



President's Patch

By President Dorte Mobley

What a winter we are having. A few years ago, I decided to find out how much snow weight there was on our deck. I took a square foot of snow and weighed it. Calculating the square footage of the deck, I figured that I had removed thousands of pounds. Well, today I think I beat that by leaps and bounds. Switching between rain and snow all day after a night with heavy rain created an amazing work-out.

However, I do know spring is almost here – a friend of mine has fired up her greenhouse. And she heard a robin the other day. In 2020 I saw the first one here on March 22. Is spring coming early? I would like to think so. Maybe that can give me enough energy to shovel more slushie tomorrow.

If you haven't told Deb that you will help with the conference, you should do so. The more of us who help, the easier it will be for everyone. We also are looking for a chair for the plant sale that rapidly is approaching. Remember if you are in charge, you can get other people to do the work! :>)

If you have any seed starting "tricks of the trade," please send them to Deb for the newsletter. I learned from an amazing Palmer gardener that she puts bamboo sticks about 14" long in with her sweet peas. When the plants grow above the sticks, they get haircuts, so she has these bushy sweet peas instead of the skinny ones like my plants have always been. I imagine peas can get the same treatment.

Hope to see all of you at the meeting where we will learn about a local seed library. Still looking for a meeting place, so standby for more information.



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GENERAL MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY, MARCH 7TH, 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION:

THE MARCH MEETING WILL BE A ZOOM ONLINE MEETING. A LINK WILL BE EMAILED OUT WHEN AVAILABLE.

MEETING AGENDA

BUSINESS MEETING 7:00 PM

GUEST SPEAKER 7:30 PM

MILENA SEVIGNY

FOUNDER OF THE MAT-SU SEED LIBRARY

SHE WILL TALK TO US ABOUT HOW SHE CAME UP WITH HER IDEA AND HOW SHE HOPES THE LIBRARY WILL SERVE THE COMMUNITY.

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

We gardeners are very fortunate to have such a plethora of plant varieties available to us. Vegetable and flower seeds, heirloom and hybrids, we have wonderfully great choices. We can experiment with new varieties or replace those that lose availability. Sometimes it takes considerable experimenting to find just what we want, but the choices are there.

The peasant has grown Princeton cabbage for several years, but the seed is no longer available. Princeton is a late [110 day] storage variety that served the purpose well. Last season we replaced it with Murdoc, which wasn't entirely satisfactory, so a new candidate will be tried this year, Green Mariner from Territorial Seed Co. Incidentally, the original carrier of Princeton, Stoke Seeds, now sells only to commercial growers and does not have seeds available in packet quantities.

On the subject of cabbage, the peasant has been very pleased with Parel, a very early cabbage of good quality with a maturity of 45 days. Other varieties that are supposed to be very early have been tried but were not satisfactory. Parel seed was originally purchased from Territorial, but they stopped carrying it. Then it became available through E-bay with the seed coming from Ukraine, where it was developed. E-bay now says, "sold out." It can be purchased directly from Ukraine, but the peasant passes on that route. He has enough seed for two or three years and will go from there.

Tomato variety "Red October" has been a standby for the peasant for years. It too has fallen to the wayside. As possible replacements the peasant has decided to try a couple from Tomato Growers Supply that are recommended for greenhouse growing. They are pricey with only 10 seeds per packet. Since the 2022 tomato crop is

already started and the peasant wanted to give the new varieties a try, he decided to plant a couple for this season. At 99 cents per seed, he planted one of each. They're not up yet, but they've only had three days. They should show in another day or two.

It's fun and interesting to see what some new varieties will do. Too bad we can't try them all. They don't always match description or may disappoint us in some ways, but we can certainly learn from experimenting.

Thanks, folks.



These are Parel cabbage plants as they look almost ready for harvest. When seeded in the greenhouse about April 1, they will begin producing by mid-June. Quality is excellent and they can stand in the garden for at least a couple of weeks without splitting. It is my hope that things will settle down in Ukraine and the seed will become available again. Perhaps the search for a replacement must be done. If anyone knows of a good replacement, please let me know.

Curt Mueller

ROCKING THE GARDEN: BY ISAAC VAUGHAN, MASTER GARDENER

Photo submitted by the author

People have many ideas about what a rock garden should be. One idea is a jumble of neat-looking rocks. Another is any garden that has rocks incorporated in it. Then there is anything and everything in between. My definition is as follows: A sloped or graded area of soil, covered with various-sized (larger than basketballs) rocks and the spaces between the rocks planted with accustomed shrubs, perennials, and self-seeding annuals.

My rock garden is made with all domestic rock (I found them around the property). Since I don't have access to any power machinery, they are hand-moved. Once the rocks get in the range of 500 pounds, it takes a couple of quarters (a sibling bribe), a wagon, two stout planks, and 50 feet of rope to get it up the hill. Not mentioning placement and adjusting, which takes another few quarters, two shovels, and sometimes a little groveling. By this time, I start to consider paying for landscape rock. A hand cart (that wheeled contraption that looks strangely like a catapult) was used experimentally, but due to an unforeseen incident that put a living payload - me - a few yards in the air, it is not considered an option anymore.

I then shovel sand between the rocks, mixed with aged chicken manure to about 5:1 to 10:1 ratio, depending on the future residents. The sand provides the drainage required for succulents and the manure satisfactorily provides the needed organic matter and nitrogen; no need to compost.

To me, the plants are the most important part. Among my favorites are *Sempervivum*, creeping sedums, mugo pine, and creeping

thyme. The pattern: Any low-growing, alpine, drought-hardy plants are a good addition to a rock garden. There are an enormous number of wonderful native plants available, such as the alpine willows, saxifrages, draba, bearberry, and miniature fireweed. There are even some cacti that are a possibility, though I don't think I have the space to go into that now.

Although my rock garden is a constant work in progress, it is probably my favorite category in gardening. The least explored plants on earth are most likely the alpine plants. They all have amazing hardiness, fascinating flower structure, and impressive survival techniques to survive their hostile climate. They are miniatures, built small to protect themselves from the worst of the desiccating wind. Their fascinating color and structure mixed with a simulation of the environment they're built for is a perfect subject for a garden. Since our local climate is somewhat similar to their native climate, the only maintenance is pulling out the dandelions; chickweed is too tender to live there, believe it or not.





Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center
 CLASSES - February Theme is: Preparedness
 March Theme is: Sustainable Living

**Watch our Facebook and Instagram page
 as well as our website for additional info & registration links!**

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

Feb 22	Preparing Your House for Extreme Cold & Emergencies – Steve Brown
Feb 24	Prepare your Pets for Disasters – Steve Brown
March 1	Sustainability: Getting the Most from your Firewood – Glen Holt
March 3	Creative Alaskan Gardening - Jodie Anderson
March 8	Encouraging Natural Predators in your garden – Alex Wenninger and Jozef Slowik
March 10	Food Storage: Making the Harvest Last - Art Nash
March 15	Financial sustainability - Financial Coach, Dylan Robertson
March 17	Sustainability within your local food system - Courtney Long, ISU
March 22	Food Preservation Basics - Leslie Shallcross
March 24	Ethical Foraging – Ann Kowenstrot
March 29	Food Dehydration Basics - Sarah Lewis
March 31	Chicken University - Steve Brown

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The University of Alaska Fairbanks Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center strives to make our programs accessible for all individuals. If you or a family member who is attending a program needs accommodations to participate, please contact our office 5 days in advance to request services.

This will give us the opportunity to provide assistance you require. (907)745-3360 or email Theresa Isaac misaac@alaska.edu



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Spring 2022 In-Person Alaska Master Gardener Class

The tentative details on the upcoming spring Alaska Master Gardener Class:

Tuesday 6-9 p.m., March 1st - May 24th, at the Experiment Farm.

Cost is \$300 but includes all materials and a \$100 rebate if community service hours are completed one year from class start date. The registration website will be up soon, but people can email Stephen Brown at scbrown4@alaska.edu and he will put them on a registration notification wait list.

2022 Standing Committee Volunteers

- **Monthly Newsletter** - Deb Blaylock, publisher
- **Website Manager** - Eva Cohnen-Brown
- **Guest speakers for monthly regular meetings & meeting space coordinator** - **Vacant**
- **Membership Directory** - Kristina Tornqvist
- **Rebarchek Farm Project** - Michael Kircher, chair
- **Annual Plant Sale** - **Vacant**
- **Palmer Library & Pioneer Home Planting** - Sue Glenn
- **Midsummer Garden & Art Faire** - Chair: Craig Lisonbee
- **Summer Garden Tours** - **Vacant**
- **Alaska State Fair awards** - Deb Blaylock
- **State Fair Parade** - **Vacant**
- **Nominations Committee** - **Vacant**
- **2022 Christmas Party** - **Vacant**

As you can see, many of our 2022 Standing Committees need volunteers. Please contact one of the board members if you would like to fill one of the vacancies. Thank you!

My Favorite Garden Tool - submitted by Sue Glenn (photo by the author)

Another fabulous garden tool in my yard is a plastic tarp. Useful for hauling leaves, grass, weeds, tree limbs etc. I can move a large amount a material at one time, more then can fit in wheelbarrow, especially bulky items. I slide the tarp along the grass to my dump site and pull it in and lift edges to dump just where I want it.

The tarp is very flexible, going downhill, uphill around trees, and sliding over most surfaces with ease. Also, good to slide a shrub or rhubarb that has been dug up and needs moving. Limitations are weight, heavy branches, logs, or dirt clumps that will quickly make it more difficult to slide the tarp. Especially useful for spring cleanup, fall leaves, pruning shrubs or, as shown in the photo, clearing an area for a new gardening plot.



Alaska Seed Potato FAQ

"Can I plant potatoes I just buy from the grocery store?"

From Jodie Anderson, UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center

"That's a definite no. Tablestock potatoes (the ones you buy in the produce section) are grown, harvested, stored, and sold. **Certified seed potatoes are inspected before they are sold to make sure their storage facility is clean and disease-free.** They are also inspected twice during the growing season to make sure there is little to no disease present in the plants. Planting tablestock potatoes is planting uninspected potatoes that can harbor disease you cannot see until the plant is growing or near harvest. In addition, potatoes from outside, even tablestock potatoes, are commonly sprayed prophylactically just to make sure they won't get disease: we don't do that in Alaska. **Planting certified seed potatoes decreases our disease potential and opportunities of spread ultimately keeping all Alaska grown potatoes more easily disease free."**

"What about potatoes I have grown here and overwintered?"

From Greg Kalal, certified seed grower and owner of GK 'Raising it Up' Farm

"I used to think that if you had certified seed potatoes you could probably get two years out of them before I would worry about them picking up some disease. As it has warmed up and some diseases that were never heard of in Alaska start showing up here, I have changed my mind. Certified seed potatoes have been inspected twice during the growing season by the state ag inspector and she takes virology specimens of anything questionable to be tested. She also does a storage inspection in the spring before granting tags. Without having the inspection and samples taken it is possible that a hungry aphid or leafhopper took a "suck" of your potato plant and transmitted a disease to it. Planting its progeny allows that disease another year to spread and perhaps infect your neighbors' plants--and then to a potato farmer. The last major potato disease was spread by a peach aphid. How did it get to Alaska? The state has also started inspecting potatoes grown by people that want to replant them. **Using certified seed potato is the only way to keep from having to grow potatoes in Alaska like they do in the lower 48, ie, "chemical warfare every couple of weeks."** Most of the big potato gurus in the lower 48 are warning of the end of non-GMO potatoes just because of the disease pressure and diseases that don't initially show any manifestations."

For more information:

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





You Can Grow It!

Alaska Master Gardeners 2022

2022 State Alaska Master Gardeners Conference

Saturday, April 2, 2022

8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Evangelo's Restaurant,

*Conference entry is on the lower parking level
(back of the building)*

2530 E Parks Hwy, Wasilla, AK 99654

The Mat-Su Master Gardeners Association is proud to host the 2022 State Alaska Master Gardeners Conference. We have an exciting and full slate of speakers and programs! The focus this year is on beginning and new-to-Alaska gardeners. We're sure even the most experienced gardener will learn a few things!

Lunch is included - a yummy variety of soups, garden salad, and rolls provided by Evangelo's

Speakers

Keynote & Capstone Speaker: Melody Rose, Tennessee Extension

Jeff Smeenk: Basic Soils for the Alaska Gardener

Leah Wagner: Best Practices to Cultivate Success in your Alaskan Garden

Dario Canelon: Indoor Lighting Basics

Gina Dionne: Perfect Perennials

Josh Smith: Growing Fruit in Alaska

Joey Slowik & Alex Wenninger: Integrated Pest Management

Theresa Isaac: CES: We Have Your Resources to Help You Grow It!

Stephen Brown: Gardening Apps

Local vendors will be on site with a variety of items.

There are door prizes with drawings throughout the conference for these goodies!

Early Bird Registration is \$60 through March 15, 2022. After March 15, 2022, registration is \$75 per person. *Registration is limited to the first 100 people. Cancellation Policy: a full refund will be applied until March 26th, 2022.*



Visit the Mat-Su Master Gardeners Association webpage for more conference information and registration details:

www.matsumastergardeners.com

Contact: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com



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January	February	March	April	May	June
Late-Jan	Early Feb	Early March	Early April	Direct Sow	Direct Sow
Echinacea	Hot Peppers	Dahlia bulbs	Kale	Carrots	Beans
Rhodochiton	Catnip	Bell/Sweet Pepper	Cilantro	Potatoes	Sweet Corn
Leeks	State Fair Cabbage	Kalettes	Sweet Corn	Beets	Zucchini
Shallots	Parsley	Marigolds	Lettuce	Swiss Chard	All Squashes
Onions	White Sage	Mid March	Dill	Lettuce	
Lemon Grass	Lemon Balm	Leaf fennel	State Fair cucumbers	Peas	
Rhodiola	Thyme	Tomatoes		Spinach	Transplants*
Rosemary	Stevia	Late March		Turnips	Sweet Corn
Artichokes	Hyssop	Broccoli	Late April	Cilantro/Dill	Zucchini
	Lavender	Cauliflower	Zucchini	Transplants*	Winter Squash
	Horehound	Cabbage	Winter Squash	Cauliflower	Summer Squash
	Oregano	Kohlrabi	Summer Squash	Cabbage	Tomatillos
	Stevia	Romanesco	Cucumbers	Broccoli	Tomatoes
	Leaf Fennel	Alyssum	Pumpkins	Herbs	Pumpkins
	Mid to Late February	Nasturium	Melons	Onions/Scallions	
	Sage	Holy Basil		Leeks	
	Celery	Calendula		Kohlrabi	
	Celeriac	Sweet Basil		Romanesco	
	Brussel sprouts	Tomatillos		Flowers	
	Scallions	Lily bulbs		Lettuce	
	Hot Peppers			Kalettes	
				Celery	
				Brussels sprouts	
			* These should be hardened off before transplanting.		

This is my personal seed starting schedule - it is not written in stone, and you can modify it to work for you. I start some things early as they are very slow growing, and I schedule things based on my available seed starting space and when I can move them from my grow room (some call it the laundry room) out to a larger heated area in my greenhouse. I am fortunate to be able to set up a shelter logic in my greenhouse to expand my seedling growing area. I move things from the seedling area in the house out to the heated area in my greenhouse (it's a 10 x 10 shelter logic lined with Reflectix insulation and Agribon with a small space heater) when the seedlings are large enough. This is generally around early to mid-March.

Deb Blaylock, Alaska Master Gardener, Palmer, Alaska January 2022

February Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Isaac Vaughan, Secretary

Monthly Meeting - participants: Isaac Vaughan, Dorte Mobley, Deb and Kenneth Blaylock, Kristina Tornqvist, Cathy Crew, Craig Lisonbee, Curt & Marge Mueller, Phyllis Kircher, Michael Kircher, Greg Kalal, Sandra McMillian, Belinda, Ellie, Theresa, Laurel Flynn, Mimi Talley.

Dorte Mobley motioned to open the meeting.

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Dorte Mobley, Deb Blaylock motioned to accept, Ken Blaylock seconded.

The membership flyers were all sent out to the members.

Somebody is needed to coordinate the plant sale; decision pushed to next month because no one volunteered.

We may meet in the [Rebarchek?] barn once things warm up. We still need a speaker coordinator, but Kristina Tornqvist and Dorte Mobley are doing it so far.

No updates on State Fair float or prizes.

Kristina Tornqvist motioned to adjourn; Deb Blaylock seconded.

Garden Links (updated Mar 2021)

Alaska Botanical Garden

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

Alaska Center for Conservation Science

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

Arbor Day Foundation

www.arboday.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 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://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/>

Good Earth Garden School

<http://ellenvandevisse.com/>

Grow Palmer

<http://growpalmer.org/>

Integrated Pest Management Program

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

Junior Master Gardener

<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 (Extension)

<http://search.extension.org>

Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley

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

Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Services

New

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

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

Society of American Foresters, Cook Inlet Chapter *New*

<http://www.alaska.forestry.org/alaska/chapters/cook-inlet>

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 Georgeson Botanical Garden

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

UAF Herbarium

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

UAF Alaska Master Gardener Program

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

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

<https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Dorte Mobley	907-232-5422
Vice President:	Kristina Tornqvist	907-795-6393
Secretary:	Isaac Vaughn	dnavon@msn.com
Treasurer:	Cathy Crew	907-632-4401
Member at Large:	Sue Glenn	907-671-0252

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

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAR 2022 AND BEYOND

Mar 1 – May 24, Mat-Su Spring Master Gardener Class

Mar 7, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Milena Seigny, Founder of the Mat-Su Seed Library

Mar 11-12, Anchorage, ABG 2022 Spring Garden Conference

Apr 2, Wasilla, (Evangelo's), State Master Gardener Conference, "You Can Grow It!", <https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/2022-state-conference.html>

Apr 4, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

May 2, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

May TBD, Palmer, Palmer Veterans and Pioneers Home Planting

Jun 4, Palmer, Palmer Pavilion, Annual Plant Sale

Jun 13, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Planting at Palmer Public Library

July TBD, Palmer Garden & Art Faire

July/August, TBD, Summer Garden Tour(s)

Aug 19 – Sep 5, Palmer, Alaska State Fair

Don't 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, 2022, 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 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.

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--



March 2022



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

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
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