

AMGA NEWSLETTER

July 2015 Volume 17, Issue 7

Message From Barbara Baker AMGA Co-President

What an amazing summer we're having. South Central's temperatures are breaking records and I'm grateful we have healthy watersheds to nourish our thirsty plants and trees. These higher than usual temperatures also bring out the experimenters in us, testing if we can stretch the zones and grow some of those warm weather plants outside a greenhouse. I've noticed more corn and peppers being planted in our neighborhood. In fact, at our recent Master Gardener visit to Dimond Greenhouse, they were in the process of getting a second planting of corn ready for customers since demand had been so strong.

Speaking of garden tours, our thanks go out to our June hosts, who've sparked our imagination with whimsical and stunning garden design and enriched our spirit with colors and textures. Gardeners can never be underestimated in what we can create, like a mountainous historic railroad landscape with appropriately scaled plant materials. Nor should shaded areas or steep driveways prove too challenging, as many of us commented on the beautiful usage of rocks and plants and the pleasure of walking under the shade of trees during these hot days. We were also happy to help a fellow Master Gardener identify some of the beautiful flowers happily growing in her garden. July will bring us another collection of beautiful garden tours, so be sure to leave your Mondays open (except July 6).

July begins the peak of our growing season. Watering, weeding and pest control are on all of our minds. Many of you have commented how handy the light weight flex hoses have been in watering, although some have said they seem to leak at the connections. Instead of thinking of dandelions as an annoying weed, I've decided to treat it as free salad green (on chemical-free, pet-free lawns). Defoliators like leaf rollers, currant and other larvae have had voracious appetites. During my walks through the garden, I 've been picking off about a cup full of currant larvae on a daily basis! In spite of these challenges, my plants continue to thrive and multiply. What perfect timing. Our "Late Summer Plant Sale" is

just around the corner. Let's pot-up those plants we have no room for in our garden and bring them to the sale on August 8th. Plants can be donated for sale or members may sell them and share the proceeds with AMGA. Look for more information on selling plants at the plant sale on Constant Contact.

May you all enjoy a safe and happy 4th of July. See you at the garden tours!



Photo by Gina Docherty

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Highlights from AMGA's June Garden Tours

If you have photos to contribute from the garden tours, please send them to: amga@alaska.net

Please indicate the date & whose garden it was taken in.

See you in the garden!

June 1st, Forget Me Not Nursery

Photos by Melanie San Angelo





June 8th, Sean Monico's Train Garden

Photos by Melanie San Angelo





Treasurer's Report

Treusurer's Report		
Balances 4/30/15	•	
Checking account		9543.65
Savings account	11691.7	4
•		\$21235.39
Dedicated Funds		\$6497.64
Revenue:		
Dedicated Donation		500.00
Fundraising		5.00
Interest		1.49
<u>Membership</u>		720.00
•		\$1226.49
Expense:		
Operations		244.21
Website	85.00	
		\$287.99
Balances 5/31/15		·
Checking account		10480.66
Savings account	11693.2	
		\$22173.89
Dedicated Funds		\$6497.64
Dodicated Fullas		Ψυ 177.04

June 15th, Dimond Greenhouses



Photo by Melanie San Angelo

June 22nd, Ilene Rountree's garden





Photos by Phyllis Rogers

Cell Phone Apps By Mary Rydesky

Seems that even when I am in the garden, that cell phone is within reach. It is not that I must catch every call or post my gardening mishaps and victories on Face Book with no delay; it's more the fact that I have a compact reference library in my grasp.

Have you explored the variety of gardening apps out there? Here is a list of free ones that offer help in our moments of puzzlement or desire for a better way to annotate the season's progress. Almost as good as having a personal secretary at your elbow!

Check to see if the published version is iOS or Android so you have something compatible with your phone or notebook.

Garden Answers Plant/Disease Identifier and Garden Compass

You take a photo and send it in, experts at each of these sites identify the problem and send you recommendations.

Garden Design Ideas

Eye candy to help you determine how you want the area to look before you start, maybe save this one for January viewing?

Garden Produce USA Free

Vegetable gardening fans, this tool is for you. Reference material and a way to keep track of what you planted, sort of like a couple of books and a notebook all in one.

Gardening: The Ultimate Guide

From seed to harvest, gardening is guided through the phases.

Grow Your Own Organic Herbs and Grow Organic Herbs Free

Yes, for herbs. That's two apps!

Leafsnap

Match the tree leaves you are looking at with the images in this guide by using visual recognition software. They include 185 trees (Northeast US) and they are working trees of the continental US as a whole. Shall we petition for Alaska coverage?

Like That Garden

For 'flower identification support', a picture of what you see, and this app compares it to photos, sorting them to help you determine name, species, and facts about the plant. Best if you take pictures of the flower: comments indicate it is weak in leaf identification. And you still have to use your judgment once you see the app's best match to your specimen.

Master Gardener Pocket App (\$1.49) Android

Over 675 horticulture/gardening terms and concepts – quizzes, flashcards, and a dictionary will refresh your recall. Good for gardens, flowers, tress, shrubs, and lawn references.

Cont. on page 7

Growing Young Gardeners: Poison Control By Amy Reed, MG



Are you familiar with Mr. Yuck stickers? Those bright green circle faces with scrunched eyes and tongue sticking out announce the Poison Control telephone hotline number. They were supposed to adhere to our chemicals to signal the contents were "POISON—DON'T TOUCH". When I was pregnant, I dutifully stuck Mr.

Yuck stickers all over my household cleaners and chemicals. I'm embarrassed to admit I had to call Poison Control once when my toddler took a bite out of a bar of Dial soap and swallowed it.

As a Pediatric Intensive Care Unit nurse, I have cared for numerous children who have unintentionally and (sometimes intentionally) swallowed poisonous items over the years. While parents and grandparents obviously know that ammonia is harmful to ingest, many are not aware the ingestion of roots, leaves, and seeds of Mayapples (Podophyllum peltatum) or any part of Mistletoe (Viscum or Phoradendron species) warrant a call to Poison Control. I find it fascinating that apple seeds actually harbor a small amount of a cyanide compound (Source: http://www.snopes.com). The hard shell coating of the seed protects humans from any cyanide poisoning, however chewing large quantities (over a cup) of apple seeds is not recommended.

The National Capital Poison Center runs a fantastic website: http://www.poison.org. To find poisonous plants, click on the hyperlink "Prevent Poisonings" in the left hand column, and choose the link for "Plants". Many of the plants listed have links to identifying photos. It is not a complete list but rather the more common indoor and outdoor plants in your home.

Emphasis must be placed on not allowing children to pick berries in the yard unattended. Many of our Alaskan wild plants boast beautiful berries that are very tempting for young ones to sample. Deadly nightshade (Atropa belladonna), for instance, grow sweet berries that resemble overripe dark cherries and are right at a child's eye level. Two to four berries are lethal to small children (Source: http://poisonousnature.biodiversityexhibition.com/en/card/deadly-nightshade). Janice Schofield's book, Alaska's Wild Plants fits nicely in a backpack when hiking or berry picking in order to reference edible wild plants.

Continued on page 7

Happy Flowers at the Pioneer Home By Lynne Opstad

The Pioneer Home service project is in full swing and flourishing. Our faithful volunteers spent several mornings working hard to prepare the soil before the big planting. On June 3rd we filled the garden with over 700 plants under the direction of Erma MacMillan, designer of the beautiful gardens. The plantings include a combination of annuals and perennials, including 'Sonata White' Cosmos, 'Royal Velvet' Petunia, 'Sweet Blue Sunrise' Osteo, 'Crested Merlot' Argyranthemum, plus Lobelia, Snapdragon, Verbena, Alyssum, Begonias, Nicotiana, Malope and Nasturtium. Perennials added are 'Bronze' Deschampsia, 'Stairway to Heaven' Polemonium, 'Black Lace' Sambucus, and 'Sum and Substance' Hosta and Dahlias wintered over from last year.

Thank you to all the volunteers that got the garden growing- Erma MacMillan, Julie Ginder, Joyce Smith, Lynne Opstad, Barbara Baker, Harry Deuber, Susan Miller, Jane Baldwin, Shirley Mathews, Judith Brendel, Sharon Davies, Cheryl Shroyer, Michael Carey, Maureen Pintner, and Margaret Hintz.

We recently received a thank you card from one of the Pioneer Home residents. She wrote:

"Happy summer to each of you! Every time I go to the front of our building I see the Happy Flowers you put in to make APH so pretty for me and everyone to enjoy. Thank you for your TIME, TALENT, and just much "dirty work" you have done. I just walk to my auto and smile. So lovely! Sincerely, Dot"

Swing by the gardens on your way downtown to see how the Happy Flowers fill out over the summer. Or come by during the July 13th Monday Garden Tour to view the gardens. They are worth the trip.



MG Judith Brendel planting "Happy Flowers" Growing Young Gardeners: Poison Control By Amy Reed, MG

A Taste Of Japan In Your Garden By Rosemary Shinohara

Bored with the same old veggies lining up in your kitchen garden? Don't get me wrong: Spinach, kale and carrots are great. But local gardeners may discover new growing and taste adventures with Japanese vegetables.

My husband, Vincent Katsuyoshi Shinohara, grew up in the town of Kiryu, north of Tokyo. He's the main cook in our house for both Asian food like kimchee and Japanese soups, and traditional American fare — and for years he craved fresh veggies for the Japanese dishes.

His first gardening brainstorm years ago was to bring home to Anchorage some cucumber seeds from Japan.

"I wanted to eat that with Japanese miso paste, or marinate it with sweet vinegar. Or use it for pickling," he said.



Vincent Shinohara with his cucumbers Photo by Rosemary Shinohara



He has since found U.S. suppliers for Asian seeds, and expanded his repertoire to a whole group Japanese greens that grow well here.

The Japanese cucumbers, alas, need the greenhouse, but are still his favorite crop. They are crisper and have fewer seeds than common American varieties. They are smaller than English cucumbers. Like English cukes, the skin of Japanese cucumbers is edible.

Left to right: Japanese cucumber, Persian cucumber, and storebought English cucumber (for comparison) Photo by Rosemary Shinohara

The ones we grow now - the tsuyataro hybrid - reach maturity relatively fast, Vincent says. The seeds he planted March 4 (that we grew under lights) produced the first ready-to-eat cucumber June 11.

This year he is also growing Persian cucumbers, after seeing some in Pike Place Market in Seattle. The taste and texture is quite similar to Japanese cucumbers, according to a taste test with some friends. And they matured even faster: Planted March 4, they yielded the first cucumber May 22.

Vincent bought the seeds for the Persian cucumbers on Amazon. He ordered the Japanese cucumber seeds and most other Asian seeds from Kitazawa Seed Co. based in Oakland, Calif.

Here are some Japanese greens Vincent is growing this year:

-Chinese leeks, called nira. Kitazawa describes the



Mizuna in a planter Photo by Rosemary Shinohara

Japanese variety as having a garlic-onion flavor, and says the nira tolerate both heat and cold. The nira seed germinate at between 60 and 70 degrees, and takes a little over 3 months to mature. "I use it to put in kimchee," Vincent says. He also uses hot Korean pepper in the kimchee, and thinks the nira mellows out the pepper flavor.

-Mizuna - This is Japanese mustard used as a salad green or cooked. Days from germination to harvest: 40-

50. "I use it for salads, or for pickling - or you can use it for soup," Vincent says.

-Shiso (she-SO) - This herb features leaves that are green on one side and red on the other. The seeds we bought are supposed to reach maturity in 60 days. "You can use it for salad. Japanese cooks use it in tempura. Or you can wrap a ham or sausage in it, dip it in tempura butter sauce and fry it," says Vincent.

-Komatsuna - These turnip greens are mostly used for stir-fries or are steamed, Kitazawa Seed company says. They take 40 days. You can also pickle the greens, says Vincent.

Kitazawa says the turnip greens are popular as a snack for skiers in northern Japan, pickled with fish.

[Editor's note: Kitazawa also has wonderful Japanese recipes using their vegetables in their catalog.]



PLACE YOUR BETS. . . . Whose 'Little Marvel' peas, planted on Easter Sunday, will be the first to mature? Sue Lincoln planted under plastic in Willow; Julie Riley in a downtown Anchorage south-facing window box. The Willow peas germinated 1.5 weeks earlier and had 4-inch pods on June 20 about the time the Anchorage peas first started flowering. However, Julie has not conceded the race claiming 'Little Marvel' pods must be plump before harvesting.

LA TREE FLEUR . . . Properly suited and brief-cased denizens of the city's legal district raised no objections last week to the woman in the apple tree lopping off branches. Yes, it was Nickel, volunteering her expertise (and risking her neck) to service the historic Courthouse Crabapple. The crabapple, a Dolgo, is 80 years old -- crabapples are considered "old" at 40 -- and the last tree left in place from the era when Third and L streets were homesteads, not courthouses. It was grown from a cutting off a tree in the yard of J.J. Delaney -- seventh mayor of Anchorage, Delaney Park Strip, etc. For 50 years, the late Judge Fitzgerald watched over the Dolgo but lately she's fallen on hard times. She had trouble blooming this year (and don't we all when we're 80), So Nickel volunteered to prune her. Hubby held the ladder.

ZONED IN . . . Ginny Moore and husband Ted planted two Giant sequoia while on a trip to Seldovia last month. The Arbor Day Foundation lists the tree as Zone 6 but hope springs eternal. And really, you never know if something will grow until you try. The intrepid duo also found two small yellow cedars in the forest.

PASS THE GARLIC. . . Noted under the heading Volunteer Personalities in a book on community gardening: Well-Intended Middle-of-the-Roaders will work for food, but GARDEN ZOMBIES "love their garden like a zombie loves fresh brains".

WORDS AND MUSIC. As part of Anchorage's Centennial Celebration Fivethirty event, Master Gardeners hosted a brief educational event in the Centennial Rose Garden which ended with a 'rose parade' led by a drummer and ukulele player. All participating groups converged on the Town Square, where, in additional to many musical activities, Cheryl Shroyer gave a rousing speech on the significance of the trees in the park.

SPUD LOVELY. . . Five pounds of certified 'Haida' seed potatoes were planted at the Alaska Botanical Garden this spring. The two-year process to get the heritage variety into production was a labor of love by Master Gardener Greg Kalal, GK Raising It Up Farm. The potatoes will be available for purchase as table stock from ABG this fall.

Five Thirty Urban Conflux By Lynne Opstad

This is the centennial year of the Municipality of Anchorage and there have been many events around town to celebrate that landmark. On 5/30 the "Five Thirty Urban Conflux" event was held. It was a light-hearted and fun event: "piped pipers" showed up unexpectedly around town and led citizens to Town Square for a rally.

AMGA and CES participated in the event by holding a rose workshop in the Centennial Rose Garden. Volunteer Master Gardeners were there to educate people on the selection, growing and care of roses. Debbie Hinchey gave a lesson on rose pruning and got a section of the Rose Garden pruned in the process.

A small band of musicians serenaded the group until 12:30pm when they gathered the crowd to lead us to the Town Square where hundreds of people had followed their pipers. Master Gardener Cheryl Shroyer gave an inspiring speech about the Town Square trees.

Per Cheryl:

"My talk was titled 'Trees in Town Square are Really Memories', at the request of Five Thirty organizers to talk about the Town Square Trees.

After introducing the varieties of trees, I spoke about the people who had gathered a year ago to check on 'their trees' after the Municipality removed 9 trees. These trees represented the memories of loved ones.

As the folks strolled around they started to tell each other the stories about friends and relatives honored by the original \$500 donation of a tree. Many stories included the tale of how a family was packed into the car and drove up the highway to Alaska. Another separate group of younger people appeared with new tales. Their story was growing up with the Town Square trees and memories centered on picnics, the Christmas tree and family fun they had under the trees. Now you know that the Town Square Trees really are memories."

Cheryl received a standing ovation for her speech. All and all it was a fun day that reminded us of the rich history of Anchorage.

Growing Young Gardeners: Poisonous Plants... cont. from page 4



An old saying about wild mushrooms is: "There are bold mushroom hunters, and there are old mushroom hunters. There are no old bold mushroom hunters." Many mushrooms can look identical, and Poison Control should be called immediately if anyone ingests any part of a wild mushroom picked in the yard

or woods. The USDA Dept. Forest Service developed a fantastic brochure, Mushrooms of the National Forests in Alaska, which highlights 51 species of mushrooms and assists in identification and gathering. http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stel-prdb5414170.pdf

Lastly, it is always handy to have Poison Control hotline on your phone's contact list or posted near your home phone. It is 1-800-222-1222 and is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Cell Phone Apps...cont. from page 3

Moon Gardening (\$1.99)

Want to plant by the moon phases?

Sprout It

According to a review I read, "...With a crisp, clean interface and a library full of plants, [it] inspires beginners to take control of their green spaces. Vivid illustrations help users see what they're about to grow before they get going and pairs location-based data with weather information...".

Sun Surveyor Lite

Want to examine the sum's positions throughout the day? This app will help you. Then you can determine whether you have a spot for a partial shade plant.... or one meant for partial sun!

The Dirt on Organic Gardening (really, a magazine) focuses on fruits and vegetables for the 'urban gardener' but can be useful in our more rural settings too.

So try an 'app' or two and see if the features add to your fun in the garden. Remember to be patient during the learning curve while you are experimenting with the controls!

Have a Happy and Safe 4th of July!



Garden Event Calendar

MEETINGS and EVENTS

Wednesday, July 1, 15 and 29

Campbell Creek Science Center Work Party: Join Verna Pratt to Weed the Wildflower Beds. 7:00pm - 9:00 pm at the East Entrance of the Science Center, 5600 Science Center Dr. Anchorage.

Thursday, July 2, 16 and 30

Tragopogon Pull: Led by Verna Pratt. 6:30 pm at Potter Marsh Section House Parking Area. Bring garden gloves and dandelion digger, Adults only. Details at: 333-3212 or verna@acsalaska. net.

Thursday, July 2

Anchorage Garden Club monthly public meeting: Picnic at 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Pioneer Schoolhouse, 437 E 3rd Avenue, Anchorage.

Tuesdays and Thursdays, July 2 - July 30

Herb Study Group: Join the Herb Study Group in the Herb Garden at Alaska Botanical Garden. Learn to care for the 100 different species of herbs. Bring tools, kneeling pads and a bucket for weeds. 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm at The Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage.

Thursday July 9

**Mat-Su Master Gardener's Monthly Meeting: Tomato Tasting. 10:00 am at Mid-Valley Greenhouses, Hyer Road, off Parks Highway, Wasilla. Details at: http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/calendar-of-events.html.

Friday, July 10

Alaska Botanical Garden Beer Garden: Local Breweries, Food Vendors and Live Music. 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm at The Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage. Cost: \$35 in advance and \$50 at the door. http://alaskabg.org/events/.

Saturday, July 11

Mid Summer Garden and Art Faire: Celebrate Summer: Gardening, Gourmet Food, Art, and Music. Palmer. Details at: http://www.palmergardenandart.org.

Tuesdays, July 14 and July 28

Dandelion Removal for the Lowenfels Trail: Led by Verna Pratt. 7:00 - 9:00 pm at Lowndfels trail, Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage. Helpful tools to bring: Dandelion digger, kneeling pad and a 5-gallon pail or a plastic bag.

Wednesday, July 15

Meadow Lake Bloomers Garden Club Monthly Meeting. 10:30 at Meadow Lake Senior Center.

Saturday and Sunday, July 25 and 26

Willow Garden Club: Les Brakes Coyote Garden Tour. 10:00 am - 5:00 pm Saturday and 12:00 am - 5:00 pm Sunday at Coyote Gardens, Mile 71 Parks Highway. Suggested donation: \$7.00 to support the Georgeson Botanical Garden in Fairbanks. Details at: http://willowgardenclub.blogspot.com/.

Sunday, July 26

Anchorage Garden Club Annual City Garden Tour. 12:00 pm – 5:00 pm. Check website: http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/for details.

Tuesday, July 28

Alaska Orchid Society Monthly Meeting: Field Trip to Alaska Botanical Garden. 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Details at: http://www.wayne-toups.squarespace.com/events/.

CLASSES

Saturday and Sunday, July 18 and 19

Alaska Garden Club Symposium: Sponsored by Alaska State Garden Club Judges Council. Open to gardeners, designers, garden club members, friends and guests. 8:00 am - 5:00 pm at Central Lutheran Church, 1420 Cordova, Anchorage. Details at: http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/Anchorage%20Garden%20Club/Symposium%202015.pdf.

Wednesday, July 22

Midsummer Night's Science Series: Inch by Inch-Gardening with the Family: Learn Gardening Tricks, Information about Native Plants, Landscaping Ideas and Interactive Songs for Children. Led by Patrick Ryan from the Alaska Botanical Garden. 7:00 pm at Campbell Science Center, 5600 Science Center Drive, Anchorage. Details at: http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sciencecenter/ccsc_calendar.html.

Thursday, July 23

Mat-Su Cooperative Extension: Harvest of Yum: Fun Tips and Ideas For How to Use Your Great Alaska Produce For Grades 3 and Up. 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm at The Matanuska Experiment Farm, Palmer. Details at: http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/calendar/.

SAVE THE DATES

Saturday and Sunday, August 1 and 2

Anchorage Garden Club 72nd Annual Flower Show at the Northway Mall, Anchorage. Details to follow at: http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/anchorageclub.htm.

Monday, August 3

Winterizing Your Gardens: Learn the Essential Tasks of Preparing Your Garden for Winter. Topics Include Mulching, Fertilizing, Weeding, Dividing Plants and Protecting Bulbs. 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm at University Center, 3901 Old Seward Highway, Anchorage. Details at: www.uaa.alaska.edu/continuinged.

Saturday, August 8

Alaska Master Gardener's Plant Sale: Perennials, Berries, Trees and Shrubs. 10:00 am - 3:00pm at Cooperative Extension Office, 1675 C Street, #100, Anchorage.



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.

AMGA Board of Directors

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Volunteer Coordinators: Julie Ginder, Joyce Smith,

Lynne Opstad

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

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Phone: 345-4099 Email: amga@alaska.net

AMGA Web Site: www.alaskamastergardeners.org

AMGA Google Group:

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

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

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If you have questions or want to make address or email corrections, please contact Jane Baldwin at:

ak.jbaldwin@gmail.com

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, calender items and announcements are always welcome.

For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact: Cooperative Extension Office 1675 C St, Suite 100 Anchorage, AK 99501 Phone: 786-6300

Phone: 786-6300 Fax: 786-6312



