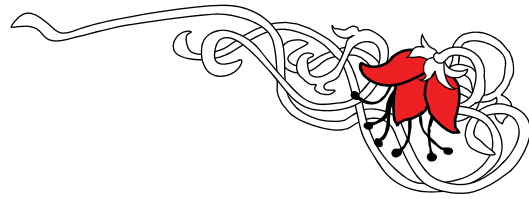


Anchorage Chapter



Volume 14, Issue 12

# ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER December 2012



## December 2012 - A Nickel's Worth By Madame President Nickel LaFleur Meister



I just love this time of year! Reminders of all we have to be thankful for pop up everywhere. I'm especially excited about our 25th Anniversary on Saturday, December 15, 2012 from 1 to 4p at CES Building @ 1675 C Street. As a rule we don't have get-togethers in December due to all the other

obligations but Alaska Master Gardener's 25th Anniversary just HAS to be recognized!

I have been digging around in the archives of the Master Gardeners Association and found all sorts of interesting trivia tid-bits to bring to the Anniversary party. Here's a taste: the Master Gardener program didn't get started until the early 1970's and it was organized by two men in Washington State that worked for the Cooperative Extension Service. The first Alaska Master Gardener training was conducted in 1978 in Anchorage. There were 13 students trained as Master Gardeners that year. Our local organization was launched December 15th, 1987, and Wayne Vandre was the Hort agent at that time.

Much thanks to MG Patrick Ryan who agreed to play some songs at our Anniversary Party and at 2pm we'd like to have as many people as we can to get together to do some singing while being photographed for possible YouTube fame. We will be having a couple special guests from the Festival of Flowers to add to the entertainment. It'll be our focus to have fun and wish fellow MGs the happiest of holidays and the coming year - along with cheers for another 25 years of success for Alaska Master Gardeners. I hope you'll join me for a group hug! Thanks to the Moose's Tooth who agreed to help sponsor our refreshment request by providing pizza and salad to share at the Anniversary Party. We will have cake and coffee as well. Please do sign the guest book and spend some time getting reacquainted with fellow Master Gardeners.

Hats off to the retiring Board members, Judy Christiansen, Annie Nevaldine and Kathy Munk - your volunteerism is appreciated! I'm excited to transition into a new year with an enthusiastic Board. All members are welcome to sit in on Board meetings or if there are

concerns - have them addressed at these meetings. This is our Organization so let's be good proactive stewards of the earth.

This month our focus article is on Connie Hebert (pronounced Aye-bear) who came up from Louisiana for the summer, anxious to be involved with the Alaska Master Gardeners group. She volunteered working on trees at our parks and putting in some hours helping on maintenance at the Pioneer Home. I hope we can use Connie as a good example of what a Master Gardener can do for a community and volunteer! Master Gardeners have programs in all fifty states so along with volunteering here, check out other MG programs and see how you, too, can be an asset. Thanks, Connie --- come back soon!!

To you all, have a safe, healthy holiday season and stroll by CES on December 15th to celebrate Alaska Master Gardeners 25th Anniversary! I'll see you there.



### Treasurer's Report

Balances 9/30/12	
Checking acct	3295.43
Savings acct	12133.81
CD's	7706.66
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$23135.90</u>

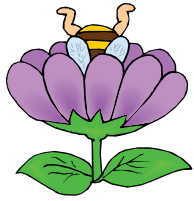
Revenue	
Adv Master Gardener	1460.00
Interest	67.21
Membership	160.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>1687.21</u>

Expense	
Adv Master Gardener	518.92
Newsletter	259.57
<u>Total</u>	<u>778.49</u>

Balances 10/31/12	
Checking acct	8557.31
Savings acct	12135.87
CD's	3351.44
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$24044.62</u>



## November AMGAA Program Report: Plants Do It Too! By Pat Anderson



Retired Botany Professor Marilyn Barker did it again! Wearing a unique banana fiber scarf she had woven, she kept us captivated teaching us how different flowers experience seedling, germination, maturation and then flowers. Quotes from the book "Sex in Your Garden" by Angela Overy began her tale of how plants reproduce - and

she jazzed up the whole talk in a humorous vein, which made the information fascinating and fun!

Assisted by her beautiful Powerpoint Presentation, Marilyn showed us the parts of plants, and where they are located on Iris, and other flowers. "Why do plants need flowers?" she asked. "Well, why does Target need a sign?" It pays to advertise. Flowers advertise by size, shape, color, nectar, fragrance, flower groupings, and sometime petal groupings! She showed us how our common Dwarf Dogwood (*Cornus Canadensis*) fools us into thinking they have large white petals, when the white 'petals' are actually leaves. Touch the hairs of the flowers in the center of the bloom, and they explode with pollen! The small flowers in the center grow together to entice fertilizing! Asters also have flowers packed close together!

Marilyn explained that Linnaeus was the Father of Botany. He wrote a thesis on plant sexuality in 1729, and he had lots of correct teaching, even then. She explained that color is the real attractant for flowers - every color in the book. Humans see color differently from pollinators: bees, butterflies, flies, Carrion eating flies and hummingbirds. She showed us colors that we would see, and then in colors that some insects would see. Shape is important in flower advertising and sex as well: from open bowl (common shape) to umbrella shapes which offer shelter, to tubular shapes for hummingbirds. Some flowers have landing platforms like the Siberian Iris.

There are at least 13 types of insects that pollinate, plus mammals, birds, slugs, wind, and water. Plants also use bribes to get pollination accomplished - such as the odors produced at night by some flowers, as an example. Or trickery - one flower looks exactly like certain female insect, & the male thinks it is mating with a female, but he is actually pollinating the flower.

Serial reproduction is in three steps, and plants can have more varied sets of chromosomes, unlike animals. Marilyn explained the amazing way ferns develop spores, how they are used, and their alternate generations. She said that pollen grains are so different you can actually identify plants from pollens, and that all pollens have two nuclei. She pointed out that if you look at the vascular of tulips, you can tell them apart.

Her talk was about 45 minutes long and so interesting it made one want to take Botany courses. Small wonder why gardening is so fascinating and fun! Thanks again for a wonderfully informative experience, Marilyn!

## Master Gardener Class Coming to Seward and A Brief History of the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service By Kirstie Lorelei Willean

On the day I first arrived in Alaska 30 years ago, the road from Fairbanks International Airport rolled past open fields gently inclining to the main campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). The foreground view was Norman Rockwell-esque with a large red barn, grazing livestock, and hooped greenhouses. My daily bike-riding route soon took me past what I soon learned was the agricultural research station for the Cooperative Extension Service (CES). This was just the beginning of a very resourceful educational relationship with an agency I knew little about.

In January 2013, The UAF Cooperative Extension Service will be offering a new and long-awaited Master Gardener course here in Seward. It's been several years since our last Master Gardener class. Seward has a budding crop of new gardeners who have eagerly awaited this course. More information about this upcoming course can be found at the end of this article. A little history on the Cooperative Extension Service, first!

Beginning 150 years ago in 1862, the Morrill Act established land-grant colleges with an original mission "to teach agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies so members of the working class could obtain a liberal, practical education." (Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities - 2/2012). President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act into law in 1862. Over the course of time several other federal acts have broadened the scope of the original Morrill Act as the act met with an increasing demand for technical and agricultural education in the United States. Each U.S. state, territory, and Washington, D.C. have at least one land-grant institution. Alaska has two: University Alaska Fairbanks and Ilisagvik College in Barrow.

Twenty-five years after the original Morrill Act passed into law, the federal government agricultural experiment station programs became a key component of the land-grant system with the passage of the Hatch Act in 1887. The Hatch Act of 1887 was passed in recognition that research was needed to develop agricultural practices through the land-grant institutions. Currently, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) plays the lead role in administration of federal funding and activity coordination at the national level. The Cooperative Extension Service of the USDA works cooperatively with each state's government. State governments also provide funding for research and extension programs. Collaboration between state and federal governments, under the guidelines of several government acts, following the Morrill and Hatch Acts, provide funding to the land-grant institutions and facilitates the sharing of information within the Cooperative Extension Service. Alaska was still a young territory when the Morrill and Hatch Acts were passed.

While the land-grant process was already established and continuing to develop, Alaska had several federal agriculture experiment stations working to establish the viability of farming and gardening in the far north. In the early 1900's, though statehood was still more

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## Master Gardener Focus: Connie Hebert By Cheryl Chapman



Connie at a MG Summer tour -  
Photo by G.Docherty

At Connie and Mark Hebert's home in Port Allen, La., a bare half-mile from the Mississippi River across from Baton Rouge, critters include fever-carrying mosquitoes, water moccasins, bull alligators booming in the night, snapping turtles big as washtubs and fire ants (don't ask - but if you meet you'll wish you'd picked up more of your sailor uncle's vile language). It's a world of green and sweaty lushness, the next best thing to the tropics where spats

can simmer for years over the merits of Hino azaleas (small leaves, submerged in flowers, persnickety) versus Formosas (larger clusters of bloom airily spaced among larger leaves, hardier).

The Heberts hit Anchorage on May 23 in an airborne leap from their Louisiana Zone 8 to Zones 4 to 3, with an option for 2. They settled into a hotel as Mark began his oilfield job as a summer consultant, Master Gardener Connie explored, "and after 10 days in the hotel, the only thing I could think of was 'Get me out of here,'" she says.

She knew Anchorage had Master Gardeners and decided to find them. A floral photo spread in a tourist guide had the caption, "Tended by Master Gardeners," and in a fine confirmation of that old promise, "You get what you need," she ran into MG president Nickel LaFleur at the Alaska Botanical Garden's June 1 plant sale, "and the rest," Connie says, "is history." By the time she and Mark moved into a duplex in East Anchorage, she was embedded in gardening volunteer work and getting colorful annuals started at the duplex. "I'd hoped to experiment with plants I'd never encountered," she said, "but the landlady brought things I already knew about like geraniums and petunias and sweet alyssum. They were pretty, real pretty, but not what I had in mind."

Connie's gardening began in the small Louisiana town of DeQuincy in the mixed pine and hardwood forests in the southwest corner of the state. It is and was a railroad and lumber community where dogwood splashes white light through the evergreens in May, slow, lazy bay-ous wind through cypress groves, pickups parked along roadsides are piled with coolers of shrimp and crawfish for sale, and little children are useful in spite of themselves.

"I helped my grandfather in his garden," she says, "and my job was to stay on the sled behind the horse and throw out cow patties for fertilizer. When I was a

teenager, we moved to Baton Rouge and my siblings and I (she's one of six) had to grow vegetables for our food. When we got out on our own, we didn't eat vegetables for years, except for rice."

She and Mark met at Dow Chemical and both worked there until retirement. Now they split their years between Port Allen in winter and, then, usually, Colorado once the Louisiana thermometer hits the misery index - "We don't do summers in the heat," she says.

In 2005, a friend invited her into the Tri-Parish Master Gardeners course in Port Allen (Louisiana has parishes instead of counties or boroughs), "and we had a fantastic time in the class," she says. "Port Allen is a mix of farming and industry, so we draw on both those areas for topics: with LSU (Louisiana State University) right across the river with its huge horticulture department, we have a plethora of experts to call on, so we have a lot of guest speakers."

"Things we talk about in Port Allen aren't exactly the same as what we talk about in Anchorage, but they are parallel."

All summer, Connie was a gardening mainstay at the Pioneer Home in midtown as she hauled hoses, chatted with residents about the plants and hitched down long rows of perennials on hands and knees, weeding.

"It was difficult trying to work at the Pioneer Home," she says. "A lot of the weeds there looked like pretty

good flowers to me, but I guess one gardener's weeds are another gardener's wildflowers."



Connie helping Nickel LaFleur with some pruning - photo from N.LaFleur

She linked up with Pat Joyner and the rest of the TREE-rific crew and dropped back on hands and knees to weed around trees in city parks, and at the cemeteries; by summer's end, she'd crawled over a sizeable chunk of Anchorage real estate. She pruned here, she pruned there. Husband

Mark joined in. "Every time we did something, Mark was there helping us. He's not a gardener, but he's a good gardening assistant," she says.

Come the Alaska State Fair, Connie was there, too, recording entries as a scribe for the judges in the potato category: "Magic Mollies and Magic Myrnas," she says. "They were a first. I loved the farmers' markets too. The purple, gold and green cauliflower? Those are LSU's colors, Mardi Gras colors."

When she got lonesome for home plants, she visited the Mann Leiser Memorial Greenhouse in Russian Jack Park off Bragaw, said hello to the succulents and bromeliads and took deep breaths of the dark, rich smells.

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## MG Course Coming to Seward / History of CES

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than a quarter-century in the future, it was Judge and Congressional Delegate James Wickersham who pushed for the creation of a college in Alaska's Interior. The Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines started classes in 1922. In 1935, the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines became known as University of Alaska. From these humble beginnings, the Cooperative Extension Service began working with Alaskans to initially organize 4-H and home economics clubs.

In 1935, a full-time director was appointed to the Cooperative Extension Service; this was also the same year that the federal government established the Matanuska Colony. The Matanuska Colony was a group of 200 families, mainly from the mid-western states, who were selected to settle and farm in the Matanuska Valley. The first CES field office opened in Palmer in 1936 to provide agents who worked closely with the new homesteaders.

Lydia Fohn-Hansen had been a Cooperative Extension Service leader in Fairbanks. Coming to the Matanuska Valley and working from a tent, Lydia provided educational services to the colonists. Lydia taught the new colonists how to can salmon, make clothing suitable for the northern climate, and she wrote hundreds of informational bulletins during her tenure with the CES.

During the 1950's, the Cooperative Extension Service worked with community members in remote areas of Alaska to determine their growing needs. A concerted effort to bring educational resources to the northern and western regions of Alaska was under way. The CES has continued to grow to meet Alaskan's many agricultural needs. Annually, the Cooperative Extension Service serves approximately 80,000 Alaskans by providing relevant, research-based knowledge in understandable and usable formats.

Two other arms of this land-grant system are also active in Alaska. In 1966, the U.S. Congress established the National Sea Grant College Program which focuses on coastal and marine resources in various states. Whereas the land-grant funding is based through the USDA, sea-grant funding is based through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the Department of Commerce. Many sea-grant sponsored activities and research occur here in Seward. As a tribal college, land-grant status was conferred to Ilisagvik College in Barrow as part of the "Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994", which includes funding for higher education programs in agriculture and natural resources.

The UAF Cooperative Extension Service, like the CES of other land-grant institutions offers hundreds of free publications both online and at each district office. The Kenai Peninsula district office is located in Soldotna. Aside from publications, workshops and practical trainings are available in the areas of agriculture and horticulture; health, home and family development; natural resources and community development; and 4-H and youth development.

Beginning in January 2013, the UAF CES will be offering residents of Seward and Soldotna the Alaska Master Gardener course. The Master Gardener train-

ing includes 40 hours of intensive horticultural training. The class will be held on Tuesday evenings, from 6:00-9:00pm. The course will run most Tuesday evenings until May. Beyond the classroom training period, if you are interested in becoming certified as a "Master Gardener" you will also need to complete an additional 40 hours of hands-on volunteer gardening service within our community.

Applications will be accepted on a first come, first served basis through the University of Alaska Cooperative Extension Service Office, Kenai Peninsula District website. To request an application be sent directly to you, please call 907.262.5824 or email lclayton2@alaska.edu. Applications need to be submitted to the UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Kenai Peninsula District Office (43961 K-Beach Road, Soldotna, Alaska, 99669) by close of business on December 29th, 2012.

The entire course costs \$150 and payment can be paid the first day of class. A refund of \$40 will be given to each individual that gives back 40 hours of volunteer service as a Master Gardener.

### Reflections on 25 years of the Alaska Master Gardener Association

Judy Christianson writes:

*Boy am I getting older - 25 years in the AMGA.*

*We have come a long way since the beginning of AMGA. The paperwork and forming the group: we had business meetings for the most part at the beginning. Our CES agent was Wayne Vandre. Our classes were at UAA. Our meetings were at CES office.*

*Our first conference was held at the end of The Greenhouse & Growers conference. It was one day. Our meetings were sparsely attending until we had speakers come and then we outgrew the rooms. Our board did the business like it's done today and we enjoyed the benefits of the speakers and panels. We volunteered at the Pioneer Home and ABG planting flowers and maintenance and all the clinics and answering the phone at the CES office when someone had a gardening question.*

*You really got to know the different members by working with them and all the various garden techniques that gardeners use. Some of our members have become speakers at the other clubs and conferences, spreading the gardening education to the community. I have gotten to know a lot of my neighbors because the word got around that I was master gardener. They call today or stop by with many questions. We have made many friends through our AMGA group and our community.*

And from Mary Shier:

*Judy covered it quite well and the only thing I could add would be a foot note: that I learned quite a bit about gardening in AK which was extremely useful to me. Also having to help others solve their garden problems benefited me as well as the other gardeners.*

Be sure to attend the Celebration of the Alaska Masters Association, Anchorage, on December 15th at the CES, from 1-4 p.m. to learn more about your Anchorage Master Gardener Group!



## Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

There's nothing to write about in early December. Potatoes and other root veggies are taken care of and everyone is looking for a catalog that will say **SPRING**.

Dream on.

MG Don St. John still says his garden is white but he got a notice from Tomato Fest ([tomatofest.com](http://tomatofest.com)) of stuff on sale until January 13. Never mind that they have over 600 varieties of organic tomato seed but what matters is the Black Cherry seed are on sale for \$2. Don is the guy that introduced me to the black cherries and they are my cherry of choice. They have a very good balance of sweet to acid.

Both my neighbor Mark and I have noticed the lack of bunny and vole tracks across the driveways. Don't know what happened to the hares but who cares? That's the nice thing about a snowfall...one finds out what's going on in the 'hood.

Wrote to a friend in China about potato consumption and he agreed that the Chinese eat a LOT of potatoes. They just don't serve them to guests because they are so common. We shared recipes back and forth. Potatoes are cut into "fingers" and stir fried with other veggies for a main dish by his wife.

Kathy Wartinbee wrote, "I have one green bean almost ready for a casserole. A very tiny casserole. Getting holes in the leaves and have no idea what is making that happen. If anyone has an idea, pass it along. Stokes and Pinetree seed catalogs are here. Stokes had free shipping for seeds and I think I missed it. Hum ... it's always something."

It's time to renew various garden related memberships like the Botanical Garden, Fruit Growers, Garden Clubs, Rock Garden Society, etc. Not to mention AMGA! Which reminds me, I put that paper somewhere...

With our new CES head, Lydia Clayton, we're gearing up for MG classes in both Seward and Kenai. The Greenhouse and Nursery Conference will be in Fairbanks January 24/25. What's to look for is to fly one way, and take the train the other.

There is an Open House for folks interested in growing Peonies here in the Central Kenai Peninsula held at the CES office on December 15th from 10:00 am - Noon.



Margaret Simon said her bromeliad bloomed (again). That's not fair! Mine are multiplying root over stem and not blooming. I got a picture of her fig plant (it's not a bush or a tree) that gave her

Margaret Simon's blooming bromeliad - Photo by M. Simon.



Margaret Simon's productive Fig plant - photo by M. Simon

the 54 figs she had this summer. It's not big! That's not fair either! Mine is just trying to survive my abuse.

This from Barb Jewell: "Just savoring the seed catalogs that have arrived during this cold spell. The sunshine and seed catalogs make for a good afternoon on a chilly day." She's

more optimistic than I.

I'm taking the coward's way out this winter and going to AZ for 6 weeks mid January. See you all later.

## "Where Lilacs Still Bloom" by Jane Kirkpatrick

A Book Review by Nickel LaFleur

The book is historical fiction of a house and garden in lower Washington state in a place called The Bottoms. The farm was located in an area between the Columbia and Lewis Rivers made up of beautiful black soil from those rivers.

Our story starts out in 1889 with a hard working German American woman named Hulda Klager and her husband Frank and children moving to a farm near her parent's apple orchard. Hulda enjoyed working with her father in the orchard and shared with him her desire to achieve an easy-peeling apple so she could make her family the perfect apple pie. Over time, Hulda was able to graft the two apples that produced the crispier apple but it wasn't done without a lot of heartache. With Hulda's illness and the death of her daughter's husbands there was more than enough heartache for one family to live through.

Along with apples grafting, Hulda ventured into experimenting with daffodils. When the bulbs were in bloom, people from all over would come by to see the displays. But her real passion was lilacs. Hulda was determined to hybridize lilacs until she achieved a creamy white or red lilac with multiple petals and she spent her life trying.

After reading the book I searched to see if this lilac garden was still in existence today and it is. Hulda died in 1960 and soon afterwards, it was sold to the Woodland Federated Garden Club where one of its members that helped with the acquisition deeded the property to the newly formed non-profit Hulda Klager Lilac Society. The house wasn't included in the purchase so fund raising and matching dollars from the state of Washington were needed in order to acquire it. The best time to tour the Lilac Lady's house are the last couple weeks of April and first few weeks of May. There is a website <http://www.lilacgardens.com/index.html> for more information on the gardens.

Next time I find myself near Woodland, Washington, I'm going to make a stop at Hulda's garden a priority. Hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did. I got the book from our local library and have returned it for the next lucky person.



## Bird Chatter

- Joan Diamond (MG 08/09) shared worms with Kathy Baker and Father Jakoff who took them to Chignik Lake.
- From the MG Botany class, a Marilyn Barker (MG 08/09) joke, "How do you spell xylem with four letters?" Answer: W-o-o-d.
- Come to the 25th Anniversary Celebration for AMGAA on Sat, Dec 15th. There will be no Speed Pea Shelling, Potato Toss or Dance Until you Make Butter. These games are reserved for the Alaska State Fair in Palmer.
- Welcome new AMGAA member Becky Manley and please thank your daughter for your gift membership to our organization.
- The Anchorage CES front office is short-staffed right now. Sandra Danilition moved back to Canada last month and this leaves Nina Markossian to meet and greet you. At times, you'll also see Ashley, Extension's UAA student worker.
- 'Alaska's wicked winters', a phrase quite apropos these days, was coined by Sheila Toomey (MG 11/12) in an article she wrote on alpine plants for the Anchorage Daily News last summer.
- Those crazy Arkansas Master Gardeners have planned a cruise to Alaska. To date there are 800 registered. If you're contemplating going, Julie Riley and Rosemary Kimball (MG 84/85) would love to have you along to represent Alaska Sept 7 - 14, 2013.
- The Anchorage CES office will be closed for two weeks, from December 24 through January 6.

### Make Your Own Twinkie Cake! Recipe from Lynne Opstad

Prepare 1 yellow cake mix in a 9x13 pan; cool completely, then slice lengthwise.

Mix 1 cup milk and 7 TBS flour in a sauce pan; boil until thick.

Combine & mix well:

- 1 cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Crisco (or equivalent)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup margarine
- 2 tsp vanilla
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt

Add the milk mixture.

Spread the mixture over the bottom half of the cake, replace the top section and refrigerate overnight.



### A Memorial

Condolences to the family and friends of Theresa Geiger, who passed away November 17th. Her obituary said: "Theresa became a master gardener and her flowers and vegetables were highly coveted, especially her carrots." Theresa became an MG in 01/02 and had been an AMGAA

member through December 2011, and was also a member of the Wildflower Garden Club. Besides sewing, knitting, and weaving, Theresa was also active in the Weavers and Spinners Guild and the Alaskan Apple Users Group.

### Dear Santa...

Pat Anderson: Dear Santa weather - man: I would like to have 10 to 12 inches of snow for Christmas!!! Or before!! My plants & underground pipes would like it too!!!

Nickel LaFleur: My Christmas List:..... off the top of my head: A half dozen serrated steak knives to use for turf removal around trees and shrubs; Manual of Woody Landscape Plants: Their Identification, Ornamental Characteristics, Culture, Propagation and Uses / Edition 6 by Michael A. Dirr; pieces of clear fiberglass cut into 9x13 sizes for my mosaic making; continued good health to my husband, dogs, parents, friends and neighbors.

Jane Baldwin suggested Christmas gifts to buy for your friends: an AMGAA membership, or Coffee Mugs!

### Wanted: Seed Varieties Recommended by Master Gardeners for South Central Alaska

Do you have a special seed variety that works well for you? It would help to know what seeds produce the best plants here in Anchorage, and the best place to get them. Also if you want to share any particular successes with your plants & how you achieved this, for example, growing conditions or location, please do. This includes outdoor varieties of vegetables or flowers as well as greenhouse varieties. Please take note of what seeds did well for you & why you chose this variety and send your notes to: amga@alaska.net for compilation.

The results will be in the newsletter next month, just in time for purchasing seeds. We want to know what works for you!

Thanks!

*Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days; that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth; that can transport the sailor and the traveller, thousands of miles away, back to his own fire-side and his quiet home!*

~Charles Dickens, The Pickwick Papers, 1836

*Isn't it funny that at Christmas something in you gets so lonely for - I don't know what exactly, but it's something that you don't mind so much not having at other times.*

~Kate L. Boshier

*What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace.*

~Agnes M. Pahren

*Three phrases that sum up Christmas are: Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men, and Batteries not Included.*

~Author Unknown

**MG Focus: Connie Hebert**  
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Connie toiled along in the Master Gardener caravan to Forget-Me-Not Nursery in Indian to view the moose painted with tulips, and continued to Alyeska Resort for MG Robbie Frankevitch's tour of its spectacular grounds, the Frederic Remington "Mountain Man" and the full-size grizzly and the moose sculptures (actual bulls have mistaken their bronze brother - briefly - for a rival).

The Hebert's' next apartment, in South Anchorage, had picture windows overlooking a small meadow and a crabapple tree, and they watched neighborhood moose strip the tree of fruit over the course of a week: "First the mama and baby, and then a week later, the bull."

"I've loved the Monday garden tours," Connie says "I saw so much and learned so much. Apples, for instance. I'd never seen apples growing on trees before. The peonies are so pretty, too, just gorgeous, the dahlias are spectacular and the Fuchsias' colors are unbelievably vivid. And rhubarb. What a terrific landscape plant! When it's big enough, it makes quite the statement."

The Heberts had six small rhubarb plants stashed in the refrigerator to go with them back to Port Allen, to see how they like being parboiled in 100 percent humidity. But moisture may be relative. "I've done stuff in Anchorage in the rain that I never thought I'd do in the rain," says Connie. "In the South when it rains, you get out of it, but here, you just go on. That may be because of how hard it falls. Here, you get inches of rainfall in a year that there, we'd get in a month."

She prepped in advance for the mild Louisiana winter. Five flats of annuals for coloring were waiting for her at the house: false indigo, foxglove, snapdragons, columbines, petunias and pansies. "The pansies will be blooming really, really well by February, and I'm just hoping I can carry the petunias through to spring," she said, to the faint, distant rasp of Anchorage gardeners grinding their teeth.

Connie will be making "Far North Gardens" presentations for some time to the Tri-Parish Master Gardeners, and also applying community garden information she picked up in Anchorage to help set up similar gardens there. The Tri-Parish MGs are an active group; over the past three years they've landscaped 10 Habitat for Humanity homes, and they're working with the Council on Aging to establish a community garden for the elderly "to piddle in it if they want," Connie says. In addition, grants from industries including Dow are funding greenhouses around the parishes, at parks and at the Port Allen Cooperative Extension Office, and she's involved in that.

"I have really enjoyed working with all the Master Gardeners in Anchorage, and the hospitality they have shown me," she says. "No matter, though, where you're from, or who you're with, or what you're doing, you want to go home."

"But now, I am an Alaska Master Gardener too. I paid my dues."

## Garden Event Calendar

### Saturday, December 1

Alaska Botanical Garden, Herbs as Gifts, 2 to 4pm, Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Rd., Anchorage. Must register to attend at [www.alaskabg.org](http://www.alaskabg.org). Fees apply.

### Sunday, December 2

Cook Inlet Bonsai Study Group, Winterizing Outdoor Bonsai and Hands-on activities; 1pm-4pm, Dimond Greenhouses, 1050 Dimond Blvd, Anchorage. Contact Paul Marmora 278-5926

### Monday, December 3

Alaska Native Plant Society, Stoney Wright, Plant Materials Center Manager. Review new publication, "A Field Guide to Grasses of Alaska", 7 pm, Campbell Creek Science Center, 5600 Science Center Dr., Anchorage

### Tuesday, December 4

Cooperative Extension Service, Paul Hennon, Forest Pathologist, U.S. Forest Service, Changing Forests of Coastal Alaska, 7:00 - 8:15 p.m., UAF Cooperative Extension Service, 1675 C Street, Suite 100 - The story of yellow cedar decline and other effects of climate change on Alaska's Southeast forests, Kodiak and British Columbia. Paul Hennon, U.S. Forest Pathologist will be video-conferencing from Juneau. FREE but please call to register at 786-6300 or online at [www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/anchorage/](http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/anchorage/).

### Saturday, December 8

Alaska Botanical Garden, Worm Composting, Lacey Ott, 2-4pm, Alaska Botanical Garden 4601 Campbell Airstrip Rd., Anchorage. Must register to attend at [www.alaskabg.org](http://www.alaskabg.org). Fees apply.

### Tuesday, December 11

Central Peninsula Garden Club, Jamie Rodriguez, Rock Garden Construction and Alpine Plants, 7pm. Cook Inlet Aquaculture Bldg. on Kalifornsky Beach Road, Kenai

### Saturday, December 15

Alaska Botanical Garden, Ice Candles and Luminaries, 2 to 4 pm., Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Rd., Anchorage. Must register to attend at [www.alaskabg.org](http://www.alaskabg.org). Fees apply.

**NO AMGAA MEETING IN DECEMBER  
HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS!  
(and don't forget to pay your dues!)**

### Thursday - Friday, January 24-25, 2013

Alaska Greenhouse and Nursery Conference, Pike's Waterfront Resort, Fairbanks. This event targeting Alaska's horticulture industry includes a trade show and presentations on grafting vegetables, plant breeding, using pellets for heating, & the story of Juneau's Glacier Gardens' upside down trees. Registration information will be available at [www.uaf.edu/ces/](http://www.uaf.edu/ces/).



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:

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.net](mailto:munkster@hotmail.net)

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For information about membership or  
upcoming programs, contact:  
Cooperative Extension Office  
1675 C St, Suite 100.  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
Phone: 786-6300  
Fax: 786-6312



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*Have a Safe and Healthy  
Holiday  
From AMGAA*