



President's Patch

By President Jenny Weaver, photos by the author

Let the season of planting begin! I know many of you are well into the 2026 gardening season. You ordered your seeds long ago and began sowing seeds and bulbs at the beginning of the year. Some of us have just begun to plant. This process of seed sowing should be based on the conditions of your property and your individual sowing set up. It also has much to do with whether you plan to sell seedlings at our plant sale, grow to provide veggies for your family during the summer and beyond, or perhaps you just garden for the love of flowers!

Like many of you, I struggle to organize my seeds and arrange packets to begin sowing indoors.

This spring, I followed two key pieces of advice from the owners of Frosty Gardens, located in Fairbanks. Frosty Gardens shares a wealth of practical information for Alaska growing, both on their Facebook page and website. I love their practical advice!

First, I ditched my shoebox storage method and purchased two Rainbow Photo & Craft keepers from Michaels, recommended by Frosty Gardens. I loaded one keeper with veggies and one with flowers. Each keeper contains 16 colored, snap-shut boxes that I labeled with types of veggies or flowers. The individual boxes have an additional advantage; if seeds escape their packet, they are contained within the smaller box. I had such fun organizing my wealth of seeds and feel so smug with the end results!



I then organized individual packets for seed sowing (and hardening off), ahead of the time plants move to my greenhouse or transplant to the garden. I used groupings of 12 weeks, 10-12 weeks, 8-10 weeks, 8 weeks, etc., with a separate grouping for direct sowing (spinach, carrots, potatoes, beets, peas, etc.).

The second helpful hint offered by Frosty Gardens is to mark the front of each seed packet with the year purchased. If you are like me, every season you search the back edges of your seed packets for the date-of-purchase. Sometimes I have cut that information off (quite by accident, of course) or the info was destroyed

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REGULAR MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

APRIL 6TH, 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION:

REBARCHEK FARM, SOJDIN BARN, EAST REBARCHEK ROAD,
PALMER, ALASKA

AGENDA

APRIL SPEAKER, CARLA VIZZERRA, BODY IN BALANCE
BUSINESS HIGHLIGHT, CAROL SYMONDS, EWETOPIA FARMS
BUSINESS MEETING

PLANT SALE SIGN-UP AND PLANT TAG PICK-UP

by water or dirt during messy sowings! Now, they are all marked boldly and easily read. Simple and genius!



What helpful hints do you have to organize and store seeds? Be ready to share your tips and tricks during our introductions at our meeting on April 6th.

SOMEWHERE IN THYME

WAYBACK ARTICLES FROM PAST MMGA PUBLICATIONS

Peasant's Perspective

By Master Gardener Curt Mueller, photo by the author

Originally published April 2016

It's the first day of spring and the snow is coming down as this is written. Surely this snow will benefit all things waiting to grow. The peasant responds with joy as he cranks up the snow blower.

Growing starts from seed has been the modus operandi for the peasant as it has for many of our club members. It offers a wide choice of varieties to be grown and flexibility in choosing seeding and transplanting time, not to mention the satisfaction and enjoyment of seeing the seeds sprout and develop.

The peasant would like to make some suggestions that have worked well and may have some applications for others.

Starting cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and the like around April 10 has been an optimal planting date. They are started in 32s which gives them some extra root room. The plants will be of the right size when transplanted to the garden, minimizing wind damage that can occur with larger plants. Brussels sprouts will still have enough time to mature in the fall as well. We do start a few plants of short maturity cabbage about March 25. A variety that performs well for this is Parel, with a maturity date of less than 50 days. Three or four plants will make tasty heads when you're craving fresh produce from your garden.

Marge and the peasant make a batch of sauerkraut every summer and for that we grow midseason cabbage that makes firm large heads. Late cabbage is grown for storage or contribution to the Pioneer Home. Cauliflower is available in early and later varieties, lengthening the season on that crop. Broccoli will continue to produce satellite shoots as long as you keep them picked. Winter squash and cucumber varieties are started at mid-

April and grown as greenhouse crops. There are some cucumber varieties that do not require pollination that do very well in the greenhouse. If listed as parthenocarpic they do not require pollination. Gynoecious means they produce only female flowers.

We have on occasion started some peas in three-inch pots in the latter part of April to get an early crop. These are transplanted to the garden when the soil is ready for planting. It's worth a try. Thanks, folks.



How about a little color?

Annual Spring Garden Show Saturday, April 18, 10 am - 5 pm Midtown Mall Anchorage

Join us for our Annual Spring Garden Show and wander through a vibrant indoor garden filled with plants, seeds, garden art, décor, and expert tips from local Alaskan businesses, clubs, and nonprofits.

Bring the kids! They can plant their very own free marigold to take home and grow

April 6 Monthly Meeting - 7pm at Rebarchek past the Red Gate, Alaska State Fairgrounds



Carla Vizzerra, Physical Therapist Extraordinaire, to present at our April 6 meeting

Carla was born and raised in Anchorage, AK. She attended Oregon State University where she majored in Exercise and Sport Science and minored in Psychology. She then went to Pacific University for graduate school and graduated in 2004 with a Doctorate in Physical Therapy. Her love of Alaska brought her back home to work.

Carla has worked at Body in Balance Physical Therapy, in the heart of downtown Palmer, since moving to the valley in 2011. It quickly became evident that MatSu residents are hardworking, skilled, and tenacious. From playing in the Alaskan mountains to farming and gardening, she learned this community knows how to play hard and work hard. Because of this, she has great joy in working with and getting so inspired by her patients.

Carla is looking forward to sharing information and meeting everyone on April 6 for the next Master Gardeners' meeting. She will discuss the challenges/demands that are unique physically to Alaskan gardeners, common injuries seen, how to prevent these injuries, improving ergonomics and how to be proactive during gardening season. She will lead us through some examples of easy, practical, functional, and effective exercises that can be done while outside gardening or while inside taking a small break - all things to help us keep doing the things we love to do!

April Business Highlight



Carol Symonds, owner of Ewetopia Farms, opens our April 6 meeting as the Business Highlight. Ewetopia, a local greenhouse tucked into a corner of the Butte, has been in business for 27 years. They specialize in baskets, perennials, fruit trees, and shrubs. The Farm's motto is "We take the time to get you growing." In addition to hearty plants, Ewetopia hosts a number of fun make-and-take workshops. The picture here shows friends sharing their fairy garden creations.



Link to website:

<https://frostygarden.com/>

Link to Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/frostygardens>

MMGA March 2026, Meeting Minutes, submitted by Secretary Rebecca Emerson

Member Attendance:

In-Person:

Deb & Ken Blaylock	Kristen Buchta
Jana Gooch	Gregory Kalal
Craig Lisonbee	Dorte Mobley
Marjorie Mueller	Rhonda Schneider
Leslie Scott	James Patrick
Kristina Tornqvist	Dawn Wolski
Jenny/Todd/Pearl Weaver	

Online:

Eva Cohnen-Brown	Laurel Flynn
Sandy Hinton	Stephen Spurger

Call to Order

Introductions: Members shared what new things they are trying in their gardens this year. A clarification was made that Jana's email address uses yahoo.com.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes from the February meeting by Ken Blaylock. **Second:** By Craig Lisonbee. **Vote:** The motion passed with no opposition.

Officer Reports

President's Report & Announcements: The board met via Zoom on February 24th to prepare for this meeting. A seed starting class was recently held in Sutton. A reminder to please complete the member survey. For the May meeting, the board is looking for a speaker. Topic ideas include greenhouse management (possibly Denise Bowlan), watering systems, or fruit trees. Dorte suggested that instead of a traditional speaker, the group could visit an orchard or a watering system setup, and Craig recommended Dan Moore's orchard in Meadow Lakes.

Treasurer's Report (Dorte):

Treasurer is in the process of consolidating activities to Mat-Su Valley Credit Union, which will be the club's only bank account. The petty cash fund of \$65 is to provide change to people who pay in cash. No questions were raised regarding the report.

Guest Speakers

Margaret (Alaska Farmland Trust):

Spoke about the trust's mission to act as a community land trust and preserve agricultural soils in perpetuity.

Upcoming Events: Food Security Workshop on April 18; Farm Succession Planning workshop on Sunday, March 22 from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM; and the Farmland Forever Fest at Hamilton Farms during the last week of May, which is always looking for volunteers. She also mentioned the "Drive your tractor to Work Day in May."

Laura Stanley (Alaska State Fair):

The Alaska State Fair will run from August 21 to September 7, with Farm and Garden Day scheduled for Saturday, August 22. All fair guides should be available on the website by April 1. Celebrating its 90th year ("Ninety years with you"), the fair is asking all garden clubs to help with patriotic flower and crop displays for the America 250th birthday theme.

The fair is looking for a flower superintendent! While the position offers modest compensation (essentially covering your gas money,) it is a wonderful way to support the fair and the local gardening community. This role is perfectly suited for someone whose own greenhouse or growing season wraps up right around the time the fair begins. Because fair week is incredibly busy, we are hoping to find someone who has the time and energy to devote to the flowers department once their own spring tasks are complete.

Committee Reports

Volunteer Opportunities (Kristen):

Seed Swap: Scheduled for April 6 (4:00 PM - 6:00 PM) and April 7 (10:00 AM - 2:00 PM) at the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center.

Master Gardener Certification: Reminded the group of the 20 volunteer hours and 10 educational hours needed to maintain certification; more information on this is expected in mid-April.

Homesteader Expo: Discussed having an MMGA table where members can sign up for shifts. Currently checking if entry will be free for nonprofits. The 2026 Spring Alaska Homestead Expo (also known as the 3rd Annual Alaska Homestead Expo & Marketplace) is scheduled for

May 22–25, 2026. The event will be held at the Big Lake Lions Club in Big Lake, Alaska.
<https://commongroundalaska.com/alaska-homestead-expo/>

Lunch and Learns: The Cooperative Extension Service is looking for people to teach sessions on topics like seed snails and sauerkraut.

Sutton Library: The library is looking for a volunteer to help set up a seed library.

A comprehensive list of volunteer opportunities is being put together.

New Business

It was suggested that Greg do a presentation on potatoes in the future.

Plant Sale: Sign-ups for the plant sale and label distribution will happen next month. Deb has already ordered the tags.

Action Items

Task 1: Sign up for the plant sale and collect labels at the next meeting.

Task 2: Wear tennis shoes to the next meeting.

Next Meeting: Apr 6, 2026 at 7pm at Reharchek



Alaska Peony Society

Peony Lovers – don't miss this event!

Price is \$20 via Event Brite

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1654071695747838>

Email questions to alaskapeonysociety@hotmail.com

Alaska Peony Society Presents

One of Alaska Premier Peony Experts

Professor Pat Holloway

Saturday April 11, 2026

Valley Board of Realtors Conference Room,
741 E Susitna Ave Wasilla, Alaska

Program begins at 0900 am (Lunch on your own 12:00- 1:00)

Resume program 1:00 to 4:00 pm



Please join us in welcoming Pat Holloway for her presentation.

Dr. Patricia Holloway, retired, of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) School of Natural Resources and Extension was the first to recognize the commercial opportunities of the peony industry in Alaska. Patricia Holloway is a long-time Alaskan who – through innovation, experimentation, creativity, and hard work – helped create a new and burgeoning industry in Alaska and a center for horticulture research, education and outreach at UAF.

Dorte Mobley – President – Alaska Peony Society



MATSU MASTER GARDENER 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 will be available only for members who have signed up for the 2026 plant sale and will be available at the April and May 2026 Mat-Su Master Gardener Association meetings.

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 names of plants 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 MMGA 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 MMGA. (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 use any price for plants as long as it seems reasonable, and **prices are in \$1 increments - this is non-negotiable.**

Perennials, including herbs:	3" pot	\$3 - \$4
	4" pot	\$4 - \$5
	6" pot	\$5 - \$6
	gallon 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 (depending on pot size)		\$1 - \$2
Raspberries, Currants, Rhubarb	gallon pot	\$5 - \$10
Shrubs trees	2-gallon pot	\$10 - \$15



MATSU MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

2026 PLANT SALE PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

The Plant Sale will be held on **May 30th, 2026**, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Palmer Pavilion (across from the Palmer Visitor's Center). This is our major fundraising event for the year, and members are encouraged to participate either by bringing plants to sell or helping out with the sale. It is an immensely popular event with members of our community and draws a large crowd.

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 4th, 2026**, can participate in the plant sale. Helpers are needed to help with checkout, help the cashier, 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 tag showing the item's price and the seller's unique ID. If there is no ID on the yellow tag, the item is assumed to be a donation to the Association. For all sales, the MMGA retains 20% of the sales of each item. The MMGA member will receive 80% of the sale price 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, Siberian pea, and butter and 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 sell crafts, arts, or garden-related items by providing and staffing their own tables. These items will 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 and chairs. It is highly recommended that you bring items for your own comfort such as chairs, warm clothing, beverages, snacks, and lunch.
9. **All unsold plants need to be picked up after the sale.** If you can't be there at 3 pm, please arrange for someone to take your plants. **Do not just drop off plants and leave them.** Plants or items left behind will be discarded.
10. You may 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 either mails each individual 80% to their address on file with the Association or hands out checks at the following June 6th MMGA meeting at Rebarchek Farm. Please indicate on the sign-in sheet how you would like to receive your check.

Garden Links (updated March 2024)

Alaska AgrAbility Program ****New Mar 2024****

<https://www.uaf.edu/ces/agriculture/agrability/index.php>

Alaska Botanical Garden

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

Alaska Center for Conservation Science

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

Alaska Community Forestry

<https://forestry.alaska.gov/community/index>

Arbor Day Foundation

www.arborday.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 Non-Native Species List

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

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

<https://georgesonbotanicalgarden.org/>

iNaturalist *****New May 2024*****

<https://www.inaturalist.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

<https://visionplusapps.com/alaska-plants/>

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/>

National AgrAbility Program ****New Mar 2024****

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

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation District

<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>

Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

<https://wildflowergardenclub.org/>



BOARD OF DIRECTOR CONTACT INFO

President:	Jenny Weaver	907-982-5446
Vice President:	Kristin Buchta	907-350-4429
Secretary:	Rebecca Emerson	334-207-5217
Treasurer:	Dorte Mobley	907-232-5422
Member at Large:	Deb Blaylock	907-746-6045

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

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 2026 AND BEYOND

Apr 6, Regular Meeting, Carla Vizzerra, Body In Balance - How to Warm Up Before & Cool Down After Gardening. Business Highlight - Carol Symonds, EweTopia Farms.

May 1-2, Juneau, 2026 Alaska Master Gardener Conference,

May 4, Palmer, Regular Meeting, To Be Announced

May 4, Palmer, Drive Your Tractor to Work Day, <https://www.facebook.com/driveyourtractortoworkday>

May 22-26, Big Lake, Homestead Expo, <https://commongroundalaska.com/alaska-homestead-expo/>

May 30, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale

May/Jun ?, Palmer, Veterans and Pioneers Home Planting

Jun 6, Palmer, Rebarchek MMGA Plot

Jun 13, Palmer, Colony Days Parade, "Rooted in Community"

Jul 18, Palmer, Arts in the Garden

Aug 21 - Sep 7, Palmer, Alaska State Fair

Sep 14, Palmer, Regular Meeting

Oct 5, Palmer, Regular Meeting

Nov 2, Palmer, Annual Meeting

Dec TBD, Holiday Party

Don't forget to check out the photos tab on our webpage! It is periodically updated with photos from activities our Association participates in.

<https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/photos.html>

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 **March 2, 2026**, 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: 20th day of each month -- Thank you--



April 2026



Like us on
Facebook

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MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION
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