



Jan 2015



President's Patch

By Rhonda Bowman, President

The holidays came and went fast this year. Our Annual Christmas Party was quite the success and a lot of fun. We had great food and even better company.

Please make sure that you contribute articles to the newsletter and your gardening photos to the website and newsletter. This is a great opportunity for new Master Gardeners to get their hours by submitting an article for the newsletter. And if you have any ideas or know someone that could speak at our meetings with a gardening-related topic please let me know so that we can get them booked. It is always better to share knowledge because it only makes us better gardeners.

Soon the days will be getting longer and we haven't had much snow this year. It will could affect your perennials if they don't have suitable cover when the bitter cold hits us. Last year quite a few of the customers attending our plant sale said they'd lost their perennials. You might want to keep that in mind so that we can be ready for customer favorites when starting our seeds in the upcoming planting season. We had someone ask for Forget Me Not flowers and I don't know if we had any for sale. Don't forget that the Grow Palmer initiative will probably need donations of seeds for the beds around town. It is widely popular and I am constantly hearing about how beautiful the vegetables beds in the public areas are from the Anchorage folks visiting our town.

Happy New Year! See you at the next meeting.

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CHAPTER MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, JANUARY 5TH, 7:00 PM

LOCATION: MTA CONFERENCE ROOM

480 COMMERCIAL DR., PALMER, AK

DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

MEETING AGENDA

- TREASURER REPORT
- MINUTES
- OLD BUSINESS
- NEW BUSINESS

TOPIC/SPEAKER:

WE WILL HAVE MATT FRANKE FROM ALASKA HYDROPONICS BACK AS OUR SPEAKER FOR THE JANUARY MEETING. HE WILL BE DISCUSSING GETTING SEEDS STARTED FOR SUMMER PLANTING.

PEASANTS PERSPECTIVE

By Curt Mueller, Master Gardener

It has taken the greater part of the morning for the sun to make an appearance on this 27th of December, but we gained a little more than a minute of daylight today as the sun inched a bit higher over the horizon. The horizon for most of us being punctuated by our favorite mountain range.

The peasant has begun the growing season by starting some Northern Giant cabbage plants. Each year the seeding date has moved up a few weeks in an effort to find an optimal time to start them. Seeding date has moved from mid-March to the winter solstice. The pros don't divulge much information on techniques and timing, so the peasant has to continue to experiment.

Marge and the peasant do not present any real threat to the big dogs, but it's fun to try, and to learn what it takes to grow a really world class cabbage. In 2014 Marge's entry came in as number five, same as in 2013. It was a good looking entry, but this is not a beauty contest. Her entry had just begun to form some satellite heads, mere tufts of leaves at the base of the main leaves. The peasant observed that the winners had well developed satellites and concluded that the plants were more mature and seeding could occur earlier. The date was moved from January 18 in 2014 to the present starting date on the solstice.

There is no deep mystery to growing giant vegetables. Timing, growing conditions, fertilization and dedication to daily care are the main needs. All of these are familiar to Master Gardeners. One must continue to experiment until the right combination is found. The peasant will pass along those techniques which seem to work well in hopes that one of us will give the pros some real competition.

Meanwhile we're on the upswing for daylight again and we can ready ourselves for another good growing season.

Thanks, folks.



Northern Giant, seeded December 21, 2014



High Noon at the Winter Solstice

GROW MEDIAS FOR STARTING SEEDS

By Stephen Brown, Mat Su/Copper River District Ag/Hort Agent

It's just about time to start our seedlings. With spring in the air, the barrage of questions regarding what medium to start seedlings begins. Here's the lowdown on the most popular varieties.

- **Vermiculite**
This material when used alone provides good seed germination. It is clean, and if not contaminated during handling, will not need sterilization. If other seeding mixes are used, it is useful for covering seeds since it does not form a crust and provides easy emergence for the seedlings. Vermiculite is available in several size grades. For seeding, a fine grade is best.
- **Synthetic mixtures**
Mixes that contain no soil are available for growing seeds. These contain either a combination of peat moss and vermiculite or peat moss and perlite. They may be purchased ready-made or can be mixed at home. To prepare such a mix, use 4 quarts of vermiculite, 4 quarts of peat moss, 1 tablespoon of superphosphate and 2 tablespoons of pulverized limestone. These mixes, as well as vermiculite used alone, have little fertility. Seedlings must be watered with a diluted fertilizer solution soon after they emerge.
- **Soil-vermiculite mix**
Seeds may be started in a mixture of about one-third good garden soil and two-thirds vermiculite. Since good soil contains some fertility, prompt fertilization after germination is not so essential. When garden soil is used, the mix must be sterilized before seeds are planted in it.
- **Soil-peat-sand-mix**
Large seeds or vigorous-growing seeds may be planted in a mix of two parts good garden soil, one part shredded peat moss, and two parts either perlite, vermiculite or sharp sand. Soil sterilization is necessary.
- **Milled sphagnum moss**
This is a ground sphagnum moss sometimes used for starting seeds since it appears to have an ability to inhibit the seedling disease "damping off." It should be well moistened before use. Since it contains no fertility, prompt fertilization is essential after seeds have germinated.
- **Layered mixes**
Another technique used for germinating seeds is to partially fill a flat or pot with a sterilized soil mix and then top it with a layer of vermiculite or milled sphagnum moss in which the seeds are planted. After germination, roots of seedlings move from this top area into the soil mix, which provides fertility, so adding liquid fertilizer is less critical.

Garden Links

Alaska Botanical Garden

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

Alaska Community Agriculture

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

Arbor Day Foundation

www.arborday.org

Alaska Natural Heritage Program – Botany

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

Alaska Garden Clubs

<http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org>

Alaska Grown Source Book (online)

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/sourcebook/index.htm>

Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage Chapter

<http://alaskamastergardeners.org/>

Alaska Master Gardener Blog

<http://alaskamastergardener.blogspot.com/>

Alaska Native Plant Society

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

Alaska Orchid Society

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

Alaska Peony Growers Association

<http://alaskapeonies.org>

Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Assoc..

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

Alaska Plant Materials Center

<http://plants.alaska.gov/>

Alaska Rock Garden Society

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

Cooperative Extension Service, Palmer

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/>

Eat Local Alaska

<http://akfood.weebly.com/index.html>



Good Earth Garden School

<http://ellenvandevisse.com/>

Integrated Pest Management Program

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ipm/>

Junior Master Gardeners

<http://www.jmgkids.us/>

Landscape Plants for Alaska

www.alaskaplants.org

Local Alaskan Plants Clearinghouse

<http://www.localplants.org/Home>

Mat-Su Borough Rain Garden Program

<http://www.matsugov.us/raingardens>

Mat-Su Master Gardener Website

www.matsumastergardeners.org

Master Gardener Research Link

<http://search.extension.org>

Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley

<http://interiormastergardeners.org/>

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

South-Central Alaska Beekeepers Assoc.

<http://www.sababeekeepers.com/>

Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners

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

Sustainable Agriculture – UAF*NEW*****

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/>

UAF Cooperative Extension Service Publications

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/pubs/catalog/>

UAF Georgeson Botanical Garden

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

UAF CES Citizen Pest Monitoring Portal

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ipm/cmp/>

University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

www.fruit.usask.ca

USDA/NRCS Plant Data Base

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/>

Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation

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

Announcements

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Know of an upcoming event or organization which needs our help? Let a board member know!

BOARD MEMBER OPENING

The position of Club Secretary is still open. The job involves taking minutes at meetings and attending board meetings. If you are interested, please contact Rhonda Bowman for further details and information.

Club Membership

The membership year runs from January to December each year. Annual individual memberships are \$10 and family memberships are \$12.

Membership forms are available to download on the club's website, www.matsumastergardeners.com

thank you

CLUB CONTACT INFO

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| President: | Rhonda Bowman | 746-2948 |
| Co-VP | Curt Mueller | 745-6144 |
| Co-VP | Hally Truelove | 376-0909 |
| Secretary: | Vacant | |
| Treasurer: | Cathy Crew | 632-4401 |
| Member at Large: | Marge Mueller | 745-6144 |

If you have gardening news, photos or information you'd like to share in the newsletter, please contact: Deb Blaylock @Email: kdblaylock@ak.net

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 2015

Jan 5, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Seed Starting
Jan 30-31, Fairbanks, APGA Annual Peony Conference 2015,
<http://www.alaskapeonyconference.com/>

FEBRUARY 2015 AND BEYOND

Feb 2, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Feb 21, Palmer, Alaska Produce Growers Conference,
<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/ahortland/>
Mar 2 Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Mar 3-5, Fairbanks, 11th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference,
<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/conference/>
Mar 7, Fairbanks, State Master Gardener Conference,
<http://www.interiormastergardeners.org/>
Apr 6, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
May 4, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
May 30, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale (tentative)
Jun 3, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Palmer Library Planting



How and what to Submit for the Monthly Newsletter

Your submissions are greatly 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. I do not have a scanner to copy pictures so I cannot accept hard copies.

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 editor 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--



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January 2015



Like us on
Facebook

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Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER'S CLUB
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