



## President's Patch

By President Kevin Johnson

Well, let us cross our fingers - spring is on the way. I still have 5 feet of snow in my yard. Again, the snow melt will be great for my yard. Dan Elliott attended the March meeting for MMGA. He brought a recent cutting of a tree and demonstrated the procedure to graft another cutting. The tools, process and the wrap were basic, and was great to see the graft completed. For more information on the work Dan and his wife Marian have done with apple trees, read the March MMGA newsletter.

The Alaska Master Gardeners Annual Conference is happening next month, April 7th and 8<sup>th</sup>; register soon. There are 10 speakers lined up for this great event.

The MMGA will be holding our largest fundraiser on June 3rd beginning at 9:00 AM. This annual event will be at the Pavilion in downtown Palmer. At the four-way stop lights, you will see the activities near the library. Pass the word on!!!

Speaking of the library, I contacted Brad Hanson, the Community Development Director for the City of Palmer. I mentioned about the flower beds near the library that we would like to remove, in order to preserve, for future use when they make the necessary repairs or rebuilding of the library. The snow is still deep around the area. Mr. Hanson mentioned that we can remove the beds, and we just need to coordinate the removal with him. So, watch your phone and email as we will be soon gathering people, supplies to remove the planters and store them.

Hopefully by now most of your plants and flowers that you are starting by seed are working out. This is always stressful.

Membership: We have great turnouts at the monthly meetings at the UAF Extension campus on Trunk Road. We begin with business of the organization at 7:00, and then the guest speaker begins roughly around 7:30. Members do not need to have taken the Master Gardener course to be a member; the only requirement is to have a love of gardening.

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REGULAR MEETINGS
FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH
NEXT MEETING
APRIL 3RD, 2023, 7:00 P.M.
LOCATION:

MATANUSKA EXPERIMENT FARM AND EXTENSION
CENTER, KERTTULA HALL, "BLUE ROOM,"
1509 S GEORGESON DR, PALMER
AGENDA

DM RIISINESS

7:00 TO 7:30 PM BUSINESS MEETING 7:30 GUEST SPEAKER

CAROL SYMONDS, EWETOPIA FARMS GREENHOUSE
"FLORAL TAPESTRY... WEAVING TEXTURES, COLORS AND
DESIGN"

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

PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY THE AUTHOR

The peasant is going to dispense with using a third person essay today and go with first person instead. Back in the day when I was farming in Wisconsin, I had a particularly good friend who enjoyed calling me peasant even though he was doing the same thing I was. He's no longer with us, but I surely enjoyed his joshing at the time and will never forget him. So that's where my peasant moniker came from.

A certain garden writer who has an offering weekly in the Anchorage newspaper likes to refer to the time when the birch leaves reach the size of a squirrel's ear. I have a hunch he has picked up an old saw back in the corn belt which went like this: "When the oak leaves reach the size of a squirrel's ear it's time to plant corn." That saying was attributed to the native folks who raised corn long before Europeans came to America.

This brings up some other old saws that pertained to summer rains. Please bear in mind that this was for a mid-continent area before weather forecasts reached their present accuracy and may have a grain of truth to them.

"When the sun shines on a wet rock it will rain again soon."

"Rain and sunshine rain tomorrow."

"When the sun sets in the sack it will rain tomorrow."

The last one I find particularly interesting since the weather was watched closely during grain threshing time. Grain was cut with a binder and the bundles were set up in "shocks" which consisted of six bundles stood on end with a seventh bundle spread over them as a cap. When the shocks had dried in the field for a time, they were loaded on horse-drawn wagons and run through a threshing machine. The grain bundles needed to be dry, hence we needed to keep a weather eye out. What was called the "sack' was a developing dark cloud on the western horizon. Weather patterns in the U.S. flow from west to east, so a cloud layer visible in the west at evening would probably be in your area the following day.

Incidentally, I pitched many a grain bundle into a threshing machine using a three-tined pitchfork. One needed to get the wagon close to the machine, so it wasn't too much of a stretch to pitch bundles into the elevator. Since the horses didn't enjoy being in the noise and dust alongside the threshing machine it was necessary to encourage them to get close. Bundles went into the machine grain end first as that was the most efficient way to separate the grain from the straw. The threshing machine was powered by a tractor and belt driven. This was another consideration for the horses as they pulled up to the machine, which was running. They had to be very close to the belt if they pulled up on the belt side of the threshing rig.

Threshing was an organized system with a group of neighbors in a threshing run. The system moved from farm to farm with each farmer in the run making a daily contribution to the effort with a team and wagon or handling the threshed grain or pitching the bundles onto the wagons where the wagon driver carefully stacked them. Everyone cooperated and morning and afternoon lunches were served by the womenfolk. Coffee and sandwiches and homemade doughnuts were the menu. We worked hard, ate well and today I can remember threshing runs as a pleasant event. People did work together to accomplish chores such as wood sawing, corn shredding, clover hulling, and other events that required extra help. I shall never forget the good people I worked with, many of them long gone.

Thanks, folks.



Horse equipment was finished, and tractors took over. This photo from about 1960 is of yours truly chopping corn for the silo.

## April Guest Speaker Introduction

"Floral tapestry... weaving textures, colors and design"



My name is Carol Symonds. I am the owner of EweTopia Farms Greenhouse and for 25 years I have been able to do the best job in the world. I am very excited to be able to share with all of you my passion and joy of gardening. I will be talking with you about making beautiful baskets, weaving texture color and design. Looking forward to seeing you for a fabulous evening!

Two of Carol's beautiful creations!





We may have a door prize drawing for a basket or two at the conclusion of Carol's presentation. Come join us for an interesting evening and learn a trick or two on creating your own beautiful baskets.



## **2023 Standing Committees**

- Monthly Newsletter Deb Blaylock
- Website Manager Eva Cohnen-Brown
- Guest speakers Deb Blaylock
- Membership Directory Kristina Torngvist
- Rebarchek Farm Project Isaac Vaughan
- Annual Plant Sale Vacant
- Palmer Library & Pioneer Home planting -Dorte Mobley
- Midsummer Garden & Art Faire Vacant
- Summer Garden Tours Dorte Mobley
- Alaska State Fair Special Awards Deb Blavlock
- State Fair Parade Vacant
- Nominations Committee Vacant
- 2023 Christmas Party- Vacant

A few hours of your time will help all the committees meet their goals. Have questions or want to volunteer? Send us an email at matsumastergardeners@gmail.com.

Thank you!

## FAILURE: AN OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED

By Isaac Vaughan, Master Gardener

As I have been gardening for only a few years, I do not have too much enlightening experience to share. Nevertheless, having spent an almost unhealthy amount of time and money on gardening and garden-related goods, I have obviously made my share of mistakes and killed my share of plants. As Thomas Edison said, "The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing." Using Edison's philosophy, I can say I have never made a real mistake in killing a plant. In this writing, I'll share a few of my gardening blunders and what I learned from them.

Most of us Master Gardeners have likely, at one time or another, planted a bare root tree or shrub. It took me 10 or so sugar maples, a few lilacs, some roses and a pine to start questioning my early planting methods. It wasn't until I read an article by Curt Mueller about his burr oak that I realized the spartan conditions I was subjecting my plants to: Pulled straight from their packaging and plunged into the rocky subsoil otherwise known as our yard, watered maybe twice a month, and given no respite from the summer sun. Miraculously, I had a 10% survival rate using this "planting method." This past summer, though, all my bare root trees and shrubs have survived and remained healthy due to being grown thus far in containers. When they are grown in pots for a few years, they are allowed to establish root systems in relatively warm, fertile, and easily maintained With this settings. acclimatization, the plants will be much easier to establish and quicker doing so.

Another group of plants I previously had trouble with was tillandsias. Tillandsias are air plants; they need no soil, often have no roots whatsoever, and are frequently misrepresented in houseplant books. I had read in one such houseplant manual that

tillandsias "...take up water from humid air, and obtain nutrients from airborne dust." I disastrously attempted to cultivate a number of them using this method, only to later find a specialized air plant book to advise growers to "Submerge the plant once a week for 1 to 2 hours," further suggesting a few drops of liquid fertilizer per gallon of water. Although I have yet to try growing tillandsias again using this method, I hope for (dare I say expect?) better results next time I purchase an air plant...or ten, knowing how my garden center trips normally end up.

Through all my gardening misadventures, I have learned not only to research my projects thoroughly ahead of time from multiple resources (advice from more experienced Master Gardeners is the best; thanks everyone!), but also how to learn from failure. Though I have spent an unhappy amount of time and money on what seemed at the time to be fruitless endeavors, I have gained invaluable experience and knowledge. I have never truly failed, because I have always learned.



Link to register for the State Master Gardener Conference:

https://www.alaskamastergardeners.org/conference.html



#### Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center

#### March/April Classes March Theme: Sustainable Living April Theme: Earth/Eco Friendly

Mar 21	Firewood Cutting Checklist for Harvesting Firewood - Glen Holt - Zoom
Mar 30	Chicken University - Steve Brown - In-Person
April 1	Mat-Su Food Preservation - Canning Fruit & Tomatoes - Julie Cascio
April 1	Mat-Su Food Preservation - Canning Fish in Jars - Julie Cascio
April 4	Constructing an Effective Woodshed for Drying & Storing Your Firewood - Glen Holt - Zoom
April 6	Healthy Soils = Healthy Planet - Caley Gasch
April 15	Mat-Su Food Preservation - Dehydrating Food - Julie Cascio
April 15	Mat-Su Food Preservation - Canning Meat & Vegetables - Julie Cascio
April 18	Backyard Pollinators - Alex Wenninger - Zoom
April 20	Composting Basics - Caley Gasch - Hybrid
April 25	Biomass and Firewood as a Local Energy Alternative - Glen Holt - Zoom
April 27	Know Your Soil: Testing & Amending - Bob VanVeldhuizen & Theresa Isaac -

Watch our Facebook, Instagram and website for up-to-date info & registration links!

https://www.facebook.com/matanuskaexperimentfarm/ https://www.facebook.com/MatsuExtension https://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/

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## April Seeds to Start

#### First half of April:

In-Person

Kale, Cilantro, Dill, Lettuce, Sweet Corn, Nasturtium

Sweet corn should be planted in largish, deep containers and transplanted only once. They grow a central tap root.

Dill and Cilantro can also be direct seeded when soil is warm and workable.

#### Second half of April:

Zucchini, Winter Squashes, Summer Squash, Cucumbers, Pumpkins and Melons (Cucurbits)

Most cucurbits detest the transplanting process, preferring to not have their roots disturbed. Like sweet corn, they should be transplanted only once. Starting these too early can make transplanting difficult and damage the plant during the process.



Steve Brown provided the following report on the 2023 Alaska Master Gardener classes:

The 2023 Master Gardener classes are off to a historic start with record enrollment of more than 100 individuals attending classes in Palmer, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau. There may also be additional classes this fall.

In addition to the traditional Master Gardener classes, nearly 200 elementary students in Anchorage will be participating in Junior Master Gardener workshops in Anchorage. The focus of their activities will be growing giant Alaska cabbages that they will start at school and take home when school is over. Hopefully, some of those cabbages will end up in the junior division of the Giant Cabbage Weigh-off at the Alaska State Fair!

They will be using the brand new UAF publication, co-authored by Master Gardener Eva Cohnen-Brown, on growing giant cabbages. The publication, HGA-00049, can be downloaded from the Cooperative Extension publication library. https://cespubs.uaf.edu/

#### **MMGA Membership Report**

Cathy Crew, our treasurer, reports that as of Saturday, March 18th, we have 70 members! Ten of those are reported as being new members. Welcome to all our new members and thank you to all who have renewed membership for 2023.

If you have not renewed, there is still time before we hit the May 1st deadline. In order to participate in the Annual Plant Sale, you must be a member by the May meeting. Also, to participate in any member-only summer activities, current membership is required.

#### Renewal information:

https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/

#### **Alaska Commercial Greenhouses**

Compiled from member suggestions, Facebook Group Alaska Home Gardeners. Have others to add? Send a message to matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

#### Palmer/Wasilla Mat-Su Valley

EweTopia Farms Greenhouse, 3911 S Caudill, Palmer, AK, 907 746 4134, (On FB)

Mid Valley Garden and Greenhouse, 1346 Hyer Rd, Wasilla, AK, 907-982-6691,

https://www.midvalleyak.com/, (On FB)

Jacobson's Greenhouse, N Lucas Rd, Wasilla, AK, (907) 376-2123, <a href="http://www.jacobsonsgreenhouse.net/">http://www.jacobsonsgreenhouse.net/</a>, (On FB)

Ken's Garden Center, 4121 East Dimond Way, Wasilla, AK, (907) 982-9804,

http://www.kensgardencenter.com/, (On FB)

Aurora Gardens, 4280 N. Ryder Dr. Mile .9 Palmer-Fishhook Rd, Palmer, AK, (907) 746-2060/ 982-4852, http://auroranursery.org/index.html, (On FB)

The Alpine Garden Nursery, 455 S Hyer Rd (5.39 mi), Palmer, AK, (907) 355-2462 \*\*\*By Appointment Only\*\*\*, (On FB)

Fresh Starts Farms, 1505 S. Inner Springer Loop, Palmer, AK, (907) 745-8500,

www.freshstartsfarms.com, (On FB),

Last Frontier Flowers, 4255 S McKechnie Loop, Palmer, AK 99645, (907) 354-8545, (On FB)

Northern Flowers, 12700 E Scott Rd, Palmer, AK, (907) 250-9175, (On FB)

### **Anchorage Bowl**

Perennial Gardens, 20779 S Birchwood Loop Rd, Chugiak, AK, 907 688 2821, (On FB)

P&M Garden Services, 21144 Eagle River Road, Eagle River, AK, 907-694-9293, (On FB)

Mile 5.2 Greenhouse & Gift Shop, 17026 Santa Maria Dr, Eagle River, AK, (907) 694-3978, (On FB)

Bells: Specking Location, 13700 Specking Rd, Anchorage, AK, 907-345-4476; Cranberry Location, 7653 Cranberry Rd, Anchorage, AK, 907-243-1020; DeArmoun Location, 3125 DeArmoun Rd, Anchorage, AK, 907-345-2654, (On FB) Dimond Greenhouse, 1050 W Dimond Blvd, Anchorage, AK, (907) 349-2552, (On FB)

Forget Me Not Nursery, 480 Indian Rd, Indian, AK, (907) 653-7673, (On FB)

Alaska Mill & Feed, 1501 E 1st Ave, Anchorage, AK, (907) 276-6016, <a href="https://www.alaskamillandfeed.com/">https://www.alaskamillandfeed.com/</a>, (On FB)

#### Fairbanks/Interior

Plant Kingdom Greenhouse & Nursery, 620 Fideler Road, Fairbanks, AK, 907-457-5268, (On FB)

Risse Greenhouse, 981 Risse Rd, Fairbanks, AK 99712, 907 488 6973, <a href="https://www.rissegreenhouse.com">https://www.rissegreenhouse.com</a>, (On FB)

Hawks Greenhouse, 2260 Old Richardson Hwy, North Pole, AK 99705, Phone: 907-488-6119, https://hawksgreenhouse.com/, (On FB)

Midnight Sun Greenhouse, 841 Balsam Drive, Fairbanks, AK 99712,

http://www.midnightsungreenhouse.com/, (On FB)

Ann's Greenhouse, 780 Sheep Creek Rd., Fairbanks, AK 99709, 907-479-6921, (On FB)

#### Kenai Peninsula

RustyRavin Plant Ranch, 35680 Baranof Street (mile 12.5 K-Beach Rd), Kenai, AK, 99611, (907) 283-5686, (On FB)

Trinity Greenhouse, 42963 Kalifornsky Rd, Soldotna, AK, 907 262-9242, https://trinityalaska.com/, (On FB)

Jackson Gardens Nursery, 48195 Johns Rd, Soldotna, AK, 907-252-9459, (On FB)

Alaska Hardy/Fritz Creek Gardens, 3800 Sterling Hwy, Homer, AK 99603, 907-235-4969,

http://www.alaskahardy.com/, (On FB)

Cookie's Country Greenhouse, 2340 E End Rd, Homer, AK, (907) 235-8915, (On FB)

Anchor Point Greenhouse, 33851 Alder St, Anchor Point, AK (907) 235-7288, (On FB)

Wagon Wheel Garden and Pet, 1506 Ocean Dr, Homer, AK, (907) 235-8777, <a href="http://www.akwagonwheel.com/">http://www.akwagonwheel.com/</a>, (On FB)

Baycrest Greenhouse, 2661 Sterling Highway, Homer, AK, (907) 399-2007,

http://www.baycrestgreenhouse.com/, (On FB)

## Garden Links (updated March 2023)

Alaska Botanical Garden

http://www.alaskabg.org/

**Alaska Center for Conservation Science** 

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

**Arbor Day Foundation** 

www.arbordav.org

Alaska Division of Agriculture

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

Alaska Garden Clubs

http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org

Alaska Grown

http://www.buyalaskagrown.com/

Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage

http://alaskamastergardeners.org/

**Alaska Native Plant Society** 

http://www.aknps.org/

**Alaska Orchid Society** 

http://www.akorchid.org/

Alaska Peony Society

https://www.alaskapeonysociety.com/

**Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association** 

http://www.apfga.org/

**Alaska Plant Materials Center** 

http://plants.alaska.gov/

Alaska Rhodiola

https://www.akroseroot.com /

Alaska Rock Garden Society

http://www.akrockgardensociety.org/

Flora of North America

http://floranorthamerica.org/

**Good Earth Garden School** 

https://www.goodearthgardenschool.com/

Georgeson Botanical Garden \*New\*

https://georgesonbotanicalgarden.org/

**Integrated Pest Management Program** 

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

IPM Alaska Pest Reporter

https://plw.man.mybluehost.me/

Junior Master Gardener

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 (Extension)

https://extension.org/search/

**Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley** 

https://fairbanksmastergardeners.wordpress.com/

Mat-Su/Copper River Cooperative Extension Service

https://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/

Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Services

https://www.uaf.edu/afes/places/palmer/

**Alaska Non-Native Species List** 

https://accs.uaa.alaska.edu/invasive-species/non-native-plant-

species-list/

**Palmer Soil & Water Conservation** 

http://palmersoilandwater.org/

Society of American Foresters, Cook Inlet Chapter

https://forestry.org/cook-inlet-seedling-sale/

South-Central Alaska Beekeepers Assoc.

http://www.sababeekeepers.com/

**Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners Association** 

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

Sustainable Agriculture - UAF

https://www.uaf.edu/ces/agriculture/sare/

**UAF Cooperative Extension Service** 

https://www.uaf.edu/ces/

**UAF Cooperative Extension Service Publications** 

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

**UAF CES Citizen Pest Monitoring Portal** 

https://pestreporter.alaska.edu/

**UAF Herbarium** 

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

**UAF Alaska Master Gardener Program** 

https://www.uaf.edu/ces/garden/mastergardeners/

University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

www.fruit.usask.ca

**USDA/NRCS Plant Database** 

https://plants.usda.gov/home



## **CLUB CONTACT INFO**

President: Kevin Johnson 907 775 2808
Vice President: Lois Rockcastle 907 632-1137
Secretary: Jana Gooch 907 746-2891
Treasurer: Cathy Crew 907-632-4401
Member at Large: Deb Blaylock 907-746-6045

If you have gardening news, photos, or information you would like to share in the <u>newsletter</u>, please send to the MMGA email.

Website: <a href="https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/">www.matsumastergardeners.com/</a>
Email: <a href="mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com">matsumastergardeners.com/</a>

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

#### **APRIL 2023 AND BEYOND**

Apr 3, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Carol Symonds, EweTopia Farms Greenhouse, "Floral tapestry... weaving textures, colors and design" Apr 7-8, Anchorage, State Master Gardener Conference, "Party in the Garden",

https://www.alaskamastergardeners.org/

May 1, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Ellen VandeVisse, Biochar

**May/Jun,** Palmer, Palmer Veterans and Pioneers Home Planting (TBD)

Jun 3, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale

**Jun 12**, Palmer, Palmer Library Planting (TBD) **Jul 8,** Palmer, Palmer Midsummer Garden and

Art Faire

Jul/Aug, Summer Garden Tours (TBD)
Sep 11, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Bob Van
Veldhuizen, Soil Testing Basics w/hands-on
demonstration

Oct 2, Palmer, Regular Meeting, 2023 Garden Year Recap Slideshow & Discussion and Potluck. Nov 6, Palmer, Annual Meeting, Dr. Jeff Smeenk Dec, Palmer, Christmas Party

Do not forget to check out the photos tab on our webpage! Eva updates it periodically from activities our Association participates in. <a href="https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/photos.html">https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/photos.html</a>

## Club Membership

The membership year runs from January to December each year. Annual individual memberships are \$15 and family memberships are \$20. Family memberships are only for family members living in the same household. The deadline to join is January 15, 2023, to be listed in the annual membership directory.

Join or renew online. *Thank you!* 

# How and What to Submit for the Monthly Newsletter

Your submissions are appreciated and make our newsletter what it is - so do not 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 needed 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.

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:  $20^{th}$  day of each month ~~ Thank you~~





Website: <a href="https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/">www.matsumastergardeners.com/</a> Email: <a href="mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com">matsumastergardeners.com/</a>

> MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION PO BOX 598 PALMER, AK 99645

