



MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

May 2014



President's Patch

By Rhonda Bowman, President

It is amazing how trends come back full circle over and over! Now the local food movement is more popular than ever and growing your own food has taken off with families as well as restaurants which cater to locally produced items. Our passion for gardening has an impact nationwide because it allows families to feed themselves rather than being reliant on large grocery chains to provide our produce. It allows children to see how their food is made and to actually participate in the planting, harvesting and cooking of items that they've helped to raise.

Nationwide our country is suffering from food insecurity and 49 million Americans are having a hunger crisis. Cuts to the Farm Bill have made it harder for parents to feed themselves and their children. Food Banks are stretched and are experiencing increases in request for food even from families that never sought their services previously. But we are seeing a rise in communities taking the 'bull by the horns' and creating local growing endeavors such as Grow Palmer and creating Community Gardens to allow people to grow their own food or to have access to affordable food rather than relying on the government to dole out what they feel a family needs.

There are community garden plots available this summer out on Trunk Road at the Experimental Farm. The City of Palmer is creating Community Gardens as well as the Edible Garden sponsored by Grow Palmer. Everyone has the ability to participate in some way to feeding our communities and even the smallest efforts done by a large group can make a big difference.

Don't forget that our Plant Sale will be held on May 31 at the Pavilion in downtown Palmer and we hope to have a large turnout this event as well as great weather.

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CHAPTER MEETINGS FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, MAY 5, 7:00 PM

LOCATION: MTA CONFERENCE ROOM,
PALMER

DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

MEETING AGENDA

- TREASURER REPORT
- MINUTES
- OLD BUSINESS
- NEW BUSINESS
- QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
- HAND OUT PLANT LABELS FOR PLANT SALE

SPEAKER:

Topic: Propagating Blueberries by Faltz
Nursery Staff

Hope to see you at our next meeting on
May 5 at 7pm.

PEASANTS PERSPECTIVE

By Curt Mueller, Master Gardener

This peasant had planned to extol the health benefits of vegetable growing, in this month's newsletter, when lo, the Anchorage Daily News printed an article on their Health Page which contained most of the things I wanted to write about. A couple of the advantages brought forth are the dietary fiber produced and the exercise we get from the gardening activity. Not mentioned as a health benefit, but one that may qualify is the joy and satisfaction we get from this. It is fun to do. Let's call that a health benefit.

Getting an early start on the growing season is of considerable value in order to mature garden crops and reap bountiful harvests. This peasant uses a couple of methods which may be of some value to fellow gardeners.

Seed potatoes, certified and purchased from one of our own, are acquired in time to let them sprout before cutting up for seed pieces. One can store them in a warm place to promote sprouting. They've most likely come out of cold storage and need to be awakened. After cutting into pieces with a couple of eyes on each they're spread out and the cut surfaces allowed to dry and skin over for a day. They are then laid in flats on soil or a growing mix, covered with same, moistened sparingly, and left there until planting time. At room temperature they begin to develop a root system and leaves. If they need to be slowed down they're put in a cool garage. When the garden is ready they are carefully planted.

An advantage to this system is an earlier and more uniform emergence of the plants. Seed pieces that are slow in developing while in the flats can be discarded. This method will gain at least an extra week of growing time, and, we hope, a larger yield.

Strawberries, that delectable fruit, are given

royal treatment. Bare-root plants are purchased from a reliable mail-order nursery with a requested delivery time of mid-April. Our variety of choice is Tribute, a day-neutral type and generous producer of tasty berries. When received the plants are potted into four inch pots. Incidentally, we use square pots that measure a full four inches. Sixteen fit nicely into a square flat. The plants are then placed on a heated concrete slab in the greenhouse for two or three days to give them a wake-up call.

The plants are then moved outside to a sunny table and given a dose of water-soluble fertilizer. They are cared for in that location until time to plant in the strawberry beds. It has been our experience that growing them in the greenhouse forces an early bloom that results in crippled berries due to poor pollination and root-bound plants. A greenhouse isn't really necessary for starting the plants. They could be started in a sunny window for a couple of days or on bottom heat indoors.



Peasant's strawberry crop as of April 22, 2014

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During the outdoor starting period light frosts do not harm the plants. The cool nights will keep them from blooming prematurely. If temperatures get too low the plants may be covered to prevent the soil in the pots from freezing, but we haven't resorted to that even in the cold spring of 2013. A covering of snow will not harm the plants.

When the beds are ready and the soil is beginning to warm, the plants are transplanted into the beds. They will be ready to bloom and the first berries will be normal, although not as large as subsequent ones.

Production should continue until fall frosts. Oh, yes, robins like strawberries too. Bird netting frustrates them.

This system has worked well for us. We get to choose the variety that we like best and cost for plants is fairly reasonable at about \$50.00 with shipping per 100 plants in 2014. Berry quality far surpasses those from the produce department. Yum. Thanks folks.



Individual plant, April 22, 2014.
Buds are beginning to form in center of plant. Bare-root plant was potted on April 15

LOCAL GARDENING RESOURCES

Alaska Jack Hydroponics	http://www.akjacks.com/
Alaska Sea-Ag	http://www.alaskasea-ag.com/
Aurora Nursery	http://www.auroranursery.org/
Brandy's Garden Supply	https://www.facebook.com/pages/Brandys-Garden-Supply/614180585260508
Budget Feed and Farm	http://www.budgetfeedandfarm.com/
Bushes Bunches Greenhouses	16428 E. Clark Wolverine Road, Palmer
Colony Greenhouse	https://www.facebook.com/colonygreenhouse123
Craig Taylor Equipment	http://www.craigtaylor.com/
Dearborn Farms	980 S Old Trunk Rd, Palmer
Denali Seed Company	http://www.denaliseed.com/
Ewe-Topia Farms Greenhouse & Nursery	https://www.facebook.com/pages/EweTopia-Farms-Greenhouse/126832540716700
Far North Garden Supply	http://www.farnorthgardensupply.com/
Foundroot	http://www.foundroot.com/
Good Earth Garden School	http://ellenvandevise.com/
Gray Owl Farm	https://www.facebook.com/pages/Gray-Owl-Farm/166087656881906
J&B Greenhouse	https://www.facebook.com/jb.greenhouse
Jacobson's Greenhouse	http://www.jacobsonsgreenhouse.net/
McGuire's Greenhouse	https://www.facebook.com/McGuiresGreenhouse
Mid-Valley Garden Greenhouse	https://www.facebook.com/pages/Mid-Valley-Garden-and-Greenhouse/143422226822274
Northern Fruits Greenhouses	16042 E Ptarmigan Rd, Palmer
Su Valley Farm	https://www.facebook.com/pages/Su-Valley-Farm/156149794467172
Susitna Organics	http://www.susitnaorganics.com/
The Alpine Garden Nursery	http://thealpinegardennursery.com/
Woolwood Studio & Gardens	http://www.woolwood.com/

Minutes of Mat-Su Master Gardeners Meeting 4-7-14

Submitted by Rhonda Bowman

During the Board meeting we proposed to increase the State Fair Sponsored Exhibits to \$800 and to support the Community Garden in Palmer for \$3,000. The budget was approved and then amended to include the Summer Agricultural Project for Natural Connections for \$1,000. It was also recommended that we submit a letter giving the money for operating their program and request an annual report and share success stories from participants of the program. It was previously approved that we increase the scholarship fund to \$500 for two candidates.

Discussed which exhibits to support and it was brought up that they did not want to duplicate prizes and possibly fund exhibits that were under-utilized, seniors, kids, herbs, fruit, veggies and flowers.

Plant Sale: May 31 date is confirmed for the Downtown Pavilion in Palmer. Need to provide flyers for bulletin boards in Palmer and Wasilla. Reminder that only paid members of our club can participate. Another suggestion was to contact the Frontiersman to post on their reader board and in the newspaper. Needed to order labels since we only have 1600 left in the amount of 5,000 white and 3,000 yellow and/or lavender. Post information on website for plant sale. Cathy Crew and Wayne Bowman will man the cash box and a reminder was made to bring boxes if you are selling plants. Wayne also mentioned that during the fall the Botanical Gardens recycles pots.

COMMUNITY GARDEN PLOTS AT THE MAT-SU EXPERIMENT FARM

Interested in growing a garden this year? Community garden plots are available at the Matanuska Experiment Farm, 1509 S Georgeson Drive, Palmer (behind the hospital off old South Trunk Road). See the application form, garden rules and etiquette, and waiver forms at:

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/matsu/hhfd/> .

For more information call Julie at 745-3677.

The farm will plow the land when the ground is ready, for planting to begin June 3. The cost is \$25 per 10x20 foot plot.

The Cooperative Extension Service is Moving to a New Location

After many years in their current location of 809 S Chugach St., Ste #2, Palmer, the Mat-Su Extension office will close its doors on May 6th, 2014. The office will re-open for business on Monday, May 12th at their new location at the Matanuska Extension Farm, 1509 S Georgeson Dr, Palmer (near the new hospital). They will move into the newly renovated second floor of the Kertulla Hall building (formerly laboratories and research offices.) The renovations include a new demonstration kitchen as well as a much larger classroom area.

Please be patient during their transition to the new offices. Phone numbers will remain the same as will their website. During the office closure, information is available on their website, www.uaf.edu/ces/matsu .

Mat-Su Master Gardeners
Annual Plant Sale
May 31, 2014
9 am ~ 3 pm
Palmer Pavilion

*A variety of annuals and
perennials grown in members
own gardens and
greenhouses suitable for
Alaskan gardens. Come
early for best selection.*



For more information on the plant sale go to:
<http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/annual-plant-sale.html>

Garden Links

Alaska Botanical Garden

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

Alaska Community Agriculture

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

Arbor Day Foundation

www.arborday.org

Alaska Natural Heritage Program – Botany *NEW*

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

Alaska Garden Clubs

<http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org>

Alaska Grown Source Book (online)

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/sourcebook/index.htm>

Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage Chapter

<http://alaskamastergardeners.org/>

Alaska Master Gardener Blog

<http://alaskamastergardener.blogspot.com/>

Alaska Native Plant Society

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

Alaska Orchid Society * NEW

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

Alaska Peony Growers Association

<http://alaskapeonies.org>

Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Assoc..

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

Alaska Plant Materials Center

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

Alaska Rock Garden Society

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

Cooperative Extension Service, Palmer

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



Eat Local Alaska

<http://akfood.weebly.com/index.html>

Integrated Pest Management Program

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

Junior Master Gardeners

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

Landscape Plants for Alaska

www.alaskaplants.org

Local Alaskan Plants Clearinghouse

<http://www.localplants.org/Home>

Mat-Su Borough Rain Garden Program *Updated*

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

Mat-Su Master Gardener Website

www.matsumastergardeners.org

Master Gardener Research Link

<http://search.extension.org>

Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley

<http://interiormastergardeners.org/>

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

South-Central Alaska Beekeepers Assoc.

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

Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners

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

UAF Cooperative Extension Service Publications

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

UAF Georgeson Botanical Garden

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

UAF CES Citizen Pest Monitoring Portal

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

University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

www.fruit.usask.ca

USDA/NRCS Plant Data Base

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/>

Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation

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

Announcements

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Know of an upcoming event or organization which needs our help? Let a board member know!

Club Membership

The membership year runs from January to December each year. Annual individual memberships are \$10 and family memberships are \$12.

Membership forms are available to download and/or print on the club's website,

www.matsumastergardeners.com

thank you

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Rhonda Bowman	746-2948
Co-VP	Curt Mueller	745-6144
Co-VP	Hally Truelove	376-0909
Secretary:	Jan Bass	373-6208
Treasurer:	Cathy Crew	632-4401
Member at Large:	Marge Mueller	745-6144

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

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2014

MAY

May 23 – Aug 29, Palmer, Friday Flings
May 5, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Propagating Blueberries
May 6, Alaska Agriculture Day
May 17, Palmer, Clean Up Day
May 19, Arbor Day in Alaska
May 31, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale

JUNE AND BEYOND

Jun 2, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Library Planter
Jun 6-8, Palmer, Colony Days
Jun 19, Anchorage (ABG), Midsummer Gala in the Garden
Jun 28-29, Anchorage (ABG), Boreal Garden and Art Festival
July 7, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Using plants as Dyes.
July 12, Palmer, Mid-Summer Garden & Art Faire
Aug 4, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Aug 21 – Sep 1, Palmer, Alaska State Fair
Sep 8, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Oct 6, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Nov 3, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Dec 1, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Dec 12-14, Palmer, Colony Christmas
Dec 13, Palmer, Colony Christmas Parade

How and what to Submit for the Monthly Newsletter

Your submissions are greatly appreciated and make our newsletter what it is - so don't be shy about submitting items for publication. However, there are a few rules which we all must pay attention to:

Articles, stories, poetry, upcoming events, and pictures (garden-related) are gladly accepted for inclusion in the newsletter. Please submit pictures in JPEG format and other items in Word format with no special formatting other than paragraphs. When submitting pictures, please provide a brief caption or explanation as to who or what is in the picture. I do not have a scanner to copy pictures so I cannot accept hard copies.

If you are not the author or photographer, please ensure you have permission of the author or photographer to use their material in the newsletter. The newsletter editor 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~~



May 2014



Like us on
Facebook

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

MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER'S CLUB
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