



President's Patch

By President Kevin Johnson

Membership Membership Membership

Welcome to the new year!! With 2024 comes membership renewal and new members. Mat Su Master Gardeners Association (MMGA) is looking for members, more members equate to less work for everyone. The work that MMGA does is more a labor of love than work and is a great hobby.

A few of the activities of MMGA includes:

- Participation in Alaska State Fair Parade
- Participation with the Rebarchek Farm at the State Fair
- Flower beds at the Palmer Veterans and Pioneers Home
- Plant Sale

Each of these are labors of love spreads the beauty of gardening in the Mat Su Valley.

Dating back to the Depression when pioneers came to the Matanuska Valley by rail, the rich Matanuska soil and farming knowledge of the pioneers has fed many people. Restaurants in Anchorage and the Valley have vegetables and flowers available for sale or display that come from Mat-Su farms.

At our meetings we have had speakers with presentations on various subjects. Some of the 2023 topics included:

- Grafting and pruning fruit trees
- Flower arranging
- Floral tapestry
- Biochar
- Soil testing
- The Palmer Soil & Water Conservation District

The annual plant sale is always an anticipated event by the community and is our largest fund-raising event. Many people look for the great flowers, fruit and vegetables plants grown by our members. The sale is Saturday June 1 in 2024. Members that renew or join by end of January are eligible to sell at the event.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Patch	1
Next Meeting	1
Peasant's Perspective	2
The Shortest Day	2
Meeting Minutes	3
2024 Committee Volunteers	3
Christmas Party Photo Collage	4
Garden Links	5
Contacts	6
Calendar of Events	6

REGULAR MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

JANUARY 8, 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION:

**MATANUSKA EXPERIMENT FARM AND
EXTENSION CENTER,**

KERTTULA HALL, "BLUE ROOM"

1 509 S GEORGESON DR, PALMER

AGENDA

7:00 TO 7:30 PM BUSINESS MEETING

7:30 GUEST SPEAKER

GREG KALAL, OWNER OF GK "RAISING IT UP FARM"

SEED POTATOES, WILL GIVE A TALK ON ALL THINGS

POTATOES. JOIN US AND LEARN A THING OR TWO

ABOUT GROWING POTATOES IN ALASKA.

Currently the 2024 speakers are being lined up now. Keep watching for the schedule.

Join MMGA and have great time learning about growing flowers and gardens in the Mat Su Valley.

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE:

BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER – PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

The winter solstice is passed, our daylight has reached its nadir, and once again we're on the upswing. Gardeners rejoice! The landscape is pretty with all the snowfall which will surely stay with us for a few months. It will take some warmth and sunshine to melt this overabundance of the white stuff, but it will happen.

The peasants decided to include some photos of more colorful time, so as to remind you people of what spring and summer look like.

May 2024 be a good and prosperous year for us, and our hopes for a more peaceful world happen. We have the next months to get ready for the new growing season.

Thank you, folks, for your patience and interest in the peasant's efforts.



Yellow swallowtail loves white lilacs.



Honeybees love pasque flowers.



Sphinx moth, wings transparent, loves white lilac.

THE SHORTEST DAY BY SUSAN COOPER

And so the Shortest Day came and the year died

And everywhere down the centuries of the snow-white world

Came people singing, dancing,

To drive the dark away.

They lighted candles in the winter trees;
They hung their homes with evergreen;
They burned beseeching fires all night long
To keep the year alive.

And when the new year's sunshine blazed awake

They shouted, reveling.

Through all the frosty ages you can hear them
Echoing behind us - listen!!

All the long echoes sing the same delight,
This Shortest Day,

As promise awakens in the sleeping land:

They carol, feast, give thanks,

And dearly love their friends,

And hope for peace.

And so do we, here, now,

This year and every year.

Welcome Yule!

MMGA Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Submitted by Secretary Georgiana (Jana) Gooch.

Members present: Georgiana & Jerry Gooch, Gregory & Kathy Kalal, Ken & Debby Blaylock, Eva Cohnen-Brown, Curt & Marjorie Mueller, Dawn Wolski, Wayne & Arlene Bowman, Sue Glenn, Sandy Bohling, Susie Hayes, Tom Cappiello, Todd, Jenny & Pearl Weaver, Michael & Phyllis Kircher, Kevin Johnson, Cathy Crew, Lois Rockcastle, and Isaac Vaughan.

Guests present: Eric Noble, Daniel Glenn, Gideon & Amie Vaughan.

Meeting opened at 6:58 pm. Kevin Johnson invited everyone to start helping themselves to the potluck. After dinner, we participated in a white elephant gift exchange.

Kevin asked if there were any questions regarding the Treasurer's report that was handed out. No questions.

Lois Rockcastle announced the Alaska Peony Society has a conference coming up in Anchorage on March 9th. There will be two speakers. It will be held at the St. Mary's Episcopal Church. The cost is \$30 for the whole day to include luncheon.

Kevin Johnson asked for all members to let him know when we volunteer our hours so that he can keep track of our hours and present them to UAF at the end of the year. This is because UAF used to keep track of these hours; however, with budget cuts, that will no longer be tracked by UAF. It also helps to keep track of volunteer hours to be credited towards Master Gardener's requirements.

Reminder: Next meeting is Monday, Jan 8, 2023.

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 pm

2024 Committee Volunteers

Newsletter	Deb Blaylock
Website Manager	Eva Cohnen-Brown
Guest Speakers	Jenny Weaver
Membership Directory	
Rebarchek Farm Project	
Annual Plant Sale	
Palmer Veterans & Pioneers Home Planting & TBD	
Midsummer Garden & Art Faire	
Summer Garden Tours	
Alaska State Fair Awards	
State Fair Parade	
Nomination Committee	
2024 Christmas Party	
Meeting Space/Equipment Coordinator	Jenny Weaver

We rely on volunteers to run our committees and activities. Please consider one of the committees, activities, or board positions. Most committees or activities are something which can be as 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.

January Guest Speaker

Gregory Kalal is our January 2024 Guest Speaker. He is the owner of GK "Raising It Up Farm." Greg and his wife Kathy grow seed potatoes commercially. Their potato farm is near Trapper Creek, Alaska. You can find them in many of the local greenhouse in the spring - usually beginning in mid-April. You will find them certified by the State of Alaska and of excellent quality. To see a list, go to the MMGA website and look under the "For Sale by Members" tab. Or use this link:

<https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/for-sale-by-members.html>

CHRISTMAS PARTY PHOTOS - COURTESY EVA COHNEN-BROWN



Garden Links (updated November 2023)

Alaska Botanical Garden

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

Alaska Center for Conservation Science

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

Alaska Community Forestry ****New Dec 2023****

<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.akorcid.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/>

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/>

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation District

<http://palmeroilandwater.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/>

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Kevin Johnson	907 775 2808
Vice President:	Jenny Weaver	907-982-5446
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 2024 AND BEYOND

- **Jan 8**, Palmer, Gregory Kalal, All Things Potatoes
- **Feb 5**, Palmer, Cec Ellsworth, Boreal Coir and High Tunnel Successes and Failures
- **Mar 4**, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Mycorrhizae
- **Apr 1**, Palmer, Regular Meeting
- **May 6**, Palmer, Regular Meeting
- **Jun 1**, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale
- **Jun 10**, Palmer, Regular Meeting
- **Sep 9**, Palmer, Regular Meeting
- **Oct 7**, Palmer, Regular Meeting
- **Nov 4**, Palmer, Annual Meeting/Elections
- **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>

It's time to renew your membership! You can renew by printing out and mailing in a 2024 membership form. You can also renew online by completing the online form and submitting your payment online using the convenient credit/debit card option. www.matsumastergardeners.com - look for the Membership Application tab.

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 5, 2024**, 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 2024



Like us on
Facebook

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

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 598
PALMER, AK 99645**

