



Jan 2022



President's Patch

By President Dorte Mobley

Happy New Year to all of you.

As incoming president, I would like to thank Deb for her great leadership for the last several years. It will be hard for me to follow. I also want to thank both the outgoing and the incoming officers. I hope we have a wonderful year ahead of us with an exciting conference in the spring. Another huge thanks to Deb for stepping up and taking charge of that. Please let her know how you can help.

Kristina has arranged for a couple of great guest speakers for the first few months until we get someone to step up and take over that task. Both meetings will be via Zoom – both because the speakers are not local but also because we don't have a place to meet - yet.

If you have any ideas of what you would like to see at the meetings, you really need to let me know. I assume that you all want a speaker? Or maybe I am wrong, and you only want a business meeting? LOL! Just joking. I am sure one of you will take on that task and arrange for some fun for us to do. If you have an idea but don't know who a good speaker would be, still bring it up – maybe someone else knows. And we also need to find a place where we can meet without harsh Covid restrictions.

So please put on your thinking caps and let us have another fun and educating year.



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GENERAL MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY, JANUARY 10TH, 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION:

THE JANUARY MEETING WILL BE A ZOOM ONLINE MEETING. A LINK WILL BE EMAILED OUT WHEN AVAILABLE.

MEETING AGENDA

BUSINESS MEETING

7 PM

GUEST SPEAKER

7:30 PM

KEENAN PLATE WILL BE OUR SPEAKER ON JANUARY 10TH. KEENAN IS THE COORDINATOR FOR THE GROW NORTH FARM WHICH IS PART OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION ASSISTANCE SERVICES IN ANCHORAGE

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Here we are again, the day before the winter solstice, on the verge of lengthening days with the sun rising higher and coming up more to the east day by day and then moving toward the north. This is a phenomenon we can thoroughly enjoy at our northerly latitude. From our home on Lazy Mountain, we are presently watching the sun set and rise again behind the various peaks in the range to our south as it makes its short transit each day. Right at noon the sun disappears behind Pioneer Peak for a half hour and finally clears the peak on January 8. Yes, the peasant has been tracking that.

The snow is silently drifting down today, promising to be a more than generous snowfall. We are indeed having an Alaska winter. The cover of snow is a boon for our perennials. We can expect some thaws during the winter months. Maybe we won't get too much more subzero weather. Who knows? We will accept and enjoy it.

We MGs have an eventful year coming up. Hosting the conference will be fun. Let us all pitch in to make it a success. As mentioned in our last newsletter the peasant is tasked with table decorations which will be distributed to people in a drawing. If you are contributing plants for the tables, please present those which will be timely for the early April date of the conference. People will need to tend the plants until it's time to plant out. Please keep me informed of what you will contribute. The peasant plans to grow plants in three-inch pots and each table will have a half flat [10 x 10] to hold the plants. If there is a mix of pot sizes that will be well, but let's keep it at three inch or a bit smaller.

May your holidays be joyful and your new year prosperous.

Thanks, folks.

Lazy Mountain Seasons



Chinese Banyan

Submitted by Master Gardener Isaac Vaughn



My mother has a large Chinese Banyan (*Ficus Benjamina*, a houseplant tree) that her mother gave her when she was born. It has many daughter plants from “impossible” cuttings. I’ve read numerous books that deem home propagation of this tree impossible (*The Houseplant Survival Manual* is one), but it’s the easiest tree ever to propagate: cut a branch 6-12 inches long, put 1/3 of the stem in water, and in around a month, it has enough roots to pot up!

This is an old, “unimproved” variety that has undergone very little---if any---hybridization to dwarf it, make it leafier, etc. This lack of breeding could theoretically make stem cuttings easier. It could also be the “Old Tree Syndrome,” my name for what happens to *Ficus* trees when they get old (20+ years): They develop their own quirky personality. Victims might have multiple growing seasons in a year, lose up to half their leaves at any given moment, have different watering or feeding requirements than is normal, or possibly like mom’s tree, make propagation simple.

All you do to train it to grow upright quickly is prune out vigorous side shoots. Being a rubber tree, it’ll bleed white latex sap that can cause allergic reactions in some people. To stop the sap in small trees, hold the tree under warm (90-100 degrees F) water for about a minute.

I liked the tree so much that I took my own cutting a few months ago, and it now is nearly a foot tall. I want it to grow tall quickly, so I am pinching out branches and fertilizing with 22/11/11 lawn food with homemade micronutrient foliar spray. This tree is my favorite indoor tree for many reasons: It grows quickly, it takes a low amount of feeding, it has a beautiful tree shape (rounded or open) with small leaves and is easily reshaped in case it gets scraggly.



INTRODUCING OUR NEW SECRETARY

Since I am taking the responsibility of the secretary of the Mat-Su Valley Master Gardener club, I think you might want to know a little bit about me. I live on ten acres of hilly, wooded rock, am 15 years old, and have 5 brothers and 3 sisters. I found my interests in plants in San Antonio, Texas (where you can grow anything but apples) around six years ago when I bought a *Parodia* cactus from a Mother’s Day display.

We started some pineapples, herbs, and tomatoes, but had to leave them behind when we moved up here. I bought a few

more cacti on the road trip up, but, sadly, my little sister has been so helpful in ... ahem ... watering them. I have been collecting many, many, species since - my indoor plant supply rocketing up to around 300 plants, and about twice as many outdoor plants...depending on the season, of course.

My favorite areas of gardening are any that have something new and exciting: Houseplants and rock gardening, for example. My favorite plants are any that are actively blooming, fruiting, or growing. I am constantly looking for new plants to try, like growing cacti outdoors in my rock garden.

Thank you for entrusting me with this opportunity! I look forward to getting to know everyone better and will be glad to be of any further assistance.

Respectfully, Isaac Vaughn

BIOCONTROLS?

Jozef Slowik, IPM Technician, UAF Cooperative Extension Service

Have you ever thought of using a biocontrol in your garden? A look on the internet may guide you down a path of supposed miracle cures for all your pest problems without the guilt of pesticide use. But biocontrols are not that cut and dry. To begin with, you obviously don't want to introduce a larger pest than the pest you're trying to treat. This is where biocontrol use in Alaska is today.

In a nutshell, there are no biocontrol agents legal for use in Alaska. The reason for this is somewhat bureaucratic. Because the federal government treats the contiguous states separate from Alaska and Hawaii, we have not been included in any of the biocontrol assessment work. This means to ship or sell a biocontrol to Alaska requires a special permit which no producer or retailer has asked for. Our state Department of Natural Resources also regulates the import of biocontrols, and again no one has been asking for permits.

I know what you're saying. Plenty of people have purchased them online, and sometimes even from stores. The reason for this availability is simple: many biocontrol agents are readily available in the contiguous states, so they assume they must be legal in Alaska as well. And this is where we are today.

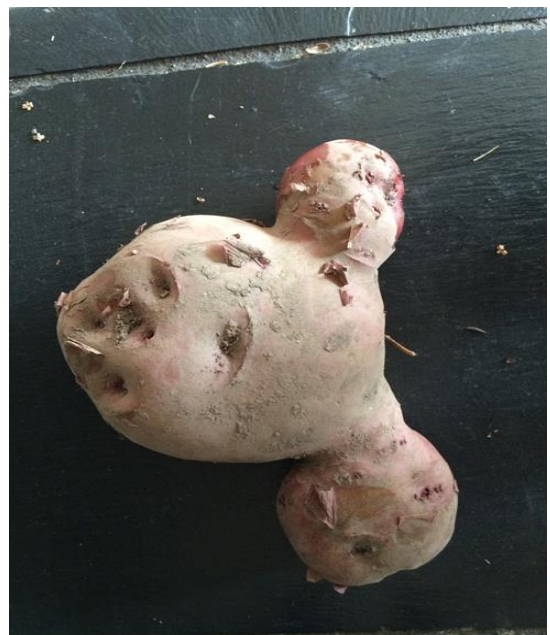
But Alaska is lucky, in a way. Because no biocontrol agents have been legalized, we can regulate them and allow only the good ones. Science has come a long way since we started using biocontrols, and there is a wealth of data we can use to help us make good choices about what species to allow, and which to skip. The U.S. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, APHIS for short, has a list of Lower 48-approved species on their webpage (just Google

"APHIS approved biocontrol list" for the list).

This is where we need your help. Have you heard of any of these? Do you have an interest in using them? We in Extension and at the DNR often collaborate with commercial growers, but we are admittedly somewhat in the dark as to what home gardeners are interested in using. If you do, please send me an email

(jaslowik@alaska.edu) and give us a heads-up as to what to look into and see if we can't get it legalized. In the Integrated Pest Management world, we would like you, the growers, to have as many tools in the toolbox as you can. But we also want those tools to be useful and not harmful. We're in a lucky position, so take a moment and if you have a recommendation, let us know.

Master Potato Farmer Greg Kalal sent this picture in of his Alaska-shaped Alaska grown potato! He suggested adding a bit of imagination when looking at it. I can see it!



Rose Hip Jelly, Submitted by Isaac Vaughn
(link: https://www.simplyrecipes.com/recipes/rose_hip_jelly/)



SERVINGS 80 servings, YIELD 5 8-ounce jars

Rose hips have seeds on the inside that are itchy and irritating. You can leave the seeds in if you want or remove them; they will get strained out if you don't remove them before cooking.

On doing research for the jelly recipe, one source said that the seeds were slightly tannic and recommended removing them. I tried it both ways and noticed practically no difference in the resulting taste. Removing the seeds is rather painstaking, and for the jelly recipe can add an entire hour to the jelly making process.

Do not use aluminum or cast iron to cook the rosehips; use stainless steel or non-reactive cookware.

Ingredients

- 2 quarts rose hips
- 6 cups water
- 1/2 cup fresh squeezed lemon juice
- 1 package Sure-Jell pectin
- 1/4 teaspoon butter
- 3 1/2 cups sugar

Rinse and trim: Rinse the rose hips thoroughly. Cut off the scraggly ends and discard.

Boil the rose hips: Place rose hips in a large pot. Add 6 cups of water. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to simmer. Cover and cook for 1 hour (or longer), until rose hips are soft and can be mashed.

Mash hips and strain: Use a potato masher to mash up the rose hips into a rough purée.

Set up a jelly bag, or a large very fine mesh strainer, or 4 layers of cheesecloth over a bowl or large pot.

Transfer the rose hip mixture into the jelly bag/strainer/cheesecloth. Let strain into the

bowl for at least an hour. Squeeze the jelly bag or cheesecloth to get more remaining juice out.

Prepare canning jars:

You'll need 5 to 6 half-pint canning jars and lids. Sterilize the jars by either running them through the dishwasher, right before canning, or placing them on a rack in a large pot of water that you bring to a boil for 10 minutes, or by placing them in a 200°F oven for 10 minutes.

To sterilize the lids, bring a kettle of a couple cups of water to a boil. Place lids in a shallow bowl and pour the boiling water over them.

Measure the juice:

You will need 3 cups of juice for this recipe, so if you have less than 3 cups, add more water to the mixture (you can also add some boiling water to the jelly bag if you still have it set up, allowing more liquid to drain out).

Make the jelly: Place 3 cups of the rose hip juice in a large, wide pot. Add the lemon juice and pectin. Bring to a boil, dissolving all of the pectin. Add the sugar. Once the sugar has dissolved, add the butter. Bring to a hard boil (one that you cannot reduce by stirring).

The mixture will bubble up considerably. Boil for exactly one minute. Then remove from heat and pour off into prepared canning jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace from the rim.

Can the jelly:

If any jelly falls on the rim as you pour it into the jars, wipe the rim with a damp paper towel. Place sterilized lids on jars and rings to secure.

To ensure a good seal, and to guard against mold, you can process the jars in a water bath for 10 minutes (bacteria is already killed by the sugar). To process, place the jars on a rack in a large, tall stock pot. Cover with an inch of water and bring to a rolling boil for 10 minutes.

Then turn off the heat, remove the jars from the water, and let cool. As the jars cool you should hear a popping sound as the lids seal. The lids should seal; if not, store in the refrigerator.

Isaac's note: You may need to boil for another few seconds to a half minute, or it doesn't harden all the way.

JANA'S CRANBERRY RELISH

submitted by Jana Gooch

Ingredients:

- 3 cups sugar
- 3 cups water
- 2 packages fresh cranberries
- 1 cup pecan pieces, finely chopped
- 1 small orange (zested), then chop 1/2 the orange into very small pieces

Eat the other half of the orange. 😊

Directions:

Stir sugar and water together in large saucepan. Turn heat to high until briskly boiling. Stir often to keep sugar dissolving.

Add cranberries, turn to medium-high heat, and keep boiling as cranberries pop. Stir often to keep from sticking. If cranberries don't all pop, you can force them by mashing them against the side of the pot with a spoon. Once the cranberries are nicely popped, turn off heat and set aside to cool.

Once cooled, place in refrigerator until cold.

After completely cooling, add chopped pecan pieces, orange zest, and chopped 1/2 orange. Stir well. Refrigerate until dinner is served.

Serves 16.

**2022 Standing Committee Volunteers**

Monthly Newsletter - Deb Blaylock, publisher

Website Manager - Eva-Cohnen-Brown, manager

Guest speakers for monthly regular meetings & meeting space coordinator - Vacant

Membership Directory - Vacant

Rebarchek Farm Project - Michael Kircher, chair?

Annual Plant Sale - Vacant

Palmer Library & Pioneer Home Planting - Vacant

Midsummer Garden & Art Faire - Chair: Craig Lisonbee

Summer Garden Tours - Vacant

Alaska State Fair awards - Deb Blaylock

State Fair Parade - Vacant

Nominations Committee - Vacant

2022 Christmas Party - Vacant

2022 State Master Gardener Conference Committee: Deb & Ken Blaylock, Cathy Crew, Craig Lisonbee, Curt Mueller, Steve Brown, Eva Cohnen-Brown, Connie Egger, Katie Hurley

As you can see, many of our 2022 Standing Committees need volunteers. Please contact one of the board members if you would like to fill one of the vacancies.

Thank you!

2022 State Master Gardener Conference Update

Happy New Year's everyone! I hope Santa Claus was good to you! I wanted to give everyone an update on what's going on with the State Master Gardener Conference that the Mat-Su Master Gardeners are hosting on April 2nd, 2022.

First, we could use a few more volunteers. We really need someone to head up the following conference committees: Door Prizes, Vendors, Advertising, Goodie Bags, and Programs, and Speaker Thank You Gifts. We could also use extra help on all these committees to help. Here's a description of the main committees.

- DOOR PRIZES – contact companies to donate items for door prizes or to put in the goodie bags.
- VENDORS – contact local companies to set up a business table at the conference.
- ADVERTISING/PR – contact local news outlets and get the word out about the conference.
- GOODIE BAGS/REGISTRANT FOLDERS – order bags and get folders from CES. Put together the bags and folders for each conference attendee.
- SPEAKER THANK YOU GIFTS – Purchase thank you gifts for each of our guest speakers.
- SET UP AND ATTENDEE SIGN IN – Help Saturday morning of the conference to sign in attendees and hand out goodie bags.
- TABLE DECORATIONS – Help Curt Mueller grow some plants.
- PROGRAMS/REGISTRANT NAME TAGS/ETC – put together conference programs and other products.

We are renting Evangelos Restaurant's banquet room. It is a very nice venue, and they also will do the food service for our event. Curt Mueller is heading the committee to put together the centerpieces for each table which will also be a

door prize. Contact him if you can help out with growing a few things.

We have some great guest speakers in the works. The focus of our conference will be on beginning and new-to-Alaska gardeners. During the pandemic, gardening became a much-needed outlet for folks. We hope to be able to educate a lot of those new gardeners. Experienced gardeners are sure to learn a few new things as well at the conference. Steve Brown is working on our keynote speaker.

The conference motto has evolved a few times, but I think the final one will be, "You Can Grow It!" If anyone has some artistic talents and can produce a logo for that conference motto, let me know! Otherwise, our logo will be some canned art from the internet. It would be nice to have some homegrown talent make a logo for us.

We aim to make the conference registration fee as low as possible and as soon as we have all our costs figured out, we'll announce that. We have room for about 10 vendor tables. I had thoughts about setting up a demonstration table that folks could "man" at breaks. We could have seed catalogs, seed starting equipment, and different planting media and tools at the table to talk about.

Please consider which committee you would like to help with. If you have any ideas to make our conference successful, please let me know!

Committee members who actively participate get a discounted registration to the conference.

We need your help to make the conference a success. Let Deb Blaylock know if you can help (matsumastergardeners@gmail.com).

We hope to have a conference committee meeting on Monday, January 10th at 6 pm on Zoom (just prior to our regular membership meeting). An email will go out when the zoom link is available. Please join us if you're interested in helping out!

Garden Links (updated Mar 2021)

Alaska Botanical Garden

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

Alaska Center for Conservation Science

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

Arbor Day Foundation

www.arboday.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 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://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/>

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

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)

<http://search.extension.org>

Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley

<https://fairbanksmastergardeners.wordpress.com/>

Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Services

New

<https://www.uaf.edu/afes/places/palmer/>

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

Society of American Foresters, Cook Inlet Chapter *New*

<http://www.alaska.forestry.org/alaska/chapters/cook-inlet>

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 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

USDA/NRCS Plant Data Base

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

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Dorte Mobley	907-232-5422
Vice President:	Kristina Tornqvist	907-795-6393
Secretary:	Isaac Vaughn	dnavon@msn.com
Treasurer:	Cathy Crew	907-632-4401
Member at Large:	Sue Glenn	907-671-0252

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/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JAN 2022 AND BEYOND

Jan 10, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Grow North Farm

Feb 7, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

Feb 4 – Mar 11, Palmer, Organic Gardening Course, <https://ellenvandevise.com/>

Mar 7, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

Mar 11-12, Anchorage, ABG 2022 Spring Garden Conference

Apr 2, Wasilla, (Evangelos), State Master Gardener Conference, "You Can Grow It!"

Apr 4, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

May 2, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

May TBD, Palmer, Palmer Veterans and Pioneers Home Planting

Jun 4, Palmer, Palmer Pavilion, Annual Plant Sale

Jun 13, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Planting at Palmer Public Library

July TBD, Palmer Garden & Art Faire

July/August, TBD, Summer Garden Tour(s)

Aug 19 – Sep 5, Palmer, Alaska State Fair

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 January 15, 2022 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 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.

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--



January 2022



Like us on
Facebook

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Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
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