



President's Patch By Rhonda Bowman, President

While many folks are looking towards purchasing property in a planned community with pools or golf courses, it appears that there is a new trend: agrihood. These are communities or subdivisions that are situated near or on part of a working farm. Nationwide there are about 200 agrihoods in Phoenix, Illinois, Atlanta and even Hawaii. The homes generally run higher priced than similar houses in standard subdivisions or communities. But what professionals are paying for is the farm experience without the actual gardening responsibilities. Let's face it, farming is hard work and time-consuming, but with the local "Farm-to-Table" movement, people want access to food that hasn't sat in a refrigerated truck for days. They vary in size and have various vegetables, fruit trees, chickens, eggs, honey and livestock. Some are set-up as a CSA, but many are run by farmers who work the land and sell the crops to the locals in a farmer's market or farm stand.

Isn't it nice that Palmer is at the forefront of a trend? Growing local vegetables is a big part of life here and if we don't grow them we certainly purchase from local farmers, and even our stores feature produce from the Valley. Many locals here have gardens in their backyard, fruit trees and even chickens and eggs.

Don't forget that when you are out and about there are beds that can use some weeding at the Library, Experimental Farm and at the Palmer Pioneer and Veterans Home. Get signed up at the Cooperative Extension to volunteer to work their booth at the Alaska State Fair with free entry and parking.

Continue to have a great summer!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Patch	1
Next Chapter Meeting	1
Peasant's Perspective	2
Bees and Wasps	3
Pioneer Home Planting	4
2016 Alaska Invasive Species Workshop	5
Spring Creek Farm	6
Alaska State Fair 4-H Building Volunteer Info	7
Fall 2016 Master Gardener Course	7
Alaska Agriculture Appreciation Day	8
Garden Links	9
Announcements/Volunteer Opportunities	9
Contacts	10
Calendar of Events	10

CHAPTER MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, AUGUST 1, 7:00 PM

LOCATION: MTA BUILDING, CONFERENCE ROOM (IN THE BASEMENT), PALMER, AK

DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

TOPIC/SPEAKER:

GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING. BRING IDEAS FOR THE 2017 STATE MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE



Flowers of 2016 by Rhonda Bowman

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photos by the author

It is often questionable whether seeds from some highly prized varieties developed as ornamentals will produce plants from their seeds which have the same characteristics as the parent plant. If the variety is a hybrid it may not, but it's certainly interesting to see what will happen.

Several years ago, the peasant purchased a packet of five seeds of Purple Haze geranium. Two germinated and one plant has thrived in a perennial bed with a minimum of care. It has a striking foliage, leaves varying in color from bronze to purples, and beetroot. The flowers contrast with the foliage in a violet mauve. It is a very attractive and hardy plant. It has produced offspring, and the peasant has grown out some of these seedlings. It takes a couple of years to get a plant with the size needed to determine how it compares with the parent, so a modicum of patience is in order.



Close-up of flowers on original Purple Haze

Eight offspring of the original Purple Haze are presently being grown. Of these, five have the purplish leaf color in various shades. Three have green leaves. One with green leaves has the violet colored flower; the other two have yet to flower.



Close-up of leaves on original Purple Haze

One plant with colored leaves has a pale pink flower. Another with leaf color has a violet colored flower. The others have not yet "flowered."



Two offspring of Purple Haze
The left one has green leaves and a violet flower.
The right one has colorful leaves and a pale pink flower.

All eight plants appear to be vigorously growing, having been dug from the soil as soon as they made a true leaf and had reached a height of about one half inch. Survival was excellent and none were lost after being potted.

The peasant thinks it would make an interesting contrast to grow these eight plants with their varying traits together in a single bed or large planter.



Offspring of Purple Haze. This has colorful leaves and violet flowers

Some photos are included for your interest. Thanks, folks.

BEES AND WASPS, BY LAURA EMERSON

Photos from: PDclipart.org (for public domain)

Since bee and wasp populations are so robust this summer, the following reminders may be useful to gardeners (and others) endeavoring to enjoy the outdoors. Insects going about their business are usually no problem, but disturbing a nest triggers aggressiveness. In fact, the "guard" bees emit a pheromone to attract more fighters!

Bees: In addition to our honeybees, I see two types of bumblebees collecting nectar to make honey for food. One has a bright orange butt and the other yellow and black stripes. I have not discovered the location of their hives, but they tend to be in shady low spots, like under a porch or even in tall grass!

When bees sting, the barbed stinger and venom sac are both yanked out of their bodies, killing them, and embedding in your skin. So the first response by a victim should be to scrape the stinger out, with a fingernail or dull tool, like a card, since the sac keeps pumping out the acidic venom, pH 5 - 5.5. To counter the acidity and histamine properties of the venom, a victim should take an antihistamine like Benadryl, wash the wound(s), and apply alkaline home remedies like baking soda, baking powder or even toothpaste, followed by an ice pack to sooth the sting.

Wasps: Hornets, paper wasps and yellow jackets are all wasps. All build distinctive, papier mâché-like nests by chewing wood fiber. The biomorphic football shape hornet nests hang from trees and buildings.



The smaller paper wasp nests are flatter, like shower heads or umbrellas and lack the outer casing, so you can see the hexagonal cells. Yellow jackets build their nests underground, often in neglected burrows, or in rotting trees. I've disturbed some simply by raking leaves. Both the larger, black-and-white hornets and the smaller black-and-yellow paper wasps are carnivorous hunters who eat flies and smaller wasps and bees, so they are considered beneficial insects. Yellow jackets, however, are scavengers, eating dead flies as well as your picnic foods, particularly sweets and protein.



Bald Faced Hornet

Wasps can sting repeatedly because they do not lose their stinger in the process. The venom has a near neutral pH 6-7 - 6.9. Many people swear to the efficacy of vinegar, but also think the venom is alkaline. Like bee venom, wasp stings do trigger a histamine reaction, so initial responses should include popping a Benadryl, washing the wound, applying an ice pack, and some skin soothing agent, like calamine lotion.

So next time you pack for a picnic, include some antihistamines, an ice pack, and maybe some baking soda and vinegar.

PIONEER HOME PLANTING BY MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS

PHOTO AND ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY CURT MUELLER



This is the planting done by our group at the flagpole area. It was a great choice of patriotic colors and the plants to produce such vivid results. The salvia has had the first flower spikes removed as they senesced, and each plant responded with two or more new spikes. The lobelia may stay colorful all summer and the alyssum may have to have the seed heads removed. This bed was not being watered by Pioneer Home staff and has been kept watered by Curt and Marge Mueller and Lenita Dede. We will continue to keep it watered.

The large flower bed at the main entrance is looking good after being weeded and deadheaded twice by the Muellers. The first time the chickweed was beginning to choke and outgrow the pansies. We removed two five gallon buckets worth of weeds and spent flowers. At the time it appeared that the bed had not been watered and we watered using the hoses and spigot at the Home. A week later it was dry again and we watered and went over the weeds and spent flowers.

In the back the sweet peas were doing well and in bloom, although the bed was overgrown with chickweed. We did not weed. We had spoken earlier with Mitch Flagg who works in Activities and he was recruiting residents to water the flower beds in the back. On our last visit the beds were well watered. The two beds with the ivy geraniums looked rather sad with the soil covered with chickweed and the plants small, although in bloom.

The landscaping in front of the Home has not been properly maintained and the general appearance is quite seedy. The spirea planter in the center of the circle drive has tall grass hiding the spirea and there is a large specimen of bird vetch blooming in the bed. Fortunately, our MG plantings provide brightness and tend to mitigate the neglect of other landscaping.

These comments are designed to promote thinking on what we as MGs can do in the future to make the Pioneer Home a more pleasant place for the residents and those who visit. Indeed, residents and staff have expressed gratitude for what we have done. That is sufficient pay for volunteering and making a contribution.

SAVE THE DATE

2016 Alaska Invasive Species Workshop

Oct. 25 - 27
Fairbanks
Wedgewood Resort

Adapting to a
Warming Environment
Invasive Species
in Alaska

COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION
SERVICES
UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

CNIPM

For more information, visit www.alaskainvasives.org.
UAF is an AVEO employer and educational institution.

SPRING CREEK FARM, BY MASTER GARDENER KEN BLAYLOCK

Photos from: Eva Cohnen-Brown, Master Gardener

Members of the Mat-Su Master Gardeners Association were graciously hosted on a tour of Spring Creek Farm for our July meeting. Spring Creek Farm is located on the working hay farm owned by Alaska Pacific University Kellogg Campus. It is located 45 miles outside of Anchorage near the town of Palmer. The campus is 800 acres of farm and forest which sits at the foot of the Chugach and Talkeetna Mountains.



Megan Talley, the Farm Manager, gave us an informative tour. She explained how APU students and interns live and work on the farm to further their education toward agricultural degrees. For many of the students that come from large cities out of state, living in a tent on a farm in Alaska is a welcomed adventure.

The farm experiments with new strains of vegetables to find better food crops for Alaska that are resilient and immune from environmental pressures.



Megan Talley explains many of the varieties planted on the farm's six acres of planted crops.

Some of the harvest is shared with the volunteers and students who helped grow it, and some is sold. The farm sells much of the produce at the APU farmer's market and through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares. Some is also donated to Project Tilt, a philanthropic partnership between APU's Kellogg Campus, the Matsu UAF farm facilities, and chef Wynona Benson of Family Nutrition. The program feeds needy families and educates them about healthy, affordable eating.

Further information for the farm and its many programs can be located at the following sites:

<https://www.alaskapacific.edu/spring-creek/>

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

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

Alaska State Fair

Volunteer at the 4-H Building with the Mat-Su Cooperative Extension Service

It's fair time again!

Volunteer sign up for the June Tull 4-H Building is all online this year! Simply type or copy the link below into your browser and select a time slot.

We are looking for two adults (13 and up) per time slot. Per volunteer slot, there will be 1 ticket and 1 parking pass available. Tickets and parking passes can be picked up at the Will Call station at the Green Gate any time after the first day of the fair. Children under 13 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian; however, only one ticket per adult volunteer will be provided.

If you cannot make your time slot for any reason, please notify the Cooperative Extension office at 745-3360 as soon as possible so we can find a replacement.

You will receive an email reminder 2 days before your volunteer time.

Sign up link:
<http://tinyurl.com/zmrodk7>

We have beds that could use your tender loving care! The Palmer Library, Pioneer Home & the Matanuska Experiment Farm planter beds need your attention. The Pioneer Home flag bed is constantly in need of water and the flowers underneath the sign could use some weeding. It appears that the Experiment Farm is not getting watered as regularly as previous years. As always the Library could use some weeding. Please make sure if you are in the area or out and about that you take some time to help out.



FALL 2016 MASTER GARDENER COURSE

Sign up now for the Fall 2016 Master Gardener course to be held at the Big Lake Library, Big Lake, Alaska. Classes will take place Tuesdays, 6 - 9 p.m. starting September 2nd and ending December 2nd. Follow this link to sign up: <http://bit.ly/Fall16MG>.

The Alaska Master Gardener training provides a broad horticultural background and includes the topics of botany, soils, vegetable production using organic and conventional techniques, Integrated Pest Management, greenhouses, lawns, houseplants, trees/shrubs, flowers and invasive plants. To earn the title Alaska Master Gardener, participants must complete 40 hours of community service involving horticulture. Students who complete their 40 hours of community service within one year of the class start date will receive a 50% registration rebate.

Contact Stephen C. Brown, Ph.D., District Agriculture Agent, Cooperative Extension Service, at 907-745-3360 for more information

ALASKA AGRICULTURE APPRECIATION



Free!

Day at the Farm

Thursday, Aug. 4, 2016
noon to 5 p.m.

Matanuska Experiment Farm
1509 S. Georgeson Road, Palmer



- Agriculture presentations
- Cooperative Extension Service cooking demonstrations
- Kids activities
- Hay wagon rides
- Farm equipment displays
- Vendors, exhibits and lots MORE!

Save the Date!



For more information, contact Theresa Isaac
at 907-746-9450.

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Garden Links

Alaska Botanical Garden

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

Alaska Community Agriculture

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

Arbor Day Foundation

www.arborday.org

Alaska Natural Heritage Program – Botany

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

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 Chapter

<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 Pioneer Fruit Growers Association

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

Alaska Plant Materials Center

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

Alaska Rhodiola Products Cooperative

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

Alaska Rock Garden Society

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

Eat Local Alaska

<http://akfood.weebly.com/index.html>

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.org

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 Georgeson Botanical Garden

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

UAF CES Citizen Pest Monitoring Portal

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

UAF School of Natural Resources

<http://www.uaf.edu/snre/>

University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

www.fruit.usask.ca

USDA/NRCS Plant Data Base

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/>

Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation

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



Announcements

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The club is desperately in need of someone to coordinate speakers for our meetings.

We need a volunteer coordinator to track the many volunteer opportunities we have this summer. Duties would be to coordinate with volunteers and create an Excel spreadsheet to track volunteers. This will be posted on the webpage. Please contact Rhonda if interested.

Reminder that the 2017 State Master Gardener Conference is going to be held in Palmer. We would like to get a committee put together to get some planning underway. It seems like a long way from now but a little planning early can keep everything from snowballing to the last minute. Please let Rhonda know if you are interested in assisting with putting this big event together or sharing your ideas.

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Rhonda Bowman	746-2948
Co-VP	Curt Mueller	745-6144
Co-VP	Hally Truelove	376-0909
Secretary:	Joan Redlin	206-604-4676
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 @Email: kdblalock@ak.net

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST 2016

- Aug 1**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, General Business Meeting. Bring ideas about the 2017 State Master Gardeners Conference
Aug 5, Palmer, Alaska Agriculture Appreciation Day
Aug 25 - Sep 5, Palmer, Alaska State Fair

SEPTEMBER 2016 AND BEYOND

- Sep 12**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Oct 3, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Oct 25-27, Fairbanks, 2016 Alaska Invasive Species Conference
Nov 7, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Dec 5, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Christmas Party

Please let Rhonda know if you have any ideas for future meeting topics. Members are welcome to offer to speak or reach out to speakers of interest to the club's membership. The club would welcome a speaker coordinator - if interested contact Rhonda.
Our club is only as good as we the members make it!

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 on the club's website, www.matsumastergardeners.com

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 2016



Like us on
Facebook

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

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
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