



President's Patch

By President Deb Blaylock

Thank you to all who have participated in our community service projects to date - especially those who braved the hail, rain and flooding of downtown Palmer on the day we planted the Palmer Library! Also, many thanks to those who participated in the plant sale, which is our biggest fundraising event. Special acknowledgement goes to our treasurer, Cathy Crew, for all the hard work she puts into the plant sale event. Steve and Eva Brown should also be recognized for volunteering to help out with the Palmer Garden & Art Faire set-up when the committee chair became unable to participate. Thank you!

I would like to write a bit about the art of growing cucumbers in Alaska. I hear many folks struggling to grow a decent crop of cucumbers every year. There are some solutions to help those who struggle with this. The two biggest are variety and feeding, with growing strategy being a close third.

By growing strategy, I mean where and how do you grow them? Cucumbers are heat lovers and I recommend a greenhouse, or - at a minimum - a low tunnel with protection all summer. Secondly, I recommend using a trellis system to allow your cukes to grow up. A trellis will give you better access and better-looking fruit.

Cucumbers are hungry feeders. I grow in 5-gallon containers and work in a good quantity of a granular type fertilizer specific to vegetables. I prefer a brand that also includes beneficial mycorrhizae and bacteria in their mix. These are necessary in a soilless growing system (i.e. potting medium) to break down any organic nutrients. Beginning in July, the plants are then fed a liquid water-soluble fertilizer. I alternate between one with a high N number and one with a higher P number (N - P - K).

The last and most important factor is variety. Select a variety which is parthenocarpic or parthenocarpic and gynoecious. Parthenocarpic means the plant can set fruit without human or insect assistance with pollination. I tend to avoid varieties which are either monoecious (having both female and male flowers) or gynoecious (having female flowers). These require human assistance (or insects) to pollinate which is quite time consuming and may or may not work.

A few popular varieties amongst our members for greenhouse production are Adam Gherkin, H19/Little Leaf, Excelsior, Tasty Jade, Sweet Success or any of the Beit Alpha cultivars. There are many more varieties out there and most are a hybrid of some sort. I tend to avoid open-

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GENERAL MEETINGS
FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH
OUR NEXT GENERAL MEETING WILL BE
SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2019

DURING THE SUMMER, WE HAVE GARDEN TOURS FOR MEMBERS ONLY. AN E-MAIL WILL BE SENT OUT TO ALL CURRENT ASSOCIATION MEMBERS WITH DETAILS OF THE JULY GARDEN TOUR IN THE NEAR FUTURE - BE ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR IT! THE GARDEN TOUR WILL BE IN THE PALMER/BUTTE AREA THIS YEAR. ANTICIPATE SEEING SOME GORGEOUS GARDENS!

pollinated varieties because they are usually not parthenocarpic.

Our next meeting will be our members-only garden tour to be held sometime in July. Information will be sent out with further details as soon as it's available. We will have a booth in conjunction with the Cooperative Extension Service at the Palmer Garden & Art Faire, July 13. Also, please remember to check the weeding schedule! Enjoy your summer!

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photo submitted by the author

The peasant, having observed fifty years in Alaska some months ago, reminisces. A massive oil discovery had been made at Prudhoe Bay and the oil companies were scrambling and competing to gather seismic data on potential leases to be bid on in the fall of 1969. Anchorage was a huge city of 60,000 souls, people spoke of going hunting to get their moose, and on Memorial Day weekend the city was deserted while everyone left to fish the Kenai River.

The only edible apple that people were familiar with was Yellow Transparent. For anyone to plant a vegetable garden before Memorial Day was foolishness. Alaska had four seasons, categorized thusly: Almost Winter, Winter, Still Winter, and Road Construction. So, what has changed? We have. The climate has, imperceptibly year by year. Gardeners have developed new techniques; new plant varieties have become available. Climate change has made more plant varieties able to survive, nay thrive, in Alaska. Native trees and shrubs have moved farther north.

More than likely we will experience some climate setbacks from time to time in the future, but these will be anomalies rather than the norm. Harsh winters and inclement summers, late frosts, early frosts; these will still be with us to throw a wrench in our efforts at times. We have adapted and will continue to adapt. We may lose some choice plants, but we will replace them and continue to expand our choices of plant species.

The peasant hails from the northern corn belt where supposedly it was a native American observation that it was time to plant corn when oak leaves were the size of a squirrel's ear. An Alaska gardening writer has apparently turned that around to it being a safe time to put tender plants outdoors when birch leaves are the size of a squirrel's ear. This brings up a change of pace. Oak forests were plentiful and much loved by the peasant. After seeing the healthy bur oak growing at the MEA arboretum, the peasant has been trying to get a couple started. The first effort failed when he grew the plants in the greenhouse the first summer. They made good growth but did not survive the winter in storage. He would skip the greenhouse part and start them outdoors.

The current effort was stymied by the supplier sending bare root red oak instead of the bur oak requested. The red oaks are somewhat less hardy than bur oaks, which themselves can be expected to be a marginal plant in our area. Upon being made aware of the error, the supplier sent bur oak plants at no cost this spring. Over winter the red oaks had been laid on their sides and all survived the winter. The fact that they had time to harden off during mild October 2018, was probably a factor in their survival, as well as having a continuous snow cover over winter. The bur oaks which arrived this April were potted up and the red oaks, also still in pots, were lined up on the south side outside the greenhouse. The bur oaks responded by leafing out fairly soon and the red oaks following. The peasant surmised that perhaps the red oak requires a somewhat warmer temperature for growth. A shorter growing season due to a slow spring start would certainly create a situation where winterkill would be more likely.

As the situation stands now, the peasant has red oak and bur oak trees in pots, all surviving, so what happens next? Try planting some out and keep some in pots for backup? Incidentally, deer like to nibble on young oak growth. Moose are deer, but do they understand that oak is food? Probably.

Enough rambling already. Thanks, folks.



State of growth of bur oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*, on the left and red oak, *Quercus rubra*, on right as of June 18, 2019. Please note that the leaf nodes on bur oak are rounded and those on red oak are sharply pointed. Autumn leaves on red oak are a vivid red; those on bur oak will be yellow/brown.



Now is the time to sign-up to be a volunteer in the June Tull 4-H Building! Master Gardeners are desperately needed to answer gardening questions from the public. Volunteers are responsible for manning 3.25 hours slots and get a complimentary Alaska State Fair entry ticket.

Sign up here: <http://bit.ly/2VC8HkQ>

Select the time slot(s) you want and enter the submit button. A dialogue box will then appear that will allow you to enter your name. See you at the Fair...Its only 2 months away!

Master Gardener Class Registration Open

This 40-hour Master Gardener class provides a broad horticultural background and includes the topics of botany, soils, vegetable production, using organic and conventional techniques, Integrated Pest Management, greenhouses, lawns, houseplants, trees/shrubs, flowers and invasive plants. The Alaska Sustainable Gardening/Master Gardener textbook is included in the class fee of \$300.

The Palmer Master Gardener class begins on Tuesdays, beginning September 3rd and will run until December 10th. An Anchorage Master Gardener class is also available that meets on Mondays beginning August 26th.

To earn the title "Alaska Master Gardener," participants must complete 40 hours of community service involving horticulture. Those who complete their 40 hours of community service within one year of class start will get a \$100 rebate. Those who just want the information are welcome to enroll but will not receive the title or the rebate. For more information contact Steve Brown at scbrown4@alaska.edu or 907-745-3639.

Deadline to enroll is August 9th, but class always fills well before deadline. To register, go to: <https://bit.ly/2a5Q0Q7>



Mat-Su-Master-Gardener-Booth-Shift-Sign-Up-Palmer-Museum-Garden-and-Art-Faire, 7/13/2019	
Time	Name
9-10am	Ken-&-Deb-Blaylock (bring-&-put-up-tent)
Set-up	Marcia-Clemons Steve-&-Eva-Brown
10am-Noon	Laurel-Flynn
Noon-2pm	Phyllis-Kircher Michael-Kircher
2-4pm	Arlene-Bowman
4-6pm	Marge-Mueller Curt-Mueller
6pm	Ken-&-Deb-Blaylock (take-down-tent)
Take-down	Steve-&-Eva-Brown

ALASKA STATE FAIR EXHIBITORS' GUIDES

How many of you wander through the Crops and Flowers departments in the "Barn" at the Alaska State Fair gazing at all the awesome entries? Have you wanted to enter something of your own? It's very easy to do. The State Fair has Exhibitor Guides online which have instruction with "What, When, Where and How" to enter flowers or vegetables or fruits or mushrooms (the list goes on). Here's a link to the general information on entries: <https://www.alaskastatefair.org/site/exhibits/>. Scroll down and click on Crops and/or Flowers to find out more specifics on each department. It is highly recommended to print out the general entry requirements as well as the department info you're interested in entering items into. Each is available in an easy-to-print PDF file. Still have questions? Each department has a contact person to help answer questions. Come on out and show off your prize carrots, giant cabbage or even a huge turnip!



LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Be part of the largest garden exhibit in Alaska! Entry and judging days at the Alaska State Fair's Crops and Flowers Departments are a fun environment to meet new people and catch up with old friends.

A great opportunity to learn something new and/or share your own gardening experiences.

You can also earn some credit for Alaska Master Gardener volunteer hours!

~ Entry Clerks ~

Wednesdays, August 21 & August 28

Three shifts available ... 12-5 PM, 3-8 PM and 5-9 PM

Duties: Help exhibitors fill out entry forms correctly and assist the entrant in the preparation of their entries for judging by showing/teaching how to follow the guidelines of the Exhibitor Guide, and placement of entry in the display area.

~ Judges Clerks ~

Thursdays, August 22 & August 29 from 8 AM-Noon

Duties: Record winning results, set up and place ribbons for the final display.

~ 1st & 2nd Entry Take down ~

Tuesdays, August 27 from 4-7 PM & September 3, from 9 AM-Noon

Duties: Looking for a few people to help with 1st and 2nd entry take down and ribbon sorting.

"Crazy Good" memories & fun times! Volunteers make it happen!

For more information contact Kathy Liska at (907) 337-2196, (907) 301-0317 or akliska@aol.com.

Sign Up for Weeding Palmer Library & Veterans and Pioneers Home

If you would like to sign up for an unclaimed week, email matsumastergardeners@gmail.com with the date and your name.

Week of:	Name
June 10	Arlene Bowman
June 17	Clint Rayback/Laurel Flynn
June 24	Rhonda Bowman/Sue Glenn
July 1	Anita Chace/Deb Caillouet
July 8	Hazel Koppenberg/Sally Sonichson
July 15	Laurel Flynn/Cathy Crew
July 22	Marge and Curt Mueller
July 29	Marcia Clemons/Sally Sonichson
August 5	Maria Cunningham
August 12	Deb & Ken Blaylock
August 19	Courtney Osmanson
August 26	Danielle Simoni

Garden Links

Alaska Botanical Garden

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

Alaska Center for Conservation Science

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

Arbor Day Foundation

www.arborday.org

Alaska Division of Agriculture

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/>

Alaska Farm to School

<https://www.farmentoschoolalaska.org/>

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

<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 Peony Society

<https://alaskapeonysociety.wixsite.com/alaskapeonysociety>

Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association

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

Alaska Plant Materials Center

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

Alaska Rhodiola **New**

<https://www.akroseroot.com/>

Alaska Rock Garden Society

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

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.com

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 CES Citizen Pest Monitoring Portal

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

UAF Georgeson Botanical Garden

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

UAF Herbarium

<http://www.uaf.edu/museum/collections/herb/>

UAF School of Natural Resources & Extension

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

University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

www.fruit.usask.ca

USDA/NRCS Plant Data Base

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

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Submit an article to the newsletter
- Volunteer to chair or help a committee – Curt needs help with the State Fair float; Michael will need help at the Rebarchek Farm project.
- Sign up to work at the June Tull 4-H Building during the State Fair.
- Opportunities are now available to work at the Crops or Flowers Departments at the State Fair.

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Deb Blaylock	746-6045/kdblayment@ak.net
Vice President	Gregory Kalal	339-1966
Secretary:	Dorte Mobley	232-5422
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: kdblayment@ak.net

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY 2019

Jul - TBD, Garden Tours

Jul TBD, Palmer, Rebarchek Farm

AUGUST 2019 AND BEYOND

Aug 5, Palmer, Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center Tour

Aug TBD, MMGA State Fair Float Assembly

Aug 24, Palmer, Alaska State Fair Parade

Aug 22 - Sep 2, Palmer, Alaska State Fair, "Crazy Good"

Sep 3, Palmer, Alaska Master Gardener Course starts

Sep 9, Palmer, MMGA Meeting, TBD

Oct 7, Palmer, MMGA Meeting, TBD

Nov 3, Day Light Savings time ends

Nov 4, Palmer, MMGA Annual Meeting

Dec 2, Palmer, MMGA Annual Christmas Party

Club Membership

The membership year runs from January to December each year. Annual individual memberships are \$10 and family memberships are \$12. Family memberships are only for family members living in the same household. The deadline to join is January 15, 2019 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 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.

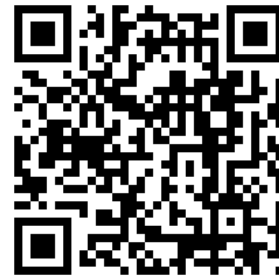
If you are not the author or photographer, please ensure you have permission of the author or photographer to use their material in the newsletter. The newsletter publisher is not responsible for obtaining this for you.

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--



July 2019



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

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

