



# President's Patch By Rhonda Bowman, President

It is sometimes necessary to remind ourselves how lucky we are to have plenty of food to eat. During the holidays, we should make sure that we give to those in need and provide help to the local organizations in our community that provide to families in need. In the United States, there are 14.7 million children and 4.8 million senior citizens who don't know where their next meal is coming from, per Feeding America, a nonprofit food bank organization. We have food banks and other organizations that provide donated food, game and produce to those in need. Some of these organizations are set up as a nonprofit, as well as churches. It is not hard to find them and during this time of year they have been having food drives to get their pantries set up to feed families during the holidays.

We are soon coming up on a new year with renewed hope and it should be a time of reflection of your past successes and failures to make your new growing season plentiful. Did you keep a gardening journal? It sure can help spark your memory to remind you of items you might have forgotten or help you to move certain plants to help them be more successful next year.

We would love to have interesting speakers at our meetings and if you know of someone that would be a speaker, please contact us. Please join us at our meetings on the first Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

I hope that everyone has a great holiday season!



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## CHAPTER MEETINGS

### FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

#### NEXT MEETING

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 5TH, 6:00 PM**  
**LOCATION: TURKEY RED, MEETING ROOM,**  
**PALMER, AK**

DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

#### MEETING AGENDA

- BRIEF BUSINESS MEETING
- ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

#### TOPIC/SPEAKER:

We will have our annual Christmas party potluck dinner. The association will provide the meat. Everyone should bring a side-dish or desert. Turkey Red will furnish coffee, hot tea and water. If you haven't, please RSVP to Marge Mueller as soon as possible (see club contact page for her info). There will be a gift exchange round-robin (Chinese auction) after the meal. Please bring a gift for each participant - \$10 gift limit.

## PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photos by the author

As the daylight dwindles, and there is still no snow to brighten the land, the memories of our past growing season begin to fade; then lo, here comes a seed catalog! Ah, there is hope! The peasant can dream of a new season and new things to try. He is grateful for the seed companies that provide these colorful displays of things to be grown. Sure, you can always find this stuff online, but these time-honored catalogs that come in the mail are most welcome and useful. One can peruse and compare the various offerings easily and then go online to do your ordering.

It is wonderful that new things are presented and the old standbys are honored as well. The peasant makes good use of new hybrids, but appreciates the old reliables too. The availability of such a variety of choices would indicate that all is well in the realm of growing things.

It is the peasant's hope that you are all enjoying some of last summer's production, be it of aesthetic value or something to dine upon. A favorite of the peasant and his good wife is winter squash. Quartered and baked and with a dollop of butter melted into the center hollow; hey, this is fine dining. Two varieties we enjoy are Chacha and Winter Sweet, both kabocha types. They reach their best flavor after being stored for a while after harvesting. So far, we have grown them in the greenhouse or an automated cold frame, but the peasant thinks they could do well in a warm and sunny garden spot. Late season rainy weather might be a problem and require some mitigation.

The peasant has always hand-pollinated these squash, and will continue to do so to assure a good crop. It's good to have several plants, as an individual plant may not produce pollen-bearing flowers and fruiting flowers on the same day, both being needed at the same time for successful pollination. Cross pollination between the varieties we grow works well. The peasant puts a small piece of plywood under each fruit to keep them off the ground. Some

spoilage has been experienced when the fruit contacts moist soil.



Chacha squash. A kabocha type it comes to us by way of Japan. it has an orange smooth flesh and has a subtle sweet flavor.

So far, we have grown these squashes in five-gallon bags, with eight to ten square feet per plant. Under these conditions, they produce one fruit per plant, occasionally two. With more space, they might produce more per plant, but we all know how valuable greenhouse space is. Good air circulation is important, as with most garden vegetables. If winter squash is to be grown outdoors, anything that will raise soil temperature will be advantageous. The peasant thinks black plastic bags would be a good method. Exposure of the bags to sunlight should help to raise soil temperature within the bags. The warm outdoor temperatures we have recently experienced in summer will certainly help if they continue. A site near a sunny south wall will be favorable as well.

Giving the squash plants a head start to make use of the warmth and long days of mid-summer is a must. Starting indoors in four-inch pots in mid-April and careful transplanting is a good way to go. Squash cannot tolerate frost on either end of the growing season, so that is to be kept in mind.

Enjoy the season. Thanks, folks.

## CHRISTMAS PARTY INFO

The Christmas Party will be on Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Location is Turkey Red in downtown Palmer. We will be in the meeting room. The club will furnish the meat and everyone else should bring a side dish or dessert to share. The limit on the gift for the Chinese auction is \$10. Each person wanting to participate, should bring a gift.

In the works are a brief business meeting, great meal, a Chinese gift exchange, and of course, the superb company of fellow master gardeners.



## HOW WINTER IS SUPPOSED TO LOOK

Photo from Curt Mueller of the Mueller homestead



## MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER'S ASSOCIATION MEETING MINUTES, NOVEMBER 7TH, 2016

Members Meeting - 7:00 PM

Rhonda called the meeting to order.

Cathy gave the financial report.

Membership was discussed.

Proposed, voted on, and passed was "Family" membership shall be members of the same household. We discussed the parameters for the Plant Sale in May. It was proposed, voted on, and passed that in order to participate in the Plant Sale, individuals must be a member by March 1 and attend the March, April, and May meetings. Other benefits, including the ProMix sale, will require the same membership criteria.

Our Christmas Party is on Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM. It will be in the same meeting room as last year at Turkey Red. Turkey Red will provide the plates, silverware, and coffee. Each member should bring a present (under \$10.) for the round-robin gift exchange.



## Conference Planning Update

Plans are moving forward for the Master Gardener Conference at the Palmer Train Depot, April 22, 2017. If you have any suggestions for speakers at the conference, please share them with us. Donations for door prizes are most welcome. Due to space limitations in the Palmer Depot, there will not be a silent auction at this conference but lots of great door prizes! Lunch will be catered by Turkey Red, delicious local food.

Ideas for vendor displays are also welcome and please spread the word there will be vendor space available at the conference. Thank you to everyone who came to the conference planning meeting in November. We look forward to everyone's suggestions and lots of help with the conference. Our next planning meeting will be December 12th, 2016 at the MTA Building, 480 Commercial Drive, Palmer.

Lois Rockcastle, Conference Chairperson, e-mail: [tundracare@alaska.net](mailto:tundracare@alaska.net), phone: 907-632-1137.

## Committee Meeting for April 22, 2017

Conference - 6:15 PM

Lois Rockcastle, Chair, called the meeting to order. 12 members were present. Various members reported. The Palmer Depot will be the site for our conference. Turkey Red will cater the food for lunches. Our Keynote Speaker will be Marion Owen. Speaker for composting will be Ellen Vande Visse. Rob Brown will speak on grafting melons and tomatoes. We are still looking for speakers to talk about fermenting and other topics. Members also discussed vendors and door prizes.

## CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Conference committee members - there will be a committee meeting on Monday, December 12th at 7:00 p.m. It will be in the MTA Conference room. For more information or with any questions, contact the committee chair: Lois Rockcastle at [tundracare@alaska.net](mailto:tundracare@alaska.net).

Some important items to bring updates on would be website info, payment processing info, speakers, and any other concerns committee members have.

## 2017 State Master Gardener Conference Committees

Chair - Lois Rockcastle  
 Auction/Door Prizes - Marge Mueller, Pat Tremaine  
 PR/Advertising - Wayne and Arlene Bowman  
 Vendors - Michael Kircher, Curt Mueller  
 Speakers - Ken Blaylock, Steve Brown  
 Coffee Service - Cathy Crew  
 Venue Location - Deb Blaylock, Cathy Crew (done) - Palmer Depot Secured  
 Food/Lunch - Lois Rockcastle  
 Programs/labels/registration forms - Deb Blaylock  
 Goodie Bags - Marcia Clemons  
 Registration - Cathy Crew, Joan Redlin  
 Website updates - Eva Cohnen-Brown  
 Table Decorations - Vacant  
 Conference Set-Up/Take-Down - Bonnie Hager  
 CES support - publications/folders/copies/other goodies (as their budget allows) - Steve Brown & Melissa Clampitt  
 Budget - Cathy Crew  
 Thank you gifts for Guest Speakers - Vacant  
 Meeting Scribe - Vacant

## Garden Links

### Alaska Botanical Garden

<http://www.alaskabg.org/>

### Alaska Community Agriculture

<http://www.alaskacommunityag.org/>

### Arbor Day Foundation

[www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org)

### Alaska Natural Heritage Program – Botany

<http://aknhp.uaa.alaska.edu/botany/>

### Alaska Garden Clubs

<http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org>

### Alaska Grown Source Book (online)

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/sourcebook/sourcebookindex2016.html>

### Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage Chapter

<http://alaskamastergardeners.org/>

### Alaska Master Gardener Blog

<https://alaskamastergardener.community.uaf.edu/>

### Alaska Native Plant Society

<http://www.aknps.org/>

### Alaska Orchid Society

<http://www.akorchid.org/>

### Alaska Peony Growers Association

<http://alaskapeonies.org>

### Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association

<http://www.apfga.org/>

### Alaska Plant Materials Center

<http://plants.alaska.gov/>

### Alaska Rhodiola Products Cooperative

<http://www.alaskarhodiolaproducts.com/>

### Alaska Rock Garden Society

<http://www.akrockgardensociety.org/>

### Eat Local Alaska

<http://akfood.weebly.com/index.html>

### Good Earth Garden School

<http://ellenvandevisse.com/>

### Grow Palmer

<http://growpalmer.org/>



### Integrated Pest Management Program

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ipm/>

### Junior Master Gardeners

<http://www.jmgkids.us/>

### Landscape Plants for Alaska

[www.alaskaplants.org](http://www.alaskaplants.org)

### Mat-Su Borough Rain Garden Program

<http://www.matsugov.us/environment/raingardens>

### Mat-Su Master Gardener Website

[www.matsumastergardeners.org](http://www.matsumastergardeners.org)

### Master Gardener Research Link

<http://search.extension.org>

### Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley

<https://fairbanksmastergardeners.wordpress.com/>

### Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

### South-Central Alaska Beekeepers Assoc.

<http://www.sababeekeepers.com/>

### Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners Association

<http://seak-mastergardeners.org/index.html>

### Sustainable Agriculture – UAF

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/>

### UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Palmer

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/>

### UAF Cooperative Extension Service Publications

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/pubs/catalog/>

### UAF Georgeson Botanical Garden

<http://www.georgesonbg.org/>

### UAF CES Citizen Pest Monitoring Portal

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ipm/cmp/>

### UAF School of Natural Resources

<http://www.uaf.edu/snre/>

### University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

[www.fruit.usask.ca](http://www.fruit.usask.ca)

### USDA/NRCS Plant Data Base

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/>

### Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation

<http://www.wasillaswcd.org/>

## Announcements

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The club is desperately in need of someone to coordinate speakers for our meetings.

Need volunteer hours? Volunteer to help with the 2017 State Master Gardener Conference. Send an email to the club and we'll add you to the list.

### ITS THAT TIME!

Its time to renew your annual association membership. Dues are \$10 for an individual annual membership and \$12 for a family membership. We've clarified what a family membership means. **A family membership is for family members who live in the same household.**

We also have a gift membership available for holiday gift giving! Forms are available at:

<http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/forms.html>

## CLUB CONTACT INFO

<b>President:</b>	<b>Rhonda Bowman</b>	<b>746-2948</b>
<b>Co-VP</b>	<b>Curt Mueller</b>	<b>745-6144</b>
<b>Co-VP</b>	<b>Hally Truelove</b>	<b>376-0909</b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Joan Redlin</b>	<b>206-604-4676</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Cathy Crew</b>	<b>632-4401</b>
<b>Member at Large:</b>	<b>Marge Mueller</b>	<b>745-6144</b>

If you have gardening news, photos or information you'd like to share in the newsletter, please contact: Deb Blaylock @Email: [kdblalock@ak.net](mailto:kdblalock@ak.net)

Website: [www.matsumastergardeners.com/](http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/)  
Email: [matsumastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### DECEMBER 2016

**Dec 5, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Christmas Party**

### JANUARY 2017 AND BEYOND

**Jan 9, Palmer, MMG Mtg**

**Jan 26-29, Fairbanks, 2017 APGA Annual Peony Conference,**

<http://www.alaskapeonyconference.com/>

**Feb 6, Palmer, MMG Mtg**

**Feb 21-23, Fairbanks, 2017 Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference,**

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/conference/>

**Mar 6, Palmer, MMG Mtg**

**Apr 3, Palmer, MMG Mtg**

**Apr 22, Palmer, Alaska State Master Gardener Conference**

**May 1, Palmer, MMG Mtg**

**Jun 3, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale**

**Jun 5, Palmer, Palmer Library Planting**

**Jul 10, Palmer, MMG Mtg**

Please let Rhonda know if you have any ideas for future meeting topics. Members are welcome to offer to speak or reach out to speakers of interest to the club's membership. The club would welcome a speaker coordinator - if interested contact Rhonda.

Our club is only as good as we the members make it!

### *Club Membership*

The membership year runs from January to December each year. Annual individual memberships are \$10 and family memberships are \$12.

Membership forms are available to download on the club's website, [www.matsumastergardeners.com](http://www.matsumastergardeners.com)

*Thank you*

## How and What to Submit for the Monthly Newsletter

Your submissions are greatly appreciated and make our newsletter what it is - so don't be shy about submitting items for publication.

However, there are a few rules which we all must pay attention to:

Articles, stories, poetry, upcoming events, and pictures (garden-related) are gladly accepted for inclusion in the newsletter. Please submit pictures in JPEG format and other items in Word format with no special formatting other than paragraphs. When submitting pictures, please provide a brief caption or explanation as to who or what is in the picture. I do not have a scanner to copy pictures so I cannot accept hard copies.

If you are not the author or photographer, please ensure you have permission of the author or photographer to use their material in the newsletter. The newsletter publisher is not responsible for obtaining this for you.

Please do not provide magazine articles or pictures from the internet unless they are public domain items.

**Deadline for submission of articles and info: 20<sup>th</sup> day of each month -- Thank you--**



December 2016



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**Facebook**

Website: [www.matsumastergardeners.com/](http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/)  
Email: [matsumastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com)

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