Nov 2026

President's Patch

Please consider volunteering to help with one of these committees for 2027. Contact a board member if you need more details – see page 9.

2027 Committee Volunteers

Newsletter	Deb Blaylock
Website Manager	
Guest Speakers	
Membership Directory	
Rebarchek Farm Project	
Annual Plant Sale	
Palmer Veterans & Pioneers Home Planting	
Arts in the Garden	
Summer Garden Tours	
Alaska State Fair Awards	
Colony Days Parade	
Nomination Committee	
2027 Christmas Party	
Meeting Space Coordinator	
2027 Master Gardener Conference	

Inside This Issue

President's Patch
Somewhere in Thyme 2
Sept 2026 MMGA Meeting Minutes 3
Proposed 2027 MMGA Budget 4
Vegetable Storage in Root Cellars 5-7
Garden Links 8
Contacts 9
Calendar of Events 9

Regular Meetings

First Monday of the Month

Next meeting

Nov 2nd, 7:00 P.M.

Location:

Rebarchek Farm, Sojdin Barn, East Rebarchek Road, Palmer, Alaska

Agenda

Guest Speaker: No Guest Speaker

Annual Business Meeting

Discussion and Elections for Board of Directors/Officers for 2027

Discussion 2027 MMGA Budget

Beautiful late blooming Hibiscus in Iowa – submitted by Deb Blaylock

Somewhere in Thyme

Wayback Article from Past MMGA Publications – Nov 2015

Peasant's Perspective; By Curt Mueller, Master Gardener

Photos by the author

A goodly number of years ago, the peasant built a bin in a corner of our heated garage, the purpose of which was and is to store potatoes and other vegetables during the winter months. Sort of a poor man's root cellar. The sides and end which are exposed to the heat in the garage are insulated with four inches of foam. One side and the bottom are not insulated, taking advantage of a below grade north wall and cold floor to help keep the temperature in the bin at a level which would be conducive to storing vegetables.

It worked to some extent, but not as well as hoped. Wintertime garage temperature would be about 50F, and bin temperature was not always cool enough.

When a builder constructed a house for his family just across the street from us, he showed me how he planned to store his produce. He used the space under his entrance stairs as vegetable storage, insulating it from interior heat. He then ran a loop of two inch PVC plastic pipe through the storage. The pipe was open to the outside on both ends and could be closed off if the temperature in the storage dropped too low.

The peasant is not averse to using someone else's idea, so he copied the system, using some modifications to suit a somewhat different situation. The pipe was installed with one end open to the outside but at a higher level than the bin. Where it exited the bin, that end emptied into the garage. Colder and heavier outside air would circulate and flow into the garage, but slowly enough to have a negligible effect on the garage temperature, and keeping the bin temperature at a good storage level. If the bin temperature dropped too low the pipe could be plugged off, stopping the circulation.

The system has worked quite well. Vegetables are harvested and put in the bin at a time when the ambient outside temperature is dropping. A small blower is used to push air through the pipe and reduce the bin temperature faster until it has reached the right level. Vegetable quality and length of storage has been satisfactory. A plus is ease of access to the bin. The bin has three lids, each with four inches of foam insulation. The family dog makes his comfy bed on top of a lid.

The photos may make it easier to understand the system.

This photo shows the storage which has been divided into separate bins. Note the thermometer for temperature monitoring by the parsnips and carrots. The blower for initial cooling down has been laid atop the pipes to show its size. The output end is pushed into the pipe outside and forces a flow through the pipes. After the initial cooling the blower is removed and it becomes a passive system operating by gravity as the colder outside air is heavier than that inside. One of the covers has been set on top of the pipes.

This is Lutzi's favorite spot to bed down. Note the foam insulation on the cover - four inches of blue-board.

Thanks, folks.

MMGA Meeting Minutes – Sept 14, 2026

Location: Rebarchek Palmer, Alaska
Time: 7:00 PM – 9:30 PM

Submitted by Secretary Rebecca Emerson

Note: there were no Oct Minutes – these still need to be approved by the membership.

In-Person Member Attendance:

- Deb & Ken Blaylock
- Rebecca Emerson
- Sue Glenn
- Bonnie Hager
- Craig Lisonbee
- Dorte Mobley
- Marjorie Mueller
- Doug Patrick
- Chelsea San Roman
- Leslie Scott
- Ginger Sweeney
- Kristina Tornqvist
- Isaac Vaughan
- Jenny/Todd/Pearl Weaver
- Dawn Wolski

Guests:

- Jani and Eric Anderson

Online Attendees:

- Kristen Buchta

1.Call to Order / Welcome

Our first meeting of the fall kicked off on Monday, September 14, at 7:00 P.M. at the Rebarchek Barn. Garden treats were shared as snacks for a fun summer recap.

2. Approval of May Minutes

The minutes from our May meeting were reviewed. Kristina Tornqvist motioned to approve the minutes, Rebecca Emerson seconded, and the motion passed unanimously with no objections.

3. Treasurer's Report

Dorte provided the financial update. Our accounts have been successfully consolidated into a single active account at Mat Su Valley Federal Credit Union, where the club doesn't receive as many charges. The old First National Bank account has been officially closed.

- Square Reporting: We discussed the need to accurately track gross receipts and Square processing fees separately for clean bookkeeping. Dorte Mobley noted she needed assistance with square reporting if there is anyone willing to help.

4. Old Business

We enjoyed a wonderful photo journey celebrating our packed spring and summer events. A huge thank you to everyone who played any part in all the activities. We made a huge impact on the community this summer with all the help. If you have time check out Rebarchek before the harvest day to see the wonderful plants and Steve Brown's plaque.

5. Announcements

- October Meeting Change: Due to scheduling, a motion was made by Deb Blaylock and seconded by Ken Blaylock to bump our next meeting into Monday, October 12. The motion passed.

- Rebarchek Farm Harvest Day: Scheduled for Saturday, October 10, with time to be announced, to finalize garden cleanup and winterization.

- November 2nd Meeting: Our annual Budget review and board elections. We are actively looking for nominations and volunteers to fill key board positions (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer). Jenny Weaver will be stepping down as president to focus on the MMGA Master Gardener's conference in 2027! If you are interested in any of these positions, reach out to us.

Proposed MMGA Budget 2027						
Income						
	Operating Income					
		Membership Dues			$ 700.00	
		Donations/Prizes				
		Interest from bank account			$ 5.00	
		Existing funds from checking account			$ 3,240.00	
		Dividend Interest CDs			$ 280.00	
	Total Operating Income				**$ 4,225.00**	
	Education/Community Outreach Fundraising					
		Annual Plant Sale			$ 14,000.00	
	Total Education/Community Outreach Fundraising				$ 14,000.00	
	Total Income				**$ 18,225.00**	
Expenses						
	Operating Expenses					
		Banking/Square fees			$ 250.00	
		Advertising Signs			$ 250.00	
		Equipm. Rental (PO Box etc)			$ 300.00	
		Licenses, Fees and Permits			$ 50.00	
		Supplies, Stamps, Copying			$ 50.00	
		Website/Computer			$ 350.00	
		Membership Directory			$ 50.00	
		Christmas Party			$ 400.00	
		Insurance			$ 400.00	
		Membership Appreciation			$ 100.00	
		ZOOM subscription			$ 100.00	
			Total Operating Expenses		**$ 2,300.00**	
	Educational/Outreach					
		Arts in the Garden			$ 150.00	
		Board Discretionary			$ 200.00	
		Garden Tour			$ 150.00	
		Plant Sale Member Consignment			$ 12,000.00	
		Plant Sale Supplies/Advertising			$ 250.00	
		Pioneer Home			$ 650.00	
		Rebarchek Farm Project			$ 500.00	
		Scholarship MG Class			$ 700.00	
		Speaker Fees			$ 525.00	
		State Fair Prizes			$ 800.00	
			Total Ed/Comm Outreach		**$ 15,925.00**	
	Total Expenses				**$ 18,225.00**	

Vegetable Storage in Root Cellars, HGA-00331

In Alaska, cold winter temperatures and cold soils all year long make root cellars a good method for storing vegetables. Root cellars offer gardeners a method for storing produce through the winter or for holding produce until there is time for canning and freezing. Consumers can also use root cellars to store produce bought in bulk from the farmers market or grocery. High-quality, locally-grown vegetables can be available from the root cellar throughout the winter.

Stored fruits and vegetables are living organisms, and to keep the quality and nutritional value high, certain storage conditions should be met. The best conditions for each crop will vary, but the important requirements include temperature, moisture and ventilation. To have the best success using cold storage, select late-maturing varieties of vegetables that have been allowed to grow late into the fall and fully mature.

Temperature

During the day, plants make food through photosynthesis. At night or during storage, plants respire or use the stored food to survive and keep alive. To keep produce at the highest quality, it is important to slow down the growth and respiration with cool temperatures. Respiration reduces quality and speeds up with warmer temperatures. The optimum storage temperature for most vegetables is between 32° and 40°F. This temperature can be maintained by using insulation on walls and ceilings, thermostats and a heat source when needed. An adequate heat source can sometimes be as little as a 100-watt light bulb placed near the floor. Keep in mind that warm air rises and warmer temperatures will be found at the top of the root cellar. Thermometers can be positioned throughout the cellar to monitor temperatures.

Humidity

High humidity (between 80 and 95 percent relative humidity) keeps vegetables from drying out. The exception to this rule is with cucurbits (squash family) and onions — vegetables that produce a thick wall. These vegetables prefer dry storage conditions and tend to mold when the moisture is high.

The easiest way to keep the moisture high is to have a dirt floor, which helps the root cellar keep a constant moisture during the winter. If the floor is concrete or wood, it may be necessary to place several pans of water on the floor. Vegetables are 90 percent water. The fuller the root cellar, the higher the humidity. That is why a small, full root cellar will work better than a larger one.

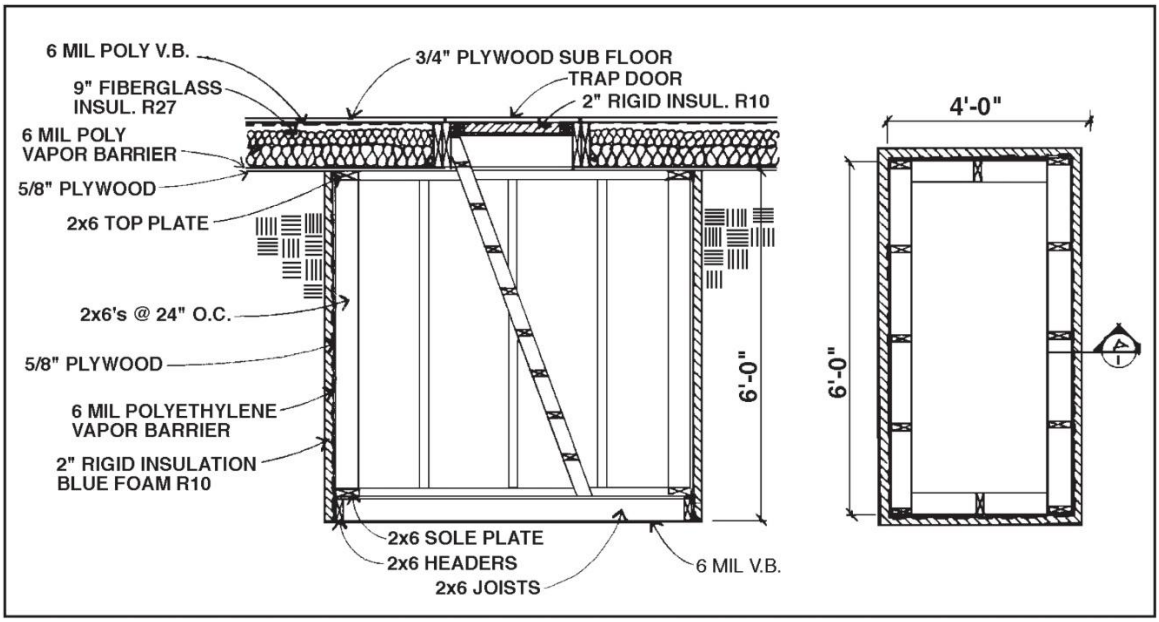
Ventilation

Ventilation is used to help control the temperature and humidity. Excess moisture that encourages mold can be exhausted and the room can be aired out when not in use. Be sure the ventilation system is screened to keep rodents out.

Harvest and storage

Choose to grow vegetable varieties that are late maturing or have good storing qualities. Harvest as late in the season as possible before a killing or damaging frost. Vegetables should be harvested in the morning after the dew has time to dry but before the afternoon heats up the vegetables. Remove the field heat by cooling in a cold place. Produce can be grouped according to storage requirements into four groups: (1) cold and very moist, (2) cold and moist, (3) cool and dry, and (4) warm and dry.

Most vegetables need a cold and very moist storage condition because of thin skin or leaves. Thin skin produce, including **beets, kohlrabi, turnips, carrots, parsnips, radishes and cucumbers**, is harvested leaving a ½-inch stem and stored to retain moisture. This can be done with packing material or perforated plastic bags. Layer vegetables in packing materials such as moist sawdust, sand and peat moss.



Leafy vegetables such as **celery, Chinese cabbage, endive, kale and cauliflower** should be lifted out of the garden with roots attached and replanted in moist packing material. Vegetables with strong odors, such as cabbage and turnips, are best when individually wrapped in newspaper to prevent drying out and to reduce smells.

Potatoes and **tomatoes** need a cold, moist storage condition. Potatoes need to be cured in a warm environment before cold storage. Harvest potatoes late in the season and store in the dark at a warm temperature for 7 to 10 days to allow them to dry and develop thick skins. Then move them to a cold, dark area. If potatoes are stored together in crates or boxes, they will share moisture and keep each other from shriveling. Do not store potatoes above 40°F or they will begin to sprout.

Tomatoes are harvested leaving a short stem attached. Place tomatoes one layer deep in a shallow box and cover with newspaper to keep them from drying out.

Onions, like potatoes, are cured for several weeks after harvest. This allows the skin to become papery and the roots to shrivel. Onions are best stored in a cool, dry location with good air circulation. Onions are often braided or put in a mesh bag and hung from the ceiling of the root cellar.

Winter squash and pumpkins are best stored in a dry, warm spot such as the corner of a room indoors. Cut as late as possible before a frost, leaving a 2-inch-long stem. The more mature, the thicker the skin and more resistant to decay and drying out the vegetables will be. If stored in a moist location, squash will quickly mold.

Building a root cellar

A root cellar should be cold, dark and damp and in a convenient location. It is easier to control

temperature and humidity in a small cellar. Most families can get by with an area 4 feet by 6 feet in size. The most convenient location may be a walled-off part of a basement or garage area with a window for ventilation. A common location in rural Alaska is in the floor of the kitchen. With an inside installation, be sure to put a vapor barrier towards the inside of the root cellar to protect the rest of the house from excess moisture and rot.

In both attached and separate structures select wood designed for direct burial for the walls and floor. Check with the supplier to be sure that the wood treatment is not toxic in this application. Uninsulated masonry walls will conduct the cool ground temperature into your root cellar and are very durable. Water drainage is important for keeping out surface water in the spring and during summer rains. Insulate above-ground walls to protect from cold temperatures in winter and warm temperatures in summer. Be aware that seasonal frost can extend over 4 feet deep seasonally into the soil. Keep this in mind and make sure that the insulation extends below the frost line.

Storage Time and Temperature for Some Vegetables Grown in Alaska

Vegetables	Temp F.	% Humidity	Storage Time	Comments
Beets	32°	90-95	3 months	Leave 1-inch stem.
Brussels sprouts	32°	90-95	4 weeks	Wrap to avoid drying
Cabbage	38°	90-95	4 months	Late maturing varieties **
Carrots	32°	90-95	5 months	Top leaving ¼-inch stem *
Cauliflower	32°	85-90	3 weeks	Wrap in leaves *
Celery	32°	90-95	4 months	Dig with roots ***
Chinese cabbage	32°	90-95	2 months	Dig with roots ***
Cucumbers	50°	85-90	3 weeks	Waxed or moist packing *
Kohlrabi	38°	90-95	3 months	Trim leaves *
Onions	32°	55-60	8 months	Dry for two weeks.
Parsnip	32°	90-95	6 months	Top leaving ¼-inch stem *
Potatoes	38°	85-90	8 months	Pack in boxes unwashed.
Squash	60°	55-60	3 months	Winter types, leave 2-inch stem
Tomatoes	60°	55-60	8 weeks	Single layer in covered boxes
Turnips	38°	90-95	3 months	Waxed or moist packing *
Small fruits	32°	85-90	7 days	

* Pack in moistened sawdust or sand.
** Wrap in clean newspaper.
*** Replant in moist sand.

Phillip Kaspari, Extension Faculty, Agriculture and Horticulture. Originally prepared by Ray Morgan, former Extension Community Development Agent. Revised June 2020. Downloaded 10/28/2026 from https://www.uaf.edu/ces/publications/database/food/vegetable-storage.php

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

NOV 2026 AND BEYOND

Nov 2, Palmer, Annual Meeting
Nov 12-14, Anchorage, Alaska Agriculture Conference, **https://akagconference.com/**
Dec TBD, Palmer, Turkey Red, Holiday Party

2027

Jan 4, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD
Feb 1, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD
Mar 1, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD
Apr 5, Palmer, Regular Meeting, TBD
Apr 30 – May 2, Wasilla, 2027 State Master Gardener Conference
May 3, Palmer, Regular Meeting
Jun 5, Palmer, Annual Plant Sale
TBD, Palmer, Veterans and Pioneers Home Planting
TBD, Palmer, Rebarchek Workday

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

Each membership year runs from January to December. 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 1, 2027**, 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~~

Oct 2026

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

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