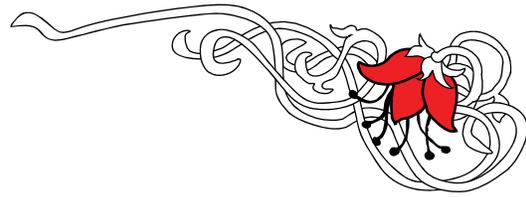


Anchorage



Volume 15, Issue 5

# ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ANCHORAGE NEWSLETTER May 2013



## A Nickel's Worth from President LaFleur

I love May. It's my favorite time of year! All the extra daylight rejuvenates my spirit. The 3rd Monday in May is designated as the day to celebrate Arbor Day in Alaska and I'm glad to announce that after a day of celebrating trees around the Municipality of Anchorage, our new Urban Forester, Maria D'Agostino will join us at our May 20th get together @ CES. Maria will introduce herself and give us an overview on her first few months in Anchorage and be available to answer a few questions Master Gardeners may have on the status of our urban forests. And then we'll get on to the meat & Potatoes of the evening... <sorry>... I am really looking forward to having Bill Campbell as our program presenter on May 20th, too.

Earth Day found me picking up garbage along the bike trail weaving in and out of all the bird cherry (prunus padus) trees that were out-competing the alder, willow and birch along the path. This tree is on our Invasive Species list for South Central Alaska and every year it's important to pull out all the suckers you can find to reduce its spread. Sign yourself and family members up for a weed pull to help reduce the infestation of bird cherry.

May is a good time to get out and take a look around at your landscape and make it your mission to plant a tree or two this year. When buying a tree, 'bigger' doesn't necessarily mean 'better' - and it definitely is more expensive. Being able to buy a tree bare root is often the best bargain. When purchasing bare root, you see the structure of the roots in proportion to the tree stem (trunk). This is an important clue. Look for a single straight trunk with a noticeable root flare at the bottom. Make sure this flare is above ground level when you are finished planting. Dig the planting hole in a saucer shape and use the existing soil to fill back in. It's easier to dig if you use a soaker hose for a few days before planting (and after) to encourage help with moisture control. Unless you live in a windy area, you shouldn't need to have the tree staked. However, having the tree protected from the moose is always a good idea.

The Festival of Flowers - the endowment for the flowers in downtown Anchorage - will be on Saturday, June 1st this year and I'm looking for a few Master Gardeners to donate their time by selling flower baskets and giving tours of the gardens around Town Square. A map of all the flowers will be distributed to the tour guides and it's really a lot of fun to be involved in this worthy effort. Get a hold of me if you have some time to donate. It's

held from 10 am until 5pm around the Town Square area.

I saved the best news for last. Thanks to Treasurer Cindy Walker and X-President Jane Baldwin the Bylaws for the Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage organization have been completed and presented to the membership at our April 15th meeting. What a huge accomplishment and I am so proud that we are now ready to start the paperwork to become a 501c3 group as recognized by the IRS. Can I hear an "AMEN & a THANK YOU, CINDY WALKER & JANE BALDWIN!!!"

Please contact a board member if you would like a copy.

I'll see you on Arbor Day - please wear your name tags!

## AMGA Treasurer's Report Balances 2/28/2013

Checking S-88	3859.17
Savings S-19	15147.60
CD-112.1 (ABG)	3357.35
CD-126 (Education)	3005.20
	<u>\$25369.57</u>

Revenue:	
Interest	18.57
Membership	160.00
	<u>\$178.57</u>

Expense:	
Directory	798.86
Hospitality	36.99
Newsletter-Feb	264.09
	<u>\$1099.94</u>

## Balances 3/31/2013

Checking S-88	2919.23
Savings S-19	15151.07
CD-112.1(ABG)	3363.14
CD-126 (Education)	3014.76
	<u>\$2448.20</u>



## AMGA Meeting Report April 2013: Wildflowers of Hatcher Pass with Jaime Rodriguez

By Pat Anderson

Jaime Rodriguez, owner of The Alpine Garden Nursery in Wasilla and current board member of the Alaska Rock Garden Society, was also the head gardener for the City of Palmer for many years. His nursery specializes in perennial alpine, rock garden and Alaska native plants. Jaime's latest endeavor is the development of a field guide that catalogues the wildflowers of Hatcher Pass. With all the trips needed to hike Hatcher Pass to photograph these flowers, he realizes that it will take at least three years to complete this project.

His descriptions and pictures of baneberry plants, anemones, native columbine, *Aruncus Sylvester*, fields of heather and friendly chic-weed made you want to touch and see them up close and personal. Dwarf willows are plentiful; some are from 50 to 200 years old and can grow from cuttings. Native delphinium and monkshood, fireweed, chocolate lilies, and gentian were shown. Our native *Geranium* is the mother plant of Johnson's Blue, which many MGs enjoy in their yards. Cow Parsley's 'hairs' can make you sun sensitive or give you allergies. We have an Alaskan *Rhododendron* now, because *Ledum Palustre*, or Labrador tea was re-categorized to *Rhododendron tomentosum*.

Some interesting things Jaime talked about: Alaska has more Terrestrial Orchids than anyplace in the country! Did you know that all Jacob Ladders' flowers smell like grape cool aid? Wonderful native potentillas that look like strawberry plants with yellow flowers live in the Pass, as well as many kinds of berries such as Lagoon, native raspberries, blueberries, elderberries and others. Fourteen kinds of saxifrage grow mostly in the wet areas, plus *Rhodiola/Sedum Rosea* that have anti-aging properties in the roots. Pink *Silene Acalis*, a beautiful early bloomer grows here, watermelon berry plants that have laxative properties can be found, and Lowbush Cranberries which make great sauce. Native veronica *Wormskjoldii* with its blueness is "stunning" in the garden.

Jaime pointed out that the few plants he gets, he has permission to obtain; he relishes planting them and hopefully raising them at his nursery to share with others. Almost all of his plants are seed grown, cuttings or divisions. High mountain blueberries grow so slow, he puts the berries in a blender, blends for awhile then lets it sit a while. The seeds fall to the bottom, then he plants them.

Hatcher Pass opens the 4th of July; the lower part is available for gold panning in the Little Susitna River. Trails can be found in maps on-line. His favorite place is the April Bowl Trail.

Because of Jaime's incredible enthusiasm and passion for the amazing Wildflowers of Hatcher Pass, chances are many MGs will be found this summer exploring the many trails. Many thanks to Jaime for showing us what treasures Hatcher Pass contains.

The meeting ended with the drawing of wonderful door-prizes, and outstanding refreshments. Thanks to all who made this meeting so enjoyable!

## AMGA May 20th Meeting: The Potato Man Speaks! Nickel LaFleur

Don't miss May 20th presentation by "Potato Production Volunteer Consultant" Bill Campbell at the Cooperative Extension Building. Thanks to AMGA Board member Greg Kalal, we are fortunate to be able to host Bill Campbell for an update on what is happening in the world of potatoes. We've entitled the program "The Potato Man Speaks" and he'll be doing just that at 7pm on May 20th. As we know from our wonderful directory and top notch website calendar Bill was to be our speaker on April 15th but due to a trip to Cairo, Egypt, to consult with the Union of Producers and Exporters of Horticultural Crops (UPEHC), he and Jaime Rodriguez switched places. Everyone enjoyed the eye candy and depth of knowledge Jaime brought us on the wildflowers of Hatcher Pass.

Bill's mission the first couple weeks of April was to inspect the potato fields and speak to the farmers and see how his knowledge & experience could be used to improve the quality and productivity of this important crop in Egypt. I don't think there is anyone anywhere in the world that is better suited to find the right seed potato to feed the people. We as Alaskans are proud to call him 'our potato head'.



When not out of the country on a camel, Bill can be found at the Plant Materials Center (PMC) in Palmer as an Agronomist II. The online dictionary told me an agronomist was "an expert in soil management and field-crop production; a person with special knowledge or ability who performs skillfully." I'd say that fits Bill to a T.

Arbor Day, May 20th will be our last indoor meeting

before we start having tours of local gardens. Bring along your questions for Bill and I promise he will enrich your potato-world knowledge, too.

## Alpine Plants By Carmel Tysver

Members of the Alaska Rock Garden Society talk about alpine plants all the time and many times a non-rock gardener will ask "what is an alpine plant"? Since ARGS is sponsoring an internationally known speaker on alpine plants this June I will define an alpine versus a non-alpine plant.



The usual definition is a plant that grows above the tree line in mountainous areas of the world. For most people that is trip of several hours. Here in Anchorage we differ in that we can be in an Alpine area in 30 minutes from downtown. The area most of us enjoy visiting is Hatcher Pass. There are easy hikes and lots of blooms all summer. Alaska has some great areas to view our alpine plants and one of my favorite is Eagle Summit, accessible

from the Steece Highway. The members of ARGS are planning a trip for viewing and possible seed collecting this summer at Thompson Pass, north of Valdez.

Alpine plants are not of one taxon but like all perennials include cushion plants, grasses, and even small trees. The growing conditions for these plants are a concern when growing the plants in our gardens. The mountainous areas where they are from have well-drained gravel areas. The moisture below the surface may be a few inches or more in much deeper soils. For the areas where the moisture is deeper, the roots of the plants will seek the moisture; I have traced roots down several feet before giving up. That is a major reason that digging plants in wild areas is not a good idea and why most of the members of ARGS start seeds.

Growing alpine plants can be difficult but if the soil is prepared for the specific plant, they are a great joy to grow and the blossoms are fantastic. I grow many kinds of alpines in hypertufa troughs that I built and have placed in specific areas of my garden. My favorite planting recipe is 1/3 local soil (reedy peat), 1/3 sharp sand and 1/3 gravel. Builder's sand is readily available and for gravel it depends upon what is available and often ends up being pea gravel. With that mix, adding more gravel or soil depends upon the needs of the specific plant. Then the question is "How do you know what the plant needs?" There are books that tell us where the plants are located and if viewed here in the wild, look at the soil present at the growing site.

Originally, all of my alpines were grown in troughs and when I went overboard, decided a regular rock garden was needed. My husband and I collected gravel, rocks, broken concrete and whatever we could scrounge as the base, then started building on top of that material. Since the soil mixture used in the troughs worked so well, I mixed up the same for the rock gardens, of which there are now two. A few years ago I wanted

more troughs; since the trough garden area was full, there is now a second trough garden also.

Growing alpines has become a passion for me. The colors of the flowers are spectacular; the tight little bun-like growth and huge fantastic flowers make me want more. I can guarantee that once you are hooked you can never have enough.

There is also another part of the fun in growing the alpines: collecting! There are plants from Alaska, the Rockies, Asian areas such as Tibet, Nepal and China. Then there are the plants from Russia - where do I stop? Beside the buns there are miniature trees, bulbs, and every type of plant you can think of included in the Alpine arena.

As someone told me who came to the garden, "I have never seen so many rocks!" Besides the rocks, there is real tufa of many sizes and shapes. Thankfully I have a husband who spoils my wants and supplies, as he calls it 'e-manual' labor. The garden is usually on several tours each year and I enjoy sharing.

If you stop by in the summer I will most often be in the garden and not answering the phone. I quit taking the telephone to the garden after watering some very expensive phones.

**Alaska Rock Garden Society Presents:  
Chris Chadwell, Freelance Lecturer,  
Himalayan Consultant  
and owner of Chadwell Seeds**

2013 Alaska Schedule:

### Kenai:

June 4th at 7 p.m. - "Program Paradise on Earth: the beautiful Flowers of Kashmir" - Central Peninsula Garden Club at the Cook Inlet Aquaculture Bldg., on Kalifornsky Beach Road between Soldotna and Kenai. Free and open to the public, there will be refreshments.

Contact: Marion Nelson, 907-283-4632 or mmkn@ptiaalaska.net

### Homer:

Chris will be repeating the program on Friday, June 7th at in Homer at 7 pm at the Islands and Oceans building.

Contact: Teena Garay, garay@acsalaska.net

### Palmer:

Saturday, June 15th at 2pm at St. John's Lutheran Church. Chris will be presenting "Paradise on Earth: the beautiful flowers of Kashmir" Free and open to the public

### Anchorage:

Sunday, June 16th at 2 pm at the Cooperative Extension Service Office; Program: "Plant Hunting in Western Tibet" Free and open to the public.

## Bolting in Alaska: The Benefits of Cold Weather Gardening

By Marylynn L. Kostick

After my first season of gardening in Alaska (2009), I compared my garden notes to previous years spent in Washington and found that my broccoli and other cole crops had a much longer season in AK. (April to November in WA compared to May to October here in AK). Now this may not surprise many of you veteran AK gardeners, but many consider western WA's climate as a fairly mild climate and cole crops do very well. Gardening in WA meant that temperatures were moderate and often predictable and I wasn't too sure of the differences to expect in Alaska.

As many of you know, bolting [Wikipedia: *when agricultural and horticultural crops prematurely produce a flowering stem/s before the crop is harvested, in a natural attempt to produce seeds and hence reproduce*] of crops is influenced by increased temperatures as well as longer periods of daylight. The process of bolting can affect the taste and yield of crops, often turning them bitter. Bolting can be reduced by delaying transplanting of crops; however some may notice a reduction in their crop yield.

The removal of the flowers can slow the rate at which seeds are produced. However, the interplay between the temperatures and our unique exposure to daylight left me wondering: which has more influence on bolting - temperature or time exposure to daylight? After further research I learned a few things I was not aware of nor had I experienced in my growing days in WA (where our growing season generally maintains a temperature range of 65-75F, optimal for broccoli). When similar plants in the same field were either covered or not to allow fluctuations in light exposure, the plants given longer periods of light bolted as usual, whereas the others lagged or did not produce bolt. In another study, when plants were grown in a controlled area with short days and warm temperatures, plants did not bolt.



Based on these observations my suspicion was that the length of daylight exposure was most important in the bolting process. However, a third observation described high temperatures influencing an early bolting process. After reading through the article and considering my observations: Is a moderately cool temperature the most influential factor in staving off the bolting process? Perhaps, but remember, even though broccoli and many other cole crops are tolerant of frosts, prolonged exposure to cold temperatures following a period of good growth can also increase the occurrence of bolting in broccoli. Either way, we will continue to observe and adjust and our crops will continue to be enjoyed. Where there is a will, there is a way to garden in Alaska.

Happy Spring, All.

## APPS for Gardeners

By Janice Berry



Have you had a chance to explore the exploding world of mobile garden apps? Before the garden season gets into full swing, I decided to explore a few. My research was surprising. There are over 100 apps about gardening, most of which are for vegetable gardening. Typically they feature photos or drawings of the most common plants, offer tips and advice,

have a place to keep track of your progress, or to journal. Many also offer the ability to add photos of your plants and to email and share information with experts or on Facebook, Twitter, etc. Some apps need the internet to utilize them fully, and others don't. Many of the free apps are designed by seed and plant retailers. Take note, since smart phones and tablets are still in their infancy (or perhaps toddlerhood by now), user reviews indicate there are still lots of bugs to fix.

Two apps that I downloaded were created by popular gardening magazines. Mother Earth Magazine's "Gardening Guide" app is purely informational, as opposed to being a "tool." It has three sections: Crops, Techniques and Resources. The app lists 18 common vegetables, then for each vegetable it lists Types to Try, Planting tips, Harvesting and Storage, Saving Seed, Pests and Diseases, Growing Tips, and In the Kitchen. The vegetables are beautifully illustrated with drawings. The descriptions are thorough and easy to understand. Mother Earth magazine's website has tons more information and other apps that you can download for a fee. There's one for gardening insects and one called "Vegetable Garden Planner" that lets you design your garden, what to plant where, and when and where to rotate your crops. This program is available for Apple devices, Android, and the desktop PC.

The other app I looked at is from Organic Gardening magazine, called "Plant Planner." Although more like a "tool," it has a ways to go before being a valuable resource. You can set up various gardens, name them, and then add vegetables, herbs, or flowers (in list form). All selections are for the most common plants. For instance, for lettuce, you get a picture of the basic head lettuce - nothing more. There's a weather section, where you select your location. Yes, Alaska is included, however for Anchorage the only selection is for Anchorage International Airport, and as Master Gardeners know, we have several micro-climates that vary pretty widely. For each plant that you add to your garden, there's a description, the type of info that you would find on the back of its seed packet, i.e., seed spacing and depth, days to harvest, etc. And you can add the date that you actually plant your seed.

So, can any of these apps help the Alaska gardener improve their yields, save time, or money for that matter? It doesn't appear so at first glance, as any of the information these apps provide can be found in books or through a search engine on the web. But the apps I reviewed here were FREE, and might be useful for beginners. There are probably several better ones out there for a small price - something to look into this fall perhaps! If you have the time, it's worth exploring.



## Central Peninsula Master Gardener News

By Rosemary Kimball

April 12, down here in Sterling brought  $-3^{\circ}$  in the morning and needless to say our gardens are still covered with a foot of snow. The exception is Cheryl Wickstrom who went out and shoveled hers off! According to [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) our highs are still at least 10°s below average for this time of year. Doesn't everyone who's still looking at most of last winter's snow know that? Friends down here are slow to start plants because of the daunting snow and lack of spring.

Kathy Wartinbee wrote, "Starting to clean out the greenhouse in hope spring will really be coming. The seagulls aren't here yet and I haven't heard the geese or the cranes either. Spring seems to be waiting and a long time coming."

We have a first-bird sighting (or hearing) and compare notes all around. I've had a couple varied thrushes that didn't stick around plus a robin briefly and a flock of gulls.

Barb Jewell added, "After a day like yesterday (sunny and in the low 40s) I feel there's hope for gardening this year, albeit later planting. The little green "spikes" under lights make spring more encouraging. Hey, there was melting of snow! The snow pack is getting thinner in the front yard - can't say the same for the backyard (north side).

Don, our tomato guy: "I had a poor tomato season last year with all the cold weather. This year I planted what seeds I had left from last few years. I used 2" soil blocks this year. I like the NO plastic idea. Out of 44 soil blocks of tomatoes 43 germinated. They looked a little wimpy this week so I sprayed them with Norwegian Kelp. They perked right up and are ready to transplant. I hope it warms up soon so I can afford to heat the greenhouse. Like most of you my house is being overrun with plant starts."

From the premiere Master Gardener, Margaret Simon: "It's Earth Day! How happy I would be if I could walk in the dirt instead of looking at 2 feet of snow! The tomatoes that are forming on my plants are a hopeful sign of what will come eventually--in Mother Nature's time. 40 figs on my fig tree is also encouraging; now if I can remember to keep it watered so they don't fall off. I'm sore from chipping ice in front of the greenhouse. I want in! That too, will eventually happen. Leeks, fennel, celery, cole crops, cukes, and various flower starts are all happy when they see me coming with the watering can! Tell me summer will happen...."

And I checked Mark's figs after reading that and they've grown to about the size of quarters. My plant is putting out a couple new leaves but not a hint of a fig.

Now is the time to look at your stuff in the freezer. Can the salmon and make juice or jam from the berries and rhubarb. Or make a fruit liqueur. I use vodka rather than Ever Clear as I want the after dinner conversation

to be coherent.

### Fruit Liqueur

-2 pounds of whatever fruit needs using up. (For variety add orange peel, lemon peel, cinnamon sticks or mixed fruit. Fruits release their juice faster if they have been frozen.)

-1 1.75 liter bottle of inexpensive vodka.

Let it marinate for a month, then strain and bottle. Of course you may want to do quality control during that time.

I actually saw a strip of green grass today, Earth Day, and stopped to take a look at it...artificial turf...but it still looked good, especially with no weeds to pull.

## Milk Thistle can Easily Escape

By Julie Riley

St. Mary's milk thistle, *Silybum marianum*, is big, bold annual thistle. It is often grown as an ornamental because of the striking white pattern of its leaves. All parts of the plant are considered edible. Milk thistle has long been used medicinally and currently, one of the active ingredients found in its seeds, silymarin, is being investigated as a treatment for cancer. However, during her presentation at the Alaska Greenhouse & Nursery Conference in January, Dr. Pat Holloway warned against growing St. Mary's milk thistle because of its invasiveness. Once the purple flowers go to seed, they float on the wind and end up everywhere.

This picture was taken at the Georgeson Botanical Garden in Fairbanks:





## Bird Chatter

-- The last vestiges of 'Master Gardener's Helping Hands' recently melted away, but MG continue to help others learn to garden. The multicolored ice sculpture was created by Nickel LaFleur for the 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage in Dec.

-- MG Amy Olmstead flew to Kenai/Soldotna to share her drip irrigation expertise as speaker for the Central Peninsula Gardening Club in April.

-- Julie Riley will be operating on reduced hours during the last part of May and into June. CES faculty must take time off-contract if they do not obtain funds to pay five weeks of their salary.

-- Longing for something new and unusual this season?



'Bartzella' on display in MG Becky Fox-Krogstad's peony spiral in her West Anchorage garden.

Alaska Mill Feed & Garden Center will be carrying 10 different Itoh peonies, including 'Lollipop' (bronze flecked with bright pink) and 'Bartzella' (yellow with salmon at the base). Dr. Toichi Itoh created the wild flower colors and huge blossoms of these intersectional hybrids by cross breeding herbaceous with tree peonies.

### A Note from a Homer Gardener

Please start educating people on their responsibility to grow heirlooms. We in Alaska face all kinds of hardships having to do with weather and shipping, and it is the loss of our regionally acclimated heirlooms that has us in this slump.

My family and I grow grapes in Homer. We have 2 types of rhubarb that has been genetically isolated for over 150 years; we've been doing this for a long time. We call our rhubarb "Babushka's gift", because it was an engagement gift from a Russian-Polish clergy man (my 3x great-grandfather) to my 3x great grandmother who was a full blooded Aleut woman. My family goes all the way to bed-rock here in the state.

I have 2 varieties of grape growing outside: Valiant, which is hardy to -40, and Vitis Riparia which is hardy to -70. We also have grapes in a High Tunnel and in a Low Tunnel. Our family farm is L.O.V.E. (Local Organic Vegetables and Edibles) and our seed bank name is Legacy Heirlooms.

Feel free to call (907)399-0061  
Joshua Jackinsky, Homer

## Humbly Seeking Aloe by Annie Nevaldine

"Would you find me an aloe plant to soothe my radiation burns?" asked a friend with cancer. After six months of chemotherapy subsequently followed by surgery, she is now in the midst of radiation treatments. She was hoping aloe's slimy salve would soothe the burning skin resulting from the radiation. I, of course, readily agreed to get her a plant. I could shop a few greenhouses the next day and deliver a plant that weekend.

The next morning I had the brainstorm to put a request for a piece of an aloe plant on the Master Gardener google group listserv. Literally within minutes of posting the request, my phone began to ring and replies streamed into my email box. "I adopted a big aloe plant from another MG last year and would be happy to pass it on to your friend." "I have a 'large' plant with many plantlets. These originally came from southern Texas many years ago and were grown by a lady who developed some of the first aloe products." "I have an aloe plant that I received from a dearly beloved neighbor. The neighbor that gave it to me would be honored it was going to help someone." "I have one, and if you like I could drop it by your place tonight." "I have a lot of aloe vera plants. They aren't real big but many are having babies. How many would your friend like?" "I really need to cut my aloe, please, please come and get it! Call me anytime. The plant is in the kitchen, if I'm not there cut the big plant off at the bottom."

It was absolutely no surprise to me that so many (and more) responded with offers of plants or pups. "After all," one master gardener wrote, "this is MG ;)." What I hadn't anticipated, though, were wishes extended even when the gardener didn't have a plant to offer. "Sorry, Annie, I don't grow aloe. But I really wish your friend well." "Hope your friend finds the relief she needs. Blessings to her and you." "Thoughtful quest. Sorry I don't have one." "All the best to your friend." "I wish I had one to give but mine went about 30 years ago." "Wishing your friend a successful recovery."

Yes, indeed, master gardeners are very caring. My friend--who now has a HUGE aloe plant thanks to a member--and I both thank you all. Master gardeners don't only nurture plants; we also nurture people. I am humbled by the generosity, kindness, sensitivity, and thoughtfulness demonstrated.

At about the same time I posted this request, there was an exchange of emails on the google group listserv about a confusing question on the MG survey. Some folks expressed regret that several activities they value about the organization couldn't all be rated as equally high, but had to be rank ordered.

Perhaps the response to my request that sums it all up the best reads, "MGs are such caring people. Put that in THE SURVEY."

## Warm up your Garden with Remay By Gina Docherty

Reemay or Floating Row cover has many merits for use as a season extender or insect barrier. It has different names: Grow Guard, Reemay (or Remay), Frost Blanket, Summer Insect Barrier, Crop Cover, etc., but all forms provide additional heat as well as protection from wind, hail and insects.

This horticultural fabric is made of spun-bonded polyester and comes in different thicknesses or weights. The heavier fabric will need hoops or supports to hold it over crops, while the lighter weight fabric can rest over the top of plants, leaving enough slack for plant growth. The edges must be secured by using heavy weights on the edges, such as soil, rocks, bricks or earth staples to prevent insects from sneaking in underneath.

Remay allows sunlight, air and water to penetrate through. The lighter weight fabric is used mainly for insect barriers, but any plant that requires insect pollination must either be parthenogenic or hand pollinated (i.e., pumpkins or squash) or have fabric removed by the end of the offending insect season. In Alaska, our biggest insect problem with crucifers is Root Maggots. Floating row covers, such as Reemay, can prevent or drastically reduce infestation by root maggot populations when placed over transplants or seedlings. Row covers are not effective if the area planted is already infested with root maggot populations. For more information and life stages of Root Maggots, see:

<http://www.uaf.edu/files/ces/publications-db/catalog/anr/PMC-00330.pdf>

The lighter weight row cover, used primarily as an insect barrier, is said to allow up to 85% UV rays to penetrate; heavier fabric allows less light in, but provides more warmth, up to 8 degrees of frost protection.

Row cover can last for several years, and can even be washed in the washing machine, no fabric softeners however. Tears can be sewn up or duct taped (an Alaskan favorite). Store it dry over winter. It can also be used to keep unheated greenhouse plants warmer at night too.

Remay or row cover is available on line from many different companies, and also found locally in prepackaged products; a heavier fabric in bulk is available from Suttons.

The pros are numerous, and the only 'cons' are that you can't see your beautiful plants when they are all covered up, or heaven forbid, the temperature might get too warm for cool weather plants. Plants enjoy the extra heat and wind protection in our cool summers. Row covers can extend your growing season by adding warmth in the spring and again in the fall. It is a win-win solution to many common garden problems we find here in Alaska. Here are a few places on line to read more about or purchase Reemay or Floating Row cover:

Territorialseed.com  
HighMowingSeeds.com  
wikipedia.org  
Johnnyseeds.com  
OrganicGardening.com  
Charleysgreenhouse.com  
Burpee.com

Here's to warmer gardens this year!

## Garden Event Calendar

### Thursday, May 2nd

Anchorage Garden Club: Container Gardening with Edibles presented by Verna Pratt - 7 pm, Pioneer Schoolhouse 437 E 3rd Avenue, Anchorage

### Saturday, May 4th

Rain Gardens: The Municipality of Anchorage has a Rain Garden program that gives home owners money to create a rain garden. Classes FREE; but space limited; call 276-6016 to register. 10:00 am, Alaska Mill & Feed, 1501 E 1st Ave., Anchorage

### Monday, May 6th

Alaska Native Plant Society: Kodiak Flora Summary of 2013 Field Trip presented by Beth Baker - 7 pm, Campbell Creek Science Center

### Wednesday, May 8th

Food Preservation Class - Drying Fruits and Veggies, Sponsored by CES - \$25.00 - 5:30-9:30 pm at Viking Hall, 6141 Briarwood St. Anchorage

### Saturday, May 11

ABG Rock Garden Clean up (Thaw permitting) 2:00pm - 4:00pm

### Saturday, May 18

Alaska Rock Garden Society Anchorage Plant Sale, at Sally K's, 9am - 4pm, 7435 Old Harbor Ave,

### Saturday, May 18th

Society of American Foresters-Cook Inlet Chapter Arbor Day tree seedling sale - 9:00 am in the REI parking lot

### Monday, May 20th

AMGA Meeting: The Potato Man Speaks! Bill Campbell, Agronomist from the Plant Materials Center in Palmer - 7 pm, CES 1675 C Street

### May 21st - June 1st

Organic Food Gardening at ABG - \$150 per person (\$125 ABG Members) Space limited, reserve with Julie Riley. Two Tuesday & Thursday evenings: 6 - 9 pm, and two Saturdays: 11 am - 3 pm

### Wednesday, May 22

Wild Edibles: Honoring Rachel Carson, Plant walk and feast, Sponsored by Alaska Community Action on Toxics - \$50 fundraiser. To register, call 222-7714 - 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm at the Kincaid Park Shelter

### Friday May 24th - 27th

Alaska Plants as Food and Medicine Symposium - Contact: Meda Dewitt-Schleifman (907) 729-3639, [www.apfm2013.org](http://www.apfm2013.org) \$450, with deep discounts to elders and youth. Hotel Alyeska in Girdwood, Alaska

### Saturday May 25th

Alaska Rock Garden Society Valley Plant Sale: 9am - 4pm at Snowfire Gardens, 3379 Inlet Vista Circle, Wasilla

### Saturday, June 1st

Wildflower Garden Club Plant Sale: 9am-4pm, 7435 Old Harbor Ave.

### Saturday, June 4th, 7th, 15th, 16th

ARGS speaker: Chris Chadwell will be speaking in various areas around SouthCentral Alaska - see Carmel Tysver's article on pg. 3 for more info

**For a more complete calendar, visit our web page:  
[alaskamastergardeners.org](http://alaskamastergardeners.org)**



The Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage 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)

AMGA Web Site: [www.alaskamastergardeners.org](http://www.alaskamastergardeners.org)

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

Jane Baldwin at:

[jbaldwin@alaska.net](mailto:jbaldwin@alaska.net)

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



## Inside this issue....

A Nickel's Worth  
AMGA April Meeting Report: Jaime Rodriguez  
AMGA May Meeting: The Potato Man Speaks  
Alpine Plants  
Bolting in Alaska: The Benefits of  
Cold Weather Gardening  
APPs for Gardeners  
Central Peninsula MG News  
Milk Thistle Can Easily Escape  
Bird Chatter  
A Note from a Homer Gardener  
Humbly Seeking Aloe  
Warm up your Garden with Remay  
Gardening Event Calendar



AMGA is proud to present  
the new and improved,  
upgraded website! Please visit us  
and have a look around at:

[alaskamastergardeners.org](http://alaskamastergardeners.org)

Thanks to all the AMGA board of directors,  
committee members and  
Spoonfrog Graphics for making it happen.

---

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

Non Profit Organization  
US Postage Paid  
Permit #107  
Anchorage, Alaska