

MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

Feb 2018



President's Patch

By President Michael Kircher, photo by the author

Let's see, was this week spring or winter? The beginning of the week was decidedly spring breakup with the moss under our apple tree appearing to green up and grow. As I write this, winter is holding forth with predicted near zero temperatures for next week. The frost on the sunny side of our cars was melted off this morning while in the shaded side, frosticles were in full bloom. It's that time of the year when the sun is starting to exert its influence. There is almost no snow on my perennials now, so we'll see what survives the thaw-freeze cycles. The good news is:

You know spring is coming because:

- Seed catalogues have been arriving, so we gardeners can experiment with plants that don't grow in Alaska and pay \$10.00 for two packs of seeds and an additional \$20.00 for shipping to Alaska because the companies say that it costs more to ship outside the U.S.A.
- There are only a few patches of ice in your driveway with your name on them.
- The mice are starting to forage from out of your beehives where they spent the winter.
- Curt has already started his tomato plants.

My son Tom and I are planning to dig the soil out of one of our greenhouse beds as soon as it thaws and insert heating cables, so we can start plants much earlier there. Remember, plants can grow in 40-degree temperatures if their roots are warm. If we can, we will try to obtain 12-volt heating coils, so we can use the output from our solar panels to heat the soil.

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GENERAL MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH AT 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION: MATANUSKA TELEPHONE COMPANY
(MTA) BUILDING, LARGE MEETING ROOM (IN
THE BASEMENT), 480 COMMERCIAL DR.,
PALMER, AK

DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

MEETING AGENDA

- TREASURER REPORT
- MEETING MINUTES
- OLD BUSINESS
- NEW BUSINESS

SPEAKER/TOPIC

ROUND-ROBIN DISCUSSION ON BEEKEEPING BY
ASSOCIATION MEMBERS.

SEED EXCHANGE. PLEASE BRING EXTRA SEEDS
TO SHARE WITH OTHERS. IF THE SEEDS ARE
NOT IN ORIGINAL PACKET OR ARE SOME YOU
HARVESTED, PLEASE PROVIDE SPECIES, VARIETY
AND DATE HARVESTED. BRING SOME SMALL
PLASTIC BAGS AND MARKER.

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photos by the author

The peasant has been writing monthly articles for our newsletter for some years and thinks it's time for some help. It is certainly true that avid gardeners, such as we are, have had unique experiences that, if shared, will be of interest and benefit to all of us. So how about sharing some of your secrets and make our newsletter more interesting? In the past, sometimes at the end of the growing season we made the rounds of the attendees at a meeting with each person sharing a success or anomaly that was experienced during the summer. Maybe relating our stories could replace having a speaker at a fall meeting. We could all be speakers. The point is to spread our knowledge and experiences. There is much accumulated knowledge and skill among our group. The dissemination of knowledge is a prime goal of the master gardener program.

Two years ago, the peasant acquired some seeds for white fireweed through the graciousness of Pat Tremaine. She had a stunning example of *Epilobium angustifolium album* growing and blooming in her yard. The peasant wanted to grow some from this seed but wasn't sure of what to expect. For one, the white flower phase is surely a recessive trait. Would any of the plants produced from seed have white flowers? Searching the internet wasn't a lot of help, so the peasant decided to find out. In early January he seeded a couple of containers, covered them with stretch wrap, and placed them in the potato bin. At the end of the month they were taken out and allowed to germinate at room temperature with light. Germination was excellent.

In hopes of getting at least one plant that would produce a white flower the peasant kept a hundred seedlings and continued growing them in the greenhouse. After a

couple of weeks, it became evident that some plants had a different color to the leaves and stems. After scrutinizing photos of white and pink fireweed plants online, the peasant determined that the pink fireweed had a darker leaf color and some reddish coloring in the stems. The white phase had paler leaves and no reddish stems. The peasant's plants with paler leaves outnumbered the others by about ten to one. So far so good. All plants were potted into three-inch pots.

When the weather warmed the plants were put outdoors and grew reasonably well. BUT. In mid-July one by one the tops died back to the ground. Then after several weeks a tiny leaf appeared in some pots and by fall a small rosette showed. All pots were put into protected storage for the winter. In spring weak plants appeared in ten pots, three that should bear pink flowers and seven to bear white. The plants recovered enough to bloom and in fall the peasant planted two of the white at spots in the yard and discarded the pink. One of the white was put into winter storage and the rest of the survivors were shared with friends.

So, this is what we can take away from this experience. Although many wild plants can be germinated and grown in early winter and will thrive thereby, fireweed is not one of these. It should be germinated in spring at what would be a natural time. What must have happened with the early germination of fireweed is that by midsummer the plants responded as though the season was over and went dormant. Then, as the season was still warm they began to grow again, but the new growth was not mature enough when autumn came and most of the plants died.

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So, hang in there, the days are getting longer, and we are fast gaining light. Get those herbs started and pruners sharpened. It won't be long now.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME!

We hope you enjoyed the past year with the Mat-Su Master Gardeners Association. It's time to renew memberships for 2018. A renewal form is conveniently located on page 5. Please complete it and mail it in with your check (please don't send cash through the mail). If you would like to renew with credit or debit card, please go to our web site and visit the membership tab and follow the instructions:

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

This year, we're reviving the membership directory. Everyone needs to fill out a new form and answer the question about being included (or not) in the membership directory. To be included in the directory, please submit your membership form before the end of January.

Thank you!

Continued from page 2

As for the recessive white color, apparently the flowers that are self-pollinated on the parent plant will be white, while those that are cross-pollinated with the wild pink type will be pink with perhaps a very small percentage producing a white flower.



This white fireweed can be expected to grow upright in a location with full sun. Note the purity of the white flowers. Some cultivars have flowers showing some pink or red. This one is indeed choice.

It is the peasant's hope that his *Epilobium angustifolium album* survives the winter and produces abundant flowers and seed. "Album" indicates the white phase, in case you're not up on your Latin. This is a choice plant and should be made readily available as a specimen plant or however people choose to use it.

Thanks, folks.

UNDERSTANDING PLANT FREEZE DAMAGE

STEPHEN C. BROWN, DISTRICT AGRICULTURE/HORTICULTURE AGENT

Plant cells are injured when temperature declines below a critical level for a species. Injury that occurs at or below the freezing point is called frost injury or freezing injury. Injury above the freezing point is called chilling injury. Frost injury and freeze injury are closely related. Frost damage occurs during a radiation freeze; freeze damage occurs during an advection freeze. In both cases, ice crystals form in plant tissues, dehydrating cells and disrupting membranes.

Advection freezes occur when an air mass whose temperature is below freezing moves into an area and displaces warmer air, causing the temperatures of plants to become low enough for ice crystals to form within their tissues. Radiation freezes occur on clear, calm nights when plants radiate (lose) more heat into the atmosphere than they receive. This creates a temperature inversion in which cold air close to the ground is trapped by warmer air above it (the temperature of the air increases with altitude). When the air temperature at plant level is near or below freezing, the temperature of the plants is likely to be colder than the temperature of the air.

If plants become sufficiently cold, the water in them freezes and cells are damaged. The frost that appears on plants is simply ice crystals that form on the plant surface, the equivalent of dew forming at temperatures above freezing. The frost itself does not damage plants; plants are damaged by ice crystals that form within their tissues.

Be aware that an area's microclimate could be different from one yard to another because of topography and proximities to bodies of water... thereby increasing or decreasing an area's chance

of frost. The coldest air accumulates in valleys and lowlands.

Gardens in low areas have a higher risk of late spring or early fall freezes. North-facing areas receive less heat from the sun than areas with a southern exposure. Northern exposure may delay plant growth in spring, thereby reducing the likelihood of damage by a late spring frost. Conversely, a southern exposure may speed plant development and reduce the chance from a fall freeze.

(Adapted from an original article written by Margaret Bayne, Oregon State University.)

Parmesan Mashed Potatoes

Submitted by Gregory Kalal, DDS

Ingredients

5 # Mat-Su Potatoes peeled and cut into 1" pieces
 3/4 cup butter softened
 3/4 cup sour cream
 1-1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
 1 teaspoon salt
 3/4 to 1 cup 2% milk warmed
 2 tablespoons minced parsley

Directions

Place potatoes in a 6-quart stockpot, add water to cover. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and cook uncovered 10-15 minutes until tender. Drain, return to pot and stir over low heat 1 minute to dry.

Coarsely mash potatoes gradually adding butter, sour cream, seasonings and enough milk to reach desired consistency. Stir in parsley.

Yield 12 servings of 3/4 cup.

This was one of the side-dishes we enjoyed at the Christmas party.

Mat Su Master Gardeners Minutes of the Jan 8, 2018 meeting

Present were: Lois Rockcastle, Denise Bowlan, Michael Kircher, Curt Mueller, Eva Cohnen-Brown, Lorraine Cordova, Chris Wood, Kristina Tornqvist, Cathy Crew, Arlene and Wayne Bowman, Marge Mueller, Carolyn Johnson, John Beck, Phyllis Kircher, Deb Blaylock, Ken Blaylock, Gregory Kalal, Anita Chace, Jana Miller, Lenita Deda, Chuck Deda, Rhonda Bowman, Sue Glenn, Dorte Mobley.

Meeting was called to order at 7 by the president, Michael Kircher.

Treasurer report was given by Cathy Crew. Not everybody has paid dues - members need to let us know if it is okay to put their contact information/picture in the yearbook. Deb will send out emails regarding this. Cathy suggested we raise the dues to cover the people paying with cards. Phyllis suggested \$15 and 20 but Cathy thinks that is too much. Denise suggested we just charge the people that want to pay with cards. This will be discussed at the board meeting.

Minutes were sent to Deb to put in newsletter. Nobody had corrections to them.

Kristina Tornqvist will do the yearbook. She needs to know how much money she can spend, what we want in a yearbook and when is the cut-off to get in it. Dorte will help her.

We need committee coordinators for the following:

Planting at the library

Planting at the Pioneer Home garden - plants need to be ordered from P&M (last year we spent \$290)

Planting at the Experiment Farm

Float at the Colony Days parade

Deb will be the chairman for the State Fair awards.

Rhonda will be the chairman for the plant sale - we have some labels but will need to buy more.

Dorte and Kristina will co-chair the summer garden tour.

Kristina asked if we give out grants. We do have a scholarship fund and support Grow Palmer, Heart Reach and plant flowers at the Pioneer Home and at the Palmer library. There has been talk about sponsoring someone for the next MG class. Last year we did ask for a letter saying what they needed the money for. Board will investigate that.

New business:

Curt will continue to get information and newsletters to the two members who don't have internet.

Speaker/topics for February will be bees in a forum format. March will be Israeli flowers and structures.

Budget for this year will be discussed at the board meeting.

Historical Society flower bed across from Colony Inn needs a lot of help.

Denise Bowlan from Pioneer Peonies spoke about growing and selling peonies. Points to notice: Don't cut flowers until the plant is at least 3 years old. Peonies do not like wet feet - she has hers in an old gravel pit with topsoil on it and the only place she has lost plants is in the corner where the soil doesn't drain enough. When you want to take peonies inside, cut them in the bud stage a day or two in advance, put them in the fridge and then in a vase. This prolongs the vase life.

Ellen VandeVisse informed us about gardening classes she has coming up. Look at her web site for dates, places and times.


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

 Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com

 Email: www.matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

2018 MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

Membership is \$10 for an annual individual membership or \$12 for an annual family membership. **Family memberships are for family members who reside in the same household.** Memberships are for the calendar year – January through December. Please add matsumastergardeners@gmail.com to your email address book so that club correspondence is not blocked.

Mat- Su Master Gardeners Membership Application:

Please PRINT CLEARLY and complete **all** address fields to ensure that our database is current and accurate. Please indicate if this a

New Annual Individual \$10 membership ☐ **OR** a new Annual Family \$12 membership ☐

or if you are **renewing** an individual \$10 membership ☐ **OR** a Family \$12 membership ☐

Name (s): _____

Mailing Street Address/PO Box: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Preferred Phone Numbers: Home: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Gardening areas of interest: ___ annuals ___ perennials ___ trees & shrubs ___ vegetables
___ fruit ___ landscaping/garden design ___ other (please specify) _____

Gardening information you would like to see in the newsletter or presented at a meeting:

Do you consent to having photos of you participating in Association activities posted on the website? Please initial: Yes _____ or No _____

Do you consent to have your phone number and e-mail published in the Annual Yearbook? Please initial: Yes _____ or No _____

The newsletter is published monthly and is available to download and print on the association's website: www.matsumastergardeners.com .

Return your payment and the completed application/renewal to:

Mat-Su Master Gardeners
c/o Membership Coordinator
PO Box 598,
Palmer, AK 99645

Visit our website for monthly meeting information

Lenita Deda, Membership Coordinator~ 745-3413

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 Farm to School **New**

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

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.akrockgardenociety.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/>

Announcements

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Submit an article to the newsletter
- Volunteer to head a committee

Committee Chairs/Coordinators Needed:

- Speakers for Monthly Meetings
- Colony Days Parade
- Alaska Veterans & Pioneers Home Planting
- Demonstration Bed at Experiment Farm
- Palmer Library Planting
- Grant/scholarship coordinator

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Michael Kircher	745-1459
Vice President	Curt Mueller	745-6144
Secretary:	Dorte Mobley	232-5422
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 at her email: kdblalock@ak.net

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2018

Feb 5, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Round-robin beekeeping discussion and seed swap

MAR 2018 AND BEYOND

Mar 5, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Presentation of Israeli flowers and structures by Michael Kircher

Mar 10, Anchorage, ABG Spring Seminar

Mar 23-24, Fairbanks, State Alaska Master Gardener Conference, Pike's Waterfront Lodge

Apr 2, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

Apr 7, Anchorage, Sears Mall Spring Garden Show

May 7, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

Jun 2, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale

Jun 4, Palmer, Palmer Library Planting

Jun 8 - 10, Palmer, Colony Days

Jun 9, Palmer, Colony Days Parade

Jul 2, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

Aug 6, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

Aug 23 - Sep 3, Palmer, Alaska State Fair

Sep 10, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

Oct 1, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

Nov 5, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

Nov 5 - 7, Anchorage, Alaska Sustainable Agriculture Conference

Dec 3, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

Please let Michael 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 Michael.

Club Membership

The membership year runs from January to December each year. Annual individual memberships are \$10 and family memberships are \$12. Family memberships are only for family members living in the same household.

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~~



February 2018



Like us on
Facebook

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

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

