



President's Patch

By President Jenny Weaver, photos by the author

So....I know all of you organized and efficient Master Gardeners ordered your seeds for the 2026 season weeks or even months ago. Well, I just got my orders off today. It's true! I scanned catalogues for weeks, but the total cost was too high, I knew I had to cut some items, but I just couldn't bring myself to do it!

I want to try some new items. I want to stop buying "mixes" of flowers; to order singular colors and plant splashes of a single-color palette. I want to try some different cherry tomatoes and beef up my sunflower array.



1 INFRARED MIX
SEED / 1 gram



1 CONCERT BELL
SEED / 50 seeds



1 SAHARA
ORGANIC SEED / 25 seeds



1 SHOCK WAVE® PURPLE TIE DYE
SEED / 15 seeds



1 LOOPYTUNIA MIX
SEED / 30 seeds

So today I pared down my wish list and submitted three separate orders from different companies. 1) Denali Seed Company, my absolute favorite for Alaska proven varieties of veggies. 2) Territorial Seeds to try several cool sunflowers, an assortment of beans (other than Provider and Contender), and a few other first-tries including Rudbeckia and eggplant! And 3) Johnny's Seeds for an assortment of snapdragons, yarrow, dahlias, plus a new Delphinium.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| President's Patch | 1 |
| Somewhere in Thyme | 2 |
| Sutton Seed Starting | 3 |
| MMGA Member Survey | 3 |
| March 2 Meeting Info | 4 |
| March Guest Speaker | 4 |
| March Business Highlight | 4 |
| February Meeting Minutes | 5/6 |
| Seed Swap Information | 6 |
| Garden Links | 7 |
| Contacts | 8 |
| Calendar of Events | 8 |

REGULAR MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

MARCH 2ND, 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION:

REBARCHEK FARM, SOJDIN BARN, EAST REBARCHEK ROAD,
PALMER, ALASKA

AGENDA

MARCH SPEAKER, MARGARET ADSIT
ALASKA FARMLAND TRUST

BUSINESS HIGHLIGHT, LARA STANLEY, ALASKA STATE FAIR

BUSINESS MEETING



Who are your go-to for seed companies? How early do you order? Did you try some new varieties or even new plants this year? How do you organize your seeds for storage and planting? Hopefully, we will have some time to discuss seed buying during our Monday, March 2 meeting. Bring your ideas to share! Hope to see you on the 2nd!

SOMEWHERE IN THYME

WAYBACK ARTICLES FROM PAST MMGA PUBLICATIONS

Peasant's Perspective

By Master Gardener Curt Mueller, photo by the author

Originally published March 2018

Growing from seed is a skill that Master Gardeners aspire to. Flower and vegetable seeds that we grow for later transplanting or direct seeding in beds and gardens are largely produced by seed companies to be reasonably reliable to germinate. Rightly so. We expect our efforts to be successful the first time, for sometimes we get one shot at the most opportune time to get germination and growth. Short summers don't always allow for a second chance.

Those plants commonly grown will have certain temperature and light requirements for germination, but almost all will do well without stratification or scarification to enhance their development. When we wish to grow wildflowers from seed or to acquire some new cultivars that have desirable attributes, it often becomes necessary make use of these techniques.

Stratification is a way to simulate the effect of temperature experienced by a seed in its natural situation. Usually, it requires a cool period of varying length and sometimes of temperature fluctuation. We often need to mimic temperature effects of winter, especially in germinating perennials and wildflowers. Some seeds germinate after experiencing heat from a fire.

Scarification is a method used on seeds with a hard, impregnable coat. There needs to be a way for moisture to find its way to the seed itself. The outside coat needs to be abraded in some way to make this possible. In nature this can happen if the seed is ingested by an animal and makes its way through the animal's digestive tract, whereby the seed coat is softened or thinned but the seed itself is left viable. Freezing and thawing can also work to open the seed coat. Methods we can use to scarify seed are tumbling with abrasives, nicking the seed coat with a file or knife, using an acid to soften the seed coat, or lightly sanding until the seed begins to show through the coating.

The peasant has had fair success growing plants using scarification and stratification. Wild lupine seed germinates well with just a slight nick in the seed coat but stay away from the area where the radicle emerges.

Stratification has worked very well in germinating pasque flower seed. Website onrockgarden.com has this to say about germinating *Pulsatilla vulgaris*, our pasque flower. Germination Tips: a) Sow immediately. The viability of these seeds is short, or the species propagates best with fresh seed. Stored seed might be coaxed into germination with temperature cycling and patience. b) Sow at 20 degrees Centigrade. Seed germinates within 3 months. c) Special Care: It has been proven that removing tails is not necessary.

The peasant sowed the *Pulsatilla* seeds on January 1st, 2018. The seed tails were used to place the seed into the starting mix with the top of the seed at mix level. The container was then covered with food wrap and placed in the potato bin at a temperature of about 40 degrees F. The container was removed from the bin on February 2nd and given light in a 68°F environment. A slight amount of bottom heat was provided. The photo shows germination as of February 19. Some seeds are still germinating but are not visible in the photo. Estimated percentage of germination is 75%. Seeds had been placed about 1/2 inch apart to facilitate separating plants for transplanting.



To start the *Pulsatilla* seed immediately after it matures would entail some difficulty in our area, as the seed isn't ready to harvest until September, just before it drops off the stem. This is not an opportune time to sow. Sometime during the winter, the new plants would need to become dormant and later reawakened. It works better to store the seed for a few months, but not to allow too long a storage time as the viability will decrease.

The internet can give you methods for germinating almost any seed. The methods do not always agree, but usually there are several that do, and one can weed out the outliers. I hope this has been of some help and interest. Thanks, folks.

**Sutton Seed Starting Presentation
by Jenny Weaver
Photos by Pearl Weaver**

On Friday morning, February 20th, Pearly and I took a beautiful drive north to Sutton for a Seed Starting Class. I was invited to present by Joy Mathias (who visited our meeting and joined Mat-Su Master Gardeners last spring). Joy is the Assistant Librarian for Sutton, but truth be told, she does far more than process books! The Sutton library is in an awesome community building with a genuinely nice multi-purpose room, perfect for a presentation. My trusty assistant, Pearl, helped set up the slide show, a soil block demonstration, some seed tape tools, and a wealth of handouts from the Cooperative Extension Service.



Turnout was good for this very cold and windy day; several ladies attended, some with young children. We talked about various ways to start seeds, previewed seed packets, seed starting charts, types of containers, light setups, and soil options. We had an interesting time discussing growing gardens in Sutton. Attendees shared their successes and failures. We also made take-home carrot seed tapes and tried our hand at soil blocks.

I love to share information on gardening in Alaska. Although I came to share information with others, I also took home some new knowledge and tricks of the trade, as well as having the opportunity to meet some wonderful folks.



Volunteer opportunities abound in the Valley for Master Gardeners members. Community groups beyond Palmer and Wasilla would appreciate your help planning and planting public gardens, presenting short seminars, and sharing your expertise on gardening.

If you have volunteered to help fellow Valley gardeners, won't you share your experience with us? Are you looking for a way to complete volunteer hours for the Master Gardener Program? Stay tuned! We hope to publish a list of volunteer opportunities for you very soon.

Mat-Su Master Gardener Member Survey

Link: <https://forms.gle/BPemDizXNpUkyTxG8>



If you would like a paper copy, send an email to matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

March 2 Monthly Meeting - 7pm at Rebarchek past the Red Gate, Alaska State Fairgrounds

Join us at the Mat-Su Master Gardeners Meeting to learn how protecting farmland today strengthens Alaska's food future.

At the Mat-Su Master Gardeners Meeting on Monday, March 2, 2026, the Alaska Farmland Trust will present Protect Farmland for Alaska's Self-Sufficiency, an engaging discussion on why farmland in the Mat-Su Valley is vital to our state's economy, food security, and future generations.

With over half of Alaska's population living in the Anchorage and Mat-Su region, and a staggering 11% of our prime farmland lost in the last 10 years, preserving prime agricultural soils near population centers has never been more important.

Learn how agricultural conservation easements work, how they benefit landowners and future farmers, and what current local projects are underway to protect hundreds of acres in the Valley and beyond.

Whether you're a gardener, farmer, landowner, or simply care about local food, this presentation will show how you can play a role in keeping Alaska's farmland in production.

Come be part of the conversation, and the solution.

Featured Guest Margaret Adsit, Lands Program Coordinator and Alaska Farmlink Director

Margaret is thrilled to return to AFTC, supporting the lands program and strengthening Alaska's farming community by connecting landowners with aspiring farmers. She proudly considers herself a cheerleader for others' dreams, a passion that has shaped her career. From helping entrepreneurs grow their businesses through Scribe Away to promoting Alaska agriculture with Alaska

Farm Tours and protecting farmland with the Alaska Farmland Trust, Margaret has dedicated herself to making a positive impact.

When she's not advocating for local farms, you will find her immersed in a good book, tackling trails at a leisurely "sloth-like" pace, or enthusiastically experimenting in the kitchen. She lives in the Butte with her husband, two kids, and a mischievous dog.



Business Highlight: Alaska State Fair Exhibits Manager

Hello from the Alaska State Fair! The Fair is currently recruiting a new superintendent for the Flowers Department. The main requirements for the position are organization and communication skills. Superintendents need to be able to recruit and coordinate many volunteers to receive, judge, and display entries. The department has 2 entry days, receiving close to 1000 entries each day. Past superintendents have provided contacts and instructions on previous department operations. The wheel does not have to be reinvented; however, change is encouraged to facilitate growth and development of the Alaska State Fair. Our Exhibits Superintendents are an intricate part of the Alaska State Fair. Please visit our website or contact me for more information.

Lara Stanley
Exhibits Manager, Alaska State Fair
lara@alaskastatefair.org

Lara will be presenting at the March Meeting

MMGA February 2026, Meeting Minutes, submitted by Secretary Rebecca Emerson

Member Attendance:

In-Person:

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Deb & Ken Blaylock | Marjorie Mueller |
| Rebecca Emerson | Sue Glenn |
| Gregory & Kathy Kalal | Craig Lisonbee |
| Dorte Mobley | Rhonda Schneider |
| David Thompson | Kristina Tornqvist |
| Isaac Vaughan | Dawn Wolski |
| Jenny, Todd & Pearl Weaver | |
| Jacob Mattes, IT ASF | |

Online:

| | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Eva Cohnen-Brown | Cathy Crew |
| Phyllis & Michael Kircher | |

Guest Attendance:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Lola Foss | Lara Stanley, ASF |
| Pria and Paige Goslin | |

Business Highlight: Rachel Schoonover and Adam Trabello presented on **Peak Feed and Seed**, a local resource focusing on Alaska-suitable products for farming and gardening. Their shop serves as a "true local" resource for livestock feed, gardening supplies (specifically those suited for Alaska's microclimates), and wild bird supplies.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY MINUTES

Motion: A motion was made to approve the January meeting minutes. **First:** *Kristina*. **Second:** *Rebecca (Second provided, vote proceeded)* **Result:** Approved with no opposition.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Presentation: Dorte provided the financial report. **Discussion:** Clarification was provided regarding interest rates and fees at the current bank, First National Bank (FNBA). **Consolidation:** The board recommended moving all accounts to Mat Valley Federal Credit Union (MVFCU) for better interest and simplicity. **Motion:** A motion was made to

transfer the organization's accounts to MVFCU. **First:** Dawn. **Second:** Rhonda. **Result:** The motion passed with no opposition.

Deb pointed out a discrepancy in online membership dues paid. Members paid \$15 but the report was only showing \$14.76. Dorte is going to investigate the square account.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Board Updates: The board met on January 20th via Zoom. This was our second meeting. We held the first in person in December. I welcomed folks, then we got to work.

Newsletter: The February newsletter is available on our website. Jana Gooch submitted a funny but helpful article on de-cluttering.

Website: Responsibility for the website has transferred from Eva to Isaac.

Workshops: Jenny is presenting two upcoming workshops in conjunction with CES: a seed starting class in Sutton for elementary students on February 20th and "Gardening 101" at CES on March 4th.

Conference: The 2026 Alaska Master Gardeners Conference is hosted by the Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners Association in Juneau on May 2, 2026.

OLD BUSINESS

Membership Survey: The 2026 member survey is now live via Google Forms and on paper to assess performance and meeting needs. Please fill out for discussion at the March meeting. Rebecca is available to assist with Google form if needed.

NEW BUSINESS

Volunteer Opportunities: *

Seed Swap at CES: Scheduled for March 6th (4-6 pm) and March 7th (10-2 pm). Please bring seeds to the March 2 meeting. In need of help on site during seed swap.

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

Plant Sale (May 30): Kristina volunteered to handle flyers; Craig will handle signage, tables, and setup; Sue Glenn will help *with plant tags and accounting.*

Rebarchek Garden: We are forming a committee to get the soil ready to plant, including various types of beds prepped for spring. Site prep led by David Thompson regarding tilling beds. We plan to give Rebarchek one last true effort. Our goal is to represent various types of plants, perennials, annuals, herbs, veggies, and fruit. We also want to demonstrate various ways to plant - raised beds, open ground, cold frames, high beds, mulches, cover crops, companion planting etc. Members are invited to join us as we work to revitalize our plot at Rebarchek.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fair Awards: Sue Glenn has taken over coordination for the fair awards.

Announcements

March Speaker: Margaret Adsit from Alaska Farmland Trust.

Business Highlight: Lara Stanley from the Alaska State Fair regarding tCrops and Flowers Superintendents



Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center Seed Swap

It's only 2 weeks away and we're so excited!! Join us for our Seed Swap on Friday, March 6th from 4-6pm and Saturday, March 7th from 10am-2pm at the UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center.

Bring seed packets to swap (veggies and flowers are welcome, and they do NOT need to be new or unopened) and take some seed packets home with you. Drop in any time during the designated hours for this free family-friendly event.

****This year the swap will be for 2 days only so be sure to mark your calendar** Try something NEW in your garden this summer!**

Along with seeds, we will have information about our Community Garden space, upcoming classes, what's happening in our community, and more!

We are located right off Trunk Road at 1509 S. Georgeson Dr., Palmer, AK 99645, near Mat-Su Regional Hospital.

If you'd like to donate seeds beforehand, please drop them off at the UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center. Our hours are Monday 10:00 am-4:30pm and Tuesday-Friday 8am-4:30pm.

For questions, please contact our front desk at 907-745-3360. Accommodation requests related to a disability should be made five business days in advance to Melissa Clampitt by calling 907-745-3551 or mrclampitt@alaska.edu. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information, will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request to amnorris@alaska.edu. UAF is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer, educational institution and provider and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual: www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination.

Attention MMGA Members! If you can't participate on the dates of the seed swap, please bring your extra seeds to the March 2nd meeting. Kristen Buchta will be collecting them to deliver to the seed swap.

Garden Links (updated March 2024)

Alaska AgrAbility Program ****New Mar 2024****

<https://www.uaf.edu/ces/agriculture/agrability/index.php>

Alaska Botanical Garden

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

Alaska Center for Conservation Science

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

Alaska Community Forestry

<https://forestry.alaska.gov/community/index>

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 Non-Native Species List

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

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

<https://georgesonbotanicalgarden.org/>

iNaturalist *****New May 2024*****

<https://www.inaturalist.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

<https://visionplusapps.com/alaska-plants/>

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/>

National AgrAbility Program ****New Mar 2024****

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

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation District

<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

USDA/NRCS Plant Database

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

Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

<https://wildflowergardenclub.org/>



BOARD OF DIRECTOR CONTACT INFO

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| President: | Jenny Weaver | 907-982-5446 |
| Vice President: | Kristin Buchta | 907-350-4429 |
| Secretary: | Rebecca Emerson | 334-207-5217 |
| Treasurer: | Dorte Mobley | 907-232-5422 |
| 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 2026 AND BEYOND

Mar 2, Regular Meeting, Margaret Adsit, Alaska Farmland Trust. Business Highlight: Lara Stanley, Alaska State Fair

Apr 6, Regular Meeting, Carla Vizzerra, Body In Balance - How to Warm Up Before & Cool Down After Gardening. Business Highlight - Carol Symonds, EweTopia Farms.

May 4, Regular Meeting

May 30, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale

May/Jun ?, Palmer, Veterans and Pioneers Home Planting

Jun 6, Palmer, Rebarchek MMGA Plot

Jun 13, Palmer, Colony Days Parade, "Rooted in Community"

Jul 18, Palmer, Arts in the Garden

Aug 21 - Sep 7, Palmer, Alaska State Fair

Sep 14, Regular Meeting

Oct 5, Regular Meeting

Nov 2, Regular Meeting

Dec TBD, Holiday Party

Don't forget to check out the photos tab on our webpage! It is periodically updated with photos 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 **March 2, 2026**, 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 2026



Like us on
Facebook

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 598
PALMER, AK 99645

