



President's Patch

By President Jenny Weaver

When the weather hijacked our January meeting it really set me back. I was ready to go to work and excited to take the reins as President of the MatSu Master Gardeners Association. But the weather called a delay of game, and we reset for February 3rd.

Ellen Vande Visse of Good Earth Garden School leads off our speakers in 2025 with a hands-on foliar spray lab on February 3rd. It will be fun to share an interactive presentation. Do join in! See our calendar for future speakers. This also marks our first Zoom meeting with connect info to arrive by email one week before the meeting.

As well as phenomenal speakers, we have several regularly scheduled events to host throughout the year. Our Annual Plant Sale is slated for Saturday, May 31st. Last June, in spite of windy weather, we had a good turnout with a long line of folks waiting to purchase their precious finds. As usual, our gardeners showed up in force with beautiful plants to sell. During the March meeting we will brainstorm and share more info about our sale.

June 14 marks the Colony Day Parade, a substitute for our usual Alaska State Fair float. The award winning Mueller Family, including Dawn Wolski, once again agreed to tackle a parade float. Do you have some time to help build and paint? Ideas to share? Plants to share?

Kevin Johnson will lead us in our Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home beautification project. Last year the grounds looked lovely, and our efforts really blossomed over the summer. Kevin plans some innovative ideas for this year's planting. Stay tuned!

The Palmer Art and Garden Faire is slated for Saturday, July 19th. The Palmer Museum and Visitor's Center hosted a fun affair last year, which

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Patch	1/3
Somewhere in Thyme	2
Hands on Fertilizer Lab	3
Zoom In!	3
Favorite Seed Companies/Catalogs	4
2025 Committee Volunteers	5
Guest Writers Needed	5
MMGA Membership Renewal for 2025	5
Regenerative Gardening/Farming	5
Seed Starting Chart	6
Garden Links	7
Contacts	8
Calendar of Events	8

REGULAR MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

FEB 3RD, 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION:

MATANUSKA EXPERIMENT FARM AND EXTENSION CENTER,

KERTTULA HALL, ROOM 208, SECOND FLOOR

1509 S GEORGESON DR, PALMER

AGENDA

7:00 TO 7:30 PM REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

7:30 SPEAKER:

ELLEN VANDE VISSE

MAKE YOUR OWN FERTILIZER SPRAY

SEE PAGE 3 FOR MORE DETAILS

utilized the grounds surrounding the center. Other than Julie, of Aurora Gardens, no real gardening groups were represented. Perhaps we can make a difference this year. Should we participate this summer? Are you up to chair or co-chair this event?

(Continued on page 3)

SOMEWHERE IN THYME

A WAYBACK ARTICLE FROM A PAST MMGA PUBLICATION – ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED FEB 2011

Supplemental Lighting and Bottom Heat

by Master Gardener Curt Mueller

The days lengthen quickly, and the sun beams brighter day by day, but for gardening endeavors, some help is still in order. Lighting is of prime importance. The goal is to produce sturdy, healthy plants to set out in gardens, flower beds, planters, and baskets; wherever we wish to add a touch of beauty or grow for the table. Supplemental lighting will help attain that goal.

Most seeds require light for germination. Some notable exceptions are nasturtium, nemesia, pansies and violas, sweet peas, and several other commonly grown species. Without exception these will respond to light for growth and should be given light as soon as they germinate. For seeds that require light, the intensity is a factor for germination in many species. Tomatoes and cucumbers are examples, germinating faster and more evenly with supplemental light, as will most others.

For growing on, lighting is of the essence. Sunny windows help, but additional light will keep plants from stretching out and becoming "leggy." It will definitely improve plant health, when used with other good cultural practices.

There are many types of light fixtures suitable for plant growth. Incandescent, fluorescent, HPS {high pressure sodium}, MH [metal halide], high output fluorescent, and LED all have uses. Most home gardeners will want to keep the initial costs down as well as electricity usage. There are some kits and shelf setups available that may be in a price range that people can handle, or you can make your own setup. This could be as simple as using compact fluorescents. What works very well at reasonable cost is a setup using four-foot fluorescent tubes. What are called shop fixtures are available at a reasonable price, and the inexpensive 40-watt cool white

tubes will do a great job, especially when coupled with sunlight from a window.

It is well to remember that placing the light close to the plants is a big factor in growth. Light intensity decreases with the square of the distance. What this means is that a light source placed one foot from a surface will be four times as intense as that placed two feet from a surface.

Bottom heat for germination and growth is a particularly useful technique. Many seeds, certainly not all, will germinate much better and faster with a temperature warmer than room temperature. Any warm season crop such as tomatoes or squash will germinate best at 75 to 80 degrees F. Cabbage and petunias would like 70 to 75. Each plant variety will have an optimum germination temperature. It is well to err on the high side of that which is recommended but be sure to remove most seedlings from bottom heat as soon as they germinate, lest they become leggy. Some may be grown with heat, but less than what is used for germination. Cuttings such as fuchsia and geraniums also benefit from bottom heat.

Keep in mind that room temperature usually drops at night, and many people keep the daytime thermostat setting at 68 degrees or cooler. Evaporation from the medium used for germination has a cooling effect. An inexpensive way to monitor soil temperature is with an aquarium thermometer, one of the floating kinds.

Heating mats work well and vary in cost with size and whether or not they have temperature control. Those that do not will heat full time and it may be useful to place some thin wood slats under flats to maintain the desired temperature.

A handy person can make a heating box using an incandescent fixture, some scrap plywood, and an old cookie sheet. It is amazing how much heat a 25-watt bulb will produce.

Hands On Fertilizer Lab!

Or shall we say -
Calcium for Dummies &
Boron for Morons

What: Step into the lab and put your apron on! You're going to be a Mad Scientist and formulate your own custom liquid fertilizer. When you apply it to your seedlings, vegetables, fruits, and flowers, you'll deliver neglected minerals, feed microbes, and reduce disease.

Why: This liquid spray is highly effective at nourishing your garden with two of the most commonly deficient but tricky minerals: Boron and Calcium.

Please join us during our regular meeting on February 3, as Ellen Vande Visse of Good Earth Garden School leads us in this interactive lab presentation. Please RSVP if you plan to attend so that we might provide enough seats, equipment, and supplies to accommodate everyone.

REMEMBER, those who attend in person should bring a pint-sized container that will hold liquid!



Ellen Vande Visse, MS
Good Earth Garden School

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ZOOM IN!

Submitted by Jenny Weaver

February 3 marks our first full-on Zoom meeting. Both our business meeting and the guest speaker will be broadcast via Zoom. All 2024 and 2025 Mat-Su Master Gardeners will receive an email complete with Zoom contact/sign-on information one week prior to February 3.

This will be the last opportunity for 2024 members who have not yet renewed in 2025 to join in online. Please renew your membership if you wish to Zoom in on future meetings. Also, if you DO plan to Zoom, I would love to hear from you. I'd just like to get a handle on how many will join online, and how it goes for all who do.

Public guests may attend the meeting in person in Room #208 of the Palmer Extension Service Office, 1509 Georgeson Rd, Palmer, but will not receive access to Zoom attendance.

Hope to see or hear from you on the 3rd!

(Continued from page 1)

Isaac Vaughan, high school member extraordinaire (and ultimate trickster) again leads the charge for our Rebarchek Project. We plan to brainstorm ideas for this during a future meeting. Many thanks to Deb and Ken Blaylock whose assist with building the arbor planters last July proved essential for this on-going project.

Dorte Mobley and Kristina Tornqvist volunteered to tackle garden tours this year and with a little help may schedule some fun Valley visits. Do you have a garden to share? Know of someone who would?

As fall approaches we may be looking for a new chairperson to lead our Alaska State Fair Special Awards. Deb Blaylock reports she has a bunch of info to pass on to whomever might take the lead. We have several members who usually participate during crop/flower intake and judging. Perhaps someone will step up to help with this fun event....

Behind the scenes, Deb Blaylock continues as editor of our monthly newsletter and posts and answers questions on our Facebook page and group. Seriously, this is no small job! Eva Brown faithfully administers our web page. Do you have information, ideas, or articles to share with these two ladies?

Cathy Crew works diligently as Treasurer to update our membership list, balance our books, pay our bills, and provide monthly reports.

Thanks to all our board members, committee chairpersons, and volunteers for the work they do for Mat-Su Master Gardeners! Special thanks to Todd Weaver for his yummy after-meet treats.

Now is the time to ask ALL members, can you help with any of our activities? Can you share your ideas and/or contacts? Do you have a few moments to tackle a small task for any one of these committees? Do you have a truck to haul tables/chairs? An urge to spend a half-day planting? An interest in Rebarchek? Please consider what you might do to assist MMGA as we spread the love and knowledge of gardening to others in the Mat-Su Valley.

I believe 2025 will be a good year for Mat-Su Master Gardeners and I know, with your help, we can make that happen!

Favorite Seed Companies/Catalogs

Here's a list of some favorite seed companies and catalogs in alphabetical order:

- Adaptive Seeds: <https://www.adaptiveseeds.com/>
- Alaska Native Plant Society Seeds: <https://www.facebook.com/alaskanativeplantseeds>
- Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds: <https://www.rareseeds.com/>
- Best Cool Seeds aka Denali Seed Company (**Founded in Alaska by an Alaskan**): <https://www.bestcoolseeds.com/>
- Ed Hume Garden Seeds: <https://www.humeseeds.com/>
- Eden Brothers: <https://www.edenbrothers.com/>
- Fedco Seeds: <https://www.fedcoseeds.com/>
- Foundroot (**Alaska company**): <https://www.foundroot.com/>
- High Mowing Organic Seeds: <https://www.highmowingseeds.com/>
- Hudson Valley Seed Co: <https://hudsonvalleyseed.com/>
- Johnny's Selected Seeds: <https://www.johnnyseeds.com/>
- Park Seed Company: <https://parkseed.com/>
- Peaceful Valley Farm & Garden Supply: <https://www.groworganic.com/>
- Pinetree Garden Seeds: <https://www.superseeds.com/>
- Renee's Garden Seeds: <https://www.reneesgarden.com/>
- Richters Herbs: <https://www.richters.com/>
- St. Isidore Farm, Alaska Wildflower Seeds, (**Alaska company**) <https://www.stisidorefarmak.com/>
- Seed Savers Exchange Heirloom Seeds: <https://www.seedsavers.org/>
- Seeds and Soil Farm - Palmer (**Alaska company**): <https://seedsandsoilorganics.com/>
- Seeds N Such: <https://seednsuch.com/>
- Strictly Medicinal Seeds: <https://strictlymedicinalseeds.com/>
- Territorial Seed Company: <http://www.territorialseed.com/>
- True Leaf Market: <https://www.trueleafmarket.com/>
- Veseys (Canada & US): <https://www.veseys.com/>
- Victory Seeds: <https://www.victoryseeds.com/>

2025 Committee Volunteers

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

Guest Writers Needed!

I am 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: debblaylock23@gmail.com.

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>



Regenerative Gardening & Farming

The Comprehensive Course
With Ellen VandeVisse

Six Fridays or Saturdays
Palmer or Wasilla AK
Feb 21- March 29, 2025

Energize your soil, grow your own nutrient-dense food

Details Here

<https://commongroundalaska.com/product-category/classes/>

<https://commongroundalaska.com/product-category/classes/>

Palmer/South Central Alaska Seed Starting Chart 2025

January	February	March	April	May	June
Jan	Early Feb	Early March	Early April	Direct Sow	Direct Sow
Echinacea	Hot Peppers	Bell/Sweet Pepper	Kale	Carrots	Beans
Rhodochiton	Catnip	Margolds	Cilantro	Potatoes	Sweet Corn
Leeks	Parsley		Sweet Corn	Beets	Zucchini
Shallots	White Sage		Lettuce	Swiss Chard	All Squashes
Onions	Lemon Balm	Mid March	Dill	Lettuce	Need Warmer Soil
Lemon Grass	Thyme	Dahlia bulbs	Nasturtium	Peas	
Rhodiola	Stevia	Tomatoes	Beets	Spinach	Transplants*
Rosemary	Hyssop		Sunflowers	Turnips	Sweet Corn
Artichokes	Lavender	Late March	Late April	Cilantro/Dill	Zucchini
Super Hot Peppers	Horehound	Broccoli	Zucchini	Transplants*	Winter Squash
Slow growing herbs	Oregano	Cauliflower	Winter Squash	Cauliflower	Summer Squash
Chives	Leaf Fennel	Cabbage	Summer Squash	Cabbage	Tomatillos
Asparagus (seed)	Eucalyptus	Kohlrabi	Cucumbers	Broccoli	Tomatoes
		Romanesco	Pumpkins	Herbs	Pumpkins
		Alyssum	Melons	Onions/Scallions	
	Mid to Late February	Basil		Leeks	
	Sage	Calendula		Kohlrabi	
	Celery	Tomatillos		Romanesco	
	Celeriac	Lily bulbs		Flowers	GARLIC
	Brussel sprouts	Collards		Lettuce	Garlic is planted in the fall. Usually late September to mid-October. Wait for a hard frost or two to plant. Don't plant if its raining a lot! Garlic doesn't like soggy soil.
	Scallions			Beets/Chard	
	Bulb Fennel			Celery	
	Strawberry (seed)			Brussel sprouts	

*** These should be hardened off before transplanting.**

This is my personal seed starting schedule - it is not written in stone and can be modified to work for you. I start some things early as they are very slow growing. Others, I schedule because of my available seed starting space. Memorial Day weekend is the target date I use for planting outdoors. Remember – ground temperatures are just as (or more) important than air temperatures. Growing zones are based on air temperatures and don't account for Alaskan cold soils. Hardening off is a must for plants started indoors or in a protected greenhouse. environment. Expect your plants to take a "pause" after transplanting. They need to establish new roots and adjust to the cooler soils. Happy Gardening! Deb Blaylock, Alaska Master Gardener, Palmer, Alaska.

Last modified January 2025.

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

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

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

USDA/NRCS Plant Database

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

Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

<https://wildflowergardenclub.org/>

BOARD OF DIRECTOR CONTACT INFO

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

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/
Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2025 AND BEYOND

Feb 3, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Ellen Vande Visse, Make Your Own Fertilizer Spray
Mar 3, Palmer, Regular Meeting, David Ianson
Apr 7, Palmer, Regular Meeting
May 5, Palmer, Regular Meeting
May 16-18, Juneau, State Master Gardener Conference
May 31, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale
June 9, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Rebarchek Farm Project Day
June 13-15, Palmer, Colony Days
June 14, Palmer, Colony Days Parade
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: 20th day of each month -- Thank you--



February 2025



Like us on
Facebook

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION
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