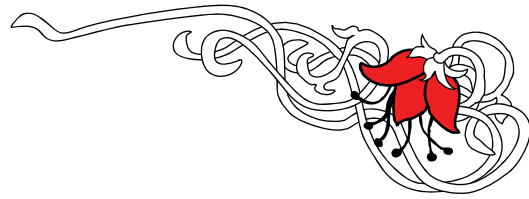


Anchorage



Volume 16, Issue 1

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ANCHORAGE NEWSLETTER January 2014



Meet the Nominees for AMGA Board of Directors:

Barbara Baker



This summer I had the pleasure of coordinating summer field trips for Master Gardeners. I don't know what inspired me more, the extraordinary gardens or the generous and creative gardeners who shared their piece of paradise with us.

Since serving on the board in 2012, I've also had the opportunity to volunteer as the program coordinator, hospitality chair, volunteer coordinator and volunteer at the Pioneer Home. These duties have convinced me that Master Garden-

ers are some of the most generous people in sharing what they know and among the most curious about what they don't know.

I completed the Master Gardener's class in 2007. And, like any education, you learn that there is always more to discover. AMGA keeps inspiring me with new information, bringing together the talent from in- and outside the organization to explore topical gardening subjects. While I remain a flower person, I've gained confidence to venture into the world of vegetables because of the support I've found among the MG community.

Cindy Walker

Raised in Alaska with a passion for the opportunities and challenges of zone 3 gardening, I passed the Master Gardener exam in 2002 and joined the Board of Directors in 2011. During my term, I served as Treasurer and have enjoyed helping Master Gardeners thrive.

My accomplishments include organizing the finances, implementing an annual budget with monthly reports, and achieving IRS compliance.



Currently I am working to attain IRS 501(c)(3) status. I would be honored to continue serving on your Board of Directors, and I look forward to contributing my energies to this organization.

Continued on page 2

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Treasurer's Report

Balances 10/31/13	
Checking S-88	2509.94
Savings S-19	12664.69
	<u>\$15174.63</u>
Dedicated Funds	\$6409.23
Advanced Master Gardening	945.00
Donation	50.00
Interest	1.56
Membership Dues	840.24
	<u>\$1836.80</u>
Expense:	
Newsletter	309.55
	<u>\$309.55</u>
Balances 11/30/13	
Checking S-88	4035.63
Savings S-19	12666.25
	<u>\$16701.88</u>
Dedicated Funds	\$6409.23

Lynne Opstad



Lynne has been gardening since her mother gave Lynne the responsibility for her own garden while in elementary school. She moved to Alaska in 1979 and loves the state and all it represents. She spent 30 years in the air transportation industry in management and sales. Lynne became a Master Gardener in 2008 and an Advanced Master Gardener in 2011.

Lynne likes to spend as much time as possible outdoors; loving the fresh air and serenity that nature brings us. She has been on the Board of Directors for two years and coordinates volunteers for the Pioneer Home Gardens among other duties.

Sheila Toomey



Born in NYC, I've lived in Anchorage for 30 years and dug in the dirt around my Airport Heights home ineffectively for most of that time.

After retiring from life as a reporter/editor for the Daily News, I wised up, took the Master Gardener course in 2012 and am now out of control -- convinced I can keep

zone 5 plants alive if I find the exact right spot for them. I would like to be on the Master Gardeners board to both contribute and learn.

Annual Meeting and Election Results January 20, 2014

By now you should have received your ballot via email or it is enroute via snail mail if you don't have email. Please take time to vote.

The elections results will be announced at AMGA's Annual Meeting, January 20, 2014. Following the business portion of the annual meeting, Julie Riley will be presenting her program: "New for 2014: Vegetables, Herbs and Flowers".

Hope to see you there.

Growing Young Gardeners - Birding by Amy Reed, MG

I'm excited to share that my family has started a new hobby of birding! Last spring we watched from our front window as a pair of robins built a nest of twigs and settled in to start a family. It was a terrific learning experience as we anticipated the arrival of the robin chicks. My daughter found the broken blue egg shells later in the spring beneath the tree, and sure enough, we were able to hear little cheeps and see scrawny heads and necks peer up from the nest. We are anxious to see if a robin family chooses our tree again this year.

We decided to attract the birds near our window by hanging a birdhouse and a birdfeeder.



While the birdhouse is store-bought, the birdfeeder is a fun and easy craft you can make with your child or grandchild. Materials you need are a 2 liter empty soda bottle with the label removed, a small foot long dowel rod, a strong cord, and scissors. Carefully poke a hole in each side of the plastic bottle near the bottom for the perch. Cut two U-shaped cuts two inches above each perch hole and bend them outwards like an awning. Punch two

holes under the rim of the bottle for the hanger and thread a piece of strong cord through the holes to hang the feeder. Insert the dowel rod through the perch holes. Fill the bottle with birdseed and put the bottle cap back on. Now your feeder is ready for the birds!

Another fun activity is decorating a nearby tree with treats that will attract the birds. We hang pretzels, balls of suet, slices of oranges and pomegranates with pretty ribbons on a nearby tree.

A great book to use when identifying birds with your youngsters is *Birds of Alaska Field Guide*, by Stan Tekiela (2005) Adventure Publications. It categorizes the birds based on their dominant color, which makes it incredibly easy to locate the species of bird nibbling on your feeder or tree.

Happy Birding!

Chickadee Trivia

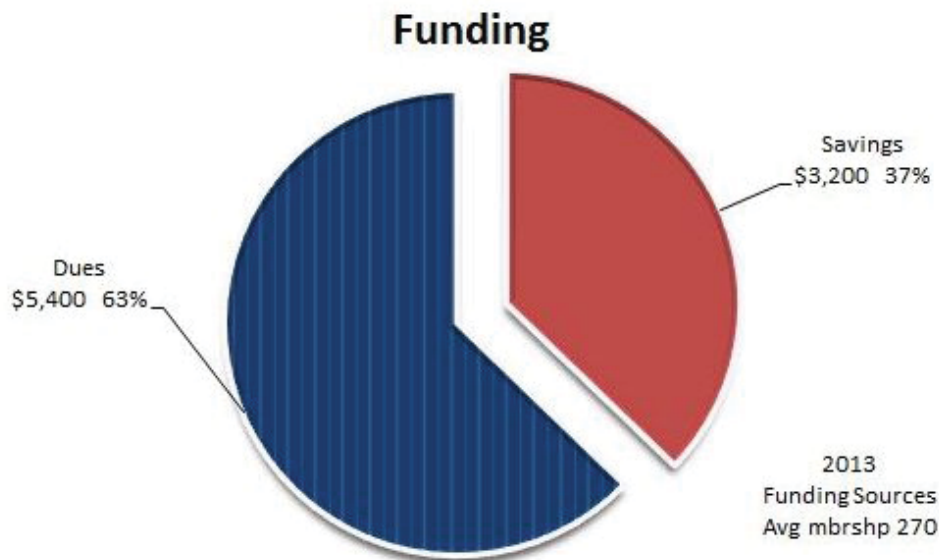
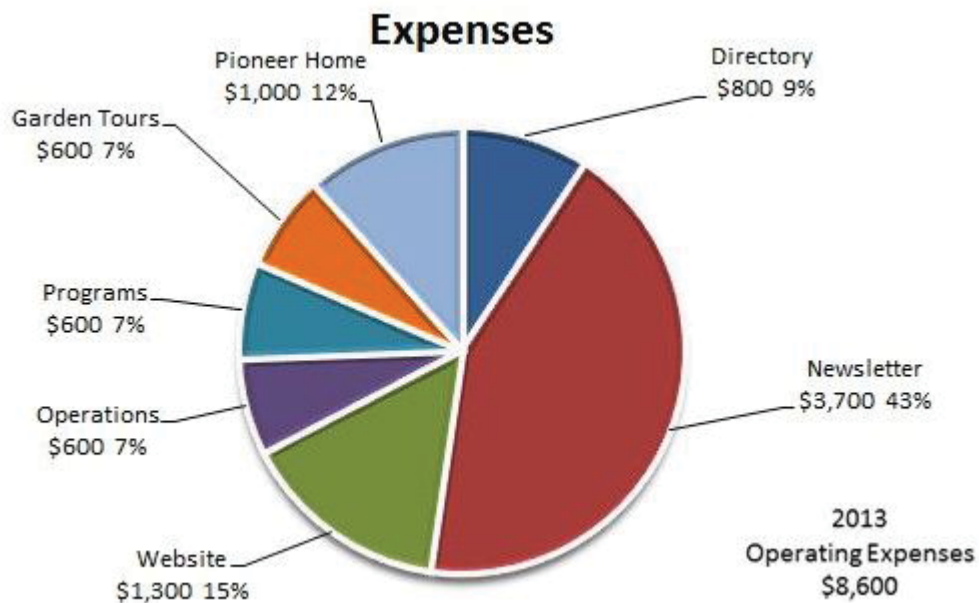
There are several species of these. In our area we most often see the Black-capped Chickadee. Did you know that they weigh less than half an ounce? In winter, if the temps drop below 10 degrees, they can double their chances for survival with access to a feeder! They can increase their weight by 10% during the day, and lose 10% overnight on a cold night. Think about this the next time you see one at your feeders. Enjoy the birds!

The More You Know...(About the AMGA) From Cindy Walker, AMGA Treasurer

AMGA has a lot to brag about. Our membership received monthly newsletters throughout the year, informative programs were provided at our general meetings from September through May and this past year we visited twenty-two different gardens. We modernized the website by adding a more efficient email contact system for better communication; provided online renewal capability; continued to support our Pioneer Home service project and donated our time to other numerous worthy projects throughout the year.

Our ambitious efforts have been accomplished without an increase in annual dues. However, providing this level of program and activities during 2013 required about one-third of our annual operating budget to be funded from our savings account.

The AMGA board has been carefully examining expenses to better align our annual operating expenses with our dues income. Below are charts illustrating our expenses and funding for 2013. The largest portion of our annual budget is providing the newsletter in hard copy format and will be a topic of discussion for the AMGA Board in 2014.



A Daughter's Love By Jill Shepherd

Hidden in the gardens that surround the Anchorage Senior Activity Center are plants whose ancestors once flourished in some of early Anchorage's finest flower gardens.

"Nothing is written down," said Bonnie Tisler, who has started mapping the garden's plants. A volunteer, Bonnie is the center's head gardener. This summer the diminutive 74-year-old logged 238 hours, not counting October.



Senior Center Grounds
Photo by Jane Baldwin

Bonnie got involved with the senior center through her mother, the late Catherine Weimer, one of Anchorage's earliest gardeners and a senior center founder. (Bonnie's brother Pete Weimer also is an active ASAC member.) For many years Catherine donated

plants for the center's spring plant sale from her large garden at 1207 G Street. When Bonnie started gardening for her mother in 1987, she helped get plants ready for the sale.

"I did softwood cuttings and rootings in the fall," she said, and overwintered the plants in pots in the vegetable garden.

Gardeners didn't purchase plants from nurseries in the 1930s, when Catherine would have been a young married woman.

"Mom ordered Burpee seeds and grew her own bedding plants," Bonnie said. "Most of Mom's shrubs and trees were from other Anchorage gardeners, like Jane Hafling, Elsie Coats and Aileen Strutz." Many of these shared perennials, trees and shrubs made their way into the senior center gardens as leftovers from the plant sales.

"There are lots of her poppies here, and lilacs from a 1946 plant," Bonnie said over lunch at the Rose Cafe, which overlooks the center's south gardens. "If I find a raspberry bush out there, I know it's mother's -- that it didn't sell and got put somewhere." Bonnie says she often sits on her mother's bench in the center's garden, a bench with a commemorative plaque on it. "It's nice," she said, smiling at the memories.

We met for lunch in the center's Rose Cafe, which overlooks the south gardens. It was October 18 and Bonnie had just finished the last chore of the year--spreading 15 wheelbarrels of compost.

"It takes a truckload of grass to fill three compost bins," said Bonnie, who mixes and turns the piles of compost by herself.



Bonnie received her
MG certification in 2013.
Photo by Jane Baldwin

"I really enjoy hard work," said Bonnie, who said she will keep on doing the work as long as she feels good. "And I feel good. Nothing hurts." Bonnie admits that it would be nice to have a co-volunteer, one who had regular hours and their own work, but she insists she doesn't want to be a supervisor, or schedule volunteers. She says she isn't responsible for watering or mowing the lawn. Lynne Duncan, a fellow master gardener, volunteers twice a week.

"I would love to mentor new gardeners, somebody who wants to learn how to garden," she said. She also said there are projects that other volunteer gardeners could take on, such as developing an herb garden

Bonnie comes from a family that arrived in Anchorage almost 100 years ago. Her grandparents, Peter and Agnes Cavanaugh, arrived in Anchorage in 1915 via the Klondike, Washington and Nome. Their daughter Catherine was born here in 1916, and Bonnie was one of the first babies born at the old Providence Hospital.

"Everybody had a garden," said Bonnie. "My mother gardened from age 6 to 92," said Bonnie, and the family also had a stump ranch on the outskirts of town.

Catherine, who died in 2009, eventually moved to the Anchorage Pioneer Home, and enjoyed the gardens maintained there by the Alaska Master Gardeners Association. Bonnie recently started donating \$500 a year in her mother's name to the AMGA for plant purchases.

"Mom was a plant person. It's the kind of donation that she would make," Bonnie said.

Volunteers are the BEST
kinds of people!

Google Search Tips for Gardeners -- Part 1

Mike Baldwin



Just because your garden is dormant this winter, it doesn't mean that your mind needs to go dormant! Instead of digging into the dirt, you can dig into the vast amount of information on the Internet to help prepare you for the gardening season. All of the information you could possibly want is at your fingertips. To paraphrase that old yellow pages slogan "let your fingers do the digging - it's a snap!"

As we all know from searching the internet for various topics there is a ton of information out there - some good, some bad, and some ugly! Frequently, it takes a while to sort through the websites to find exactly what you want. There are a number of different search engines or websites out there, of which Google (www.google.com) is probably the most widely used.

To help you narrow down your searches to (hopefully) more relevant information, here are a few tips that will help weed out the bad and ugly information and produce useful information. There are three basic search strategies that should help weed out the bad and ugly information: quotation marks, site type search, and filetype search.

Quotation Marks -- This is often a good place to start if you have a general topic but don't know exactly what you are looking for, but would like to explore a bit. Quotation marks are the most basic of search strategies that allow you to narrow your search results slightly more than if you just typed your topic of interest into the Google search box.

For example if you are interested in learning more about growing rhubarb you can type "growing rhubarb" into the google search box and it will find you all of the websites that have that exact phrase on them.

While you explore the websites you found with quotation marks you can begin to refine your search and become more specific in what you are seeking. This will allow you to use the next two strategies to greater effect.

Site Type Search -- Information can come from a large number of sources, many of which are of questionable credibility. One way to improve your confidence in the information is to limit your searches to sources or website domains that tend to have more reliable and accurate information. Three types of site domains to focus upon are organization sites (.org), educational sites (.edu), or government sites (.gov).

For example, if you are a peony grower and are concerned about thrips and the damage they could do to your flowers, you could do a site specific search for information. In the Google search box you would type the phrase:

- site.gov thrips to search government or agriculture sites for information on thrips,
- site.edu thrips to search for thrips in university or cooperative extension sites,

- site.org thrips to search organizational type domains for content on thrips.

These three site domain types will produce some great content specific sites to explore for your desired information.

Filetype Search -- Sometimes, even though you have narrowed your search to specific content related websites there is still a lot of information to sift through. You can focus your search even finer by searching for a specific type of document or filetype. It is possible to search for different document types, presentations, or even photographs.

If you were growing tomatoes and noticed the leaves were starting to look funny and you thought it might be tomato wilt, you could do a specific search for different documents or file types to help you diagnose the problem, and figure out a remedy. In the Google search box you would type the phrase:

- filetype:ppt tomato wilt to find power point presentations,
- filetype:pdf tomato wilt to retrieve adobe acrobat formatted documents,
- filetype:doc tomato wilt or filetype:docx wilt to pull up related word documents,
- filetype:jpg tomato wilt to locate photographs.

These three basic search strategies should hopefully help you find the information you want in a more efficient manner AND find information that is more reliable and accurate. Down the garden path a bit, after you've had a chance to practice with these strategies, there will be some additional search strategies that can help you refine your searches even more.

Stay tuned...In the meantime, Happy Data Digging!

Weather Trivia (results of a Google Search)

Q: What is the difference between sleet, hail, and freezing rain?

A: Hail is a chunk or stone of ice dropped from a thunderstorm. Sleet is frozen rain. Freezing rain is liquid rain that freezes to a surface such as the road or a tree.

Q: True or False: It must be 32°F or colder for it to snow.

A: False. It has been known to snow with temperatures in the mid 40's. Temperatures are below 32°F up in the clouds where the snow is forming.

Q: On the average, one inch of rain is equivalent to how many inches of snow?

A: 10 inches of snow melts down to about an inch of liquid rain.

Q: Can it snow from clear skies?

A: Yes. Ice crystals sometimes fall from clear skies when temperatures are in the single digits or colder.



Bird Chatter

Rosemary Kimball has a secret admirer - the '12 days of Christmas' gifts were left in her mailbox:

- A Partridge in a pear tree---a wonderful box of pears whose juice tasted like perfume
- Two turtle doves---two bars of Dove soap
- Three French hens---Three Cornish game hens
- Four calling birds---an Audubon bird clock
- Five gold rings---A package of crispy onion rings
- Six Geese a-Laying - a goose call
- Seven Swans a-Swimming--- seven 'ugly ducklings'
- Eight Maids - Milking --- a can of Country Maid Canned Skim Milk
- Nine Ladies Dancing---a book on belly dancing
- Ten Lords a-Leaping---"Little Lord Fauntleroy" novel
- Eleven Pipers Piping---A recorder with a 'how to' book
- Twelve Drummers Drumming---will remain unknown.



From Rosemary: "By the time I got home at 4PM some low life had taken the present out of the bag, taking the ornament too. Unless someone fesses up, we will never know."

Sweet Corn in Container Question:

In response to Kathy Wartinbee's question about sweet corn (December Issue, Central Peninsula Master Gardener News) from Sharon Schlicht:

In summer 2013 I grew sweet corn in a container on the south side of my garage in Anchorage for the first time and it was great! Eight corn stalks produced eight ears of corn, each about 5" to 6" long. The corn was tasty and very sweet. Unfortunately I don't know what kind it was. I got plugs from Sutton's Greenhouse when they were about 3" tall and looked like blades of grass. Our unusually warm summer likely contributed to the success of my crop.

2014 Online Master Gardener Course February 18 - May 16th, 2014

The online MG Course is an opportunity for folks interested in Master Gardener training who haven't been able to work the in-person class dates into busy schedules. The online course might be the answer.

Pass the word to those you know who might be interested. As is the case with in-person MG training courses, the online course is only being offered once a year. Online registration for the 2014 online MG course is now open with a February 17th deadline for registering. The course begins February 18th and runs through May 16th.

Information from the link below says that "the course is comprised of self-paced lessons, quizzes, a book report and a final exam and takes students approximately 3 hours per week to complete".

Link to registration information:
<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/gardening/mastergardeners/online/>

Herb Study Group Update Artemisia: 2014 Herb of the Year From Sharon Schlicht

The Herb Study Group meets once a month except during the gardening season when we volunteer in the herb garden at ABG. At our December meeting Julie Riley presented "Growing Herbs Indoors." She included herbs that are not winter hardy, those that can't be grown outside even in summer, herbs that fit in windowsill-sized pots, those that must be eaten fresh, and herbs that have low light requirements. A list of favorite herbs to grow was provided.

Debbie Hinchey shared information from the 2011 MG Conference in Fairbanks about making your own hydroponic garden. Julie discussed Aerogardens and included information from Pat Anderson about revisions her son made. Gina Docherty shared a Kitazawa seed catalog and recommended it as a good source of Asian vegetable and herb seeds and recipes.

The topic for the January meeting is Artemisia - the 2014 Herb of the Year. Each year since 1995 the International Herb Association has highlighted an Herb of the Year. In order to be considered for this honor, the herb must be outstanding in at least two of three major categories: medicinal, culinary, or decorative.

The International Herb Association states "This diverse herb [Artemisia] family contains many strikingly different plants, from the highly decorative Artemisia ludoviciana 'Silver King' to the delicious and tender French tarragon (Artemisia dracunculoides 'Sativa'). Artemisia has a long history, prominent in folklore, its virtues used in numerous ways: to protect and heal, create tasty beverages and foods, decorate the home and work its magical properties."

You can learn more about this herb at the January meeting of the Herb Study Group. Contact Julie Riley at jariley@alaska.edu for meeting details.

When you think of trees, do you think of these? Nickel LaFleur

Last week I was dreaming of some fabulous trees that would be great to incorporate in our South Central landscape and wanted to share the list of what I came up with -- it includes trees and shrubs in no particular order.

- Ivory Silk Lilac - a lovely, lovely vased-shaped lilac that blooms late and has fragrant light yellow flowers.
- Copper Curls Pekin Lilac Tree - it wants to be a shrub, love its golden peeling bark that reminds me of an Amur Chokecherry.
- Saskatoon Berry - beautiful shrub that provides color and delicious purple fruit.
- Little Leaf Linden - my tree friend gurus insist this fragrant tree is a winner - and too underutilized in Anchorage—let's plant 'em
- Black Locust 'Purple Robe' - I love everything about this tree. Anyone have a black locust in South Central?
- Chanticleer Pear - though this is rated a zone 5, we

Garden Event Calendar

are able to grow the Ussurian Pear and some have had success with the Bradford Pear. In Alaska, pear trees don't provide fruit for us to eat but they do have the wonderful smell in the spring we love and is a good alternative to the dreaded bird cherry. My favorite pear tree the Ussurian Pear is at UAA by Edward & Cathryn Rasmuson Hall

- Katsura - a favorite in Southeast Alaska and one I've been thinking of planting in Anchorage for years.

- Toba Hawthorne - small fragrant landscape tree that can handle -40° so let's give it a whirl.

- Amur Maple - it likes to be a shrub rather than a tree; imagine a hedge of them - gorgeous!

- Scarlet Oak - is one of the few oaks that have leaves that change colors and found mostly on the East Coast. Here the Pin Oak and Burr Oak are the only two varieties I know that are thriving.

Hope my dream-list of trees stimulates your decisions to plant more trees on your property.

Welcome Master Gardener Class of 2013 - 2014!

Jane Atuk
Claudia Behr
John Combs
Suzanne Farley
Martha Farris
Charlotte Fox
Tyler Glodt
Robin Harter
Connie Jense
Sally Jungreis
Verena Kaeppele
Carolyn Lassiter
Katherine Lightwood
Kathy Liska
Sue Looney
Richard Lott

Shirley Mathews
Samuel Miles
FX Nolan
Scott Presley
Heather Probasco
Ann Rappoport
Shay Salat
Deborah Schaffer
Sharon Schlicht
Nina Schwinghammer
Keirsten Smart
LaVerne Smith
Diana Steer
Terry Tarner
Andrea Trent
Byron Turner



Julie Riley speaks to the new MG class at the Green Connection. Photo by Tony Flores

January 3

Herb Study Group: "Artemisia: Herb of the Year, 2014" Meets at the CES, 12 -1:30 p.m.

January 20

AMGA Monthly Meeting: "New for 2014: Vegetables, Herbs and Flowers" by Julie Riley 7:00 p.m. Annual Meeting and Election Results www.alaskamastergardeners.org

February 7

Herb Study Group: "Artemisia, Part II" Meets at the CES, 12 -1:30 p.m.

February 5-9

Northwest Flower & Garden Show "Art in Bloom" Seattle www.gardenshow.com

February 17

AMGA Monthly Meeting: Master Gardener's Summer Recap/ Annual Potluck/Seed Exchange 7:00 p.m. www.alaskamastergardeners.org

If you or your organization have gardening events you would like listed here, please send them to: Cheryl Shroyer: clshroyer@hotmail.com

Online Permaculture Course Offered

The Alaska Cold Climate Permaculture Institute and the AlaskanEcoEscape Permaculture Center teamed up with APU to provide an on-line, cold-climate Permaculture Design Course specifically for Alaskans.

Permaculture is a design science that looks to the past to help us design a sustainable lifestyle for the future. Life-long Alaskan, Cindee Karns, along with other guest teachers, will bring you this 72 hour course and help you design a system just for your corner of Alaska.

The dates are: January 6, 2014 - April 25, 2014
Learn more here: <http://alaskapermaculture.com/on-line-alaska-cold-climate-permaculture-course/>



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

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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Welcome MG Class of 2013 - 2014!
Photo by Tony Flores

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