



President's Patch

By President Jenny Weaver, photo by the author

Perhaps I'm not the only one wondering where 2024 went and how we arrived at the doorstep of 2025. I am also still confused about how in the world I find myself in the president's seat of Mat-Su Master Gardeners. Kevin Johnson is a rather mellow fellow, but also a very tricky guy. I can't help thinking he had ulterior motives when he invited me to serve in the VP position a couple of years ago. I firmly recall telling him I didn't want his job but would love to help....

Thanks to Jana Gooch for the nomination and to all who voted in my favor. I am truly honored by your confidence in me and hope I live up to your expectations. I am terrifically excited to work with everyone, to help plan our next year's activities and speakers, and to involve more members in our worthwhile efforts.

We begin 2025 with member and guest speaker Ellen Vande Visse of the Good Earth Garden School. Please join us Monday, January 6th as Ellen conducts a hands-on lab to make a foliar spray to supplement the boron and calcium lacking in our Mat-Valley soils.

I hope the group might consider an option for a guest speaker and perhaps host a round table discussion that taps into our own members' valuable expertise. What did you do in 2024 that proved successful? What setbacks or failures did you face this past summer? What could you use help with or what would you like to learn more about as you nurture your garden(s) in the Valley?

Our brief 30-minute meetings allow such a short window of time to review committees and projects. How might we better support our committee chairs as they work to complete their tasks for the annual plant sale, Pioneer Home planting, Rebarchek projects, guest speakers, and summer garden tours?

Is there something each of us can do to contribute, however great or small, to increase participation and strengthen our organization? All ideas are welcome! Let's do it! Together, in 2025.

Please feel free to share with me your thoughts and ideas.

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REGULAR MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

JAN 6TH, 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

(HINT! BRING A PINT JAR AND LID TO TAKE A SAMPLE HOME)



Our Winter Grow Tent Lettuce

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE:

BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

We seem to be in a history mode regarding the efforts of the Peasant in writing monthly articles for our newsletter. I will try to explain how this came about.

My own Master Gardener days go back to the 1970s. Our class was the second in Alaska and taught by Wayne Vandre, who was an Extension horticulturist at the time based in Anchorage. Classes were free, but we were urged to complete forty hours of time volunteering and educating the public with our knowledge. Part of that was setting up tables in shopping malls and greenhouse businesses where we disseminated information and handed out extension publications. Our class persuaded Wayne, a really excellent instructor, to give us an advanced class the following year. This was done, and well appreciated.

In the 80s I joined the Matsu Master Gardeners after a move to Lazy Mountain, and I was asked to do a monthly writeup on gardening. I still felt a responsibility to complete forty hours of payback, and I accepted. My sources of information were my own Master Gardener training and experiences, Extension bulletins, fellow gardeners, gardening magazines and books, especially those pertaining to cool climate crop growing, and seed catalogs which could offer information and inexpensive seeds and plants to try in northern climates. One special book was "Victory Gardens." You see, as a youth during World War Two, Victory Gardens were promoted as a way to raise food for personal use while much of our farm produce was being sent overseas to our military and that of others and to civilians of war-ravaged countries. Rationing was definitely a factor.

My own farming parents were already producing most of our own food, so Victory Gardens were

easy. My parents were excellent growers, and my own education began early in life. A recollection I have is trying to keep three horses to step lively when pulling a corn binder to cut and tie a crop that was really too heavy for the binder and its horsepower. Kids were expected to pitch in and I did and never regretted it. Thanks, Dad.

A couple of stints as president of our Matsu club brought about the peasant moniker. Our membership was small at the time and often the only offerings in our newsletter were by the president and my gardening articles. The president's updates were to keep members informed of club events and business. The president wrote under "President's Patch." For one person to monopolize the newsletter was not right. Gardening experiences would be written in the third person. No "I did this" or "I grew a successful crop of onions." One does not boast or insult his readers. Many were really gardening experts. Hence "Peasant's Perspective."

But this is only half of the story. In the 60s a very dear friend and I were struggling dairy farmers in Wisconsin. It became a favorite tag of his to refer to me as "Peasant." One could hardly take umbrage at this as we were both trying to make things go at a time of milk surpluses and low milk prices.

My friend is no longer with us, but to honor and remember him, peasantry suits me well. It has several definitions, but I choose "An honest, hardworking tiller of the soil."

Thanks, folks.

January 6th Meeting Change

Participate in a hands-on lab during our first meeting of 2025 at 7 pm in Room 208 of the Palmer Cooperative Extension Service office. Bring your own spray bottle or pint container and mix-up a healthy potion for your plants and garden. This meeting will also be held on zoom for members who need or prefer to participate online. Zoom connection information will be provided in a separate email to current members of Mat-Su Master Gardeners.

Make Your Own Fertilizer Spray

The Soil Whisperer Reveals Secret Recipes!

It's likely your veggies, fruits, and flowers suffer from Hidden Hunger. Uh-oh, why? Our local soils typically lack two tricky minerals: Boron & calcium. Why tricky? You only need a teeny amount—a couple parts per million. These deficiencies cause other needed minerals to be disabled, so you have disease problems. But if you over-apply, you invite another set of problems. Remedy: Join Soil Whisperer Ellie as she reveals two formulas for nutrient sprays you can make in your kitchen. Why is Ellie so excited about effectiveness? Foliar feeding of plants provides 95% efficiency compared to 10% efficiency when applying the same nutrients in the soil. So, make & spray this nourishment and watch your plants will flourish this growing season with your gifts of boron & calcium—in just the right amounts.



Ellen Vande Visse, MS,
Good Earth Garden
School

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Since 1987, Ellen has been training sustainable and organic growers through Mat Su College, UAA Anchorage, and her own Good Earth Garden School. Ellen, a member of Mat-Su Master Gardeners, has raised organic vegetables for market, sold Actively Aerated Compost Tea, teaches free compost classes through Mat-Su Borough, and offers how-to workshops based on her book, *Ask Mother Nature, a Conscious Gardener's Guide*.

MMGA Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

Submitted by Georgiana Gooch, Secretary

Members present:

-Georgiana Gooch	-Kay Fyfe
-Jerry Gooch	-Kevin Johnson
-Isaac Vaughan	-David Thompson
-Ken Blaylock	-Kristina Tornquist
-Deb Blaylock	-Sue Glenn
-Cathy Crew	-Rebecca Emerson

-Julie Pollard

-Curt Mueller

-Eva Cohnen-Brown

-Wayne Bowman

-Arlene Bowman

-Greg Kalal

-Kathy Kalal

-Dawn Wolski

-Marge Mueller

-Todd Weaver

-Pearl Weaver

-Jenny Weaver

GUESTS:

-Nathan Vaughan

-Christy Thompson

-Maynard Perkins

-Amie Vaughan

-Gideon Vaughan

-Joe Emerson

-Lincoln Emerson

-Winston Emerson

Meeting opened at 6:32 pm

Last month's meeting minutes: Ken Blaylock motioned that we accept the November minutes; Sue Glenn seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Per Cathy Crew, nothing to report.

Vice President's Report: Jenny Weaver took our one-time "thank you" breakfast to the folks at the Experiment Farm and they were all very appreciative.

Midsummer Garden and Art Faire: The members of the committee for the MGAF weren't sure they would be doing it again this year and indicated they were looking for another non-profit to do it.

Membership forms were passed out at the meeting.

Georgiana Gooch motioned that we adjourn the meeting. Ken Blaylock seconded motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:53 pm.

SOME WHERE IN THYME

A WAYBACK ARTICLE FROM A PAST MMGA PUBLICATION

Winter Wonders

by Master Gardener Curt Mueller

(Originally published in the January 2011 Mat-Su Master Gardeners Newsletter. Curt says this article was written due to the large number of amaryllis bulbs gifted at the 2010 Christmas party gift exchange.)

Although there has been a previous essay on caring for amaryllis, several people have asked about growing these beautiful plants and getting them to re-bloom. Generally, they'll bloom once a year, but occasionally they'll bloom a couple of times in a twelve-month span.

First off, the bulbs that are retailed at many stores are packaged to bloom and then be tossed. They come in a pot that is much too small for the size of the plant if it is to be allowed to grow to its potential. It could be re-potted as you start the plant, or you could wait until it has bloomed out. An eight-inch pot would be a good start. A good potting soil will work fine.

After the plant blooms, cut off the flower stems. What must happen then is that the bulb be replenished, as it has exhausted much of its energy in producing the flowers and leaves. This means it will require some nutrients in the form of a water-soluble fertilizer. The Miracle-Gro brand works well. The stuff that is marked as tomato fertilizer is about right. It has an even ratio of the major elements plus some micro-nutrients. A dose of this every couple of weeks as a part of regular watering should suffice. Lighting is not as critical as for some plants, as this tropical plant grows in shaded areas in its natural setting. Nonetheless, it responds well to good light, and foliage produced will be strong and not flop over.

The plant will enjoy being set outdoors during summer. It is susceptible to freezing,

so bring it in before the fall frosts. It can be induced to rest at this time by storing it in a cool but frost-free garage in darkness or semi-darkness. At this time withhold watering and let the foliage die back. When it sends forth a flower bud bring it back into light and commence watering. The fertilizer regime may begin while the plant is blooming. A plant that doesn't break dormancy by itself will probably bloom when care has begun again. Give it a month or more to rest.

With room to grow and proper care the bulb will increase in size greatly over time. It will also produce offshoots which form a new bulb. These may be left in the same pot with the parent bulb or separated to start a new plant. As a bulb becomes firm after blooming and increases in size to a diameter of 4-5 inches, it is capable of producing more than one flower bud, each of which will give you four gorgeous blooms, far better than the first time around. As the bulbs crowd an eight-inch pot they can be moved to a twelve inch. This is a bit heavy to move around but you'll get from twelve to twenty blooms, and they'll be spread over a longer time period as they won't all bloom at once.

Enjoy - well worth trying!



Blooming Amaryllis - photo by the author

Weather Sensors

By Outgoing President Kevin Johnson

Thank you everyone again for coming out to the Christmas Potluck at Turkey Red. There were about 45 people there and the party was fun for everyone. The White Elephant contest was great again. This year, someone marked a present for Ken (Blaylock). Ken did not pick this gift during his turn. But it was eventually chosen and of course it was fun to open. I estimate there were about six layers of packing tape around the paper and it took a while to remove. A hunting knife had to be used to assist. Thank you very much Jana Gooch for setting up the potluck.

While I was sitting at my table enjoying the delicious meal, we got to talking about weather monitors. I have the Acurite Iris 5-in-1 weather sensor and two other sensors. They all can be loaded on to an application for your phone. There is also a desktop display available. There are two remote sensors - one is in the greenhouse in backyard, and the other is in the front yard. The main unit, Iris, is mounted on a fence post on fence in the back of the house.



Because I wanted to get “accurate” wind speed, the placement is critical. Do some research on the placement i.e., height, near fence, buildings etc. The Iris also has a small solar panel. The panel does okay, but Alaska’s limited daylight in the winter does affect it. The AA batteries are great, but I have occasionally had to install new batteries in the winter.

The app is okay, but limited because you have several items that your monitor and sensors are reading, but on the app widget only eight can be displayed. By pressing on any of the areas, you can pull up the full information plus any sensors that you have installed. Note: be sure to label the sensors so they correspond to the name on app. By pressing any of the readings, you can pull up the high/low temperature, high/low dew point and can also customize it. The graph displays the information for today, 24 hours, 7 days, 31 days, year, all time and can be customized.

Ordering one is a bit of a pain. While looking through the website, it’s hard to determine which sensor goes with which display and if another item is needed so the sensors can be displayed on the app. They have good chat sessions to help with ordering but seems like they are helping numerous customers with long lag time. I have called them and received great service. I explained what I wanted, and they told me which models to purchase. The overall cost I think was right around \$300.

The Palmer winds have not affected the wind gauge mounted on the fence much. I still don’t know if it’s true reading as the highest was around 70 mph. If you want to share information with others, you can automatically upload information to Weather Underground. There are many amateurs posting information automatically, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. If you don’t have a sensor, you can still go to the site and find information near you. Last time I looked there were 10 weather stations spread out over the Palmer area.

2025 Committee Volunteers

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

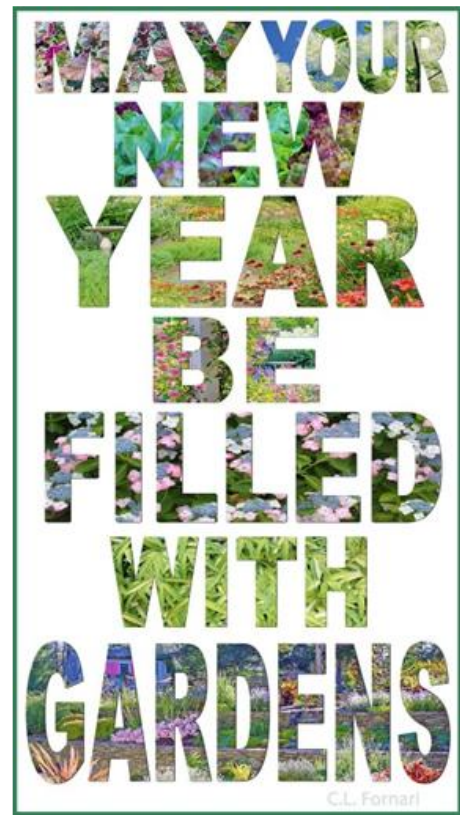
The 2025 MMGA Membership Form is now available for you to renew your membership. You can download a form from the webpage - please print it out and mail it in or bring it to a meeting.

<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>

Thank you for renewing early!



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

JANUARY 2025 AND BEYOND

Jan 6, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Ellen Vande Visse, Make Your Own Fertilizer Spray
Feb 3, Palmer, Regular Meeting
Mar 3, Palmer, Regular Meeting
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, Rebarchek Farm Project Planting
June 13-15, Palmer, Colony Days
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--



January 2025



Like us on
Facebook

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MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION
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