



MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER

Feb 2019



President's Patch

By President Deb Blaylock

First, I would like to thank all those who stepped forward at the January 2019 meeting and volunteered to chair or participate in a committee. Many of the committees do not involve much time at all but are important to the mission of our association. We still need a few folks to take the lead on our annual plant sale. Grab a friend or two and volunteer to help out! Our plant sale is a vital part of our fund-raising efforts and is also an annual event the community looks forward too. Most of the tasks are already lined out and take minimal time to accomplish.

If you haven't already done so, its time to renew your membership for 2019. Membership benefits include participating in the annual plant sale and the summer garden tour and activities. Our general membership meetings are open to the general public, but these activities are one of the benefits of joining the association. Another benefit of joining by January 15th is being included in the membership directory, which gives you access to contact information for fellow members. This is nice to have when you have gardening questions throughout the year.

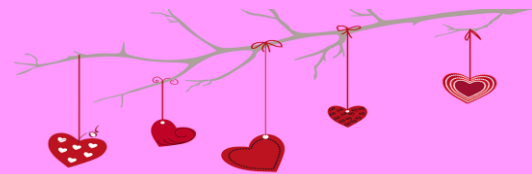
As the newsletter editor, I am looking for a new photo for the front page of the newsletter. It needs to be a panoramic type of photo. Photos which can be associated with a Mat-Su Valley location would be acceptable. Garden photos would be great if they meet the size requirement (panoramic). I can only take emailed photos so please send them to the association's email:

matsumastergardeners@gmail.com.

Our February 4th meeting will be a presentation by local businessman and gardener, Cec Ellsworth, on how to use coconut coir. Cec is somewhat of a local legend because of the coconut coir product he sells from his small business, Veggies on the Rye. Coconut coir is an excellent medium for seed starting and many gardeners use it now instead of peat moss products. Come and listen to Cec and learn how to use this amazing medium.

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GENERAL MEETINGS FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH, 7:00 P.M.

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

DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

SPEAKER/TOPIC

BUSINESS MEETING - 7-7:30 PM

GUEST SPEAKER - 7:30 - 8:30 PM

Cec Ellsworth of Veggies on the Rye will be speaking to us about using coconut coir.

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photo submitted by the author

The peasant has a penchant for all things we grow in our vegetable gardens, not the least of which are cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower. That first cole slaw from fresh cabbage is a few months off, but there are some things we can do to hasten the first taste and also to prolong the harvest of these crops.

For an early cabbage crop, the peasant has settled on the variety Parel. In addition to being very early, Parel will hold in the garden for a time without splitting or becoming overly mature. The peasant has taken to starting plants of this variety two to three weeks ahead of the other transplants, growing a few of them in three-inch pots for a good start. The seed for Parel has become more difficult to obtain recently, and the peasant has found another early variety, Katarina, if Parel becomes unavailable. Parel has a maturity of 35-40 days after transplant and Katarina about the same.

To extend the season, Golden Acre, sometimes considered an heirloom variety, follows in maturity at 60-65 days. It forms medium-sized solid heads and is good for making sauerkraut and other cabbage dishes. There are a number of varieties considered main season by commercial growers that mature in about 80 days. Some of these can get quite large which is good if you're making a lot of sauerkraut; most are medium sized and designed for marketing. A late storage variety that matures in 110 days will store well in a root cellar. They are able to withstand some frost, thus may be left in the garden into the fall, thereby lengthening their season. Many of the late varieties have longer stems and are less susceptible to slug damage, especially since there are few leaves at ground level and a non-toxic slug bait may be sprinkled beneath the plant.

Raw cauliflower is a real delicacy to the peasant. A new variety, White Corona, is given as having a maturity of 30 days after transplant. This should really speed up the harvest, and the peasant plans to try this. Perhaps it could be jump-started as with Parel cabbage. Snow Crown is a commonly grown variety at 50-60 days. Variety Amazing is later at 75

days and Callisto still later at 90-105 days. Varying growing conditions in our summers will affect maturity times on all things we grow, so the given maturity dates tend to be relative.

Broccoli has a way of extending its season by sprouting lots of satellite heads. By growing early varieties we're pretty well covered for the season. Find ones that suit your taste and produce well. It has long been a favorite pastime for the peasant to browse in the garden and break off some satellite heads of this crop to munch on. If you let the flowers open up, they're done for the season. Well, the yellow flowers are pretty too.

The peasant hasn't tried growing cabbage or cauliflower to maturity in the greenhouse, but it might be worth a try with the very early varieties.

Thanks, folks.



Newly transplanted cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and broccoli, spring of 2018. Cabbage plants in center foreground are early variety Parel, started three weeks prior to the other transplants. The Parel are ready to begin forming heads.

HOW DOES SNOW HELP AND HARM PLANTS?

BENEFITS OF SNOW: A GARDENER'S DOZEN

Written by Marion Owen; published with the author's permission.

There's a saying, "A good winter with snow makes all the plants grow."

Snowflakes: Nature's frost blanket

Believe it or not, temperatures under a layer of snow are usually warmer than the outside air. All thanks to the structure of snowflakes. Inside each crystal are hundreds of tiny air pockets encased in ice. Even larger air pockets form when snowflakes heap together on the ground. The result is a fluffy, down quilt that insulates the ground. Without snow, prolonged periods of cold can spell trouble. Roots are unable to take up water which means plants, including your lawn, can die from dehydration.

Like a flashlight

Snow's whiteness reflects a certain amount of sunlight. But much of the light penetrates snow like a giant flashlight. Which means plants can continue photosynthesis through the winter.

Fertilizer from the sky

Something magic happens when it snows. As snowflakes tumble downward, sulfur and nitrogen compounds cling to the crystals. Then, when the snow melts, these elements release into the soil where plants absorb them.

Eases freeze-thaw damage

Freeze-thaw periods can be deadly to plants. They cause water in the soil to expand and contract. Roots break, daffodil bulbs turn to mush, even launching out of the soil. A blanket of snow saves the day by softening the blows of extreme temperature swings.

Doubles as a windbreaker

Snow not only insulates plants from sub-zero temps, but it also shelters them from fierce

winds. Nature's windbreaker. Icy gales suck moisture from leaves, stems, and roots.

A quilt for containers

Planters create miniature gardens to grow flowers, herbs, and veggies. , [sic] pots and containers shrouded with snow are less apt to crack and split. Bottom line: More plants and shrubs survive 'til spring.

Learn a lesson from trees

The next time it snows, go for a walk in the woods. Observe. Here, let me help. In a dense coniferous forest of cedar, pine, or spruce, 75 percent of a heavy snowfall collects on tree tops. Which means, not much snow reaches the ground. No snow. No insulation. The ground can remain frozen well into spring.

When snow falls in a deciduous forest of maples though, most of it collects on the leaves and soil below. Snow... Insulation. You got it. The ground remains warmer over the winter.

I bet you can guess that the same thing happens in the garden. Let's say you planted tulip bulbs and primroses under a spruce tree. Uh, oh. The ground is bare of snow. Needless to say, the tulips didn't bloom and the primroses remained scrawny.

Drip, drip, drip

Plants need moisture. Rain, fog, hail, snow, sprinkler. Compared to rain, snow has a gentle touch. It's true. When snow melts, it releases moisture drip by drip. At the same time, snow improves soil tilth or texture. And to some degree, so does freezing and thawing. Much like the burrowing action of earthworms, bacteria, and fungi.

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SAVE THE DATE and LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION SOON

2019 Alaska Master Gardener Conference: Urban Gardening in the Last Frontier

Saturday, April 6, 2019
UAA Lucy Cuddy Hall, Anchorage

Speakers include Keynote presenter Robert Kourik and gardening professionals, garden designers and Master Gardeners from around the state.

Robert Kourik is an author, horticultural researcher and landscape consultant most known for his work on understanding roots—the title of his latest book. The conference includes a choice of multiple presentations, garden market, lunch, door prizes, a silent auction, and opportunities to network with fellow gardeners. Watch for on-line registration or mail registration in February at:

www.alaskamastergardeners.org/.

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Exposing creatures of the night

What creatures tip-toe around your garden at night? What part of the yard thaws out first in spring? Snow reveals mysteries while you sleep. Deer tracks, mice prints.

Exposing microclimates

First, let's explore what a microclimate is... I'll give it a try. A microclimate is a pocket zone within a general climate zone that has its own climate. Make sense?

Think of your yard. The garden by the front door might be warmer than the rest of the yard. You might be wondering why I mention microclimates. I'll give you an example: If you plant a warm-loving shrub in a spot where snow lingers, it suffers. Observing how snow collects and later melts in microclimates offers valuable clues. Observe how the wind deposits new snow and shapes existing drifts. Notice where sunlight melts snow first and last.

The perfect bird feeder

Brown seeds stand out against the white of snow for birds and small animal [sic] to find.

God bless dirty snow!

Ever noticed how snow turns to slush faster where the road grader created snow berms? That's because when snow becomes dirty it absorbs more sunlight, heats, and melts.

God bless white snow!

Winters in Kodiak are dark. Our shortest day is 6.5 hours. I can hardly wait for the first snowfall! It brightens everything, creating peace and stillness which lifts everyone's mood. Especially Dan, who runs the local tire shop.

In Japan, snow is revered. Stone lanterns called Yukimi are set out as snow-viewing accents. As for snowflakes. When they settle on branches they become Sekka, or snow flowers. Google Sekka.

To see the entire article, go to Marion's blog, Lagniappe. Article available at: <https://marionowenalaska.com/how-does-snow-help-and-harm-plants/>.

MMGA Minutes, January 7, 2019 - Minutes submitted by Deb & Ken Blaylock

Meeting called to order at 7:02 p.m. by the president. Dorte is out of town and Ken "volunteered" to help record the minutes.

Present: Cathy Crew, Deb & Ken Blaylock, Sally Sonnichsen, Marge Mueller, Eva Cohnen-Brown, Deb Caillouet, Phyllis Kircher, Clinton Rayback, Michael Kircher, Gregg Kalal; Lois Rockcastle, Curt Mueller, Kristina Tornqvist, and Sue Wallin

Treasurer's report given by Cathy Crew, Treasurer. She presented the final 2018 budget and a draft 2019 budget.

A motion was made to amend the following on the 2019: State Fair prizes from \$500 to \$800 because of the changes to the 2019 Standing Rules and Yearbook Expenses was increased from \$50 to \$150 per a request from the Yearbook Committee Chairman, Kristina Tornqvist. A motion was made to approve the changes, seconded, and approved. The Board of Directors will meet in February to further review the 2019 budget and present it to the membership at the February meeting for final approval. Deb called for any bills and no one had any.

Secretary's report was given by Deb. The last minutes to approve were from the November 2018 meeting which were published in the December newsletter. No one had any changes to the minutes and all indicated they had read the minutes. A motion was made to approve the minutes, seconded, and approved.

Committee Reports:

Christmas Party – Marge reported the Christmas party went well and everything was paid for. The final budget indicated the final Christmas party costs were \$278.81 - \$3.31 over budget.

Speaker Coordinator - Kristina reported she has a speaker for February and is working on someone for March. Deb requested to add the annual seed exchange to the March meeting.

Membership – Lenita was absent. Cathy Crew report we have 41 current members.

Membership yearbook – Kristina reported

the deadline to be in the 2019 yearbook is coming up soon - January 15, 2019.

Newsletter – Deb reported she will be out of state until the 25th and the deadline to submit information for the February newsletter is the 26th of January.

Old Business:

Deb requested a change to the State Fair sponsorships per a request from Kathy Liska, of the Alaska State Fair. In the Flower Department, Division 8, Lilies already had a sponsor and she suggested we sponsor Division 10, Collections instead. There was some discussion to clarify that we sponsor the Division 10 Champ and there are multiple classes under division 10, but we only recognize the overall division champ. A motion was made to accept the change, seconded, and approved.

Several members had requested new Alaska Master Gardener name tags from the CES office. The name tags will be available at the CES office to pick up by those who had requested them. Call Steve Brown to coordinate pick up.

New Business

2019 Vacant Committee Chairs. Deb noted there are several committees with no chairs and unless someone volunteers to head the committees, we may not do these activities.

Marge Mueller volunteered to chair the Christmas party again; Michael Kircher volunteered to chair the Rebarchek Farm committee; Marge Mueller and Sally Sonnichsen will tackle the Palmer Veterans & Senior Home planting; Deb Caillouet volunteered to head the Mid-Summer Garden and Art Faire. Dorte Mobley had volunteered via email to head the Summer Garden Tour.

Still vacant are the grant/scholarship committee, plant sale, Palmer library, and the nomination committee.

Deb suggested that all committee chairs and officers keep a folder with information about the position and activities so they can pass this on to the next person who fills the position.

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PLEASE HELP YOUR MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

We are an organization of all volunteers. No one gets a paycheck and we all have other things to do in our lives. We have banded together to spread the word about good gardening practices in our niche of Alaska and to share our knowledge and teach others. Volunteering doesn't take much time and will make us stronger as an organization and help us help others.

A HUGE thank you to our current volunteers!! These are the positions which are filled for 2019:

Guest Speakers: Kristina Tornqvist

Website: Eva Cohnen-Brown

State Fair Sponsored Awards: Deb Blaylock

Newsletter: Deb Blaylock

State Fair Parade: Curt Mueller

MTA Room Coordinator: Phyllis Kircher

Christmas Party: Marge Mueller

Midsummer Garden & Art Faire: Deb Caillouet

Summer Garden Tours/Activities: Dorte Mobley

Rebarchek Farm: Michael Kircher

Palmer Veterans & Senior Home Planting:

Marge Mueller and Sally Sonnichsen

Association Yearbook: Kristina Tornqvist

Committees which need a volunteer(s):

Plant Sale – See the 2019 Standing Rules for major duties. This project could use several volunteers to make it successful.

Grants/Scholarships – Coordinate with individuals and organizations on grant or scholarship requests, present information to membership.

Palmer Library Planting – Determine a planting theme, present the theme at the April meeting, coordinate planting at the Palmer Library.

Nomination Committee – At the September meeting, gather a committee of at least one other member to query the current membership for volunteers to serve as officers/board of directors for the 2020 membership year. Finalize the list by October 20th and send a list of potential candidates to the newsletter editor to publish in the November newsletter. Present the candidates to the membership at the November 2019 Annual Meeting for voting.

If you're interested in serving as a chairman or just as a member of any of the committees, please send an email to matsumastergardeners@gmail.com.

Thank you! We appreciate your help with keeping our association functioning.

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Michael Kircher requested suggestions and ideas for the Master Gardener's plot at the Rebarchek Farm this summer. Deb Blaylock noted that she and Ken had volunteered to keep the plot mowed. Michael requests folks email him with any suggestions at urbanag@gci.net.

There will be a board of directors meeting on February 4th from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m at the MTA Conference room (prior to the February meeting).

Michael Kircher offered up an old Alaska Master Gardener handbook to anyone who's interested in giving it a new home.

Lois Rockcastle mentioned an interesting website she had found: <https://www.floretflowers.com/>.

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Lois Rockcastle did a delightful presentation on a botanical garden she had visited in New Zealand.

Garden Links

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 Farm to School

<https://www.farmentoschoolalaska.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

<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 Peony Society

<https://alaskapeonysociety.wixsite.com/alaskapeonysociety>

Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association

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

Alaska Plant Materials Center

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

Alaska Rhodiola **New**

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

Alaska Rock Garden Society

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

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.com

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 CES Citizen Pest Monitoring Portal

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

UAF Georgeson Botanical Garden

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

UAF Herbarium **New**

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

UAF School of Natural Resources & Extension

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

University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

www.fruit.usask.ca

USDA/NRCS Plant Data Base

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

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Submit an article to the newsletter
- Volunteer to chair or help a committee – See page 6 for committees/projects which need someone to take the lead.

The 2019 Standing Rules and Association By-Laws can be found on our website:

<https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/standing-rules-and-bylaws---2019.html>

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Deb Blaylock	746-6045/kdblayment@ak.net
Vice President	Gregory Kalal	339-1966
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: kdblayment@ak.net

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2019

Feb 4, Palmer, MMGA Meeting, Cec Ellsworth of Veggies on the Rye will be speaking to us about using coconut coir.

Feb 21, Palmer, Third Thursdays with Extension: Seed Starting and Alaska Gardening, Call 745-3360 for more details.

MARCH 2019 AND BEYOND

Mar 4, Palmer, MMGA Meeting

Apr 1, Palmer, MMGA Meeting

Apr 6, Anchorage, State Master Gardener Conference, Lucy Cuddy Center, UAA

Apr 20, Anchorage, Spring Garden Show, Mid-Town Mall

May 6, Palmer, MMGA Meeting

Jun 1, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale

Jun 3, Palmer, Palmer Library Planting

July - TBD, Garden Tours

Aug - TBD, Local Business Tour

Aug, Palmer, Alaska State Fair Parade

Aug 22 - Sep 2, Palmer, Alaska State Fair

Sep 9, Palmer, MMGA Meeting

Oct 7, Palmer, MMGA Meeting

Nov 4, Palmer, MMGA Annual Meeting

Dec 2, Palmer, MMGA Annual Christmas Party

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. The deadline to join is January 15, 2019 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 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 2019



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Facebook

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

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
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