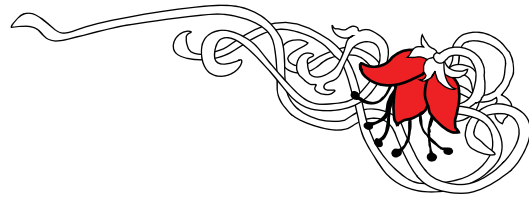


Anchorage



Volume 15, Issue 9

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ANCHORAGE NEWSLETTER September 2013



A Nickel's Worth from President LaFleur

What a wonderful, wonderful summer. I hope everyone had a chance to enter something in the Alaska State Fair, and if nothing else, were able to make time to attend some of the events. Congratulations to all the Master Gardeners that won ribbons and thanks to all who volunteered their time. Participating in the Alaska State Fair as a volunteer is vital to having the Fair run 'in the black'. If you didn't participate this year, but are interested in doing so next year, get a hold of Kathy Liska (Crops Superintendent) at 337-2196 with your contact information and she can reach you about next year job assignments. It's a lot of fun.

Speaking about 'next year', it's time to renew membership in the AMGA group. You may fill out your registration form online, mail it in or bring it to our September 16th meeting. Our membership dues haven't changed - it's still \$20 and this year we are offering a couple incentives for early renewal (such as an AMGA coffee cup). The sooner we get the renewals, the sooner we can get our wonderful directory out to the membership. Take a minute to fill it out today and have it in before the end of October to be eligible for our prize drawing.

I really am looking forward to Monday, September 16th when we will have MG Franny Junge (pronounced like 'Young') entertain us with "Plants to Dye For". As you know, our meeting is at 7pm at the CES Building at 1675 C Street. I hope you all will make plans to join us then.

As I mentioned last month, with this nice weather, the invasive weeds have had an easy time to flourish and it is our job as Master Gardeners to do our part to eradicate these unwanted plants. Please take a plastic bag along on your walks and pick the weeds and dispose of them properly. Please. If I recall right, we are the ONLY State in the US that doesn't have to spend enormous amounts of state money to fight invasives and I'm sure we can agree that it is imperative not to get complacent because of it.

In regard to the property in Muldoon (where the old Alaska Greenhouse used to be), we have been advised that until the East Side District Plan is complete, the Parks and Recreation Board and the Anchorage Assembly will hold off on making a decision on making the land into a park. It's not too late to send an email to the Assembly and the P&R Board to express your support of this Ordinance (AO2013-73). We really do need a place

in East Anchorage where we can put in some community gardens and this place is perfect for it. If there is any questions I can help answer, please email me at Tagalak@alaska.net or call 337-5651.

Be sure to take advantage of our fall weather to get your garden tidied up for winter and prepare the plants that you want to overwinter before the inevitable frost reaches your part of South Central Alaska. I've got my fingers crossed it won't happen for another month. Anyone want to make a wager?

Continued on page 7

Treasurer's Report: Balances 6/30/2013

Checking 5-88	2135.97
Savings 5-19	12658.30
CD-112.1(ABG)	3369.01
CD-126(Education)	3024.45
	<hr/>
	\$21187.73

Revenue:	
Interest	1.61
Membership	40.09
	<hr/>
	\$41.70

Expense:	
Awards	41.83
Newsletter	29.99
	<hr/>
	71.82



Balances 7/13/2013

Checking 5-88	2104.24
Savings 5-1	12659.91
CD-112.1(ABG)	3369.01
CD- 126 (Education)	3024.45
	<hr/>
	\$21157.61

August Garden Tour Photos

[photos submitted by Barbara Baker unless otherwise indicated]

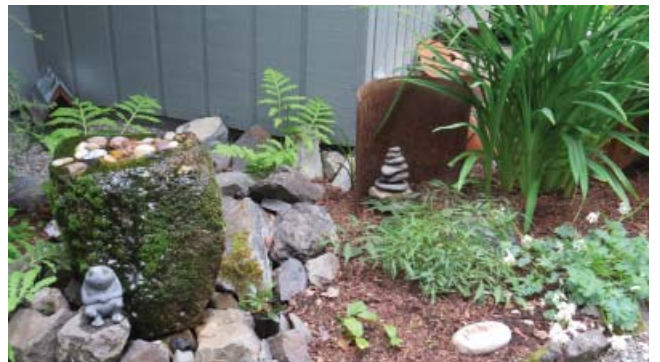
August 5th: Kathy Jellic - Her gardens were colorful combinations of dahlias, perennials and annuals. She had lovely rock walled gardens.



August 5th 3rd tour of the evening: Sandy and David Harrington- Sandy's shade and woodland gardens combine artful use of shade plants with accents of striking garden art and water features. Sandy maintains a pile of various sized rocks that she uses in her design concepts and in bordering her gardens.



August 5th second tour: Gary and Donna Beller - Gary designs, plants and tends the vegetable garden. He loves the design aspect when he puts his organic vegetable garden together. His hot house on the porch contained tomatoes and zucchini squash. Donna planted and maintained the potted garden on the deck.



August 12 tour: Cook Inlet Housing Eklutna Estates roof garden and community garden, hosted by Susan Tillman and Brent Hovey. Eklutna Estates roof garden is a garden in evolution. Designed as a sustainable roof top garden, it contains perennials from the native areas of the elders and other plants to bring summer-long color.



August 19th: Tour/potluck/plant swap at Madge Oswald's- Features: Shed with sedum green roof; enclosed organic vegetable garden containing gigantic vegetables; Thalictrum and lily beds surrounding the newly installed deck. Madge has also utilized a variety of different stone shapes to create interest and transition of garden beds. The potluck was also a celebration of birthdays including Della Berry, Nickel LaFleur, Marge Olson and Debbie Hinchey.



August 26th: Eastridge II Townhomes gardens - MG's followed AMGA President Nickel LaFleur's commentary as she marched us around Eastridge II townhomes' well landscaped complex that features many trees and multiple pocket gardens. Nickel works as East Ridge's arborist and landscape professional and has used a number of interesting annuals integrated with perennials in the numerous pocket gardens planted around multiple large glacial errata type rocks. [photos by Jane Baldwin]



There is no question that Anchorage is a gardening town, after visiting the extraordinary gardens in August. Our hosts delighted us with elegant design, vegetable gardens, and, flower and landscape gardens worthy of the cover of garden magazines. Thanks go out to MG Sandy Harrington for encouraging her neighbors, Kathy Jellie, and Gary and Donna Beller to share their gardens. We also appreciate Cook Inlet Housing for allowing us to view their roof top and community gardens at Eklutna Estates. Thanks to Nickel LaFleur for sharing Eastridge's lovely gardens. A large thank-you also goes out to MG Madge Oswald for hosting our end of the year pot luck and plant swap.

Creeping Charlie (ground ivy) Weed, Ground Cover, or Medicine?

Submitted by: Janice L. Berry

Glechoma hederacea. If you're like me you may have picked up this innocent-looking plant with pretty little purple flowers at a plant exchange one day, only to discover that, like its common name, it likes to creep into places it doesn't belong via runners as long as three feet! *Glechoma* can make a nice ground cover when it forms a low-growing mat of stems and leaves over the ground. In the spring, it's one of the first plants to pop out of the snow. This perennial evergreen has a square stem and is a member of the mint family. It has very fine hair all over. The tubular flowers appear as early as March. Bees are attracted to the flower's nectar.



Young leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. The leaves have a bitter, minty flavor and can be tossed into salads to add a slight aromatic tang. They can also be added to soups, stews, or omelets. This wild edible has been added to beer in much the same way as hops in order to clear it and also to improve its flavor.

Glechoma is considered to be astringent, tonic and stimulant. Tea can be made from the fresh or dried leaves. The fresh herb is rich in vitamin C. Along with its volatile oils, it is useful in treatments of headaches, inflamed mucous membranes (ear, nose, throat), colds and sinusitis. Externally, *glechoma* promotes the healing of bruises and black eyes. *Glechoma* juice is considered to be a calming eye wash.

The plant is native to Europe and southwest Asia. In England, this plant is considered desirable and allowed to grow as a flowering ground cover; but when brought to our country for the same purpose, it has been regarded as a weed where much effort is spent eradicating it from lawns. *Glechoma* does best in shady, moist areas where grass does not grow well. Small infestations can be controlled through hand weeding; repeated weeding is required because the plant will continue to spread from its roots or bits of stem.



Surprisingly Twenty Mule Team Borax, a laundry booster, has been used to control this plant. Borax is actually sodium tetraborate, a white, crystalline, mineral salt formed in the beds of ancient lakes millions of years ago. As early as the 1920s, this

mineral was being used to eradicate weeds. (It is also an active ingredient in indoor and outdoor ant baits and killers.) Why does borax work? Borax contains boron, an important plant micronutrient. However, the difference between plant requirements and toxicity problems is very small. When excessive quantities are present, boron can damage and even destroy plants. Grasses tend to be more tolerant of excess boron than are broad-leaves, and fortunately *glechoma* is particularly sensitive to boron.

Recipe for Borax control of ground ivy on bluegrass
(Caution: apply over recommended area to avoid toxicity

symptoms)

To treat 1,000 sq. feet:

- 10 oz. Twenty Mule Team Borax
- dissolve in 4 oz. warm water
- then dilute in 2.5 gal. water

Boron is toxic to other plants and to animals at only slightly higher concentrations and, being an element, does not break down; therefore the long term use of this technique on soil or groundwater is discouraged.

Sources:

www.ediblewildfood.com
http://health-from-nature.net/Ground_Ivy.html
<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hort-news/1997/8-22-1997/borax.html>

Growing Garlic in Alaska? By Master Gardener Deb Blaylock

Yes, garlic can be grown in Alaska. In fact, it's been my experience that it grows quite well in my zone 4b Palmer garden. Since moving to the Mat-Su Valley in the winter of 2002, we've been experimenting with growing various types of garlic. There are four main factors which I think are the key to successfully growing garlic in our unpredictable winter climate. These are bed preparation, planting time, winter bed protection, and patience. A few other things to consider are variety, bulb storage, and where to purchase bulbs.

Bed preparation can be done any time before planting but I like to do mine after I've harvested what is growing in the beds. My raised beds are approximately 4 or 5 foot wide by 12 foot long and 12 inches deep. I try to rotate crops and not to grow garlic or onions two years a row in the same beds. My favorite tools for bed preparation are my trusty broad-fork and a spade. I dig and loosen up the soil and throw in a healthy dose of blood meal. Work the blood meal into the soil (more will be added at planting time). I occasionally add compost and a couple of handfuls wood ash when the beds are low on organic matter.

Planting time is crucial to the success of your garlic crop. Planting too early can lead to crop failure. As most of you know, Alaskan falls can be very rainy and cool. Planting the cloves during this period can cause the cloves to mold and rot. My general rule of thumb is to plant after the first hard frost. The individual cloves are planted (pointy tip up), six inches apart in rows which are about 8 inches apart. Rows are first dug with a hoe (about 3 to 4 inches deep) with some more blood meal worked into the bottom of each row. Firmly place each clove in the row then cover with soil.

Winter bed protection is very important. Straw is added to each bed to the depth of 4 to 5 inches. Because I live near Palmer and we often get those lovely fall and winter winds, the mulch must be secured with some heavy wood planks criss-crossed diagonally across the beds. In my opinion, this is probably the most crucial step (at least in my zone and microclimate.) The mulch is removed in the spring (late April/early May).

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Central Peninsula Master Gardener News By Rosemary Kimball

It's the end of the summer and after all that hot weather, the rains came - didn't they ever! A half-inch to over an inch dumped in dry Sterling, spaced just widely enough that you wanted to play in the puddles instead of work.

Margaret Simon is crying over the early blight that swept through her potato patch. Janice Chumley said the potatoes were good to eat but wouldn't keep well. Margaret is shutting down her greenhouse which greeted me a couple Sundays ago with a torrent of red tomatoes and an invitation to eat. It didn't have to be repeated! Gardeners are so generous! Go to this site: *Solanaceae - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia* for more on this interesting family. Did you know that potatoes and petunias were cousins? Margaret spread soybean meal with a fertilizer spreader on her lawn to feed the microbes as suggested by Jeff Lowenfells. Her lawn always is nice. I was out at Margaret's with my neighbor Mark and his dad and we came back via the escape route and there were acres of fireweed that had bloomed out but not seeded out under the power line. It was still beautiful but next year we're going to make it a point to go down that road when the fireweed is in full flower. It should be nothing less than stunning.

Barb Jewell is just trying to get all her ends caught up before she goes on a cruise around the Greek Islands.

Kathy Wartinbee gave most of her produce away because she has two freezers stuffed to the water line. That we should all have that problem. Her planters and flower beds definitely suffered from the rain and were shutting down. The nice thing is that when our gardening season is over, it is OVER. Feel sorry for the people that have bugs and produce 9 to 12 months a year. Makes me tired just to think of it! She let her broccoli flower copiously because someone nearby has bees and they love the flowers.

It was another year that I didn't garden and didn't miss it...I just visited around and inventoried Mark's garden for munchies. He grew the largest, most beautiful head of Napa cabbage I've ever seen. His greenhouse is producing tomatoes at a satisfactory rate and he'll go in, get a handful or so of cherry tomatoes and sit down. I like it that he has Adirondack chairs in there for snitching in comfort.

I stopped at Sunrise Inn in just outside of Cooper Landing for breakfast recently, and being an inveterate eavesdropper listened to a guy telling his friend he had a greenhouse full of ripe tomatoes. Having no shame, I went over and asked what varieties he was growing. He had no idea and told me to ask his friend who gave him the starts, Glen Sackett of Sackett's Kenai Grill. He's the one I heard about from someone else that was renting the old Sterling Greenhouse buildings (Alaska is a small town and Sterling a small neighborhood) so I invited myself to see his operation. Wow. The benches



Glen Sackett of Sackett's Kenai Grill
and his Sterling Greenhouse.
Photos by Rosemary K.

were out of the original sales area and he'd made growing beds on the ground. He had some pretty good looking corn that was tasseling but there was nothing under the pollen fall to fertilize. I could have cried to see that pollen going to waste. He was hauling out too much lettuce in a wheel barrow. What he doesn't sell at the greenhouse can go up to the Grill which his son manages. It sounded like a win-win situation. He's not a Master Gardener but he sure is a 'master' gardener. I'm sure his mantra is, "wait 'till next year" along with the rest of us. He was using the same compost tea that Kathy Wartinbee uses and he didn't have a single aphid in the green house at the end of August. Not even on his peppers! He had the biggest Roma tomatoes I've ever seen. He also had a super flavorful orange cherry whose name escapes me but it sounded Polish if that makes sense to anyone.

Until this summer, my mantra has been, "mine died" when I look at things thriving in others' yards. This year I have stuff that lived and even thrived! My blood red dwarf bleeding heart from Fritz Creek Garden last summer bloomed copiously and I enjoyed it copiously. My rosemary thrived. I didn't decapitate my fig tree and it kinda sorta looks like it might be thinking about having a fig. My pot of orange mint is contemplating a world takeover.

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Bird Chatter

- Check out Central Peninsula Garden Club's new Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/124466601096176/> - there's a recent thread posted on ways to hasten ripening of your green tomatoes.

- MG & CenPec GC President Marion Nelson's show, Encaustic and Cold Wax Work, will be on display September 3-30, 2013 at Veronica's Café in Historic Old Town Kenai.

- An August 19th news release from UAF reports that a hot and dry summer contributed to reduced hay yields in the Interior and Matanuska Valley with UAF/CES agents reporting that farmers were getting yields of about one-third to one-half their usual crop.

Watch out for that Basil!

By Michael Baldwin

From the blog Ask the Past: advice from old books: In 1595 Thomas Lupton wrote in his book A Thousand Notable Things about the perils of Basil - Brain Scorpions!

How to Defend Yourself From Basil, 1595

"An Italian, through the oft smelling of an herbe called Basil, had a Scorpion bred in his braine, which did not only a long time grieve him, but also at the last killed him... Take heede therefore ye smellers of Basil."



So, now you know ye smellers of Basil - Beware!

Check it out yourself: <http://askthepast.blogspot.com.au/2013/07/how-to-defend-yourself-from-basil-1595.html?m=1>

Seed Saving

By Nickel LaFleur

It's time to start collecting seeds of your favorite plants. And here's a few tips you might want to think about when gathering and saving seeds from your own plants:

There are different methods to dry seeds but an easy one is to spread the seeds on newspaper or in a paper bag and let them air dry for about a week.

After the seeds are thoroughly dry, place the seeds in a small envelope that is labeled with variety, date & other pertinent information and store the packets in airtight jars.

Don't trust that you will remember next year, label, label, label. Maybe take a photo of the plant too.

Once the seeds are in an air tight container, store it in a cool, dark, dry place and avoid opening the containers until time to plant.

Have fun and share your seeds with fellow Master Gardeners in the spring.

Garlic....cont. from page 4

I've found removing the mulch in layers allows the beds to thaw much faster.

The final factor is patience. Mine was really tested this spring when none of my garlic emerged until the end of May - boy was I sweating it! By June 6th I breathed a heavy sigh of relief as most of the garlic had emerged and was growing strong. After the cloves start growing, it's just a waiting game. Give it lots of water, keep it weed-free and occasionally side dress with some type of nitrogen fertilizer (I prefer Alaska fish). Bulbs should be ready to harvest sometime between late July through mid-August (variety dependent.)

Choosing a variety to grow can often be intimidating as there are many out there. I've had good luck with Siberian and Music or look for a variety which is cold tolerant. If you're planning on storing your garlic, look for one which has good long-term storage. Most of my garlic is sliced and dehydrated. I prefer to buy outside garlic as I haven't had much luck getting large bulbs the following year from the garlic I've grown here. Most seed catalogs like Burpees or Territorial Seed sell many varieties of garlic. My favorite place to purchase is Filaree Farms - the owner is the guy who wrote, "Growing Great Garlic" (a must have book for garlic growers). It's not too late to purchase some and plant this fall! Good luck! [Editor's note: Deb's garlic was the grand champion winner in the Herb Department at this year's Fair.]

Green Tomato Cake Recipe

Submitted by Jane Baldwin

Recipe (among others) is from UAF/CES Publication FNH-00024, A Harvest of Green Tomatoes

Green Tomato Cake

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter
2 cups white sugar
2 eggs
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon baking soda
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped nuts
4 cups diced green tomatoes

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and flour a 9x13-inch baking pan.

Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs and beat until creamy. Sift together flour, cinnamon, nutmeg, soda and salt. Add raisins and nuts to dry mixture; add dry ingredients to creamed mixture. Mix well. Add diced tomatoes and mix well. Pour into the prepared 9x13-inch pan. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, or until wooden pick inserted into cake comes out clean.

A Nickel's Worth.. cont. from page 1

Once again, thanks to all the Master Gardeners who shared their gardens with us this summer and I hope others are inspired to share their gardens with us next year. If this is something you may be interested in, please let one of the Board members know. We'd love to be able to fill every Monday (and maybe even a couple days a week) with gardens from all over the City. A special THANK YOU to John & Madge Oswald for sponsoring the annual AMGA Potluck and Plant Swap on August 19th, it was perfect!

We are looking for candidates to join us on the Alaska Master Gardener Anchorage Board. We meet once a month from September through May and could use some fresh faces in the mix. If you are interested, but want to know more about being a Board Member, please let me know.

I look forward to seeing all of you back at our monthly meetings.

Central Peninsula MG News...cont. from page 5

What do we have a lot of this time of year? Cabbage! This is my neighbor Mark's recipe for:

SCALLOPED CABBAGE

Cut the cabbage into wedge sections with a portion of the main core to hold it together. Place in a pan and steam until tender. Place sections into an oiled baking dish.

Make a White Sauce:

1/4 C Butter
1/4 C Flour
2 1/2 C Milk
Salt & Pepper to Taste.

Cook & Stir Butter & Flour over medium heat for about 5 minutes. Add milk; allow to thicken. Add salt & pepper to taste.

Pour the White Sauce over the cabbage. Top with cheese of your choice (MW: I use American or Cheddar). Top with dried bread crumbs evenly over the dish. Bake at 350°F for about 30 minutes until the casserole is hot & bubbly.

Alternate: Take your favorite Scalloped Potato Recipe and substitute Cabbage. (RK's notes, add ham or use chicken broth in lieu or along with the milk).

Dispose of the rest of your green tomatoes or rhubarb by making chutney. Chutney comes from the East Indian meaning to lick. Google for recipes.

And since red cabbage keeps so well, you'll get a couple recipes for that next month.

Garden Event Calendar

Thursday, Sept 12

Wildflower Garden Club: Putting Your Garden to Bed for Winter, Speaker: ABG staff;
10:00 am, Central Lutheran Church, 15th & Cordova

Monday, Sept 16

AMGA Meeting: Plants To Dye For, speaker MG Franny Junge;
7:00 pm, CES - 1675 C Street, Anchorage

Saturday, Sept 21

Alaska Botanical Garden: Garlic Planting Hands-On Planting Workshop, presenter Julianne McGuinness; 1:00 pm; Cost \$20 includes garlic to plant at home. Registration limited; call ABG 770-3692 for registration information.

Sep 29 - Oct 3

8th Circumpolar Agricultural Conference and University of the Arctic Inaugural Northern Food Summit; advancing food security and sustainable agriculture in the circumpolar north. Alyeska Hotel and Resort in Girdwood, Alaska, Sept. 29 through Oct. 3, 2013. For information: <http://www.uaf.edu/cac/about-the-conference/>

Thursday, Oct 3

Anchorage Garden Club: Characteristics of Plant Families, speaker Carmel Tysver; 7:00 pm, Pioneer Schoolhouse, 437 E. Third, Anchorage.

Oct 7 - Dec 4

2013 Master Gardener Class: Mondays & Wednesdays from 12-3:00 pm beginning Oct 7th and ending Dec 4th. To add your name to the interest list for this class, call UAF/CES Anchorage 786-6300 or visit the CES Anchorage website <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/anchorage/MG/> and click on the link for "interest list" in the 2013 Master Gardener class announcement.



The Anchorage Chapter of the Alaska Master Gardeners Association welcomes letters, opinions, articles, ideas and inquiries. Contact the editor, Gina Docherty, at:

Mail: 14051 Fejes Road
Anchorage, AK 99516

Phone: 345-4099

Email: amga@alaska.net (NEW EMAIL)

AMGA Web Site: www.alaskamastergardeners.org
(The Newsletter will be on-line in living color!)

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

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

For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact:
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1675 C St, Suite 100
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: 786-6300
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Master Gardeners enjoyed August's multiple garden tours - shown here, Eklutna Estates roof garden and community garden. More photos on pages 2-3.

Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage
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