



## President's Patch

By President Deb Blaylock

It's time! What time do you say? It's seed starting time! Yay! With piles of seed catalogs and the dining room table turned into my seed sorting area, I'm ready to get my first seeds into some potting medium and get things growing! A word to the wise - this year is looking like seeds are once again in high demand. Many online sites are shut down periodically to catch up on the high demand or only open specific times. I've noticed a distinct lag in shipping times as well. If you haven't ordered, you should get in gear and get your orders in. I've also seen quite a few places around the Mat-Su Valley have their seed racks out. I suspect quite a few gardeners are out there grabbing up seeds as I see many gleeful posts on Facebook with folks who have already raided the local sources.

At this time, we are planning on having our plant sale, but who can predict the future and what new mandates and directives may be thrown out to the citizenry to implement. I hear the Alaska State Fair has begun their planning process for the 2021 State Fair and we can also look forward to the Palmer Midsummer Garden and Art Faire. We definitely will be doing our annual plantings at the Palmer Library and the Palmer Veterans and Pioneers Home.

A committee chair is needed to head up the planting committee soonest. Flowers need to be ordered with a local greenhouse and coordination done with the two locations ahead of our arrival. We'll also need a few folks to take up specific tasks on the Plant Sale Project. Ken and I will be the coordinators and we have already reserved the location and plant labels are on hand. Folks are needed for these remaining plant sale tasks: coordinating advertisement with radio and newspapers; coordinating with the CES to pick up/return tables and chairs; coordinating with CES to pick up plant sale signs and place them around town and on the building the day of the plant sale. If you're interested in doing any of these, shoot an email to [matsumastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com). You can also speak up at the next meeting.

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### GENERAL MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

**NEXT GENERAL MEETING**

**MONDAY, FEB 1ST, 2020, 7 P.M.**

**LOCATION: ONLINE ZOOM PRESENTATION**

**BUSINESS MEETING AT 7 P.M.**

### SPEAKER/TOPIC

**DORTE MOBLEY WILL LEAD US IN A "ROUND (ZOOM) TABLE" DISCUSSION ON GARDEN JOURNALING. A REQUEST WAS EMAILED OUT EARLIER THIS MONTH ASKING FOLKS TO SHARE EXAMPLES OF HOW THEY KEEP TRACK OF THEIR JOURNAL. PLEASE SEND HER PHOTOS THAT SHE CAN PUT INTO A PRESENTATION TO SHARE. FOLKS WILL BE ABLE TO TALK ABOUT THEIR METHODS AT THE FEBRUARY MEETING. SEE PAGE 4 FOR MORE DETAILS.**

**ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION WILL BE EMAILED OUT AS SOON AS ITS AVAILABLE.**

Be on the look-out for an email with the finalized 2021 Budget. See you on the 1<sup>st</sup>!

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

Photo submitted by the author.

When the days begin to get longer, the winter begins to get stronger. This old saying may not always hold true, but it seems to be accurate on this January 19. The snow is falling heavily with an accumulation thus far of five inches here on Lazy Mountain. More snow removal coming shortly, making it a bit difficult to concentrate on gardening plans. The tomato seedlings which were planted on New Year's Day did get transplanted into four-inch pots on the sixteenth and are thriving on bottom heat and fluorescent light next to a south window in our family room.

The peasant is checking out his seed inventory and perusing seed offerings in catalogs and online to see what's new and what old favorites need to be ordered for the approaching growing season. It is disappointing that Stokes is no longer providing seed in quantities suitable for home gardeners. They have gone to commercial growers only. One of the items to be found in their catalog [commercial] that is interesting is Blue Magic, a Hubbard squash with a small vine. Unlike typical Hubbards which require much room and are not well adapted to outdoor growing in our area, this one might be greenhouse grown and provide the great flavor of Hubbards. The peasant has found other seed sources and will give it a try.

The peasant recalls the days of his youth when Hubbards were grown by his parents. The very large squash with hard rinds were best chopped into individual portions with an ax. Delicious they were, with butter melted in the concave sections. This brings fond memories of a pile of squash and pumpkins in the cellar.

February is a month for starting some flower and vegetable varieties that require considerable time to develop before transplanting to the garden. Over the years Marge and the peasant have kept track of starting dates with the help of a comprehensive list from Harris-Moran which gives seed-to-transplant time, germination and growing temperatures, light or dark to germinate, and other useful information. All of this for vegetables and flowers, annual and perennial. Seeding dates are also logged on a calendar and kept for reference for the next year.

The peasant is remiss in keeping a good garden log but relies on the aforementioned methods and in keeping all seed packages from year to year, thus being able to go through them and decide what needs to be ordered and what seed is aging and should be replaced. A notebook contains ideas for what may work in the next year.

Thanks, folks.



The squash shown is Bonbon, a buttercup type and one which has a short vine. It is quite tasty and stores well.



Not to forget our feathered friends, this pine grosbeak is enjoying sunflower seeds at Mueller's feeder. They also enjoy tiny crabapples in the yard. They eat the seeds and spit out the pulp, unlike Bohemian waxwings which consume the whole fruit.

## Ready, Set, Plant!

Submitted by MG Deb Blaylock

Seed starting can seem intimidating to the beginning gardener. Fortunately, there are many tools out there to assist with deciphering information. There are many gardening groups on social media as well as websites where information can be accessed. Our Matsu Master Gardener Facebook group has a list with websites and files members can access. Our friends at the Cooperative Extension Service have numerous free publications on gardening in Alaska and is a great resource. You can access their website here: <https://www.uaf.edu/ces/>. Seed packets or seed catalogs are often a good source of information with growing details. Good seed companies will list seed starting requirements on the seed packet or in their catalog. Key terms to look for are light requirements, how deep to place the seed, germination and growing temperature requirements, germination time, when to start, and number of days to maturity. These are just a few of the items to look for but some of the more important ones.

One important detail that many gardeners have problems with is what to start their seeds in. There are many options out there, but the most important detail to seed starting in my opinion is starting off with sterile containers and potting medium. I use a simple mixture of coconut coir and medium grade vermiculite for the majority of my seedlings. Coir is generally sterile and free of pest problems (insects, disease, and unwelcome plant seeds). Vermiculite is also a sterile plant medium. I reuse many of my pots, so they get a good soak in bleach and soap with a quick scrub. For other tips, please refer to these Extension publications: HGA-00032, Seed Starting and Transplanting (free online) or HGA-001334, 16 Easy Steps to Gardening in Alaska (free online).

Another helpful tip is to set aside a dedicated space to start your seeds in. This can be as elaborate or simple as you want to make it or have the time, energy, and funds to invest. A few items which will lead to success are a shelf with lights and a small fan for air movement. I like to add a heat mat under my seed trays to ensure quick and even seed germination. A shop light is often sufficient for beginners but there are many options out there. A trip to a local garden supply store might be well worth the time to investigate light options. Placing seedlings on windowsills often doesn't provide the intense light seedlings need. Long and leggy plants are a sure sign your seedlings are not getting quality light. A small fan mimics the air movement plants have when growing naturally. Plants will be sturdier and stronger with a gentle air flow. Air movement also keeps the soil surface dryer and helps prevent molds, algae growth and damping-off disease.

Here are a few links with helpful information:

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/techniques/soil-temperature-conditions-vegetable-seed-germination>

<https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/1996/2-9-1996/seed.html#:~:text=The%20closer%20the%20temperature%20is,than%20the%20optimum%20germination%20temperature>

<https://www.johnnyseeds.com/growers-library/growing-center.html>

<https://www.johnnyseeds.com/growers-library/seed-planting-schedule-calculator.html>

<https://extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/lighting-indoor-plants>

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

## Mat-Su Master Gardener Meeting Minutes January 4, 2021

Submitted by Secretary Dorte Mobley

Present were: (M = Member and NM = Non-Member). Steve Brown (M), Deb and Ken Blaylock (M) Kristina Tornqvist (M), Curt and Marge Mueller (M), Cathy Crew (M), Gregory Kalal (M), Michael Kircher (M) Phyllis Kircher (M), Dorte Mobley (M), Becky Myrvold (NM), Linda Sloan (NM), Craig Lisonbee (M), Laurel Flynn (M), Alice Bethka (NM), Joseph Slowik (NM), Jaime Rodriguez (NM), Loree and Clint Raybeck (M), ISAAC Vaughan (NM), Makiah (NM), Thomas Kircher (NM), Ellen VandeVisse (M), Sue Glenn (M), and Jan Mishin (NM)

The meeting was called to order at 7pm via Zoom by President Deb Blaylock. 25 people were in attendance, including members from other garden clubs.

Treasurer Cathy Crew presented the budget. There were questions about the budget not balanced and assorted items, and Kristina Tornqvist moved to postpone approving the 2021 budget to the February meeting so that the Board can meet and go over the details a bit more. The motion was seconded by Dorte Mobley and passed.

The November meeting minutes had been emailed out prior to the meeting. Kristina Tornqvist moved to approve the minutes as presented and Sue Glenn seconded. The motion passed.

President Deb Blaylock then went over the various committee volunteers as more members have been added to some committees. Some committees still have no volunteers. Deb reminded committee members to choose a chair within each committee.

Deb also reminded us that if we had not paid our dues yet, we needed to do that before January 15 for our name to be in the directory. Deb thanked David McCorkell for his article "The Last Tomato" in the January newsletter.

Under New Business, Dorte Mobley inquired whether we need to purchase a club Zoom account (\$150 for a year). President Blaylock responded that since the club is part of the Cooperative Extension Service, we can continue to use the Extension Service account unless they tell us otherwise.

The plan for both February and March will be Zoom meetings with a potential for a presentation/roundtable on using garden journals in February. Our guest Joey Slowik might be a possible speaker on integrated pest management.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:19pm. The evening's presenter was Alpine Garden Nursery owner Jaime Rodriguez, who gave an excellent presentation about wildflowers in Hatcher Pass.

## February Meeting

Hello all,

At our February meeting, we will have a discussion on garden journals. If you are keeping a journal, and are interested in sharing your experience, can you please send a few pictures of it to me at [danishdream@gmail.com](mailto:danishdream@gmail.com). I will put the pictures in a presentation, and then at the Zoom meeting you can talk about the journal (if you like) when we show your pictures. It doesn't matter how fancy or how sloppy it is, it might give someone else an idea of what to do - or not to do. Looking forward to getting a bunch of pictures to share.

Dorte

If you haven't submitted anything yet, please send to Dorte soonest so she can get her presentation done before the February 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. Thanks all!

## 2021 Committee Volunteers

**Monthly Newsletter** - Deb Blaylock, editor; David McCorkell, contributor, Curt Mueller, monthly column contributor

**Website Manager** - Eva-Cohnen-Brown, chair; KC Elliott; David McCorkell

**Guest speakers for monthly regular meetings & meeting space coordinator** - Dorte Mobley, Kristina Tornqvist, Greg Kalal

**Membership Directory** - Kristina Tornqvist, Sue Glenn

**Rebarchek Farm Project** - Michael Kircher, chair; Craig & Mary Lisonbee, Deb & Ken Blaylock, Joe Moore

**Annual Plant Sale** - Deb & Ken Blaylock, chair; Lorraine Cordova, Wendel Lewis, Chuck & Lenita Deda, Ginger Sweeney, Ann Eagerton, Heather Kalxdorff

**Palmer Library & Pioneer Home plantings** - Sue Glenn, Eva and Steve Brown, Joe Moore, Maria Cunningham, Chuck & Lenita Deda, Ginger Sweeney

**Midsummer Garden & Art Faire** - Lydia Wood, Sue Glenn, Wendel Lewis, Ann Eagerton, Craig & Mary Lisonbee

**Summer Garden Tours** - Dorte Mobley, Kristina Tornqvist, Erin O'Connel

**Alaska State Fair awards** - Lydia Wood, Heather Kalxdorff

**State Fair Parade** - Debra Caillouet

**Nominations Committee** -

**2021 Christmas Party** -

**2022 State Master Gardener Conference Committee:** Lorraine Cordova, Ellen VandeVisse, Cindy Walker, Erin O'Connel



## Garden Links (updated Nov 2019)

**Alaska Botanical Garden**

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

**Alaska Center for Conservation Science**

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

**Arbor Day Foundation**

[www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org)

**Alaska Division of Agriculture**

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/>

**Alaska Farm to School**

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

**Alaska Garden Clubs**

<http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org>

**Alaska Grown**

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

**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**

<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 Gardener**

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

**Landscape Plants for Alaska**

[www.alaskaplants.org](http://www.alaskaplants.org)

**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)**

<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**

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

**USDA/NRCS Plant Data Base**

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



## CLUB CONTACT INFO

|                         |                           |                                  |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>President:</b>       | <b>Deb Blaylock</b>       | <b>746-6045/kdblalock@ak.net</b> |
| <b>Vice President:</b>  | <b>Kristina Tornqvist</b> | <b>797-6393</b>                  |
| <b>Secretary:</b>       | <b>Dorte Mobley</b>       | <b>232-5422</b>                  |
| <b>Treasurer:</b>       | <b>Cathy Crew</b>         | <b>632-4401</b>                  |
| <b>Member at Large:</b> | <b>Sue Glenn</b>          | <b>671-0252</b>                  |

If you have gardening news, photos, or information you'd 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

### FEBRUARY 2021 AND BEYOND

**Jan 29 – Mar 5**, Palmer, Good Earth Garden School Organic Gardening course, <https://ellenvandevisse.com/events/>  
**Feb 1**, Palmer, MMGA meeting, Dorte Mobley, Garden Journals  
**Mar 1**, Palmer, MMGA meeting, TBD  
**Mar 4-5**, Via Zoom, 2021 ABG Virtual Spring Garden Conference, <https://www.alaskabg.org/>  
**Apr 5**, Palmer, MMGA meeting, TBD  
**May 3**, Palmer, MMGA meeting, TBD  
**Jun 5**, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale  
**Jun 14**, Palmer, Palmer Library Planting  
**May/Jun TBD**, Palmer, Palmer Veterans and Pioneers Home Planting  
**Jul/Aug**, Member-Only Summer Garden Tour(s)  
**Aug 26 – Sep 6**, Palmer, Alaska State Fair  
**Aug 28**, Palmer, Alaska State Fair Parade  
**Sep 13**, Palmer, MMGA meeting, TBD  
**Oct 4**, Palmer, MMGA meeting TBD  
**Nov 1**, Palmer, Annual MMGA meeting, TBD  
**Dec 6**, Palmer, Christmas Party

### *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, 2021 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: 20<sup>th</sup> day of each month -- Thank you--**



February 2021



Like us on  
**Facebook**

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

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