



July 2018



President's Patch

By President Michael Kircher

Charles Dudley Warner, who once said "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it," also said "What a man needs in gardening is a cast iron back, with a hinge in it." I don't know about you, but about now as summer officially begins, I'm feeling like I could use a cast iron back to keep up with weeding. I'm convinced however, that gardening is some of the best exercise you can get, as long as you can still stand up after a long weeding session. A hinge in our cast iron back would make that a bit easier. The good news is that our plants are growing almost as fast as the weeds, with the weather alternating sunlight and warm temperatures with periods of rain. This summer so far has been a blessing as far as the weather is concerned, compared to last year.

Our bees have been able to get out during this nectar flow. We'll see if we get any honey this year. I already added a third super, over a queen excluder, and I figured that I get to keep anything that the bees produce there. They can overwinter with everything they stored in the brood chamber and the medium super below mine. We've been able to get some house maintenance projects done along with the usual garden maintenance and upgrades, trying to paint between rains and before the cottonwood and dandelion seeds start flying all over the place, unless you like a fluffy appearance to your paint jobs.

The plant sale brought in a lot of people, and early. We had people waiting for us to officially open. I hope that's indicative of a growing (pun intended) interest in gardening, since there were many plant sales before ours. Of course, it was a success because of the hard work and participation of our

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GENERAL MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, JULY 16TH AT 3:00 P.M.

LOCATION: SEE PAGE 3

THIS EVENT IS FOR MEMBERS ONLY AND THEIR GUESTS

SPEAKER/TOPIC

2018 MMGA GARDEN TOUR

SEE PAGE 3

members. The pavilion has already been reserved for next year.

We have an upcoming gardening tour in July in lieu of our meeting. I hope most of you can take advantage of it. Also, in July if anyone who has not already seen my root cellar wants to stop by informally, please give Phyllis and me a call and we'll try to accommodate you.

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photos submitted by the author

The swift seasons have again bestowed upon us the long days of summer. Enjoy!

The peasant has checked on our rose pruning job at Colony Museum. Indeed, the roses we had cut to the soil are growing back with a heartiness that verges on vengeance. Those we let grow show some dieback on the tops, and there is one shrub which appears to be dead. The bed needs some attention. One or two willing people could spend an hour making it look good. Should our MGs volunteer to do some TLC on it?



The plant on the right is apparently dead. The dead stuff should be removed and any life below it allowed to grow. Just to the left is a potentilla with some dead stuff to be removed.



Please note the lush regrowth in the foreground and the dead tops sticking up in the roses we left.

The theme for the Alaska State Fair is "Memories in the Making." The peasant has volunteered to lead the effort to put an entry in the fair parade. We could use about four people to help with assembly; two of those people are to ride on the float. The peasant has floated an idea for the entry but is certainly amenable to ideas from all club members. What the peasant has in mind is to pull a trailer behind his Formal Cub. The trailer will be about eight feet by ten feet; small enough to cover with greenery and have a space for a table and a couple of lawn chairs.

Marge and the peasant can contribute some items to adorn the float and we will need more from our members to make it luxuriant in greenery. If you can supply plant items to make this a good-looking entry, please send me a list of what you can contribute. Any container grown plants, flowering, vegetables, shrubs or other will be welcome. If you will present the peasant with a list of what you have available, we can plan our layout around that. Containers will need to be stable so as not to tip as the float is in movement.

Marge is growing a nice OS Cross in a bushel container, and it is doing very well. We plan to take thinnings from chard and kale and grow them in planter boxes. We also have strawberries in two five-gallon bags. Outdoor grown tomatoes should be producing at fair time; we have two in five-gallon bags. Other produce can be displayed as well, including root vegetables with tops attached, spuds, peas, and beans.

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Please contact Curt by August 1st if you want to volunteer. Email: mueeller@mtaonline.net or phone: 907-745-6144. He advises to plant containers soon so they will be ready in time for the parade.

Please bring a snack and something to drink as you are sure to get hungry and thirsty during the tour! Count on not getting done with the tour before 7:00 p.m. It should be a fun afternoon with interesting gardens and great company!

Summer Farm Day Fun

From 10 a.m.-noon

\$10
per family
for each class

1509 S. Georgeson Drive,
Matanuska Experiment Farm, Palmer

Led by Lee Hecimovich and Melissa Clampitt.
Each class includes instruction, a craft/game, an activity
and a snack relating to the topic.

Register online no later than three days prior to class at <https://bit.ly/2sn6Vgx>.
Class size is limited, so registration is required.

June 13	Gardening: It's For Anyone!
June 27	May the Forest Be With You!
July 11	Outdoor Exploration
July 25	Animal Safari – "What Lives Here"
August 8	Harvest of Fun

Cooperative Extension Service
Mat-Su/Copper River District Office
907-745-3360 • mat-su_ces@alaska.edu

COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION
UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS
www.uaf.edu/ces • 877-520-5211

ALASKA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE is an equal opportunity organization. We are committed to providing educational programs and services to all people regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, age, disability, or sexual orientation.



While the deadline for being listed in the 2018 directory was January 15, 2018, we want to welcome the following new and renewing members to our club: Laura LeMieux, Jane & James Tapley, and Rebecca Kopperud, who all signed up after the deadline. We look forward to seeing you at our meetings and welcome your ideas and expertise!



Be a Part of the Largest Garden Exhibit in Alaska!



Entry & Judging days at the Alaska State Fair's Crops & Flowers Departments is a fun environment to meet new people & catch up with old friends. It is a great opportunity to learn something new and/or share your own gardening experiences. You can also earn some credit for Master Gardener volunteer hours!

~ Entry Clerks ~

Wednesdays, August 22 & August 29

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

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 23 & August 31 from 8 AM - Noon

Help record winning results, set up and place ribbons for the final display.

~ 1st & 2nd Entry Take down ~

Tuesdays, August 28 from 4 - 7 pm & September 4, from 9 am - Noon.

We are looking for a few people to help with 1st Entry take down and ribbon sorting.

Join the Fun ... "Memories in the Making" ...

Volunteers make it happen!

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

Recycling Effort Update

The garden plastic recycling is going well. Volunteers are emptying the bin on a weekly basis, and the yield has been very heavy at times! **You will have an opportunity to pick up pots/trays during the garden tour on July 16, or if you're in need of items sooner (or later), please contact Kristina Tornqvist at (795-6393) to see what is available. It is time to stock up!**

THE REAL DIRT ON SOIL: PART II – ORIGIN AND DISTRIBUTION

BY JOE MOORE, MASTER GARDENER CANDIDATE, PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY AUTHOR

The soils of the lower Matanuska and Susitna valleys, especially those of the Matanuska valley, are some of the best soils in Alaska for both general agriculture and gardening. Soil properties, however, vary widely across the valleys and it is useful to understand the nature of the soils in your particular area. The following are some general characteristics of our local soils.

The soils of the lower Mat-Su valleys formed from several distinct geologic processes. Glaciers scoured and pushed earth materials, then left them behind as the glaciers retreated. This moved material, known as **glacial till**, consists of silts, sands, and gravels. Smeared along the sides and underneath the glacier or pushed into small hills ahead of the glacier, the glacial till is often dense and compacted.

Other earth materials, trapped within the glacial ice, were washed out as the ice melted and then transported down glacial rivers. This “washed out” material, known as **glacial outwash**, consists primarily of loose sands and gravels. The outwash from the constantly advancing and retreating glaciers formed several different terrace levels that grade down to the current river floodplains. Non-glacial streams contributed **alluvium**, material similar to the outwash, but often with layers of silt included.

Subsequently, strong winds lifted silt and very fine sand particles off the active glacial river floodplains and then slowly buried the adjacent glacial till, glacial outwash, and areas of older alluvium. These airborne materials, known as **loess**, resulted in the very rich agricultural soils found in many parts of the Matanuska Valley. Farther west, toward the Susitna Valley, the loess is mixed with ash blown in from volcanic eruptions in the Alaska Range. These geologic processes are still active today and can be observed in different areas throughout Alaska.

Because of the processes described above, most of the soils in the lower Mat-Su valleys have two very distinct layers. The near surface soil is dominated by the silty loess, and, in some areas, volcanic ash. This is the soil layer we strive to farm or garden in, if it is

thick enough. The underlying soil layer contains the coarser sands and gravels from the glacial till (*Fig. 1*), glacial outwash (*Fig. 2*), or alluvium. This coarser underlying soil layer is not suitable for farming and gardening but does affect the drainage of the overlying layer. Conversely, the coarser underlying layer is often well suited for engineering and construction purposes, while the overlying silty loess and/or ash is not.



Fig. 1. Loess overlying loose glacial outwash

The lower Matanuska Valley has the thickest loess deposits, which mostly overlie glacial outwash. The loose outwash is well drained and results in drier soils.

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The loess deposits are thickest near the source - the Matanuska and Knik River floodplains. The loess layer is about 14 feet thick in the northern portion of Palmer; about 6 feet thick in the Springer Loop area; and gradually thins westward across the valley towards Wasilla. These soils have a relatively thin layer of decomposing organic material at the surface and average about 6 to 9 percent organic carbon in the top 5 to 10 inches of the silt layer. Organic carbon content then drops very rapidly with increasing depth. The soils have a natural pH of 5.5 to 6.5 near the surface. The soils are very productive, if managed in a sustainable manner. Early farmers recognized the natural productivity of these soils and cleared lands in the best areas, including those now bisected by Bodenbug Loop, Farm Loop, Springer Loop, and Fairview Loop roads.



Fig. 2. Glacial till. The overlying loess layer has been disturbed with some removed and some mixed into the till.

Moving westward from Palmer towards Wasilla, the silty loess mantle slowly thins, and the underlying glacial outwash becomes intermingled with areas of glacial till. The thinner loess mantle results in more gravels and cobbles near the surface, and the inclusion of denser, more compacted glacial till results in scattered areas of poorer drainage and wetter soils. The pH of the near surface mineral soil is 5.0 to 6.0 in well-drained soils and 4.5 to 5.5 in soils with poorer drainage. In areas where the soil has been disturbed by clearing for development, the loess layer has often been removed or mixed with

the underlying glacial materials, limiting the usefulness for farming and gardening.

South and west of Wasilla, the loess mantle contains increasing amounts of the volcanic ash blown in from the Alaska Range. Volcanic ash has unique properties that affect fertility as well as other soil characteristics. Ash soils bind with phosphorous, which limits its availability to plants. Small changes in pH can substantially alter the availability of other nutrients. Ash soils can be difficult to work when wet and are often hard to re-wet if allowed to dry completely. They are still productive for agriculture and gardening if one understands the unique soil characteristics and manages accordingly.

Moving westward from Wasilla and then northward into the Susitna Valley, soils generally have more ash content, thicker surface organic mats, and poorer drainage. The surface organic mats have a pH of 3.5 to 4.5, with a pH of 4.5 to 5.5 in the mineral soil immediately underneath. Wetland areas increase in size and extent, as the underlying soil material becomes dominantly glacial till and other compacted material.

The foothills and mountain side-slope soils throughout the Mat-Su valleys have thin loess or ash\loess layers underlain by glacial till, shattered rock, or bedrock. The numerous small wet areas and seeps are evidence of the poorer drainage characteristics of the glacial till. Sands, gravel, and rock fragments carried downslope by gravity or by small mountain streams often cover or mix in with the thin loess or ash mantle.

Before purchasing property or developing new areas for a garden or other agricultural project, learn about the soil properties of the site using the ***Soil Survey of the Matanuska-Susitna Valley Area, Alaska*** (USDA, 2002); (available online at <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>). Before planting on a specific plot, obtain a soil test (contact *University of Alaska Fairbanks, Cooperative Extension Service*).

In the next newsletter, we'll discuss the individual components that make up a soil, as well as the soil texture and how it affects farming and gardening.

You are invited to a garden party!

Local
artists
painting
on-site &
live music
wafting
through
the air

Alaska WildBird Rehabilitation Center

invites you to enjoy

"Birds and Blooms"

Hosted by

Snowfire Gardens

3379 S Inlet Vista Circle

Preview the gardens at www.Snowfiregardens.net

Silent
auction,
with
unique
gifts and
activities
for you
to bid on

-Delicious lunch provided
-Scrumptious "no-host" desserts : buy
one serving, or the whole dessert

And, of course, meet our
distinguished
Ambassador Owls!



July 14, Noon to 3 PM

Tickets \$40

Tickets available at:

Non Essentials (728 S Alaska, Palmer); Steve's ToyoStove (mile 3.4 KGB Rd, Wasilla);
or contact Carol at 355-4123; or check our website: www.akwildbird.org

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Willow Garden Club Garden Tour 2018 Willow Garden Club Inaugural Plant Sale

July 28, 2018 10:00 a.m. -3:30 p.m. (all gardens including Les Brake's Coyote Garden)

July 29, 2018 12:00-5:00 p.m. ONLY Les Brake's Coyote Garden

Meet at Willow Community Center -- Mile 69.8 Parks Highway

- Time to meet at Willow Community Center for Inaugural WGC plant sale: 9:00 a.m.
- Time to pick up tour maps and directions: Willow Community Center outside the library entrance: 9:50 a.m.



- Lunch is from 11:45-1:00p.m. Bring a brown bag lunch and something comfortable to sit on as you tour the garden and eat lunch at the home of George and Mary Howard. Willow Garden Club will provide drinks.
- Need more info?? Call 907-244-0830.
- The fundraising tour at Coyote Garden is 26 years old!! Coyote Garden just gets better and continues to receive many kudos from well respected garden publications all over the U.S. Their garden was featured in a recent issue of *Garden Design*. This year's fundraiser (\$7 donation) will once again benefit *The Georgeson Botanical Garden* and *Willow Garden Club*.

Mat-Su Master Gardener Booth Shift Sign Up Palmer Museum Garden and Art Faire, July 14, 2018

If you would like to sign up for an unclaimed time slot,
email matsumastergardeners@gmail.com.

Time:	Name
9 – 10 am Set-up	Ken & Deb Blaylock
10 am - Noon	Maureen Campbell
Noon – 2 pm	Michael Kircher
	Lydia Wood
2 – 4 pm	Anita Chace
4 – 6pm	Marge Mueller
	Curt Mueller
6 pm Take down	Ken & Deb Blaylock

6-4-2018 Minutes
 Mat Su Master Gardeners
 Submitted by Secretary Dorte Mobley

Meeting was held at the Palmer Library planting. Present were Michael and Phyllis Kircher, Curt and Marge Mueller, Deb and Ken Blaylock, Bonnie Hager, Kristina Tornqvist, Eva Brown, Dorte Mobley, Christine Ashurst, Rhonda Bowman.

Treasurer Report: Thanks to Bonnie, Kristina and Dorte for separating and counting the tags from the plant sale and to Michael and Phyllis for helping count all the money. The club took in \$1943 (\$9,851 in total and \$7,908 out to members).

We have \$13,110.13 in the account and we need to find a grant committee.

Secretary Minutes: There are no corrections to the minutes that were emailed out.

Old Business: Midsummer Arts and Garden Faire - all time slots have at least 1 person. We can use more people to help.

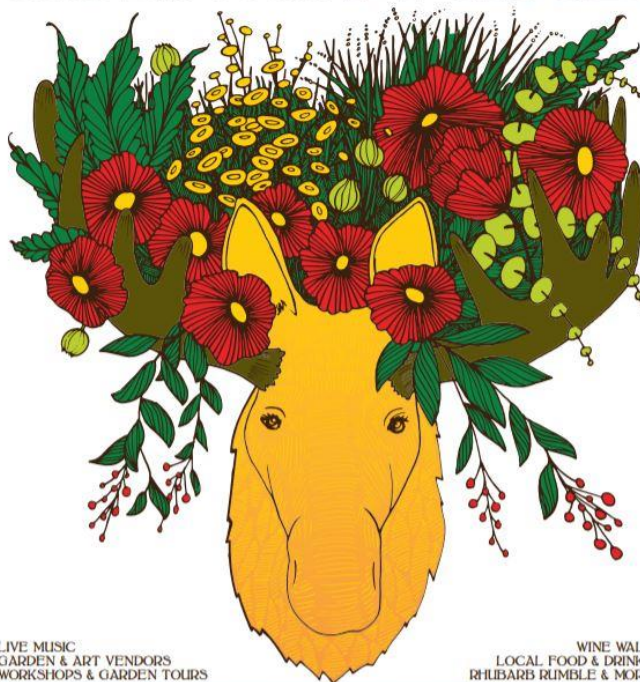
Garden tour is on July 16th starting at 3 pm. If you know of someone with nice gardens in the Wasilla area, please let Kristina or Dorte know.

Sign-up sheets need to be out for both Pioneer Home and Library weeding.

Lamar Anderson met with the board and informed us that The State Fair has bought a farm and some land around it and is in the process of developing ideas - display garden, agricultural business development, community gardens - and would like the master gardeners to be involved. Michael will get more details and then present ideas to the club.

No meeting in July since we have the garden tour.

PALMER MUSEUM GARDEN & ART FAIRE



LIVE MUSIC
 GARDEN & ART VENDORS
 WORKSHOPS & GARDEN TOURS

WINE WALK
 LOCAL FOOD & DRINKS
 RHILBARB RUMBLE & MORE

JULY 14, 2018 | 10AM-6PM

DOWNTOWN PALMER, ALASKA
palmergardenandart.org

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Frontiersman

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Palmer

Palmer City

Woodward Studio & Gardens

Palmer Chamber of Commerce

Palmer Arts Council

Healing Path Therapeutic Massage - MEA - Make A Scene - Valley Hotel - MTA - Palmer Arts Council



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 11	Lydia Wood
June 18	Kim Neill
June 25	Eva Cohnen-Brown
July 2	Mueller's
July 9	Terrie Irwin
July 16	Kircher's
July 23	Blaylock's
July 30	
August 6	Kim Neill
August 13	Laura LeMieux
August 20	
August 27	Kristina Tornqvist

SUMMER PROJECTS: PALMER PUBLIC LIBRARY AND PALMER VETERANS AND PIONEERS HOME

PHOTOS BY EVA COHNEN-BROWN, KEN BLAYLOCK, AND MICHAEL KIRCHER



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 **New**

<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
- Help with the float for the Alaska State Fair Parade
- Sign up for the summer weeding schedule
- Grant/scholarship coordinator
- Help at the Alaska State Fair
- Help with the Midsummer Garden and Art Faire MMGA booth

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Michael Kircher	745-1459
Vice President	Curt Mueller	745-6144
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: kdblalock@ak.net

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY 2018

Jul 14, Palmer, Midsummer Garden & Art Faire
Jul 16, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Garden Tours
Jul 19, Palmer, Third Thursdays with Extension, Alaska Wild Berries

AUGUST 2018 AND BEYOND

Aug 6, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Hypertufa troughs, Jaime Rodriquez, Alpine Gardens
Aug 23 – Sep 3, Palmer, Alaska State Fair
Aug 25, Palmer, Alaska State Fair Parade
Sep 10, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Oct 1, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Hydroponics, Southside Garden Supply
Nov 5, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Annual Meeting/Worm composting, Ellen VandeVisse, Good Earth Garden School
Nov 5 – 7, Anchorage, Alaska Sustainable Agriculture Conference
Dec 3, Palmer, MMG Mtg, 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. 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 2018



Like us on
Facebook

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

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION
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