



Feb 2014



President's Patch

By Rhonda Bowman, President

We are in the midst of winter but we have been enjoying some fairly warm weather while the lower 48 has been in the grips of cold weather. I think everyone has been planning for our upcoming planting season but we have some planning to do for our club as well.

At our January meeting we had Don Berberich from the Palmer High School presented his course of study for students wanting a summer credit course in agriculture. He invited anyone to come and visit the greenhouse facilities and to volunteer to mentor a student which would be beneficial to laying the groundwork for "growing" gardeners and provide an opportunity for Master Gardeners to gain their volunteer hours.

Eva Brown has been working hard to update our website and it will be necessary to make a few changes to make it a more user-friendly tool. We need to have some discussions about the website at our next meeting.

At our last meeting we also received a very generous donation from Far North Gardening Supply of vegetable and flower seeds which was a very pleasant surprise. Please make a point to thank the folks over there the next time you stop by.

Please don't forget that we need to have your membership dues paid for the upcoming year and these monies can be mailed in to our post office box (598) if you cannot make our next meeting. You can also make a gift membership donation if you know someone that cannot afford the dues.

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CHAPTER MEETINGS FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 7:00 PM
LOCATION: MTA CONFERENCE ROOM,
PALMER

DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

MEETING AGENDA

- **TREASURER REPORT**
- **MINUTES**
- **OLD BUSINESS**
- **NEW BUSINESS**
- **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

SUE AND PAUL WALLIN

They will build a worm ranch and give it away at the mtg. Materials list, construction demonstration, WORMS, bedding, feeding and care.

PEASANTS PERSPECTIVE

By Curt Mueller, Master Gardener

For several years it has been the habit of this peasant to seed tomatoes on New Year's Day. There is no particular advantage to using this day, but it signals the New Year and a new start on the gardening season. The aim is for the first ripe tomatoes during the month of May with production from then until the close of the greenhouse season in early October.

In past years production has slowed in late summer and fall. The peasant attributes this to the senescence of the plants which by October have been growing for nine months and producing for more than half of that time. Certainly the shortening days and often overcast skies in late summer are a factor as well; still, younger plants should be more vigorous and productive.

Usually fourteen tomato plants have been grown in the limited greenhouse space allotted for them. They have all been started and grown at the same time, filling that space. No more space is available in which to put new plants. It's easy enough to grow replacements from cuttings, but who has the heart to remove producing plants in midsummer? The plan then, is to grow only enough plants to provide fruit early, take cuttings in late April, and fill the space left with plants that will hit their flush of production in August. A collateral effect is to reduce crowding in the greenhouse as other plants are grown for the summer season.

This method will of course reduce the amount of fruit produced during early summer but will help to extend the season later on. When the greenhouse is shut down there should be considerable fruit to pick and store for several weeks, extending the season further in the fall.

In the last few years there has been increasing interest in grafting tomato plants. There are vigorous and disease resistant rootstocks available from seed. Heirloom varieties are often desirable for quality of fruit but lack disease resistance and productivity. They can be grafted to the rootstocks to provide those advantages. There are several websites which provide information on tomato grafting along with photos and videos.

While seeds for rootstocks are expensive and so are the clamps used for holding the grafts in place, there may be an inexpensive alternative available. Many vigorous hybrids have excellent disease resistance. They can be used as rootstocks and other varieties grafted to them.

As an experiment which requires no purchase of additional seeds or equipment, the following method could be tried:

Two tomato plants are grown side by side in the same pot. One serves as rootstock and the other as scion. When they have both reached a diameter of about one quarter inch a v-shaped notch is cut into the side of the scion. The rootstock is cut off and an inverted vee shaped to fit into the scion is made. The rootstock is cut at a level slightly higher than the notch in the scion. When the matching cuts are put together there will be a bend in the rootstock which will put some pressure on the graft. When the graft has healed the scion is cut off below the graft and is now growing only on the rootstock. A photo on a grafting website will explain this process well. It might be fun to try!

Thanks, folks.



2014 tomato starts. Seeded January 1, photo taken January 6



Tomato starts photo taken January 22.

SEED STARTING AND TRANSPLANTING

Submitted by Deb Blaylock, Master Gardener

MATERIAL NEEDED FOR STARTING TRANSPLANTS

Container

Almost any type of container can be used as long as it has adequate drainage and will last for up to three months when damp. Some possible choices include wood flats, plant pots, peat pots, peat pellets, tin cans, milk cartons, foil pie plates, plastic freezer cartons, etc.

Germinating Media

Although soil and potting mixtures may be used, they are **NOT** necessary to ensure germination. Vermiculite, sphagnum moss, sand, perlite or other **STERILE** material that can be kept uniformly moist is satisfactory. If a soil mixture is used, moisten and bake in the oven to sterilize (one-half hour at 180°F is sufficient). Sterilized media is required to prevent "damping off" disease from killing seedlings. Fill containers to within ½ inch of the top. Seedling surface should be firm but not hard to provide good contact between soil and seed. All containers, tools and the working area must be clean and sterile to prevent reinfection. Wood and plastic can be sterilized with a mixture of one part chlorine bleach to nine parts water. Clean containers first and let stand in bleach solution for 30 minutes. Dry before reuse.

Seed Treatments

Many seeds from commercial sources are already treated with fungicides to prevent "damping off." If they are not or if they are home-grown seeds, they should be treated. Contact your local district Extension office for recommendations on seed treating.

SEEDING AND GROWING TRANSPLANTS

Seeding

Space or scatter seeds well apart. Nearly everyone plants many more seeds than can grow for even a short time. Plant in rows if more than one type of seed is used.

Covering Seeds

Cover very lightly. Fine seeds need no cover at all if kept moist. If covered, the surface

should be firmed to insure good seed-soil contact. Cover should be to a depth of two times the seed diameter. Lettuce and celery seeds require light for germination.

Watering

Water seeds gently but thoroughly. Fog or mist is ideal to keep the surface moist. The container can also be put in a pan of water to absorb moisture from the base, which helps to avoid damping off by keeping the surface dry.

Covering the Container

Glass or plastic may be used to keep seeds moist. An old newspaper may be used until the seeds germinate.

Heat

Place in an area where the temperature is about 70°F. Heat at the bottom of the container hastens seed germination. Avoid placing covered containers in direct sunlight. A few plants such as larkspur, snapdragon, sweet pea, cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower start best at about 55°F.

After Germination

New seedlings need light and fresh air. Remove newspapers, glass or plastic covers as soon as seedlings appear. If not all seeds germinate at the same time, keep un-germinated rows covered until seedlings appear. Strips of newspaper work well for this.

"Damping Off"

This is the major problem to watch for with new seedlings. Poor air circulation and/or crowded plants create ideal conditions for "damping off." Increase air circulation and thin the plants at the first sign of trouble. Plants should have circulation of air at the soil surface. A fungicide may be required if the disease is extensive. Excessive heat and humidity and insufficient light also create conditions favorable for damping off. Treated seeds may also be available to prevent this problem.

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Transplanting

Transplant seedlings to individual containers or flats filled with sterilized garden soil as soon as the first true leaves appear. In flats, space seedlings on centers at least 2 inches by 2 inches. Larger growing plants should be placed in individual containers. Handle plants gently by the upper leaves. Use a pointed stick (dibble) to roll out or “prick off” the seedlings. **DO NOT PULL THE PLANTS.** Avoid tearing the roots and replant at the same depth as the plant was growing in the seed flat.

SETTING PLANTS OUT IN THE GARDEN OR YARD

“Hardening Off” Plants

Before transplanting outdoors plants should be “hardened off.” Withhold water and carry them outside for progressively longer periods of time each day. As plants start to “harden off,” they may become slightly yellow with tinges of red at the edges of the leaves. Allow a week or more for this process. A cold frame works well for this procedure. Avoid wind or temperature below 45°F. This transition period is important in harsh climates.

Starter Solution

Use a starter solution when transplanting to get plants off to a good start in their new

environment. Follow mixing directions on the container carefully. Use ½ to 1 cup of solution per plant. A good solution is 1 tablespoon of high phosphorus water soluble fertilizer in 1 gallon of water.

Adapted by Deb Blaylock from UAF Cooperative Service publication HGA-00032 dated November 2010.

Matsu Master Gardener Meeting Minutes Jan. 6, 2013

Call to order: 7:05 PM by Rhonda Bowman

Officers present: Rhonda Bowman-President, Cathy Crew-Treasurer, Janice Bass-Secretary, Curt Mueller-2nd Vice President, Marg Mueller Member-at-Large and 20 regular members and guests present.

Treasurer's report: was given by Cathy Crew with a balance of \$8,658.04.

Minutes: for the December meeting were read by Curt Mueller, accepted and 2nd by membership.

Old Business: Yearly membership dues are now due. Congratulations all around for the 1st place taken by our float submission in the Parade of Lights.

New Business: General discussion regarding establishing a budget, board meeting, upcoming speakers, program development and membership outreach.

A suggestion was made that we add a general member “question and answer” segment to our regular meeting to draw on general membership experience and knowledge.

We are looking for budget recommendations for 2014, please contact Rhonda Bowman with ideas and recommendations.

Adjournment: 7:35PM

Guest Speaker Don Berberich, teacher from Palmer High School, spoke about his school's summer program “Natural Connections”, a program that offers hands-on classes in Agriculture. He offered a tour of the high school's greenhouse as well as volunteer opportunities to our Master Gardeners.

Respectfully submitted by Jan Bass

New Member Welcome

The following is a graduate of the Fall 2013 Mat-Su CES Master Gardener Class and will be joining the club – congratulations and welcome aboard!
Carolyn Roy

Let's Get Growing!



Announcing 2014 Courses through Good Earth Garden School

Details to be posted on website around Feb 1st

Please visit www.goodearthgardenschool.com

Questions? Email

information@goodearthgardenschool.com

Classes are free, or have a nominal tuition fee.

- * High Tunnels & Season Extension: In-depth Growers' Training. Team-taught by experts. A series of 3 classes in total. Offered in both Anchorage and Mat-Su Valley.
- * Co-Create Your Garden: Ask Mother Nature. Joyful collaboration with the subtle forces of nature for less struggle & more yield.
- * Composting: Perfect your Strategies
- * Organic Gardening: The Comprehensive Growers Course. Five evenings at Mat-Su College plus a field trip.
- * Climate Change for Farmers: Specific strategies to thrive through extreme heat, cold, drought, and flooding.
- * Plants & Animals: an Akashic Record Channeling A Divine Perspective on our fellow travelers from the Angels.
- * Worms & Vermi- Composting: Disappear your garbage, make fertilizer, & prevent flies.
- * Organic Vegetable Growing
- * Update: What's New from the Front Lines of Sustainable Farming and Gardening?
- * Pranic Gardens & Communication Through the Veils - Designs to heal the planet while producing food and beauty, by Liz Holmgren
- * Alaska Plants as Food & Medicine Symposium
- * Gardening with the Joyful Devas & Nature Spirits
- * Edible and Medicinal Plants of the Matanuska Valley: Janice Schofield-Eaton returns!
- * Wild Medicinal Herb Retreat: With Janice Schofield-Eaton & Ellen Vande Visse

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What would you like to see included in the budget for the upcoming year? We have gotten very few suggestions and I would appreciate more of your great ideas prior to our February board meeting. We will be adding a question and answer section to our other agenda items for our upcoming meetings and look forward to a lively discussion.

If you have any suggestions for speakers you'd like to see at our meetings please contact Sue Walling so she can line them up and place on the schedule for our upcoming meetings.

Hope to see more of you all at our February meeting and I want to thank you for all your help and support.



Garden Links

Alaska Botanical Garden

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

Alaska Community Agriculture

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

Arbor Day Foundation

www.arborday.org

Alaska Exotic Plants Information Clearinghouse (AKEPIC)

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

Alaska Garden Clubs

<http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org>

Alaska Grown Source Book (online) **New**

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/sourcebook/index.htm>

Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage Chapter

<http://alaskamastergardeners.org/>

Alaska Master Gardener Blog

<http://alaskamastergardener.blogspot.com/>

Alaska Native Plant Society

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

Alaska Peony Growers Association

<http://alaskapeonies.org>

Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Assoc..

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

Alaska Plant Materials Center

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

Alaska Rock Garden Society

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

Cooperative Extension Service, Palmer

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



Eat Local Alaska

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

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 Cost Share Program

<http://www.matsugov.us/planning/environmental-division/rain-gardens>

Mat-Su Master Gardener Website

<http://matsumastergardeners.weebly.com/>

Master Gardener Research Link

<http://search.extension.org>

Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley

<http://interiormastergardeners.org/>

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

South-Central Alaska Beekeepers Assoc.

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

Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners

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

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

The club has a new webpage. Please be patient as the new webmaster moves items from the old page onto the new page. The new webpage is at: <http://matsumastergardeners.weebly.com/>. Please update your bookmarks. The old site will remain active for a short time until everything is moved over. Our new webmistress is Eva Cohnen-Brown. Contact her at email: ecbrownak@gmail.com. Thank you Eva!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Know of an upcoming event or organization which needs our help? Let a board member know!

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 and/or print on the club's website.

thank you

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Rhonda Bowman	746-2948
Co-VP	Curt Mueller	745-6144
Co-VP	Hally Truelove	376-0909
Secretary:	Jan Bass	373-6208
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: djblaylock@alaska.edu

Website: <http://matsumastergardeners.weebly.com/>
Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2014

FEBRUARY

Feb 1, Palmer, Produce Growers Conference

Feb 3, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Building a Worm Ranch

MARCH AND BEYOND

Mar 3, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Fertilizers/Soil Amendments

Mar 11-13, Fairbanks, Sustainable Agriculture Conference

Mar 14-15, Anchorage, 2014 Alaska Botanical Garden Spring Conference

Apr 7, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Growing Berries

May 5, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Propagating Blueberries

May 31, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale - TENTATIVE

Jun 2, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Library Planter

Jun 19, Anchorage (ABG), Midsummer Gala in the Garden

Jun 28-29, Anchorage (ABG), Boreal Garden and Art Festival

July 7, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

Aug 4, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

Sep 8, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

Oct 6, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

Nov 3, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

Dec 1, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

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. If you don't have computer access, please submit your article or item neatly and clearly written so the newsletter editor can easily read it. 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 editor 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. -- Thank you--



February 2014



Like us on
Facebook

Website:

<http://matsumastergardeners.weebly.com/>

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com



Matsu Master Gardeners Club
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Palmer, AK 99645