



MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER

May 2018



President's Patch

By President Michael Kircher, photo by the author

As I write this we are experiencing the first rain of Spring at my location (North Palmer). We are lucky that just four days ago we had the roofing replaced on our shed roof. However, we had removed the photovoltaic (solar) panel arrays from the roof and planned to start reinstalling them today. I receive my bees tomorrow afternoon and I was not looking forward to working on my shed roof in the flight path of the bees, since the beehive is right at the base of the shed. So, if we don't get it done today, we will have to reinstall the solar panels early in the day or in the late evening when it's cool and the bees have bedded down for the night. It's always something. Anyway, our sunroom is loaded with plant starts under lights. They get a lot of sunlight now as well. Last year we switched from fluorescent shop lights to LED lights. They work very well, and we cut our electricity consumption by more than half. We moved our amaryllis plants and pelargoniums from our crawl space, where we stored them for the winter, to the greenhouse. We had previously brought up several amaryllis that bloomed nicely in winter. Soon we'll move all the summer plants from the sunroom to the greenhouse.

We pulled some rose bushes out of the root cellar where we had them stored for the winter at near freezing temperatures and high humidity. We brought them up into our little potting greenhouse where they will remain until it's warm enough to set them outside. The bushes were covered with white mold as usual, which Phyllis gently removed. It doesn't seem to have any adverse effect. The roses had started to grow in the root cellar in complete darkness. Somehow, they know it's Spring.

Our peonies are coming up and our apple trees are starting to bud out. A plethora of poppies are popping up in profusion. If you can say that ten times fast.....well then you definitely have too much time on your hands. We can use the rain to help melt the rest of the snow and clear up some of the dust. Get out and tour the nurseries and make hay while the sun shines.

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GENERAL MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, MAY 7TH AT 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION: MATANUSKA TELEPHONE COMPANY
(MTA) BUILDING, MEETING ROOM (IN THE
BASEMENT), 480 COMMERCIAL DR., PALMER,
AK

DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

SPEAKER/TOPIC

DAN ELLIOT AND DEBBIE HINCHEY FROM THE
ALASKA PIONEER FRUIT GROWERS
ASSOCIATION WILL SPEAK ON ESPALIERING
TREES AND WHY.

PLANT LABELS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PICK-UP
AND LAST CHANCE TO SIGN UP FOR THE JUNE 2ND
PLANT SALE.



PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photo submitted by the author

The peasant has been thoroughly enjoying our sunny warm days, watching the snow melt and soak into the soil. It has happened with little runoff and no very hard nightly frosts. There is still snow in drifted areas here on Lazy Mountain, but it is disappearing as well. Trees are budding, rhubarb and tulips are showing, and hopes are up too for a good gardening season.

Last month the peasant wrote about his efforts to improve germination on sweet peas. Observing the results, the best ones were in seeds that had been soaked for four to six hours with no nicking of the seed coats. Soaking the seed overnight softened the seed too much and handling the seed then became a problem. Some seed remained impervious and could be nicked. For future growing of this plant with the colorful and fragrant flowers the peasant has decided to make it easy on himself and just go with soaking seed for four to six hours. Starting the plants early and pinching the tops to help the plants bush out will be a good way to do sweet peas.



Sweet peas in three-inch pots. They have been topped once and are filling out nicely. They may need to be staked. They will be planted out when the soil has warmed and can tolerate light frosts.

Some time ago the peasant had also written about growing white fireweed from seed. It has been an education, and despite a mistake in germinating the seed in winter, after two winters the surviving plants are showing multiple shoots and promise to be more than was hoped for. The peasant has decided that a

good recipe for growing this plant from seed would be this:

- Obtain seed from a plant that produces pure white flowers.
- Stratify the seed. This may not be necessary, but it helps.
- Choose a sowing time that corresponds with germination in a natural setting.
- Sow a generous amount of seed. Not all will germinate readily.
- Rogue out any plants that have dark colored leaves with reddish stems.
- Grow in pots through the first winter.
- Plant out in the following season.

The reason for getting rid of plants with dark leaves and reddish stems is that they are the product of cross-pollination with nearby wild plants and will produce pink flowers. Those that will have white flowers have paler leaves and stems and are readily distinguishable from those that will produce pink flowers. Obtaining seed may be difficult. There are sources online at varying cost. The peasant should have a limited amount available by next fall [he hopes] and will be happy to share.



New shoots on overwintered white fireweed. There are seven shoots shown here. More may appear later. This plant should be quite showy by mid-July.

Enjoy the green-up which will surely come soon. It's a wonderful, miraculous, time. Thanks, folks.

The Art of Container Gardening

Stephen Brown

Mat Su/Copper River District Agriculture Agent

Constructing a container garden isn't about doing everything perfectly. In fact, there is no right way to create a container garden. It is more about art and personal expression. Much depends on a person's individual taste and preference. There are some general guidelines that will make this project more enjoyable.



The first thing you will need is a container that is pleasing to you. You may want to consider the colors of the plants that you are going to grow so that the container will accentuate them. Be sure that you go to a reputable garden center and look for the healthiest plants for your selection.

Some things to consider:

- Is there robust growth at the base of the plant?
- Does the underside of the foliage look healthy, or do you observe spots or pests hiding there?
- Do you want a plant that is going to take up a lot of room?
- Do you want tall plants or compact ones? Read the tags that accompany the plants.
- Are you going to place the container in the sun, partial shade/partial sun, or shade? Be sure that the growing requirements for the plants coincide with the location of your container.

It is important to start with a good soil combination for your planting. It is best not to make the container too full of plants at the beginning of the season. Allow for their growth.

This may require some patience on your part, but it is best for the plants because they will have more room for root growth. Less crowded containers also have better air flow around the plants. Take into consideration the final size of the plants. For example, some petunias are quite vigorous and will expand rapidly. If the container garden becomes too full, don't be afraid to transplant into a larger container or remove some of the plants.

Water is vital to a plant's survival. The easiest way to tell if your container needs water is to stick your index finger about two inches into the soil. If the soil feels dry, then the plant needs water. Keep in mind that container plantings will dry out quicker than plants grown in the ground. The best time to water your containers is in the morning when the temperature is typically cooler.

One common technique for designing container gardens is the thriller, filler, spiller concept. This concept utilizes three different types of plants to create well-rounded combinations.

Plant types

Thrillers are plants that add height and create drama and vertical elements to the container combinations. They are the centerpiece plantings. Thrillers can either be flowering or foliage plants. Examples of thrillers are spikes, canna lilies, caladiums, or tall ornamental grasses. Thrillers are generally put either in the center or at the back of containers. If the containers will be viewed from all sides, place them in the center. If they will be viewed from one side, place the thrillers in the back of the pots.

Fillers are rounded plants. These plants fill in the middles of the combinations and their job is to make the planters look full. More than one filler may be used.

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Some plants that make great fillers are lantana, nemesia, diascia, and coleus. Place the fillers in front of or around the thrillers, depending on the placement of your thrillers.

Spillers are the last plants to add to the combination container. Spillers are trailing plants that hang over the edge of the planters.

Some examples would be sweet potato vine, creeping jenny, or petunias that trail. Spillers are placed close to the edges of the pots. If the pots are going to be viewed from all sides, spillers should be placed on all sides. Utilizing the thriller, filler, and spiller concept will help you to create well-balanced and full upright patio containers.

In addition, small containers work well positioned in perennial gardens because they can be used at different locations as your perennial garden changes throughout the growing season. They also can serve as focal points in the garden.

Don't be afraid to add perennials to container gardens. Perennials add dimension and texture. The advantage of utilizing perennials in container gardens is that you can reuse the same container plantings year after year and just freshen them as needed. Foliage can add great color elements to container plantings. Dark foliage is a great way to highlight light colored flowers and create both drama and contrast in combinations.

Remember that creating containers depend on the creator's personal preference. Enjoy personalizing your garden and patio with container gardens.

Adapted from the Penn State Extension website.



Potatoes!

Master Gardener Gregory Kalal will have potatoes for folks from the MMGA who ordered seed potatoes from him for Spring 2018. You can contact Greg at: 907.339.1966 or email, gkalal@gci.net. The varieties he has for sale are available here:

https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/uploads/2/7/3/9/2739768/potatoes2018_picture_s.pdf

Mat-Su Master Gardener Booth Shift Sign Up Midsummer Garden and Art Faire, July 14, 2018

If you would like to sign up for an unclaimed time slot, email matsumastergardeners@gmail.com.

Time:	Name
9 – 10 am Set-up	Ken & Deb Blaylock
10 am - Noon	Kristina Tornqvist
Noon – 2 pm	Michael Kircher
2 – 4 pm	Anita Chace
4 – 6pm	Marge Mueller Curt Mueller
6 pm Take down	Ken & Deb Blaylock

Email matsumastergardeners@gmail.com with your name and contact info for the shift you would like to sign up for. First come - first serve. Thanks!



MATSU MASTER GARDENER'S ASSOCIATION

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLANT SALE

Each plant or item offered for sale is to be marked with two tags - a white tag and a color tag. Tags are available at the May 2018 Mat-Su Master Gardener's Association meeting or from the Plant Sale Coordinator, Rhonda Bowman @ 746-2948.

Choose an ID to mark your tags with. Most use their initials (two or three). Indicate your tag ID on the Plant Sale Sign-In sheet when you arrive at the morning of the plant sale. Please ensure your tag ID is unique. Remember, your ID tells who gets paid for the sale of the item.

Use permanent marker or #2 pencil to label the tags:

White tag has common or botanical name of plant and any optional information.

Yellow tag - the item price (**in \$1 increments ONLY - please no 25¢, 50¢, 99¢, etc.**) and your unique tag ID

Yellow Tag - Front
Price



Yellow Tag - Back
Unique ID



White Tag Plant Name



The MMG Association receives 20% of the sale from each plant or item and you receive 80%. If there is no yellow tag or the unique tag ID is unreadable, it is assumed that all proceeds go to the MMG Association (Thanks for the donation!)

Members often ask how to price plants, but you may want to price yours other than the suggestions below. Price them to sell. Plants that have not sold by noon may be reduced in price.

SUGGESTED PLANT PRICING (These are just suggestions - you may price plants as long as it seems reasonable and **prices are in \$1 increments**)

Perennials, including herbs:	3" pot	\$3 - \$4
	4" pot	\$4 - \$5
	6" pot	\$5 - \$6
	Gal. pot	\$6 - \$8
Annuals, including herbs	4/6 cell pot	
	3" pot	\$3 - \$4
Vegetables	4/6 cell pot	
	3" pot	\$3 - \$4
Tomatoes (plant size, variety, and post size determine price)		\$3 - \$10
Strawberries		\$1 - \$2
Raspberries, Currants, Rhubarb	gallon pot	\$5 - \$10
Shrubs trees	2 gallon pot	\$10 - \$15



MATSU MASTER GARDENER'S ASSOCIATION

2018 PLANT SALE PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

The Plant Sale will be held on June 2nd, 2018 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Palmer Pavilion (across from the Palmer Visitor's Center).

1. All Mat-Su Master Gardener Association (MMGA) members who have joined or renewed their **membership AND signed up to participate in the plant sale by May 7th, 2018** can participate in the plant sale. Many helpers are needed to set up tables, arrange plants and boxes, receive money sort tags, answer buyer questions, and direct buyers to the appropriate tables.
2. Plants should be brought to the Pavilion between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. on the morning of the plant sale. Please check in, sign your name and verify your unique tag ID. No one may sign up on the day of the plant sale to participate as a vendor.
3. All plants for sale must be tagged with a white tag, showing the common name and/or botanical name of the plant. All items will have a yellow/lavender tag showing the item's price and the seller's unique ID. If there is no ID on the yellow/lavender tag, the item is assumed to be a donation to the Association. For all sales, the MMGA retains 20% from the sale of each item. The MMGA member will receive 80% from the sale of each item.
4. Native plants should be garden grown (PLEASE, no digging in the wild!). Please avoid bringing invasive plants like orange hawkweed, spotted knapweed, butter n' eggs, etc. The Cooperative Extension Service offers a lengthy list and description of suspected invasive species.
5. Inspect all plants carefully to ensure no plants have evidence of insects or disease.
6. MMGA members may also sell crafts, arts, or garden-related items by providing and staffing their own tables. These items will also have the appropriate yellow price tag attached.
7. **All sales** will be made through the central check-out stand. Volunteers are needed to staff this.
8. There are some tables available at the Pavilion; however, it is recommended that you bring your own table. It is highly recommended that you bring items for your own comfort such as chairs, warm clothing, beverages, snacks and a lunch.
9. **All unsold plants need to be picked up after the sale.** If you can't be there at 3 pm, please make arrangements for someone to take your plants. **Don't just drop off plants and leave them.**
10. You may also donate your excess plants to the MMGA for the various Association planting projects. Donations must be coordinated **prior to the closing of the plant sale.**
11. Proceeds from the sale will be calculated after the plant sale has ended. Normally, our treasurer will either mail each individual's 80% to their address on file with the association or hand out checks at the following MMGA meeting. Please indicate on the sign-in sheet how you would like to receive your check.

New and Renewing Members

While the deadline for being listed in the 2018 directory was January 15, 2018, we want to welcome the following new and renewing members to our club: Debra Caillouet, Dan Elliott, Karen Felts, Carol Halsey, Carol Johnson, Heather Kalxdorff, Kim Neill, Maria Cunningham, Joe Moore and Clinton and Loree Rayback who all signed up after the deadline. We look forward to seeing you at our meetings and welcome your ideas and expertise!

**4-2-2018 Meeting Minutes
Mat Su Master Gardeners
Submitted by Dorte Mobley, Secretary**

Present were: Phyllis and Michael Kircher, Ken and Deb Blaylock, Marge and Curt Mueller, Arlene and Wayne Bowman, Lenita and Chuck Deda, Joe Moore, Denise Bowlan, Dorte Mobley, Hazel Koppenberg, Anita Chase, Cathy Crew, Rhonda Bowman, Kristina Tornqvist, Deb Caillouet, Marcia Clemons, Theo Garcia, Maria Cunningham, Billie Willis, Jeannette Willis, Sally Koppenberg

Treasurer's report was discussed, and questions were answered.

Secretary report was mailed out in the newsletter. Motion to approve it was seconded and motion passed.

Old Business:

Midsummer Art and Garden Faire Booth: We need more members to help with it. Deb passed around a sign-up sheet.

Flower bed at the Mat-Su Experiment Farm. Dorte reported that the area where the beds used to be will be made into community gardens. There is an area under the windows on the westside of the building that could be made into a garden. Dorte will talk more with the folks at the Farm about that. We also can work together with the Valley Garden Club and the Peony Society, so it will be easier for everyone. Dorte will talk with the other clubs.

Cathy brought up that maybe the club should pay the \$25 for people to garden at the Community Garden plots at the Mat-Su Experiment Farm. Some discussion followed. No decision made.

Kristina has updated the membership directory. We can e-mail out the updated directory to all members, so everyone has it. Some questions and discussion followed, and the board will discuss how we will go about doing this. A few members don't have computers, and Curt will send the directory and newsletters to them.

New Business:

Rhonda reported that the Palmer Historical Society would like help with current flower boxes and beds and potentially help making some new ones. The place is on Elmwood. It was decided that we need to go see what is there and then decide. Museum is open between May 1 and August and we will take up the discussion next month.

Sally has a list of plants and flowers that were grown back during the colony days and will email the list to Dorte to potentially use if we do take on the project.

Dorte reported that the Peony Society doesn't have any more Promix to sell.

Plant Starts: Pioneer home has requested some organic vegetable starts. Michael will talk with Madonna Gerber.

Kristina reported that Kit Strange, horticulturalist in Kew Gardens in England will be in Alaska and do three presentations:

- April 8, 2018, 3 PM Sunday: Homer. United Methodist Church, 770 East End Road: Kit Strange on "How to be a better propagator" \$5 donation.
- April 9, 2018, 7:00 PM Monday: Palmer. Mat-Su College, Fred and Sarah Machetanz Building, 8295 College Drive: Kit Strange on "Floral Treasurers from Eastern Turkey." \$5 donation.
- April 10, 2018, 7:00 PM Tuesday: Anchorage. Central Lutheran Church, 1420 Cordova St: Kit Strange on "Bulbs of Kyrgyzstan." \$5 donation.

Kristina reported that Molly at the recycling center has agreed to let Valley Garden Club recycle pots from May through September. Last year it was a great success and they recycled over 6000 pots, keeping them out of the landfill. The VGC has someone designated to pick up the pots from the recycling center and Kristina will announce when and where club members from VGC, Master Gardeners and Bloomers can come get them. Please spread the word.

Wayne reported that he has seen someone on Craig's List have free seeds to give away.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35

Sally Koppenberg did a presentation on clematis. We learned that they like to have their roots in the shade, but not in soggy soil. They don't like to be moved and if you plant them by and let them climb up a deciduous tree, you can have a beautiful blooming tree at a different time than the tree would normally bloom. They are normally not herbaceous but because of their place where they grow, they die down to the ground. If they get better growing conditions, they will continue to grow each year. Sally showed a bunch of beautiful clematis, that have been grown by her and other gardeners in our area. She will provide a list to Dorte to share with the club.

Garden Links

Alaska Botanical Garden

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

Alaska Center for Conservation Science

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

Arbor Day Foundation

www.arborday.org

Alaska Division of Agriculture

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/>

Alaska Farm to School

<https://www.farmtoschoolalaska.org/>

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

<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 Peony Society

<https://alaskapeonysociety.wixsite.com/alaskapeonysociety>

Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association

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

Alaska Plant Materials Center

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

Alaska Rhodiola **New**

<https://www.akroseroot.com/>

Alaska Rock Garden Society

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

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

Mat-Su Borough Rain Garden Program

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

Mat-Su Master Gardener Website

www.matsumastergardeners.com

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 CES Citizen Pest Monitoring Portal

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

UAF Georgeson Botanical Garden

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

UAF Herbarium **New**

<http://www.uaf.edu/museum/collections/herb/>

UAF School of Natural Resources & Extension

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

University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

www.fruit.usask.ca

USDA/NRCS Plant Data Base

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

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Submit an article to the newsletter
- Volunteer to chair a committee
 - Colony Days Parade
 - Alaska Veterans & Pioneers Home Planting
- New Flower Bed at Experiment Farm
- Palmer Library Planting
- Grant/scholarship coordinator
- Help at the Alaska State Fair
- Help with the Midsummer Garden and Art Faire MMGA booth

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Michael Kircher	745-1459
Vice President	Curt Mueller	745-6144
Secretary:	Dorte Mobley	232-5422
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 at her email: kdblalock@ak.net

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 2018

May 7, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Espaliering trees and why, Dan Elliott & Debbie Hinchey, APFGA
May 17, Palmer, Third Thursdays with Extension: Raised Garden Beds, Container Gardening,
[\(http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/\)](http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/)

JUNE 2018 AND BEYOND

Jun 2, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale
Jun 4, Palmer, Palmer Library Planting
Jun 9, Palmer, Colony Days Parade
Jul 2, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Garden Tours
Jul 14, Palmer, Midsummer Garden & Art Faire
Aug 6, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Hypertufa troughs, Jaime Rodriquez, Alpine Gardens
Aug 23 - Sep 3, Palmer, Alaska State Fair
Sep 10, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Oct 1, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Hydroponics, Southside Garden Supply
Nov 5, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Annual Meeting/Worm composting, Ellen VandeVisse, Good Earth Garden School
Nov 5 - 7, Anchorage, Alaska Sustainable Agriculture Conference
Dec 3, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Christmas Party

Club Membership

The membership year runs from January to December each year. Annual individual memberships are \$10 and family memberships are \$12. Family memberships are only for family members living in the same household.
 Join or renew online

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--



May 2018



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

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
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