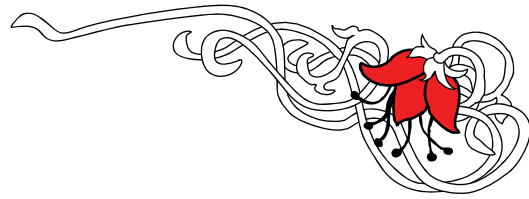


Anchorage



Volume 15, Issue 11

# ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ANCHORAGE NEWSLETTER November 2013



## A Nickel's Worth from President LaFleur

I have enjoyed the past month's fall weather and glad to report that the snowfall in late September didn't stick around. For the past month, South Central Alaska has been enjoying all the colors the trees and shrubs are providing. The drive we took to the Valley was just breathtaking. I can't remember the last time the cotoneasters looked more colorful. The fiery red from the Amur maples and the oranges of the mountain ash are truly eye-candy and a pleasure to see on a daily basis.

November is a month to count our blessings of which we have many. I'd like to send warm wishes out to our members from the AMGA Board as we ask you to volunteer to become more involved in your organization. Part of our mission as an Alaska Master Gardener is to share our knowledge of gardening and there are so many ways to accomplish this. An important volunteer job is stepping up and taking over one of the many duties there are to make the AMGA organization more fun for everyone. Ask yourself what YOU can do to volunteer and get with a current Board member to express your level of interest. We need each other to be a successful organization. Please help!

Thanks to all the Master Gardeners who have renewed their membership for 2014 by the early incentive due date of October 31st. Winners will be drawn the week of November 4th and notified shortly thereafter. I promise to get their prize to them in short order. I'll let you know who our winners are in next month's article.

I've been sorting out all the seeds I've collected through garden-take-down this fall and doing my best to get them dried and put away to bring to our February 17th MG program as we share stories from our 2013 planting season. So, consider this your 'heads up' to keep the February 17th date in mind to share seeds and stories. My 'toughest' plant this year is the hollyhocks. They handled the first snow without any problem and now at the end of October, they still retain green turgid leaves even if they aren't putting out any flowers. It's hard for me to cut down any live plant the end of October - especially annuals. If I wait much longer, they will then be 'winter-interest' for the garden. <big smile>

I'm anxious to get my gardening chores finished for the season and start playing around with some mosaics. I enjoy doing something creative that I could give away as gifts to my friends and family. Is there any interest

in the membership to learn more about crafts like this? We are brain-storming ideas for programs to present and want to where the interests of the membership lie. Feel free to email me at Tagalak@alaska.net or get in touch with any of the Board members to share your ideas, please.

Speaking of programs, Mike Monterusso with Alaska Botanical Gardens will be speaking to us about Green Roofs for our November program. This is a wonderful subject for people that don't have the land to garden on but still have the passion to play in the dirt.

Let me be the first to wish you Happy Thanksgiving from the Board of the Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage and ask you to please do your part to share your love of gardening by volunteering! I'll look forward to seeing you out there!

## AMGA Treasurer's Report

### Balances 8/31/2013:

Checking S-88	1329.94
Savings S-1	12661.52
CD-112.1 (ABG)	3369.01
CD- 126 (Education)	3024.45
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	\$20384.92

### Revenue:

Donation	20.00
Interest	17.33
Membership	660.18
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	\$697.51

### Expense:

Newsletter	299.72
Operation	1.95
Website	130.00
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	\$431.67

### Balances 8/31/2013

Checking S-88	1578.45
Savings S-1	12663.08
CD-112.1 (ABG)	3374.95
CD- 126 (Education)	3034.28
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	\$20650.76



## AMGA October Meeting Report: "Growing and Preparing Rhubarb"

By Pat Anderson

About 60 Master Gardeners listened to, saw great info and tasted rhubarb chili and rhubarb/lemonade presented by Dave Ianson and Jeff Smeenk, both from The Soil and Water Conservation District, Palmer, and Leslie Shallcross from the UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Anchorage.

"Rhubarb is the plant name for the many species of *Rheum* growing in the wild in the mountains of West and Northwest provinces of China and Tibet and in cultivation in Europe and the United States. Rhubarb is a vegetable. (AM Heritage Dictionary) Fruit is the ripened ovary or ovaries of a seed bearing plant containing seeds. A vegetable is a plant cultivated for an edible part, root of beet, leaf of spinach, flower of broccoli."

This information is from the powerpoint presentation made by Dave Ianson. He told us some of the history of rhubarb: it started in China and Tibet. The East India Company helped spread it worldwide, as did Marco Polo on the Silk Road and the Russians. There are all kinds of rhubarb for many different uses-it's been around for 5,000 years. The root was used at first as medicinal - purgatives in China, animal bites, plague remedies etc. It was considered valuable, and when Marco Polo died, he had a bag of rhubarb root he left in his will! There was almost a war that started over the ownership and rights of rhubarb, with Catherine the Great. In 1778 pies started in Europe, and in America in 1790. Now the British are using rhubarb as a cancer-fighting ingredient. In rhubarb, the polyphenols are increased by cooking. There are many varieties of rhubarb.

When growing rhubarb Dave says to keep their feet out of water and use good organic soil. He has found that not many insects like rhubarb - fungus gnats are sometimes bothersome, but can be dealt with easily. Slugs are not bad either. He said he uses benign neglect in Alaska, but nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium are all good. Rhubarb loves our climate and long days. Once the frost hits rhubarb, don't harvest. If it loses its rigidity, it is dehydrated and not good to use. Divide rhubarb every four or five years to keep it from crown rot. Alaska Botanical Garden is setting space aside for a rhubarb patch, and Dave will be in charge of it. He brought two books on rhubarb that he recommends: "Rhubarb, The Wonder Drug" by Clifford M. Foust, and "Every Which Way With Rhubarb" by Amanda Brannon. There was a quote at the beginning of one of the books: "Rhubarb is the Rodney Dangerfield of the vegetables.....it gets no respect", Anonymous.

Then came the special mid-meeting treat. Jeff Smeenk served rhubarb chili to everyone. The chili was a winner at the Alaska State Fair, and now a restaurant is selling it in Palmer. Prior to the meeting, Jeff took and passed a food-handling test and got his license for same, so he could serve us officially. Other recipes came from the fair, from a Rhubarb Rumble that was organized, and many good recipes developed from the fun competition. Leslie made some delicious rhubarb-lemonade which went well with the chili.

Jeff and Dave are trying to find other ways to use rhubarb in Alaska. Sell it by the pound, in pies, juice, chili, and who knows what will come next. Jeff will be conducting a trial to see how rhubarb will work across the state. He wants to get the top ten, then send them

around the state to see how and where they grow best. When asked for the top ten rhubarbs, he doesn't know yet. These are good so far: German Wine, Penn. St. 3, and MacDonald. Canada Red is off his wish list. He will tell us more a year from now.

Facts from our experts: When you plant rhubarb use lots of organic matter and nutrition, and water every 3 days until established, then water once a week. Cut off all seed heads. It can grow 5 feet across the first year, and will develop a dead zone in the center of the crown. To divide, chop it apart. If you plant from seeds, you don't really know what you will get, there will be diversity. Green rhubarb is more productive than red, but customers eat with their eyes and they like red. You can put rhubarb in the compost: 'dilution is the solution to pollution'; oxalic acid will be chewed up by compost. A rhubarb piece about the size of your thumb is good to plant, be sure and get a bud though. Dave dug a pit around the crown, and put a weed mat around and puts straw on top, about a three foot wide geo tech cloth, with a hole in the black fabric for the rhubarb, and that will hold the weeds back. The biggest rhubarb stalk weighed five pounds 13 ounces!

Leslie gave us some nutritional value from rhubarb - good source of vitamin C, one cup of chopped rhubarb will give you 10 - 15% of needed vitamin C per day. There are anti-oxidant pigments, anti-cancer, good fiber and good potassium in rhubarb. She made her rhubarb/lemonade drink by chopping rhubarb into 1" pieces, covered with water, and cooking gently for 10 minutes; you can see the pigment extract. Keep it overnight in water, then strain it out. Don't push pulp through the strainer. Use about 1/2 juice and 1/2 lemonade. You can also make it with rose petals: one cup rose petals to one cup rhubarb to 2 cups lemonade.

Leslie encouraged us all to look up rhubarb on the Cooperative Extension Service, Anchorage website. Go to publications, and type in rhubarb in the search title. There is fabulous information about growing rhubarb, rhubarb recipes, and fruit leather available right online.

Master Gardeners enjoyed learning about rhubarb. Unlike Rodney Dangerfield, we all gained new and exciting respect for rhubarb. Going to the website for rhubarb lovers is certainly a "must-do".



Marion Owen, left, and Jill Shepherd, right, with rhubarb plants and leaves - Kodiak 2011.

Photos from Jill Shepherd

## Warning Against Eating Frost-Damaged Rhubarb

By Jill Shepherd

In April 2007, a Canton, Ill. woman fell ill after eating cake made with the stalks of a rhubarb plant hit by a hard spring frost. The hospital doctor diagnosed her sickness as rhubarb poisoning, according to *The Daily Ledger* (Illinois).

"Rhubarb should not be harvested when the leaves are wilted and limp after a hard freeze," warned Elizabeth Wahle, Extension horticulture specialist in a University of Illinois news release in May 2007. "Not only do the leafstalks acquire a poor flavor and texture, but the leaves and eventually the stem may become toxic."

MedlinePlus, an online service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine and a reference for the nation's poison centers, states that rhubarb leaf poisoning occurs from eating leaves from the rhubarb plant (*Rheum officinale*). The poisonous ingredient(s) are oxalic acid and possibly anthraquinone glycosides. The health guide makes no mention of the possibility of poisoning from ingesting the stalk.

Oxalic acid is a chemical found in bleach, metal cleaners and anti-rust products, according to the online *Encyclopedia Britannica's* "Toxic Tuesdays: A Weekly Guide to Poison Gardens." The Jan. 26, 2010, blog entry by Heather Blackmore says that the stalk becomes poisonous after cold temperatures "trigger the release of the toxin from the leaves into the stalk."

A more complete explanation of the migration of oxalic acid was offered by University of Illinois Extension horticulturist Tony Bratsch in 2007:

"In response to freezing temperatures, the oxalic acid in the leaves will translocate to the rhubarb stalk. Once frozen, the leaf tissue will initially appear 'water soaked' and then wilt, and eventually blacken along the edges or where tissue was damaged. Once the plant experiences a damaging freeze, the stalks should not be eaten."

However, in 2009 Rosie Lerner disagreed with everyone.

"There is little evidence that supports the idea of the stalks becoming toxic following a frost or freeze. Nor is there clear evidence to say that stalks do not become toxic," wrote the Purdue University Extension consumer horticulturist.

For most of us, the bad appearance of frozen rhubarb stalks will not appeal to our appetites, but for those who are inclined to eat the mushy, bad-tasting stalks, be forewarned.

### Why Does Eating Rhubarb Make Your Teeth Feel Furry?

Rhubarb stems contain large amounts of oxalic acid. This is released when cooking breaks down the cell wall structure, and the acid then reacts with our calcium-saturated saliva to leave a deposit on the teeth that the tongue then perceives to be 'furry'.

## Rhubarb as Food

By Jill Shepherd



Culinary rhubarb technically belongs with other vegetables but often masquerades as a fruit customarily prepared with sugar. However, this versatile plant (think laxative) tastes fine cooked up as a vegetable. Here are some examples:

People in Iran and Afghanistan still prepare a traditional stew using rhubarb (and spinach). An enterprising chef in Palmer, Alaska, has developed a recipe for chili that substitutes rhubarb for tomatoes. The rest of the ingredients are secret, but I'm told he might share the recipe if the price were right.

Rhubarb, not native to this continent, was introduced to the East Coast in 1770, thanks to Benjamin Franklin. Living in Europe at the time, Franklin sent a case of rhubarb roots to John Bartram, a colonial farmer and plant exporter. Franklin's instructions were how to use the plant as a medicine, not food. This is particularly interesting because it was at about this time (1778) that rhubarb was acknowledged as a food plant in Europe.

History tells us that rhubarb was first sold in America as produce at a market in Massachusetts. However, a group of patriots in Georgia is claiming rights to having successfully grown the first rhubarb crop in America in 1770, although I wonder what variety of rhubarb grows well in the South. In their defense, it should be noted that Franklin could have been their rhubarb root supplier, since he was employed as their colonial agent.

The 18th century historian James Cox, an Englishman who worked as a tutor in Imperial Russia, wrote about culinary rhubarb in one of his popular travel books.

"The stalks of the leaves are eaten raw by the Tartars; they produce upon most persons, who are unaccustomed to them, a kind of spasmodic contraction of the throat, which goes off in a few hours; it returns however at every meal, until they become habituated to this kind of diet."

"The Russians make use of the leaves in their hodge-podge: accordingly, soups of this sort affect strangers in the manner above mentioned. In Siberia the stalk is sometimes preserved as a sweetmeat; and a custom prevails among the Germans of introducing at their tables the buds of this plant, as well as of the *Rheum palmatum*, instead of cauliflower."

Other reports of rhubarb as vegetable come from Poland, where cooks prepare rhubarb in a traditional dish cooked with potatoes (and spinach), and from the indigenous people of Chinese and Tibet, where rhubarb stalks were eaten raw.

## Journey North by Patrick Ryan

All over the world this Fall, students, teachers and at-home gardeners are planting Red Emperor tulips in order to track changes in seasons and climate. Over time, the observation of plant growth can be used as an indicator of climate change. Simply put, Journey North is a free, Internet-based program that explores the interrelated aspects of seasonal change.

I have been involved with Journey North since 2005. I remember reading a small ad about the program in *Science and Children*, a magazine for teachers, and decided to join the investigation. There were some basic requirements for the planting site so the emergence of the bulbs would accurately reflect the climate of the area. Bulbs must be planted 15 feet away from buildings and pavement, with good exposure to sun, but not on a south-facing slope. As gardeners, we seek out these microclimates to eke out every bit of warmth for our gardens. But in the interest of scientific accuracy, the planting protocol must be followed. Tulips planted by my first graders that first year were placed in a rock garden outside my classroom. We reported the date tulips were planted, the date they emerged, and the date they finally bloomed, which in Anchorage, is usually around the last day of school.

But Journey North is more than tulips. As the web site explains:

"Journey North engages citizen scientists in a global study of wildlife migration and seasonal change. K-12 students share their own field observations with classmates across North America. They track the coming of Spring through the migration patterns of monarch butterflies, robins, hummingbirds, whooping cranes, gray whales, bald eagles—and other birds and mammals; the budding of plants; changing sunlight; and other natural events. Migration maps, images, standards-based lesson plans, activities and information help students make local observations and fit them into a global context. Widely considered a best-practices model for education, Journey North is the nation's premiere citizen science project for children. The general public is welcome to participate."

So besides planting tulips, other investigations include:

**Sunlight and the Seasons:** Children study seasonal change in sunlight in a global game of hide and seek called *Mystery Class*.

**Seasonal Migrations:** Children follow animal migrations. They observe, research, and report findings and watch journeys progress on live maps.

**Journey North for Kids:** A simple, student-directed entry point to Journey North studies. Engaging stories, photos, videos, and slide shows from the natural world build observation skills, inspire scientific thinking, and create fertile ground for discussions and new questions! The JN project is now worldwide. Join the fun this Fall by planting a tulip garden for the Test Garden project. In this international science experiment, people of all ages across the northern hemisphere plant tulip bulbs in their own Test Gardens. When the plants emerge and bloom, they announce that Spring has arrived in their part of the world.

Continued on page 6

## Anchorage Garden Club's 53rd Annual Flower Show "Twisted Holidays" November 19th From Cheryl Schroyer Accredited National Garden Clubs Flower Show Judge

Never tried entering a Flower Show? We can fix that. Lots of us enjoy some pretty nice house plants. Why not reward our botanical buddies by showing them off and winning some ribbons at the Anchorage Garden Clubs 53rd Annual Holiday Flower Show on November 19th & 20th at the Wells Fargo Bank midtown? Anyone can enter; it is fun, exciting and simple. Really!!

Look around at your house plants. Surely there is a winner somewhere. Entering the Flower Show gives you new eyes, makes you reevaluate your houseplants. If you don't have a few beauties, it's time to take action. Step it up a few notches. You know you've meant to get around to it. Each plant is a treasure. Keep it in a great container. Trim it, prune it, feed it, turn it, and grow it so it thrives. Happy plant, happy house, happy you. Swap out a plant that doesn't grow well. Sometimes we need change. Try scented plants, go for more color, or get variegated leaves. Bite the bullet; kiss those old tired strugglers a fond farewell.

What makes a plant a winner? Horticulture rules are easy and logical. Horticultural perfection is the goal, superior form. Fancy schmancy won't help. Truth is the plant only needs to be healthy, well-groomed and look like what it is supposed to look like. A six dollar Fred Meyer plant can rule. Timing, competition and fate can be the deal maker. Scenario #1 Judging day: Your favorite blue violet is symmetrical, clean, a nice size, vigorous and blooms like crazy. The flowers are a bit spent, last week it was crazy fantastic. Another violet is entered. It looks like yours did last week. They get the Blue Ribbon, you get second place. Scenario #2 Judging day: There are 2 other entries of vigorous beautiful violets, one is bigger and one is smaller. Neither entry has near the amount of flowers you have. Violets are grown for bloom. You win the Blue ribbon. Scenario #3 Judging day: You are the only violet entered and win. See, you just never know what will happen.

Competition classes for houseplants are either grown for bloom or grown for foliage. Separate classes are cacti, succulents, orchids, violets, "other" and herbs. There are classes for terrariums, planters and dish gardens. You may not compete against yourself. It can be tough to pick one plant per class. See the Anchorage Garden Club website for Flower Show rules. [www.alaskagardenclubs.org](http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org). AMGA has several flower show judges. Talk to Marty Black, Verna Pratt, Della Barry or Cheryl Shroyer for info and encouragement.

How do you enter the Flower Show? Arrive between 9:00 and 10:30 am Nov 19 with your plants. Fill out an entry slip. Competition requires each plant to be properly named with genus & species, show classification people can help. Transport plants carefully.

In a Flower Show nothing is guaranteed. That's half the excitement. Will you knock their socks off or miss by a nose? No way to tell. Enter more than one plant and increase your odds of success. You're going to be there anyway right? The best advice given me was just to enter a lot. My last minute plants have a pile of ribbons. Grow great plants and reap the rewards. It is fun. It is a good learning experience. Give it a try.



## Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimble

Our curmudgeon, Don St. John, has mellowed out. Don writes, "Isn't fall a wonderful season? By the time fall officially

arrives most of our vegetable and flower gardens are put to bed for a long, long winter's nap. We seem to have forgotten how much work we put into our gardens for the month or two of really great vegetables and beautiful flowers as we start browsing and ordering seeds for next year. I regrettably fall into that category too. I was introduced to a couple of new (they can't be new if they are heirloom) tomatoes this year that are on my must grow list for next year. Lydia Clayton got me hooked on Aunt Ruby's Green Tomatoes. This is a beefsteak size tomato with great flavor. Lee Bowman has convinced me to grow an Orange Paruche Hybrid Cherry tomato after eating some of his... look out Black Cherry. Enough drivel for now... Time to enjoy a hot toddy of Nickel Back Apple Jack from High Mark Distillery in Sterling, Alaska. Straight from the jug to a cup, warm it up, add a cinnamon stick and enjoy. Better than Uncle Al use to make. They have free tastings too".

It must have been the apple jack which I agree, is wonderful. Too wonderful. I think the orange Paruche must be what Glenn Sackett in the old Sterling greenhouse gave me and I agree with his assessment of it's flavor. Delicious.

Asking people what's going on in their lives before seed catalogs, Barb Jewell wrote that she is "going to Seattle to see its fall plantings and family. Also, loving our awesome Fall this year. After Brenda's (Central Peninsula) garden club's presentation, I'm seriously planning changes to a couple flower beds next spring. Nice winter dreaming!"

And Margaret Simon in Nikiski wrote back to the query of what her plans for the next few months were... "I have to think about this...survival is what comes to mind!" and Kathy Wartinbee replied, "Plans? ... Sorry. At the moment there aren't any but I'm open to ideas".

Barb Jewell and I were walking in downtown Anchorage and saw some baskets outside the Brew House with an very intriguing vine in the hanging baskets and we didn't know what it was. The flowers were shaped like a campanula. Sent a query around on the AMGAA list-serve and got back wonderful replies from Jane Baldwin and Gretchen of Green Connections who provided the baskets to the Brew House. The flower was *Cobaea scandens* and definitely something that we're going to start down here in the spring. Gretchen says they start them in February in 8 inch pots with a tripod stake at GC but don't have them for sale, but would if there was enough interest. For home use, they probably could be started later, but the stake is really necessary. They have tendrils that will grab onto everything. Google the plant. I am going to put together an article for the newsletter, later, using both Gretchen and Jane's cultural directions.

For fun, Google Harry Lauder's Walking Stick and Joe Pye Weed.

Hope everyone is enjoying our long autumn!



Lovely petunias at the Pioneer Home garden this year were designed, planted and maintained by master gardeners. Special volunteers are needed to carry on this tradition.

Photo by Lynne Opstad

### Pioneer Home in Transition

The Alaska Master Gardener Anchorage group has been designing, planting and maintaining the gardens at the Pioneer Home for almost 30 years.

When the Home lost their funding for a gardener, the AMGA stepped up and began a service project to provide the residents with gardens to lighten their days. Since then, many dedicated AMGA volunteers have worked the gardens, giving residents, their families, visitors, employees and the neighborhood wonderful gardens to enjoy throughout the summer.

Because of the amount of time it takes to plan and maintain the gardens it has been difficult to fill all of the volunteer jobs. The Board of Directors has asked the Pioneer Home to take on the front portion of the project: planning, ordering and maintaining plants prior to planting, and perhaps move to more low maintenance beds and plantings. The AMGA may continue maintaining the gardens, planting, watering, weeding and winterizing, as long as we have enough volunteers. During this transition period the AMGA needs volunteers who will fill the following roles:

- Coordinator for the project (starting now until the end of next summer)
- Long Range Design Planner to transition over to low maintenance gardens (now until the end of the summer)
- Hardening off Volunteer(s) (Spring work but need commitments now)
- Volunteer Scheduler (Spring through the Summer but need commitment now)

Hours worked count towards Advanced Master Gardener volunteer hours but not core Master Gardener Class volunteer requirements.

Since the design and plant order need to be done soon, we need to know as soon as possible if we are going to have enough volunteers for the coming year. If you are interested in filling any of these roles, please contact Lynne Opstad, lopstad@gci.net.



## Bird Chatter

### 2013 Annual Alaskan Invasive Species Conference November 5-7, Fairbanks, Alaska

It looks like an interesting program of presentations that might be of interest to Master Gardeners that include herbicide degradation in Alaskan soils and water, Vetch Busters, and best practices for weed prevention in right of ways to name a few.

If you have time and are in the neighborhood, you should go check it out!

For information about registration and the agenda go to <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/pests/cnipm/annual-invasive-species-c/>

#### Why do snails move so slow?

Because they have both male and female parts. One half won't ask for directions and the other doesn't know where they're going.

#### How do you know you are a Master Gardener?

- There is a decorative compost container on your kitchen counter.
- You would rather go to a nursery to shop than a clothing store.
- You prefer gardening to watching television.
- You plan vacation trips to arboretums and public parks.
- Dirt under your fingernails and calloused palms are matters of pride.

And From the David Letterman Show Recent Scientific Discoveries: "Plants enjoy photosynthesis well into their 60's."

#### Alaskans Speak About Urban Gardens

From Janice Berry

Buried in the Alaska Public Media's website was the following article published July 2013 by Sharon Kuhn of the Anchorage Food Mosaic who asked the question, "Why is having a garden important to you?" Here are some of the responses she received:

*"FRESH HERBS! Anyone can have an herb garden!! You don't even need a green thumb. Basil in pasta dishes, cilantro in Mexican dishes....SO much cheaper and easier. And SO satisfying to go out to your windowsill or deck and snip snip some herbs. You can avoid the grocery stores. Who wants to be stuck in Costco on a gorgeous sunny evening when you can mosey on back to your own garden and harvest your dinner right there?"*

*It's important to me that I am doing my part to provide for myself and not consume products that are supported by unfair labor practices and immigration policies. Even if it's just picking my kale and lettuce for my salad, I know I am doing my small little part."*

-Kate Powers, Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center

*"Meet your neighbors! An interesting yard is a great conversation starter."*

-Nick Treinen, Black Dog Gardens

- *Low cost, high nutrient food right in my backyard.*
  - *It's a meditative and artful way to spend time that is so different than my workday or my exercise or the other pieces of my life*
  - *What else would I do with my backyard?*
  - *We can grow Colombian vegetables (papas criollas, chuguas, and acelga) that we can't get in the U.S.*
  - *I know it doesn't have pesticides on it.*
  - *I want to teach these skills to my future kids, so I have to hone them myself.*
  - *Low carbon footprint food*
- Laura Avellaneda-Cruz, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

*"I love urban gardening! I love to sit out on the edge of my raised beds in the morning, drinking coffee and watching my bees busily fly in and out of the hive and buzz about the ever changing landscape of my backyard. I love the seasonality of urban farming, ordering my seeds from Alaska companies in March, starting my seeds in April and planting the garden in May. The summer is filled with anticipation and appreciation for the sweetness and crunch of fresh picked veggies and the excitement of harvesting and experimenting with the ever growing pile of new found canning recipes that have accumulated throughout the year. The winter of course isn't too bad either, the hardest part is to determine which tasty goodie to eat when and making sure I don't use up all of the rhubarb and raspberry preserves too quickly, a goal I never seem to achieve."*

-Melissa Heuer, Renewable Resources Foundation

*"...turn that park everyone is afraid to go near into the vibrant community space it is supposed to be! We have what 243 parks? Not all of them are going to be top-notch. The way I think of it is from an urban development/redevelopment standpoint and the opportunity to transition troubled or vacant land (blight) to productive use. Turning something back in to a community asset - that's the real story of the Gardens at Bragaw. We're amazed by how many people are mobilized around that space already (neighbors, schools, business, nonprofits) and they are all thankful to have that space back to take their kids and dogs and see lively activity that makes our neighborhood more livable."*

-Kirk Rose, Anchorage Community Land Trust

#### Journey North cont. from page 4

Since retiring from 21 years in first grade, I now use my Junior Master Gardener outdoor classroom at the Alaska Botanical Garden as a tulip test garden. Bulbs are planted by visiting students on field trips to the Garden. Last year, no tulips emerged due to some construction in the area and a very cold Fall with no snow cover. We planted 50 bulbs this year.

Another exciting part of this project is hearing from other test gardens. I have had on-going conversations with teachers and students from around the world.

Just visit [www.learner.org/north](http://www.learner.org/north) to get in on the fun and excitement of citizen science and gardening!

## 2013 Advanced MG Class: Taxonomy

The 2013 Advanced MG class in Taxonomy begins November 6th. Taught by Dr. Marilyn Barker, Botanist, the class will meet at the CES Wednesdays and Fridays, **Nov 6, 8, 13, 20 & 22, from 7-9 pm** with a Saturday lab session on **Nov 9, at 10am-3pm, location TBA.**

Registration is open to Advanced MGs and MGs who have completed their 40 hour volunteer service and to everyone else on a space available basis. Registrants who have not completed their 40 hour volunteer service and others who are not Master Gardeners will be notified November 4th if class space is available.

Cost: \$35.00 payable to AMGA at the door.

### Nominations for AMGA Board of Directors' Vacancies

Nominations are now being accepted through the November 18th monthly meeting to fill four vacancies for 2-year terms on AMGA's Board of Directors. The election will be held electronically in January 2014 with results announced at the annual AMGA meeting.

Directors are elected "at large" with Executive Officer positions determined by the newly elected Board. The Board meets once a month Sept-May, currently on the 2nd Monday at 6 p.m. at CES and occasionally for special meetings.

Qualifications for AMGA Board service include (a) current paid membership as a voting member; (b) the ability to attend and actively participate in regularly scheduled and specially called meetings; and (c) a willingness to complete agreed upon tasks on time and to report progress at each meeting.

Self-nominations are welcomed and encouraged. You may also nominate another person with their permission. Nominations are an opportunity to express your interest in or your recommendation for another person interested in active participation in the volunteer management of your association.

Nominations must be received/postmarked by Nov 18th. Send to AMGA, POB 221403, Anchorage 99522 or Email to [amga@alaska.net](mailto:amga@alaska.net) or directly to Committee members Nickel LaFleur, Chair; Gina Docherty or Annie Nevaldine (see MG Directory for contact info). Nominations will also be accepted at the AMGA monthly meeting on November 18th.

Qualified nominees will need to provide a short bio of about 150 words or less, along with a picture which will appear in the monthly MG newsletter and on the electronic ballot. For more information, contact Nickel LaFleur or any Board member. Remember: AMGA runs by your volunteer support!



If you have questions or want to make address or email corrections, please contact Jane Baldwin at: [jbaldwin@alaska.net](mailto:jbaldwin@alaska.net)

## Garden Event Calendar

### November 4

Alaska Native Plant Society: Nome Field Trip Participants: Take a virtual floral field trip to Nome through photos from the July 2013 AKNPS outing. 7:00 pm Campbell Creek Science Center

### November 4

Mat Su Garden Club: Monthly Meeting Growing Garlic and Leeks in Alaska - Deb Blaylock 7:00 pm at the MTA conference room

### November 7th

Anchorage Garden Club: Creating Creative Designs demonstrated by Alaskan NGC accredited judges. Pioneer School House, 437 E. Third Ave. Anchorage  
<http://alaskagardenclubs.webs.com/anchorageclub.htm>

### November 14

Wild Flower Garden Club: First Impressions, Front yard gardens a pictorial tour by Annie Nevaldine. Central Lutheran Church: 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. 1420 Cordova, (15th & Cordova) Anchorage

### November 16

Alaska Rock Garden Society: Monthly Meeting

### November 18th

AMGA meeting: "Profile of a Green Roof" with Mike Monterusso, manager for the ABG. 7 p.m., CES 1675 C Street, Anchorage

### November 19th

Anchorage Garden Club: Holiday Tea, Wells Fargo Bank, 301 West Northern Lights Blvd., 12:00 to 2:00 pm

### November 19-20

Anchorage Garden Club: 53rd Annual Holiday Flower Show "Twisted Holidays". See article on page 4

### December 2

Alaska Native Plant Society: Monthly Meeting 7:00 pm Campbell Creek Science Center

### December 5

Anchorage Garden Club: Annual Christmas Party 6:30 at the Pioneer School House

### December 12

Wildflower Garden Club: Annual Christmas luncheon 11:00 to 1:00

### December 15

Alaska Rock Garden Society: Annual Christmas Party and Yankee Swap gift Exchange



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!)

AMGA Google Group:

<https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups#!forum/AkMGA>

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

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

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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Annie Nevaldine neck-deep in Rhubarb - Palmer, 2009.  
It's all about rhubarb this month - three articles will tell you all you ever wanted to know about rhubarb, from the history of rhubarb, to growing and preparing it to eat, and how it's being used in Alaska.

Photo by Jill Shepherd

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

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