



# MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

Oct 2014



## President's Patch

By Rhonda Bowman, President

It certainly is time to be putting up jams and vegetables so that we can enjoy them all winter long. Once the temperature turns cooler I find that I want to get lots of jars and freezer bags filled with goodies. There is an abundance of information available to get a good product on your harvest and I love pouring over the books, articles and shows that allow you to get the most of your planting.

There are many sources available even locally to give you good information on saving and preserving your seeds for planting next year. It is so rewarding to have your plants grow from seeds and even to use seeds you've saved from the previous year. Gardeners usually start off small but with the smallest of successes you are able to keep build always expanding your results and expectations.

Don't forget that the Food Banks could use your fresh produce if you have an over-abundance to feed needy families throughout the valley. It is feels good to give back when our lives are blessed.

We hope to put a photo album on our website showing successes in our gardening endeavors and I think it would be welcome addition to our website. If you have pictures to submit please submit one or two to Eva Brown so she can develop the photo album.

Don't hesitate to submit gardening articles to the newsletter by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to appear in the next month's newsletter. They need to be sent to Deb Blaylock and her contact information appears in this newsletter.

Hope to see you at the next meeting on October 6 at the MTA conference room.

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### CHAPTER MEETINGS

#### FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

#### NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6TH, 7:00 PM  
LOCATION: MTA CONFERENCE ROOM,  
480 COMMERCIAL DR., PALMER, AK,  
DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

#### MEETING AGENDA

- TREASURER REPORT
- MINUTES
- OLD BUSINESS
- NEW BUSINESS

#### TOPIC/SPEAKER:

AT THE TIME OF PUBLISHING, NO SPEAKER  
INFORMATION WAS AVAILABLE.

## PEASANTS PERSPECTIVE

By Curt Mueller, Master Gardener

Harvest time is a good time, but isn't it a bit sad to see the summer pass? Ah, but fall is beautiful too. The colors and scents are a feast to the senses. Enjoy.

The sunflowers that Christine contributed to the library planter are beginning to bloom and are visible from some distance in Palmer. Good idea, Christine.

Several years back, Pat Tremaine gave Marge some Walla Walla onion seeds which got us started growing onions from seed instead of the usual store-bought sets. Seeds are started and grown in our greenhouse. The peasant scatters several seeds in each cell and then thins to one plant per cell, rather than separating the wee plants and transplanting, which sets them back for a week or so.

Some of our gardeners purchase onion starts which have been grown outside of Alaska and shipped in. This has proven to be a successful method of growing as well.

A variety that has done very well for the peasant is Ailsa Craig. They grow to a good size and have a good flavor. They are not for long-term storage, but will keep for a couple of months. Storage varieties such as Patterson or Cortland will store over winter as will Red Beauty. The onions will need to be properly dried and stored where they get some air circulation. Those with thick stems will not store as well and could be used first.

Marge picked a nice batch of Tribute strawberries on September 18. She says that is probably the last picking. The rains and moist air have caused some rot in the strawberries. The peasant thinks this could be mitigated and the season could be extended by providing some shelter. Perhaps next year.

Yup, it's time to start getting our gardens ready for next year. We can save some time next spring by cleaning up our plots, spreading compost, weeding to get rid of seed producers,

repairing and building raised beds and anything else that we can do to give our gardens a fast start come spring.

Thanks folks.



A handful of Ailsa Craig onions



The peasant and his Cub in the State fair parade. This machine is of absolutely of no use for gardenina. It is a mere ornament.

## FALL IS THE TIME TO PREVENT SNOW MOLD IN LAWNS

By Stephen Brown, Mat Su/Copper River District Ag/Hort Agent

Snow mold is a fungal disease that appears in early spring as the snow melts. There are two types of snow molds, gray and pink, that become active under the snow cover. Gray snow mold (also called Typhula blight) is caused by *Typhula* spp., while pink snow mold (also called Fusarium patch) is caused by *Microdochium nivalis*.

Gray snow mold survives summer temperatures in the soil or in infected plant debris as sclerotia, resistant fungal structures, while pink snow mold survives as mycelium or spores in infected plant debris. Fungal growth begins in the winter, beneath a cover of snow on unfrozen ground.

Growth can take place at temperatures slightly below freezing and may continue after snow melt, as long as the grass remains cool and wet. Gray snow mold activity stops when the temperature exceeds 45° F or the surface dries. Pink snow mold activity may continue during wet weather in the fall and spring, as long as the temperature is between 32° F and 60° F.

Symptoms first appear in the lawn as circular, straw colored patches when the snow melts in the spring. These patches continue to enlarge as long as the grass remains cold and wet. Grass within the patch often has a matted appearance and colored fungal growth. The fungal growth may cover the entire patch or develop along the margins, with gray snow mold being white to gray in color and pink snow mold being white to pink in color.

Occasionally, fungal fruiting bodies (mushrooms) may be seen emerging from infected turf. Hard structures, (sclerotia), may also develop on the leaves and crowns of plants infected by gray snow mold, not

pink. The sclerotia are spherical in shape and roughly the size of a pinhead. Their presence helps to distinguish gray snow mold from pink snow mold.

Snow molds do not occur in the home lawn every year, but are most common during years when an early, deep snow cover prevents the ground from freezing. A cold, open winter will not promote snow mold, but may cause winter injury. The damage caused by snow molds is seldom serious. Generally, infected areas are just a little slower to green up. Gently rake affected areas of the lawn to promote drying and prevent further fungal growth. Fungicides are not usually recommended for preventing snow mold.

The following steps can be taken to minimize damage next spring:

- Avoid excessive applications of nitrogen fertilizer in the fall. Use 5 pounds/1,000 square feet of 8-32-16 instead of lawn fertilizer.
- Continue to mow the lawn at the recommended height until it is no longer actively growing. The taller the grass, the more likely it will mat down and encourage snow mold.
- Rake up leaves in the fall.
- Manage the thatch layer to avoid accumulations of more than ½ inch.
- Spread out large snow piles to encourage rapid melting. Use snow fencing to minimize snow accumulation in problem spots.

*This article is based on material from the North Dakota and Minnesota Cooperative Extension Services.*

## MY FIRST YEAR AS A MASTER GARDENER

By Carol Giese, Master Gardener in Training

One year ago I took a course, passed a test and became a "Master Gardener." I received an abundance of information, some of which I retained, some of which I did not. But I think the most important thing I learned was how much I didn't know! Thank God for the course handbook, the Sustainable Gardening Manual! Every question I ever had about gardening in Alaska is answered in that manual and if I want more specifics, there are references to books and websites that will provide that information.

Unfortunately, after one year I am afraid my new title doesn't fit me very well. There was nothing masterful about my gardening this year! I was plagued by mistakes all over the garden. For example, either my memory from years ago is warped or nasturtiums nowadays have been genetically altered to create monster plants. Everywhere I planted them they grew enormous and smothered all the flowers around them! My Livingston daisy "border" became an entire "bed" of daisies. And the sunflowers I so artfully planted to act as a "natural" fence turned out to be nothing but a pain in the \*%# as I lost many a battle with the wind to keep them upright. I also had no idea to what giant proportions kale, Swiss chard and parsley can grow. My early summer salads were always lacking something - not everything was ready to harvest when I was ready to

harvest them. Needless to say, my fully grown garden didn't look much like what I had envisioned! On the other hand, my hanging baskets were surprisingly beautiful - so, I guess there is still a chance that I can become a master gardener!

My hope is that what I have learned from this year's blunders will help me grow a better garden next year. I will certainly be a little more cautious about how close together I put my plants, making allowance for the "giant" growth caused by our Alaskan sun; I will probably spend some time this winter researching the best ways to protect the garden from those inevitable Matanuska winds; I will definitely be timing plantings more carefully so that I can have more complete salads all summer; I'm fairly sure I won't be growing sunflowers again; and I will never, ever grow another nasturtium.



## Mat-Su Master Gardeners Meeting Minutes

Minutes for MG meeting September 8, 2014

Cathy Crew was not present but submitted account balances: checking: \$5164.89 & savings: 3729.01 for total of \$8893.90.

We budgeted funds for the Palmer Community Garden but have done no payout as yet. Also the FFA booster club has not cashed our check for the summer program and we have not heard from them. One member suggested that if there was no summer program perhaps they should return our money. We will contact them for an explanation. No funds have been requested for scholarship as yet.

We need to do changes for the sponsored prizes for the Alaska State Fair for next year since the board meets September 17. One prize given had no entries and it was suggested that we change it to "Trees and Shrubs" to be awarded to Division Champ. We received a positive response to this change.

Curt brought up the recommendation that we get additional articles for the newsletter. And had a discussion to remind folks all submissions needed to be done by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Another suggestion was made to create a photo album on the website and Eva said that she would work on developing this. There was another suggestion to have everyone submit one or two photos to include. One of new members: Carol said she'd like to do an article about her first year as a Master Gardener and the challenges she faces.

Meeting was adjourned.

## Mat-Su Master Gardeners at the Alaska State Fair

By Deb Blaylock

Many member of the club entered items in the 2014 Alaska State Fair Crops and Flower Departments as well as a few brave ventured into the realm of the Giant Cabbage most often dominated by names like Robb, Dinkle or Hubaceck. Marge Mueller came in a respectable 5<sup>th</sup> place with a 53 pound cabbage and Eva Brown also entered a very pretty cabbage called Jenny Craig.

Leading the charge in the crops and flower departments was Pat Tremaine with a total of 174 Ribbons and once again snagging the Extreme Exhibitor Award. Some of her winning entries were: Best in Show/Division Champion, Flowers, Lily; Division Champion, Potted Plants, Lavender; Division Champion, Outdoor Crops, Sunchokes (Jerusalem Artichokes) and a State Record with the tallest dill which was 9 feet, 10  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

Phyllis Kircher also had a state record herb with her fennel which was 5 feet, 7  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches. Husband, Michael also won a division champion for apples in first entry. Hazel Koppenberg won Division Champion with a Tiger Lily the second entry. Lois Rockcastle won division champion for her beautiful potted Bonfire begonia. Deb Blaylock won Division Champ in herbs for her garlic in the first entry and several blue and red ribbons with various veggies.

Thank you to everyone who provided their information for the club's "Brag Wall". It's always nice at the end of the year to show off a bit of the results of our summer's hard work! Congratulations to all.

Many thanks also to all those who volunteered their time and talents to the Crop and Flower Departments as well as the CES/4-H Hospitality Booth.

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS AT THE 2014 ALASKA STATE FAIR**

Pat Tremaine Best of Show



State Record Dill and Fennel



Hazel's Lily



Sunchokes



Lois' Begonia



Extreme Exhibitor!



Deb's Garlic



## 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/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 Orchid Society

<http://www.akorchid.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.akrockgardensociety.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](http://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](http://www.matsumastergardeners.org)

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

### USDA/NRCS Plant Data Base

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

### Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation

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

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## Announcements

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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

### BOARD MEMBER OPENING

The position of Club Secretary is once again open. The job involves taking minutes at meetings and attending board meetings. If you are interested, please contact Rhonda Bowman for further details and information.

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### *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,

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

*thank you*

## 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>Vacant</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 2014

#### OCTOBER

**Oct 6**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD  
**Oct 28 – 30**, Anchorage, Alaska Invasive Species Conference

#### NOVEMBER AND BEYOND

**Nov 3**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD  
**Nov 14-15**, Anchorage, Alaska Greenhouse, Nursery, & Landscape Conference  
**Dec 1**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD  
**Dec 12-14**, Palmer, Colony Christmas  
**Dec 13**, Palmer, Colony Christmas Parade

#### 2015

**Jan 5**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD  
**Feb 2**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD  
**Mar 2** Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD  
**Mar 7**, Fairbanks, State Master Gardener Conference  
**Apr 6**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD  
**May 4**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD  
**May 30**, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale (tentative)  
**Jun 3**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Palmer Library Planting

## 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 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.

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



October 2014



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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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