



Aug 2018



President's Patch

By President Michael Kircher

On Tuesday, July 17, members of the Valley Garden Club stopped by for a garden tour. They had two buses and several cars. We estimated the number at around 800 people and one dog. My estimate could be off a bit. I might have counted some more than once as everyone was moving about. It was a pleasure to have so many people enjoy our garden. The rose bushes that lined our driveway let out a welcoming aroma as people arrived. Our peonies were in full bloom and our lilies were starting to bloom out nicely. Our bees, Carniolans, "bee"aved themselves as Ginger, our cat, looked out at the crowd from the safety of our sunroom and probably wondered what the heck was going on with so many people in "her" yard. The root cellar was a hit. I hope Phyllis and I were able to fully answer most of the questions.

The mammoth sunflowers have developed flower heads, so we'll see how they do. Usually they develop 10" heads and then lots of seeds that don't have time to mature. Corn (tricolor) is high and looking good with tassels developing nicely. It did very well last year so we decided to try it again. There's nothing like having fresh corn right from your garden. We planted "Queen Sophia" marigolds and they have exceeded expectations. They are going crazy this year with a massive number of blooms and height. If the weather holds, this will be a very productive summer for farmers and gardeners. I'm looking forward to seeing what is displayed at the Fair this year. Speaking of which, we all need to ask Curt Mueller what he needs for our Master Gardener float for the Fair. Please contact Curt as soon as possible.

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GENERAL MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, AUGUST 6TH AT 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION: DORTE MOBLEY'S HOME: 575

JEROME DR, WASILLA

THIS EVENT IS FOR MEMBERS ONLY AND THEIR GUESTS

SPEAKER/TOPIC

JAIME RODRIGUEZ WILL GIVE US A DEMONSTRATION ON HOW TO MAKE HYPERTUFA TROUGHS/PLANTERS.

BECAUSE THE PROCESS IS SEVERAL DAYS LONG, WE WILL JUST HAVE THE DEMONSTRATION SHOWING THE VARIOUS STAGES OF THE PROCESS. YOU WILL BE ABLE TO GO HOME AND MAKE YOUR OWN TROUGH/PLANTERS.

WE WILL SEE ALL THE DIFFERENT STEPS, HAVE A DISCUSSION ON WHAT KIND OF SOIL AND PLANTS THAT LIKE LIVING IN THESE, AND ALSO SEE ANOTHER USE FOR THE HYPERTUFA MIX.

DIRECTIONS TO DORTE'S

TAKE THE PALMER WASILLA HWY TO SHENNUM. FOLLOW TO THE END AND MAKE A RIGHT ON SERRANO. TWO HOUSES OVER, MAKE ANOTHER RIGHT ON JEROME. LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT.

Ira Gershwin wrote, in *Porgy and Bess*; "Summertime and the livin' is easy." I'm guessing that Gershwin never had to pull chickweed from his garden.

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photos submitted by the author

Ah, these endless days of summer are upon us, flowers are in their prime, gardens are producing, we've been getting a good blend of sun and rain making for a good growing season. It's shaping up for a bountiful harvest. It is to be enjoyed. And oh, the Matsu Miners are on top in the Alaska Baseball League! Again!

Our tour of showcase gardens was grand indeed. It was well planned and well executed by Kristina Tornqvist and Dorte Mobley. In addition to reveling in the beauty of the gardens, it has indicated to the peasant how the avocation of gardening involves both spouses to make it successful. The assistance and cooperation of a willing partner are a wonderful way to make connubial life happier.

A favorite pastime of the peasant is to browse the vegetable garden. A tomato here and there, some broccoli satellite heads to be munched on the spot, a bright red strawberry or two or three, peas when they're ready, carrots the same, kohlrabi, radishes, golden turnips, raspberries soon; these things are so very tasty when enjoyed outdoors. The list could go on. The peasant hasn't always been too particular about washing this stuff. A good rinse at an outdoor faucet will suffice. Life is good.

Ginger, Marge, and the peasant spent some time sprucing up the rosebushes at the Colony House Museum. Dead stuff was trimmed out, vetch and butter-and-eggs were pulled, some deadheading took place and some of the new growth of rose canes was cut off. Mowing and other work is all done by volunteers there. Help was needed.

Finding time to do volunteer stuff is probably easier for retired people than for those who are workaday people. Some people call it paying back. The peasant calls it walking the extra mile and hopes to continue to walk the extra mile as long as he is able.

That's it. Time for the peasant to check that Snow Crown cauliflower that he covered with a leaf yesterday to keep it blanched.

Thanks, folks.



One of the highlights of our garden tour was this bed of delphiniums combined with fireweed. The combination of colors is stunningly beautiful. Cathy Crew's imagination in combining these plants is to be commended. This closeup was taken to show how the colors are repeated again and again in varying hues.



Be a Part of the Largest Garden Exhibit in Alaska!



Entry & Judging days at the Alaska State Fair's Crops & Flowers Departments is a fun environment to meet new people & catch up with old friends. It is a great opportunity to learn something new and/or share your own gardening experiences. You can also earn some credit for Master Gardener volunteer hours!

~ Entry Clerks ~

Wednesdays, August 22 & August 29

Three shifts available ... Noon - 5 PM, 3 - 8 PM and 5 - 9 PM

Help exhibitors fill out entry forms correctly and assist the entrant in the preparation of their entries for judging by showing/teaching how to follow the guidelines of the "Exhibitor Guide" and placement of entry in the display area.

~ Judges Clerks ~

Thursdays, August 23 & August 30 from 8 AM - Noon

Help record winning results, set up and place ribbons for the final display.

~ 1st & 2nd Entry Take down ~

Tuesdays, August 28 from 4 - 7 pm & September 4, from 9 am - Noon.

We are looking for a few people to help with 1st Entry take down and ribbon sorting.

Join the Fun ... "Memories in the Making" ...

Volunteers make it happen!

For more information contact Kathy Liska at (907) 337-2196 or akliska@aol.com

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 member to our club, Peter Kopperud. We look forward to seeing you at our meetings and welcome your ideas and expertise!

THE REAL DIRT ON SOIL: PART III – COMPOSITION, PARTICLE SIZE, & TEXTURE

BY JOE MOORE, MASTER GARDENER CANDIDATE, FIGURES ARE ALL PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGES

Soils are composed of a combination of mineral and organic particles together with the voids or **pore spaces** that exist between the particles (*Figure 1*). The mineral particles consist of material originally weathered from bedrock, or volcanic ash. The weathered bedrock materials are then transported and deposited by wind, water, ice or gravity. Very few soils are actually formed in-place by the weathering of underlying bedrock. The organic matter portion consists of plants and animals in various stages of decomposition. The pore spaces are filled with either air or water. In a saturated or wet soil, water will fill most pore spaces and air becomes limited in the soil. In a dry soil, air will fill most of the pore spaces, with water being limited. The relative amount of air and water present in an individual soil can vary considerably from day-to-day and throughout the year.

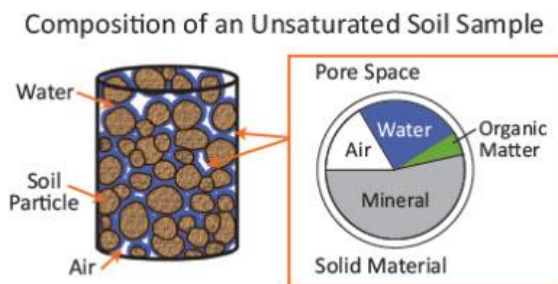


Figure 1. Soil Composition

The solid portion of most soils is dominantly mineral material with some organic matter present. Organic matter, however, decomposes slowly in colder soils and also in saturated soils where there is little or no oxygen present. As a result, soils dominantly composed of organic matter occur in many of the fens, bogs, and wet tundra areas across Alaska.

Particle Size

The mineral portion of a soil is described based on the size of the individual mineral particles (*Figure 2*). Particles larger than

2mm (about 1/4 inch) are described as gravels, cobbles, and stones. Particles less than 2mm in size are described as sand (0.02 to 2mm), silt (0.002 to 0.02mm) or clay (<0.002mm). The sand, silt, and clay-sized particles have a major influence on our farming and gardening activities.

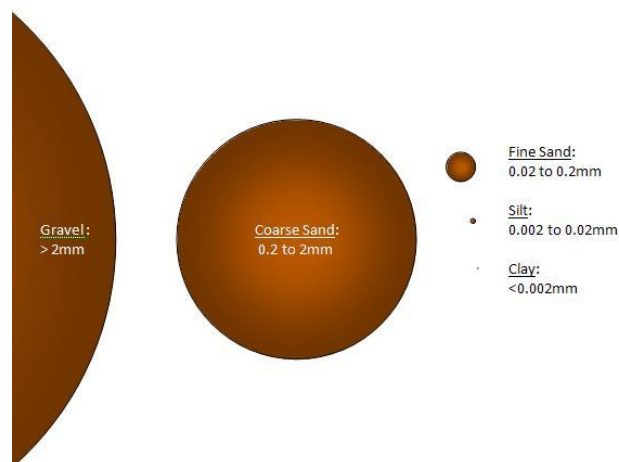


Figure 2. Soil Particle Size

Sand-sized particles feel gritty and abrasive when rubbed. Silt-sized particles are not abrasive and feel like flour when rubbed. Individual clay particles are too small to see without a microscope. If moist, a collection of clay particles will feel sticky and can be molded into various shapes. A moist ball of silt can be rolled between the palms into a rope or worm, but it will crack or fragment before reaching about 2 inches in length. Moist clay can be rolled out into a long worm without breaking.

Sand, silt, and clay-sized particles each respond differently to various uses. Fill three identical containers: one with sand, one with silt, and one with clay. There will be many more individual particles of silt compared to sand due to their size difference. There will be vastly more individual particles of clay as compared to silt or sand. The large number of clay particles

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means there is much more surface area to adsorb or hold onto water and available nutrients. Sands cannot hold much water, drain rapidly, and are low in fertility. Silts can hold more water, drain slower, and can hold more nutrients. Clays can hold a large amount of water but are slow to drain, and they have the potential to hold many nutrients that are then available to plants. Some management characteristics of sand, silt, and clay are compared in *Figure 3*.

SOIL TEXTURE COMPARISON

SOIL CHARACTERISTICS	SAND	SILT	CLAY
Ability to Compact	Low	Moderate	High
Air Space	High	Moderate - High	Low
Soil Fertility	Low	Moderate - High	Moderate - High
Tendency to Form Clods	Low	Moderate	High
Water-Holding Capacity	Low	Moderate - High	High
Water & Air Permeability	High	Moderate - High	Low
Workability	High	Moderate - High	Low

Figure 3. Characteristics of sand, silt, and clay

Soil Texture

Soil Texture refers to names that indicate the relative amount of sand, silt, and clay in an individual soil. The soil textural triangle (*Figure 4*) can be used to determine the texture name for a soil if the amounts of sand, silt, and clay are known. Soils with about 40 percent sand, 40 percent silt, and 20 percent clay (loam) are generally considered the best for agricultural purposes since they average out the best and worst characteristics of each particle size. Certain specialty crops, however, may respond better to a texture that is sandier, siltier, or higher in clay.

There is very little clay in the soils of the Matanuska and Susitna Valleys. Even the clay-like tidal flats and glacial till materials are actually dominated by densely packed silts. Our near-surface soil layers are mostly silt-sized particles from windblown loess and volcanic ash. These silty surface soils (silt

loams) average about 70 percent silt, 25 percent sand, and 5 percent clay. These soils have good water holding capacity and potential nutrient availability. They are easy to work except when wet, are very susceptible to erosion when dry, and they generally have suitable organic matter content only within a few inches of the surface. The underlying glacial outwash and glacial till materials are extremely gravelly sands and very gravelly loams, respectively. They are extremely low in both organic matter and potential nutrient availability. These subsoils drain excessively if they are loose glacial outwash or very slowly if compacted glacial till. Soils that are dominated by organic matter have a texture name of **peat** if the organic material is relatively undecomposed and **muck** if the organic material is well decomposed.

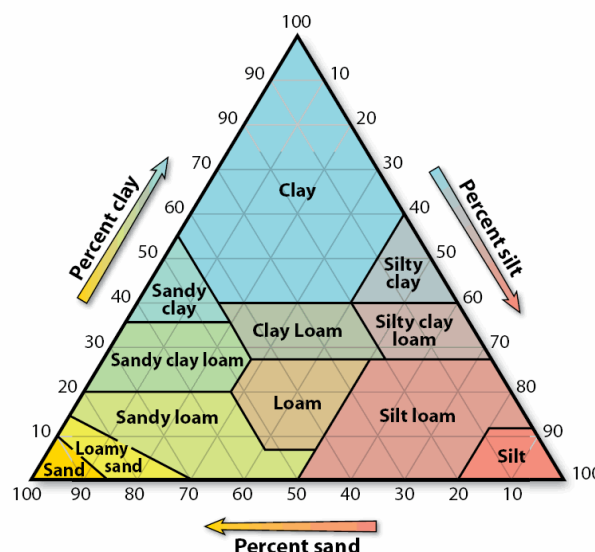


Figure 4. USDA Soil Textural Triangle

If you are interested in quickly determining the texture of your soil, the following guide can be used:

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_ME/DIA/nrcs142p2_050574.jpg.

Part 4 of this series will discuss soil structure and water properties and how they affect our farms and gardens.

2018 MMGA GARDEN TOUR

On Monday, May 16th, we gathered at the home of Kristina Tornqvist and enjoyed a tour of her gardens and four others in the Wasilla area. Thank you to Kristina, Dawn Cowan, Dan and Marian Elliott, Dorte Mobley, and Cathy and Rod Crew for sharing your wonderful gardens with us. Following are a few shots from each garden with a brief narrative. Photos from Eva Cohnen-Brown and Deb Blaylock. Many thanks to Kristina and Dorte for orchestrating everything!



Kristina in her happy place



Checking out Kristina's garden



Ken and Curt taking a break in Kristina's garden



A view of the Palmer Hay Flats from the Elliotts' garden



Marian Elliott in her lovely garden



Dan Elliott pointing out details on an apple tree



An apple being grown in a bottle - we didn't catch the reason for this



A successful bridge graft from approx. 2004 at the Elliotts' orchard



A strap graft at the Elliotts' orchard



An unusual graft - a pear scion grafted onto an apple scion grafted onto an apple tree at the Elliotts' orchard



Grab-bag Costco peony - what a beauty - at Dawn Cowan's secret hideaway



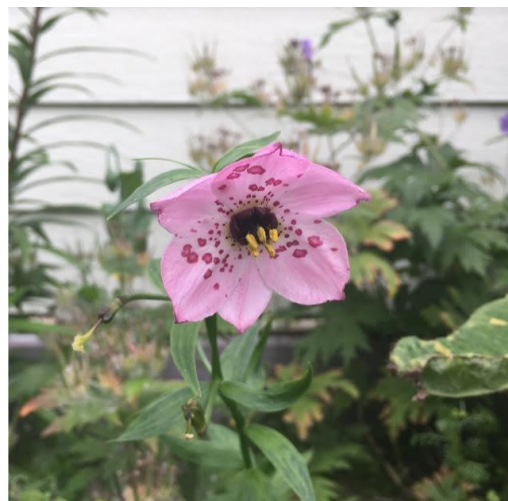
A gorgeous hybridized wild geranium in Dawn's garden



Variegated astrantia, another lovely in Dawn's garden



Rasmus, the Emu, at Dorte's home



Nomocharis aperta, a lily relative but not a lily - at Dorte's gardens



Eucomis (Pineapple Lily) at Dorte's gardens



Delphiniums and fireweed at Cathy Crew's garden



Somewhere over the rainbow...at Cathy Crew's place



Honeysuckle vine at Cathy Crew's garden

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 or help a committee
- Help with the Alaska State Fair Parade float
- Grant/scholarship coordinator
- Help at the Alaska State Fair

Many thanks to all who volunteered to help with our booth at the Palmer Museum Garden and Art Faire! We combined forces with the Cooperative Extension Service office. Garden questions were answered and publications from the CES office were handed out to the public.

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

AUGUST 2018

Aug 6, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Hypertufa troughs, Jaime Rodriquez of Alpine Gardens (Members only)

Aug 23 – Sep 3, Palmer, Alaska State Fair

Aug 25, Palmer, Alaska State Fair Parade

SEPTEMBER 2018 AND BEYOND

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--



August 2018



Like us on
Facebook

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