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## AMGA NEWSLETTER

March 2015  
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### Message from Barbara Baker, Co-President AMGA

AMGA's working board is governed by our bylaws. The elected unpaid board sets policy, conducts business and provides the necessary administrative support. Annually, the board elects officers, sets up programs and activities and approves a budget to accomplish these goals. In addition, the board (along with other AMGA members) chair and serve on various committees to deliver the services you enjoy.

New officers were selected at the February board meeting. Barbara Baker and Lynne Opstad are continuing as co-presidents, while Phyllis Rogers and Melanie San Angelo are co-vice presidents. Cheryl Shroyer and Cindy Walker are remaining as secretary-parliamentarian and treasurer, respectively. Harry Deuber is the new Hospitality chair.

Have you wondered what the officers do?

The President is responsible for the successful operation of AMGA and is the spokesperson and liaison for the organization. Additionally, Lynne and Barbara preside over membership and board meetings and set the agendas. They appoint chairpersons to committees and provide oversight to make sure programs and activities, like monthly educational programs, summer garden tours and the membership directory are provided to you. The co-presidents inform you about AMGA business and the board's activities in the monthly newsletter and other various media, and coordinate communications with Cooperative Extension. They also authorize expenditures from the AMGA budget.

The Vice President coordinates monthly programs and summer tours. Melanie and Phyllis will form committees to develop program ideas from members, and identify and confirm speakers on topics of interest and summer gardens to view. The VPs will keep you informed by making sure the information appears in the membership directory, monthly newsletter, Constant Contact and Google Group notifications. When the presidents are unavailable, they will also preside over meetings.

The Secretary records the minutes of the board meetings, annual meeting and all special meetings; is the custodian of AMGA records and sends out correspondence as needed, such as sympathy notes. In addition, Cheryl coordinates note takers for our monthly membership meetings and makes sure an article appears in the newsletter summarizing the program. Cheryl also serves as the AMGA Parliamentarian. She insures our meetings are conducted in an orderly fashion by utilizing Robert's Rules of Order.

The Treasurer maintains AMGA's financial records. Cindy prepares and presents monthly financial reports to the board. She issues checks, accepts funds for deposit, and writes receipts for donations. Cindy provides a year-end summary of AMGA's financial condition for the annual meeting and is the lead on developing the proposed annual budget. Additionally, she prepares documents required for IRS reporting.

As you can see, board officers have many responsibilities and we haven't yet explored the roles of committee chairs! But, each person is a dedicated team member who is interested in providing the best organization, possible. You're always welcome to attend board meetings and watch us in action. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm at Cooperative Extension.

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## AMGA February Potluck & Seed Swap

By Peggy Piper

Spring is coming, and you could really feel it at the February 16th meeting, potluck and seed exchange. The potluck required six tables or more to display all the goodies and one item was imported all the way from Japan! Everyone was milling about, eating and enjoying conversations about how the holidays went and looking forward to the upcoming gardening season.

### Announcements and Reminders:

- \*Barbara Roland announced another seed exchange Tuesday March 10th, 7-9p.m. (see calendar for details)
- \*Save April 11th, Saturday at 1:00 p.m., for the Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Annual Grafting Workshop at Dimond Greenhouse. Open to the public.
- \*Statewide Master Gardener Conference in Fairbanks March 7th.
- \* Julie Riley will be teaching a 4 hr. seminar on soils March 28 noon - 4 p.m.
- \*Marya Morrow will be teaching about Dahlias at Alaska Mill & Feed March 28th at 1p.m. [For a complete list of classes, visit: <http://www.alaskamillandfeed.com/>]
- \*Annual Meeting Minutes of the Board were presented, seconded and accepted. The new Board Members are Harry Deuber, Melanie San Angelo, Phyllis Rogers and Cheryl Shroyer (incumbent).

Business concluded, Cheryl Shroyer introduced the Presenters of the Evening. I must confess that what transpired was so enjoyable for me that my notes were terrible. I couldn't write fast enough or even put together complete sentences to convey how beautiful some of these gardens were. I can only say that I urge you all to try and go to the garden tours during the summer, and simply be amazed.

### Highlights:

Gina-Slides of various garden tours. (Several were of gardens I hadn't made it to, so I lost all focus - they were wonderful!)

Emily - Forget-Me-Not Tulip bed, WOW; Airport Heights School Garden

Robbie -Girdwood seed starting; primroses AHH!; Hydrangea Paniculata; Primula Watsonii

Fran - Photos of her garden & Colston Burrell's. Must have REALLY appealed to me because I didn't write anything down - please take this as a compliment gardeners.

Mayra - Her garden photos with DAHLIAS - only one of my FAVORITE flowers and as I mentioned earlier the Peacock Kale - too cool, really

Anchorage Pioneer Home Garden - lots of work and looked wonderful. All the master gardeners that worked on this project are just great!

\*The attention shifted at this point to the potluck table, the seed exchange and enjoying each other's company, just the way the meeting started.

I had too much fun watching the slides!

## The Great Potato Mash

Sheila Toomey



No doubt the annual Potato Bash, celebrated on February 11th this year, conveyed serious horticultural knowledge. After all, potatoes are our main claim to agricultural fame.

But for those of us whose spud obsession is limited to three varieties growing in barrels on the deck and a weeks-long orgy of eating the crop after fall's first frost (does potassium relieve depression?), this year's Bash was a tailored fit. It was all about food.

The plan was "to expose people to the different taste of potatoes," said Greg Kalal, who provides seed potatoes to local nurseries.

"People don't buy potatoes by taste," said Greg. "They buy them by looks." He thinks that's a bad idea. A pretty potato isn't always a yummy potato.

Continued on page 5

## Treasurer's Report

Balances 12/31/14	
Checking account	10100.37
<u>Savings account</u>	<u>11685.98</u>
	\$21786.35
Dedicated Funds	\$6483.22
Revenue:	
Fundraising	30.00
Interest	1.49
<u>Membership</u>	<u>300.00</u>
	\$331.49
Expense:	
Grants	150.00
<u>Operations</u>	<u>140.30</u>
	\$290.30
Balances 1/31/15	
Checking account	10140.07
<u>Savings account</u>	<u>11687.47</u>
	\$21827.54
Dedicated Funds	\$6483.22

## Plant Hardiness Zones: How Low Can They Go?

By Cheryl Chapman

In Anchorage, planting success is often more a matter of "where" than "what." Unlike simpler Outside cities with just one plant hardiness zone, or average cold temperature, Anchorage has four, not counting hot spots and cold sinks, and they can vary by 30 degrees in winter. The prized perennial that thrives in Bootlegger Cove's Banana Belt near Cook Inlet may give it up on a single Hillside night.

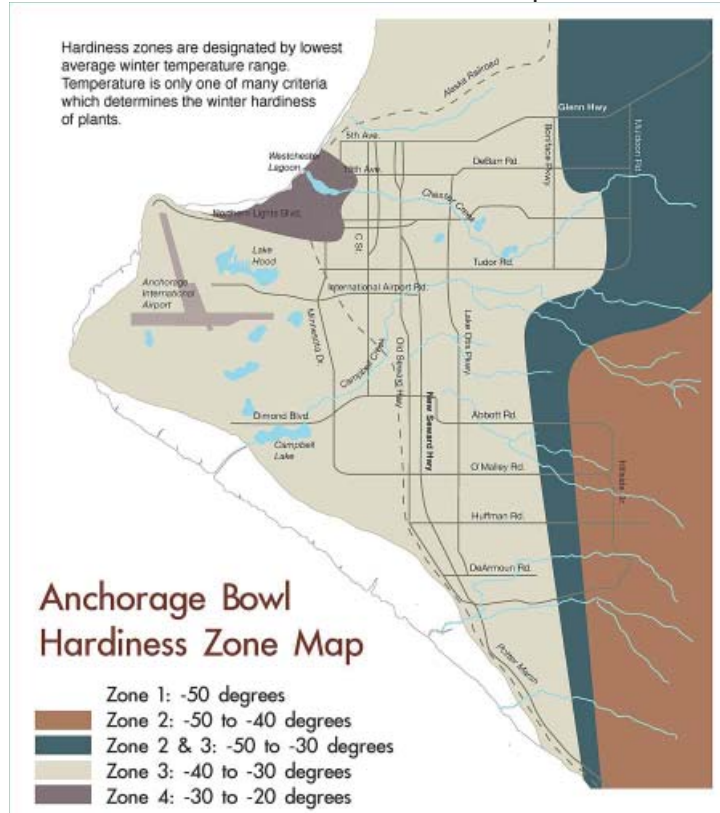
"All it takes is one night colder than a plant's zone to kill something that's been there for 40 years," said horticulturist Julie Riley of the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service in Anchorage.

### USDA UPDATES ZONES

Almost all nursery catalogs include USDA hardiness zone information for each seed packet or plant. The USDA's most recent hardiness zone mappings, from 2012, mine temperature reports spanning 1976 to 2005, with readings between the reporting sites interpolated through use of an algorithm. The zones don't indicate the coldest an area has ever been or might be but instead are based on its average lowest winter temperature.

The USDA ran its numbers through Oregon State University's climate mapping technology, PRISM, which meant that for the first time things like elevation, coastal effects and topography like slopes or valleys were factored in.

An excellent interactive map of the most recent USDA hardiness zones is available online at [www.planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/InteractiveMap.aspx](http://www.planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/InteractiveMap.aspx).



[ness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/InteractiveMap.aspx](http://www.planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/InteractiveMap.aspx). Type in your ZIP code and a box will pop up with your zone, its average cold temperature, its temperature range, and its latitude and longitude.

Compared with the previous USDA Hardiness Zone Map of 1990, zones in many areas in the United States were a half-zone warmer in 2012. The USDA notes, however, that since it had access to more readings, the warmer zones in and of themselves are not evidence of global warming.

### CES ANCHORAGE BOWL ZONES

The Cooperative Extension Service in Anchorage has its own Anchorage Bowl Hardiness Zone Map available at the office at 1675 C St., Suite 100, listing five zones but showing four: Zone 1, a shivery -50 degrees, is omitted, but the graphic picks up with Zone 2 (-50 to -40 degrees), a russet expanse of upper Hillside. Midnight blue Zones 2 & 3 (-50 to -30 degrees) generally trail along the base of the Chugach from Boniface Parkway to south of Potter Marsh; most of the city is in Zone 3 (-40 to -30 degrees), a khaki expanse from Ted Stevens International Airport on the west to Patterson Street on the east, and from well north of Ship Creek, south to Potter Marsh. Zone 4 (royal purple and -30 to -20 degrees), is a small but relatively balmy inset fronting Cook Inlet, from just north of 15th Avenue to a touch south of Northern Lights Boulevard.

### EAGLE RIVER PROJECT

This spring CES and Eagle River Master Gardeners are starting to collect data to establish Eagle River plant hardiness zones for a community that spreads across a plateau, a valley and mountains. The project, supervised by Julie Riley, will determine the area's warmest and coldest spots and the average temperatures, both highs and lows, plus first and last frost dates.

The 10 to 15 monitors will record each day's maximum and minimum temperatures, the date and the elevation, using digital thermometers supplied by CES.

The information collected will be used for an Eagle River hardiness zone map to benefit all area gardeners.

### OTHER FACTORS

But hardiness zones are just one part of plant survival. An unsuitable plant may thrive if it's in a microclimate against a home's warm south side, or protected from drying winds, or in healthy soil with adequate moisture. Odds don't favor the bush that goes into winter dormancy with dry roots. Reliable snow cover is vital, too, as natural insulation against cruel cold or wild temperature swings. With enough snow each year to protect its roots, a plant can sometimes be pushed up a zone or even two, but if the snow fails just once, likely that plant is doomed.

A gardener can save heartbreak and expense by selecting suitable varieties in the first place, and CES has both books and handouts listing landscape plants and vegetables that have been trialed successfully for Anchorage zones. Most of these publications are free.

## **Growing Young Gardeners: Bring out the Shamrocks!** by Amy Reed, MG



March 17th is one of my favorite days of the year. I show my 1/8th Irish descent with pride on St. Patrick's Day, and it is enjoyable to establish family traditions as well. Besides wearing green, and preparing colcannon casserole and soda bread for dinner, we like to do special St. Patrick's Day crafts together. Of course, shamrocks always make their way into our craft projects, and I decided to research how to grow shamrocks and perhaps incorporate this into our family traditions and indoor garden.

The traditional shamrock is not to be confused with the lucky four-leaf clover (*Oxalis tetraphylla*). It is a three-leaf clover that had received its popularity in the fifth century when Saint Patrick was teaching Christianity to Ireland. He used the three leaves of the shamrock to symbolize the Trinity "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit". Ancient Celts also revered the shamrock due to its semblance of threes. Triads are commonly found in Celtic knot work, triskelions, and god/goddess worship.

There are over 900 different species of shamrocks or *Oxalis* genus, in the wood sorrel family, and they are considered annual or perennials grown from bulbs, corms, or rhizomes. Hardiness depends on the species, with most growing in woodsy shade in zones 7-11. The flowers have five petals, ten stamens, and range in color from white, pink, yellow, orange, or red. *Trifolium dubium* or Lesser Clover is considered the traditional shamrock by roughly half of Irish people. It is extremely difficult to grow indoors and is rarely sold by nurseries or florists. The seemingly easiest shamrock to grow indoors is the *Oxalis regnellii*. The bulbs can be planted indoors in a preferred cool room with a south-facing window providing at least twelve hours of light, however indirect light is ideal. The soil around the bulb should be kept evenly moist and not allowed to become completely dry between watering. Fertilize the plant once a month. Shamrock plants should enter dormancy at least once a year for a 2-3 month period. Allow them to go dormant when the leaves go "punky", by pulling off the brown leaves and placing the container in a darkened room.

It is important to note that shamrocks contain microscopic oxalate crystals. They have a bitter taste that usually deters further ingestion. Soluble oxalate salts bind to calcium in the body causing a sudden drop in serum calcium levels, and possible acute renal failure. Clinical signs of this type of poisoning include drooling, anorexia, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, weakness, trem-

ors, bloody urine, and changes in thirst and urination. It has been noted that it takes a lion's share of shamrock to cause extreme illness. People do gather roots, leaves, stems, and seeds and safely ingest them if in small quantities after rinsing with warm water. Leaves and stems have been known to be steeped in tea. The leaves are a source of Vitamin C and were used by sailors to prevent scurvy. Even with that being said, if you notice a child has ingested any part of the shamrock, rinse his or her mouth and call Poison Control 1-800-222-1222. If your pet has eaten any part of the shamrock, do the same oral rinsing, and call your vet. A 24 hour Pet Poison Helpline is 855-764-7661.

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

### **Film Review: NATURE: What Plants Talk About A PBS documentary By Gina Docherty**

Here is the PBS introduction to this film: "When we think about plants, we don't often associate a term like "behavior" with them, but experimental plant ecologist JC Cahill wants to change that. The University of Alberta professor maintains that plants do behave and lead anything but solitary and sedentary lives. What Plants Talk About teaches us all that plants are smarter and much more interactive than we thought!"

Plants move through growth - but is this behavior? Take the Venus Fly Plant behavior catching insects - many thought this was the exception to plant behavior. But all plants are doing this - just slower, or in the soil.

Plants display feeding behaviors on their constant hunt for food & light. Eighty percent of a plant's total mass lives below ground, so by using time lapse cameras over many hours, scientists recorded plant roots searching for nutrients. They found that plant roots are more animal like than we imagined. Similar to bears searching for food, plants undergo sudden root growth until they find nutrients. Growth then slows down to absorb, much like bears "foraging".

How do they do it with no eyes, no ears, no brain? Through many experiments with the vampire plant "Dodder Vine", time lapse cameras showed how this vine circles around choosing a tomato over a wheat plant. Plants exude volatiles when they breathe which other plants can distinguish.

Once plants are attacked, they let off a smell, a chemical "scream" from stress or trauma; this is their way of calling out for help. But WHO are they calling out for? Calling out to insects to eat insects that eat them?

Using the desert plant "*Nicotiana attenuata*" (wild tobacco) scientists found that this plant produces a toxin

Continued on next page

that poisons anything with a muscle; it will poison some and not others like a horn worm caterpillar. When attacked, they send out a chemical message (an SOS) that calls for insects that love caterpillars. The 'Big Eyed Bug' shows up within hours.

How does a plant know who's attacking it? Caterpillar's saliva has compounds that provide information to the plant, so the plant attunes its responses to the herbivore. When a caterpillar eats the toxic trichome (glandular hairs on the leaves) of the nicotiana, they start to smell, which attracts predators. Since plants can't run away, they have to do this for self-preservation.

Do plants fight over food & terrain? Yes - they push & shove! Spotted knap weed is an invasive European plant taking over Montana, invading over 4.5 million acres. This weed isn't affected by weevils burrowing into their taproot. It is the "Terminator" equivalent and deploys chemicals that kill native plants. Another plant, Wild lupine launches a chemical 'counter attack' by using oxalic acid to get food from the soil, & this acts as a defensive shield of toxins. This will protect surrounding plants as well.

Are they sociable? Kin recognition is an essential skill - so not to interbreed. Plants can sense above the ground, by light receptors on the leaves to compete for light. Roots respond differently to other roots than their kin's roots. Studying the plant "Sea Rocket" it was found that for plants growing among siblings, there was less root growth noted than when planted with the same amount of 'strangers' - a sort of plant 'altruism'. Who would have thought?

Do mother trees nurture their young? A Douglas fir can live up to 1000 years, growing up to 300 feet tall. Only part of this tree can be seen above ground. The movie "Avatar" showed a Mother tree that nurtured all the trees in the forest. Suzanne Simard, Ph.D. is a Professor of Forest Ecology in the Department of Forest and Conservation Sciences at the University of British Columbia. She researched this & demonstrated how older trees feed younger trees around them. This was done by exposing radioactive gas to a branch of Douglas fir by putting a branch inside a gas filled bag. After a few days, a Geiger counter noted that the radioactivity was also found in young trees nearby. There was probably some fungi involved along the way.

How do plants do this without a brain? Can they organize or integrate information? Scientists don't know. Perhaps plants are a lot more intelligent than we ever imagined.

This may be 'old news' to many of us, but it is still fascinating to watch these studies on film.

This PBS documentary can be found on Netflix, and also on line at PBS.org. 53 minutes.

## The Great Potato Mash...cont. from page 2

So the program started with Greg demonstrating the specific gravity of different potato varieties. Many deeply horticultural conclusions were no doubt drawn from this but, jumping to the chase, heavy means watery which means don't use it in potato salad.

Thanks to a gang of volunteer kitchen workers, events proceeded nicely toward eating -- comparing more than a dozen varieties -- evaluating spud nuances when mashed, baked, boiled and roasted. Were they grainy? waxy? mealy?

Turns out Greg was right. Different potatoes taste different. Some are better than others for mashing or baking. Some are sweet. Some aren't that great. And when it was done, everyone agreed that . . .

Seriously? You're kidding, right? Most of the 45 attendees were potato people (as opposed to AMG people), which means there were 45 opinions. No best-in-show was chosen this year, said Greg; although everyone seemed to agree that potatoes in general are good.

While all this was going on, Julie Riley was discovering that some people in the room were eating baked potatoes "wrong." They were just slicing open the skin and dumping butter, salt, etc into the opening, smushing it up and scarfing down the whole thing, skin and all.

That's not how they do it in Wisconsin, she said. In that fly-over time zone, people slice open the potato, spoon out the white stuff, mash it on the plate, adding butter, etc. After eating it, health nuts may slice the empty skin into small pieces and eat that, she said.

While Julie was marveling at geographical potato oddities, CES nutritionist Leslie Shallcross defended the potato against mythical calumny -- spurious claims that all that starchy goodness might not be super healthy: More potassium than a banana, she said.

So, as they say on NPR, what's the "take-away" for our deck-garden potato eater? The unofficial favorite of Julie and many others was the German Butterball -- nudging out Magic Myrna, a prior favorite.

To get major fluff in mashed potatoes, boil them; then run them through a ricer before adding butter and cream. Don't use an electric mixer.

And, for the best potato flowers, Greg says try White Rural New Yorker. There's a barrel waiting.



## Bird Chatter

**BRAVE NEW WORLD** . . . but only if "brave" means scary. The AP and NPR say the feds have OK'd genetically modified apples developed by a Canadian company. And what new trick have the gene splicers taught the apples? They don't turn brown after being cut.

If that's not disturbing enough, *GMO* peddlers have christened the first two varieties "Arctic Golden" and "Arctic Granny Smith." Why? Who knows. Maybe some focus group told them "Arctic" sounds white and clean and unspoiled.

Is Bird Chatter the only avian annoyed by this linguistic appropriation? It will be a few years before the trees produce a commercial crop.

**BRAVER NEW WORLD** . . . This one is fun. No *GMO* involved. A UK company has grafted a cherry tomato plant onto a potato tuber. It's been done before, as far back as Luther Burbank, but with limited success. This plant produces a good potato and up to 500 cherry tomatoes, a manager at Thomas & Morgan claims. About 40,000 of the "TomTatoe" plants were sold in the UK last year, he said. The two-fer phenom will be released in the U.S. this spring as "Ketchup 'n' Fries." Oh, please.

**EYE OF THE BEHOLDER**. . . Bird Chatter hears a neighbor complained that the painted wig-heads decorating Mike Baldwin's rock garden gave him (or her) nightmares. Alas, the heads are no longer gracing the landscape. Several have been repurposed, however, for use on Halloween.

**LIVING DANGEROUSLY** . . . Spotted cruising in the vicinity of Alaska's potato empire, a vehicle with vanity plates reading: ID SPUD. True, the plate was from an alien land where they might not know better -- one of those fly-over vowel states that thinks it can compete with Yukon Gold.

**WHO WOULDN'T?** . . . Pat Ryan reports a northern flicker visited his heated bird bath. He was excited. Bird Chatter is equally excited to report Debbie Hinchey saw two robins in February.  
Hey, maybe we're really are having an early break-up!  
(Just kidding)

**CONGRATS** . . . You had to be a gardener to appreciate Julie Riley's idea for celebrating Linda and Herb Spencer's 5th anniversary; she passed out refrigerator magnet slugs -- made by Linda.

For \$2.95 you can get 100 seeds of chickweed from the Horizon Herb catalog. Horizon Herbs is located in Williams Oregon.

*What do you get when you cross poison ivy with a four-leaf clover? A rash of good luck. ~Author Unknown*

*An Irishman is never drunk as long as he can hold onto one blade of grass to keep from falling off the earth. ~Irish Saying*

## Herb Study Group: Growing Herbs Indoors

Contributers: Sharon Schlicht / Jane Baldwin

Growing herbs indoors was the topic at the February 6 HSG meeting. Considerations when selecting plants include: smaller plants need less light, some herbs taste best fresh, cost of purchasing herbs, favorites to have available year around, herbs not available commercially, herbs that cannot be grown outdoors and herbs that are not winter hardy.

Here are some tips for growing herbs indoors:

- Basil can be started from seeds or cuttings
- Bay grows well in an east or west window.
- Chervil seeds started in late summer grow in low light but need temperatures between 65-79° F.
- Chives can be dug from the garden and potted; leave outside until leaves die back.
- Oregano is best started with a tip cutting from an outdoor plant.
- Parsley can be started from seed or dug from the garden; use deep pot to hold tap root.
- Rosemary can be purchased or started with a cutting kept in moist, sterile soilless mix until it roots.
- Sage is started from seed or tip cutting from an outdoor plant; it tolerates dry indoor air but needs strong sun of a south window.
- Tarragon requires a dormant period in late fall before coming inside; pot and leave outside until leaves die back.
- Thyme can be started by rooting a soft tip cutting or by digging and potting an outdoor plant.

Herbs brought indoors for the winter after growing outdoors need reverse hardening off. They can be left outside almost until frost. Acclimate them to weaker indoor light by moving to shade for part of the day and gradually to full shade over the course of a week.

Some indoor herbs are known for compact growth and strong flavor. The following are started from seeds:  
'Grolau' chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*), 8-12" tall;  
'Fernleaf' dill (*Anethum graveolens*), 18" tall;  
'Spicy Globe' basil (*Ocimum basilicum minimum*), 8-10" tall; Greek oregano (*Origanum vulgare hirtum*), 8-12" tall.

Those best propagated from cuttings include:  
'English' mint (*Mentha spicata*), 12-18" tall; broadleaf thyme (*Plectranthus amboinicus* or *Coleus amboinicus*), 10-12" tall; Vietnamese coriander (*Polygonum odoratum*)--a good substitute for true coriander, 4-8" tall; 'Blue Boy' rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), 24" tall; dwarf garden sage (*Salvia officinalis 'Compacta'*), 10" tall; and creeping savory (*Satureja repandra* or *S. spicigera*), 2-4" tall.

"Medicinal Terminology of Herbs" is the topic for the March 6 meeting at 12:00 noon, Cooperative Extension Service, 1675 C Street, Suite 100. For information about the Herb Study Group, contact Mary Shier at 345-1562.

## Home Made Cough Drops (or Sweets)

[From [metaspoon.com/cough-drops-natural-homemade/](http://metaspoon.com/cough-drops-natural-homemade/)]

1 cup sugar  
½ cup water  
1 tbsp. honey  
1 tbsp lemon juice  
1/2 tsp. ground ginger  
1/4 tsp cloves

Heat all ingredients until boiling; reduce heat & simmer for about 15-20", stirring regularly.

Meanwhile, lay some baking paper on a cookie sheet. After cooking, let mixture cool. Then drop onto baking sheet from a tablespoon in about ¾" - 1" drops. Let cool for about 20". Sprinkle powdered sugar over the dots so they don't stick together; Use as a cough drop or dissolve 2 in a cup of hot water to drink.

## Garden Event Calendar

### MEETINGS and EVENTS

#### Monday, March 2

\*\*Alaska Native Plant Society Monthly Meeting: Christina Rinas, APU graduate student, will present her research in shrub distribution and abundance above tree line in the Chugach Mountains. Mini-Botany: Devils Club, Bull Kelp by John Trent; Plant Family: Crepis nana and Saxifraga bronchialis by Mike Monterusso, 7:00 pm at Campbell Science Center, Anchorage. \*\*Mat-Su Master Gardener's Monthly Meeting: Seed Swap, 6:30 pm. MTA building, Palmer.

#### Tuesday, March 3

Valley Garden Club: Red Beet Blending, How to Use the Whole Vegetable by Sally Koppenberg. 10:30 am at First Baptist Church, Bogard Road, Wasilla. Details: <http://www.valleygardenclub.com/>.

#### Thursday, March 5

Anchorage Garden Club monthly public meeting: Jump Start Spring/Cold Frame Boxes, by Melody Schneider at 7:00 pm, Pioneer Schoolhouse 437 E 3rd Avenue, Anchorage.

#### Friday, March 6

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

#### Monday, March 9

All-Alaskan Seed Swap, presented by Dirt Divas and Grow Palmer, 2:00 - 7:00 pm at the Train Depot. Bring harvested seeds from your garden or seeds of Alaskan plants. Seeds should be labeled and dated. Details at: [DepotFarmMarket@gmail.com](mailto:DepotFarmMarket@gmail.com).

#### Tuesday, March 10

- Anchorage Permaculture Guild Seed Exchange. Bring seeds of vegetables, flowers and herbs to share, especially those that have been hand collected. Mini presentations on seed-related topics will begin at 7:45 pm at CES, 1675 C Street, Suite 100.] FREE! Registration NOT Required

#### Thursday, March 12

Wildflower Garden Club Meeting: Making the Vegetable Garden Organic, by Ellen Vande Visse. 10:00 am - 11:30 am at Central Lutheran Church, 1420 Cordova Street.

#### Monday, March 16

Anchorage AMGA Meeting: Hardy Roses of South Central Alaska, by Debbie Hinchey, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at CES, 1675 C Street, Anchorage.

#### Thursday, March 19

Willow Garden Club, Gardening in Small Spaces- Lets Get Growing, Field Trip to Jacobson's Nursery Tour and Presentation on incorporating variety, color and beauty to baskets and small containers, planting media, care, by Cory Jacobson. Details at: <http://willowgardenclub.blogspot.com/>.

#### Saturday, March 21

\*\*Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers: Pruning demo and workshop. 6:30 pm at Boyers Greenhouse. Members only. Join at: <http://www.apfga.org/membership/>

\*\*Alaska Rock Garden Society Monthly Meeting: Ordering Plants from Catalogs: what to order, what is tried and true. 2:00 - 4:00 pm at MTA in Palmer. Details at: <http://www.akrockgardensociety.org/>.

#### Tuesday, March 24

Alaska Orchid Society Monthly Meeting: Annual Meeting Party, 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm at the BP Center. Details at: <http://www.akorchid.org>.

### CLASSES and WORKSHOPS

#### Saturday, March 7 - Saturday March 28

Alaska Mill and Feed Spring Classes: 10:00 am at 1501 East First Avenue. Classes are free. Reservations are required. Register at: <http://www.alaskamillandfeed.com/#!events/>.

March 7: Potatoes

March 14: Bee Keeping

March 21: Begonias, Dahlias at 1:00 pm

March 28: Birch Tree Tapping

#### Tuesday, March 10

Anchorage Permaculture Guild Seed Exchange: Bring seeds of vegetables, flowers and herbs to share. Mini-presentations on seed topics. 7:45 pm at Cooperative Extension Office, 1675 C Street, Suite 100.

#### Wednesdays, March 11 - 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 March:

March 11: Summer Shorts: Powerhouse Vegetables. Plant the most nutritious best for your garden.

March 18: Food Production in the City: Learn food production for small spaces.

March 25: Soil Basics for Organic Growers: Learn to have a productive garden with organic methods.

#### Friday March 13

Get Your Garden Growing: presented by Anchorage Cooperative Extension Service at 11:00 am - 1:00 pm at Anchorage Native Primary Care Center Lobby, 4320 Diplomacy Drive. Details at [www.southcentralfoundation.com](http://www.southcentralfoundation.com).

#### Saturday, March 14

ABG workshop: Organic Composting 101. Learn various ways to compost: hot, vermicomposting, etc., by Will Criner. 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm at Bells Nursery, Specking Avenue. Cost: \$25 ABG Non-members, \$20 ABG members. Register at: [www.alaskabg.org/events](http://www.alaskabg.org/events).

#### Monday, March 16, 23 and 30

Good Earth Garden School: Season Extension High Tunnels; Grower Training, by Dr. Jeff Smeenk and Ellen Vande Visse.

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Cost: \$65. Details: <http://www.goodearthgardenschool.com/>.

### **Saturday, March 21**

ABG workshop: Garden Design Basics. Learn key elements of garden design. Bring your site plan, a ruler and photographs of your site. Led by Ginger Hudson. 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm at Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage, Cost: \$ 25 ABG Non-members, \$20 ABG members. Class is limited, pre-registration is required. Register at: [www.alas.kabg.org/events/](http://www.alas.kabg.org/events/).

### **Saturday, March 28**

Bigger, Better, Lusher Gardens: Organic Growing Through Soil Science: Anchorage CES, 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm at Cooperative Extension Office, 1675 C Street, Suite 100. Suggested donation: \$25. Limited space. RSVP with ACAT at [www.akaction.org](http://www.akaction.org)

### **Tuesday, March 31**

Good Earth Garden School: Start Your Own Seeds - Organically, by Ellen Vande Visse, 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm at Artemisia Acres, Palmer. Cost: \$25. Details: <http://www.goodearthgardenschool.com/>.

## **CONFERENCES**

### **Tuesday - Thursday, March 3 - 5**

11th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference: Workshops and Seminars to Increase the Sustainability of Agricultural Pursuits in Alaska. Fairbanks Westmark Hotel and Conference Center, Fairbanks. Agenda and Registration at: <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/conference/>.

### **Saturday, March 7**

Alaska Statewide Master Gardeners Conference: Program includes Plant Hardiness, Growing Garlic in Alaska, Alaska Herbs and other topics, at Pikes Landing, 4436 Airport Way, Fairbanks. Details and Registration at: <https://fairbanksmastergardeners.wordpress.com/conference/>.

### **AMGA Board of Directors**

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- Programs & Field Trips - Phyllis Rogers and Melanie San Angelo
- Volunteer Coordinator - Sue Looney
- Website - Gina Docherty

**February 23, 2015**

### **Legislation Filed to Declare July Alaska Peony Month**

Juneau - On Friday, Representative David Guttenberg (D-Fairbanks) filed legislation to celebrate the achievements of the peony industry by declaring the month of July to be Alaska Peony Month.



House Concurrent Resolution 6 recognizes those who have worked tirelessly over the past fourteen years to take advantage of Alaska's unique peony blooming season and bring a new and profitable agricultural industry to the state.

"With this resolution we are fertilizing the opportunities that are expected to come from this blossoming industry," said Rep. Guttenberg.

### **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:

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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)

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.