



Feb 2016



President's Patch By Rhonda Bowman, President

Gardening help has now gone high tech! There are some apps for your smart phone that can assist you. "Yardmap.org" helps you plan your garden, yard or area with room to take notes on your observations and to document results, watering frequency and other conditions.

"Merlin/allaboutbirds.org" allows you to document the date and location of your bird sighting as well as tools to help you with identification. "Tomato Chooser" provides information on selecting the right tomato variety by maturity dates, size and color as well as other information. There is also "GrowIt™" from Ball Horticultural company, which provides suggestions and connects with other gardeners to find information about plants. "Homegrown," with Bonnie Plants, lets you record information, details and even photos of your gardening endeavors.

We have the Alaska State Master Gardeners Conference coming up on April 16 at UAA. There will be links on the Anchorage Master Gardeners website for registration starting in February! We do have links from our website as well. The conference will be a day filled with good information from nine speakers and inspiration for gardeners of all levels. The theme this year is: "Grow Your Own - from the Soil Up."

New Master Gardeners can get their volunteer hours by assisting with planting opportunities in May and beyond to fulfill their community service requirement of 40 hours. Keep your eyes peeled on our future newsletters for more information. You can also volunteer to work at the Cooperative Extension booth at the State Fair in August.

Hope to see you at the next meeting. Our meetings are the first Monday of every month at 7 p.m., usually held in the MTA conference rooms. Don't forget to get your annual dues of \$10 sent in for this year.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Patch	1
Next Chapter Meeting	1
Peasant's Perspective	2
Upcoming Gardening Classes/Events	3
Cabin Fever Reliever Workshop	4
Meeting Minutes	5
Welcome our New Club Secretary	5
Garden Links	6
Announcements/Volunteer Opportunities	6
Contacts	7
Calendar of Events	7

CHAPTER MEETINGS FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING
MONDAY, FEB 1, 7:00 PM
LOCATION: MATANUSKA TELEPHONE
COMPANY (MTA) BUILDING, CONFERENCE
ROOM (IN THE BASEMENT), PALMER, AK
DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

MEETING AGENDA

- **TREASURER REPORT**
- **MINUTES**
- **OLD BUSINESS**
- **NEW BUSINESS**

TOPIC/SPEAKER:

JAN NEWMAN, GROW PALMER

UPDATE ON THE GROW PALMER INITIATIVE.

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photos by the author

The peasant has a penchant for trying new things to enhance garden production in our fair state. A device that has been around for many years and has caught the eye of the peasant is an automatic vent operator. It can be used to open and close a hinged vent in order to give a measure of temperature control to a cold frame, greenhouse, or similar structure. This device is often offered for sale in seed catalogs and other gardening publications. The price is usually high in these catalogs; however, some searching on the internet will reveal the same item at a much more reasonable price.

The most common of these operators is called Univent. It is manufactured in Denmark, a country which often experiences cool, damp growing seasons. It appears to the peasant to be one of the better ones available as to price and durability.

The Univent is operated by a type of hydraulic cylinder which uses a wax that expands with heat. It does not require electricity. It is adjustable to an opening temperature of 63 to 77 degrees Fahrenheit, with maximum opening at about 86 degrees. It will lift a weight of 15 pounds, which means it could raise a horizontal hinged vent weighing 30 pounds since it only raises one side of the vent. Lift height is 18 inches. A vertical vent could be heavier since the operator doesn't have to lift it. Closing is accomplished by a pair of springs built into the operator.



This shows the Univent in open position.

The peasant now has one of these devices in his possession and plans to build a cold frame to be placed atop a raised bed. He plans to try it on onions to see if bigger sized onions can be grown using the cold frame. It might also be good for cucumbers or tomatoes or any crop that could benefit from more warmth. It would also be useful as a way to allow pollinating insects to enter the structure, for crops that need pollination.



This shows Univent in fully closed position.

On the subject of tomatoes; last year the peasant started some Polar Baby tomato plants for a good neighbor who wanted to grow tomatoes outdoors and had purchased the seed for Polar Baby. Marge kept one plant to try outdoors and was very pleased with the results, as was the neighbor. The plants bore heavily, ripened the fruit, and the tomatoes had a good flavor. This should be a good one to try alongside Stupice, a commonly grown outdoor tomato for Alaska.

For more cool weather tomato varieties, you could see the website "Tomato Dirt." Under "tomato varieties" they list "best tomatoes for cold climate." This includes both hybrid and open pollinated varieties.

Thanks Folks.

Organic Gardening Five Fridays (afternoon or evening) Plus Field Trip

Feb 19, 26, March 4, 11, 25 (2016)
1:30pm-4pm or 6pm-8:30pm
plus field trip on Sat Mar 26

Once a year, I offer this foundational training. You go home with an armload of practical knowledge to grow delicious vegetables, fruits, flowers, herbs, & grains on any scale.

Learn

- Successful composting
- Organic fertilizers & soil balancing
- Non-toxic pest management
- Nutrient-dense production

1 credit = \$183, or Senior Citizen Tuition Waiver

Location: Mat-Su College, Palmer, Room: SNOD 117

To register: call 907-745-9746

(phone or stop in-easier than on-line registration)

Good Earth Garden School,

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



Alaska Botanical Garden

Annual Meeting & Reception - March 2nd
10th Annual Spring Garden Conference
Thyme for Gathering - March 19th



Join us on March 2nd for our Annual Meeting & Reception at the BP Energy Center, 900 E Benson Blvd, 7 - 8:30 pm. At this free event we will share 2015's accomplishments and challenges, including fiscal, program and garden specifics. See future plans and the current Master Plan. Attendees will be invited to share their ideas and thoughts for the Garden. An informal reception will follow.

Join us on March 19th for our 10th Annual Spring Garden Conference - Thyme for Gathering at the BP Energy Center, 900 E Benson Blvd. Doors open at 8:45 am and sessions begin at 9:30 am. Cost \$85 Student, \$105 Early Bird Member, \$120 Early Bird Non-member (rates increase March 1st)

Some Speakers & Topics Include*:

Tim Meyers - Organic Gardening & Season Extension in Bethel

Julie Riley - Propagating Herbs and ABG Herb Garden

Mary Kate Reeder - Growing Garlic in Alaska
Ellen Vande Visse & Michelle Wilbur - Teas to Nourish Your Plants

Cathy Sage- Herb Garden Design

Jason Smith & Pat Duttle- Hydroponics

Leslie Shallcross- Herbs as Medicine

Mary Goddard & Lauren Fetzer- Dining with Delicious Local Edibles

*Topics and speakers are subject to change.
Check our website for the most current information: www.alaskabg.org.

Join us . . .

Alaska Sustainable Agriculture Conference

February 23-25, 2016
The Lakefront Anchorage

Getting Down to Business with Fibers and Foods

Tuesday workshops will be followed by two days of presentations and discussion related to farm management, including a Thursday session on qiviut.

Tuesday Workshops:

- Budgeting for Farm Decision Making
Presented by Gina Greenway
- On-farm Food Safety and Marketing
Presented by Barbara Hanson and Johanna Herron
- Connecting Fiber Producers to Markets
Presented by Carrie Hull

Contact Dairy Discovery at dairydiscovery@alaska.edu or 907-474-5107 or visit alaskadairy.com for more information.



Cabin Fever Reliever Workshops

Location: UAF Cooperative Extension Office, Matanuska Experiment Farm, 1509 S. Georgeson Road, Palmer, AK, Call 745-3360 with any questions.

Date: February 6, 2016, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Cost: Adults \$25 Youth \$15 (Children must be accompanied by an adult): Costs cover day of classes and light lunch. Preregistration required. Register online at: <http://bit.ly/ces-workshops>

Workshop Title: Yogurt

Presenter: Julie Cascio

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Room 208 9:30-10:20

Description: Types of milk, starter, containers, incubation methods and food safety will be discussed in this hands-on class to make yogurt.

Workshop Title: Mozzarella

Presenter: Julie Cascio

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Room 208 10:30-12:20

Description: Practice making fresh mozzarella cheese in this hands-on class.

Workshop Title: Fermenting Vegetables

Presenter: Julie Cascio

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Room 208 1:00-1:50

Description: Principles in fermenting vegetables, containers to use for fermentation, food safety and storage will be discussed in this class.

Workshop Title: Tapping Birch Trees

Presenter: Julie Cascio

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Room 208 2:00-2:50

Description: When and how to tap birch trees will be discussed in this class. Nutrients in birch sap, ways to use the sap, storing the sap and principles in making syrup will also be covered.

Workshop Title: Making Fresh Pasta

Presenter: Julie Cascio

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Room 208 3:00-3:50

Description: Learn to make homemade pasta in this hands-on class. Practice rolling out the dough by hand and with a pasta machine.

Workshop Title: Introduction to Alaska Gardening

Presenter: Steve Brown

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Blue Room 9:30-11:20

Description: Gardening in Alaska is actually very easy...if you forget what you learned in the Lower 48. This class will teach you the fundamentals of successful high latitude gardening.

Workshop Title: Seed Starting

Presenter: Ken Blaylock

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Blue Room 11:30-12:20

Description: Getting an early start on your plants is easier than you think. However, there are some important steps for success. This class will teach you what you need to know.

Workshop Title: Growing Giant Cabbage for the Alaska State Fair

Presenter: Curt Mueller

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Blue Room 1:00-1:50

Description: Learn the secrets of growing a giant cabbage for the Alaska State Fair. Variety selection, fertilization, irrigation and tips on transporting a giant will be covered.

Workshop Title: Greenhouse Design

Presenter: Steve Brown

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Blue Room 2:00-2:50

Description: There are a lot of things to consider when choosing a greenhouse design. Cost, location, wind resistance, volume, snow load capacity are all factors that must be balanced. This class will discuss the pros and cons of the most popular designs and help you make the right decision.

Workshop Title: Chicken University

Presenter: Steve Brown

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Blue Room 3:00-3:50

Description: A backyard flock is fun and a great way to include Alaskan food security. This class will enable a novice to start their first flock. Breed selection, incubation, nutrition, coop design, disease management, cold weather tips and even chicken psychology will be covered.

Workshop Title: Raw Hide - More than dog treats

Presenter: Connie Harris

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Seed Lab 9:30-10:20

Description: Rawhide is a value added resource and potential uses will be discussed including a demo on drum making. Each participant will have the opportunity to prepare a strip of rawhide, which then could be used to create your own design.

Workshop Title: The Marvels of Dutch Oven Cooking

Presenter: Ron Philipps

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Seed Lab 10:30-12:20

Description: Join Ron Philipps, Valley outdoor cook extraordinaire, as he unveils the marvelous world of Dutch Oven Cooking. This two session offering will introduce basics, proven techniques, charcoal formulas & conclude with the actual preparation of a variety of desserts to be served to "Reliever" participants & presenters at Lunch!

Workshop Title: The "Magnetism" of Map & Compass

Presenter: Steve Brown

Room/Time: Kerttula Seed Lab 1:00-1:50

Description: Mastering the fundamentals of using a topographical map and magnetic compass is a required skill in Alaska. This class will teach participants how to read a topographical map, map orientation, setting declination, setting and following bearings, triangulation and more.

Workshop Title: Trails... Our local GEMS!

Presenter: Chuck Kaucic

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Seed Lab 2:00-2:50

Description: This presentation will feature a review of our wonderful trail system throughout the Core area. Maps will be used to illustrate locations & access. The "inside stuff" of uses through all seasons & little-known/used trails will be revealed. A plethora of free brochures & maps will be available.

Workshop Title: 25 Upcoming Activities that CAN'T be missed

Presenter: Chuck Kaucic

Room/Time: Kerttula Hall Seed Lab 3:00-3:50

Description: Know any of the locations of our local arboretums? Need a best spot to take the family? Entertaining elderly guests & wish them to have a memory-filled visit to a stellar location? Take a virtual journey with Chuck Kaucic as he navigates you through the most attractive things to do in the Valley during the next few months.

Cancellation Policy: Refunds will be given if participant cancels three or more days prior to event. No refunds will be given for participant cancellations within three days of the event.

**MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 4, 2016**

The first meeting of 2016 was held on January 4, 2016 with 18 members and one guest present. Rhonda called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Cathy, Treasurer, presented the Jan.- Dec. 2015 Profit and Loss Previous Year Comparison and the January 2016 Balance Sheet. She also reminded us that the 2016 budget was needed.

Cathy reported that a \$1000 donation to Pioneer Home had not been cashed, nor do we have a proposal for the donation. It was discussed and decided that we need more information so this was tabled until the February meeting.

The Community Gardens may need funds so Rhonda will contact Sandra Garley for more information.

A letter was received by Jan Newman on behalf of the GROW PALMER project. After much discussion this was tabled until February so that additional information could be obtained by Rhonda.

Rhonda adjourned the meeting.

Speaker Robb Wells, of THE PERSISTENT FARMER, spoke of his dahlia business growing and selling dahlia tubers. He showed dahlia tubers to illustrate as he described his set-up and how he planted in the spring. He also talked about when to dig tuber clumps in the fall, and how to prepare and store tubers until spring. He advised buying *The Encyclopedia of Dahlias* by Bill McClaren to view the many types and varieties of dahlias.

by Joan Redlin, Secretary

Please Welcome our New Club Secretary!

Joan kindly provided some background information on her so we could all get to know her. Joan - welcome to the club and thank you for volunteering!

About Joan Redlin:

I grew up on a farm in Montana. My grandparents on both sides were farmers in Montana and Minnesota. My grandmas had large flower and vegetable gardens. My Mom and Dad farmed and my Mom gardened. I spent many happy hours with them all in the gardens and with my Dad in the fields. I have two brothers and three sisters.

I have had gardens in Montana, South Dakota, Idaho, Arizona, and Washington. I planted yards and gardens in Arizona and Washington.

I attended the Alaska Master Gardener's class this past Fall with Stephen (Mat-Su Cooperative Extension Service). I still need volunteer hours and am open to all suggestions: joanredlin@gmail.com

I taught grades K-8 for 23 years in Pierre, South Dakota and Seattle, Washington. I loved teaching and am retired now.

I live just outside Palmer by the Matanuska River with my daughter Sarah, son-in-law Brandon, three cats and a dog. We have gardened with success the past three years. My daughter Emily, son-in-law Jonah and granddaughter June, who just turned two, live in Seattle, Washington.

Garden Links

Alaska Botanical Garden

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

Alaska Community Agriculture

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

Arbor Day Foundation

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/index.htm>

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 ****New****

<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/>

Integrated Pest Management Program

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



Junior Master Gardeners

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

Landscape Plants for Alaska

www.alaskaplants.org

Local Alaskan Plants Clearinghouse

<http://www.localplants.org/Home>

Mat-Su Borough Rain Garden Program

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

Mat-Su Master Gardener Website

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

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

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/>

University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

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 in desperate need of someone to coordinate speakers for our meetings. Please let Rhonda know if you're interested. Thanks!

Check out our new Facebook group, Mat-Su Master Gardeners. The web link is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/911603338876982/>. The group format allows better interaction with the public. Individuals can easily post comments and receive advice from experienced gardeners. If you're on Facebook, be sure to stop by and join. Share it with your friends and family.

CLUB CONTACT INFO

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

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

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/
Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2016

Feb 1, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Grow Palmer Update
Feb 6, Palmer, Cabin Fever Reliever Workshops, Mat-Su CES, <http://bit.ly/22NOpEK>
Feb. 22-25, Anchorage, 2016 Alaska Sustainable Agriculture Conference, <https://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/conference/>

MARCH 2016 AND BEYOND

Mar 7, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Stephen Brown
Mar 19, Anchorage, Alaska Botanical Garden, 10th Annual Spring Garden Conference – Thyme for Gathering, <http://alaskabg.org/>
April – National Gardening Month
Apr 4 Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Apr 9, Anchorage, Mall at Sears Spring Garden Show, <http://mallatsears.com>
Apr 16, Anchorage, State Alaska Master Gardener Conference, <http://www.alaskamastergardeners.org/>
April 22, Earth Day
May 2, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Jun 4, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale (Tentative)
Jun 6, Palmer, Annual Palmer Library Planter

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

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: 20th day of each month -- Thank you--



February 2016



Like us on
Facebook

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/
Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER'S CLUB
PO BOX 585
PALMER, AK 99645**

