



### President's Patch

By President Dorte Mobley

#### Hello all,

I cannot believe it has been a year already. Time flies when you are having fun. I want to thank all of you that make the club better by helping where and when you can. I really appreciate it and I am sure the other members do too. I also appreciate the newer members who are stepping up to run the club next year. It will be great to get some "new blood" in here. Unfortunately, I will not be able to participate in the Christmas party. I will do a quick trip to Denmark to see my dad, Mads (my middle boy) and the others over there. I hope you all have a fun time at the party, a merry Christmas, and a happy New Year. See you all next year.

#### Dorte

#### Newsletter editor's note:

A big thank you to Dorte and the other board members who made 2022 such a successful year for the Mat-Su Master Gardeners Association. We had a great state master gardeners conference, a successful plant sale, and some awesome educational speakers!

Give them a pat on the back and a big thank you next time you see them. Dorte, outgoing president; Kristina, outgoing Vice President; Isaac, outgoing Secretary; and Sue, outgoing Memberat-Large. Cathy Crew will continue as our Treasurer. By the way, she has been keeping our accounts straight for well over ten years! Thanks to all for your hard work and efforts. They are appreciated by all!

#### Merry Christmas











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#### **REGULAR MEETINGS**

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

**NEXT MEETING** 

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5TH, 2022, 6:00 P.M.

LOCATION:

**TURKEY RED RESTAURANT** 

**BANQUET ROOM** 

550 S ALASKA ST, STE 100, PALMER, AK

99645

**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY** 

ROOM OPENS AT 6 P.M. – DINNER BEGINS

PROMPTLY AT 6:30 P.M.

SEE PAGE 7 FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE PARTY



# PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

In early 1983, while perusing the seed catalogs, the peasant ran across an ad in one that read "25 hardy apples, \$11.95". It may have been in a Burgess catalog. What an interesting ad at a time when there were only a few apple varieties that were recommended for Alaska. At such a price the peasant must try this. The order was made and when the wee trees arrived, they were bare root seedlings 4-6 inches high. They were planted in pots and later in that year when we moved from Anchorage to Lazy Mountain, the seedlings came with us. The pots were laid in a wooded area and covered with leaves. The little trees had made some growth over the course of the summer, and all were healthy.

The following year one was planted in a favorable spot on the south side of what was then our new house. It grew well during the summer but died back to the soil during the winter. The following summer it produced several shoots from the roots, and the peasant cut off all but two, and after still another year cut back to one. Since then, it has thrived and is now a thirty-foot well-branched tree which blooms with white flowers and produces its crop of half inch crabs every year. They could hardly be called apples. The rest of the twenty-five were planted out or given away. All survived and at present we have a dozen or so mature trees. Some have white flowers, and some have deep pink blooms. Those with white flowers produce red fruit and the ones with pink flowers produce fruit with a purplish cast. Indeed, they are hardy, but apples? OK, we will call them apples.

Each winter these apples are much relished by birds. Bohemian waxwings come in flocks of twenty to two hundred or more. Pine grosbeaks show up in small flocks of eight or ten. Spruce grouse can reach them from the stronger branches and will sometimes spend a night in a crotch of the tree or on the ground nearby. Interestingly, the waxwings eat the whole fruit while the grosbeaks eat only the seeds, and the pulp is expectorated and stains the snow. Summer birds use the trees for nesting or as safe hiding places.

We continue to reap the benefits of these "hardy apples," and the experiment was well worth the investment in time and money. The trees may be Siberian crabs or another variety that holds its fruit over winter. It was suggested at one time to graft edible apple varieties on them, but the peasant is happy to leave them for the birds and spring flowers which come at a good time for beekeeping. They are an early source for pollen and nectar when the bees are getting started.



Bohemian waxwing on crab tree.



Male pine grosbeak on feeder.



Female pine grosbeak on feeder. Dark band is shadow from window frame.

# Plants Wanted!

A new addition to the MMGA newsletter. If you are looking for specific plants or seeds - submit your request to the newsletter editor.

**Isaac Vaughan** is looking for the following. Contact him at: <a href="mailto:dnavon@msn.com">dnavon@msn.com</a>

Since I am interested in straining out varieties for better hardiness, color, edibility, etc., I am looking to buy a few plants with notable traits, listed below.

Goji berries: Hardiness.

I am seeking hardy goji berry stock. I need [a] cutting[s] / seeds of a plant that has survived Alaska with little or no protection.

Lilac: Color.

Since I cannot find guarantee on lilac color, I want to find any of the following colors: reddish (needs not be perfect, just close), yellow - not cream, and blue.

Siberian pea-shrub: Edibility.

With about 36% protein and 13% fatty oil per weight, the seeds of this hardy, fast-growing, nitrogen-fixing legume are extremely nutritious, but tough and not very tasty. My goal is to eventually have a pea-shrub with tasty, tender pods.

Lavender: Hardiness.

Somewhat self-explanatory, as we Alaskans yearn for those glaucous, scented, purple-blossoming shrub; I do not expect much. If anybody knows of someone in southcentral Alaska who has a lavender that has notable hardiness ("How much mulch did you say you used?!?"), I am indeed interested.

Information on or materials from these listed plants with notable qualities can prove profitable to those who provide it: They will have cost-free access to the finished plant before anyone else.

**Deb Blaylock** (contact <a href="mailto:kdblaylock@ak.net">kdblaylock@ak.net</a>) is looking for Danish Flag (*Papaver somniferum*, "Danish Flag") seeds.

# Christmas Tree Care and Selection

For many people, the holiday season would not be complete without a decorated tree in their homes. While some opt for an artificial tree, nothing compares to the look, feel and smell of a real tree.

Selecting a tree is based on more than just appearance; although buyers must decide on color, branch size and length, tree height and fullness of the crown, they should also consider needle retention and tree safety when buying and decorating a holiday tree. Tree needle retention in the home can be influenced by temperatures that the tree had been subjected to on its journey to Alaska and your home and tree dryness.

#### **Needle Retention**

The ability of a tree to retain its needles after cutting is based on environmental factors and tree species characteristics. Trees sold in Alaska typically are harvested in October in the Pacific Northwest. Field conditions around the time of harvesting will influence the tree's ability to retain its needles. Although harvested trees are usually somewhat dormant, their ability to resist cold temperature damage (accelerated needle loss due to exposure to cold temperatures below 0 degrees F) is limited by the prevailing field temperatures prior to and at the time of harvest. Delivered trees usually have not been hardened off to be able to withstand cold temperatures such as those found in late November and December in Alaska. A tree taken from a showroom (delivered to Alaska unfrozen and kept above freezing) and driven in temperatures below 0 degrees will likely experience temperature-induced needle loss in the home. If possible, avoid transporting the tree outside, even if the tree is wrapped in plastic.

It is important to look at different tree species when considering needle retention, as there are considerable differences between species. Noble, Frazier and balsam firs are very resistant to needle loss, even when the trees become totally dry.

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Grand and Douglas firs as well as Scotch and lodgepole pines are more susceptible to needle loss and are influenced by temperature and dryness. Most spruce trees are very susceptible to needle loss.

Tree Species and Needle Loss

Best	Noble, Frazier and balsam firs	Very resistant to needle loss
Good	Grand and Douglas firs, Scotch and lodgepole pines	More susceptible to needle loss

**Poor** Spruce Very

susceptible to needle loss

#### Caring for your tree

After selecting a tree and transporting it home, owners will need to make efforts to keep the tree healthy through the holiday season. Many products on the market claim to prolong tree life or prevent needle loss when added to the water in the tree stand. Common additives include aspirin, soda, honey, floral additives and Karo syrup. Testing has shown that these products have no more success than plain water.

Purchase the correct tree stand for your tree and check the water levels often. A general rule of thumb is that trees will need about one quart of water per day per inch of trunk diameter.

Before placing the tree in water, cut about one-fourth inch off the base and keep this surface in water. The wood tissues that conduct moisture to needles are located underneath the bark, but surface blemishes on the bark will not affect water intake.

#### Tree safety

Always inspect the Christmas tree's base. Make sure the "handle" (the first eight inches of trunk) of the tree is relatively straight. This part of the tree is extremely important when securing the tree in a stand. Make sure removing any limbs attached to the "handle" will not hurt the tree shape.

When decorating Christmas trees, always use safe tree lights. (Some lights are designed only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.) Larger tree lights should also have some type of reflector rather than a bare bulb and all lights should be listed by a testing laboratory.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use tree lights. Any string of lights with worn, frayed or broken cords or loose bulb connections should not be used.

Check the strands of lights to determine the number of strands that may be connected.

Always unplug Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed.

Make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, such as fireplaces and radiators. Try to position the tree near an outlet so that cords are not running long distances. Do not place the tree where it may block exits.

Extension cords should be placed against the wall to avoid tripping hazards, but do not run cords under rugs.

Adapted from "Selecting and caring for a Christmas tree," University of Alaska, Cooperative Extension Service. Original publication available online at: <a href="http://library.alaska.gov/asp/edocs/2008/04/ocn225867824">http://library.alaska.gov/asp/edocs/2008/04/ocn225867824</a> <a href="http://library.alaska.gov/asp/edocs/2008/04/ocn225867824">http://library.alaska.gov/asp/edocs/2008/04/ocn225867824</a>



# November 2022 MMGA Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Secretary Isaac Vaughan.

Present: Isaac Vaughan, Amielyn Vaughan, Georgiana (Jana) Gooch, Dorte Mobley, Cathy Crew, Eva Cohnen-Brown, Michael Kircher, Phyllis Kircher, Kevin Johnson, Greg Kalal, Deb Blaylock, Ken Blaylock (10-member quorum met for annual meeting voting purposes.)

Called to order by President Dorte Mobley

Treasurer's report: Treasurer is working out the error with the plant sale vendor. We now operate on Square instead of Stripe because it is a bit cheaper. Michael Kircher motions to accept the monthly report; Ken Blaylock seconds.

The 2023 Budget was discussed; however, we could not vote because a copy of the budget was not available for review. There was some discussion on adding more funding for the Rebarchek Farm project because we have not spent any of the past funds allotted to the project. Deb Blaylock motioned that we delay voting on the 2023 Budget until the December meeting. Ken Blaylock seconded the motion and the motion passed. A copy of the proposed budget will be emailed out. Everyone should review and forward any suggested corrections/changes to the Board of Directors prior to the December meeting.

Holiday banquet and gift exchange: Marge Muller not present. Maximum gift price set at \$25. Ken Blaylock motions and seconds to accept the change. Will still be Monday, despite the mix-up. Marge Muller will send out invitations on email. Deb Blaylock volunteered to cook a turkey; Isaac Vaughan volunteered to cook a ham.

Newsletter: Deb Blaylock suggests that the July and August newsletters be combined.

Nomination: Elections held. Dorte asked if there were any more nominations from the floor. There were none. She called for member approval. There were all yeas and no nays. Motion carried. New board members approved were President Kevin Johnson, Vice President Lois Rockcastle, Secretary Jana Gooch, Treasurer Cathy Crew and Member-at-Large Deb Blaylock.

Rebarchek: Isaac Vaughan takes up our plot; a "realignment of boundaries" is up in the air. No details were provided. It was brought to our attention that the Master Gardeners are allowed to use the Rebarchek greenhouse.

Speaker coordinator: Deb Blaylock found five guest speakers for our meetings: Josh Smith on the Rebarchek food forest, Paul Mamora on flower arranging, Ellie Vande Visse on biochar, Dan Elliot on grafting, and Julie Cascio on food preservation. \$600 is needed to fund the flower arranging class. Deb will forward to the Board to increase speaker funding on the 2023 budget to cover the amount.

State Fair prizes: One check from 2022 is still outstanding. Treasurer will contact the person in question.

Standing Rules: Appeared in the November 2022 Newsletter. Deb Blaylock motions to accept; Ken Blaylock seconds.

Budget: Rebarchek is on the budget for this year with \$500. If a larger project is proposed, we can bring it up in a meeting.

We unofficially decided our club initials should be MMGA as opposed to MSMG. We have been using MMGA for many years now.

Membership dues need to be paid by 1/15/2023.

Steve Brown is now mostly recovered.

Ken Blaylock motioned to adjourn; Phyllis Kircher seconded.

#### Isaac's 2022 Garden Recap

April: Vegetable seedlings started early.

May: Seedlings, the majority started too early, suffer from lack of sufficient space and light.

May/June: Forgot to appoint plant-sitter for a weeklong fishing trip. Most starts died. Started spinach and radish outdoors afterward. Spinach bolted; not enough water on the fishing trip (this was during the early heatwave). Whilst I had planted nearly fifty violas last year, this year their numbers had increased enough to nearly smother the peonies they grew with. Potatoes were planted, without much thought to soil, water, etc., then forgotten.

June: Met the Rebarchek food forest crew, got access to an array of fruit and nut trees. Brought a few dozen plants home. Started more flower and vegetable seedlings, many of them unmarked (All those spilled seeds in the bottom of the seed bin? Those are fun!) Got a summer job doing garden work for an elderly couple with a substantial perennial garden, consistently coming home with volunteer plants, seeds, and cuttings (thanks again!). Flower garden doubled in species diversity.

July: Sedums and Sempervivums blossomed all summer long. My nut trees sprouted at around 80% germination rate (although some sprouted in August). The few self-seeded "Hungarian Blue" bread seed poppies blossomed. I finally got around to potting up tomatoes. First harvest of radishes. While a transplanted Juniper nearly died of drought stress, the also transplanted two-yearold Mugo pine (the little one: Pinus mugo subsp. mugo) fared much better. Discovered four cobweb hens-and-chicks (Sempervivum arachnoideum) that survived the winter in my rock garden; note hybrid hens-and-chicks perform much better than these species: S. ciliosum, S. tectorum, and S. arachnoideum, listed in declining order regarding hardiness.

August: Drought ends, rain starts. Few remaining radishes reach impressive sizes. Squash stopped producing, the cucumber plants rotted. Dandelion seedlings make my rock garden look like a tray of microgreens... Since I did not get them all pulled out, spring of 2023 will not be fun. Collected around 1,100 pine nuts to plant. Previously mentioned Juniper recovered, though it sustained

a large amount of dieback. More poppies and nut trees sprouted; most of the former did not blossom and the nut trees may not be fully hardened off by snowfall.

September: I dug an open-topped root cellar (a pit with log walls around it) to overwinter potted trees, shrubs, and perennials. Once the plants were in the pit, I filled it halfway with leaves. Then, when the snow comes, I will fill it the rest of the way with snow. Harvested Sedum and Sempervivum seeds. I am hoping to get some good "chance hybrids" out of them. Got a few pods worth of poppy seeds, more than enough for next summer.

For spring: I decided to rotate the poppies I grow to keep the strains I have pure: 2023- mixed poppy - rotated as to not contaminate the others; 2024- "Hungarian Blue"; 2025- "Black Swan"; repeat. I will just not let any self-seed, and I should thus be able to keep pure strains.... But as for the mix, I will deadhead any colors or forms that get too populous as to keep an interesting mix. I will sow Sedum and Sempervivum seeds, and possibly select a few hybrids to further propagate. Mom (the landlady?) decided that she needs a lilac screen on the edge of the yard, containing all colors and scents of lilac.... It was not too difficult to persuade her to throw in a few other trees and shrubs for interest (as long as she is paying!).

## **2023 Standing Committees**

- Monthly Newsletter Deb Blaylock
- Website Manager Eva Cohnen-Brown
- Guest speakers Deb Blavlock
- Room, Equipment, Zoom Coordinator Vacant
- Membership Directory Kristina Tornqvist
- Rebarchek Farm Project Isaac Vaughan
- Annual Plant Sale Vacant
- Palmer Library & Pioneer Home planting -Vacant
- Midsummer Garden & Art Faire Vacant
- Summer Garden Tours Vacant
- Alaska State Fair Special Awards Deb Blaylock
- State Fair Parade Vacant
- · Nominations Committee Vacant
- 2023 Christmas Party- Vacant

Email matsumastergardeners@gmail.com to get on a committee!



# Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center

# Watch our Facebook and Instagram page as well as our website for additional info & registration links!

https://www.facebook.com/matanuskaexperimentfarm/ https://www.facebook.com/MatsuExtension https://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/

Nov 22 Soil Care for the Winter Garden – Dr. Caley Gash – Zoom Nov 29 Blackout Backup – Art Nash & Steve Brown – In Person

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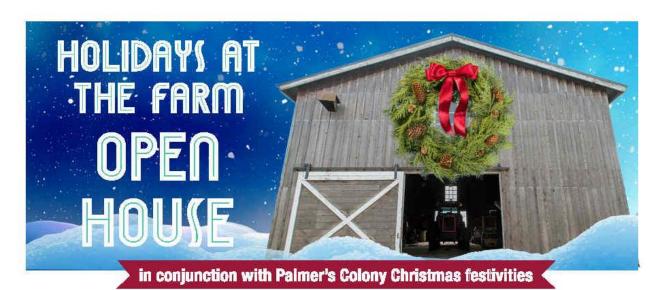
The University of Alaska Fairbanks Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center strives to make our programs accessible for all individuals. If you or a family member who is attending a program needs accommodations to participate, please contact our office 5 days in advance to request services.

This will give us the opportunity to provide assistance you require. (907)745-3360 or email Theresa Isaac <a href="mailto:tmisaac@alaska.edu">tmisaac@alaska.edu</a>

# **ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY!**

It is time for our annual holiday get-together! We meet Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at the Turkey Red conference room in downtown Palmer. The room opens at 6 pm and dinner will start promptly at 6:30 pm. The Association will furnish turkey and ham and members should bring a covered side-dish.

Dinner will be followed by a white elephant gift exchange. If you wish to participate in the gift exchange, bring a wrapped gardening themed gift, valued at no more than \$25. Please RSVP to Marge Mueller no later than Nov 28<sup>th</sup>. Phone: 745-6144 or email: <a href="mailto:mueller@mtaonline.net">mueller@mtaonline.net</a>.



Friday, Dec. 9 • 4-6 p.m.

Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center 1509 S. Georgeson Drive, Palmer



# Everyone welcome

- Hot Chocolate, Cider, and Cookie bar
- Crafts, cookie decorating, and kids' activities
- A visit from AKF&G "Christmas Caribou"
- Q/A by Extension Faculty and Staff
- Caroling @ 5:15
- Tree lighting @ 5:30
- Door Prizes and Christmas Tree Giveaway

Join us for this free family event!

Cooperative Extension Service
Mat-Su/Copper River District Office
1509 S. Georgeson Drive, Palmer
907-745-3360 • matsu.ces@alaska.edu



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## Garden Links (updated Apr 2022)

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 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/

Georgeson Botanical Garden \*New\*

https://georgesonbotanicalgarden.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** 

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

**Palmer Soil & Water Conservation** 

http://palmersoilandwater.org/

Society of American Foresters, Cook Inlet Chapter

https://forestry.org/alaska/

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 Database** 

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

## Garden Tips from Dorte

Make a notebook where you write down all the plans for fall, spring or next year - move plants too tall for front of border, divide plants or move due to clashing colors

## **CLUB CONTACT INFO**

President: Dorte Mobley 907-232-5422
Vice President: Kristina Tornqvist 907-795-6393
Secretary: Isaac Vaughan dnavon@msn.com

Treasurer: Cathy Crew 907-632-4401 Member at Large: Sue Glenn 907-671-0252

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

Website: <a href="mailto:www.matsumastergardeners.com/">www.matsumastergardeners.com/</a> Email: <a href="mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com">matsumastergardeners.com/</a>

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### **DECEMBER 2022 AND BEYOND**

Dec 5, Palmer, Christmas Party

Jan 9, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

Feb 6, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

Mar 6, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

Apr 3, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

May 1. Palmer. Regular Meeting. TBD

Jun 3, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale

Jun 12, Palmer, Palmer Library Planting

Sep 11, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

Oct 2, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

Nov 6, Palmer, Annual Meeting, TBD

Dec, Palmer, Christmas Party

Do not 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

Membership renewal for 2023 is now available on the website!

Renewal is simple - complete the online form and then submit your membership dues using a debit or credit card - all on our website:

https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/online-membership-application.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, 2023, 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:

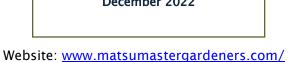
Articles, stories, poetry, upcoming events, and pictures (garden-related) are needed for inclusion in the newsletter. Please submit pictures in JPEG format and other items in Word format with no special formatting other than paragraphs. When submitting pictures, please provide a brief caption or explanation 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:  $20^{th}$  day of each month ~~ Thank you~~





Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com





**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION** PO BOX 598 PALMER, AK 99645

