



June 2023



## President's Patch

By President Kevin Johnson

Another month and so much is happening. As we look out to our perennials, we see massive growth each day. Already have some buds and should have flowers in the next few weeks. Work has been going on in our greenhouse and it should be totally enclosed by June 1. Yes, late, but better late than never. Going to be continuing the process throughout the summer.

Of course, spring means many plant sales. I saw last week at school, the Palmer High FFA club had a sale. Coming up on Saturday, May 27 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, the Valley Garden Club will be holding their plant sale at the Boys & Girls Club at 3700 E Bogard Road. Arrive as early as possible as the parking lots will be full.

Then on Saturday, June 3 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, we will be holding our plant sale at the Palmer Pavilion. The pavilion is located near the Palmer Library and Visitors Center. Again, shop early as most plants will be gone early.

We will be holding our annual planting at the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home on June 6, 3:00 pm. We usually also plant at the Palmer Public Library, but due to the partial building collapse, we will not be working at that location.

All the commercial greenhouses are in full operation now. Stop by all of them to include the smaller ones. There are many in the Valley, large and small. Each one has a bit different plants, information, and products.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION** – Our June meeting will be held on **Monday, June 12 at 7:00 pm**, not on our regular meeting date. This is to allow our treasurer time to prepare checks for the vendors of our plant sale. The location is at the Matanuska Experiment Farm on Old Trunk Road, near the hospital – not the Palmer Library.

Membership – MMGA is always open to new members. Members do not need to hold a certificate as a Master Gardener. The only requirement is to have a passion for gardening. Most of our meetings we have guest speakers. Just to highlight a couple of the

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### REGULAR MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

JUNE 12TH, 2023, 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION:

MATANUSKA EXPERIMENT FARM AND EXTENSION  
CENTER, KERTTULA HALL, "BLUE ROOM"  
1509 S GEORGESON DR, PALMER

AGENDA

7:00 TO 7:30 BUSINESS MEETING

7:30 – MEF&EC FLOWER BED CLEAN UP. BRING WORK  
GLOVES, TOOLS, AND A BUCKET FOR COLLECTING  
DEBRIS. DRESS FOR THE WEATHER.

speakers: one spoke of making baskets and another spoke of innovation to bring plants and trees from the Lower 48 to Alaska. A very wide range for everyone.

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

PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY THE AUTHOR

Many thanks to Ellen Vande Visse for her interesting presentation on biochar. Keeping our garden soils healthy is of prime importance. It is also valuable to keep carbon sequestered in the soil to help mitigate our overabundance of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and ocean waters.

The peasant has used a system to improve soil tilth and provide a couple of other benefits. Our original sizable vegetable garden plot was a flat surface with vegetables planted in rows. At the end of the season excess plant material was spread over the garden area and tilled into the soil using a rototiller. This was a difficult task and required a lot of chopping with a machete in order to be able to run the material through the tiller and get it mixed with the soil.

When the peasant decided to put the garden area into raised beds, the use of the tiller was discontinued. The new system still required some work, but much less. In the fall the peasant stored leaves in bags for use the following year. When the potatoes were well up the leaves were spread over the potato bed, including under the growing plants. This needed to be done before the plants had begun to cover the whole bed, so timing was critical. One immediate advantage was that it protected the spuds from sunlight as they did not protrude through the leaf mulch as they would through bare soil. Weeds were effectively held down as well. It needs to be mentioned that lawn clippings were used at first, but that was discontinued as they invariably contained grass seeds and other seeds which became a nuisance when they sprouted in the next year.

When the potatoes were dug the tree leaves became mixed with the soil and any clumps could be spread out to help the mixing process.

The next gardening year the potato bed was planted to cole crops including cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cauliflower. The transplants were not harmed by any leaves which by now were well mixed with the soil.

The third year the bed was planted with direct seeded crops such as beets, carrots, Kohlrabi, turnips, rutabagas, chard, and kale. By now the

leaves were breaking down and did not present a problem for seed germination.

Any soil, whether sandy or heavy clay, will benefit from having organic matter mixed with it. If the soil benefits, so will succeeding crops.

The peasant has had to cut way back on his gardening activities and has discontinued using tree leaves as a mulch. The residual effect lasts for several years. Perhaps you might try investing some extra labor into a system that could benefit you and your garden soil. Crop rotation is a proven and time-honored system as well.

Thanks, folks.



This was built by the peasant for hardening off greenhouse grown plants. Damage to tender plants occurs from wind, low temperatures, frost, and ultraviolet light. Ultraviolet is usually the main problem. This structure is open to the north and plants get sunlight through the glazing material but will get incidental ultraviolet from the north. Ultraviolet is blocked by the glazing material. Plants left in this environment will be hardened off after a week or so. It is fitted with tarps hung on the north side if there is danger of a light frost. If a heavier frost is anticipated an electric heater can be used or plants can be moved back into the greenhouse. Moving plants is not a fun chore, so the heater is the usual choice if things cool off too much.

Photo taken May 18, 2023.

## MIDSUMMER GARDEN & ART FAIRE MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER BOOTH

Sue Glenn, Committee Chair

We are participating in the Midsummer Garden and Art Faire this year and will be set up like the last time with the other local garden clubs. We will be offering information to the public. We can offer some other activity if members propose ideas. It could be a short talk, a demo, or a craft for the kids, young and old. Please forward ideas to Sue Glenn at [suzygardens@me.com](mailto:suzygardens@me.com).

Also please sign up for slots; two members are needed per slot. If you wish to sign up, send an email to [matsumastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com). Thank you!

### Mat-Su Master Gardener Booth Shift Sign-up Palmer Museum Garden and Art Faire, July 8, 2023

Time:	Name
9 – 10 am Set-up	
10 am - Noon	Marge Mueller
Noon – 2 pm	
2 – 4 pm	
4 – 6pm	
6 pm Take down	

## PALMER VETERANS AND PIONEERS HOME PLANTING PROJECT

Dorte Mobley is the committee chair for this project.

A date and time have been coordinated for us to gather to refresh and plant the three flower beds at the Palmer Veterans and Pioneers Home. On June 6<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m., MMGA volunteers will assemble to clean-up and refresh the flower beds with new annuals.

Volunteers should bring a few tools to help with digging and planting as well as a bucket or two to carry away garden debris. The club is furnishing the flowers to plant.

She hopes to see many of your happy faces there!

## 2023 Standing Committees

- Monthly Newsletter - Deb Blaylock
- Website Manager - Eva Cohnen-Brown
- Guest speakers - Deb Blaylock
- Membership Directory - Kristina Tornqvist
- Rebarchek Farm Project - Isaac Vaughan
- Annual Plant Sale - Dorte Mobley
- Palmer Library & Pioneer Home planting - Dorte Mobley
- Midsummer Garden & Art Faire - Sue Glenn
- Summer Garden Tours - Dorte Mobley
- Alaska State Fair Special Awards - Deb Blaylock
- State Fair Parade - Jenny Weaver
- Nominations Committee - Vacant
- 2023 Christmas Party- Vacant

A few hours of your time will help all the committees meet their goals. Have questions or want to volunteer? Send us an email at [matsumastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com).

Thank you!



## NOT-SO-MICRONUTRIENTS

BY ISAAC VAUGHAN, MASTER GARDENER

Recently, I have realized the need for micronutrients. Although I have known they are necessary, I did not consider them particularly important. After all, they are called “micro” nutrients. How important could something preceded by “micro” be? But, when some Burgess “Trip-L-Crop” tomatoes’ growth slowed and yellowed in a “pre-fertilized” potting soil, I recognized the importance of supplementing the other plant nutrition.

After my attention was drawn to this catch, I started searching gardening books for answers. A couple of books attributed the chlorosis to either mosaic virus or nitrogen deficiency. I quickly discredited these, as all my “Trip-L-Crop” plants were affected, and the pre-fertilized soil was just recently unbagged. Another gardening book claimed either iron or magnesium deficiency and went on to suggest Epsom salts (magnesium sulfate) and/or iron supplement.

I then decided, since I have no greenhouse, I needed to have these tomatoes treated so they could mature and fruit ASAP. Thus, I collected the red dust out of a can of nails (iron/ferrous oxide; amounted to nearly a tablespoon), mixed it with an equal measure Epsom salt, and put the mix into a gallon of rabbit manure tea. Not even a week after I watered generously with this supplement, they exploded into new, healthy growth.

To the best of my understanding, the manure tea had a good amount of nitrogen and phosphorous besides the supplied micronutrients. It is pretty much a given that the urine saturating the manure has phosphorous, and manure is well-known for having significant nitrogen. That being said, my concoction supplemented a few - if not all - necessary macronutrients. I am planning

to continue brewing this fertilizer and applying it to all the vegetable beds, hopefully improving the garden’s overall health.

## REBARCHEK FARM PROJECT UPDATE

Committee Chair Isaac Vaughan

I have a couple of ideas for Rebarchek this summer, but I would like to compile a list of all the club’s ideas so we can discuss and organize. The activities I can recall (mine and others) are:

- Move the arbor
- Build/plant some sort of fence/hedge
- Plant [a] vine[s] on the arbor
- Construct raised beds, likely with soaker hoses to reduce the need for volunteer work
- Make a plaque to educate about/advertise for MMGA

If anyone has any further ideas, we can possibly have a discussion at the next meeting.

Photo of the arbor built by Michael Kircher at the entrance to the MMGA plot.



## 2023 Alaska State Fair Volunteer Opportunity



Entry & Judging days in the Alaska State Fair's Crops Department is a fun atmosphere to meet new people & catch up with old friends.

It is a great opportunity to learn something new and to share your own gardening experiences.

You can even earn some credits for Master Gardener volunteer hours!

### ~ Entry Clerks ~

**Wednesdays, August 23 & August 31**

**2 shifts still available... 12-5 PM (Full), 3-8 PM and 5-9 PM (Most Need)**

Help Exhibitors fill out entry forms correctly, explain the use of the Exhibitor Guide, assist with verbal direction on preparation of submissions for judging, and placement of entries in the display area.

### ~ Judges Clerks ~

**Thursdays, August 24 & August 31 from 8 AM-Noon**

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

### ~ Extra Hands Needed ~

**Tuesdays, August 22 & 29 from 10AM-2PM & September 5 from 9 AM-1PM**

Looking for a handful or two of volunteers to help with 1<sup>st</sup> Entry set-up, 1<sup>st</sup> Entry take down & 2<sup>nd</sup> Entry set-up, ribbon sorting, and final shut down of department for the season.

### ~ Admission & Parking Passes are provided ~

For more information or to sign up contact Kathy Liska  
Crops Superintendent/Horticulture Supervisor  
(907) 301-0317 cell or [akliska@aol.com](mailto:akliska@aol.com)



## Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center

### May/June Classes

May Theme: AK Agriculture

June Theme: Summer in Alaska

May 24	The New Matanuska Community Farmer's Market – Brandi Jo Nyberg - Hybrid
May 30	Container Potato Gardening – Ann Kowenstrot & Melissa Clampitt – In Person
June 6	Making and Using Firewood Dry Kiln to Speed Firewood Curing & Seasoning Glen Holt – Zoom
June 20	Research on Managing Weeds & Pests – Gino Graziano – In Person
June 21	Alaska's Insect Diversity – Alex Weninger – Hybrid
June 27	Exploring Trails in Your Community – Revel Treks & Tours – In-Person

**Watch our Facebook, Instagram and website  
for up-to-date info & registration links!**

<https://www.facebook.com/matanuskacxperimentfarm/>

<https://www.facebook.com/MatsuExtension>

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

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## June Planting

The gold standard response to, "When can we plant?" has always been Memorial Day weekend. At least that was what we learned in the 2004 Alaska Master Gardener Class. This year, things might be a bit later – with a heavy frost on May 17, but no snowstorm like we had on May 18, 2013. However, we may be on the upside for some good planting weather. It is always better to err on the side of caution, so procrastination is the order of the day.

This late spring and cool weather may delay planting some things outdoors. The winds in Palmer have been very harsh and not conducive to hardening-off those tender seedlings. Cloudy and rainy days are perfect to start the hardening-off process. Bright sunny days not so much. Whitening on your leaves are indications of sunburn, wind burn or both.

You can build some type of shelter for your plants (see Curt Mueller's article), or you can purchase some Agribon or similar floating row cover to reduce some of the IR light exposure as well as wind protection. Gradually expose your plants to the bright sun – early morning or evening sunlight is better than the sun at high noon.

Sweet corn, beans, and all the cucurbits really need to have warm soil for transplanting into or starting seeds in. They will stall and you will not see much growth until their roots have developed and the soil is warmed to their liking. Cold soils can also cause seeds to quickly rot.

Most of the cold tolerant plants can be transplanted now. Expect a bit of stalling and purpling of some plants as they adjust to their new outdoor accommodations and develop feeder roots. Cooler soils affect nutrient uptake. Generally, in a week or two, plants will perk up and you will know when they have made themselves at home. Growth will quickly accelerate, and the plants will return to their normal coloring. Happy Gardening!

## Certified Food Protection Manager Training

August 1, 2023 • 8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Taught by Julie Cascio, Mat-Su District Extension Agent

### What is a certified food protection manager?

A certified food protection manager (CFPM) is responsible for monitoring and managing all food establishment operations to ensure that the facility is operating in compliance with food establishment regulations.

A CFPM is knowledgeable about food safety practices and uses this knowledge to provide consumers with safe food, protect public health and prevent foodborne illnesses. Alaska regulations require food establishments to have at least one CFPM on staff.

### How do I become certified?

After you have completed this training you must take and pass a certification exam before you work as a CFPM. Testing for this certification is computer-based under a proctor in area.

**NOTE:** Test will be within one week after the training, depending on when a proctor is available in your community. Sign up by July 18 so the book can be mailed to be received before class. Studying it is recommended!

**\$200** (includes class, study guide and one proctored test)

Register at <http://bit.ly/CFPM2023>

Or contact:

Julie Cascio, 907-745-3677 or [jmcascio@alaska.edu](mailto:jmcascio@alaska.edu)

Register by  
July 18

### Videoconference via Zoom.

Proctored testing available in the following locations:

- Fairbanks
- Glennallen
- Haines
- Homer
- Juneau
- Klawock
- Palmer
- Sitka
- Skagway
- Soldotna
- Talkeetna
- Tok
- Unalaska
- Valdez

(If you are in another location, please contact [jmcascio@alaska.edu](mailto:jmcascio@alaska.edu) with location information before signing up so proctoring can be arranged.)

For cancellation: 100% refund will be made to the payer if the training book has not yet been mailed to the participant 14 days before class. Cancellation requested in writing for this program up to 14 days prior to the class, will be refunded 50% when the original sealed new CFPM book is returned to 1500 S. Georgetown, Palmer, AK, 99645. If the book has been opened from its sealing and/or not returned only 50% will be refunded. No refunds will be given if cancellation is after 14 days prior to class.

For more information, contact Julie Cascio at 907-745-3677.  
Mat-Su/Copper River District Cooperative Extension Service Office

[www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/](http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/) • 907-745-3360 • [www.uaf.edu/ces/](http://www.uaf.edu/ces/) • 877-520-5211



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## Garden Links (updated March 2023)

### Alaska Botanical Garden

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

### Alaska Center for Conservation Science

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

### Arbor Day Foundation

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

### Alaska Division of Agriculture

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

### Alaska Garden Clubs

<http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org>

### Alaska Grown

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

### Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage

<http://alaskamastergardeners.org/>

### Alaska Native Plant Society

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

### Alaska Orchid Society

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

### Alaska Peony Society

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

### Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association

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

### Alaska Plant Materials Center

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

### Alaska Rhodiola

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

### Alaska Rock Garden Society

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

### Flora of North America

<http://floranorthamerica.org/>

### Good Earth Garden School

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

### Georgeson Botanical Garden \*New\*

<https://georgesonbotanicalgarden.org/>

### Integrated Pest Management Program

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

### IPM Alaska Pest Reporter

<https://plw.man.mybluehost.me/>

### Junior Master Gardener

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

### Landscape Plants for Alaska

[www.alaskaplants.org](http://www.alaskaplants.org)

### Mat-Su Borough Rain Garden Program

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

### Mat-Su Master Gardener Website

[www.matsumastergardeners.com](http://www.matsumastergardeners.com)

### Master Gardener Research Link (Extension)

<https://extension.org/search/>

### Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley

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

### Mat-Su/Copper River Cooperative Extension Service

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

### Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Services

<https://www.uaf.edu/afes/places/palmer/>

### Alaska Non-Native Species List

<https://accs.uaa.alaska.edu/invasive-species/non-native-plant-species-list/>

### Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

### Society of American Foresters, Cook Inlet Chapter

<https://forestry.org/cook-inlet-seedling-sale/>

### South-Central Alaska Beekeepers Assoc.

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

### Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners Association

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

### Sustainable Agriculture – UAF

<https://www.uaf.edu/ces/agriculture/sare/>

### UAF Cooperative Extension Service

<https://www.uaf.edu/ces/>

### UAF Cooperative Extension Service Publications

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

### UAF CES Citizen Pest Monitoring Portal

<https://pestreporter.alaska.edu/>

### UAF Herbarium

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

### UAF Alaska Master Gardener Program

<https://www.uaf.edu/ces/garden/mastergardeners/>

### University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

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

### USDA/NRCS Plant Database

<https://plants.usda.gov/home>



## CLUB CONTACT INFO

<b>President:</b>	<b>Kevin Johnson</b>	<b>907 775 2808</b>
<b>Vice President:</b>	<b>Lois Rockcastle</b>	<b>907 632-1137</b>
<b>Secretary:</b>	<b>Jana Gooch</b>	<b>907 746-2891</b>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	<b>Cathy Crew</b>	<b>907-632-4401</b>
<b>Member at Large:</b>	<b>Deb Blaylock</b>	<b>907-746-6045</b>

If you have gardening news, photos, or information you would like to share in the newsletter, please send to the MMGA email.

Website: [www.matsumastergardeners.com/](http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/)

Email: [matsumastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### JUNE 2023 AND BEYOND

**Jun 3**, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale

**Jun 6**, Palmer, Palmer Veterans and Pioneers Home Planting, 3 pm

**Jun 12**, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Matanuska Experiment Farm flower bed clean-up and planting, 7 pm

**Jul 8**, Palmer, Palmer Midsummer Garden and Art Faire

**Jul/Aug**, Summer Garden Tours (TBD)

**Sep 11**, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Bob Van Veldhuizen, Soil Testing Basics w/hands-on demonstration

**Oct 2**, Palmer, Regular Meeting, 2023 Garden Year Recap Slideshow & Discussion and Potluck.

**Nov 6**, Palmer, Annual Meeting, Dr. Jeff Smeenk

**Dec**, Palmer, Christmas Party

Do not forget to check out the photos tab on our webpage! Eva updates it periodically from activities our Association participates in.  
<https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/photos.html>

## Club Membership

The membership year runs from January to December each year. Annual individual memberships are \$15 and family memberships are \$20. Family memberships are only for family members living in the same household. The deadline to join is January 15, 2023, 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 appreciated and make our newsletter what it is - so do not 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 needed 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.

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--**





June 2023



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Email: [matsumastergardeners@gmail.com](mailto:matsumastergardeners@gmail.com)

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