

MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

Dec 2014



President's Patch

By Rhonda Bowman, President

Just came back from a week on vacation and I really did notice how much less light we have now. I continue to be surprised every year even though I've lived in Alaska for 38 years. Everyone seems to be complaining because folks keep putting up their Christmas lights earlier every year. I think that people are tired of the darkness and are trying to counteract it with some light in their life even if it is a lighted tree in the front yard or your front porch with icicle lights hanging down. We haven't had the cold temperatures that many places in the lower 48 currently have but it is depressing with the bare grass and trees and I look forward to some snow coverage because of the lightness it provides.

Here in Palmer the Farmer's Market continues every week which is a great sign that fresh vegetables, herbs, teas and other items continue to be available long after summer is gone.

Now seems to be a planning time for the next growing season and we are filled with high expectations for the upcoming planting season and the New Year. We are hopeful that we will get some snow cover to protect the perennials for next year. And that the frost does not go down too far into the ground.

Remember that we need articles for the upcoming newsletters! And don't forget to submit your gardening pictures for the website. May your family be blessed this holiday season.



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CHAPTER MEETINGS FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 8TH' 6:30 PM
LOCATION: TURKEY RED CAFÉ,
CONFERENCE ROOM,
550 S. ALASKA ST., PALMER, AK
DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

MEETING AGENDA

- TREASURER REPORT
- MINUTES
- OLD BUSINESS
- NEW BUSINESS

TOPIC/SPEAKER:

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

We have the Turkey Red reserved for Dec. 8. The club is furnishing the meat. There will be a gift exchange and the suggested amount to spend is \$15.00. Members are to bring a side dish. There will be door prizes as well. See you there!

PEASANTS PERSPECTIVE

By Curt Mueller, Master Gardener



The dark days are hard upon us, though we haven't really had any winter as this is written. Last summer's gardening efforts may seem like a dim memory, but Lo! A ray of light pierces the overcast. Seed catalogs begin to arrive and we can scan through them to see what might fit our plans for a new growing season. Some of our favorite vendors don't mail catalogs, but their products are available online in vivid color. Our landscape has become a bit drab without snow to brighten it, so we can definitely use some color.

This peasant has long recognized that there is a considerable amount of gardening knowledge and skill among our members. How might we better share this among ourselves and others who enjoy gardening? One of the things that would be of interest is the varieties of flowers and vegetables that we grow and that have done well for us; maybe even those that have not done so well. We could have a discussion on this at a meeting, perhaps including sources and cultural techniques. We could list these items and type them up for inclusion in a newsletter, thereby making them available to those who read our newsletter. We could make this the program for a meeting.

There are new varieties of plants available each year, and there are many tried and true that continue to do well in Alaska's special climate and growing conditions. Sometimes we try something new and it works well or conversely we decide the old standby works best and we go back to it. Sometimes we like a variety and find

that it is no longer available from our old sources. Then we must search for a comparable item or a new source. We can't all try everything that's available to us. We might be missing a standout variety that someone else grows with excellent success. Let's share.

In the spirit of sharing, the peasant likes to grow some very late cabbage varieties for winter storage. Those in the 110 day maturity range work well. They will withstand very hard frosts in the fall and still store well. An advantage to that is they may be left in the garden into October, which means that they will store well into January and February with decent storage conditions. These late varieties have very firm heads; needed for good keeping quality. Several varieties have been tried, most storage varieties do well. Princeton is one that comes to mind. Stokes and Johnny's give good descriptions and maturity times on their vegetable offerings.

You may have guessed that the peasant is already thinking about the 2015 season. You are so right.

Thanks folks.



GROWING INDOOR SUCCULENTS

By Stephen Brown, Mat Su/Copper River District Ag/Hort Agent



Gardening with succulents allows you to free up your creativity and channel your inner artist in some easy, pretty much fail-safe projects using low maintenance succulents as the centerpiece. Indoors or out, on the wall, in or on the ground, or just hanging around, they make for eye-catching displays. They can be potted in a design, highlighted on their own, tucked into mixed plantings and empty corners, or used in other ways that are more like art pieces than plantings. Envision wreaths, screens, miniature gardens, terrariums and more.

Succulents are usually defined as plants with fleshy leaves or stems that allow them to store water in arid areas or those with poor soils. They are adaptable and will grow in most soil types as long as gardeners keep in mind how they operate. Since they are designed for storing scarce water, the issue of watering is crucial. They can easily be over-watered in regular potting soil. There are commercial soils made for succulents and cacti. These have more grit which lets more water flow through rather than be stored in the soil. Succulent roots get water from what's carried in the air around them rather than from direct contact with water in the soil.

Alternatively one can add perlite to regular potting soil in a ratio of three parts soil to one part perlite. The

most important factor is that it should be well draining. They should be watered deeply at regular intervals rather than lightly watered often for strong plants and root systems to form. Some sources recommend using a low-dose water-soluble fertilizer (20-20-20 or 20-10-20) in each watering. They do have dormant periods (some summer, some winter) during which watering should be lessened or stopped (See Highland Succulents reference below).

Once you've got the handle on growing and caring for succulents, their flexibility allows for much variety and creativity in ways they can be displayed. Free up your inner artist to make them whimsical (think teacups, old children's toys, niches and crannies, etc.), sculptural (a pyramid of stacked dishes), in single or mixed displays, matched or multi-colored. Succulents come in an amazing array of forms and in a huge range of colors, adding to the possibilities.

This article was adapted from original material by Betty Liske, University of California Master Gardener.





BUMPER POTATO CROP

Lenita Deda had a good harvest of potatoes this fall. Seed potatoes were purchased from Gregory Kalal, a member of the Master Gardeners Club. Lenita suggests members may want to check with him for seed potatoes next spring.

To the right is a photo of some budding pussy willows on Lazy Mountain, taken just a few days ago by Leslie Scott (also a Master Gardener)



IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!

2015 is almost upon us! We hope you've enjoyed your last year of membership and look forward to "seeing" you all next year! Go to our webpage to download a membership form

www.matsumastergardeners.com .

Thank you for your support!

The photo above was our library planter in a recent year. Many people enjoy our efforts in helping to beautify the library grounds. Photo courtesy Curt Mueller, Master Gardener.

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/index.htm>

Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage Chapter

<http://alaskamastergardeners.org/>

Alaska Master Gardener Blog

<http://alaskamastergardener.blogspot.com/>

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 Assoc..

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

Alaska Plant Materials Center

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

Alaska Rock Garden Society

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

Cooperative Extension Service, Palmer

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

Eat Local Alaska

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



Good Earth Garden School **NEW**

<http://ellenvandevisse.com/>

Integrated Pest Management Program

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

Junior Master Gardeners

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

Landscape Plants for Alaska

www.alaskaplants.org

Local Alaskan Plants Clearinghouse

<http://www.localplants.org/Home>

Mat-Su Borough Rain Garden Program

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

Mat-Su Master Gardener Website

www.matsumastergardeners.org

Master Gardener Research Link

<http://search.extension.org>

Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley

<http://interiormastergardeners.org/>

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

South-Central Alaska Beekeepers Assoc.

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

Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners

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

Sustainable Agriculture – UAF***NEW***

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/>

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/>

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

Know of an upcoming event or organization which needs our help? Let a board member know!

BOARD MEMBER OPENING

The position of Club Secretary is still open. The job involves taking minutes at meetings and attending board meetings. If you are interested, please contact Rhonda Bowman for further details and information.



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

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Rhonda Bowman	746-2948
Co-VP	Curt Mueller	745-6144
Co-VP	Hally Truelove	376-0909
Secretary:	Vacant	
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 2014

DECEMBER

Dec 8, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Christmas Party
NOTE DATE CHANGE

Dec 12-14, Palmer, Colony Christmas
Dec 13, Palmer, Colony Christmas Parade

JANUARY 2015 AND BEYOND

Jan 5, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Feb 2, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Mar 2 Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Mar 3-5, Fairbanks, 11th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference,
<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/conference/>
Mar 7, Fairbanks, State Master Gardener Conference,
<http://www.interiormastergardeners.org/>
Apr 6, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
May 4, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
May 30, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale (tentative)
Jun 3, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Palmer Library Planting



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 editor 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~~



December 2014



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Facebook

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

MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER'S CLUB
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