



Anchorage Chapter



Volume 13, Issue 9

# ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER September 2011



## Message From Jane

WHOOSH... Sound of the season rushing by. Gardeners' lament: too much to do, so little time! September is time for the usual getting ready for winter shut your garden down to-do lists. We all know it's best to do this before the days are cold enough to discourage us from our garden/yarden chores, right?

What else does September bring? LEAVES! September is the time to gather one of the best and most plentiful and FREE soil amendments available. If you don't have enough, check with your neighbors and look around your neighborhood! If you don't use a mulching lawn mower and leave them on your lawn: mulch garden beds with leaves, bag them for next season's compost pile use or use them to make leaf mold.

Leaf mold recipe: Chew them up a bit with your lawn mower, add water if needed to slightly dampen, season with a bit of garden soil (for soil critters). Mix or shake thoroughly, pour into a large black plastic bag, poke a few air holes (or not), and stockpile them behind the shed out back for a little cold cooking (composting) until next gardening season. Next spring, check the bags. You may have leaf mold ready to go - or it may take a little more time to complete the cold compost process. As a minimum you will have a partially composted leaf product which can be used: as a summer mulch; to half-way fill your garden pots (cuts down amount of purchased potting soil); to grow potatoes in; to mix with previously used potting soil to freshen and extend amount; to build garden beds using the compost layering method (lasagna), etc.

SEEDS! Gather seeds from your garden plants for an MG seed exchange sometime after the first of the year.

SLUGS! They seemed to appear in full force in early August after a slow start. An early population was primarily tiny slugs -- spring egg hatched with many of the larger slugs apparently not surviving the winter. The spring hatched slugs have grown and reached reproductive maturity and are beginning to lay eggs WHICH WILL SURVIVE WINTER. The dispatching of each and every slug you find can make a difference! Also be alert

to finding and destroying clutches of slug eggs.

SEPTEMBER MEETING: The AMGAA monthly meetings resume on Monday, September 19th, 7pm at CES with a program by Annie Nevaldine on 'Softening Vertical Surfaces'. Look ahead to October's program (MGs Summer 2011 Gardening Woes and Wonders) -- you might think about gathering some pictures and/or thoughts now to share in October.



Master Gardeners inspect plants brought for the plant swap to the CES parking lot prior to the Tour of Kris Ryan's garden in midtown.

Photo by Fran Durner

## Treasurer's Report

Checking Bal. 7/6/11	1826.00
Expenses	266.94
Deposits	20.00
Balance 8/29/11	1579.06



## August Master Gardener Tours By Pat Anderson

**8/3/11, Richard Sanders Tour:** Rock gardens containing healthy, robust plants greeted us as we entered the front yard. Each plant was easily accessed by well placed pavers on rock paths. Unique plants such as Bog Star-Parnassia Palustris, Vitaliana Primuliflora, and



Alpine Skullcap-Scutellaria Alpina Arcobleno and many other rock plants were all happily growing. Life-like wooden birds were sitting in fixed branches overlooking the rock garden. Plants and birds were labeled by metal tags so identification was easy. In the front yard, many beautiful lilies, as well as mature perennials were blooming profusely in uniquely angled raised beds giving the wood mulched walks a unique contemporary look.

Fifty three large pots, including Wave Petunias were fixed on the side fences offering a riot of color. Richard waters the pots with lukewarm water from the house which takes about an hour and a half; the beauties respond by overflowing their pots with colors of pink and purple.

In the back yard were two green houses overflowing with huge tomato plants, vegetables growing in long raised beds and peas climbing up the cyclone fence.

Cookies, pastries and soft drinks were served. Richard provided handouts telling where one could buy the boards used for his raised beds, and label making information.

Richard Sanders' gardens were an amazing feast for the eyes, and were thoroughly enjoyed by all Master Gardeners who attended the tour.

**8/8/11-Ron and Kathi Moon Tour:** Umbrellas, hoods and hats protected Master Gardeners from rain as they enjoyed this tour. Kathi Moon has a passion for Hydrangas and it shows! She has many in pots, including an 8 foot one, leading up to the



house entrance. The Hydrangas are wintered over in a nursery. However she has a Hydranga hedge in front of the house with plans to coax it to grow larger outside. There are also some hardy Alaskan Hydrangas already growing in her yard.

By the front entrance, an amazing wall of Hops grows up a story and a half to a studio deck. Ron likes the fact that when the snow comes, he merely cuts and rolls them up - as easy as that! In front, and around the house are all sorts of unique birdhouses - one in which nuthatches nest every year. M.G.s saw squirrels looking for food in one of the trees. Beautiful delphiniums and other perennials grace the walk around the side of the house, and a potting bench created from a greenhouse that her father made 32 years ago.

Delicious homemade cookies, coffee and drinks were enjoyed inside the house, where stocking footed MGs climbed stairs up to Kathi's studio and secret garden. Named by her granddaughters, it is the deck where the tops of the Hops go, and geranium hanging baskets abound. Off from the sparkling white kitchen, in the breakfast room an 8 or 9 foot tomato plant complete with green tomatoes grows up to the skylights. Rain did not dampen the spirits of the Master Gardeners who enjoyed the unique plantings and wonderful hospitality which was offered by Kathi and Ron in their beautifully decorated white and blue home.

**8/15/11 Kris Ryan Tour:** Leading to Kris and Paul's



home in downtown Anchorage is an unusual, artful cement walkway to the house, decorated with stones placed in the cement in whimsical flowing patterns. In the triangular shaped, slate edged flower bed the walkway surrounds, are large extraordinary examples of perennials and annuals. Metal artwork adorns the yard and gardens. Towards the front of the yard is an amazing boulder with a perfect large natural birdbath in the center, which was brought from the Matanuska Glacier region. Further

down the yard is a sunken circular fire pit built with stone and cement by Paul. In the center of the pit were beautiful fern patterns impregnated in the cement.

The side yard has a wood covered compost bin with canvas attached to the front concealing the composting and lifted when the compost is thrown. On top are birdhouses built by Paul's father. He grew up in the house next door where his 90 year old mom still lives. Large vegetables grow in the back of the yard, and one can see the result of lots of good compost. In the middle of the tour, a downpour of rain drove most of the MGs into the beautiful home where they enjoyed soft refreshments and delicious Petit Fours. When the rain subsided, all left grateful for this time when they experienced a unique and beautiful garden, home, and hospitality!

Continued on page 4

Sanders and Ryan photos by Pat Anderson  
Moon photo by Gina Docherty.



## Master Gardener Focus: Mary Jo Burns By Cheryl Chapman

For creatures considered rather quiet, plants do have ways of calling to those with the ears to hear, a good explanation as any of how Master Gardener Mary Jo Burns became Queen of the Primroses, though her five-year stay in Juneau pushed that mission along.

Annuals had been Mary Jo's thing for her whole earlier gardening life in Anchorage and that of her mother before her: the seed packets, the greenhouse, the trays, the lights, then the accents and drifts of color everywhere, and again the next year, the next and the next. Mary Jo's mother, Lourane Loren, indeed had been noted for her beautiful yard and greenhouse-grown tomatoes ever since she and Mary Jo's father, Ben Loren, came up the Alaska Highway in 1954 to eventually settle in College Village with Mary Jo and her two brothers right before Anchorage shook itself apart in the 1964 earthquake.

Mary Jo graduated, married, put down roots in West Anchorage, started a family, grew vegetables, dahlias and other flowers, but then in 1996, moved to Juneau where the plants and even the sky were different. And Mary Jo went into garden shock.

"In Juneau, everybody had perennials, not annuals," she says. "I didn't recognize anything. I joined the garden club and the Master Gardeners and helped out how I could, but the plant sales opened my eyes to how little I knew. I'd help pot up, but when it came to labeling, I didn't know half the plants and had to keep asking."

"They had different kinds of Primulas, and I'd never seen them before. Nobody knew if they'd grow in Anchorage, so when I came home, I brought my newfound joy of Primulas and whole coolers and boxes of Primulas. Most of those Primulas lived."

Over the next few years, Mary Jo ripped and dug and planted and completely redid the gardens encircling her home with perennials and primroses: flowers with names like the dancing princesses in fairy tales -- auricula, juliae, cortusoides, sieboldii, florindae, japonica, polyanthus, vialii.

For all their dainty appearance, Primulas are tough and sociable and as randy as bonobos, so hybrids are constantly springing up to surprise the gardener with unexpected beauties. The enthusiastic little cross-breeders fascinated Charles Darwin, and their very improper flowers were favorites of the very proper Benjamin Disraeli, Queen Victoria's two-term prime minister. When he died in 1881, she dispatched a wreath of primroses.

People may have loved primroses as long as they've loved dogs. Primulas seem to have started in Nepal, Tibet and China, high in the clouds, where snows are heavy and rains monsoons, but they didn't stay there. The great waves of prehistoric migrations seem to have carried primroses along on their crests, including those that crossed the Bering Strait back when it could be walked dry-shod, says Mary Jo. "Seven species of Primulas grow on the west coast of Alaska," she says.

The big breeders were ordinary British fanciers. As the Industrial Revolution blackened the English countryside and hungry yeoman laborers moved to town for work, they found that primroses don't need much except a pot. Hundreds of thousands lost their hearts to these little spots of beauty in a hard and ugly world, and the

back-stoop expert was born, says Mary Jo.

Primulas need moist soil but don't like being doused or standing in water, she says, which explains the British primrose house, a dollhouse roof over a family's primrose to protect it and keep the farina from washing off. Many primroses naturally produce a white or yellow powdery substance that's called "farina" if it's on the leaves or stems and "paste" if it's on the flowers, says Mary Jo. Nobody knows what it does. It's an alkaloid, and like quite a few of the alkaloids might be an irritant or poison to protect the plant. Some people are allergic and break out in itchy red wheals and welts on their arms and hands whenever they touch their Primulas, says Mary Jo. Moose seem to be sensitive and don't eat them. Rabbits do.

Those lucky enough to have heard her know that Mary Jo has been preaching the Primula gospel across Alaska for years, and not just talking them up but funneling them into gardens across Southcentral. She helped found the Primula Study Group, open to anybody who loves and wants to know more about primroses. Yet as many Primulas as she grows and as much as she studies them, still, there are always new ones from this genus as far-flung and interwoven as Southern kin.

"This spring [Master Gardener] Robbie Frankovich down at Alyeska gave me a *Primula flaccida*," she says. "I'd never had it, never seen it. It bloomed about a month ago. Blue." Few others are apt to see it either. It's rare, and Chinese.

The Burns gardens have plenty of other specimen plants besides primulas, of course, many from friends and relatives, like the thornless rose from her mother's garden, and an astonishing *Paeonia anomala*, a single pink peony with deeply cut leaves grown from seeds from the Georgeson Botanical Garden in Fairbanks. The first year, the shiny black seeds did nothing, says Mary Jo. In Year No. 2, each sent down a single thread-like root. The third year saw two leaves, the fourth, a few more, the fifth, more still and the sixth, a first bloom. Now baby anomalas are coming up under the mother plants, to be dug up and passed along to friends.

Les Brake of Coyote Gardens fame passed along a *Nomocharis pardanina*, a fringed white lilylike flower stippled with hot pink like dotted Swiss - but it won't bloom, she says, for four years. The front-bed turtle-head, beloved of butterflies, *Chelone lyonii*, came from Annie Nevaldine, and flowers late.

It's about time, says Mary Jo, to rejuvenate all the beds again to accommodate the changing seasons of a gardener's life.

"I had total hip replacement surgery, and the other one is ragged," she says. "The beds are too wide for me to reach across and gardening on hands and knees mashes the plants, so I've always gardened with my butt in the air. I can't do this anymore."

But then, there are the new plants, the unknowns. They have her number, like those Primulas so many years ago. "I have become a crazy plant collector," she says. "It's like a disease."

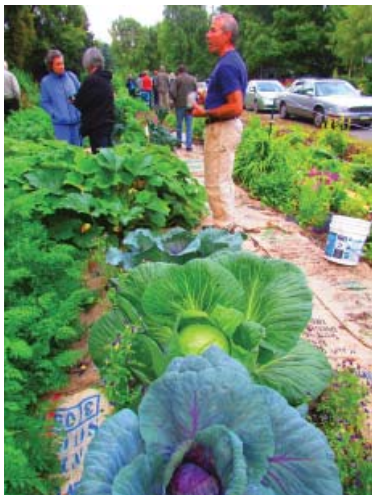
And her recommendation for gardeners in similar circumstances? "You must never allow yourself to go on garden tours," says Mary Jo. "Never. You'll be lost."

**8/22/11 - Pacific View Community Garden Tour:** Lots



of veggies and flowers grow in the Pacific View Community Garden which was graciously offered in 1997 by Mardane, a neighbor. Mardane died, but her husband Tom continues to offer the plot

the road for the community's benefit. A sign in front of the garden proudly proclaims "Mardane's Garden".



Rosa Meehan, a member of the community garden, told us that five families today have veggie beds and tend them. Gunny sacks keep the weeds down between the beds. The broccoli has already been harvested. There were New England Sugar Pie Pumpkins, kale and cabbages, an herb bed including delicious Bronze Fennel, carrots, bush beans, sugar snap peas, Fava Beans, squash, and many other veggies. A sign by one of the kale beds said that they have already frozen

31 quarts of kale, and enjoyed many summer meals. Rhubarb grows along the road. Scarlet Runner Beans and sugar snap peas run high on a unique trellis made from rebar by Dennis Ronsse, forming the background for the garden, along with a green house filled with tomatoes, peppers and other veggies. Behind the greenhouse is a compost pile. Ligularia and other flowers are growing here and there and add color and interest to the vegetables. They have a bee hive which this year produced four gallons of honey. A solar cell electric fence surrounds the garden and helps deter unwanted animals. Annie Ronsse, Dennis' wife said they weed and have wine together - sounds like fun! Husband Dennis also trades vegetables for moosemeat at work-so everyone benefits.

Dennis and Annie Ronsse, Master Gardener and community garden



members who live across the street, invited us all to look at their 64 foot wide by 40 foot vertical vegetable garden located behind their lovely home. Rows and rows of all types of healthy, large vegetables

in raised beds are tiered down the rather steep slope that has a fabulous view of the Inlet. The seeds are all started indoors, and they lasagna compost. There is color and beauty from flowers such as Malvas, Nasturtiums and Lysimachia Punctata sprinkled in between the rows. Dennis uses coffee bean chaff that is discarded from coffee houses around his plants. The rain and air turn the aromatic chaff into a protection from weeds. Such amazing and uniquely wonderful gardens made viewing exciting. Grateful Master Gardeners learned much from this terrific tour experience.

**8/22 - LouAnn and Steve Hennig MG Tour:** MG's



continued their tour on 8/22 by visiting LouAnn and Steve Hennig's garden on Kyak Drive. Tall sunflowers greet visitors in this three year old bed with well established filipendula, lysimachia, lavateria, mookshood, hosta and other flowers.

The first sound one hears is that of the model train running on raised tracks through the garden. Five sizes of hostas are found throughout the gardens. They have about 40 hostas, with 24 varieties, the largest being over three feet tall,



and the smallest is small as a saucer. Steve got many of his hostas from Savory Gardens (Savory Gardens.com) which they learned about when they visited an arboretum in Edina, Mn. Steve says Costco is also a good place to pick up hostas. Other flowers such as Filipendula, four types of sea-holly, lilies, marigolds and many more combine to offer beauty. Steve is a great believer in compost, and has two large working compost bins in the back yard. This accounts for the prize flowers that grow everywhere in the front yards plus beautiful pots of Dahlias and other flowers that grace their front deck and yard. Their goal is to have color and texture in their garden from spring to fall - and he loves to weed because he said it offers him instant gratification to see a bed changed to a weed-free presentation.

LouAnn also appreciates Clematis vines. She has a Jackmanii by the front entrance blooming vibrant blue, one climbing the crabapple tree that Steve says is so heavy he has to cut it down in the fall so the snow won't be too heavy in the tree. A yellow Tangutica Clematis was blooming profusely all over a Lilac in the front yard. It is plain that these gardeners love their plants: there is a remarkable planting of globe thistle that is 25 years old! Master Gardeners left this beautiful, thriving garden complete with train action inspired and stimulated - and filled with the goodies that our gracious host and hostess provided.





## Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

August is always a sweet and a sad month. Gardens are at their peak, the new birds are fledging and there is a difference in the sounds they make--no more "worried bird" sounds as I go to the lower garden. And the birds that show up in the feeder are somewhat bewildered which makes me think that they are fledglings. The resident Canada jays had three offspring this year and are nicknamed "the Bumbles" because they are so clumsy.

I go over to MG Mark White's next door to feed his chickens and rabbits during the week and pause in "my" chair in his green house. He has 28 pots of tomatoes creating a veritable jungle and I can spot ripe cherry tomatoes from where I sit. My lycopene and vitamin C intake has increased considerably in the last two weeks! I asked him what his recipe for his huge success was and he used the Kasilof Misner's soil recipe (e-mail me if you want the recipe) to which he adds extra bone-meal and rabbit doo doo and then makes a manure tea from his rabbit droppings and adds Epsom salts for the magnesium. He's going to scale back next year from 28 pots to 20. I'm seriously thinking of taking out my central growing bed in my greenhouse and just using pots like he does.

Talked to MGs Kathy Wartinbee and Margaret Simon about their gardens' progress and the consensus is, to quote Kathy, that the brussels sprouts and cabbages are "thinking". They better think pretty fast. Summer is winding down.

I'm now on Cheryl Wickstrom's garden picture list (she was a former bug scout down here and got her hort degree since then). The produce she is getting is phenomenal! I asked her what her soil secrets are and she wrote back, "I'm a composter and I sprinkle wood ash every other year to the raised beds. I add kelp, fish and clam guts and whatever else I can find to the compost. In the pots next to the house, I added worm castings from my indoor pet worm bin." It sure works VERY well for her. I'm awed!

Talked to Margaret Simon and she keeps a tally of the slugs she does in every day..the other day it was 200. I've got my slug boards down and every other day I lift them and put them up for the ducks' treats. It takes about three seconds for them to clean a board of slugs. I just hope there isn't any bad stuff in the protein. But I'm thinking about renting out boards and ducks for slug control. Want to rent a duck? Contact me...

Hares are still a problem, but with the availability of food, not a big one at the moment so the shooters' tallies have dropped. I have one friend who can shoot feral rabbits from her bedroom window. To look at her you wouldn't even think Donna was murderous. Think again! And she's such a "proper-looking" suburban woman!

Not only did we have no real carpenter ants and no leaf rollers, but the windscreen bug splat index is nothing! I've never gone through a summer without having to scrape the bugs off the wind screen. I don't know whether to hope for another cool summer or ramp up my windshield cleaning solution.

Typhoon Fran (Durner) came down for a couple nights and she "crumbed" the kitchen and all it meant to me is that it was time to COOK! Dinner was scallops (wild-caught Alaskan) with nectarines. Sorry you weren't here for the dinner. Next year if you are down this way...

## Camille Williams' Neighborhood Project or Camille Rocks! By Pat Anderson

Master Gardeners help their neighbors by using their knowledge and skills to create something beautiful in the yard. At least that's what Camille Williams did when she asked neighbors Dan and Holly Reynolds if they would like her to replace with flowers, the round piece of bare soil in their yard left by a downed Mayday tree. They gave full eager permission and agreed to pay the cost of soil and labor.



Delivery of topsoil, then two truck-loads of rocks gathered by Camille and her two grandchildren Josh and Katie formed the bones of the new rocked-garden. Camille then brought suitable perennials from her own yard such as primula, geranium, hosta, day-lilies to name a few and nestled them among the rocks. The rock is not the usual grey rock, but is from the mountains along the Seward Hi-way that have shades of pinks, grey, and black with some white here and there.

When asked how he likes his new garden, Dan said "My yard has been transformed, we love it!" Now the Reynolds as well as the entire neighborhood enjoy the beautiful rocked-garden built by a Master Gardener.

Photos from Pat Anderson



## Bird Chatter

## Advanced Master Gardener News From Sharon Hoffbeck

- Is Linda Teninty the only gardener in Anchorage to successfully overwinter wisteria? She planted 'Blue Moon' last fall, and it's thriving this summer.
- Congratulations to Anchorage MG Herb Spencer for winning a blue ribbon on his 'Spice Island' rosemary.
- Mat-Su MG Pat Tremaine had 6 blue ribbon herb entries. Who entered crops/flowers this year as part of Nickel LaFleur's challenge? Let us know in next month's Bird Chatter.
- Garrison Keillor's opening pieces at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer referred to Alaska's gardening prowess. He sang about the 97 pound kohlrabi grown for 'hobby' and the 17 pound carrot-- many people could 'share it' and then to the tune of the Beach Boys' "California Girls" sang that "Matanuska Girls can make your garden grow".
- Soil can make your skin look younger or so claims the skin care products company Bare Minerals. They use soil as the active ingredient in their line of products.
- Sharing the same August 19 birthday were Nickel LaFleur, Debbie Hinchey, Marge Olson and Della Berry. Happy belated.
- A new line of potato developed at the Matanuska Experiment Farm by Jeff Smeenk stands to boost the state's agriculture industry with its consumer plate appeal. MG/farmer Greg Kalal was mentioned in the UAF press as the first farmer to grow and sell the potato named '29-6' for now.
- Thanks to MG Judie Benjamin for sharing bags of her golden raspberries with CES staff. They are Julie Riley's favorite tasting raspberry.
- Many of you have visited Florene Carney's Snowfire Garden in Wasilla. Snowfire Garden now hosts weddings as was noted in the summer/fall issue of Alaska Bride & Groom.
- If you love exotic flowers, drive by 3036 Madison in Collage Village to see huge clumps of container grown true-blue Agapanthus. Not winter hardy in Anchorage, this horticultural find was spotted by Annie Nevaldine.
- Of the twenty-two peony blossoms on display at the Alaska Peony Growers Conference, (Homer, August 19-21) 'Marie LeMoine' was voted as favorite. An unknown pink came in second place and tied for third were 'Red Charm', 'Buckeye Belle' and 'Bride's Dream'.
- MG Becky Fox-Krogstad planted over 100 peonies this summer in her Turnagain yard. One hundred is a lot. The Alaska Peony Growers Association classifies a commercial grower as someone with 500 or more plants.
- Condolences to MG Rosemary Kimball; her husband Phil passed away after a long illness in August. He was also an avid gardener, bird lover and traveler.

*"Just living is not enough," said the butterfly. "One must have sunshine and a little flower."*

—Hans Christian Andersen

Summer gardening activities are quickly coming to an end, and it's time to begin thinking about the Fall Advanced Master Gardener core program for this year. This year's program is entitled Plant Physiology and will help answer many of our basic gardening questions about how and why plants work. This year's classes will be on Mon. & Wed., October 31st - November 16th from 11:00-2:00p.m in the Cooperative Extension Service classroom. Registration will be done on a Tier basis like last year, and there will be a maximum of 50 students that we can accept. We will be e-mailing everyone a registration form that you can fill out and submit anytime between October 1-15th. You will be notified of your registration status on October 21st. The fee for this year's program hasn't been determined yet, so we'll send you an e-mail with that detail as soon as we get it. The recommended textbook is Botany for Gardeners by Brian Capon, 3rd edition, Timber Press publisher, ISBN # 13:978-1-60469-095-8. This book is available on Amazon.com or can be ordered through local bookstores.

The Advanced Master Gardener core classes are primarily designed to train those who want to get their Advanced Master Gardener certification. For those who aren't able to commit to completing all of the certification requirements (18 core class hours + 2 additional CEU's + 10 volunteer service hours), please register under Tier III even if you are eligible to register under a different Tier.

There will be no make-up classes planned this year for core class hours that you miss. Last year's make-up class sessions were scheduled only because we had a severe ice storm that prevented people from getting to class. The program is not able to routinely offer make-up classes, so be sure that you are available to attend all 18 hours of classes so you can complete your certification.

For those of you who already have Advanced Master Gardener certification: if you are not able to or don't want to complete all of the requirements to get your Advanced Master Gardener II certification, you can maintain your Advanced Master Gardener certification by simply completing 10 hours of volunteer service, or 10 hours of CEU's, or a combination of both by September 1st of each year. Just submit your hours on either the CEU or VSH forms which can be found on the website.

If you have any questions, please call anyone on the Education Committee:  
Sue Lincoln-854-9536, Sharon Hoffbeck-345-1222,  
Dana Klinkhart-346-1631, Jane Baldwin-562-5451.

### LATE BLIGHT ALERT!

The disease was confirmed on potatoes growing in the Mat-Su valley on August 29. Home gardeners should be aware that cool, rainy fall weather is optimal for establishment of this disease. Plants/tubers that are suspect should be brought to CES for diagnosis. Late blight also affects tomatoes. See <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/pubs/catalog/> for more information.





## Edible Flowers by Jane Baldwin

We do routinely eat some flowers - think broccoli, cauliflower and artichokes. But, the more you know the easier it is to avoid unintended consequences.

There are risks to eating flowers. Some flowers are toxic, others may need appropriate preparation. Allergic reactions are very possible, especially from eating pollen. Some flowers may be edible if eaten in moderation, but may cause various adverse reactions if eaten in excess. Flowers gathered or from commercial growers may have been sprayed with pesticides. Note that parts of some plants other than the flowers may be inedible and/or poisonous. Some flowers may be safely eaten whole and for others only the petals maybe safely consumed.

Check specific flowers out before you sprinkle them in salads, on your soup, dress up your serving plates, freeze them in ice cubes to float in summer drinks and punch or use them to decorate cakes. Some edible flowers that come to mind are nasturtium, pansy, violet, calendula, borage, and even the omnipresent dandelion. However, even some of these and other flowers temptingly beautiful to use in food preparation may not be edible for everyone.

In general, only the petals of composite flower are safely edible - not the whole flower. The pollen of composite flowers is highly allergenic and may cause reactions in some individuals. To be on the safe side, those with asthma, known pollen allergies, and 'hayfever' should not eat composite flowers. There is some indication that some people with plant pollen allergies have experienced extreme allergies with ingesting any flowers at all.

To avoid triggering an allergic reaction, at the very least, caution is advised for those with asthma and allergies with eating composite flowers such as calendula, chamomile, chicory, chrysanthemum coronarium, Centaurea cynaus (Bachelor's Buttons), dandelion, Bellis perennis (English Daisy), safflower, and sunflower.

And there are many flowers one should NOT EAT. The following list is not complete and was gathered from several online websites. Aconitum (monkshood), Achillea (yarrow), Anemone, Asclepias (milkweed), Calla, Clematis, Crocus, Convallaria (lily-of-the-valley), Dahlia, Daphne, Delphinium (larkspur), Digitalis (foxglove), Euphorbia, Helleborus, Hemerocallis (daylily), Hyacinth, Hydrangea, Iris (all forms), Jasmine, Lantana, Lathyrus spp (Sweet pea), Lobelia (cardinal flower), Lupin, Narcissus (daffodil, jonquil), Nicotiana, Papaver somniferum (common and opium poppy), and Rhododendron (azaleas and rhododendrons).

If you want to eat flowers grown in your own garden, first check online sources to determine if they are in fact edible. Never fertilize plants to eat with uncomposted animal manures; don't splash fertilizers onto flowers during watering, don't use chemicals to combat pests and diseases, wash all flowers thoroughly in cold water after harvest, and remove anthers and pollen (a good idea regardless if flowers are to be eaten or used as garnish).

Download the UAF.CES publication Edible Flowers for the Garden and Table, HGA-00137 from <http://www.uaf.edu/files/ces/publications-db/catalog/anr/HGA-00137.pdf>

## Garden Event Calendar

### September 1-5

Alaska State Fair: check out the crops and flower exhibits.

### September 7

Mushroom Walk, Alaska Botanical Garden; 6:30 pm; RSVP required; \$10 plus entrance fee; \$8 for ABG members.

### September 8

Wildflower Garden Club, monthly meeting; Program The Culture of Gardening, Julie Riley; 10 am, Central Lutheran Church 15th & Cordova.

### September 10

Mushroom Walk, Alaska Botanical Garden; 2:00 pm; RSVP required; \$10 plus entrance fee; \$8 for ABG members.

### September 15

UAF/CES Alaska Food Preparation Class: Sauerkraut, Pickles & Relish; 5:30-10:30pm; Viking Hall, 8141 Briarwood St. Preregistration required: 786-6300; \$25/class.

### September 19

AMGAA meeting: Softening Vertical Surfaces, Annie Nevaldine. 7pm, CES, 1675 C Street.

### October 6

Anchorage Garden Club: Fair Flowers—How Do They Do It; Becky Myrvold; 7pm, ; Pioneer Schoolhouse, 437 E. 3rd Ave.

### October 6

UAF/CES Alaska Food Preparation Class: Drying & Freezing; 5:30-10:30pm; Viking Hall, 8141 Briarwood St. Preregistration required: 786-6300; \$25/class

## Gardener Needed

My neighbor will need a gardener next summer. His address in Turnagain is 2300 Telequana. Paul is 94 years young. Contact Dawn Moreau Page if interested: 248-4071



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](mailto:amga@alaska.net) (NEW EMAIL)  
AMGA Web Site: [www.alaskamastergardeners.org](http://www.alaskamastergardeners.org)  
(The Newsletter will be on-line in living color!)

To send concerns or information to the AMGA directly, mail to:  
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Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

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

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## Inside this issue....

Message From Jane  
Late Blight Alert  
August Master Gardener Tours  
Master Gardener Focus: Mary Jo Burns  
Central Peninsula Master Gardener News  
Camille Williams Neighborhood Project  
Bird Chatter  
Advanced Master Gardener News  
Edible Flowers  
Garden Event Calendar



Mary Jo Burns helped to start the Primula Study Group in Anchorage. Her story told by Cheryl Chapman is on page 3.  
Photo by Mary Jo's iPad