

Jan 2023



President's Patch

By President Kevin Johnson

Greetings everyone,

This year will be lots of learning for me. Gardening has been a passion of mine for years, as for all of you. The many different varieties of flowers, shrubs, and vegetables makes for constant changes to the colors of our yards.

My goals for the year will be to increase membership, increase awareness of the organization and attendance at the monthly meetings.

Increasing attendance at the meetings cannot be done by one person, but increasing membership, it can be accomplished. With the list of speakers at the meetings, this provides great information for all, members and non-members. In this year, invite one person, member or non-member, to a meeting and we can all increase meeting attendance together.

Also, everyone, please make it an individual goal to sign up one person as a member every six months, so two new members per year. This will increase participation for events MMGA sponsors. There are projects that we have committees already formed for and budget established; the next part is volunteers for a couple of hours of work. A reminder that our membership is open to anyone who enjoys gardening; having taken the Master Gardener course is NOT a requirement.

To spread the word of MMGA, please look for opportunities. Some examples are - forward the newsletter to friends and family, share the newsletter on social media with others, print off a membership form and present it to gardeners you meet.

Deb Blaylock has done a great job in lining up speakers for this year. The last list I saw, she had nine months of speakers already scheduled. This begins with Josh Smith speaking about the Rebarchek Farm at the January meeting.

Thank you, and hope to see everyone along the gardening trail.

Kevin

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REGULAR MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

JANUARY 9, 2023, 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION:

MATANUSKA EXPERIMENT FARM AND
EXTENSION CENTER, KERTTULA HALL, "BLUE
ROOM," 1509 S GEORGESON DR, PALMER, AK

AGENDA

7:00 TO 7:30 PM BUSINESS MEETING

7:30 GUEST SPEAKER

JOSH SMITH, OWNER OF BEAR MOUNTAIN
FOREST NURSERY AND AGRONOMIST WITH
THE REBARCHEK FARM PROJECT WILL SPEAK
ON THE HORTICULTURE PROJECTS HAPPENING
AT THE ALASKA STATE FAIR'S REBARCHEK
FARM.

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

Here we go again! We have reached the winter solstice today, losing a few seconds. Tomorrow we will gain a few, and then continue to gain daylight for six months. This giant clock that is our solar system is indeed a phenomenon! We shall surely welcome and enjoy the return of long days. Although today is the official start of winter, we might be accurate in thinking we have had a fair amount of winter already. We Alaskans can handle it.

The accompanying photo is of a young bull moose that was nibbling the new shoots on a Scotch rose. Apparently, the thorns which are on the older stems are still edible on the new ones, and there is some nourishment in the new growth. The photo was taken in early December. The peasant cranked open the dining room window for the photo. The moose only looked up for a few seconds and went right back to his snacking.



Pruning the Scotch rose

We have all had some experiences with moose eating shrubs and garden stuff. For common lilacs and such the peasant has used Plantskydd with excellent results. One

application in fall has sufficed to protect the plants all winter.

The photo of our bur oak encased in fencing material shows the interest of moose in the young tree by the abundance of tracks near it. Without protection the tree would have been totally wrecked. Incidentally, you will notice the tree has not lost its leaves. In the peasant's Wisconsin days, the saying, attributed to native folk, went thusly, "If the oak trees hold their leaves it's going to be a cold winter."



Moose tracks around bur oak

Thanks, folks. May you enjoy the holidays and have a happy and prosperous new year.



Need a recipe for a New Year's Eve party? Or a quick treat when putting away the Christmas decorations? Here are a few from some of our members.

Christmas Cheese Ball

Marge Mueller

Ingredients

- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 jar (2 oz) diced pimentos, chopped
- 2 tablespoons butter melted
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce

Beat cream cheese until fluffy; beat in cheese, onions, pimentos, butter, and Worcestershire sauce. Press into ball. Refrigerate. Remove 15 minutes before serving. Serve with assorted crackers. Very tasty.

1-2-3 Cake

I have literally never heard of this before....

You need two boxes of cake mix. One can be any flavor you prefer, but the other **MUST** be Angel Food cake mix.

Mix them together (shake them into a big bowl).

Then simply store the mixture in an airtight container until you get the urge for dessert.

Put three tablespoons of the dry mixture in a big coffee mug and stir in 2 tablespoons of water.

Microwave it for one minute and you will have a single serving of cake!

Top with fruit, ice cream, whipped cream or whatever! Awesome for those of us who want something sweet every now and then without making an entire cake!

Sent from Jana Gooch

5-minute Candied Walnuts

Deb Blaylock

Ingredients

1 cup walnut halves/pieces, you can also use this recipe for candied pecans
1/4 cup white granulated sugar, (not coarse sugar)
1 tablespoon unsalted butter

Instructions:

Heat a medium non-stick skillet over medium heat, add walnuts, granulated sugar, and butter.

Heat over medium heat for 5 minutes, stirring frequently.

Transfer immediately onto a sheet of parchment paper and separate the nuts right away. Using two spatulas will make this task go faster. You do not want to give the nuts a chance to turn into a wad of inseparable delicious goodness unless you are the only person who will be enjoying the wad ;).

Once the coating hardens (5-7 minutes), you can transfer them to a bowl and enjoy!

Garlic Artichoke Dip

(Adapted from The Garlic Lovers' Cookbook)

Eva Cohnen-Brown

3 cloves garlic
2 cans (8 ½ oz. each) artichoke hearts, drained (or [2] 8 ½ oz. frozen)
1 cup parmesan cheese, grated
1 cup mayonnaise
1 lemon, juice of
Dash of Tabasco

Chop garlic and artichoke hearts until medium fine. In small baking dish add remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly. Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes or until brown on top. Serve with veggies, chips, or crackers.

Yield: approx. 6 servings

What's Best for Everyone

Written by Master Garden Isaac Vaughan

People have many diverse reasons for planting a garden. One of the most common is for decorative reasons. Another popular reason is to reduce the grocery bill. Others include environment, therapeutic, enterprise, and entertainment. Whatever the reason, gardens remain the landscape of the cultivated world, ranging from window boxes and balcony containers belonging to the apartment and condominium dwellers, to the enormous cottage gardens and flower meadows of our country homes. We rely on garden centers and seed companies for our plants, seeds, and supplies, shifting the production stress over to them, their factories, and their chemicals. We can change this.

Although agriculture has its “dirty” secrets, there is a silver lining. Since the introduction of pesticides, people have eyed major farming industries with suspicion. Farms would excuse their use of chemicals with such alibis as “It increases yields, making us productive so we can feed you” or “Without them, insects would decimate our crops.” While legitimate excuses, there are cheaper, safer, more ecologically intelligent solutions for these issues. People are starting to seek organically grown foods as they start realizing what is happening, as common farming and, admittedly, gardening practices fail to see soil as a living web, consisting of every macro- and micro-organism that uses it... including us. Farmers (one of the most influential “soil web organisms”) partially caused the Dust Bowl by overusing their fields. In Exodus 23:10-11, God instructed the Israelites to let the fields lay fallow every seventh year, allowing the weeds to replenish nutrients and biomass. In modern times, the equivalent would be bio-integrated farms’ use of cover crops: Every few years, to keep the soil good, things need to be planted or allowed to grow that will undo damage dealt

by cash crops. On a small scale, organic gardeners use soil amendments such as manure, leaf mold, or compost to get around this issue. Even if a horticultural project has no soil or irrigation issues, there still will be the matter of pests.... What do we expect, we occupy their habitat! Beneficial insects and plants that will harbor them are what I (should) use. Biological means of pest management is widely speculated, but not so commonly used in large operations.

Growing our own gardens can do many things if we do it right. For example, we can grow flowers for pollinators. Little do we know, many hybrid plants, such as double-flowered plants, do not produce a safe, reliable source of nectar or pollen for our pollinators. While I believe double- and triple-flowered strains should be grown and preserved, we should also grow the better nectar producers, such as Nasturtium, Violets, single-flowered Snapdragon, Cranesbill, and most other wildflowers. (Note: I use “wildflower” somewhat liberally, less so than most plant companies; I prefer to use the disputed term to refer to noninvasive species plants that are native or naturalized in the inferred area). We can use our gardens to wean our reliance to the lower 48, as over 70% of Alaska’s food is imported. If every household grew a well-constructed food forest of at least half an acre, we could cut our imported food by at least 50%. Many of us can also testify to gardening’s health benefits, as can surveys and some scientific studies. Growing open-pollinated plants especially can preserve food security and old heirloom varieties. If we also break our reliance to chemicals and fertilizers by producing our own, we will be a few steps closer to self-sufficiency.

The best way of solving any of these mentioned issues is biodiversity and bio-integration, using the free resources most people would rather bypass.

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An informative book on this subject, relevant to gardeners and farmers alike, is *The Bio-Integrated Farm*, by Shawn Jardnicek. With creativity, perseverance, and hard work, we can become enough. Enough to preserve ourselves. Enough to be self-reliant. Enough to keep our earth just that. Remember, the problem is the solution; everything we need is all around us. Our ecosystem has unlimited productivity if we decide against squandering it. What is best for everyone - mindlessly easy harvests, or a lasting habitat?

Keep growing, friends.

Note - the information and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect or represent those of the Mat-Su Master Gardeners Association.

2023 Standing Committees

- Monthly Newsletter - Deb Blaylock
- Website Manager - Eva Cohnen-Brown
- Guest speakers - Deb Blaylock
- Room, Equipment, Zoom Coordinator - Vacant
- Membership Directory - Kristina Tornqvist
- Rebarchek Farm Project - Isaac Vaughan
- Annual Plant Sale - Vacant
- Palmer Library & Pioneer Home planting - Vacant
- Midsummer Garden & Art Faire - Vacant
- Summer Garden Tours - Vacant
- Alaska State Fair Special Awards - Deb Blaylock
- State Fair Parade - Vacant
- Nominations Committee - Vacant
- 2023 Christmas Party- Vacant

A few hours of your time will help all the committees meet their goals. Have questions or want to volunteer? Send us an email at matsumastergardeners@gmail.com.

Thank you!

December 2022 MMGA Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Secretary Isaac Vaughan

Present: Ken and Deb Blaylock, Greg and Kathy Kalal, Wayne and Arlene Bowman, Julie Pollard, Hazel Koppenberg, Curt and Marge Mueller, Michael and Phyllis Kircher, Isaac and Amielyn Vaughan, Cathy Crew, Daniel and Sue Glenn, Kevin Johnson, Eva Cohnen-Brown, and Steve Brown. (Quorum present for voting purposes.)

Meeting opened by Cathy Crew, as President Mobley was in Europe.

Discussion on budget resulted in an increase in speaker fees to accommodate a flower arranging class for the group. The amount added was \$600 for a total of \$1,200 speaker fees for 2023. Motion to accept made by Wayne Bowman, seconded by Julie Pollard. The 2023 MMGA Budget was approved.

Meeting adjourned by Cathy Crew.

Christmas banquet and white elephant gift exchange ensued.

**HAPPY GOLDEN 50TH
WEDDING ANNIVERSARY
TO TWO SPECIAL MASTER
GARDENERS – CURT AND
MARGE MUELLER**

PLANT/SEED SWAP

A new addition to the MMGA newsletter. If you are looking for specific plants or seeds - submit your request to the newsletter editor - www.matsumastergardeners@gmail.com.

Isaac Vaughan is looking for the following plants. Contact him at: dnavon@msn.com

Since I am interested in straining out varieties for better hardiness, color, edibility, etc., I am looking to buy a few plants with notable traits, listed below.

Goji berries: Hardiness.

I am seeking hardy goji berry stock. I need [a] cutting[s] / seeds of a plant that has survived Alaska with little or no protection.

Lilac: Color.

Since I cannot find guarantee on lilac color, I want to find any of the following colors: reddish (needs not be perfect, just close), yellow - not cream, and blue.

Siberian pea-shrub: Edibility.

With about 36% protein and 13% fatty oil per weight, the seeds of this hardy, fast-growing, nitrogen-fixing legume are extremely nutritious, but tough and not very tasty. My goal is to eventually have a pea-shrub with tasty, tender pods.

Lavender: Hardiness.

Somewhat self-explanatory, as we Alaskans yearn for those glaucous, scented, purple-blossoming shrub; I do not expect much. If anybody knows of someone in southcentral Alaska who has a lavender that has notable hardiness ("How much mulch did you say you used?!?"), I am indeed interested.

Information on or materials from these listed plants with notable qualities can prove profitable to those who provide it: They will have cost-free access to the finished plant before anyone else.

Deb Blaylock (contact kdblalock@ak.net) is looking for Danish Flag (*Papaver somniferum*, "Danish Flag") seeds.

Candy Cane Seeds

I once knew a gardener who knew how to grow
 Bright tasty candies, right out of the snow
 I asked him to share his secret with me
 And this is what he replied quite readily
 To garden in winter is difficult you see
 It takes lots of care and a very special seed
 I'll give you a couple to grow your own treats
 And you'll soon reap a harvest
 of candy cane treats.

Have a Very Merry Christmas!

Garden Links (updated Apr 2022)

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 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/>

Georgeson Botanical Garden *New*

<https://georgesonbotanicalgarden.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

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

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

Society of American Foresters, Cook Inlet Chapter

<https://forestry.org/alaska/>

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 Database

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



CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Kevin Johnson	907 775 2808
Vice President:	Lois Rockcastle	907 632-1137
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

JANUARY 2023 AND BEYOND

Jan 9, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Josh Smith, Rebarchek Farm Project
Feb 6, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Paul Mamora, Valentine's Day Flower Arrangement Class
Mar 6, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Dan Elliott, Fruit Tree Grafting, Pruning and Q&A
Apr 3, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD
May 1, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Ellen VandeVisse, Biochar
Jun 3, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale
Jun 12, Palmer, Palmer Library Planting
Sep 11, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD
Oct 2, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD
Nov 6, Palmer, Annual Meeting, Dr. Jeff Smeenk, TBD
Dec, Palmer, Christmas Party

Do not 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>

Membership renewal for 2023 is now available on the website!

Renewal is simple - complete the online form and then submit your membership dues using a debit or credit card - all on our website:
<https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/online-membership-application.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, 2023, 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--



January 2023



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Facebook

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

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
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