



# MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

Apr 2014



## President's Patch

By Rhonda Bowman, President

Spring is here! In Alaska it means something different for everyone. It could mean losing an hour of sleep, Nenana Ice Classic tickets, working on getting that lawn mower in tip top shape, getting those snow tires off but not too early since we always have one last snow storm!

Now is the time for our planning and we are getting some items earmarked for spending for this year. We recently voted to increase our scholarship to \$500 each and at our next meeting will be setting up a committee to review our previous parameters and applicants. The Alaska State Fair has contacted us to see if we want to continue to sponsor some prizes and there is the Palmer Community Garden project that we are hoping to provide expertise and possible support to assist in the building of beds. We have secured the May 31 date for the Pavilion for our Annual Plant Sale. Our June meeting we will be planting the flower and vegetable boxes at the Palmer Library. If you have a great idea that hasn't been mentioned for providing to the community we would like to hear from you.

The "Grow Palmer" organization recently had their planning meeting last week for the creation of the Edible Garden Beds in Palmer. They are requesting volunteers and plant starts for this project this summer.

We recently had a request for a request from Iditarod Elementary for a Master Gardener volunteer to speak on container gardening for edibles for their Nutrition and Gardening Family Night. If you are interested please let me know so I can pass the information to you to get those volunteer hours completed or if you have some great ideas for vegetables in containers.

Hope to see you at our next meeting on April 7!

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### CHAPTER MEETINGS FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

#### NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, APRIL 7, 7:00 PM

LOCATION: MTA CONFERENCE ROOM,  
PALMER

DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

#### MEETING AGENDA

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

SPEAKER:

DAN ELLIOT

Topic: Growing Berries

## PEASANTS PERSPECTIVE

By Curt Mueller, Master Gardener

It's dirt under the fingernails time! It's the last week in March as this is written, and we're having day after day of glorious sunshine! We gardeners and the things we grow must certainly respond to this! It holds promise for a great growing season, and will surely give our seedlings a good boost.

What a pleasant place it is to tend to things in the greenhouse. It's like music to hear the exhaust fan kick on while transplanting, the fan removing excess heat and moisture and helping to move the air around the plants.

Perhaps not all of us grow celery in our gardens, but truly it is quite easy to grow during our normally cool growing season. Celery requires a moist soil, so we should choose a moist location if we have one. If not keep the plants well watered and they will be happy. Commercial growers in other states usually select a muck soil that holds moisture well. Cool temperatures slow down the evaporation process, and late summer rains when the celery is well grown provide an advantage in our area. Soil that's too dry tends to give celery a strong taste.

A variety that does well is Utah 52-70. Seed can usually be found on seed racks and Denali seed is a good source to order from online. Seeding time is early, late February or early March will provide sturdy plants to set out in late May. We seed in boxes and transplant into 32s soon after they've made a true leaf. They are transplanted into three inch pots when they've outgrown the cells.

We delay moving the plants from the greenhouse until outdoor temperatures have warmed up well. Temperatures below 45 degrees can cause bolting, although we

haven't found that to be a problem. Late May is a good time to transplant to the garden. We plant in a bed with about eight inches between plants and between rows. The bed helps to slow down evaporation.

If you purchase plants that are still in cells, it might benefit you to purchase early and then transplant into pots to give them some root room. They will very likely be root-bound as purchased. Growing in pots for a while should give them a chance to spread out their roots before planting in the garden.

Harvesting can take place before the plants are fully grown. Outside stalks may be harvested without harvesting the whole plant.

A similar plant to celery is celeriac. This one is grown for its edible root; tops are not edible. Growing it is exactly like growing celery. It is well worth growing for a fine flavor.

Thanks folks.



A flat of newly transplanted celery.

Photo courtesy Curt Mueller

## POTATO YIELD

Submitted by Greg Kalal, Master Gardener

With the very dry and warm weather conditions last year much concern was voiced over how it would affect Alaska's vegetable crops. While relying on Mother Nature and a "rusty bucket" for irrigation, I felt that a good crop was only a dream in my mind. The "standard" yield for potatoes is generally given as ten pounds of potatoes per pound of seed. For those with smaller backyard potato patches, take the yield given divided by ten to give yield per plant. This assumes another "standard" of ten potato plants equal about a pound of seed.

During the winter months I got out my calculator and figured out some of my yields and I thought I would share the results. As some yielded what I would have expected, others truly surprised me. The winner of the yield championship was a brand new potato, so new that a common name has not been chosen, that goes by the number designation 29-6. Common names for this potato that I have heard include "Party" or "Fiesta". This potato yielded almost 37 pounds of spuds per pound of seed. I even double checked it and reweighed it. It did not yield any large tubers, most were the size of a "tennis or "golf ball" but still a very good yield. It was also generation One or the first year after germplasm. The potato has a dark red skin with white patches and a white flesh with red swirls.

Some other very good yielders were Caribe with nearly 29 pounds of spuds per pound of seed, Red Pontiac with 23, and Purple Viking and Shepody with 21. In contrast to 29-6, these all produced very large tubers with several weighing up to a pound and a half. King Edward yielded 21 pounds with respectable sized tubers.

In the battle between German Butterball

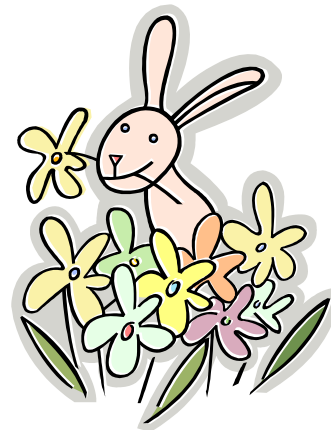
and Yukon Gold, the German Butterball slightly out produced Yukon Gold with a yield of fourteen and a half pounds of spuds per pound of seed, but with quite a few one pound plus tubers from Yukon Gold, German Butterball produced a more useful size.

All of these yields came from my field in Trapper Creek, Alaska and from certified seed produced by me with Generations One to Three seed. Your results may be different due to soil conditions and acts of Mother Nature.



29-6

Party potato, Fiesta --- Alaska bred new variety. Dark red skin and white flesh with red swirl inside. Small to medium in size.



Meeting Minutes for March 3, 2014, by Phyllis Kircher

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as read.

Treasurer's Report:   \$4996.47 checking  
                                       \$3928.09 savings  
                                       Total:           \$8724.56

- \$83.00 was income
- \$230 was dues for 2014
- \$1500 prize money from Parade from the City.
- \$100 for website from Go Daddy was left but that will be reimbursed since it was auto-renewed.

Old Business:

New web-site is up and running.

Monies to the Agriculture Program of Natural Connections should be given through the FFA Booster Club. Contact Carol Keny if we donate money or equipment or tools. The President will get more information.

Mike Kircher met with Sandra Gorby about using an area around the arboretum for a community garden. This is a City Project and they will put in some trails to make access easier but we could use the field if the City put in a water source. The City is very interested in supporting a community garden. We will send the City a letter of support for the community garden. Mike Kircher and Curt Mueller will jointly write up the letter.

It was approved that we will increase the scholarships from \$250 to \$500.00 for two (maybe more if need is there) for students that qualify. A set of parameters will be written out for the next meeting for possible candidates to meet.

New Business:

We need to reserve the plant sale area on May 31 at the downtown pavilions. The City will confirm that this date is available.

The June 2 Meeting will be the planting of the flowers at the Palmer Library.

April 7 meeting Dan Elliot will speak on growing berries.

Discussion question: How do you get your beds ready for planting? Fall weeding, compost (bought or homemade), limit tilling to preserve soil structure.

Meeting adjourned.

Steve Brown from the Cooperative Extension discussed Soil Nutrients.

## Why Use Certified Seed Potatoes

Alaska's potato crop is free from many serious pests and diseases that are common in the continental United States. Imported potatoes could introduce problems such as late blight, root knot nematode, viruses and other destructive organisms. Certification is designed to identify and remove from use those seed lots which have become diseased or are otherwise of reduced value for use as seed.

Alaska's certified seed potato growers start with disease tested stock and increase this seed in accordance with the strict certification standards. Growers manage their seed production to limit the possible exposure to diseases, but re-infection can occur from soil or other sources. The procedures used by the seed growers enable them to supply end-users with excellent quality planting stock of named varieties. Only those plantings meeting the minimum disease tolerance are allowed.

Seed potatoes are regulated because the potato is vegetatively propagated, and many afflictions can be carried in or on the potatoes used for planting. Excluding diseases from seed stock is critical. Diseases can travel long distances by the wind or insects or transferred on contaminated equipment. Planting Certified seed will help you produce a good crop and will help protect your neighbors too.

From Alaska Plant Materials Website:  
<http://plants.alaska.gov/potato-program/index.htm>



## UPCOMING GOOD EARTH GARDEN SCHOOLCLASSES

Class	Location	Date & Time	Tuition
<b>Worms &amp; Vermi-Composting #4</b> <i>Disappear your garbage, create fertilizer, &amp; prevent flies</i>	Artemisia Acres Palmer Directions on <a href="#">website</a>	Saturday April 5 10 - Noon	\$18
<b>A Story of Two Schools in Nepal and Tibet</b> <i>Catherine Inman &amp; Julie LeMay</i>	Mat-Su Valley Location to be announced soon	Saturday April 5 4pm (?)	Free Donations for the Schools encouraged!
<b>Plants &amp; Animals #2 Akashic Record Channeling:</b> <i>A Divine Perspective on our fellow travelers</i> -Repeated May 7	Palmer Artemisia Acres Directions on <a href="#">website</a>	Sunday April 6 3-5pm	\$10
<b>Have a Traditional Celtic Conversation with Devas &amp; Nature Spirits</b> <i>Ellen's workshop at the Celtic Spring Festival</i>	Anchorage <a href="#">Anchorage Senior Activities Center</a> 1300 E 19th Ave, Anchorage, 99501	Saturday April 12 10am-5pm <i>Ellen's workshop 3:30-4:30pm</i>	\$17 Includes your personal tools!
<b>Pranic Gardens</b> <i>Communication Through the Veils</i> <i>Liz Holmgren</i>	Anchorage Directions sent to you when you register	Saturday April 19 9am-1pm	\$65
<b>Secrets to Nutrient-Dense Vegetable Production</b> <i>Organic growing strategies</i>	Willow Willow Garden Club Willow Library	Thursday April 24 7pm	Free, public welcome
<b>Kenai Penn. Ag Forum</b> <i>4th Annual</i>	Homer Lands End Resort	Saturday April 26 9:00am - 4:00pm	Register through Details posted soon
<b>Gardening Outside the Box #3</b> <i>Homer Garden Club</i>	Homer Bidarka Inn	Sunday April 27 2pm	Free, public welcome
<b>Plants &amp; Animals #3 Akashic Record Channeling:</b> <i>A Divine Perspective on our fellow travelers</i>	Homer Directions upon registering	Monday April 28 Feb 4 Noon - 2pm	\$10 offering
<b>Want to host a class?</b> Just ask Ellen!	<b>Want a certain class offered?</b> Just ask Ellen!	<b>To Register:</b> <a href="http://www.goodearthgardenschool.com">www.goodearthgardenschool.com</a> under "GEGS classes"	<b>Email</b> <a href="mailto:information@goodearthgardenschool.com">information@goodearthgardenschool.com</a>

## 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 Exotic Plants Information Clearinghouse (AKEPIC)

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

### Alaska Garden Clubs

<http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org>

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

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

### Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage Chapter

<http://alaskamastergardeners.org/>

### Alaska Master Gardener Blog

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

### Alaska Native Plant Society

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

### Alaska Peony Growers Association

<http://alaskapeonies.org>

### Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Assoc..

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

### Alaska Plant Materials Center

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

### Alaska Rock Garden Society \*UPDATED\*

<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 Cost Share Program

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

### Mat-Su Master Gardener Website

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

### Master Gardener Research Link

<http://search.extension.org>

### Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley

<http://interiormastergardeners.org/>

### Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

### South-Central Alaska Beekeepers Assoc.

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

### Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners

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

### UAF Cooperative Extension Service Publications

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

### UAF Georgeson Botanical Garden

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

### UAF CES Citizen Pest Monitoring Portal

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

### University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

[www.fruit.usask.ca](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!

#### 2014 MATSU HOME SHOW BOOTH

It's that time again for the spring 2014 Mat-Su Home Show, April 4th - 6<sup>th</sup>. I would love to have some volunteers to work the booth with me. I know springtime is when folks start thinking gardening and home remodeling so anyone with information on those subjects would be greatly appreciated. Each time I work one of these home shows, I'm reminded by people how wonderful the Cooperative Extension is and how helpful we are to the community. Carmen Kloepfer. To volunteer, contact Carmen at 907-474-5854 or email: [cckloepfer@alaska.edu](mailto:cckloepfer@alaska.edu) .

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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.

*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>Jan Bass</b>	<b>373-6208</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: [kdblayment@ak.net](mailto:kdblayment@ak.net)

Website: [www.matsumastergardeners.com/](http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/)  
Email: [matsumastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com)

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2014

#### APRIL

**Apr 7**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Growing Berries  
**Apr 19**, Anchorage, Sears Mall Spring Garden Show  
**Apr 20**, Easter Sunday  
**Apr 25/26**, Palmer, Who Let The Girls Out

#### MAY AND BEYOND

**May - Aug**, Palmer, Friday Flings  
**May 5**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Propagating Blueberries  
**May 31**, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale  
**Jun 2**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Library Planter  
**Jun 6-9**, Palmer, Colony Days  
**Jun 19**, Anchorage (ABG), Midsummer Gala in the Garden  
**Jun 28-29**, Anchorage (ABG), Boreal Garden and Art Festival  
**July 7**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Using plants as dyes.  
**Aug 4**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD  
**Aug 21 - Sep 1**, Palmer, Alaska State Fair  
**Sep 8**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD  
**Oct 6**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD  
**Nov 3**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD  
**Dec 1**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD  
**Dec 12-14**, Palmer, Colony Christmas  
**Dec 13**, Palmer, Colony Christmas Parade

## How and what to Submit for the Monthly Newsletter

Your submissions are greatly appreciated and make our newsletter what it is - so don't be shy about submitting items for publication. However, there are a few rules which we all must pay attention to:

Articles, stories, poetry, upcoming events, and pictures (garden-related) are gladly accepted for inclusion in the newsletter. Please submit pictures in JPEG format and other items in Word format with no special formatting other than paragraphs. If you don't have computer access, please submit your article or item neatly and clearly written so the newsletter editor can easily read it. When submitting pictures, please provide a brief caption or explanation as to who or what is in the picture. I do not have a scanner to copy pictures so I cannot accept hard copies.

If you are not the author or photographer, please ensure you have permission of the author or photographer to use their material in the newsletter. The newsletter editor is not responsible for obtaining this for you.

Please do not provide magazine articles or pictures from the internet unless they are public domain items. -- Thank you--



April 2014



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Website: [www.matsumastergardeners.com/](http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/)  
Email: [matsumastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com)

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