



Aug 2021



President's Patch

By President Deb Blaylock

It's been a busy summer so far, but we have most of the big projects in our rear-view mirror. We still have the Alaska State Fair Parade and Curt Mueller has been busy planning our parade entry. He needs some donations from club members for the finishing touches – see page 6 for details! We're also in need of two or more volunteers on July 24th to weed a rhodiola plot at the Matanuska Extension Farm. If you can help out with this, please send an email to matsumastergardeners@gmail.com. Hours donated count as service hours towards Alaska Master Gardener certification.

There are a few other opportunities this summer to earn service hours. Kathy Liska can always use volunteers to help out in the Crops and Flowers Departments. You can contact her at 907.301.0317 (phone) or akliska@aol.com (email) and find out what dates and times she needs volunteers for. Ann Biddle at the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center is also looking for volunteers for the 4-H Building during the fair. You can go to this web site to see what dates and times are vacant and sign up: <https://tinyurl.com/2021AKFairVolunteer>. Either of these are great opportunities to earn some hours and well worth your time to sign up.

Please review the weeding list for our beds at the Palmer Library (one bed) and Palmer Veterans and Pioneers Home (three beds). Weeds quickly grow this time of year and especially after some sunshine and rain. We want to keep them in tip top shape! You can find the weeding schedule here: <https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/weeding-schedules.html>.

Update on the Rebarchek Farm: It seems we've run into some snags and are awaiting to hear details on what we can and can't do. A changeover in people has created some challenges and our previously approved plan to install fencing with treated wood and "oldcastle" blocks is on hold. Michael Kircher is

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GENERAL MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH, 2021, 7 P.M.

LOCATION:

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

THERE IS NO REGULAR MEETING IN AUGUST.

waiting on approval or a possible meeting. As soon as we know the outcome, an email will be sent out with any details we can share.

Our next meeting isn't until September 13th, and we will gather back at our regular meeting room at the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center in the "Blue Room." We look forward to getting back into our familiar routine! Enjoy the rest of your summer.

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

The people of Alaska have many differing backgrounds: those who are Native, others who were born here, and a vast number who come from other states and countries. It is natural for those who come from elsewhere to have fond memories of their previous homes. The peasant was a farm lad from west central Wisconsin and has memories of hiking for miles on a sunny autumn day, through and among the oak forests on the hills, valleys, and ridges of the area. Several species of oaks provided food and shelter for many species of animals and were utilized by local residents as building material and fuel for kitchen ranges and winter heat. Having replaced the decimated white pine in some places and certainly a more difficult wood for building purposes, the oaks were sometimes referred to in a joking way as "Wisconsin pine."

By the end of the nineteenth century the white pines of Wisconsin as well as Michigan and Minnesota had been cut down and used for building purposes in a country that was expanding rapidly and in need of wood for building. The stately trees were tall and straight and produced clear lumber that was easy to work with. Oak had become a substitute.

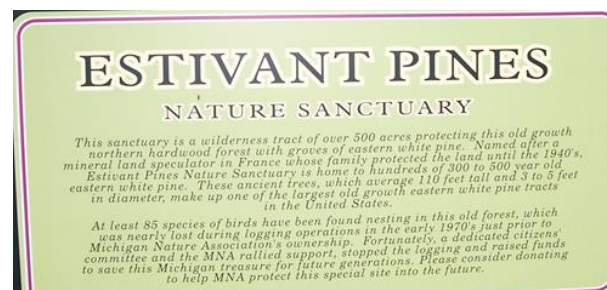
The peasant, after seeing the bur oak growing in MEA's arboretum across the street from the administrative building, decided that he'd like to have an oak tree. As it turns out, the bur oak is the one best suited to adapt to the rigors of the climate of our area. The oak growing at MEA's arboretum is thriving in an area with little wind protection. The treetop was cut back a couple of years ago as it approached the power line. That resulted in several new tops which detracted from the tree's appearance. Since then, it has been cut back further in an apparent attempt to

form a more attractive tree. It will probably take regular pruning to keep its shape.

The peasant ordered small bare root bur oaks online and grew them for a couple of years in five-gallon buckets. In winter they were laid on their sides and covered with leaves and snow. They made satisfactory growth and in the late summer of 2020 one was planted in Marge's and the peasant's yard. There was a small amount of dieback, but it began to grow vigorously in May, and as of July sixteen it appears that the new growth has stopped. If so, it will have sufficient time for the new growth to harden and for the tree to acclimatize to Alaska's seasons. The peasant is pleased with the progress made and has hopes for its future development into a strong tree.

Marge and the peasant had the good fortune to visit an old growth area of white pines on the Keweenaw Peninsula of Michigan. The peninsula juts into Lake Superior for many miles from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. It was indeed a pleasure to see some of those trees which had escaped the destructive logging of the nineteenth century. The trees are still in danger of being cut down. Is there no end to the desire to profit from nature's bounty?

The accompanying photos may explain things best. Thanks, folks.



This is the area visited by Marge and Curt that has old growth white pines.

Continued on page 3.

Continued from page 2.



Marge hugging a stately specimen of an old growth white pine.



Bur oak in its first year of growth in a bucket. The tree on the left is a bur oak, identified by rounded lobes on its leaves. The tree on the right is a red oak. It has sharp points on its lobes. The red oak was sent by mistake by the vendor. By growing the bare root stock in a container for a year or so, the tree will form a root ball with the soil clinging to the roots while the tree is transplanted to its permanent location. This gives a boost to fruit trees and other bare root stock. Dumping bare root stock into Alaska's cold soil will slow down development and can result in death of the plant.



Marge and Curt's bur oak as of July 16, 2021. The fencing is necessary at this stage of growth to protect the tree from browsing moose.



IMPORTED CURRANT WORM

BY JOEY JOZEF (JOEY) SLOWIK, IPM TECHNICIAN, UAF COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

We are getting into the time of year where we see lots of reports of damage from the imported currant worm, *Nematus ribesii*. For those of you not familiar with the pest, your first encounter is usually with a skeletonized gooseberry or currant leaf and some white caterpillars with dark heads and little black spots all over their bodies. The imported currant worm is actually a sawfly, which is related to the bees and wasps. So, the caterpillar is actually a larva, and if you count the little prolegs you'll find six instead of the four you might expect if it was a moth or butterfly caterpillar. As their scientific name implies, they are a pest of any *Ribes* species.



They were introduced to America in 1858 and by 1870 had shut down currant and gooseberry cultivation in the Northeast. Since then, we've found ways to keep their damage in check and their life cycle gives us some insight into how to control them. They overwinter as a pupa in the soil. In the early summer, the adults emerge. They are small wasp-like bugs. They are about ¼ inch in length and are black with yellow legs if you look close enough. They will mate and the female will lay her eggs in the new leaves usually on the underside near the center by a vein. The egg hatches and the larvae feed and grow. Eventually, they will eat enough and drop

to the ground to pupate and overwinter. In many areas where they are found two generations will occur. But in Alaska it appears like only one, as we don't see the caterpillars until late July and into August.

If the first time you spot them is when you see the larvae, then the best bet for control is really just collecting and killing them. At that stage, the population size is established, and every larva killed is one less sawfly to emerge next spring. If you've seen them before, or are concerned, then there are preventative measures which help control the populations. The first is just cleanliness. Removing the old leaves in the fall and tilling the soil around the plants will remove those overwintering pupae or expose them to the harshness of winter.

If you've had a problem with them before you can also spray your plants in the spring with Spinosad. It's a bacterial pesticide like BT but will work on sawfly larvae, whereas BT is pretty specific in only killing caterpillars and some flies. It's also available in organic formulations. The spray should be applied when the leaves are just opening. This will coat the leaf so when the egg hatches the larvae is exposed, or it gets on the young larvae. Depending on the formulation of the brand it only lasts about a week so you will need to reapply it. The imported currant worm can be a damaging pest but by keeping an eye out and some preventative steps it's one that's manageable.

You can contact Joey at:
UAF Cooperative Extension Service,
jaslowik@alaska.edu.

You can also submit unknown pests (plants, insects, diseases, etc.) through the UAF Citizen Scientists Monitoring Portal:
<https://pestreporter.alaska.edu/>.



Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center
 CLASSES - July Theme is: Enjoy the Outdoor Classroom
 August Theme is: Let's Get Crafty

Watch our Facebook page for additional info & registration links!

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| July 20 | In the Garden with Theresa: Let's Garden to Heal |
| July 21 | Walkabout Wednesday: Microgreens with Winona Benson |
| July 22 | Jellies, Jams, Preserves, Marmalades, and Conserves |
| July 27 | Chicken University |
| July 28 | Walkabout Wednesday – In person wagon ride farm tour |
| July 29 | Canning Fish in Jars and Smoking Fish |
| Aug 3 | Journal Garden Designs |
| Aug 4 | Walkabout Wednesday: Agronomy tour/update with Bob |
| Aug 5 | Dehydrating Fruits and Veggies (including herbs) |
| Aug 10 | Creating a Camping Stove – Burning off Wood! |
| Aug 11 | Walkabout Wednesday: Art in the Backyard (using leaves, veggies & fish for printing) |
| Aug 12 | Canning Fruits |
| Aug 12 | Alaska Project Learning Tree with Molly Gillespie |
| Aug 17 | Building Birdhouses with Jim & Jeff |
| Aug 18 | Walkabout Wednesday: Dyeing with Nature's Colors |
| Aug 19 | Canning Tomatoes |
| Aug 23 | Potato Possibilities! 4-H Summer Series |
| Aug 24 | In the Garden with Theresa: Let's Garden to Heal |
| Aug 25 | Walkabout Wednesday: Farm tour |
| Aug 26 | Preserving Pickles & Sauerkraut |

The University of Alaska is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual: www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center strives to make our programs accessible for all individuals. If you or a family member who is attending a program needs accommodations to participate, please contact our office 5 days in advance to request services. This will give us the opportunity to provide assistance you require. (907)745-3360 or email Theresa Isaac tmisaac@alaska.edu

2021 Alaska State Fair Parade "Seeing is Believing" Mat-Su Master Gardener Float

We are requesting of our members contributions of container plants for our MG float. Vegetables, flowers, shrubs, or anything else that will enhance our float. Containers will need to be stable in order to ride on our trailer. Any oversize vegetable plants will be welcomed. Window boxes are OK and pots with a wide bottom. We will have a table to display harvested vegetables, so we can use some of those, especially if you have some oversize ones we can display. We don't want to divulge our plan for the float to everyone who reads our newsletter, but if you members want details, please contact Curt Mueller by email: mueller@mtaonline.net or phone 745-6144.

Float assembly will take place at the large parking lot at E. Dahlia and S. Gulkana, across the street from the ballfield. Time for assembly will be at nine a.m. We will need someone to go to the Palmer Depot to get the position of our float in the parade.

Disassembly and retrieval of your contributions will take place at Palmer Middle School parking lot immediately after the parade.

For further information please contact Curt Mueller. Thanks!

The date of the Alaska State Fair Parade in Palmer is August 21st.

PALMER MIDSUMMER GARDEN & ART FAIRE

Many thanks to Sue Glenn for heading the PMGAF committee this year! A big thank you to Jillian Holland who brought CES flyers and goodies and helped staff the booth all day. Ann Biddle brought some 4-H goodies and Theresa Isaac assisted with locating banners and equipment for us. We appreciate our partnership with UAF Cooperative Extension Service. Thank you to the MMGA members Michael and Phyllis Kircher, Marge Mueller, Ann Eagerton and Craig Lisonbee who donated a few hours of their time to answer questions and staff our booth!



Jillian Holland, Deb Blaylock, Sue Glenn, & Ken Blaylock preparing to take down the MMGA booth. A late afternoon Palmer wind necessitated taking down the canopy early!

Garden Links (updated Mar 2021)

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 Garden Clubs

<http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org>

Alaska Grown

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

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://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/>

Good Earth Garden School

<http://ellenvandevisse.com/>

Grow Palmer

<http://growpalmer.org/>

Integrated Pest Management Program

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

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)

<http://search.extension.org>

Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley

<https://fairbanksmastergardeners.wordpress.com/>

Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Services

New

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

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

Society of American Foresters, Cook Inlet Chapter *New*

<http://www.alaska.forestry.org/alaska/chapters/cook-inlet>

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 Georgeson Botanical Garden

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

UAF Herbarium

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

UAF Alaska Master Gardener Program

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

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

<https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Deb Blaylock 746-6045/kdblalock@ak.net	
Vice President:	Kristina Tornqvist	795-6393
Secretary:	Dorte Mobley	232-5422
Treasurer:	Cathy Crew	632-4401
Member at Large:	Sue Glenn	671-0252

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

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST 2021 AND BEYOND

Aug 20 – Sep 6, Palmer, Alaska State Fair
Aug 21, Palmer, Alaska State Fair Parade (note date change)
Sep 13, Palmer, MMGA meeting, TBD
Oct 4, Palmer, MMGA meeting TBD
Nov 1, Palmer, Annual MMGA meeting, TBD
Dec 6, Palmer, Christmas Party

Don't forget to check out the photos tab on our webpage! Eva updates it periodically 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 January 15, 2021, 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 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 2021



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Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/
Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
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