



# MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

June 2016



## President's Patch By Rhonda Bowman, President

Summer events are certainly filling up our calendars! The Mat-Su Master Gardeners will have their plant sale on June 4th and Valley Garden Club's sale will be on May 28th. Don't forget to bring some cut boxes to use as plant trays for the customers to take their goodies home. Our membership has been preparing some great plants to sell and lots of them are hardy well-established perennials that will thrive in local gardens. We will be planting at the Palmer Library on June 6th and could use volunteers to assist! It is a great way to build your volunteer hours for your Master Gardener certificate. I went over to the FFA plant sale at Palmer High School last week and bought a few things. They had a nice variety of flowers and vegetables for a reasonable price.

Don't miss out on the Willow Garden Tour on July 23rd. I had the pleasure of touring the gardens a couple of years ago and it is totally amazing what they've done and the variety of flowers and plants in shade and sunny spots of their yard. Some places were on lakes and that was awesome to take in the beauty! The Willow Garden Club is collecting raspberry starts for those folks that lost their bushes in the fire so if you have some extras take them out to them.

Our next meeting will be Monday, June 6th at the Palmer Library to plant those beds. See you there.



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### CHAPTER MEETINGS FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

#### NEXT MEETING

**MONDAY, JUNE 6TH, 7:00 PM**  
**LOCATION: PALMER PUBLIC LIBRARY,**  
**PALMER, AK**

DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

#### MEETING AGENDA

- **TREASURER REPORT**
- **MINUTES**
- **OLD BUSINESS**
- **NEW BUSINESS**

#### TOPIC/SPEAKER:

**WE WILL BE PLANTING THE PALMER PUBLIC LIBRARY FLOWER BED. PLEASE BRING ANY CONTRIBUTIONS OF EDIBLE FLOWERS AND PLANTS. OUR BED IS PART OF THE GROW PALMER INITIATIVE.**

**DRESS FOR THE WEATHER. BRING GLOVES AND PLANTING TOOLS.**

## PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photos by the author

What a glorious season is spring! The timing of green-up and flowers changes year by year, and this time we have early apple blossoms, bluebells, cherries, and the never-failing dandelions.

The peasant delights in the early flowering perennials in our flower beds. A favorite is hardy primroses which provide a faithful early show.

*Primula auricula* is dependably hardy in our area, as are *Primula veris* and *Primula vulgaris*. *Primula auricula* has many cultivars. The original ones come from the mountains of central Europe, and many striking colors have been developed from the original primrose. *Primula veris* is a native from England and is commonly called cowslip. *Primula vulgaris* is called simply primrose or common primrose or English primrose. It is another native of England.



*Primula auricula* [Primrose auricula]

The peasant has grown the cowslip and common primrose from seed and is pleased with the hardiness of these plants which provide a show each spring before other perennials come into bloom. The auricula he grows has an unknown source, and

spreads somewhat but not invasively. It is easily propagated by dividing the plant or digging the offshoots. The cowslip and common primrose may also be divided if you have the heart to disturb a beautiful plant.



*Primula veris* [Cowslip]

The peasant has a number of seed starts of a *Primula Misstassinica*. This is a native primrose of northeastern U.S., several Canadian provinces and also may be found in Alaska. The name comes from Lake Misstassinini in Quebec. The seed starts are exceedingly slow-growing, but the peasant hopes to get some survivors flowering by next year.

There are many beautiful colors available in primroses. Some will be hardy in our area and others may not. Some searching may be required to find hardy varieties. Perhaps the peasant may be forgiven for using botanical names for primrose and other plants. Often common names are used for more than one plant, so using the scientific name makes it easier to identify a plant and to find additional information on it.

Thanks, folks.

## RABBITS FOR YOUR GARDEN

LAURA EMERSON, PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Many people think of animals as a nuisance to the health and beauty of a garden or yard. As an alternative point of view, I'd like to share the benefits of raising rabbits.

We raise rabbits for ... well, dinner, but I value them equally for their contributions to my yard. Rabbit manure is one of the few that is mild enough to apply to a garden fresh. Application is easy, too, because the excretions are blueberry-like in shape and consistency, not heavy. When dry, they have very little odor. With the rabbits, I don't need to buy fertilizer; I have my own pooping machines!

Some I ladle onto existing gardens in the fall and onto fallow gardens anytime. During the summer, I aerate a compost tea with a combination of dry weeds, green weeds/garbage, rabbit poop, and a dollop of molasses (which contributes sugar for the microbes to multiply exponentially).

Another advantage of rabbits is that they love to munch on yard debris. Some of you may transfer your weeds and branches to compost piles or mulching machines. I do, too, but it is also fun to bring the rabbits a snack of nettles, ferns, leaves, stalks, and wild grasses twice a day - whatever is growing (or that I store for winter snacks). They are always enthusiastic about meal time. They also like to gnaw on birch branches since, like many rodents, their teeth keep growing. The only thing they turn their little noses up to are acrid elderberry canes.

The most fun I ever had with rabbits was the winter we had a surfeit of baby

bunnies and were running out of hutches (we have 5) to separate males/females/adults/juniors. One doe (female) we moved in with the chickens and ducks. She became "one of the guys," wandering the snowy yard with the ducks and then returning for bedtime. Four juniors we moved into our unheated, winter greenhouse. What a great use of an unused building that time of year! It was like a kids' playground. I would sit in a chair in the corner and watch. Not only did they enjoy jumping around the various storage items under the shelf, but they dug tunnels in my raised bed, those fuzzy rototillers, aerating and fertilizing the soil. They also chowed down on the standing dry stalks of the prior year's tomato, cucumber, and pepper plants.

Whatever your reasons for considering rabbit husbandry, buy **Storey's Guide to Raising Rabbits** for excellent advice. And put the manure in your garden. You won't be sorry!



Note: Laura is a remote member of the Mat Su Master Gardeners Association. She lives 42 miles from the nearest road, at the base of Mt. Susitna.

## MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER 5/2/16 MEETING MINUTES

- There were 18 members and two guests present at the May 2nd meeting.
  - The 2017 Conference, held in Palmer, is in the planning stages by Jeff Lowenfels.
  - The Pioneer Home vegetable beds are ready and the flower beds still need soil. Rhonda will pick up the plants May 26th from L&M and all are invited to help plant at 1:00 p.m. on June 2nd.
  - Our Plant Sale will be 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on June 4th.
  - We will plant the Palmer Public Library beds on June 6th at 6:30 p.m.
  - Kevin Fochs, Alaska State FFA Advisor, was our guest to give us information on the FFA programs in Alaska. He said that there are 10 chapters with 1,000 student paid dues. Their 2016 conference was just held with the theme "Aim Higher." 300 students attended from all over Alaska. Their Career Development sessions at the conference contained: Marine Technology, Agriculture Mechanics (welding, electrical, and grinder/mixer), Natural Resources, Water Component, Soil Component, Wildlife Component, GPS Component, Job Interview, Veterinarian Science, and Plant Diseases/Pests, among others.
- The 2017 conference will be held on April 17, 2017. Kevin may be reached at (907) 746-9499 or email: [kfochs@alaska.edu](mailto:kfochs@alaska.edu).
- We discussed, and voted to donate \$1,000 to FFA at this time.
- Submitted by Secretary Joan Redlin



## SAVE THE DATE!!!!!!

### Willow Garden Club/ Les Brake's Coyote Garden Tour 2016

Date: Saturday, July 23, 2016

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Meet at Willow Community Center (Mile 69.9 Parks Highway) for map and directions to all the gardens. This tour includes Coyote Garden. Bring a sack lunch to enjoy at George and Mary Howard's garden.

### Les Brake's Coyote Garden Tour

Dates and Times:

Saturday, July 23, 2016, 10:00 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sunday, July 24, 2016, 12:00 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Directions to Coyote Garden: Mile 71 Parks Highway; turn right on Willow-Fishhook Road. Drive 7.5 miles up Willow-Fishhook Road. Signs will be posted. For further information about Coyote Garden Tour call 495-6525.

For more information about garden tour contact Marsha Van Abel: [marshavan@hotmail.com](mailto:marshavan@hotmail.com)

### RIVER BEAN'S ORGANIC FERTILIZER RECIPE

3 parts fish meal  
 3 parts bone meal  
 1 part rock phosphate  
 1 part greensand  
 1 part kelp meal OR wood ash  
 2 parts blood meal ( Pat's addition to the mix for high nitrogen plants)

### RIVER BEAN'S SOIL MIX

2 ½ parts top soil  
 ½ part perlite  
 ½ part vermiculite  
 ½ part compost  
 3 parts complete organic fertilizer  
 1 part lime

**FROM PAT TREMAINE:** Fish meal is available from Alaska Sea-Ag in Palmer. I buy most of my ingredients at AK Garden and Pet, which is the wholesale part of AK Mill and Feed. Far North Garden Supply in Wasilla has large bags of ingredients and that's where I buy the worm castings.

When I had my soil tested in May 2009, my beds were deficient in nitrogen, so I added 2 parts of blood meal to the mix. For gardening, I use the fertilizer mix and add it to the garden and work it in. I just sprinkle it on around the plants for all plants.

For pots, I use Promix with the inoculant and use a lot more than the top soil listed in the recipe. That sounds like a lot of fertilizer for that much soil. I also use worm compost, manure, Epsom's salts for tomatoes, microbes, and mineral rock to the mix and to the garden. Roses like alfalfa meal and I mix it in the pots in the spring. I mix the ingredients in the wheelbarrow and add water and mix well before planting. I used lots of Susitna Organics compost this year and my vegetables and flowers are huge. I bought a truckload - much cheaper than buying the bags.

Linda Lockhart from the North Root Garden Club says to use "Super Thrive" on all plants as soon as they come up. It is available at Lowe's and Home Depot, etc. It adds hormones, enzymes, and trace minerals, and makes the nutrients available to the plants.

### 2016 Alaska State Fair Volunteer Info

Be a part of the largest garden exhibit in Alaska! Entry & judging days at the Alaska State Fair's Crops Dept. is a fun environment to meet new people, catch up with old friends, and a great opportunity to learn something new and/or share your own gardening experiences. You can enter your own vegetables & flowers too!

I am seeking out volunteers to help in the Alaska State Fair **Crops Department** on

**Wednesdays, August 24 & August 31 between 12-9 PM (3 shifts - 12-5 PM, 3-8 PM & 5-9 PM as Entry Clerks, and**

**Thursdays, August 25 & September 1 from 8 AM-Noon as Judges Clerks.**

No prior experience is required.

I am also looking for a few people to help with take down and ribbon sorting on **Tuesdays, August 30 from 4-7 PM and September 6 from 9 AM-Noon.**

**Entry Clerks** will help Exhibitors fill out entry forms correctly, help the entrant to follow the guidelines of the Exhibitor Guide for the preparation of their entries for judging, and place entries in the correct display area.

**Judges Clerks** will record winning results as well as set up and place ribbons for the final display.

Tickets for Fair entry and parking will be provided for your help.

Participate in our state's biggest grower get together. "BEE HAPPY." Volunteers make it happen!

If interested, or if you have any questions, contact Kathy Liska (Crops Superintendent) at 337-2196 home, 301-0317 cell, or email at [akliska@aol.com](mailto:akliska@aol.com).

## Garden Links

### Alaska Botanical Garden

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

### Alaska Community Agriculture

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

### Arbor Day Foundation

[www.arborday.org](http://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

<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/>

### Integrated Pest Management Program

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



### Junior Master Gardeners

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

### Landscape Plants for Alaska

[www.alaskaplants.org](http://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](http://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 \*\*\*New\*\*\*

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

### University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

[www.fruit.usask.ca](http://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.

We need a volunteer coordinator to track the many volunteer opportunities we have this summer. Duties would be to coordinate with volunteers and create an Excel spreadsheet to track volunteers. This will be posted on the webpage. Please contact Rhonda if interested.

### UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm Demonstration Gardens

Planting day begins at your convenience on  
Wednesday, June 1, 2016

Potluck at Noon

The Farm will grill hamburgers  
Please bring a side dish to share.  
Contact Rhonda Bowman if you will be  
attending

## CLUB CONTACT INFO

<b>President:</b>	<b>Rhonda Bowman</b>	<b>746-2948</b>
<b>Co-VP</b>	<b>Curt Mueller</b>	<b>745-6144</b>
<b>Co-VP</b>	<b>Hally Truelove</b>	<b>376-0909</b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Joan Redlin</b>	<b>206-604-4676</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Cathy Crew</b>	<b>632-4401</b>
<b>Member at Large:</b>	<b>Marge Mueller</b>	<b>745-6144</b>

If you have gardening news, photos or information you'd like to share in the newsletter, please contact: Deb Blaylock @Email: [kdblalock@ak.net](mailto:kdblalock@ak.net)

Website: [www.matsumastergardeners.com/](http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/)  
Email: [matsumastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### JUNE 2016

**Jun 1**, Palmer, UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm Demonstration Gardens Planting.

**Jun 2**, Palmer, Palmer Pioneer Home Planting, 1 p.m. Bring gloves and planting tools. Dress for the weather.

**Jun 4**, Palmer, MMGA Annual Plant Sale

**Jun 6**, Palmer, Palmer Library Planter Planting

### JULY 2016 AND BEYOND

**Jul 9**, Palmer, Midsummer Garden and Art Faire, <http://palmergardenandart.org/>

**Jul 11**, Palmer, Spring Creek Farm Tour, 4 p.m.

**Jul 23**, Willow, Willow Garden Club Tour

**Jul 23/24**, Willow, Les Brake Coyote Garden Tour

**Aug 1**, TBD, MMG Mtg, TBD

**Aug 25 - Sep 5**, Palmer, Alaska State Fair

**Sep 12**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

**Oct 3**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

**Nov 7**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD

**Dec 5**, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Christmas Party

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](http://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: 20<sup>th</sup> day of each month -- Thank you--**



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June 2016



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Website: [www.matsumastergardeners.com/](http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/)  
Email: [matsumastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com)

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