biochar added to poor soils, especially in combination with compost and organic fertilizers can dramatically improve plant growth while helping retain nutrients in the soil.

The idea came from the Amazonian rain forests of Brazil where civilization thrived for 2,000 years. The "dark earths" persist today as a testament to ancient soil-building methods you can use in your garden. These dark earths hold plant nutrients, including nitrogen, phosphorous, calcium and magnesium, much more than unimproved soil and remain fertile even after 500 years of tropical temperatures and rainfall that averages 80 inches a year!

Sources of biochar include gathering the charred remains of wood from your woodstove or fireplace, including those summer campouts. Charcoal briquettes used in grilling are probably not a good choice. Those designed to light fast often include paraffin or other hydrocarbon solvents that have no place in an organic garden. Plain charred weeds, wood or cow pies are better materials for using this promising soil-building technique based on ancient gardening wisdom.

I can see the back of my car now, filled with campfire remains, my hands blackened. I wonder where I can find free cow pies? Maybe this is something to do with all those moose pellets lying around!

If you're interested, you can get more information by googling Biochar - one site is www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening.

A very thought provoking evening.

Alaska State Fair Entries: How to Win

by Nickel LaFleur



Photo by Nickel LaFleur

Monday, April 25th at CES, Kathy Liska, Crops Superintendent at the Fair, handed out the 2011 Flowers & Crops Exhibitor's Guide and tips on entry into the State Fair to a room full of interested master gardeners. The first entry will be on Wednesday, August 24th from noon until 9pm; the 2nd and final entry will be a week later, August 31st from noon to 9pm.

All entrants must have an entry number and if you don't have one call them at 745-4827 to get that taken care of before July. Their website is alaskastatefair.org to get further information. Kathy stressed that calling was the ONLY way to get your entry number and indicated if no one answered, you would have the opportunity to leave a message.

All the criteria that the judge's are looking for when your flowers or crops get judged on are on the exhibitor guide. The exhibitor guides can be found at the state fair website. Following that to a "T" should be able to guarantee you a ribbon (prove me wrong). With this being the 75th Anniversary of the Alaska State Fair in Palmer, it would be wonderful to see more participation in the crops/herb entries by Anchorage gardeners. After all, we enjoy going to the fair to look at the entries, why not be part of the exhibits.

There are some changes happening with the flowers and crops department. They will be combined in the same building this year. Flowers will be relocated to the barn and a new entrance door for the flowers has been built. The parking lot is being revamped, too. If you would like to get your Master Gardener volunteer hours in at the State Fair, get a hold of Julie. Let's participate and keep our State Fair Growin' for Another 75 Years.

Notes from the "Hood" From Pat Anderson



Camille Williams had some neighbors ask her how to plant containers; she has had won so many blue ribbons at the State Fair - SO she staged a container planting instruction class at Suttons where she works part time. Pat Anderson sent invites to the Gardeners in the Hood. Seven of us enjoyed watching and planting with fillers, thrillers and spillers! Here's a picture of Camille's 'class'. Some of the plugs are only 25 cents!

Photo by Pat Anderson

Master Gardener Focus:

G. Gordon Pyle By Cheryl Chapman

The land itself was Lazarus land, but Master Gardener Gordon Pyle at first didn't notice, being seduced by the light-filled, freshly painted lower duplex in Spenard. He has had 11 years now to figure it out.

This is a story of impossible flowers at the foot of a hill that are there at all solely because of one man's personal back-breaking labor and a mountain of compost, plus supervision by a cat who knew what she wanted: the late, fastidious Miss 22, who recoiled at dirtying her feet on garbage. Cats do have their standards.

Gordon grew up in Sacramento, "where you put a seed in the ground and it grew," of Portuguese stock, gardeners and union, hard workers and proud. He idolized his grandparents, the grandfather who was his first hero, the grandmother "who bled Dodger blue and Labor red and had a picture of FDR hanging next to Jesus."

Gardening was a job at the Silvera place, and who better to do it than the resident 8-year-old? Gordon mowed and watered, weeded and raked, studied and read, fought like a wolverine in the tough schools and wasn't allowed to sit down until he moved out and got his own apartment at 18.

"My papa would ask why I was sitting on the sofa. I'd tell him I was thinking, and he'd say, 'Here, hold this broom and move it while you're thinking,'" says Gordon.

He was training as an apprentice electrician in Sacramento when the trans-Alaska oil pipeline came along, and he saw opportunity for a hard worker who was skilled and fast. He wound up at the Port of Valdez, the southern terminus of the 800-mile-long conduit that, as of 2010, had moved almost 16 billion barrels of oil the length of Alaska, starting at the North Slope. That oil pours through pipe Gordon helped lay.

"There's nothing like building," he says. "It's a real treat, building good stuff. And then you can go back and see it."

Every now and again he'd return to Sacramento to live, but Alaska wasn't through with him and back he'd come to a new job in construction, or in union work, or with a series of nonprofits. The Older Persons Action Group. Adult education. Big Brothers Big Sisters. Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC).

"Then, I was always working," he says. "Then, there wasn't time for gardening."

But then, he retired. He moved into the duplex, started thinking about flowers and took a flying leap into years of trouble. Early on, their name was "cottonwoods."

There were 200-250 cottonwoods jostling to take over the small property. It took him two years to get rid of them and move on to hand-to-hand combat with the 4-foot-tall weeds. Once the weeds were pulled, grubbed, cursed, clipped and stomped, he found that beneath them, rather than soil, were huge garbage pits. Countless trips to the dump later, Gordon turned his attention at last to flowers.

"I love flowers," he says. "When I come up my driveway, I want to see flowers, I want to see color."

It was an unrequited love. They died as fast as he could set them out. "And there were no worms," says Gordon. "There wasn't a worm anywhere in the whole yard."

He started thinking hard about his soil, which turned out to be a devil's mix of clay, sand and peat that would have blighted plastic dandelions. Gordon began to try to read his way out of the problem and found that unintentionally, unknowingly, he'd created the solution: compost. The leaves and grass clippings he'd piled out back had been seething quietly, turning into a black gold more precious to Earth than all the petroleum he'd helped send on its way. Gordon began to spread and dig in and amend, and his flowers took off.

"Other than my flowers, I love making compost," he says. "It's the closest I can get to the gods of life."

The strawflowers led him to the Master Gardeners. He'd mixed their bed of half soil, half magic compost, and they'd shot to heaven, topping out at 94 inches instead of the demure 36 the seed packet promised. He took photos to the Cooperative Extension Service and was steered directly to horticulturist Julie Riley and the Master Gardeners class, which he went through in 2005/2006. As a volunteer he has helped work the phones ("Forty percent of the questions are about lawns"), he staffed a table at Sears Mall garden events, and has devoted himself to helping keep the city's Old Hermit Park across from his home mowed, clipped, trash-free and pleasant.

"There really was an old hermit," says Gordon. "When I moved here, he lived in a little shift in the woods up the hill. There are condos there now."

Now, where once garbage festered and stank, there are Gordon's new black kitten, Silky, and his gardens - the greenhouse he built himself four years ago, the 25 running feet of spring bulbs and Oriental poppies, the lavateras (he has hundreds started under lights in the front room), asters (ditto), dahlias (the new ones aren't coming up as well as he'd hoped), the red peony "Blaze," the pink "Sarah Bernhardt" of bewitching fragrance, a "Blue Boy" decorative dahlia from Amelia Walsh in pride of place out front, Ligularia "The Rocket," Liatris spicata Blazing Star, foamy pink Filipendula rubra, Queen of the Prairie or Meadowsweet, the sturdy sunflowers "Strawberry Blonde" and "Tall Teddy Bear," as well as dwarf "Teddy Bear" ("short, but huge flowers"), cosmos, delphiniums and yellow leopard's bane daisies.

Gordon's gardens have helped create a neighborhood out of a street of strangers. Joggers pause to admire and visit. Mothers stop with their children to talk over his blossoms and raised beds, always works in progress.

"Every year I start with a scheme and then throw it up into the wind," he says. "I'll be learning for the rest of my life."

"The ability to have something good you've created with love: My grandmother, my grandfather, taught me the value of this."

Monthly Advanced MG News May 2011 By Dana Klinkhart

Gardeners working toward their 'Soils in Alaska, Soils & Plant Nutrients and Amendments' certification have until September 1, 2011 to get their volunteer hours and continuing education units recorded and submitted to the Education Committee. Sally Arant will be our guest speaker at the May program and that will be just one of many programs that will qualify for credit. The new directory is delivered and reports on all of the tours and field trips that would also qualify for credit. It is not hard to fill those Continuing Education Units (CEU's) or the Volunteer Hours (VHS).

Credit and volunteer hour forms can be found on the AMGA web site. For those of us using Mac computers, we will need to use the word document files for our reporting. The PDF format does not respond to the Mac operating system, only the windows operating system work with that format. Questions? Call (346-1631) or email me (klinkhart@gci.net)- I would be happy to help.

Summer Botany Labs

The AMGAA Education Committee has planned two labs to compliment fall's Advanced Master Gardener Course on 'Plant Physiology'.



An Intimate Look at Plant Life' on Thursday, June 16 will cover cell structure (under the microscope), specialized root systems, and *Elodea canadensis* (no it's not the Canadian anthem).

On Thursday, July 14, the lab is titled 'Strange & Bizarre, but True: A look at plant growth curiosities'. Expect to see examples of fasciation, galls, nitrogen fixing nodules, nematode damage, mycorrhizae and more.

The lab classes are open to anyone. Both will be held in the CES classroom at the Anchorage Extension office, 1675 C Street. The cost for each is \$5. Attendance at either class will count toward Advanced Master Gardener CEUs for those completing last year's Advanced MG Soils core curriculum. The labs will also count as CEUs for the upcoming Advanced MG core course on Plant Physiology. More Advanced MG course details will be available next month. Registration for the summer botany labs is open now by contacting the CES office, 786-6300. The \$5 fee will be collected at the day of the class.

"And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood & cover
Blossom by blossom the Spring begins!"

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909)

Neighborhoods USA Conference Julie Riley, Extension Horticulture Agent

This national conference which highlights the best of Anchorage's neighborhoods and what residents have done to make our city a good place to live, comes to the Egan Convention Center May 25-27. The Federation of Community Councils has waived the late registration fee until May 15 if you are interested in attending.

Tour leader Laurie Holland wanted to feature Anchorage gardens as one of 12 field trips even though Thursday, May 26 is early, early and when she thought of Anchorage gardens she looked to Master Gardeners. Thanks to Dawn and Keven Kleweno for offering to show their garden. Dawn and Keven do not have a lawn, their whole front yard is planted with vegetables and flowers. Other stops on the tour include Town Square Park and the C Street Community Garden. To date 20 people have signed up for the tour including a group from the Colorado Peace Garden.

All tours end in a potluck dinner and this is where more Master Gardeners are needed to pitch in. The potluck will be in the UAF Cooperative Extension Service class room with maybe a few tents and tables set up outside if the weather is good. Master Gardeners are needed to bring food and socialize with gardeners from around the country. The potluck will begin at 6:30 p.m. Please RSVP to me by Tuesday, May 24 if you'll be able to attend. This way I'll have a sense of whether there will be enough food. I'll also send a signup sheet around at the May meeting. If there is a grill master among you and someone with a bunch of last year's salmon in the freezer, please let me know and we can set up a grilling station outside.

Volunteers are also needed for the following jobs:

-- Someone to ride and direct the bus while I give a running commentary. This person would also have an opportunity to talk to participants in addition to the appointed tour leaders at each location.

-- Someone to help write a script of interesting facts that I can give as the bus goes from Town Square Park, along the park strip to Dawn and Keven's house on Beech Street and then over to the C Street Community Garden. The list of items to research include the history of how Town Square Park was formed, the community brick project, the history of the park strip including the Rose Garden and the Pope's memorial, the history of South Addition, Aline Strutz as a garden leader and a few facts on the Cook Inlet tides, moose, the price of homes and more.

Plan to be part of a MG potluck for participants of the Neighborhoods USA conference at CES on Thursday, May 26 at 6:30 p.m. Twenty people have registered to tour Anchorage gardens including many from the Colorado Peace Garden.



CLAY POTS AND SAUCERS: Moving and can't take them. If interested, call MG Ski Olsonoski (563-6803) or call direct to her friend Carol Myers, the one with the clay pots (349-0863).



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

Breakup is a "happening" when all sorts of strange and forgotten things come out of the snow with the melting. It's not nice to see stuff that needs to be hauled off. But it is no one else's fault but mine.

The birds are still twittering but the song is changing from "let's flock" to "honey here I am". Our itinerant crossbills have taken off for somewhere else.

I've turned the chickens out of the greenhouse during the day and they are plowing up the flower beds in the front yard with their dusting. A friend from Homer was by and helped me move the frame (that he built) for the two cold frames to in front of the greenhouse. The ducks are on their own, period. I go down to the lower garden every three or four days to put chow in their feeder but they have the run of the garden. They've hit the melt ponds and have just had a ball. Since I have three females and only one egg a day they are destined to grace a friend's lake (and eagles) after it thaws. I cooked a package of thighs from their former brethren and the meat was so tough it was VERY difficult to even take a bite from them and we hadn't even started to think about chewing...

I start my garden plants--broccoli etc.-- after tax day. This year I filed for an extension and I'm not sure how that affects the size of the plants (five true leaves for a good transplant). I followed Jane's admonition about labeling and I labeled extensively in pencil so the ink wouldn't fade. I'm just wondering if I need 16 broccoli plants. Our garden scaled down drastically last year after I burned my hand and will scale down even more this year to just what we can eat during the summer with the exceptions of greens.

I had to hustle to get two flats into my neighbor MG Mark White's four-level light fixture. Mark returned from Outside with all sorts of really neat plants that I covet and water during the week. I just realized that everything I started from seed is going to need transplanting. Fortunately he has two light fixtures but the other one is out the garage door and is used as a storage area. I'll take care of that next week.

My worm compost bin has been moved back to the greenhouse for the summer. Much of the time I compost directly into the growing beds there but I can't hydrate the beds and turn worms loose because they would become selections on the chicken cafeteria.

MG Fran Durner came through on her way down to Homer with a couple jars of her pickles (and my mouth goes squirt as I write) and lots of seeds that I never would have ordered and some of which are started and growing! I can hardly wait for the rest to sprout. My stomach was having the colly-wobbles and I knew I was recovered when I could open a jar of pickled peppers and savor them.

MG Kathy Wartinbee went to Pennsylvania to visit family and wrote back that it got up to 80° F which was too hot and then she wrote this after she returned, "Just got back from outside and I'm behind the "thymes". Just working on sifting the soil in the greenhouse to get out all the roots, etc. When that's done I'll wash the inside of the greenhouse down. And while all that is happening, I'll start the "tomato walk". Walking the tomatoes in and out to get them used to the real stuff. After that, all the straw needs to come off the beds so the soil can warm up. Then there is the watering of the seedlings..." She works too hard!

MG Barb Jewell went to Seattle for a grandson's birthday and to play in her daughter's flower beds, a yearly occurrence. She had warmth and sun. Not fair.

OK, this is a reiteration of Gina's plea for volunteers for the "Ask A Master Gardener" part of the www.alaskamastergardeners.org web site. There was a question that came in about gummy ooze on a Meteor cherry tree and what should be done about it... I went whining to arborist and MG Nickel LaFleur because there was something niggling in the back of my mind but nothing I'd send out as a reply. Then I asked Gina what others had said. There weren't any others! WHERE ARE YOU GUYS??? It's a really fun way to volunteer and you can learn a lot. I've helped to field a question from NJ about problems with a magnolia (sent her the web site of the CES MGs in her state), a neat 10-year-old but I've forgotten what his question was (I asked him how he got to us), a guy from England who had a problem with his money plant (not a lunaria but a crassula). There are a lot of good questions that are fun to answer and I've learned a lot after doing five minutes of research on the problem. If you don't know something I'll bet you know someone who does. I've also whined to MG Judith Wilmarth about peonies. E-mail Gina with your offer to volunteer. It won't hurt you a bit.

And Then There's Rosemary...

And Ophelia said, "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray, love, remember: and there is pansies; that's for thoughts."

We'll deal with pansies another day. But there's been parsley, sage and now it is time for rosemary, *rosmarinus officinalis*.

The origin of the name is really interesting. The *ros* is from the Latin for "dew" and *marinus* is Latin for "sea" because it needs only the humidity from the breeze to water the plant. The *officinalis* that is present in so many botanical names means that it was used in the practice of medicine.

There is only one major species but with many permutations. A tall shrub, pink flowers, blue flowers, white flowers, prostrate.

It makes a good pot plant up here, is a lime lover, is easy to overwater and kill with low light and kindness in the winter (I do it every year) and if it dies, you just strip off the needles and put them in a jar for seasoning.



Bird Chatter

-- You won't get rich winning blue ribbons at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer, but Crops Superintendent Kathy Liska mentioned some gardeners make over \$200 in prize money.

-- Amaryllis planted in a median strip in a Florida roadway were observed blooming by Annie Nevaldine on a trip to visit her mother.

-- Even with roller derby teammates with plant-related names (Lethal Lavender and Volatile Violet) the Sock-eye Sally's were unable to beat the Dirty Polli's in their April bout. A jammer to watch out for is Salmon Ella.

-- New this year is Amanda Brannon's cookbook "Every Which Way with Rhubarb."

-- The designator of MG Rondy Royalty was remiss in not crowning Richard Saunders 'King of the MG Rondy Display'. Richard put in 8 shifts (as did Christine Sexton).

-- An 8 X 10 foot panel in the ERA wing at the Ted Stevens International Airport includes Alaska native plants, animals, GARDEN flowers and vegetables, i.e. muskox, Indian paintbrush, Echinops ritro and cabbage.

-- A graduate student in Fairbanks is doing DNA testing to see if the brilliantly blue Arctic Forget-me-not, *Eritrichium chamissonis*, found in the Kodiak Late Glacial Refugium are different from others growing in the state.

-- At their April 26 meeting the MOA Assembly voted for an ordinance which allows the keeping of up to 5 chickens on lot sizes of 6,000 feet or smaller. No roosters allowed and certain regulations apply. The ordinance titled the 'Keeping of Backyard Pets' includes rabbits.

Alaska's Arbor Day Monday, May 16, 2011 By Nickel LaFleur Anchorage Garden Club Arbor Day Chair

Please make plans to attend our Arbor Day celebration at Begich Middle School located in East Anchorage (near the corner of Muldoon and Debarr).

From 1:30 pm until 2:30 pm, we will be having a program with Arbor Day proclamations from Governor Parnell and Mayor Sullivan, as well as recognizing the recipient's of TREE CITY USA, TREE CAMPUS USA, TREE LINE USA & TREERific awards. Master Gardener Patrick Ryan along with Begich Middle School students and faculty will be singing songs celebrating trees. Topping off our celebration, we will be planting evergreen trees near the entrance of the school.

It has been almost a hundred-forty years since the first

Arbor Day was celebrated in Nebraska and there have been millions and millions of trees planted every year since. And, no - we're not done yet!

We welcome everyone to join us at Begich Middle School but if you aren't able to do so, take the time to look around at the trees and shrubs on your property. If grass and weeds are near the trunks of the trees, remove it and give them a thorough soaking. By keeping your trees and shrubs moist they have a better chance of fighting pests. Happy upcoming Arbor Day - one of my favorite days of the year!

MG Volunteer Help Needed

-- At the request of P&M Garden Services, Master Gardeners are needed to answer questions at Walmart on Saturday & Sunday May 14 & 15 and May 21 & 22. Call Julie to let her know of your availability. The display will consist of a single table and a MG sign that says 'Gardening questions answered'.

-- Master Gardeners are needed to write up monthly meetings and field trips for the AMGAA newsletter. It would be a good to have a 'team' of writers since not everyone can make each meeting. Also, Cheryl Chapman could use help taking or tracking down photographs for the AMGAA member she profiles each month.

-- A Master Gardener is needed to meet weekly with the girls at the Salvation Army Booth Memorial Home. They will be planting a garden that will be harvested for facility meals and also working in the garden of Serendipity Adult Day Care next door. Ski Olsonoski has already started herb, vegetable and flower seeds with the young ladies. Gardening time can be daytime, evenings or weekends.

-- UAA is starting a Community Garden on campus and the UAA Sustainability Club is looking for Master Gardener assistance. Please call Melody for details, 632-7045.

-- If you live in Fairview, please note the Community Council is planning a gardening event that needs Master Gardener help. Details will be forthcoming via email.



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

Mail: 14051 Fejes Road
Anchorage, AK 99516

Phone: 345-4099

Email: amga@alaska.net (NEW EMAIL)

AMGA Web Site: www.alaskamastergardeners.org

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

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

AMGA
P.O. Box 221403
Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

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

Garden Event Calendar

SPECIAL PLANT SALES

May 2, Monday 9:00 am-4:00 pm

King Career Center Plant Sale. Hanging baskets and bedding plants grown by students in the King Career Center greenhouse. Continues on Tuesday 9am-2pm if plants are still available. 2650 E. Northern Lights Blvd. 742-8900

May 18, 19, 20, 21 10:00 am-6:00 pm

Hiland Mountain Correctional Facility Greenhouse Plant Sale. In the parking lot, 9101 Hesterberg Road; take Hiland Road exit off the Glenn Highway in Eagle River. For more information contact Anisa Davis 696-9117

May 21, Saturday 9:00 am-4:00 pm

Alaska Rock Garden Society Plant Sale. 7435 Old Harbor Rd, off Muldoon Road, Anchorage. Follow signs, 333-8212

May 28, Saturday 9:00 am-4:00 pm

Alaska Rock Garden Society Plant Sale. Snowfire Gardens (Doug and Florene Carney) 3379 S. Inlet Vista Circle, off Mile 5.2 Fairview Loop Road, Wasilla 376-5390

May 21, Saturday 10:00 am-4:00 pm

Alaska Botanical Garden Plant Sale and Membership drive. Members-only preview at 9:00 am. 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road 770-3692

May 21, Saturday 9:00 am-4:00 pm

Tree Seedling Sale sponsored by the Society of American Foresters, Cook Inlet Chapter. Seedlings in bundles of 20, most about 8 inches tall, includes lodgepole pine, Siberian larch, Colorado blue spruce, paper birch, white spruce; may be pre-ordered at www.aksaf.org \$20 per bundle. Northern Lights Blvd. and Spenard Road, near REI store entrance. Pre-ordered seedlings must be picked up by 2:00 pm. For other locations for sale and distribution of seedlings, contact Roger Burnside at reburnsi@gci.net

May 28, Saturday 9:00 am-3:00 pm

Valley Garden Club Plant Sale. Boys & Girls Club 3700 E. Bogard Road, Wasilla. 745-07676

June 4, Saturday 11:00 am - Noon

Homer Garden Club Plant Sale. Homer City Hall Parking Lot

June 4, Saturday 9:00 am-4:00 pm

Wildflower Garden Club Plant Sale. 7435 Old Harbor Road, Anchorage 333-8237

June 4, Saturday 9:00 am-5:00 pm

Anchorage Garden Club Plant Sale, 3734 W. 35th Avenue, Anchorage

June 4, Saturday 9:00 am-3:00 pm

Mat-Su Master Gardeners Plant Sale at the Palmer Pavilion, across from the Visitors Center in Palmer. For more information, contact Crystal Bailar 745-7805

CLASSES, PROGRAMS, EVENTS

May 10, Tuesday 6:00 pm-7:30 pm

Community Center Green Thumb Series "Seed Starting for the Late Bloomer" Kincaid Outdoor Center. Sponsored by Anchorage Parks & Recreation and Cooperative Extension Service. \$10; ages 6+; parents must accompany children. Margaret Timmerman 343-4217

May 16, Monday 7:00 pm

Wild at Heart, Alaska Master Gardener Association Anchorage meeting. Presentation on garden perennials by Sally Arant, Plantswoman, UAF Cooperative Extension Service, 1675 C Street, #100,

May 16, Monday 1:30-2:30 pm

Alaska Arbor Day Tree Planting, Cosponsored by the Municipality of Anchorage, Anchorage School District, Alaska Division of Forestry Community Forestry Program, Anchorage Garden Club, Tree City USA, Tree City Campus and TREErific. Location: Begich Middle School, 7440 Creekside Center Drive, Anchorage.

May 17, Tuesday 6:00 pm-7:30 pm

Community Center Green Thumb Series "Container Gardening" Kincaid Outdoor Center. Sponsored by Anchorage Parks & Recreation and Cooperative Extension Service. \$10; ages 6+; parents must accompany children. Margaret Timmerman 343-4217

May 17, 24 & June 7, Tuesdays 6:15-9:15 pm

Advanced Soils Seminar, Mat-Su College course. Dig deeper into soil testing, soil amendments, mulches and soil biology. Become skilled at choosing among products like greensand, fish bone meal, rock phosphate and azomite. Lean to sort through the debates about what is allowable as 'organic'. AGRI A138 recommended or instructor approval. For registration information Mat-Su College, 907-745-9746

May 21, Saturday

Lobelia Basket Workshop, sponsored by the Anchorage Garden Club. Make & take home a lobelia basket; \$50; materials provided; advance registration required. Check website www.alaskagardenclubs.org and newspaper for more information

May 23, Monday, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Rhodiola: A Medicinal Herb for Alaska Growers, Dr. Petra Illig, Alaska Rhodiola Project, UAF Cooperative Extension Service, 1675 C Street, #100, Anchorage 786-6300

May 24, Tuesday 6:00 pm-7:30 pm

May 24, Tuesday 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Community Center Green Thumb Series "Raised Bed Gardening" Kincaid Outdoor Center. Sponsored by Anchorage Parks & Recreation and Cooperative Extension Service. \$10; ages 6+; parents must accompany children. Margaret Timmerman 343-4217

May 24, Tuesday 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Cymbidiums: The Queen of Orchids, Marcia Romick, fresh from the Cymbidium Congress in Santa Barbara, will lead this presentation with photos, information and inspiration. Hosted by the Alaska Orchid Society, free for Alaska Botanical Garden and Alaska Orchid Society members, \$5 donation for non-members. Location: BP Energy Center, 900 E Benson, Anchorage 277-2157

May 25-28, Wednesday through Saturday

Neighborhoods USA Conference, sponsored by the Federation of Community Councils, National event includes presentations on grassroots organizing, community health and recreation, the Alaska Botanical Garden, how to organize a farmers' market, a garden tour of Town Square Park, C Street Community Garden and other neighborhoods. Just reading the conference brochure will make you proud to live in Anchorage. Main conference location: Egan Convention Center. Registration \$200-\$350, Community Councils office 1057 W. Fireweed Lane, Suite 100 or www.nusa2011.org.

June 2, Thursday 7:00 pm

"Soil: The Root of All Great Gardens", Anchorage Garden Club presented by Jeff Smeenck, Horticulture Specialist, UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Pioneer School House, 437 E. 3rd Avenue, Anchorage 566-0539

June 4, Saturday 12:00 pm-6:00 pm

Festival of Flowers, Town Square Park, Anchorage, 550 W 5th Ave. Food, music, flower auctions, garden tours and answers to your horticultural questions. Sponsored by the Anchorage Downtown Partnership, Ltd. Proceeds to benefit the "City of Flowers Endowment Fund". Help ensure that the city's flower program remains at its current level, 279-5650

June 4 & 5, Saturday & Sunday

Spring Bulbs at Alyeska, free seminars and garden tours throughout the day at Alyeska Resort in Girdwood, 754-1111

June 9, Thursday 5:30 pm-8:30 pm

Alaska Botanical Garden Midsummer Gala in the Garden, fundraising event \$50pp/\$100/family, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road 770-3692

June 11-12, Saturday & Sunday 11:00 am-5:00 pm

Alaska Botanical Garden 14th Annual Garden Fair & Art Show. Family fun, garden art show, craft & plant vendors, demonstrations, Children's Village, Show of alpine & rock garden plants, music & food. \$5 pp 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road 770-3692

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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Master Gardener G. Gordon Pyle in front of his compost bins. Gordon is the topic of our Master Gardener Focus article this month, on page 3.

Photo by Fran Durner

Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Inc.
Anchorage Chapter
University of Alaska Cooperative Extension
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