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**AMGA**  
**NEWSLETTER**  
September 2014  
Volume 16, Issue 9

### Message from Barbara Baker, Co-President

Hooray! AMGA received its federal IRS non-profit status. This fantastic news means we can accept donations and gifts from people and businesses and provide them with a tax deduction. In addition, we can submit grant applications available to nonprofits that are focused on the mission of master gardeners. Receiving 501(c)3 status provides another leg in the stool of financial stability and growth for our organization.

AMGA was organized and has operated as a volunteer nonprofit since it began, but it took the efforts of many to achieve this recent goal. Our founders established strong bylaws and fiscal principles. Some improvements have been made over the years, but a recent push by our present and former board members helped make our application accepted by IRS without changes. In particular, please thank Cindy Walker and Jane Baldwin for their tireless efforts in this process.

What's next? The success of our recent plant sale allows us to start our own grant program and provide another vehicle to further knowledge of gardening practices and promote community gardening projects. Details of the grant program are being finalized and will provide for educational and gardening project grants.

The grant program is timely, as the cost of master gardening classes has risen to \$300. Our grant dollars could assist in tuition, making sure there are future master gardeners in our community. The program also envisions training opportunities for master gardeners who are willing to share what they learn. Many of our members are involved in community garden projects and have expressed a desire to broaden access to underserved populations. Others have remarked on the importance to create and maintain educational and therapeutic gardens or raise awareness of sustainable gardening practices. These purposes can all be considered under our grant program.

As fall begins, it is time to say thank-you to all of you who made our summer garden tours such a success and remind everyone to mark your calendar for our next meeting on September 15 at 7:00 p.m. We will be meeting at the Cooperative Extension Office where we will hear a presentation on Trees and Shrub Plantings of Anchorage by Nickel LaFleur and a team of tree experts and arborists. Please join us!

Anchorage Notable Trees (link to pdf on AMGA website under "Resources")  
UAA Campus Tree Tour: (found on UAA website)  
<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/fcs/maintenanceoperations/operations/landscaping.cfm>



*"By all these lovely tokens  
September days are here  
With summer's best of weather  
And autumn's best of cheer."  
- Author Unknown*

### Inside This Issue....

Message from Barbara Baker  
August AMGA Garden Tour Photos  
First Annual AMGA Plant and Garden Art Sale  
Treasurer's Report  
Growing Young Gardeners: Weeding  
Growing Young Gardeners: Rainy Day Activities  
Another Favorite Perennial: Anemone Nemorosa  
Bird Chatter  
Varied Thrush  
Recipes From the Garden: Rhubarb Custard Bars  
Volunteer Opportunities  
Garden Event Calendar

## August Garden Tour Photos

August 18th, Sharon Davies

August 4, Anchorage Senior Center [Photos by Lynne Opstad]



(Photo by Barbara Baker)



Photo by Tony Flores

August 11, Dennis & Annie Ronsse [Photos by Mike Baldwin]

July 28, Sherri Spangler (Photos by Barbara Baker)



# AMGA's First Annual Late Summer Plant and Garden Art Sale

By Sheila Toomey



[Photo by Mike Baldwin]

ers vanished as early morning volunteers helped set up tables that quickly filled with greenery and art. In all, 21 members offered plants for sale, producing approximately \$4,300 gross income.

The usual split is 75 percent for the seller and 25 percent to AMGA. However, an unexpected number of sellers donated all their receipts to AMGA.

A wide variety of garden perennials was offered -- the familiar favorites but also some unusual lust-worthy plants. Few who saw the *Dianthus barbatus nigrescens*, 'Sooty,' could resist snagging one. It's a Sweet William with flowers so maroon they seem almost black, growing on red stems.

And how about that *Astilbe 'Maggie Daley'*? Huge and filled with blossoms. What does it matter that you already have five healthy *Astilbe* in your garden?

Offering free classes and roving "Ask a Master Gardener" services proved as popular as we hoped. We need to thank Julie Riley and CES for their support here. And for use of their parking lot -- a great location for a Saturday sale.

Many buyers said they stopped by after seeing Harry Dauber's big signs on A and C Streets. Others got the word ahead of time from Fran Durner's beautiful posters tacked to bulletin boards around town.



[Photo by Mike Baldwin]

Restless clouds threatened rain and wannabe customers had to conquer an A-Street construction maze, but enough true Alaska gardeners showed up to make our first late-season plant sale a success.

Pre-sale jitters about having enough sellers, organizing an attractive display venue, and getting the word out to interested garden-

As expected, this first sale provided lessons for future sales:

- Jane Baldwin, unofficial foreman of the event, was surprised at the interest in buying and selling house plants, plus non-hardies like dahlias and succulents.
- The check-out system for art needs some work -- the white tag-yellow tag plan isn't quite right for non-plants
- And we don't really know how many customers we attracted. Perhaps next year a volunteer can sit at the check-put station and make tick marks on a piece of paper.

These are obviously minor issues compared to the over-all success of the sale. The AMGA board will do a post-mortem to assess plusses and minuses. Member input would be greatly appreciated. E-mail helpful observations and suggestions to [stoomey@ymail.com](mailto:stoomey@ymail.com).

For those who worked so hard, and so hopefully, to put the event together, Jane's summation says it all:

"We found a niche with the late summer plant sale -- and I think most of us are ready to call it an annual affair."

Too right!



[Photo by Mike Baldwin]

## Treasurer's Report

Balances 6/30/14

Checking	5757.92
Saving	11677.14
	<hr/>
	\$17435.06
Dedicated Funds	\$6453.86
Revenue:	
Interest	1.49
Membership	20.00
	<hr/>
	\$21.49
Expense:	
Operations	49.99
Website	85.00
	<hr/>
	\$134.99

Balances 7/31/14

Checking	5642.93
Savings	11678.63
	<hr/>
	\$17321.56
Dedicated Funds	\$6453.86

## Growing Young Gardeners: "Weeding"

by Amy Reed, MG

My least favorite job in my flower beds is picking weeds. It seems arduous and overwhelming at times. I thought I was in heaven when my four year old said she wanted to help me weed the gardens. Terrific! On each of her hands went the cartoon Dora gloves. She then put on her special gardening boots that light up with each step. We were ready to tackle the side garden bed, in which overnight seem to be teeming with chickweed, butter and eggs (toadflax), and dandelions.

"What do you want me to pick, Mommy?" she asked. I showed her the dandelion flowers and leaves and said, "Anything with a yellow flower goes in the bucket". We worked silently for a few minutes pulling out weeds. Anyone that is a parent or grandparent knows that silence in children usually means trouble is brewing, right?! "Look Mommy what I have!", she exclaimed as she held my yellow trolius aloft. "They are yellow! Are they a weed?" I guess I should have clarified a bit better what "yellow weeds" are, so it was a learning experience for both of us!



Beauty is in the eye of the beholder when it comes to flowers versus weeds. I personally think butter and eggs plants are quite pretty when bloomed and wish they weren't so invasive in my garden. My family, who was

visiting from Upstate NY, commented on the beauty of the cow's parsnip flowers as they dotted the roadside. Little did they know that my husband had declared war with the weed whacker in attempts to eradicate the cow's parsnip from the boundaries of our property.

Next time you feel overwhelmed by your garden's weeds, step back for a moment to admire plant's flowers, and then enlist the help of family or friends. Promise a snack or a cold drink at the completion of the job well done. Just be sure to fully clarify what is a weed!

## Growing Young Gardeners: Rainy Day Activities

by Amy Reed, MG

As Alaskans know, the rainy days of August and September are upon us. With that are the inevitable sighs and whines heard from our children and grandchildren of "I'm bored!" Having a well-stocked craft closet or bin can usually be the cure for the rainy-day blues. Below are some fun craft activities that will chase away the boredom.

### Lilies of the Valley

This is a great activity to discuss the anatomy of a flower with youngsters.

What you will need:

White and Green Construction Paper  
Yellow and Green Pipe Cleaners  
Scissors  
Clear Tape

First, fold a piece of white construction paper in half and trace the outline of your child's hand on the paper with a pencil. Cut out the outline so you have two white hands.

Repeat the process with the green paper so you end up with two white hands and two green hands.

Cut a 5 inch piece of the yellow pipe cleaner. Fold it in half and tip the two ends down to make the stamen of the center of the lily.

Use a 12 inch piece of green pipe cleaner for the stem of the lily. Fold the end down over the center of the stamen to attach the two pieces. Wrap the two white construction paper hands around the stamen to make the petals of the lily. Hold the petals in place with a piece of clear tape. Wrap the two green hand shapes around the base of the white petals to form the outer part of the lily. Hold the green hand together in place with the clear tape.



### Grass Heads

This is the homemade version of the "Chia Pet" phenomenon.

What you need:

Grass seeds  
Soil  
Pantyhose  
Piece of string  
Plastic Cup  
Google Eyes  
Red Felt  
Glue

First take the pantyhose (really only need knee-high size) and add a generous amount of grass seed to the toe portion. Then add a lot of soil until you have a good-sized ball. Tie the bottom of the tights, forming it into a nice-sized ball. Twist a "nose" into the side of the ball and tie it with a small string or piece of cotton. Add the google eyes and cut a shape of a mouth out of the red felt, gluing everything onto the ball to form a face. Place the ball with grass seeds up into the plastic cup and water thoroughly. Place in a sunny spot. In a few days, the "head" will grow grass!



## Another Favorite Perennial: Anemone Nemorosa

By Gina Docherty

[Reference source: Wikipedia]

Anemone is a genus of about 120 species of flowering plants in the family Ranunculaceae. They are native to the temperate zones, and closely related to Pulsatilla ('Pasque flower') and Hepatica; some botanists include both of these genera within Anemone.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, Greek anemōnē means "daughter of the wind". The Metamorphoses of Ovid tells that the plant was created by the goddess Venus when she sprinkled nectar on the blood of her dead lover Adonis. The name "windflower" is used for the whole genus as well as the wood anemone *A. nemorosa*.

Some of the more familiar anemones here in Anchorage are *A. sylvestris*, or snowdrop anemone; this is the white one that is so pretty, but spreads like crazy! It is very hardy, & has a fibrous (spreading) root. Another one that some people have luck with is the Japanese anemone, *A. hupehensis*, which is taller, and hardy in zones 4-8.



White *A. nemorosa*  
Photo from Wikipedia

My favorite anemone is *Anemone nemorosa*. It is an early-spring flowering plant, a native of Europe, and also hardy in zones 4-8. The *Anemone nemorosa* has underground tubers or rhizomes, naturally found in woodland & alpine pastures, but they

don't 'run wild' like its cousin *A. sylvestris*. Cultivation requirements are moist, well drained, humus-rich soil in sun to partial shade; drier conditions are tolerated when dormant in summer.

"Many woodland plants have bulbs or tubers in which to store food until it is needed to produce new growth. *Anemone nemorosa* has small, skinny rhizomes that rapidly spread through leaf litter just below the surface.



Blue *A. nemorosa*  
Photo from Wikipedia

Opportunists through and through, they colonize freely. Even the smallest piece of rhizome will rapidly make a new plant. As always, emulating nature is the simplest way to increase stock. Small pieces of rhizome can be broken off the parent plant and replanted with a little

fresh compost or leaf mold. From one or two pots, a thriving colony can soon be established.

*A planting of wood anemones can disappear on a dull day. The flowers remain closed and hang their heads, protecting delicate and precious pollen from lashing rain. When the sun shines, stems straighten and the flowers are held aloft, fully open, following the sun's course across the sky."*

[<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/how-to-grow/3298471/How-to-grow-Anemone-nemorosa.html>]

Cultivars:

- 'Alba Plena' - double white
  - 'Allenii' - large lavender-blue flowers, often with seven petals
  - 'Blue Bonnet' - deep blue flowers, blooms late
  - 'Blue Eyes' - double white with blue 'eyes'
  - 'Bowles' Purple' - purple flowers
  - 'Bracteata Pleniflora' - double, white flowers, with green streaks and a frilly ruff of bracts
  - 'Robinsoniana' - large, pale lavender-blue flowers with creamy gray backs
  - 'Rosea' - slightly hairy leaves, with elliptic, hairless, red-purple flowers
  - 'Royal Blue' - deep blue flowers with purple backs
  - 'Vestal' - White, outer circle of large petals surrounding a center of overlapping, tiny petals
  - 'Virescens' - flowers mutated into small conical clusters of leaves
  - 'Wilk's Giant' - large single white flowers
- These were the varieties (plus a few more) found on Wikipedia - many more colors and cultivars can be found by 'Googling' around.



*Anemone x lipsiensis* with its parents  
*Anemone x lipsiensis*, a hybrid between *A. nemorosa* and *A. ranunculoides*, has pale yellow flowers; *A. x lipsiensis* 'Pallida' is the best-known result of this cross. It has been awarded the Award of Garden Merit H4 (hardy throughout the British Isles), like both of its parents.  
Photo from Wikipedia



## Bird Chatter

Thanks to Fran Durner for designing the 3 beautiful posters for our 1st annual AMGA Plant & Garden Art Sale!

### Directory Photos

It's time to begin thinking about the MG Directory. A good place to start is with member photos. If any member has 1 or 2 photos of this summer would you please send them to me? [dsharr@ptialaska.net](mailto:dsharr@ptialaska.net).

They can be of flowers, gardens, MG members. Your photos make the directory personal and more interesting. Any questions, please e-mail me.

Thanks,  
Sandy Harrington

### Varied Thrush

By Sandy Harrington

When we moved into our subdivision in 1980, it was surrounded by 50 acres of Boreal Forest that bordered Far North Bicentennial Park. Besides the many Alaskan plants, shrubs and old growth trees, the second most fascinating part of this ideal environment was the variety of birds. There were large flocks of Grosbeaks, a few Great Northern Owls, Yellow Warblers, Kinglets, and of course Nuthatches and Chickadees. One treasured time there was a Boreal Owl sitting on a low tree branch over the trail. The small owl bided its time by watching my dog, Meg, and me as though we were the curiosity. Another memorable sighting was of a Spruce Grouse with tail fanned out and looking so very pleased with himself. We were treated to a stunning magisterial fearless strut. He may have been put out that we didn't applaud. And, of course, there were quite a few Spruce Hens otherwise known as the jokesters, because they wait until a person is right beside them on the trail and then they abruptly fling themselves into the air. It's one of those moments a person is apt to levitate a few inches off the ground with his or her heart jack hammering.

The occasional and seldom seen Varied Thrush was a "big eyed" moment with many whispered "there's a Thrush" and excited pointing. The Varied Thrush is a shy, secretive and solitary bird that tends to inhabit dark, dense coniferous forests. Similar but a bit smaller than a Robin, the Thrush has gray upper parts, a rust brown throat with breast, sides, and eyebrows of the same color. Other identifiable characteristics are a black breast band, gray wings with two rust brown bars and a gray tail with white corners. Even with a detailed description the Varied Thrush is mostly identified by its song, which is a one note high pitched whistle with pauses in-between. The single note pitch has been described

as F minor tone. For those of us not musically inclined, knowing what an F minor tone may not mean much, but I would think those fortunate enough to be familiar with F minor tones would be enchanted.

It felt like a lucky and unusual day when a Varied Thrush was spotted, but just recently we had a mixed group of migrating birds spend two days in our yard eating berries and splashing about in the birdbaths and the small fountain. Among the visitors were four Varied Thrushes. As Varied Thrush do not normally flock it was a rare opportunity to see four together. It became obvious they were the more aggressive of the many birds flying those two days. There were lots of chases and many Cotoneaster berries protected and Thrush ingested.

So often in the garden I am focused on the ground with my hands in the soil tending to the plants. I would hope if I hear a bird singing, I will lift my eyes to find the avian gift of nature that shares my space.



Varied Thrush - Female  
Photo from Wikipedia



Varied Thrush - Male  
Photo from Wikipedia

**Recipes from the Garden:  
Rhubarb Custard Bars**  
[Submitted by Janice Berry]

**Crust:**

1 c. all-purpose flour  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup finely chopped pecans  
6 Tbsp butter

**Filling:**

$\frac{1}{3}$  c. all-purpose flour  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  c. sugar  
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  c. milk  
3 large eggs  
5 c. sliced fresh or frozen rhubarb (thawed)

**Topping:**

$\frac{1}{2}$  c. sugar  
8 oz. block-style cream cheese  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp vanilla extract  
1 c. frozen whipped topping, thawed

**Instructions:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.  
Prepare crust by combining flour, pecans and butter.  
Cut in butter with a pastry blender or 2 knives (or your fingers!) until the mixture resembles coarse meal.  
Press into the bottom of a 13x9" baking dish coated with cooking spray. Bake for 10 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack.

Combine  $\frac{1}{3}$  c. flour and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups sugar in a large bowl; add milk and eggs, stirring with a whisk until well blended. Stir in rhubarb. Pour rhubarb mixture over crust. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes or until set. Cool to room temperature.

Prepare topping by placing  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar, cream cheese, and vanilla in a bowl. Beat with a mixer at medium speed until smooth. Gently fold in whipped topping; spread evenly over baked custard. Cover and chill at least 1 hour.

## Volunteer Opportunities Available

\*Educational articles needed for the AMGA newsletter

\*Updates & expansion of the AMGA website: Links updates, Plant Culture Tips (specifically for food growers, fruits, organic gardening, soils, lawns, compost, garden pests/IPM, invasive species, etc.), compilation of 'Ask a MG' correspondence; creating a "FAQ" page, etc.

\*Suggestions, ideas & comments are always welcome!

If you are interested in volunteering for a project, please contact:

Gina Docherty - [amga@alaska.net](mailto:amga@alaska.net)

# Garden Event Calendar

## MEETINGS and EVENTS

### Thursday, September 4

"The Store Outside Your Door": Anchorage Garden Club monthly public meeting, 7:00 pm, Pioneer Schoolhouse 437 E 3rd Avenue.

### Saturday, September 6

ABG 6th Annual Harvest Day and Scarecrow Contest, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, \$7.00 per person, \$5.00 with donation of 3 canned goods or bags of garden produce, Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage.

### Monday, September 8

Mat-Su Master Gardener's Monthly Meeting: Garden Tour of the Fairgrounds, 3:00 pm, Eckert Gardens, Alaska State Fairgrounds, Palmer.

### Tuesday, September 9

Alaska Rock Garden Society: Weeding the Rock Garden, 10:00 - 12:00. Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage.

### Monday, September 15

Anchorage AMGA Meeting: Notable Tree and Shrub Plantings of Anchorage, speakers Master Gardeners: Nickel LaFleur, Patricia Joyner, and Jill Sheperd. In the late 80's, master gardeners developed a listing and map of notable plantings in some of Anchorage's oldest neighborhoods. This presentation provides an update to the original survey and subsequent revisions, 7:00 pm, CES - 1675 C Street.

### Thursday, September 18

Forest Tree Identification: Patricia Joyner from the Alaska Community Forestry Program will lead a hike in and around the Alaska Botanical Garden. Learn about boreal and coastal forest tree species. 6:00 pm. Wear clothing appropriate for the temperature. Hike coordinator: Beth Baker [daisymae@mtaonline.net](mailto:daisymae@mtaonline.net). Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage.

### Tuesday, September 28

Alaska Orchid Monthly Meeting, 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm, Details at: [www.akorchid.org](http://www.akorchid.org).

## CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

### Saturday, September 13

\*\*Harvest Day, Alaska Mill and Feed:

Avoiding a MOOSE in Your Garden, by Rosa Meehan, Master Gardener, 10:00 am - 11:00 am, 1501 E First Avenue.

See [www.alaskamillandfeed.com](http://www.alaskamillandfeed.com) for additional classes.

\*\*Preparing Your Garden for Winter, by Julie Riley, Cooperative Extension Horticulture Agent, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm. See [www.alaskamillandfeed.com](http://www.alaskamillandfeed.com) for additional classes.

### Wednesday, September 17

ABG Workshop: Fall Perennials Workshop with Mike Montrusso, 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm, Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage, Cost \$20.00 ABG members.

### Saturday, September 27

\*\*ABG Workshop: Dividing and Growing Dahlias with Amelia Walsh, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm, Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage, Cost \$20.00 ABG members.

\*\*ABG Workshop: Growing Garlic in Alaska: Try a hands-on garlic tasting and planting session. Learn about the many varieties of garlic that perform well in Southcentral Alaska gardens. Led by Julianne McGuinness, 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm. ABG 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage, Cost \$20.00 ABG members.



Top: Master Gardeners and guests enjoyed a game of croquet



Bottom: Guests partook in a lovely dinner in the late afternoon

Panoramic shots from Sharon Davies Garden Party - - Photos by Tony Flores

## Newsletter Submission Deadline

The deadline for submitting an item for publication in the following month's edition of the AMGA newsletter is the 20th of every month. Items arriving after this date may or may not be included.

Educational or garden related articles, Bird Chatter, calendar items and announcements are always welcome.

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

AMGA Google Group:  
<https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups#!forum/AKMG>

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)

AMGA regularly meets at 7:00pm every third Monday of the month, September through May (except for December).

Meetings are held at the  
Anchorage Cooperative Extension Center  
1675 C Street, Suite 100  
(access off of 16th Avenue)

Monthly educational programs are free and open to the public. Visitors and guests are welcomed and encouraged.

*"The foliage has been losing its freshness through the month of August, and here and there a yellow leaf shows itself like the first gray hair amidst the locks of a beauty who has seen one season too many."*

*Oliver Wendell Holmes*



### AMGA Board of Directors

Barbara Baker	Co-President
Lynne Opstad	Co-President
Greg Kalal	Co-Vice President
Nickel LaFleur	Co-Vice President
Cindy Walker	Treasurer
Cheryl Shroyer	Secretary
Amy Olmstead	At large (Hospitality Chair)
Sheila Toomey	At large (Parliamentarian)

### Committee Chairs, Program Coordinators & Volunteers

- Broadcast Email Coordinator - Lynne Opstad
- Directory - Sandy Harrington
- Education/Advanced MG - Julie Riley, Ginny Moore
- Events Calendar - Martha Farris
- Google Group - Mary Rydesky - Administrator: Jane Baldwin, Gina Docherty, Nickel LaFleur - Managers
- Hospitality - Amy Olmstead
- Lifetime Achievement - Sandy Harrington
- Membership/Database - Jane Baldwin
- Newsletter - Gina Docherty
- Pioneer Home Gardens Coordinators - Camille Williams, Lynne Opstad
- Programs & Field Trips - Nickel LaFleur, Greg Kalal, Sheila Toomey
- Volunteer Coordinator - Sharon Schlicht
- Website - Gina Docherty