



Jan 2017



President's Patch

By Rhonda Bowman, President

The start of a new year! It has kinds of possibilities to refresh your life or your attitude! Sometimes we get reminded that not everyone is on our wavelength or puts importance in what we hold dear. I am talking about the cut-backs at the Anchorage office of the UAF Cooperative Extension Service. They are down to three days a week and a partial day. This makes our role as Master Gardeners even more important. Gardeners can be asked to fill in and supply help, answer questions and provide assistance to the local gardeners in the Anchorage area. It is easy to feel that you are a small group and your efforts don't matter, but it will become necessary to work smarter to reach a larger audience. A great example is social media to help gardeners with issues or help find solutions. Collectively we are a great resource with lots of knowledge about various gardening topics.

I came across an article about "foodscaping" or "edible landscaping" which views plants that you eat just as you would plan a flower garden relying on the color, form and texture of the plants. This method lends itself to using a small space to grow food rather than planting in rows. You can plant in groups or a wave of the same plant in a particular area. There are lots of people who think they can't grow food because they don't have the "normal" garden area. I have seen many herbs grown in groupings and I think they look so nice. It can be a nice corner or a small area with that little pop of a kale right next to flowers or onions. It gives the eye a break from a lawn or makes a building more interesting. Might be time to walk around your yard and rethink your space?

Hope to see you at the next gardening meeting on Monday, January 9 at 7pm at the MTA Building.

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CHAPTER MEETINGS FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 9TH, 7:00 P.M.
LOCATION: MATANUSKA TELEPHONE
COMPANY (MTA) BUILDING, CONFERENCE
ROOM (IN THE BASEMENT), PALMER, AK
DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

MEETING AGENDA

- TREASURER REPORT
- MEETING MINUTES
- CONFERENCE UPDATE/NEWS
- OLD BUSINESS
- NEW BUSINESS
- GUEST SPEAKER

TOPIC/SPEAKER:

CRAIG SMITH FROM THE NRCS

HE WILL SPEAK ON THE BASICS OF APPLYING
FOR THE NRCS EQIP PROGRAM WITH THE
GOAL OF INSTALLING A HIGH TUNNEL.

HAPPY★NEW★YEAR

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photos by the author

The winter solstice has passed and once again we have begun the swing toward our long days. How quickly the cycles come and go.

The peasant had occasion to spend a few days in Seattle recently, and while there, had a good conversation with a cousin who grows apples in the Yakima area. It was very, very interesting, and the main topic may hold considerable interest for fellow Master Gardeners. High density row planting is the topic discussed and now being shared with you.

Traditional apple orchard plantations for commercial production with standard trees - that is, full-sized - typically had 40 trees per acre. This was increased to 84 trees per acre as trees were planted closer together and judiciously pruned. The plantation shown in photos belongs to cousin Barb's brother Kevin. It contains 2,263 trees per acre at a spacing of 1.75 feet in the row and 11 feet between rows. The trees are bench-grafted on Emla 26 dwarfing rootstock, which produces a tree 40% to 45% in size compared to that of a standard tree. Emla 26 is referred to as a precocious rootstock, meaning the trees will produce early and heavily.



The first photo shows the initial planting of bench grafted trees. Note the large caliper of the trees; a far cry from the whips we often plant in Alaska. The larger caliper will produce fruit a year earlier, speeding recovery of the high cost of developing the high-density system. The hose visible in the center of the row is a weep or drip hose for irrigation and fertilizing with water soluble fertilizer. This is essential for getting the trees off to a good start, especially in the semi-arid Yakima area. No sprinklers are used, thereby not wetting the leaves, a plus in disease and fungus control.



This second photo shows the trees one month after planting. Indeed, they seem vigorous and healthy. The training system is in place, using nine wires upon which to train the trees.

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The system depends heavily on training the trees in such a way as to maximize sunlight to all parts of the tree. The top wire is at 12 feet, close to the mature height of trees on the rootstock being used. Rows are oriented north-south.



These trees are in their second leaf, the term orchardists use for second year plants. Precocious indeed, although a crop was not harvested, allowing the trees to put their energy into growth and full establishment. Crossbars visible are used to stabilize the support system. Wires are formed into a latticework to help hold spacing on horizontal wires and aid in training. Grass has been seeded between rows. Pollinator trees are Manchurian crabs. There will be one pollinator followed by four crop-bearing trees, then another pollinator, four more crop trees, and so on. The pollinators are staggered in such a way in adjoining rows as to be directly opposite the crop-bearing trees in the middle row.

The trees in the third photo are Galas, which happen to be the peasant's favorite for his apple-a-day habit. Other varieties grown are Braeburn, Fuji, and Honeycrisp, all varieties in popular demand. A planting of one variety is referred to as a block.



Third leaf and first picking. Barb and her brother Kevin are quite pleased with the 45 bin per acre result. Barb and Kevin have separate orchards and work together with management techniques. The peasant thinks the bottle Barb is holding contains water soluble fertilizer. Expected production by fifth leaf is 100 bins per acre. Production of high quality fruit compared to a plantation of standard trees is two to three times increase. Good orchard management is essential in any system, perhaps even more so using high density planting. Standard trees take from five to eight years to produce a crop. High density growing requires a heavier investment at the start, but will far outpace standard trees in a few years.

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The peasant had hoped to get a photo of the mechanized cart used in picking, but only a third of the photo got transmitted. Just a portion of the cart is shown. Fruit is picked by hand by people who ride on either side of the cart, picking both sides at once. Fruit rolls gently directly into the bin. The system does not require ladders for picking and other management aspects. This is a definite improvement in safety and efficiency in working the orchard. Do those apples look luscious or what?

There you have it folks. Perhaps there is something we can adapt to our own fruit-growing efforts here. At the very least it shows the part that science plays in keeping the world population fed.

Thank you and have a good New Year.



CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Conference committee members - there will be a committee meeting on Monday, January 9th at 6:15 p.m. It will be in the MTA Conference room. For more information or with any questions, contact the committee chair: Lois Rockcastle at tundracare@alaska.net.

Committee chairs should come prepared to speak about progress in their areas. Thanks everyone!

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/sourcebookindex2016.html>

Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage Chapter

<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 Pioneer Fruit Growers Association

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

Alaska Plant Materials Center

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

Alaska Rhodiola Products Cooperative

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

Alaska Rock Garden Society

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

Eat Local Alaska

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

Good Earth Garden School

<http://ellenvandevisse.com/>

Grow Palmer

<http://growpalmer.org/>



Integrated Pest Management Program

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

Junior Master Gardeners

<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.org

Master Gardener Research Link

<http://search.extension.org>

Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley

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

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

South-Central Alaska Beekeepers Assoc.

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

Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners Association

<http://seak-mastergardeners.org/index.html>

Sustainable Agriculture – UAF

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

UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Palmer

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

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/>

UAF School of Natural Resources

<http://www.uaf.edu/snre/>

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

The club is desperately in need of someone to coordinate speakers for our meetings.

Need volunteer hours? Volunteer to help with the 2017 State Master Gardener Conference. Send an email to the club and we'll add you to the list of helpers!

ITS THAT TIME!

Its time to renew your annual association membership. Dues are \$10 for an individual annual membership and \$12 for a family membership. We've clarified what a family membership means. **A family membership is for family members who live in the same household.**

We also have a gift membership available for gift giving! Forms are available at:

<http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/forms.html>

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Rhonda Bowman	746-2948
Co-VP	Curt Mueller	745-6144
Co-VP	Hally Truelove	376-0909
Secretary:	Joan Redlin	206-604-4676
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 at her email: kdblalock@ak.net

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 2017

Jan 9, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Craig Smith, NRCS:
How to apply for funding for a high tunnel
Jan 26-29, Fairbanks, 2017 APGA Annual Peony
Conference:
<http://www.alaskapeonyconference.com/>

FEBRUARY 2017 AND BEYOND

Feb 6, Palmer, MMG Mtg
Feb 21-23, Fairbanks, 2017 Annual Sustainable
Agriculture Conference:
<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/conference/>
Mar 6, Palmer, MMG Mtg
Apr 3, Palmer, MMG Mtg
Apr 22, Palmer, Alaska State Master Gardener
Conference
May 1, Palmer, MMG Mtg
Jun 3, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale
Jun 5, Palmer, Palmer Library Planting
Jul 10, Palmer, MMG Mtg

Please let Rhonda know if you have any ideas for future meeting topics. Members are welcome to offer to speak or reach out to speakers of interest to the club's membership. The club would welcome a speaker coordinator - if interested contact Rhonda. Our club is only as good as we the members make it!

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

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 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--



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Like us on
Facebook

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

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 585
PALMER, AK 99645**

