



Anchorage Chapter



Volume 14, Issue 4

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

April 2012



A Nickel's Worth from Madam President LaFleur-Meister

It's here - Spring and our 2012 Conference and Party! A huge thanks to all the volunteers and their dedication to the event. There have been months and months of preparation done to present a top - notch program to follow our theme of "GARDENING REALITIES" and all indications suggest it should NOT be missed. I hope you were able to get your ticket before the price rose on April 1st but if not, even at \$75, it's a worthy investment.

Friday, April 13th from 6:30 pm until 9 pm we are having a MEET & GREET party at 840 East 15th Avenue in the Green Connection greenhouse. The greenhouse is on the south side of 15th Avenue in between Ingra and Gambell. There is not a lot of parking space so travel together if possible, wear your walking shoes and watch for ice.

Please bring along your favorite finger food to share with fellow party-goers and we will furnish the refreshments and utensils. Each invitation is numbered and that will be your 'door prize' number. We will be having autographed copies of Linda's and Marion's books for some lucky attendees along with party favors for everyone.

Think of a question you want to ask Marion Owen and/or Linda Chalker-Scott and when you get to the party, write it down on a piece of paper (provided) and put it in the bucket. Around 7:15p we will gather to hear the answers and some lively discussion. A few more of the speakers from the Conference have responded that they will be attending the party too - YIPPEE! I am looking forward to having their presence at the Meet & Greet.

Don't forget your cash and checkbooks because GREEN CONNECTION has agreed to have a salesperson available to sell plants and other goods. Did you know they have a section of the store that is priced as "make an offer"? They have gently used items that they are liquidating at a discount. If you haven't seen the new living wall presentation, you must come to the party. It's done on a wick system and is just fabulous! Be sure to get your ticket ASAP - cost is only \$5. There is a limited amount of tickets for sale for this party due to the fact there is only ONE public restroom available in the building and limited parking to boot. So party goers,

as a friendly reminder - empty your bladders, travel together and bring your favorite snack to the party! I'll do what I can to make it memorable!

It was wonderful to see Linda and Herb Spencer at the last meeting and have them provide the door prizes for the evening. Posters of Herb's painting used in his First Friday Showing along with some mosaic work done by Linda on a pot (complete with plant) were well received by the lucky recipients. Thank you, Linda and Herb, for sharing your art with fellow MGs.

Each and every meeting, I am amazed at all the work done 'behind the scenes' to set the room up and be the 'go to' for the evening. For the past couple of years, Barbara Baker (along with Julie, of course) has faithfully taken care of things and this year, Lynne Opstad is assuming a lot of those duties. I want all three of you know how much I admire & appreciate how you quietly and efficiently handle the meeting preparations all year long. Thanks, thanks, thanks.

I look forward to a great party and a worthy conference. See you there!



THANKS TO GREEN CONNECTION for donating their greenhouse setting for our MEET & GREET party.

Treasurer's Report

Balances 2/15/12

Checking acct	1624.95
Savings acct	9356.01
CDs	10455.78
Total	\$21436.74

Expenses:

Hospitality	-83.63
Revenue:	
Donation	+500.00
Memberships	+180.00
Interest	+1.94
	\$681.94

Balances 2/29/12

Checking acct	2221.32
Savings acct	9357.95
CDs	10455.78
Total	\$22035.05



Charismatic Micro Flora: **MOSSES** by Pat Anderson



Marilyn Barker, showing the hand woven scarf she made from silk that she hand dyed; the design is from Polytrichum moss's leaf colors. Photo by Pat Anderson

Marilyn Barker presented to Master Gardeners at the March meeting, an exuberant look into the world of mosses. Marilyn was a professor of Biology and Botany at ACC and then at UAA. Her dissertation was Homalothecium Megaptilum, and is one of her favorites. She helped found the Alaska Native Plant Society, and became a Master Gardener in 08/09. She is now retired and searching for mosses as well as weaving and

playing an instrument with the community band.

She captured the entire audience with her excited stories about mosses, their sexual habits, where they grow, their life cycles and some of their particularly interesting characteristics. There are 10,000 species, they nourish and protect their offspring, and they lack xylem and phloem that seed plants have. (The xylem of a plant is the system of tubes and transport cells that circulates water and dissolved minerals. The phloem cells are laid out end-to-end throughout the entire plant, transporting the sugars and other molecules created by the plant.) However she was quick to tell us that each moss species is special! There are land plants, vascular plants and seed plants. And they all only have 1/2 set of dna!

A small 20 x magnification lens will be needed if you want to look into mosses seriously, however most mosses require a compound microscope for species identification. Then you can get up close and personal with the many mosses that are found in Alaska.

There are small mosses that have not been named yet, and hanging mosses on trees near Pleasure Bay and Girdwood, Antitrichia Curtipendula, one of her favorites - they need misty mornings! There are mosses that are decorative - bright and green around waterfalls. There is a Wall Moss named by Marilyn. There is Star Moss, Storks Bill Moss, Feather Moss, Knights Bloom - there are about 900 species in Alaska!

She provided great pictures of mosses, green and even orange with some drawings of moss cycles. Mosses are quite unique in spreading their spores - some pop open and the spores fly on the wind. Some are in water and the sperm swim to the female. Other mosses adapt to spreading spores in other ways - damp can spread the spores. Most spores are green and develop pro-

tonema and each spore can make a whole colony - and she showed us pictures of the round colonies that each spore started: the round colonies were separated by soil.

There are from 150-300 species of peat mosses - Sphagnum- 38-40 in Alaska. Russians have really gotten into Sphagnum Moss, and can tell water tables by them - they acidify their surroundings-orchids use Sphagnum moss to grow on. Canada is the Sphagnum Capital of the world, and has developed economic uses for Sphagnum including fuel, flavors whiskey, produces ammonium sulfate, brown dyes etc. No nasty bacteria grow in Sphagnum Moss and it was used in WWII to bind wounds. Peat bogs have history that can even be read. There is a wonderful Japanese moss garden in Portland, Oregon. Finland is a nature loving country and has coins with moss on them!

Marilyn showed pictures of a moss garden that MG Camille Williams started last fall, and explained how to make a moss milkshake: 1) gather mosses 2) place in kitchen blender 3) add 1 quart of buttermilk 4) blend - not on high 5) pour or paint over area to be grown exactly like from where the moss was taken. Example: if taken off granite, paint or pour on granite; if taken off a log, bring part of the log if possible, paint or pour over, and 6) mist new growths for one year.

Enthusiastic Marilyn gave us a list of moss books: "Mosses, Lichens and Ferns of N.W. North America, A Photographic Field Guide" by Vitt, Marsh, Bovey. "The Elfin World of Mosses and Liverworts of Michigan's Upper Peninsula and Isle Royale" by Janice M. Gline, "Some Common Mosses of British Columbia" by W. B. Schofield, "Gathering Moss" A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses" by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

She had many questions to answer from interested Master Gardeners, and much of her excitement over mosses rubbed off! Ever practical Marilyn said that to de-moss roofs and lawns, CES has handouts available. She also said that lime kills moss-they are acid loving plants!

New "Squiggley" Species Discovered in Alaska

From Alaska Dispatch: Scientists have discovered a new variety of water flea in a roadside pond on the Seward Peninsula outside of Nome, suggesting that life in the Alaskan Arctic may be far more ecologically mysterious than previously thought. This tiny crustacean - now named Eurycercus beringi - was identified during a multi-year, trans-continental investigation of water fleas that squiggle through small lakes across Alaska, Siberia and other Northern Hemisphere locales. The creatures fill a niche near the bottom of the freshwater food chain, providing summer food for birds while munching on even smaller life that erupts during the



Master Gardener Focus: Jill Shepherd By Cheryl Chapman

Small comfort, but Master Gardener Jill Shepherd's mom did the best she could to soothe her weeping teenager back in 1951 as the family struck north to Alaska from San Francisco in a three-quarter-ton Studebaker pickup dragging a house trailer: It won't be as bad as Siberia.

Jill's dad, a wandering star, had been poring over Siberian maps and Jill had feared the chilly worst after a childhood of hopscotch moves that began in a two-family home aloft on posts in the Panama Canal Zone, where her father worked as a civilian aircraft inspector for the U.S. Army Air Corps. Jill's family, and her grandfather and grandmother, had the upper rooms and the breeze; storage and the maid's room, as well as the washpots, were on the ground floor, where Jill, gardening and leaf-cutter ants -- gardeners themselves -- all met for the first time. Her mother had planted elephant ears and a fence-full of morning glories, and the young Jill, out and about, would watch the columns of ants marching briskly under their clipped greenery parasols back to their mounds to farm their fungus gardens.

She had the run of her grandmother's big garden south of San Francisco where everyone moved after World War II, at least until the itch to keep going hit her father, who wound up in Anchorage by a coin-toss at the Tok crossroads. Jill wouldn't live in Fairbanks - the other side of the coin - until she enrolled a couple of years later at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in wildlife management. There she met and wed a student in wildlife biology, moved to the UAF student trailer court, lost a shoe in road mud so deep that spring that it was never seen again, and used a kitchen fork to scratch the hardpan next to the trailer to plant a packet of seeds, which, like the shoe, vanished.

Their dog team prompted a move to a former homesteaders' chinked log cabin near Ester's Siding on the Alaska Railroad, a cabin with a huge garden where the soil had been worked and amended for years. "It was a great, great plot," says Jill. "Jim King, the bush pilot, had a wife, Jean, who was a truck farmer. They'd given us \$400 to get married on, and Jean worked with me. 'Plant those seeds really close together,' she'd say. 'They'll stimulate each other.' They must have. We sure did a lot of thinning."

"It was the best garden ever in Fairbanks: kohlrabi, Brussels sprouts, broccoli. The moose loved it. I used our Chevy Suburban to threaten them off. I gardened in every place we had until I moved down here."

That was in 1980. In the meantime she'd spent summers tent-camping with her two sons and daughter on the Minto Flats while her husband worked, did public relations for the trans-Alaska pipeline, wrote for *The Tundra Times*, hunted and fished, finished a degree at UAF where she got interested in magazine writing, won a competitive scholarship from *The Alaska Sportsman* magazine (which became *Alaska* magazine), and moved to Anchorage and the *Anchorage Times* for a year before jumping to *Alaska* magazine as a copy editor.

She put in a postage-stamp garden at her apartment in a renovated Bootlegger Cove garage. "It was almost level with the bottom of the bedroom window, which had no storm window and was colder than hell," she says. "I could see my lettuce, and every day it looked more and

more like lace. That was my first experience with slugs."

"Anchorage had so many flowers, and I didn't know what they were because there weren't a lot of flowers in Fairbanks," says Jill. But she was determined to learn. She and her mother moved to a Fairview condo with a sunny balcony that she stuffed with plants. "I had an adjustable shelf, a potting stool, pots, hanging baskets: always geraniums, but also miniature roses, fuchsias, tree saplings, canary vines, begonias, lettuce, green onions and other vegetables including round carrots, which were the devil to clean. I bought anything and everything I could find to go into pots, and flats and flats of plants. Every day I'd go out to the balcony and move things around."

"My mother suggested counseling."

She planted tulips in front of the condominiums for three years and lost every one of them to reavers. She adopted gardens around town, including at the Oscar Anderson House. She became a Master Gardener with the 1984/85 class and completed the now-defunct Community Tree Steward program, which like the Master Gardeners had a series of classes followed by 40 hours of community service pruning troubled trees and shrubs at the Anchorage Senior Center, the Pioneer Home, cemeteries and median plantings and giving little boosts to the faltering.

"In the 1990s, BP had an Adopt-A-Tree program," Jill says. "They'd buy hundreds of trees, and if your name was drawn, you'd get a tree. I won twice. Then there were the U.S. Forest Service bundles of saplings. I'd grow them on my patio and deck and when they got big enough I'd give them away. It was like playing Johnny Appleseed all over town."

She and boyfriend Jim rented one of the plots at the C Street Community Garden but that did not go well. For three years, others stripped their crops, but the real heartbreaker was the tomato. Anchorage resident Dick Green had come by rare tomato seeds from Russia, from the Siberian Institute of Horticulture in Novosibirsk, and Jill and Jim planted a variety that was supposed to grow in the great Alaska outdoors. The plant thrived until the day someone tore off all its tomatoes and ripped it up by the roots.

These days Jill gardens closer to her apartment in West Anchorage: vegetables in totes on corner tables outside ("She grows every kind of vegetable except potatoes in those totes," says Cooperative Extension Service horticulturist Julie Riley. "It's amazing."), flower boxes on the chain-link, pots crammed with flowers, begonias in hanging baskets, and beds alongside the building, this year with *Brunera* "Jack Frost" in a leading role.

Inside, she's partial to carmine and ivory *Amaryllis*, and plant close-ups. "In the mid-1990s I hooked up with (psychologist, photographer and lily lady) Annie Nevaldine and Julie Riley at a garden photography workshop sponsored by the Alaska Botanical Garden and the Garden Writers of America, and we've continued to shoot together," she says. "We do our best to schedule photo safaris every year to gardens: Barrow and Fairbanks, up to the Valley, to Gustavus, Juneau and Seldovia, to Homer and Seward, to Vancouver and the Fraser Valley in British Columbia, the Kenai and Kodiak."

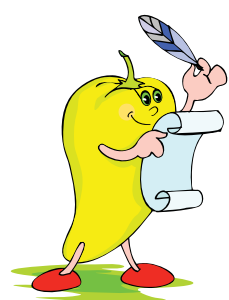
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MG Focus: Jill Shepherd cont. from page 3

This year Jill is serving the Master Gardener board as secretary and sporadically researching early gardening in Alaska, though she's been beguiled away to the side topic of rhubarb, a Russian introduction by Grigory Shelikhov at Three Saints Bay on Kodiak Island in 1784. Rhubarb and Alaska go back a long way, but the way forward is more fraught. Until the recent federal budget cuts, the Plant Materials Center at the Matanuska Experiment Farm in Palmer hosted the world's rhubarb gene bank, but the elimination of the Alaska Agricultural Research Service means the rhubarb collection - all 64 varieties -- has been moved out of Alaska to the Agricultural Research Service in Pullman, Wash.

In a 2009 interview with Fran Durner for the Anchorage Daily News, Jill talked about her continuing quest for the old rhubarbs, but also for other plant varieties that appear to have been brought to Alaska by the early Russians, among them a potato, tiger lily, yellow iris, Russian black currant, chive and daisy, and a gooseberry, raspberry and strawberry.

She has kept a photo essay of the beauties of flowering trees along what she calls "The Healing Walk," a route she followed during recovery from lung cancer surgery two years ago, and is also putting together an autobiography with classmates from Ole University. It wouldn't be her first book. That would be "The Last Frontier: Incredible Tales of Survival, Exploration and Adventure from Alaska Magazine," published by the Lyons Press in 2004, the same year she retired. The faux cover her staff prepared for her departure pictures an impish Jill and the promo, "Alaska Nursery Stocks Rise: Shepherd's Free Time Sure to Boost Plant Sales."



Great Tips from Johnny's Catalog

You can learn a lot by reading the fine print in Johnny's catalog! For instance:

Vernalization (cold treatment) -
When growing artichokes, time transplanting so plants get 8-10 days of temperatures around 50° to induce earlier budding. Protect from frost.

When planting asparagus, plant crowns 8" apart for slender spears, 14" apart for thick spears, in furrows 6-8" deep, 3-5' apart. They do best with a pH of 7 or higher.

Get a head start on growing beets - start them indoors in early spring, 5-6 weeks before transplanting outside after last frost. Sow seeds $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep, 3-4 seeds per inch. Transplant out 3" apart in rows 12-18" apart. Cool temperatures produce the best flesh color. Acute weather fluctuations will cause "zoning", white rings, in the roots.

Bush Beans - dark colored beans germinate better in cool soil than white seeds.

There's a new vegetable called "Flower Sprouts", which is a cross between Brussels sprouts & kale. They re-

semble colorful flowers or rosettes that grow on stalks of tall, upright plants just like Brussels sprouts, and taste similar to Red Russian kale.

Cabbage splitting - Early varieties may split or burst at maturity or from rapid new growth if rain or heavy irrigation follows a dry spell. Splitting may be partially avoided by slowing a plant's growth. To accomplish this, cultivate close to plants to sever some of the root system.

Growing celery: keep soil moist at all times, do not let soil dry out. Bolting is caused by exposing plants to temperatures below 55 degrees for 10 days or more. When hardening off, reduce water for 7-10 days, not by lowering temperatures.

Protect your plants from flea beetle and root maggots by covering with floating row covers from day of planting.

Lettuce is a cool weather crop and can be dormant at temperatures above 68° - this is called "Thermal dormancy". Seedlings can be kept in the shade to keep the temperatures lower; to harden off, reduce watering and temperature for 2-3 days before planting outdoors.

Leeks - when planting out, 'dibble' a hole at least 6" deep to plant. Only 1-2" of leaves need to extend above the soil surface. Do not firm the soil - allow irrigation or rain to fill in the dibble hole.

FREE Invasive Plants Webinars

Webinars are great. You can participate from home on your computer. The following two invasive species webinars are being coordinated by Gino Graziano, Invasive Plants Instructor with UAF Cooperative Extension Service in Anchorage.

Reed canary grass management, April 25, 9-10:30 a.m., Instructor: Tim Miller, Washington State University, Cooperative Extension Service, Associate Scientist

Orange hawkweed management, May 30, 9 - 10:30 a.m. Instructor: Steven Seefeldt, Agronomist

You must register in advance. Do so by the Monday before the class at <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/pests/cnipm/k12/webinars/>. The Tuesday before the class, you'll receive an e-mail with information on getting your computer set up. You'll need 'Elluminate Live' and the most recent version of Java to participate. You can determine if you have the right software and plug-ins by going to <http://www.illuminate.com/support/>. Give yourself plenty of time to download what you need to view the webinar successfully.

Pesticide applicators wishing to receive CEUs towards certification renewal must complete the short surveys at the beginning and end of the webinar. For more information, contact Gino Graziano (gagraziano@alaska.edu, 907-786-6315).



Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

A planned trip to the Homer Garden Club's late-February meeting on tomato grafting was called off for us from the central peninsula by guess what? SNOW! We sighed

because we didn't know tomatoes could be grafted or how to do it and we still don't know. I did see grafted tomatoes for sale at a wonderful nursery in Southern California--- the sign said heirloom tomatoes on hardy rootstock.

MG Kathy Wartinbee and I assuaged our grief by going out to the Western Winter Study Weekend of the North American Rock Garden Society in Everett, Washington, the second week of March. The plant vendors drove us all crazy with desire. Carmel Tysver, Alaska chapter president, has taking plants home safely down to a fine science. She takes a small cat carrier which fits under the seat and holds exactly 12 four-inch pots upright with no fuss, no muss and no bother. She does get yelled at when taking it through the x-ray machine at airport security because she's not supposed to nuke her "cat". I just shipped a large flat rate box to my neighbor, Mark.



Kathy Wartinbee & Carmel Tysver looking for plants at a nursery in Washington.

How does one write just a few words to describe all that went on during the conference? It's hours of pictures of plants and flowers. Only botanical binomials are spoken there. There was a super presentation on geology and plants which I wish I could remember. I just remember it was really, really interesting at the time. Got a quick garden tour by a former MG. Interesting was the couple of blocks of rain gardens in Everett, WA. (www.1200raingardens.org) The house's downspout was disconnected from the street rain and funneled to a corner of the yard with appropriate plantings and a dry well. Each rain garden had an explanation sign out front. At the rain gardens web site I really like the comment that Puget Sound starts at the end of a conventional gutter. That would apply to Cook Inlet too. I split from the AK contingent and went visiting friends and relations for three weeks, starting in Anacortes, WA.

I've found a new use for the panic button on the car's key---deer "mover". In Anacortes, I watched 5 deer saunter out of the woods with a daffodil dinner on their minds. I stood at the door and hit the panic button and three ran off. Two lingered so I did it again for a couple beeps, then went out and yelled at the last animal. Did I mention that the daffies were in full flower, a bright spot in all the rain? In the area around Anacortes were more snow geese and swans than I've ever seen in one place at one time. Acres of them! There were even a few ducks thrown in for good measure.

Moving south of Eugene, OR on I-5, the trees along the freeway looked like they were budding out but it was simply lichen on the branches which says nice things about air quality and availability of moisture. I kept trying to outrun the rain but it outran me. It POURED at Lake Shasta. I felt like that Joe character in the cartoon "Little Abner" that carried his own rain cloud

with him. I realize moisture is lacking so considered what I brought as a public service that I didn't have to shovel.

Along I-5 are signs at the edge of the fields saying that 'farmers feed the world'. I just wish I knew what the farmers were feeding the world. Almond orchards were easy to spot because they had their bee hives in place. South of Red Bluff, CA there were serious orchards. Some of the peach and olive orchards were using semi dwarf trees and then shearing the tops about 7 or 8 feet up so when you looked at the orchard you saw a flat ocean of trees. It certainly would make it easier to pick the fruit! Then there were the vineyards. There was no way to differentiate between table, raisin or wine grapes. The only clue for the wine grapes was a sign for a winery with free tasting from 10 AM to 5 PM. It's tough sometimes being the designated driver. It is a sign of optimism to see young orchards or vineyards. And the California freeway plantings were starting to bloom and with a lot of red bud.

In Newport Beach, CA there are snails, not slugs. The young snails have very thin shells and squoosh very satisfyingly. The older snails, about the size of a round nickel, I whacked on the street. My son took me to a couple wonderful nearby nurseries. I think of Kathy Wartinbee's line about it 'costs nothing to get in but lots to get out'. It did that! I see plants I want but won't grow up here so I get them for someone else whether they want them or not. Tyrannical gardening!

My son commented about a common southern California decorative plant in his back yard... horsetail! He whined that it had taken over the bed that it was in and was even coming up in the lawn. His horsetail is three to four feet tall and he had no idea why I was laughing.

Leaving Newport Beach and heading east to AZ there was fresh snow on the hills down to about the 3500 foot level - didn't see anything wonderful or picturesque about it. Did I mention that I was cold until my second day in Sun City West when the temperature finally warmed into the mid-60s, then the 70s and then the 80s?

On the local gardening scene, things are sort of starting to heat up. MG Barb Jewell came back from WA and needs to fight through deep snow to get her grow lights out of the back shed... She keeps remembering the crocus and daffodils in her daughter's back yard outside of Seattle.

Mark White is starting scallions, leeks and tomatoes for us. He took me to the Kenai airport when I fled the snow and asked me on the way where my seeds were (on the kitchen counter, where else?) and could he raid them for stuff to start. His dad snorted and said he'd do it anyway. True, but then I've raided his seed stash without the courtesy of asking first.

Margaret Simon's greenhouse is history. The snow load was too much for the trusses. Now she has to decide if she still wants a greenhouse or not. Janice Chumley is actively looking at seed catalogs and going over to Trinity Greenhouse to smell the dirt. She did start some basil and sage so that's at least a beginning. She has also gotten a purple Romano bean that turns green when it is cooked. Her garden boxes are still under 4 feet of snow but she's optimistically thinking of spring. Don St. John, one of our new MGs, was very succinct with his answer about what was happening, "SNOW!!!"

Just hold the thought that it is possible to dig graves at Angeles Memorial Park. Bust through an eight-inch layer of frozen ground and digging is fine. I hope that means that all that melted snow will go straight into the ground.



Bird Chatter



-- Rita Jo Shoultz (MG 97/98) will be bringing peonies and other perennials to sell at the Alaska Master Gardener Conference. She has announced that 2012 is her last season as a retailer. Coming to the conference from Fritz Creek Gardens are 'Do Tell', 'Buckeye Belle', (Photo) 'Cheddar Surprise', 'Angel Cheeks' and 'Paul M. Wild'. For photos and great descriptions go to <http://www.alaska-hardy.com/>.

- The IRS lists 313 non-profit Master Gardener Associations. AMGAA is not one of them.
- To complete her 40 hours of Master Gardener time, Sheila Toomey (MG 11/12) is now writing a regular gardening article for the Anchorage Daily News. WE ARE LUCKY! One of her March articles included a picture of Jane Baldwin (MG 99/00) smiling among last season's flowers.
- Cockroach races once occurred during a meeting of the AMGAA Education Committee.
- Shannon Green MG (93/94) reports that last month's gardening conference in Haines was GREAT! When Shannon lived in Anchorage she was a regular at Herb Study Group. Now she raises critters. Her family has 7 goats, 2 miniature horses and 38 chickens.
- Jewell Gardens in Skagway claims to be the first show garden in the United States to acquire USDA Organic Certification.
- Mollie Crittenden (MG 11/12) reported crocus blooming in front of the Pioneer Home on March 23, but we still need more snow! We have to beat the Anchorage record.
- Mel Monsen (MG 94/95) isn't worried about the snow causing a late spring because the ground's not frozen. (ADN, 3/10/12) I'm with you Mel!
- Wait until you see the new AMGAA Directory put together by Jane Baldwin. It's beautiful and there's a great picture of Robbie Frankevich's (MG 03/04) snow-covered greenhouse. He says Girdwood has had over 300 inches of snow this season. Robbie should be thankful he doesn't live at Thompson Pass where more than 5 feet of snow fell in one day in 1955.
- It's best to buy locally produced seed potatoes. The Division of Agriculture has established a quarantine on seed potatoes and potato plants coming into Alaska from out of state. Potatoes must be certified and inspected in storage and also at the point of shipping with no late blight found.
- Tomato plants brought into Alaska must be sprayed with a fungicide for late blight prior to shipping (among other things) because of the quarantine. Ordering tomato seeds from outside is not a problem.

-- There is long list of certified seed potato varieties available for 2012. Greg Kalal (MG 08/09) has Caribe, French Fingerling, German Butterball, King Edward, Magic Molly, Magic Myrna, Nordonna, Purple Viking, Red Beauty, Red Pontiac, Shepody, White Rural New Yorker, & Yukon Gold. And he's just one of Alaska's seed producers.

Denali Mosaic: Exploring Patterns of Plant Diversity

June 22 - 24, 2012

\$330 (\$297 for Alaska Geographic Members)

Over 1500 plant species reside in Denali, forming breathtakingly beautiful networks of ecological communities that vary greatly in the number and types of plants they encompass. This mosaic is the result of the interactions among species and their environment over the course of ecological history, uninterrupted by humans.

Join Denali National Park Botanist Carl Roland in the field to explore the park's patterns of plant diversity and learn and discuss how these patterns came to be. We'll hike to numerous unique plant communities, learn how to identify certain types of plants, and explore techniques that scientists use as we discover what Denali's intact plant ecosystems have to teach us about our past, present, and future. More information online. This course is 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 or call 907-683-1269 for more information.

ASLA Garden Design workshop

Sponsored by the Alaska Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, this workshop is an opportunity for homeowners to learn about landscape design as well as innovative design elements and then create a design for their home, cottage or cabin.

There are two lectures that will be given by local landscape architects Dwayne Adams of LDN/USKH and M. Elise Huggins of Earthscape and are 6:30-8:30pm on April 25th and May 2nd. The workshop also includes a 2-hour, one-on-one design session with a landscape architect on May 12th. Walk away with your own landscape plan!

This is an annual class that raises funds for a scholarship for Alaskan students studying landscape architecture. It's the biggest fundraising event for our Chapter, and many of Anchorage's landscape architects participate in the Saturday session, donating their time. Cost for the classes and workshop is \$225.

Call 222-2859 for information, or email: gardendesignworkshop@gmail.com.

Details about the event may be found at akasla.org

Shopping Opportunities at the AMGA Conference

Along with an opportunity to learn something new about gardening, there will be plenty of garden related shopping opportunities! Bring your check book, cash or debit card - there is an ATM machine right in the Senior Center.

Here are some of the vendors that will be at the conference this year:

Camille Williams - concrete bird baths, plants
Nickel LaFleur - plants & garden art
Rita Jo Shoultz - plants (Think Peonies...)
Verna Pratt - books, wildflower bookmarks, seeds, pictures, cards
Gina Docherty - tote bags, purses, iPad/Kindle covers
Suttons Brown Thumb Greenhouse - plants, plugs, seeds
Patrick Ryan / ABG - garden tools, books, apparel, jewelry, decor
AMGAA - logo items: coffee cups, aprons, t-shirts
Rustic Wood Stuff - benches, stands, totes, bowls, garden shelves, mugs, vases, journals
Susitna Organics - compost display
Denali Seeds - Seeds for Alaska climate
Denali Dreams - Handmade soaps
Faltz Nursery: Pottery, Landscape Services
Fran Durner: Cards, garden ornaments, concrete leaves
Persistent Gardener - Dahlia bulbs
Longaburger Baskets - garden related items
Brecht Studio - tiles, flower pots

And don't forget: There will be lots of fabulous door prizes! Here are just a few of what has been donated by generous donors:

Suttons - 2 \$25 gift cards
Dimond Greenhouse - \$45 gift card
P&M Gardens - \$50 gift card
Forget Me Not Nursery - \$50 gift card
Alaska Mill & Feed - Peony Fertilizer for Alaska
Colony Greenhouse - hanging basket
Mile 5.2 Greenhouse - hanging basket
Debbie Jeske - City of Flowers Poster
Anonymous - 5 Year Gardening Journal

And there's more! But you have to attend the conference to find out. See you there!

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 Kathy Munk at:
munkster@hotmail.com

Garden Event Calendar

Saturday, April 7

Spring Garden Show- Mall at Sears 10am-5pm

Saturday, April 14

Alaska Rock Garden Society presents speaker Fritz Kummert "Highlights of a 4 acre garden in Austria" - 2 pm at MTA in Palmer.

Saturday, April 14

Alaska Master Gardeners 2012 Conference 8:15am - 4:30pm; Keynote Speakers: Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott and Marion Owen - Anchorage Senior Center Cost: \$75

Sunday, April 15

Alaska Rock Garden Society presents speaker Fritz Kummert "Georgia and Plants from the Caucasus" - 2 pm at CES Anchorage office.

Monday, April 16

AMGA meeting: Camille Williams will speak about "Hanging basket design and Propagation from cuttings." - 7 p.m., CES; 1675 C St.

Thursday, April 19

Willow Garden Club Meeting 7pm Willow Community Center - Presentation by Rita Jo Schoultz "What's new for gardens this year"

Saturday, April 21

Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association Fruit Grafting Class - 1 pm, Anchorage CES office, 1675 C Street

Mon-Fri, April 23-27

Pesticide Applicator Certification Training - Mon-Thurs., 9am-12noon; Friday, 8:30-6 pm; CES, 1675 C St.; Instructors: Julie Riley & Phil Kaspari. \$30 - Register on line with credit card or in person at CES with cash or check.

Wednesday, April 25

TREerific-Growing Trees from seed by Patrick Ryan - 5:45 CES office, 1675 C Street

Wednesday, April 25

Garden Design Workshop sponsored by AK Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects; 2 classes (2nd class May 2) and 2 hour one on one session with a landscape architect. \$225. Call 222-2859 for more info.

Wednesday, May 2

Gardening the Organic Way class, 9:30am-11am, Terra Bella Bakery Café, 601 E. Dimond, Anchorage, next to Bed, Bath and Beyond; \$23 - Register at www.goodearthgardenschool.com

Wednesday, May 2

Start you own Seeds-organically- vegetables, herbs, flowers, take home planted flats - 3:30pm-5pm Terra Bella Bakery Café, 601 E. Dimond, \$30 - Register at www.goodearthgardenschool.com

Thursday, May 3

Anchorage Garden Club Meeting, Pioneer School House 7pm - Debbie Hinchey shows ways to divide perennials.

Wednesday, May 9

King Career Center Annual Plant Sale 9am-5pm or until plants sell out - 2650 E. Northern Lights Blvd Contact 742-8900

Saturday, May 12

Anchorage Garden Club Lobelia Basket Workshop - 10am -12pm, \$50, location TBA, registration forms at www.alaskagardenclubs.org - Hotline: 566-0539

Saturday, May 12

Rock Garden Society Clean up Day at Alaska Botanical Garden 2 pm

Saturday, May 19

ABG plant sale and membership drive - ABG members preview 9am, public welcome 10am - 4pm

Saturday, May 19

Alaska Rock Garden Society Plant Sale 9am-4pm; 7435 Old Harbor Rd.

Saturday, May 19

Society of American Foresters-Cook Inlet Chapter annual Arbor Day tree seedling sale - 9 am at REI front entrance. Orders must be prepaid and postmarked by 5-14. www.aksaf.org for order form and more details.

Monday, May 21

AMGA Meeting: Naomi Vaughan will speak on "Pilates for the Gardener." 7 p.m., CES; 1675 C St.

Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage
University of Alaska Cooperative Extension
P.O. Box 221403
Anchorage, Alaska 99522-1403

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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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Jill Shepherd, a gardener without land to garden, raises a kitchen-full of vegetables in totes. Read Jill's story on page 3, in Cheryl Chapman's MG Focus article.