



MAT-SU MASTER GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

Oct 2017



President's Patch

By Deb Blaylock (subbing for Rhonda Bowman, President)

Fall is here and I know you're all as busy as I am getting ready for winter. We're still waiting for a hard frost to kill off the potato plants, which makes harvesting much easier. The tubers are left in the ground for about a week to harden their skins up and lessen damage during harvest. We brush off the soil, cover them with burlap and let them cure in our laundry room for about week. They store much better after curing. I'm also waiting for the frost before I plant my garlic. Right now, the ground is too wet and garlic will rot if planted in soggy cold soil.

We have elections coming up soon and need folks to step forward and volunteer to serve on our board of directors to replace our current president and vice-president. Other board positions could possibly be open; however, we're waiting for a report from the Nominations Committee to know which positions need to be filled during the 2017 elections. Please consider throwing your name into the hat for consideration. Our association does a lot behind the scenes for our community. Fresh visions for the future and new energy would be welcomed.

We'll be putting together a "yearbook" to share with the membership at the beginning of next year. When you renew your membership this year, please fill out a 2018 membership form which asks about including your email and phone number to share in the yearbook with other members of the association. The form is now available online where you can either renew electronically or print out a form and mail it in or bring it to the next meeting. If you renew by the January

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Patch	1
Next Chapter Meeting	1
Peasant's Perspective	2
September Meeting Minutes	3
Alaska Farm to School Program	4
2017 Alaska State Fair Special Awards Recognition	5
Garden Links	6
Announcements/Volunteer Opportunities	6
Contacts	7
Calendar of Events	7

GENERAL MEETINGS FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

**NEXT MEETING
MONDAY, OCT 2ND, 7:00 P.M.**

LOCATION: MATANUSKA TELEPHONE COMPANY (MTA) BUILDING, LARGE MEETING ROOM (IN THE BASEMENT), 480 COMMERCIAL DR., PALMER, AK

DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

MEETING AGENDA

- TREASURER REPORT
- MEETING MINUTES
- OLD BUSINESS
- NEW BUSINESS
- NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

SPEAKER/TOPIC

STEPHEN BROWN, DISTRICT AGRICULTURE AGENT, COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

SOIL SAMPLE INTERPRETATION

2018 meeting, your name and information will be included in the 2018 membership yearbook.

Our next meeting is Monday, October 2nd at 7 p.m. Hope to see you there!

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photos by the author

We humans have a way of our train of thought leading to another and still others, ad infinitum. So it is with the peasant who was interested in the winter survival of Alaska's tiger swallowtail butterfly and in researching that online, ran across information on the monarch butterfly. Alaska is not blessed with the monarch, but it is well known to many of us, perhaps especially to gardeners who have a well-earned interest in insect species.

Invariably one must associate monarch butterflies with the *Asclepias* genus of plants, of which milkweed is common among the many species of *Asclepias* and a vital food for monarch larvae. Mention of milkweed brought about memories of WW2 days for the peasant, who was but seven at the time of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, which immediately brought our country into the war. Japan had taken over Java, which was our main source of kapok for stuffing lifesavers, and thus kapok was no longer available to the United States. A substitute was needed, and the fluffy seed carrier of the milkweed was made a substitute. The peasant as a young lad was issued onion sacks to collect the pods and was paid fifteen cents for a sackful of pods. Lifesavers were vital for naval and aircraft personnel. Getting paid for being a small part of what was called the "war effort" by collecting the pods in pastureland and fencerows was surely welcome to this farm boy. After all, nickels and dimes had some purchasing power at that time, and to assist in the war effort was what we did.

There was never a question over who should have priority on food and equipment at that time. It was our military who were drafted and enlisted by the millions. Every available man from 18 to 35 was subject to call, and indeed almost all were called to serve. The people on the "home front" backed our armed forces wholeheartedly. We all had a stake in the war. Rationing of meat and butter and lard and gasoline and tires and shoes were accepted as necessary. Shortages were rampant and accepted by the home front. The production of nonessentials was halted. War bonds and defense stamps were purchased to fund the

war effort. Victory gardens were planted to augment the nation's food supply and help supply the best-fed army in the world. Although farm people already were gardeners for the most part, the effort was redoubled. The peasant has never forgotten those days, and thinks raising a good portion of our food supply is a patriotic, healthful, and worthwhile activity. We need to remember and reacquire the skills that helped keep our country strong.

The monarch butterfly is in its own survival struggle. Chemical weed killers and different uses of the land have decreased the food sources for this butterfly. The monarch makes its way to the northern states and into Canada by going through its life cycle three or four times during the summer as it makes its way north, and then makes a fall migration by flying all the distance to Mexico and hibernating. It then starts a new cycle the following spring. What a magnificent creature!

As for our own tiger swallowtail, it overwinters as a chrysalis, which is attached to twigs of its host tree, very often birch, to emerge as a butterfly in spring. This seems to be a precarious way to winter, what with desiccating winds and low temperatures and temperature fluctuations. Small wonder that summer populations vary from year to year. Still another amazing butterfly is the mourning cloak which overwinters as a butterfly. How, one might ask?

The peasant has followed his train of thought and wandered through a good bit of territory. Thanks folks, for staying with these rambles. Here's to a greater appreciation of our fellow creatures. May we all survive and prosper.



Tiger swallowtail on white lilac.

*September 11, 2017
Meeting Minutes*

Submitted by Rhonda Bowman

12 people signed the attendance form

Financial: Savings: \$3,734.17, Checking: \$8,421.45, Total: \$12,155.62

The association made \$4,300 at the conference. A motion was made and seconded to move \$4,000 into savings and motion carried by majority with one negative vote. Curt suggested that we spend the money on donations such as to Grow Palmer, FFA scholarships or Palmer Historical Society. Another suggestion was to use funds for scholarships for the Master Gardener class to offset costs or establish a scholarship for deserving association members. Another suggestion was made to donate gardening books to the school libraries in the Matanuska Susitna Valley.

There was discussion of making a scholarship form like what the Valley Garden Club uses. Deb volunteered to put together a form if someone sends her some examples to use. There was also discussion about the status of the 2017 grant for Grow Palmer. No one present had received a letter requesting the grant from Grow Palmer as of the meeting. We had budgeted for \$500 for Grow Palmer during our February meeting.

Rhonda requested feedback from the nomination committee but no committee members were present at the September meeting. Rhonda reminded everyone that the committee needed names to be submitted for vote since she was NOT continuing as President next year.

Another suggestion was that the membership contact information be made

available to our membership and Cathy did not think it was good idea because she was afraid people would use the contact information for their own business gain. Suggestion was made to state that it would only be shared within the club on the membership application form. Deb will update the membership form - both online and the printed version - to include a question asking members to approve the release of the email and phone number to other members of the association only.

Kristina Tornqvist volunteered to put together the yearbook with member contact information sometime after the first part of 2018 when she returns to the state.

We discussed our non-profit status completion this winter and what that could mean to the IRS since we have never done it before. Anchorage Master Gardeners were consulted but we did not get a lot of information from them. It was suggested to ask Dorte since she had just helped the Alaska Peony Society get federal non-profit status. We need the publication from IRS for non-profits.

Palmer Historical Society has a 3x6 garden plot across from Colony Inn and we found that they need help to plant it. Nothing was in it this year.

It was suggested that the next conference be held at the Glenn Massay Theatre since it would hold additional attendees.

Cathy suggested that the online membership form needs only the mailing address, not the physical address. A plant sale check was returned by post office because a physical address was given instead of a mailing address on the membership form. Deb will update the membership form to ask for a mailing address only.

Meeting adjourned at around 8:00 pm.

Alaska Farm to School Program























October is National Farm to School Month!! We have made this national event something we can celebrate all around the state in our own way - we have an Alaska Farm to School Month Celebration calendar!! Each week has a fun focus and within each week, we hone in on specific products both cultivated and harvested as conventional and indigenous foods. The week prior to the focus week, we send out 5-7 pages of information, which focuses on: botanical information, nutrition, recipes, trivia, food safety, historic facts, etc. Each day with a specific product will have a blurb just about it including a fun classroom project. The end of each week is a day to celebrate any way you want regarding the foods of the week. We are putting all teachers/schools/cafeterias who participate into drawings each week to win curriculum and other fun prizes!!

Second, I wanted to let you know about the launching of our new Alaska Farm to School website!! Check it out here: <https://www.farmtoschoolalaska.org/>

October 2017 – Farm to School Month!!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tubers and Roots of Alaska Week	All about tubers and roots we eat in Alaska	Potatoes 	Indigenous Tubers and Roots We Eat: Eskimo potatoes 	Carrots 	Tubers and Roots of Alaska Celebration Day 	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Meats of Alaska Week	All about meats we eat in Alaska	Pork 	Indigenous Meats We Eat: Caribou 	Reindeer 	Meats of Alaska Celebration Day 	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Leaves of Alaska Week	All about leaves we eat in Alaska	Cabbage 	Indigenous Leaves We Eat: Fiddlehead Ferns 	Greens Many Ways: Cooked & Salad 	Leaves of Alaska Celebration Day 	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Fish of Alaska Week	All about fish we eat in Alaska	Halibut LOCAL FOOD LUNCH DAY!! 	Indigenous Fish We Eat: Salmon 	Shellfish 	Fish of Alaska Celebration Day 	
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Fruits of Alaska Week	All about fruits we eat in Alaska	Strawberries 	Indigenous Fruits We Eat: Salmonberries 	Apples 	Fruits of Alaska Celebration Day 	

Recipients of Mat-Su Master Gardeners Special Awards at the 2017 Alaska State Fair

Crops Department

Division 16: Veg Heads

Transform any vegetable into a character using this year's theme, "Better Together." Creativity and theme representation are encouraged.

Class:

01 Junior (ages 6-12) state age on entry form

02 Junior (ages 13-17) state age on entry form

Winners:

First Entry

Junior, ages 6 to 12: Titas Lance of Wasilla

Junior, ages 13 to 17: Josephine Rempel of Palmer

Second Entry

Junior, ages 6 to 12: Brailyn Courtney of Anchorage

Flowers Department

Division 05: Trees and Shrubs

One fresh cut branch, 14" - 30", measured from cut end to tip of branch. Apex or apical tip should be intact. Branch should show symmetry and have several nodes. Name species/variety.

Winners:

First Entry

Talan Boeve of Willow

Second Entry

Dianne Stelle of Palmer

Division 13: Artistic Design

Class 04 "Better Together!" theme design. Interpret this year's Fair theme. Use fresh and/or dried material. Feature or accessories allowed but not required.

Winners:

First Entry

Jonathon Snead of Wasilla

Second Entry

Felicia Dock of Wasilla

Each year, to encourage participation in gardening-related activities in our communities, we give special recognition to the above categories at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer. Each winner receives a \$50 gift card purchased by the Mat-Su Master Gardeners Association.

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

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

Alaska Farm to School **New**

<https://www.farmtoschoolalaska.org/>

Alaska Garden Clubs

<http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org>

Alaska Grown Source Book (online)

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/sourcebook/sourcebookindex2016.html>

Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage Chapter

<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 Pioneer Fruit Growers Association

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

Alaska Plant Materials Center

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

Alaska Rhodiola Products Cooperative

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

Alaska Rock Garden Society

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

Eat Local Alaska

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

Good Earth Garden School

<http://ellenvandevisse.com/>



Grow Palmer

<http://growpalmer.org/>

Integrated Pest Management Program

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

Junior Master Gardeners

<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.org

Master Gardener Research Link

<http://search.extension.org>

Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley

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

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<http://palmersoilandwater.org/>

South-Central Alaska Beekeepers Assoc.

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

Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners Association

<http://seak-mastergardeners.org/index.html>

Sustainable Agriculture – UAF

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/>

UAF Cooperative Extension Service, Palmer

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

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/>

UAF School of Natural Resources

<http://www.uaf.edu/snre/>

University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

www.fruit.usask.ca

USDA/NRCS Plant Data Base

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

Announcements

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Serve as an officer/board member

Submit an article to the newsletter

The Nominations Committee is actively looking for names for club officer/board member positions. If you would like to be considered for a position, please send an email to matsumastergardeners@gmail.com.

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Rhonda Bowman	746-2948
Co-VP	Curt Mueller	745-6144
Secretary:	Joan Redlin	206-604-4676
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 at her email: kdblalock@ak.net

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER 2017

Oct 2, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Stephen Brown, Soil Sample Interpretation

NOVEMBER 2017 AND BEYOND

Nov 5, Alaska, Daylight Savings Ends
Nov 6, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Susanna L. Pearlstein, Ph.D., Director, Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center
Dec 4, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Annual Christmas Party

Please let Rhonda know if you have any ideas for future meeting topics. Members are welcome to offer to speak or reach out to speakers of interest to the club's membership. The club would welcome a speaker coordinator - if interested contact Rhonda. Our club is only as good as we the members make it!

Club Membership

The membership year runs from January to December each year. Annual individual memberships are \$10 and family memberships are \$12. Family memberships are only for family members living in the same household. Join or renew online

Thank you

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 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--



October 2017



Like us on
Facebook

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

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
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