



## President's Patch

By President Kevin Johnson

December, where did the year go? Seems like just a few months ago, I was working on ideas for color in the front yard flower beds. This year we did not have high winds or heavy rains, so the tall Himalayan poppies survived. The Johnny jump-ups took off ON TOP of the weed barrier. Nice colors, but a bit too much purple.

The annual Christmas party is coming soon, on Tuesday, December 3rd at Turkey Red. Come and have a great time and bring a gift for the "competition"; it is always a hilarious laugh. June was a fun plant sale, a bit chilly and a bit challenging at the beginning with the long line, but we accomplished it. Ideas for checking out are being vetted. The Veterans and Pioneers Home plants did fabulously. When planted, I was a bit worried about them having enough time to open up, but they did and took off. The Rebarchek Farm project work party had a great work party and fantastic results. Hopefully, the Midsummer Garden and Art Faire will return, and the collaboration of the local garden clubs will host the great demonstrations once again. And you cannot forget the fabulous float in the Colony Days parade.

The past year had some great speakers each month that provided insight from growing mediums to storage. This next year may also include a "Zoom meeting" option for members outside of the area, details to follow in the coming months. The newsletter each month is full of valuable information for everyone. Resources are everywhere; you just need to know where to look.

As always organizations take volunteers to run smoothly. The volunteers put all this together plus a lot more. Consider giving

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### REGULAR MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

#### NEXT MEETING

DEC 3RD, 6:00 P.M. ROOM OPENS

6:30 P.M. DINNER IS SERVED

#### LOCATION:

TURKEY RED RESTAURANT

BANQUET ROOM

550 S ALASKA STREET, PALMER

#### AGENDA

SEE PAGE 7 FOR MORE INFORMATION

your time, just one hour a month, to help set up the meeting room, or to help with one of the planting projects - all help supports your organization.

Now time has come for me to pass the "torch" to Jenny Weaver. She did a great job the last two years as Vice President, and I have great confidence she will excel and bring the club to a new level. Thank you, Jenny!!!

### 2025 Committee Volunteers

Newsletter	Deb Blaylock
Website Manager	Eva Cohnen-Brown
Guest Speakers	Jenny Weaver
Membership Directory	
Rebarchek Farm Project	Isaac Vaughan
Annual Plant Sale	
Palmer Veterans & Pioneers	
Home Planting	
Midsummer Garden & Art Faire (TBD)	
Summer Garden Tours	
Alaska State Fair Awards	
Colony Days Parade	
Nomination Committee	
2025 Christmas Party	
Meeting Space/Equipment/Zoom Coordinator	Jenny Weaver

We rely on volunteers to run our committees and activities. Please consider one of the committees and/or activities. Most committees or activities are something which can take little as two or three hours to accomplish – some are a bit more involved but so rewarding to be involved in. See the Standing Rules for detailed information on what each committee involves.

### Mat-Su Master Gardeners Award-Winning Float Ferris Wheel

Submitted and photographed by Deb Blaylock

Many thanks to the Mueller Clan for putting together the club's float this past summer. They graciously donated the Ferris wheel to the Blaylock's for display in their yard. It is now decorated for the winter with blinking lights and winter gnomes. If you drive by Palmer High School on Palmer Moose Drive, you can see it on display (and maybe other things too!)

### Zoom Access to Master Gardener Meetings Begins in 2025! Submitted by Jenny Weaver

Good News!! At our November business meeting, members voted to allow Zoom access to our monthly meetings and guest speakers. Starting January 6th, 2025, if you can't make it to the Extension Service Office in Palmer, you can log on via Zoom, join our business meeting (a half hour), vote on important issues, and listen to our guest speaker. The guest speaker will also be recorded for later viewing.

Only paid members will receive the log-on Zoom information. So, if you have been hesitant to join Mat-Su Master Gardeners because you couldn't physically attend meetings, now is the time to sign up! You can access an on-line membership application or download one from our website at: [www.matsumastergardeners.com](http://www.matsumastergardeners.com).

You don't need to BE a Master Gardener to join our group.

I hope to "see" more of you in January. Thanks to the members who responded to my inquiry regarding Zooms. And a BIG "Thank you" to Theresa Isaac at our Palmer Extension Service for helping make this happen!



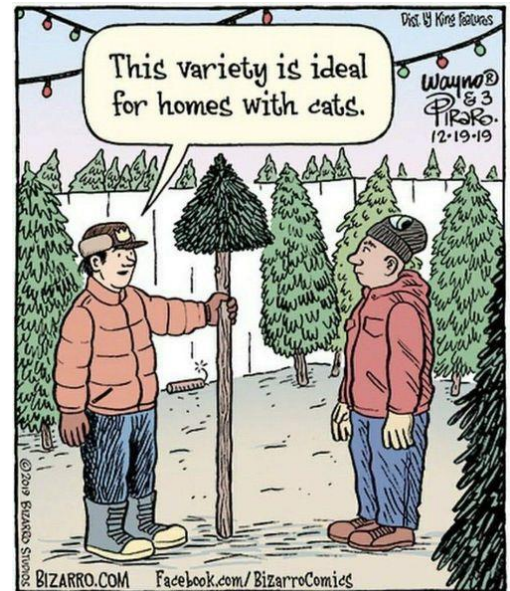
# Tips for Selection and Care of Cut Christmas Trees

Excerpt from: Tips for Selection and Care of Cut Christmas Trees, Penn State Extension Service, by Feather, Bates, and Cotrone, Nov 9, 2022. Entire publication can be found online here: <https://extension.psu.edu/tips-for-selection-and-care-of-cut-christmas-trees>

## Selecting a Fresh Tree

You can definitely be assured of getting a fresh tree if you cut your own tree from a local Christmas tree farm. While this is a cherished family tradition for many, the convenience of purchasing a pre-cut tree is more attractive for others.

To check a pre-cut tree for freshness, look for flexible needles that remain firmly attached when you tug on them. All needled evergreens shed their oldest needles every year, so do not be concerned when brown needles fall from the interior of the tree when you knock the base of the tree on the ground. Just make sure they are thoroughly shaken off the tree before taking it indoors. If the needles pull out easily, or if they appear a dull, lifeless green, that tree may be past its prime.



## Maintaining freshness

Maintaining a high moisture level in the tree is the single most important factor in reducing needle loss and keeping the tree fresh. This is accomplished primarily through the use of water-holding stands and keeping the water level in the stand above the base of the tree. Every year, there are many articles written concerning the handling and care of Christmas trees. Unfortunately, they often contain erroneous information.

These research-based guidelines will help you to maintain the freshness and aroma of your live Christmas tree this holiday season:

1. Use a tree stand with an adequate water-holding capacity. A tree stand should have a water basin that provides 1 quart of water per inch of stem diameter. For most Christmas trees, the stand should hold at least 1 gallon of water. A cut tree will absorb a surprising amount of water, particularly during the first week, so replenish the water daily.
2. The tree stand should fit your tree. Some stands have circular rings at the top, so the ring must be large enough for the trunk of your tree to go through the hole. Avoid whittling down the sides of the trunk to fit a stand. The outer layers of wood are the most efficient in taking up water and should not be removed.
3. If the tree is to be stored for more than a couple of days before display, it is advisable to place its trunk in water and store it in a cool, shaded, and protected, area such as an unheated garage.



4. If the tree has been cut within the past 12 hours, it will not be necessary to recut the trunk prior to display indoors. If it has been longer than 12 hours since harvest, the trunk should be recut to improve water uptake.
5. Cutting off a disk of wood about ¼" thick from the base of the trunk is all that is necessary before putting the tree in the stand. Make the cut perpendicular to the stem axis. Don't cut the trunk at an angle, or into a V-shape, which makes it far more difficult to hold the tree in the stand and also reduces the amount of water available to the tree.
6. Keep displayed trees away from sources of heat (fireplaces, heaters, heat vents, and direct sunlight). Lowering the room temperature will slow the drying process, resulting in less water consumption each day.
7. The temperature of the water used to fill the stand is not important and does not affect water uptake.
8. Check the stand daily to make sure that the level of water does not go below the base of the tree. With many stands, there can still be water in the stand even though the base of the tree is no longer submerged in water.
9. Drilling a hole in the base of the trunk does not improve water uptake.
10. The use of "IV" type devices to supply water directly to holes drilled into the sides of the tree trunk is not as effective as displaying the tree in a more traditional, water-holding tree stand.
11. Applying anti-transpirants to the tree does not have a significant effect on the rate of moisture loss. These products are marketed as a way to block evaporation from the foliage surface, but, in reality, they have little effect on a cut tree displayed indoors.
12. Adding water-holding gels to the stand is not beneficial, and they can reduce the amount of water in the stand that is available to the tree.
13. Do not use additives, such as floral preservatives, commercial tree preservatives, molasses, sugar, bleach, soft drinks, aspirin, honey, and other concoctions, in the water. Clean water is all that is needed to maintain freshness.
14. Displaying trees in water with the proper care is much more effective in reducing fire hazards than spraying trees with flame retardants. Some flame retardants can damage needles and actually increase the rate of moisture loss from trees.
15. Monitor your tree for dryness. Run your fingers across the needles to determine whether they are dry and brittle. If the needles break easily or fall off in your hand, the tree is dry and should be removed.

Newer LED Christmas lights generate less heat than older types of lighting. Always turn the lights off when the tree is unattended.

### **Volunteers needed!**

**I'm looking for folks to write a monthly gardening column for our newsletter. It could be as simple as a few paragraphs on your favorite seasonal garden topic - or an in-depth article to fill up a page. Seasonal gardening photos would be a nice touch! If this is something you would be interested in or have a grand idea for a monthly contribution, please reach out to me at my email: [debblaylock23@gmail.com](mailto:debblaylock23@gmail.com).**

## MMGA Meeting Minutes Monday, November 4, 2024 Submitted by Secretary Georgiana Gooch

### Members present:

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| -Georgiana Gooch | -Ken Blaylock    |
| -David Thompson  | -Deb Blaylock    |
| -Dorte Mobley    | -Cathy Crew      |
| -Dawn Wolski     | -Isaac Vaughan   |
| -Marge Mueller   | -Rebecca Emerson |
| -Curtis Mueller  |                  |
| -Jenny Weaver    | <b>GUESTS:</b>   |
| -Pearl Weaver    | -Allison Fiscus  |
| -Todd Weaver     | -Daniel Vaughan  |
| -Kevin Johnson   |                  |

Meeting opened at 7:07 pm

Ken Blaylock motioned that we accept the October minutes; Craig Lisonbee seconded the motion. Motion carried.

We introduced Allison Fiscus, a guest.

VP Report (Jenny Weaver): We have reserved our room at the Experiment Farm from January through May of 2025.

There are several folks lined up to speak next year and we reviewed the list.

Jenny took a poll of folks who might be interested in having the monthly meeting also streamed on Zoom. Several respondents indicated that they would be interested. Deb Blaylock motioned that we stream our monthly meetings via Zoom; Dorte Mobley seconded the idea. Motion carried.

Two speakers (from the Experiment Farm) did not accept their speaker's stipend. The suggestion was that the club host a sort of "thank you" breakfast for the folks at the Experiment Farm during one of their regular Monday morning meetings. Dorte Mobley motioned that we host a one-time "thank

you" breakfast for the folks at the Experiment Farm, not to exceed \$150, and that the money come out of the Board discretionary fund. Isaac Vaughan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Georgiana Gooch report: Solicited volunteers to cook the ham and turkey for the Christmas party. Marge Mueller offered to do the ham and Isaac Vaughan offered to smoke the turkey. Several folks signed up to bring a side dish. Reminder to wear as many red items as possible for a prize and that the gift exchange event will take place, not to exceed \$25. The meeting will be on Tuesday, December 3 at Turkey Red.

Cathy Crew report: We received the state fair check for winning first prize on our float entry; however, the check was not signed. Kevin Johnson offered to take the check to the office at the fair and obtain signatures. Then Cathy Crew will be able to deposit the check.

Discussion ensued on how we can streamline the checkout process at the plant sale. It was suggested that we mimic the process that the Valley Garden Club uses for their plant sale which means that we need more volunteers next year to help with the checkout process. Both Craig Lisonbee and David Thompson offered to help any committee members that needed assistance for their committee.

Ken Blaylock motioned that we accept the treasurer's report and Craig Lisonbee seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Cathy Crew reviewed the proposed 2025 budget. Kevin Johnson mentioned that the long planter at the Pioneer Home needs about 3-4" more soil. It was suggested that it may be cheaper to get topsoil and David Thompson offered to help. It was agreed that we should add \$200 to the Pioneer Home budget, making that line item \$650. Also, since the library is no longer available to us, we should

take the Library Planter off the budget line item.

It was agreed that we would leave the State Fair Prizes at \$800 as that is the maximum amount that we would pay if there were enough entries next year.

Also, since we are utilizing the Board Discretionary Fund this year, it was agreed that we would add back \$200 into that line item.

Since there are 7 speakers during the year (at \$75 stipend per speaker), we agreed to increase the proposed budget amount to \$525 for that line item.

It was agreed to increase the Rebarchek line item to \$500.

Regarding all the proposed budget changes, Dorte motioned that we accept the proposed budget changes as discussed and that we should take the \$875 discrepancy in the budget from the money in the bank so that the budget balances. Georgiana Gooch seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2025 Elections: Cathy Crew accepted the continuing position as Treasurer. Georgiana Gooch accepted the continuing position as Secretary. Kevin Johnson was nominated for Vice President, and he agreed to serve. Jenny Weaver was nominated as President, and she agreed to serve.

Standing Rules: It was agreed to accept the changes in the Social Media/Email Account paragraph, the Newsletter paragraph, the Rebarchek paragraph, the Palmer Veterans and Pioneers Home (PVPH) paragraph, the Summer Garden Tour paragraph, the Midsummer Garden and Art Faire paragraph, the Meeting Space paragraph and the final rule regarding lack of volunteers sentence; all changes to be accepted as proposed and written in the newsletter.

Regarding the Parade Participation paragraph, it was agreed that we would participate in the June Colony Days parade

since the State Fair will no longer host a parade before the State Fair.

Regarding the Plant Sale paragraph, it was accepted as written, except that we would not delete the sentence, "Pick up and hang the Association's plant sale signage on fences around Palmer and pick up the large sign to hang up on the Pavilion the day of the plant sale." Discussion ensued as to how we could accomplish this task without issues. It was suggested that we change the signage so it will be more accurate.

Regarding the Guest Speakers paragraph, it was agreed to accept as written except that we would delete the sentence, "Provide a written synopsis of the presentation to the newsletter editor for publication" and we would change the last sentence of that paragraph to read, "If a speaker declines their stipend, the money will be placed into the Board Discretionary Fund."

There was no opposition to the proposed changes to the Standing Rules as discussed and all agreed with the final determinations.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm



## 2024 MMGA CHRISTMAS PARTY



Hi All,

The 2024 MMGA Christmas Party will be at the Turkey Red Conference/Banquet Room on Tuesday, December 3rd. The room opens at 6:00 pm and dinner will begin at 6:30 pm.

The club provides the two meat dishes (turkey and ham). Members are requested to bring a side dish to share. We are looking for volunteers to prepare either the turkey or the ham. Be sure to save your receipt for the purchase for reimbursement. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Jana Gooch by phone or text to 907-982-3244 or email to [janahelp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janahelp@sbcglobal.net).

There will be a brief business meeting after we finish eating and then there will be a gift exchange which is usually lots of fun. If you wish to participate in the gift exchange, bring a wrapped item with a price limit of no more than \$25. One gift per participant. Please keep the gifts family friendly.

Please join in by wearing as many red items as you can. The person wearing the most red items gets a special prize! This should be fun to see how creative we can get.

Family members are welcome to attend. Please RSVP to Jana Gooch by November 25th. You can call Jana Gooch at 907-982-3244 (or text) or email [janahelp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janahelp@sbcglobal.net).

Sign Up Genius Link for Potluck:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0844AEA82FA3FECF8-52898304-2025#/>



## MMGA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2025

Many thanks to our 2024 members! We hope you enjoyed the monthly presentations and other club activities. We look forward to another great year of guest speakers and club activities.

The 2025 MMGA Membership Form is now available for you to renew your membership. You can download a form from the webpage - please print it out and mail it in or bring it to a meeting.

<https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/mail-in-membership-application.html>

You can also use the convenient online renewal form and payment.

<https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/online-membership-application.html>

Thank you for renewing early!



## Garden Links (updated March 2024)

### Alaska AgrAbility Program **\*\*New Mar 2024\*\***

<https://www.uaf.edu/ces/agriculture/agrability/index.php>

### Alaska Botanical Garden

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

### Alaska Center for Conservation Science

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

### Alaska Community Forestry

<https://forestry.alaska.gov/community/index>

### Arbor Day Foundation

[www.arborday.org](http://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 Native Plant Society

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

### Alaska Non-Native Species List

<https://accs.uaa.alaska.edu/invasive-species/non-native-plant-species-list/>

### 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/>

### Flora of North America

<http://floranorthamerica.org/>

### Good Earth Garden School

<https://www.goodearthgardenschool.com/>

### Georgeson Botanical Garden

<https://georgesonbotanicalgarden.org/>

### iNaturalist **\*\*\*New May 2024\*\*\***

<https://www.inaturalist.org/>

### Integrated Pest Management Program

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

### IPM Alaska Pest Reporter

<https://plw.man.mybluehost.me/>



### Junior Master Gardener

<http://www.jmgkids.us/>

### Landscape Plants for Alaska

<https://visionplusapps.com/alaska-plants/>

### Mat-Su Borough Rain Garden Program

<http://www.matsugov.us/environment/raingardens>

### Mat-Su Master Gardener Website

[www.matsumastergardeners.com](http://www.matsumastergardeners.com)

### Master Gardener Research Link (Extension)

<https://extension.org/search/>

### Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley

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

### Mat-Su/Copper River Cooperative Extension Service

<https://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/>

### Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Services

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

### National AgrAbility Program **\*\*New Mar 2024\*\***

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

### Palmer Soil & Water Conservation District

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

### Society of American Foresters, Cook Inlet Chapter

<https://forestry.org/cook-inlet-seedling-sale/>

### 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 Herbarium

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

### UAF Alaska Master Gardener Program

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

### University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

[www.fruit.usask.ca](http://www.fruit.usask.ca)

### USDA/NRCS Plant Database

<https://plants.usda.gov/home>

### Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

<https://wildflowergardenclub.org/>



## BOARD OF DIRECTOR CONTACT INFO

<b>President:</b>	<b>Kevin Johnson</b>	<b>907 775 2808</b>
<b>Vice President:</b>	<b>Jenny Weaver</b>	<b>907-982-5446</b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Jana Gooch</b>	<b>907 746-2891</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Cathy Crew</b>	<b>907-632-4401</b>
<b>Member at Large:</b>	<b>Deb Blaylock</b>	<b>907-746-6045</b>

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

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

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### DECEMBER 2024 AND BEYOND

**Dec 3**, Palmer, Christmas Party, Turkey Red  
**Jan 6**, Palmer, Regular Meeting, David Ianson, Mycorrhiza  
**Feb 3**, Palmer, Regular Meeting  
**Mar 3**, Palmer, Regular Meeting  
**Apr 7**, Palmer, Regular Meeting  
**May 5**, Palmer, Regular Meeting  
**May 16-18, 2025**, Juneau, State Master Gardener Conference  
**May 31**, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale  
**June 9**, Palmer, Rebarchek Farm Project Planting  
**June 13-15**, Palmer, Colony Days  
**Aug 15 – Sep 1**, Palmer, Alaska State Fair  
**Sep 8**, Palmer, Regular Meeting  
**Oct 6**, Palmer, Regular Meeting  
**Nov 3**, Palmer, Annual Meeting  
**Dec (TBD)**, 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 **February 3, 2025**, 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<sup>th</sup> day of each month -- Thank you--**



December 2024



Website: [www.matsumastergardeners.com/](http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/)

Email: [matsumastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com)

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