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## AMGA NEWSLETTER

April 2015  
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### Message from Lynne Opstad, Co-President

Spring is here, officially at least. This is the time of year when you wake up in the morning with the sun streaming in the windows and you think "I can't wait to get into the garden". But, stop, it's only 20 degrees outside! We have a bit more time before we can get our fingers in the soil, outside at least. By now some of your greenhouses are starting to see some action though. I've got a few things started in my sunroom, lacking a greenhouse, that will have to satisfy my urge to grow for now.

The events calendar is full of classes on every gardening subject imaginable. Look for plants sales to be listed soon. Early in the summer you can attend a plant sale in Anchorage almost every week to purchase those hard to find plants, find the perfect flower for that open spot in your garden, or get some new ideas and socialize with your fellow gardeners.

The AMGA has chosen the Alaska Centennial Rose Garden as our centennial project. Although the rose garden was established in 1967 for the Alaska centennial, it seems fitting to give it a much needed facelift for the Anchorage Centennial. Look for information about work parties and how you can help in future communications from the AMGA. Jane Baldwin is looking for people to start sweet peas for the garden now. She has the seeds if you have the space. Contact Jane if interested.

The Pioneer Home service project is recruiting volunteers for this summer's gardens. We need help with planting sometime in late May / early June and two volunteers per week to weed, water and deadhead throughout the summer. AMGA has been providing gardens for the residents of the Pioneer Home for over 30 years and the residents are so appreciative.

Master Gardeners can be found volunteering all over town in many capacities. If you have some spare time this summer consider volunteering at the Centennial

Rose Garden, Pioneer Home (contact Julie Ginder), the Anchorage Senior Center (contact Bonnie Tisler) or the Alaska Botanical Garden. Check with Sue Looney, the AMGA Volunteer Coordinator or Julie Riley for other volunteer opportunities.

As you can see, although it's only 20 degrees outside, the spring gardening fever is upon us. My guess is that many of you have already been to a local greenhouse, if not to buy then to just smell the scent of new growth. From here on out that sun will keep us going longer and longer throughout the day.

See you at the AMGA book sale at The Mall at Sears Spring Garden Show this weekend, April 4th from 10am- 5pm.



*The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers.*

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## AMGA March Meeting & Presentation: Hardy Roses / Centennial Garden

By Peggy Piper

March Madness, St. Patrick's Day, and the first meeting this year in the daylight! Fifty-one of us flocked to hear about Hardy Roses.

Announcements and Reminders by Barbara Baker:

\* Still time to donate gardening related books for the book sale April 4th at the Sears Mall Garden Show. Funds raised will benefit graduates.

\* Alaska Botanical Garden Spring Conference is April 10th and 11th.

\* Time to sign up for the Pioneer Home Gardens which are always so beautiful!

\* Also contact Phyllis Rogers and Melanie San Angelo about volunteering your garden for a garden tour this summer. The emphasis is not on perfection but on learning.

\* May 30th, Wildflower Garden Club Plant Sale

Business concluded, Phyllis Rogers introduced the Speaker, Debbie Hinchey of Debbie's Horticultural Services:

Hardy Roses for Southcentral Alaska

There are five basic types of roses: Old Garden; Modern; Climber; Miniature or Shrub.

Flower types consist of: Semi-double; Quartered; Single, and Double.

Many roses will grow here in a greenhouse or in a prime location. They like heat and a dry fall. You can improve blooming by dead-heading blooms throughout the summer, but backing off in August so rose hips can develop.

A beautiful series of photos informs me that one of my volunteers is "Rosa Glauca" a pretty little pink and white rose on burgundy foliage. This is a tough one.

The history of the rose in Alaska is best told by the creation of, and care for, the Alaska Centennial Rose Garden founded in 1967. The Alaska Rose Society was formed in November of 1967 by such people as Mann Leiser and Phil Gardener. The "Alaska Centennial Rose" was also released in 1967.

The Rose Garden started with the "Fountain Bed" to some success and a lot more learning about roses. Our city explored different wintering-over techniques which tested the roses to the max. - guaranteeing 1/3 of them wouldn't need to be re-planted at all. What a deal!

Our mission is to make the Rose Garden our "Centennial Project". There is too much to do for one Society and too many people wanting to use the Rose Garden as a special venue for a wedding or other events to let it go fallow. Gardeners, farmers have always come together to help with crops and what more beautiful crop than roses? Keep a lookout for times and tasks and come hang out with some real rose experts like Debbie.

## The "R" Words: Repurposed Recycled Reused Reclaimed Restored

By Lynne Opstad

From growing tomatoes in old tires to full scale greenhouses equipped with all the latest gadgets, humans use their fertile imaginations to satisfy the urge to grow.

I recently read an article about a company in Boston (Freight Farms) that is growing plants hydroponically in old shipping containers. They wanted to capitalize on the "grow local" movement and at the same time take advantage of unused spaces in the city. After several years of research and trials, they are growing as much as one acre of land can produce per shipping container, selling produce to local restaurants.

Reading the article got me wondering, what other unusual containers could be used for horticultural purposes? Rather than throwing away those old water boots can I repurpose them to grow something? A quick internet search came up with many clever ideas- old washtubs, musical instruments, purses, bicycle baskets, school desks, kitchen containers, old boats, dolls, tool boxes, tackle boxes, shopping bags, even bras. You name it, someone is using it to grow in. Here are a couple of ideas from our members:

Old gloves make small containers at Mary Shier's.  
Photo by Nickel LaFleur



Old tools on a radiator make cool art work. Photo from 2011 tour of Sally (MG) & Pat Tilton's garden in Peters Creek.  
Photo by Gina D.

By repurposing an item you not only keep it out of the landfill but can bring some unusual character to your garden. Now, I'm not suggesting you take an old toilet, fill it with flowers and put it in your front yard, at least not if you're my neighbor, but the next time you think you need to buy yet another flower pot look around and see what article you can re-purpose instead.

## STARTING SEEDS

Cheryl Chapman

### Celebrate Earth Day! By Lynne Opstad



Earth Day will be celebrated on April 22nd this year. We've all heard of Earth Day, but what exactly is it?

Let's step back to the 1950s when modern farming techniques were heralded as the way the United States could feed the world through the widespread use of chemicals. Environmental consciousness was raised after Rachel Carson published her book "Silent Spring" in 1962, outlining the damages humans were causing to the planet through farming and other practices. The environmental movement was formed to research and address the effect humans were having on the environment.

Earth Day was initially established as a way to focus the anti-Vietnam War energy and consciousness on environmental concerns after an oil spill off the coast of California. 20 million Americans took to the streets to rally for a cleaner environment during the first Earth Day in 1970. The movement led to the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency, recycling efforts across the country and the One Million Tree planting initiative. In 1990 the movement went global with 200 million people in 141 countries marching out of concern for the environment. Earth day is now the largest civic event celebrated spontaneously around the world.

We in Alaska walk a fine line. Since many of our jobs and state economy are dependent on the oil industry we may at times seem to be on the opposite side of the environmentalist movement. On the other hand, most of us are outdoors people and enjoy nothing better than having our hands in the dirt, boots on a hiking trail, or having a line in the water. We are keenly aware of the pristine nature of our environment. It is one of the reasons we enjoy living here. While we can't deny the need for industry to keep food on our table, we also understand the need for the job to be done right so we can maintain all that we hold dear about Alaska.



Check your local listings to find out how you can celebrate Earth Day on April 22nd, as gardeners, as citizens of Alaska, and citizens of the Earth.

Take heart, gardeners who pass wistfully by seed racks: These riches can be yours with a little information, a little effort, a little patience and a little gear that can carry over for years to come.

To start seeds indoors, you will need five things:

- Sterile growing medium. This is looser and lighter than potting soil and helps prevent damping off, death for new seedlings. If pots or trays have been used before, it is wise to sterilize them, too, in a solution of one part Clorox to nine parts water for about 10 minutes.
- Moisture and warmth. The medium should be consistently damp. Most seeds like room temperatures between 70 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Cover the trays or pots with plastic bags or clear covers to maintain humidity until growth starts, then remove them. Otherwise, your main crop will be mold.
- Good light. The Cooperative Extension Service has an excellent free publication on this, "Fluorescent Lights for Plant Growth," HGA-00432.
- Transplanting. Each baby plant gets its own room, usually in a cellpack.
- Hardening off. When they are stocky, flourishing and the weather suits, you will gradually introduce your young plants to their new lives outside.

Choose fresh seeds suited for Anchorage and pay close attention to packet directions. Usually our last frost is in mid-May, the first one is in mid-September and the average growing season is 130 days. Summer temperatures rarely rise above 70 but overnight lows can dip to the mid-40s.

Chronic seed-starting Master Gardeners have a wealth of advice for first-timers. Arborist Nickel LaFleur determines if elderly seeds still are viable by sprinkling them on a moist paper towel. If they sprout, she plants the paper towel.

Newsletter editor Gina Docherty emphasizes filling pots or trays to the very rim because empty space between soil surface and pot top is a little ranchito for mold. Also, she says, "Practice good birth control. Don't plant so many seeds that they drive you crazy."



Photo by Gina D.

Gordon Pyle, who transformed a residential dump west of Spenard to one of the most admired home gardens in Anchorage, does his transplanting with a plastic knife and spoon from a fast-food restaurant, and a Number 2 pencil. The knife gently slides under the tiny plant roots and lifts it for placement in a soil hole prepared with a poke and wiggle of the pencil. Enough moist medium is then spooned around the transplant to stabilize it and bring the soil level to the top of the cell.

Kathy Liska, crops superintendent at the Alaska State Fair, starts sunflowers in plastic baggies filled with medium on a south window ledge. Once they sprout, she opens the bag, and when they get further along she transplants them into pots.

"Don't be afraid to experiment," says Kathy.

## Growing Young Gardeners: Hydroponics By Amy Reed, MG



The world of hydroponics is fun and fascinating. We always learned that plants need sun, soil, and water to grow. What if we take the soil out of the equation? Hydroponic's Greek translation is hydro for "water" and ponics for "work".

In hydroponics, a soilless medium contains essentially no nutrients of its own, and all the nutrients are supplied by a nutrient (fertilizer)

solution. This solution passes over the roots or floods around them at regular intervals which is later drained off. The extra oxygen around the roots is able to speed the plants' uptake of nutrients. Plants grow faster hydroponically because they are able to process nutrients at a quicker rate than in a soil environment.

Setting up a hydroponics garden can only be as costly as you want to invest. We know that indoor lighting for plants, especially in Alaska's dark winter days, is a must. For a tabletop hydroponic garden, a simple desk lamp will do. A lighting rule of thumb is 40 watts per square foot for high light plants like tomatoes and peppers, and 25 watts per square foot for low light plants like lettuce and leafy plants.

The second ingredient of hydroponic gardens is water. There are many different types of watering systems. The easiest is a basic small fishbowl and water pump. Other systems, such as ebb and flow, drip systems, air pump systems, and the like are sold locally at greenhouse supply stores.

Third, hydroponic media is needed for plant roots to grab onto. One of the easiest growing mediums to garden hydroponically is rockwool, a material made from melted volcanic rock and spun into a sponge-like material. Perlite and coconut fibers are other media that can also be added to roots to maintain water-holding capacity.

Finally, nutrients are required for the hydroponic system to work. Over twenty nutrients are used by plants to grow, with nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus being some examples. Commercially made packets and gallon jugs of nutrients, such as Dutch Nutrient Formula, can be purchased online or in local greenhouse supply stores.

My family was introduced to hydroponics through "The Land" exhibit at Disney World's Epcot. From a slow moving boat, we cruised through large greenhouses that featured nine-pound lemon trees, basketball sized mangoes, and avocados the size of a human head. Disney's

horticulturalists used many diverse methods of yielding fruits, vegetables, and herbs, and one whole greenhouse was dedicated to hydroponics. It was fascinating to watch towers of oregano and basil twirl in water cylinders suspended from the ceiling (aeroponics). The plants were so healthy and lush and appeared to thrive in this non-soil environment.

The Anchorage Museum opened in March a new exhibit called "Spark!Lab" with science experiments for children and adults to engage their creativity. One activity for visitors to explore is hydroponics, in which they can create their own hydroponic garden to take home.

Hydroponics is a different and exciting way for Alaskans of all ages to grow plants indoors. While the setup may be costly or time-consuming, the results of a lush soilless garden are priceless!

### "Grow All You Can Eat in 3 Square Feet" Book Report by Sheila Toomey

This 2015 publication is a great find for flower gardeners who want to expand into vegetables but have no interest in plowing the "back 40."

"Grow All You Can Eat" is marketed as a blueprint for urban gardeners. Anchorage is not exactly the kind of urban they have in mind, but the book is a terrific guide to planting effectively in small spaces. Not just the usual limited beds, but in every possible space -- decks, driveways, windows, shelves, ladders, pallets; in roofing gutters and the spaces between pavers.

In this book, there's a salad growing on every wall.

Suggestions and techniques are lavishly illustrated with large photographs and clear diagrams. There are whole sections on trellises and on container gardening -- useful for our short growing season. I skipped pages featuring saws and drills, but there are DIY instructions for raised beds, etc.

Experienced gardeners will find some of the growing information too rudimentary to be useful, and the plant discussions haven't been Alaskanized -- you can just flip past suggestions about winter crops.

These shortcomings aside, this is a book to be read, used and enjoyed.

U.S. Editor: Kate Johnsen  
DK Publishing Limited  
List price: \$22.95 Amazon \$17.79

## New Organic Soil Amendment

By Julie Riley, Extension Horticulture Agent

AZOMITE® is one of many soil amendments that can be found on garden center shelves this season. AZOMITE® is a hydrated sodium calcium aluminosilicate extracted from a mineral deposit in central Utah. The natural product supposedly contains over 70 minerals and trace elements. The trade name, AZOMITE®, is meant to represent an 'A to Z of minerals including trace elements'.

The company AZOMITE Mineral Products, Inc. purports AZOMITE® improves root systems, yields and general plant vigor in a variety of crops and recommends the product for remineralization of depleted soils.

AZOMITE® comes from a hard rock formation, rhyolitic tuff breccia, that formed from the dust of a volcano estimated to have erupted 30 million years ago. It is thought its unique mineral composition is a result of volcanic ash merging with seawater creating a deposit distinctive to circumstances and its Utah location.

It is easy for gardeners to get excited about products that claim to add 70 or more minerals and trace elements to soil. However, it is currently accepted that plants require 17 essential nutrients for proper growth. Hydrogen, oxygen and carbon are part of these essential nutrients but they are non-mineral elements taken up by plants as gas (air) and water.

Some mineral elements are considered beneficial, though not essential, for promoting plant growth. These include silicon, cobalt, selenium and sodium, yes sodium! Elements that have been proposed as candidates for the essential or beneficial lists include chromium, vanadium and titanium. In my lifetime, nickel was added to the list of essential nutrients. It certainly is possible that others exist.

The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) lists the following products in 2015 as suitable for certified organic production.

- AZOMITE® Granulated Natural Trace Minerals (AZOMITE Mineral Products, Inc.)
- Azomite® Micronized Natural Trace Minerals For Soil 0-0-0.2, (AZOMITE Mineral Products, Inc.)
- All Natural Azomite Trace Minerals 0-0-0.2 (Down To Earth)
- Azomite Organic Trace Mineral Fertilizer (Handy Pantry Sprouting)

Sources:  
[www.omri.org/](http://www.omri.org/)  
[www.azomite.com/](http://www.azomite.com/)  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azomite](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azomite)  
[soils.wisc.edu/facstaff/barak/soilscience326/listofel.htm](http://soils.wisc.edu/facstaff/barak/soilscience326/listofel.htm)

## Pansies

By Jane Baldwin



Photo by Gina D.

*Viola x wittrockiana*  
vye-OH-luh  
wit-rock-kee-AY-nuh  
We know them as pansies -- larger flowered than the viola. Pansies were developed in the late 19th century when the small-flowered *Viola tricolor* was crossed with other species. These short-lived hybrid perennials are usually grown as annuals.

Modern hybrids come with plain and bi-colored petals including white, yellow, orange, bronze, mauve, pink, rose, blue, purple and nearly black as well as varieties with contrasting edging colors, stripes, conspicuous blotches and plain or frilly, ruffled petal edges.

The common name pansy is derived from the French *pensee* (meaning 'thought'). The species name, *wittrockiana*, is for the Swedish botanist, Prof. Veit Brecher Wittrock (1839-1914) who wrote a history of the cultivated pansy.

Garden trivia: The first blotch appeared about 1830. The common name for one of the pansy's ancestors, *Viola tricolor*, was 'heartsease'.

Pansies seem to like our cool summer season. They will survive frosts, light freezes and even a little snow! Thus they can be planted out very early if first hardened off. Pansies can be used in borders, mass plantings, containers, hanging baskets, window boxes and as quick color spots in the garden. They make good 'temporary' fill-in plants while other long-lived perennials are growing on to desired sizes. Pansies are also good fill-ins amongst spring flowering bulbs while one waits for leaves to mature after flowering. If plants get a bit leggy or flower production seems to be dwindling, they can be cut back to encourage new growth.

They do like a sunny spot but will do well in light shade. They like a good rich soil and ample moisture. To keep them blooming all season, it is important to be diligent in deadheading spent flowers before seeds are set. Seeds that do disperse will likely germinate in the garden. Most of the resulting plants will be unlike the parent plant with smaller flowers and appearances reflecting their much hybridized ancestry. If these seedlings are also allowed to seed, you will eventually find many little "Johnny-jump-ups" reflecting one of the pansy's ancestors, *Viola tricolor*, popping up in your garden beds. Seedlings are, however, extremely easy to weed out - or to pull and replant in groups to make a nice little color spot to fill a late season garden void.

Pansy and viola flowers are edible. Some pansies have a delicate fragrance, said by some to be primarily blue-flowered ones. Pansy flowers have a mild wintergreen flavor. Fancy hors d'oeuvres can be created with cream cheese concoctions on crackers topped with a whole pansy! With advance planning, one can even plant seeds for a specific color of pansy flower that you may want for edible uses for color-coordinated special events.



## Bird Chatter

**IMPERFECT PAIRING . . .** Looks like the potato-tomato graft mentioned here last month is going to sweep the nation. It's the cover illustration for the popular Territorial Seed Company catalog. If you recall, 40,000 of the unfortunately named "Ketchup n' Fries" tom-tato plants were sold in Great Britain after its debut there last year.

But don't get excited. Although Alaskans generally don't need to save space by planting a tomato that also yields potatoes, it sounds like fun. So Bird Chatter called Territorial to place an order.

"Sorry, we don't ship them to Alaska," said the voice on the phone. Annoyed Avian turned to the Sutton sisters who said, yes, they've applied for the phytosanitary certificate required for all imported tomato or potato plants (and this is both!) and hope to get in a tray of the grafts for sale.

Mia Kirk of the state Division of Ag said the certificate is issued by the exporting state, not us.

Why is Sutton's buying only one tray?

First of all, the per-tray certificate is expensive, said Anna. And second, the novelty is probably going to wear off when gardeners figure out the tomato they've used for the graft is an 85-day variety that probably won't thrive outdoors here. And potatoes don't like greenhouses. Rats!

**START COUNTING . . .** Margaret Donatello is predicting fewer slugs this year. She was right the last time she so predicted.

**BE THERE, BE SQUARE . . .** Now that the Muldoon Town Square Park has been approved, people interested in planning what happens next are meeting from 6 to 7 p.m., the third Thursday of each month except July. Meetings are at the Muldoon Boys and Girls Club, across from Fred Meyers.

**TRUNK SALE . . .** Check [www.forestry.org/alaska](http://www.forestry.org/alaska) for details of the upcoming Society of American Foresters-Cook Inlet Chapter seedling sale on May 16th. Advance purchase is possible, so take a look now. The order form is there.

**SUN STRUCK? . . .** Dale out at Mile 5.2 Greenhouse says lemon and lime trees are among his current best sellers. Huh? Tropical trees? Alaska? He says yes. They work here, indoors for the winter and outdoors for summer.

**CROCUS 2015 - THREE** crocus flowering & then frozen in February, reports Debbie Hinchey, are now blooming along with 4 others! Only the flowers froze. One usually thinks "First crocus in bloom about April 11th".

Harry Duber made a fast trip to Fairbanks to attend the statewide MG Conference. Favorite presentations included Pat Holloway's plant hardiness and Les Brake's Spring Zings.

The 2016 MG Conference committee has started meeting. Anyone interested in being part of the publicity committee should contact Julie Riley.

## Herb Study Group

By Leisje Lehman

This month the Herb Study Group focused on medicinal herbs and definitions. Some of the words we focused on were anti-rheumatic, diaphoretic, emollient, and antihistamine.

Rheumatism is any painful disorder of joints, muscles, or connective tissue. Anti-rheumatism then is anything that slows down the progression of the disease. Historically raw potatoes carried in a pocket was said to help; now willow bark, aspen and devil's claw are some of the plants that are found to be beneficial.

Diaphoretic relates to anything that produces or increases perspiration. This process of promoting sweating can reduce fever and speed up the elimination of toxins. Some of the herbs that help with this are peppermint, dandelion, yarrow and cayenne.

Emollients have the power to soften and relax, especially on living tissue and the skin. Borage, comfrey and marshmallow are some of the emollients we discussed.

With an early allergies season this year, antihistamines were a popular subject. Elderberry, nettles and peppermint were all said to help block histamines.

It was brought to our attention that Sutton's now has herb plugs for anyone ready to get started with this year's growing season.

Everyone in the group seemed really fascinated with this subject of medical herbs. We are going to expand on the subject in May by discussing the Olfactory, and how sweet, bitter, sour and umami have strong smell/taste connections. Michelle Coburn will be giving a presentation.

## Master Gardeners Sharing Knowledge

From Sandy Harrington

Recently, when thinking about the vast accumulated knowledge of the Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage, it was clear how valuable such information would be in not only saving time, but also in saving many plants from the compost pile. It can be a simple hint that can make a distinct difference in one's gardening skills. At the 2014 Alaska Master Gardener's Plant Sale, Amelia Walsh was explaining to a buyer of a succulent bowl garden that one of the ways to check if the bowl garden needs to be watered is to poke a pencil into the soil. If the pencil comes out with soil particles stuck to it, there is no need to water. This is an example of a clever, helpful and inexpensive idea. Over the years, we have learned to garden by education and by experience. It is in the sharing, we provide a service to our members and to the community.

# Garden Event Calendar

## MEETINGS and EVENTS

### Thursday, April 2

Anchorage Garden Club monthly public meeting: Primrose Path, by Jane Baldwin. 7:00 pm at Pioneer Schoolhouse, 437 E 3rd Avenue, Anchorage. Details at: <http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/anchorageclub.htm>.

### Friday, April 3

Herb Study Group, Topic: Lavender. 12:00pm - 1:30 pm at Cooperative Extension Service, 1675 C Street, Suite 100, Anchorage.

### Saturday April 4

\*\*Spring Garden Show: Come visit the Master Gardeners with your gardening questions. 10:00 am - 4:00 pm at The Mall at Sears, 600 E. Northern Lights Blvd.

\*\*Alaska Master Gardeners Book Sale: Buy Gardening Books! 10:00 am - 4:00 pm at The Mall at Sears

### Monday, April 6

\*\*Alaska Native Plant Society Monthly Meeting: A Rose by Any Other Name, Plant Nomenclature in the age of Molecular Systematics, by Dr. Matt Carlson. Mini-Botany: Dandelion, Beach Greens by Mike Monterusso; Plant Family: Claytonia scammaniana by Marilyn Barker. 7:00 pm at Campbell Science Center, Anchorage. Details at: <http://aknps.org/Pages/Meetings.php>.

\*\*Mat-Su Master Gardener's Monthly Meeting. 6:30 pm at MTA building, Palmer. Details at: <http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/>.

### Tuesday, April 7

Valley Garden Club Annual Meeting: Landscaping, Retaining Walls and Ponds by Fritz Hoffman of Rock Ridge Designs. 10:30 am at First Baptist Church, 900 Leatherleaf Loop, Wasilla. Details at <http://www.valleygardenclub.com/>.

### Thursday, April 9

Wildflower Garden Club Meeting: Planting by the Moon Calendar. 10:00 am - 11:30 am at Central Lutheran Church, 1420 Cordova Street. Details at: <http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/wildflowerclub.htm>.

### Saturday, April 11

Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers: Annual Grafting Workshop. 1:00 pm at Dimond Greenhouses, 1050 W. Dimond Blvd., Anchorage. Open to the Public. Join at: <http://www.apfga.org/membership/>.

### Thursday, April 16

Willow Garden Club: The Tomato Man: Tomatoes and Peppers including an introduction of new hybrids, plants for sale and possible taste testing of tomatoes and peppers by Mark Oat-hout, Field Trip to Mid Valley Greenhouses, Wasilla. Depart from Willow at 10:00 am. Details at: <http://willowgardenclub.blogspot.com/>.

### Monday, April 20

Anchorage AMGA Meeting: Lilacs and Other Flowering Shrubs, by Darryl Leiser of Dimond Greenhouses. 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Cooperative Extension Service, 1675 C Street, Anchorage.

### Tuesday, April 28

Alaska Orchid Society Monthly Meeting: How to Use Orchids in Floral Arrangements. 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm at The Green Connection, 804 East 15th Avenue. Details at: <http://www.akorchid.org>.

## CLASSES and WORKSHOPS

### Wednesdays, April 1 - May 6

Cooperative Extension Service: Urban Farming: Explore information and tools for urban agriculture. 4:00 - 6:00 pm at 1675 C Street. \$10 per class or sign up for all 8 for \$50. Details

and registration at: <http://bit.ly/1tmJpIp/>.

Classes in April:

April 1: Growing Vegetables: Vegetable gardening basics for cold soils and cool summers.

April 8: Goats in Alaska and Making Simple Cheese.

April 22: Chickens in the City: Learn what it takes to keep chickens healthy and your neighbors happy.

April 29: Food preservation Overview: Freezing, canning and drying the fruits of your labor.

### Friday, April 3

\*\*Cooperative Extension Service: Managing Landscape Trees: Information on selecting and planting high-quality trees, pruning for good structure, maintaining vigor and managing pests and diseases by CES staff: Stephen Nickel, Jesse Moan and Gino Graziano. 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm at CES, 1675 C Street, Suite 100. Details at: <http://bit.ly/1tmJpIp/>.

\*\*Good Earth Garden School: Basic Soil Fertility:

Organic Amendments for Powerhouse Soil by Ellen Vande Visse. 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm at Mat-Su College, Palmer. Cost: \$35. Details: <http://www.goodearthgardenschool.com/>.

### Fridays, April 3 - 10

UAA Continuing Education: Beginning Bonsai, Learn to work with Bonsai plants in a hands-on class by Paul Marmora, Master Gardener. 6:00 - 9:00 pm at 707 A Street, Rm 207C. Fee includes lessons and your own Bonsai to keep. Cost \$119. Register at [www.uaa.alaska.edu/continuing](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/continuing)

### Saturday, April 4

Caring for your Trees: Learn the most up-to-date information for managing tree pests and caring for your trees. 9:00 am - 11:00 am at Cooperative Extension Service, 1675 C Street, Anchorage. A minimum of 5 registrants required or class will be cancelled. Details and registration at: <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/anchorage/>.

### Saturday, April 4 - Saturday April 25

Alaska Mill and Feed Spring Classes: at 1501 East First Avenue. Classes are free. Reservations are required. Register at: <http://www.alaskamillandfeed.com/#levents/>.

April 4: 10:00 am, Grafted Tomatoes

April 11: 10:00 am, Spring Chickens

April 18: 10:00 am A Better Veggie Garden

April 18: 1:00 pm Tomatoes 101

April 25: 10:00 am Peonies for Fun and Profit

April 25: 1:00 pm Vertical/Creative Container Gardening

### Thursday, April 9

Wasilla & Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District Winter Conservation Series: Introduction to Alaskan Gardening by Carol Kenley. 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm at Mat-Su College. Details from [ChuckKaucic.distmgr@wasillaswcd.org](mailto:ChuckKaucic.distmgr@wasillaswcd.org).

### Tuesday, April 14

Central Peninsula Garden Club: Rhubarb for Home or Commercial Growing by Bruce Bunch. 7:00 pm at Cook Inlet Aquaculture Bldg, Mile 16.5 Kalifornsky Beach, Kenai.

### Thursday, April 16

Wasilla & Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District Winter Conservation Series: Tree Care, Maintenance and Pruning by Steve O'Sullivan. 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm at Mat-Su College. Details from [ChuckKaucic.distmgr@wasillaswcd.org](mailto:ChuckKaucic.distmgr@wasillaswcd.org).

### Wednesday April 22

Cooperative Extension Service: Composting Techniques: Turn your yard and kitchen waste into "black gold". 7:00 - 8:30 pm at 1675 C Street. Cost \$10. Registration required. Details and registration at: <http://bit.ly/1tmJpIp/>

### Saturday, April 25

UAA Continuing Education: Mounting and Caring for Miniature Orchids: Learn how to mount orchids in a natural way without the pot by Paul Marmora, Master Gardener. 9:00 am - 3:00 pm at 707 A Street, Rm 207C. Cost \$59. Register Continued on next page

at [www.uaa.alaska.edu/continuinged](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/continuinged)

**Monday, April 27**

UAA Continuing Education: Perennial Gardening, Learn how to plant perennials in the right locations, times and spaces by Paul Marmor, Master Gardener. 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm at 707 A Street, Rm 207C. Cost \$45. Register at [www.uaa.alaska.edu/continuinged](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/continuinged).

**CONFERENCES**

**Friday - Saturday, April 10 - 11**

Alaska Botanical Garden's Spring Conference: Learning from the Past: Our Horticultural Heritage, Keynote Speakers Jim Fox and Aysel Gilbert, Friday 6:30 - 8:30 pm, Saturday 9:00 am - 7:00 pm. Alaska Pacific University's Atwood Center, 4101 University Drive, Anchorage, AK. Cost: \$105 members, \$120 non-members. Details at: <http://alaskabg.org/event/abg-9th-annual-spring-garden-conference-annual-meeting/>

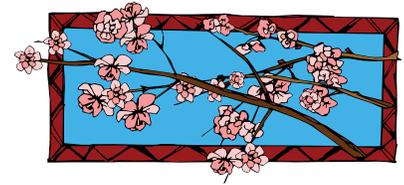
**Alaska State Fair 2015:  
August 27-September 7, 2015**

The 2015 Exhibitor's Guides are now available online and can be printed out.  
<http://alaskastatefair.org/participate/exhibitor-guides/>

The Alaska State Fair is currently accepting applications for 2015 scholarships from Alaska high school students. The deadline to apply is Wednesday, April 15 at 4:30 p.m. Recipients will be announced on or before May 9th. Five scholarships will be awarded: \$1,500 for first place, \$1,000 for second place, \$750 for third place and two \$500 honorable mentions. Application details are available online on the Alaska State Fair website.  
<http://alaskastatefair.org/the-fair-wants-to-fund-your-dreams/>

**April AMGA Meeting:  
Flowering Shrubs of Southcentral Alaska  
Darryl Leiser, owner of Dimond Greenhouses**

Our speaker in April is a third generation Alaska horticulturist. The family arrived in Alaska in 1964, one week after the Good Friday earthquake. His grandfather, Mann Leiser, had been hired to be the city's horticulturist. The family has been providing gardening classes in Alaska since the 1960's. Darryl has owned Dimond Greenhouses since 1989 and has been providing gardening classes since 1990. He is a landscaper and describes himself as a "hands on" gardener. At the April meeting he will be talking about lilacs, forsythia and other flowering shrubs of Southcentral Alaska. He is looking forward to many questions and said he might even answer the most asked question of how to keep slugs out of your garden. Some say he also has the largest corn field seen in Alaska.



**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](mailto: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:  
[ak.jbaldwin@gmail.com](mailto:ak.jbaldwin@gmail.com)

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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.