



President's Patch

By President Kevin Johnson

February meeting brought another great speaker with Paul Marmora. Paul brought with him fresh floral and greenery. Everyone provided a planter of some sort, and we put together arrangements. Most of them are posted on our Facebook page. We learned about the Fibre Flora that can be purchased in Anchorage at the Alaska Flower Market. Everyone went home with an arrangement that they made personally. Thank you, Paul, for your time and effort. Be sure to look for Paul at the Alaska State Fair, Bonsai exhibits. This is one of the benefits of being a MMGA member.

As I am writing this, the weather reports up to eight more inches of snow within the next few days. Come on SPRING!!! With January, hope everyone has finalized and placed their seed orders. Soon they will be arriving and then our favorite pastime of the summer begins with planting the seedlings. Make sure to check your plants that are over wintering. They need the TLC also. With the deep snow, moose have been searching for trees to eat. Make sure you check your favorite trees, and ensure they are still protected.

I have heard reports of some greenhouses failing under the weight of the snow. Please check your structures. The worse time to find major repairs needed are when you are ready to turn the heat on.

Emails have been flying with upcoming events. One of them is the Master Gardener courses that will be conducted in Palmer, Anchorage and Fairbanks. Sign up and have fun!!

By now everyone has heard about the Palmer Public Library and a portion of the roof collapsed. Last report I hear they were waiting for the engineers' report on the stability. This summer is the planting and maintenance of the flower beds at the library and Pioneer Home. Let us hope we can continue this summer with this great public service tradition.

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REGULAR MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

MARCH 6, 2023, 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION:

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

AGENDA

7:00 TO 7:30 PM BUSINESS MEETING

7:30 GUEST SPEAKER

DAN ELLIOTT, ALL ABOUT APPLES ORCHARD OWNER AND
LOCAL APPLE EXPERT.

DAN WILL GIVE AN INTRODUCTORY TALK ON GRAFTING
AND PRUNING FRUIT TREES. HE WOULD LOVE TO ANSWER
YOUR QUESTIONS ON PLANTING, GROWING, PRUNING, OR
GRAFTING. PLEASE COME WITH QUESTIONS YOU NEED

ANSWERED!

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

Yes, it is midwinter, and we have much snow to handle. It's also a time for planning and planting some seeds for our enjoyment, both in the growing and in the enjoyment which is still to come. Perhaps it's not too early for the peasant to toss in a few ideas on speeding the development of vegetable crops. We all know our growing season is short, so here are a few suggestions which have worked well for the peasant. Some of you will recognize these as some that were brought up before, but perhaps they may help in your planning.

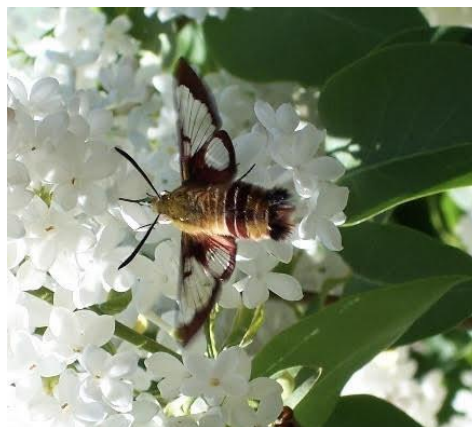
Getting a head start on peas and beans is surely advantageous. Pre-sprouting is easy and definitely speeds up emergence when planted in the soil and also makes good solid stands with no skips from seeds that didn't germinate. A 10-20 flat works well and a couple of hand towels. Wet the first one, wring it out, and lay it in the tray. Seeds are placed on the towel with separation and markers for the varieties. The second towel is then wetted and wrung out and laid on top of the seeds. The tray is then placed in a warm place but not in direct sunlight which tends to dry out the top towel. The top towel is moistened each day. Seeds must not be allowed to dry out during germination; keeping the top towel moist will prevent that. Keep a close eye on the seeds and when a radicle appears they are ready to go in the garden soil. The radicle, as you remember from training, is the embryonic root. If left on the towel the radicle will continue to grow and embed itself in the towel and become impossible to remove without damage. Not all seeds will show a sprout at the same time. You may find it necessary to plant the ones that have sprouted and plant the others as they show a radicle.

Pre-sprouting seed potatoes is another that works very well. Seed purchased from a grower may have been in cold storage and not show any growth. Store the seed potatoes in

a paper bag in a warm place for a few days and the eyes will begin to sprout. Cut the potatoes with an eye or two on each cutting and spread them out on a flat surface and allow the cut surfaces to develop a skin. One day should be sufficient. Half fill a flat with a sterile sprouting medium and nestle the cut pieces in the medium, not allowing the pieces to touch. Then cover the pieces with more medium and moisten slightly. Keep in a warm place. Do not overdo the moistening as it could cause seed to rot. You may need to sprinkle a little moisture on top day by day. After a few days the seed will have formed a little rosette of roots and leaf sprout will appear. you'll need to keep checking until this happens, then off to the garden and get them in soil.

A couple of points to remember is that garden soil will be cool at planting time, and by pre-sprouting, the growing process will be speeded up as the first steps take place in a warm environment. Also, you must time the sprouting process with garden soil preparation so you're ready to plant when the seeds or seed potatoes are ready. One advantage to this system is that the garden soil gets a few extra days to get warmer before the seeding is done.

Thanks, folks.



Think summer! Sphinx moth on white lilac.

March Guest Speaker Introduction

Dan Elliott - Owner of All About Apples and Alaska Master Gardener is our March guest speaker. He will give an introductory talk on pruning and grafting basics. This will lead into an interactive question and answer period. He asks that folks come with their questions on growing fruit trees in Alaska. Dan is ready to help you succeed in growing your own fruit.



He and his wife Marian have an orchard on Fairview Loop outside of Wasilla with more than 120 varieties of delicious apples, for snacks, pies, sauce, or ciders. The orchard consists of hardy apple, cherry, and other fruit-bearing trees. Dan has in-depth knowledge to help you raise a good crop under Alaskan conditions.



A list of Red Peonies

Submitted by Dorte Mobley

These are hyperlinks – if you click on them, they will open to a link on your internet browser.

- [1. Karl Rosenfield Peony](#)
- [2. Kansas Peony](#)
- [3. Red Charm Peony](#)
- [4. Félix Crousse Peony](#)
- [5. Fernleaf Peony](#)
- [6. Buckeye Belle Peony](#)
- [7. Henry Bockstoe Peony](#)
- [8. Felix Supreme Peony](#)
- [9. Old Faithful Peony](#)
- [10. Kirinmaru Peony](#)
- [11. Benjamin Franklin Peony](#)
- [12. Black Beauty Peony](#)
- [13. Victoire de la Marne Peony](#)
- [14. Command Performance Peony](#)
- [15. Prince of Darkness Peony](#)
- [16. Rachel Peony](#)
- [17. Red Sarah Bernhardt Peony](#)
- [18. Diana Parks Peony](#)
- [19. Peter Brand Peony](#)
- [20. Hillary Itoh Peony](#)
- [21. Lollipop Itoh Peony](#)
- [22. Shima-Nishiki Tree Peony](#)
- [23. Cherry Hill Peony](#)
- [24. François Ortegat Peony](#)
- [25. Belgravia Peony](#)

(continued from front page)

If you have not heard, the City of Palmer has a Palmer Beautification Award. The nominations are in June I believe. When I come across more information, I will pass it on. Also in June is the MMGA annual plant sale. Lots of fun each summer!!

If you know of anyone who would like to be a member, provide them with an application and sign them up! Remember, you do not need to be a Master Gardener to be a member of MMGA.

Planning and dedication makes for great gardens!!

Kevin Johnson

A Favorite Succulent

Written by Master Garden Isaac Vaughan - photos by the author.

As I cannot claim any plant as my favorite, I just have to go with whichever one I've put the most thought into lately. I recently re-potted a 5-yr-old *Echeveria decora* succulent. The aptly named *Echeveria decora* is probably one of the most beautiful succulents I've seen; see included photo. Since this plant hadn't grown any offsets in my time owning it, I decided I wanted more (strange how that works...).

When I repotted the plant, it was somewhat neglected, slightly shriveled and a little etiolated. I pulled off the shriveled, discolored leaves, and figured I might as well try and sprout the healthiest of them. My other propagation plan was to sever the rosette from the taproot and let it regrow. Thinking back, I am glad I tried leaf cuttings first. The poor, shriveled leaves I attempted to save were then laid in a square 4" pot and misted every now and then. Within a week, the leaves had sprouted roots and started to rehydrate. Currently, a month later, the leaf cuttings are sprouting rosettes of their own. While I had suspected offset-shy plants to be reluctant to grow from leaf cuttings, the lowest quality leaves I have ever used as cuttings both sprouted into new plants!

While my favorite plant in a few months may be anything I buy for the garden in the spring, my favorite plant for now and one of the prettiest succulents I have seen is my resilient and forgiving *Echeveria decora*. While unwilling to sprout offsets, it is still easy to propagate from leaf cuttings, probably easier than chickweed if the leaves and mother plant were both healthy!



Cutting (top) and mother plant (right)



MMGA Meeting Minutes Monday, February 6, 2023

Submitted by Secretary Jana Gooch

Members present:

Rayna Morgan, Isaac Vaughan, Dorte Mobley, Kevin Johnson, Eva Cohnen-Brown, Sue Glenn, Dawn Wolski, Cathy Crew, Curt Mueller, Marge Mueller, Sandy Bohling, Craig Lisonbee, Ken Blaylock, Deb Blaylock, and Georgiana Gooch.

Meeting opened at 7:15 pm.

Craig Lisonbee moved to accept the January 2023 minutes. Ken Blaylock seconded. Motion passed.

Kevin Johnson reported that the chamber is aware that many non-profits are pulling out of the Mid-Summer Garden & Art Faire because of the vendor fees. They are currently working on vendor fees and will contact Kevin once they have worked it out.

Treasurer's Report by Cathy Crew: Lots of memberships have come in (about 8-10), however, there was a problem accessing the checks due to a mix-up on who had the keys to the mailbox. Kevin has both keys to the mailbox and will get the membership forms out of the box.

Cathy will get the memberships posted as soon as she gets them. Also, because Alison Nore claims she lost the \$150 State Fair special prize check, Cathy stopped payment at a cost of \$25 and reissued the check. A question was posed as to whether we should consider putting the treasurer's name and address on the membership form instead of having them go to the mailbox. This will be a board decision.

The membership directory will have to go out late due to the mix-up on keys. A question was posed as to whether January 15 was too early for membership payments.

There were no committee reports.

Again, there are committee vacancies and volunteers are needed for the following

committees: Christmas Party, Garden Tour, Palmer Library, Annual Plant Sale, Room/Equipment Coordinator, Pioneer Home Planting, Midsummer Garden & Art Faire, Summer Garden Tours, State Fair Parade, Nominations Committee, and the 2023 Christmas Party.

Guest Speaker, Paul Marmora. We engaged in fresh flower arranging. He highlighted a new floral foam that is biodegradable, cuts better and absorbs much faster. It's called Fibre Floral and can be purchased from Alaska Flower Market (business cards were passed out). He mentioned that the packets of flower food can be obtained from any grocery store floral department. It's antibacterial and keeps about a quart of water clear. Also, there is a new Oasis Tape that is clear and not dark green that we used in our arrangements.

Suggestions on creating an arrangement included placing the greenery first. Using moss to cover the Fibre Floral foam created a more natural, woodsy look. Keep in mind that plants grow out from the root, and ferns grow from the center out and every which way. Let little bits of green hang over the edge for interest. Creating a one-sided arrangement saves on flowers used. To cut flowers, place them in water before they start scabbing over. Remember that the colors yellow and white create a focal point. Spread out across the container to create balance. Do not arrange all cuttings at the same height and the same distance. Nature is not balanced, so create a natural look. Setting cuttings in three heights (tall to medium to low) creates depth. And do not create an arrangement too tall, especially if going on a table. Measure the length of the arrangement from your elbow to your wrist (about 12").

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Photos of the finished arrangements are posted on the MMGA Facebook page.



Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center

March/April Classes

March Theme: Sustainable Living

April Theme: Earth/Eco Friendly

Feb 21	A Brief History of the Introduction of Invasive Plants in AK – Gino Graziano Zoom
Mar 7	Splitting, Stacking & Storing to get Seasoned Wood – Glen Holt – Zoom
Mar 9	Seed Starting at the Farm – Ann Kowenstrot & Theresa Isaac – In-Person
Mar 21	Firewood Cutting Checklist for Harvesting Firewood – Glen Holt – Zoom
Mar 30	Chicken University – Steve Brown – In-Person
April 4	Constructing an Effective Woodsheed for Drying & Storing Your Firewood Glen Holt – Zoom
April 6	Healthy Soils = Healthy Planet – Caley Gasch
April 18	Backyard Pollinators – Alex Wenninger – Zoom
April 20	Composting Basics – Caley Gasch – Hybrid
April 25	Biomass and Firewood as a Local Energy Alternative – Glen Holt – Zoom
April 17	Know Your Soil: Testing & Amending – Bob VanVeldhuizen & Theresa Isaac In-Person

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

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

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

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

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March Seeds to Start

First half of March

Sweet peppers, bell peppers, tomatoes

Marigolds, calendula, alyssum - to name a few.

Most brassicas: broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, collards, cauliflower, Romanesco, kohlrabi (save the kale for early April).

Second half of March

Flower tubers, bulbs like dahlias, lilies, begonias - start in large pots in a cool but not freezing area and don't water until the plants break the surface.

Faster growing herbs like basil and lemon grass (second half of March).

PLANTING TIPS

Sow seeds direct in the soil: Beets, carrots, turnips (and to some degree, parsley) do NOT like to be moved. This also goes for beans, peas, radishes, spinach, rutabagas, corn, poppies.

Sow direct OR grow as seedlings: It is cool to know that some plants actually BENEFIT by being transplanted. Swiss chard, lettuce, mustard greens (grown as a mix for salads), nasturtiums, cress, peas, and beans (be gentle).

Grow as seedlings to transplant outside: And bless them, some plants can go either way, which makes life easier for us: Collards, kale (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, etc.), oregano, thyme, cilantro, basil, calendula, tomatoes, peppers, leeks, onions, celery, squash, parsley, chives, cucumbers, beans.

2023 Standing Committees

- Monthly Newsletter - Deb Blaylock
- Website Manager - Eva Cohnen-Brown
- Guest speakers - Deb Blaylock
- Room, Equipment, Zoom Coordinator - **Vacant**
- Membership Directory - Kristina Tornqvist
- Rebarchek Farm Project - Isaac Vaughan
- Annual Plant Sale - **Vacant**
- Palmer Library & Pioneer Home planting - **Vacant**
- Midsummer Garden & Art Faire - **Vacant**
- Summer Garden Tours - **Vacant**
- Alaska State Fair Special Awards - Deb Blaylock
- State Fair Parade - **Vacant**
- 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.

Thank you!

Palmer/South Central Alaska Seed Starting Chart 2023

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

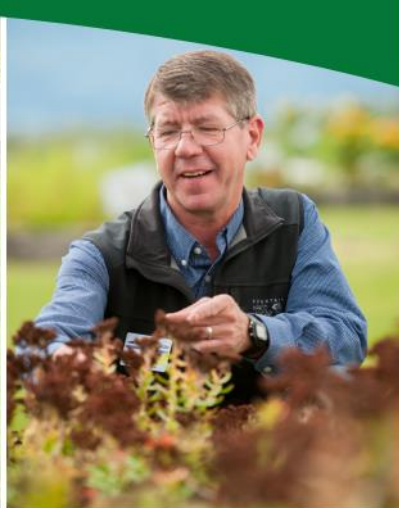
This is my personal seed starting schedule - it is not written in stone, and you can modify it to work for you. I start some things early as they are very slow growing, and I schedule things based on my available seed starting space. It is based on planting most things outdoors on Memorial Day weekend. Remember – ground temperatures are just as (or more) important than air temperatures. Growing zones are based on air temps. Hardening off is a must for plants started indoors or in a protected greenhouse environment. Deb Blaylock, Alaska Master Gardener, Palmer, Alaska. Last modified February

2023.

Master Gardening Mat-Su

Meets weekly on Tuesdays
March 14-May 30 from 6-9 p.m.

Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center
1509 S. Georgeson Drive, Palmer



This face-to-face class teaches the fundamentals of gardening and can lead to official title of Alaska Master Gardener when 40 hours of community service are completed.

\$300 includes materials and a copy of Alaska's Sustainable Gardening Handbook.

Individuals may register online at <https://bit.ly/MGPAL23>
Register by March 7, 2023

For more information,
contact Stephen Brown at 907-745-3639 or scbrown4@alaska.edu

Stephen Brown, the agriculture and horticulture agent for the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service in Palmer, will lead the classes.

Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center

1509 S Georgeson Drive, Palmer
Phone: 907-745-3551



www.uaf.edu/ces • 877-520-5211

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The training provides a broad horticultural background.

Topics include:

- botany
- soils
- vegetable production using organic and conventional techniques
- integrated pest management
- greenhouses
- lawns
- houseplants
- trees/shrubs
- flowers
- invasive plants



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

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

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)

<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://palmeroilandwater.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

USDA/NRCS Plant Database

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



CLUB CONTACT INFO

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

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/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 2023 AND BEYOND

Mar 6, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Dan Elliott, Introduction to Fruit Tree Grafting and Pruning and questions-and-answers.

Apr 3, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Carol Symonds, EweTopia Farms Greenhouse, Hanging Baskets

Apr 7-8, Anchorage, State Master Gardener Conference, "Party in the Garden", <https://www.alaskamastergardeners.org/>

May 1, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Ellen VandeVisse, Biochar

Jun 3, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale

Jun 12, Palmer, Palmer Library Planting

Sep 11, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

Oct 2, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD

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>

Membership renewal for 2023 is now available on the website:

<https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/online-membership-application.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: 20th day of each month -- Thank you--



March 2023



Like us on
Facebook

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

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION
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PALMER, AK 99645**

