



Oct 2016



President's Patch By Rhonda Bowman, President

Photos submitted by the author

Sometimes it seems like we continue to hear the same news stories repeatedly, and one of them is that fires continue to devastate homes, businesses and ruin people's lives. Our state and federal government spends millions of dollars paying firefighters, but you don't hear about any monies spent to pro-actively manage our forest in a responsible way to clear small and weak trees that would allow healthier species to grow bigger. We could use those cut trees for compost for our farm lands. Instead, timber companies are clear-cutting huge areas of forest, which encourages erosion and scars the land. Clearing undesirable trees and brush can also assist in preventing diseases in trees.

As we clear our vegetable and flower beds to get ready for winter, we are adding a lot of plant material to our compost beds. Just think next year of the great addition you can make to your gardens! Check out your place and see if you are assisting with reducing brush and overgrowth on your land.

The Mat-Su Borough is now holding classes on composting so make sure you check them out if you are looking to increase the productivity of your compost bed.

Just in case you were not aware, October is National Hunger Awareness month so make sure you donate to your local food banks. They need to increase donations now to prepare for the upcoming holidays. Give them a call so you can get those items that will specifically help them out. It is not too early to think out those donations for the upcoming tax season.

See you at the next meeting on October 3rd!



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CHAPTER MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, OCTOBER 3RD, 7:00 PM

LOCATION: MTA BUILDING, CONFERENCE ROOM (IN THE BASEMENT), PALMER, AK

DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER TO ATTEND

TOPIC/SPEAKER:

GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photos by the author

The autumnal equinox signals the end of our outdoor growing season with the glorious colors of fall. The peasant thinks we are indeed fortunate to have the type of color perception that enables us to partake of this visual stimulation. Much of summer's green is still with us to contrast with the turning leaves, and some of our gardening efforts are still adding color too.

To some extent the golden birch leaves are muted by the effects of birch leaf miners. It has been a good season for these insects. It brings to mind the infestation of aspen leaf miners in the Fairbanks area which persisted for several years but has now subsided. The damage is done by the larval stage and is said to be mainly aesthetic and does not kill the trees, but a heavy infestation certainly can't be good for a forest's health.

The peasant wonders what brought the aspen leaf miners to a low level. For years the aspen leaves had a dull silvery sheen during the growing season, from Nenana to Fairbanks and beyond - anywhere there are heavy stands of aspen. What can we expect to happen with the birch leaf miners? Will the infestation be with us for an extended time? The peasant thinks the type of summer weather affects the extent of damage done to the birches, with warm dry weather enhancing leaf miner activity. Perhaps hard freezing of the soil during the winter months might kill off some of the over-wintering pupae. Leafy cover and snow in a forest environment tends to keep soil from freezing, though.

In Alberta, Canada, biologists have introduced a parasitic wasp from

Europe. It is said to be a good control for the birch leaf miner in that providence. Perhaps we have a native parasitic species that will eventually prove to be a control, or perhaps Alberta's wasp species will eventually find its way to our state. At any rate, we'll probably continue to see damage to our birches in succeeding years.

The peasant hopes the warming trend doesn't bring exotic insect pests to Alaska or allow those we already have to proliferate to the point where they become very damaging. The spruce bark beetle may be a case in point. A change to a warmer climate is pleasant to consider for Alaska, but change may also bring some unforeseen circumstances. Master Gardeners will be leaders in anticipating and utilizing methods to adapt to change.

Thanks, folks.



Late afternoon sunshine brightens the entrance to the Palmer Pioneer Home, as have the pansies and marigolds all summer long. Planting was done by our Master Gardeners in early June. Photo is dated September 18.



Certified BACKYARD COMPOSTER

2 Hour Training

- Successfully compost manures, yard wastes and food wastes
- Remedy a pile that's too hot, too slow, or too stinky
- Produce a matured, high-quality, horticultural product

Thursday, Sept. 15, 6pm-8pm
 Saturday, Sept. 17, 10am-noon
 Saturday, Oct. 8, 10am-noon
 Saturday, Oct. 15, 10am-noon

Certified VERMI-COMPOSTER

2 Hour Training

- Successfully start and manage a worm bin
- Avoid flies and stench
- Utilize finished vermi-compost

Saturday, Aug. 20, 2pm-4pm
 Saturday, Oct. 15, 1:30pm-3:30pm

Certified MASTER COMPOSTER

2 Day Training

- Blend a wider variety of feedstocks for proper C:N ratios
- Trouble-shoot piles for moisture, temperature, aeration & odor
- Manage worm bins (vermi-composting)
- Process larger volumes of compost with static & thermal pile methods
- Test for maturation... Is it done yet?

Saturday, Oct. 1, 9am-5pm
 Sunday, Oct. 2, 10am-4pm

GOALS

- Train & empower compost experts throughout the MSB to educate residents, businesses, schools, dog mushers, farms, stables & organizations to compost organic wastes.
- Provide expertise to entrepreneurs wanting to start innovative composting & organic waste reduction businesses.
- Provide Certified Composters with a supportive Compost Hotline.



REGISTER NOW
 997.861.7605
 compost@matsugov.us

Look for more training dates in 2017



Become a Certified
BACKYARD COMPOSTER,
VERMI-COMPOSTER
 or **MASTER COMPOSTER**

FREE to Mat-Su Borough Residents

Sponsored by Mat-Su Borough Solid Waste Division
 Continual Trainings, Starting August 2016
 Held at the Mat-Su Borough Central Landfill, Palmer



Compost Happens!

Mat-Su Borough's new program to keep organic matter out of our landfill!



Planted in early June by our Master Gardeners, this planter near the flagpole at Palmer Pioneer Home has shone vivid color all summer and is still colorful on September 18, the date of this photo. Photo courtesy Curt Mueller

HYDROPONIC GARDENING – FIRST YEAR'S RESULTS

LAURA EMERSON, PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

This year, our biggest experiment was the hydroponic garden that my husband built along the north side of my greenhouse, above the 12 x 4 raised bed.

He installed ten, vertical 4" ABS plastic pipes, and perforated each one with 20 - 30 holes (facing SE, S, and SW). Over each hole, he glued a patented, angled flange (designed by an inventor friend in Texas). Each flange contains a small, plastic basket holding a narrow peat pot (which she sells) angled into the tube so each pot is gently saturated. Water is pumped from a reservoir (ours is a 35-gallon food grade drum) up through a one-inch pipe to a filter and to a top row of little sprinkler heads above the vertical tubes. There is no soil in the system.



The Emerson's' hydroponic towers, behind tomatoes.

If anyone is interested in construction issues, my husband would be happy to share the highs and lows of the project.

Advantages:

- Super easy to monitor, test, and adjust pH and plant food - much easier than soil sampling.
- A wonderful nursery for tiny or skinny seeds and small plants, especially herbs. Three types of basil, sage, and lavender all grew beautifully. In fact, ALL the lavender seeds in

the hydro system grew beautifully, whereas NONE did well in soil.

- None of the lettuces bolted, even though it was hotter there than in the exterior gardens where they DID bolt. The leaves were also more delicate. Great success!
- Plants I started and transplanted (like forget-me-nots and cosmos) were much more robust than those I started in pots in the greenhouse.
- Provided some welcome humidity in the greenhouse.
- Any excess water dripped into the raised bed garden below.

Disadvantages:

- NOT good for large seeds, like nasturtiums and peas. They just plugged up the hole and got moldy.

Once the tomatoes in the raised bed garden below started shading out the hydro tubes, we started pulling out the plants, from the bottom on up. It was amazing to see the lush roots of the lettuce which had grown 31 inches long and the basil roots 14 -17 inches long!



Cascade of lettuce roots 31" and basil 17".

Next year, I realize that I will use the system for a second "season," to start shade-loving plants behind the tomatoes and cucumbers.

SAVE THE DATE

2016 Alaska Invasive Species Workshop

Oct. 25 - 27
Fairbanks
Wedgewood Resort

Adapting to a
Warming Environment
Invasive Species
in Alaska

COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION
SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

CNIPM

For more information, visit www.alaskainvasives.org.
UAF is an AVEO employer and educational institution.

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 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/>

Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation

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

Announcements

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The club is desperately in need of someone to coordinate speakers for our meetings.

Need volunteer hours? Volunteer to help with the 2017 State Master Gardener Conference. Send an email to the club and we'll add you to the list.

Tentative 2017 Conference Committee Chairs

Committee Chair - No one as yet
 Auction/Door prizes - Marge Mueller
 PR/ Advertising - Wayne Bowman
 Vendors - Michael Kircher
 Speakers - Ken Blaylock
 Coffee Service - Cathy Crew
 Food/Lunch - Lois Rockcastle
 Badges/Folders - Deb Blaylock
 Table decorations - No one as yet

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Rhonda Bowman	746-2948
Co-VP	Curt Mueller	745-6144
Co-VP	Hally Truelove	376-0909
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 @Email: kdblalock@ak.net

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER 2016

Oct 1&2, Palmer, Certified Master Composter
Oct 3, Palmer, MMG Mtg, TBD
Oct 8, Palmer, Certified Backyard Composter
Oct 15, Palmer, Certified Backyard Composter
Oct 15, Palmer, Certified Vermi-Composter
Oct 25-27, Fairbanks, 2016 Alaska Invasive Species Conference

OCTOBER 2016 AND BEYOND

Nov 7, Palmer, MMG Mtg, Amy Pettit,
Executive Director, Alaska Farmland Trust
Dec 5, Palmer, MMG Mtg, 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.

Membership forms are available to download on the club's website, www.matsumastergardeners.com

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 2016



Like us on
Facebook

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

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION
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