



Sep 2020



President's Patch

By President Deb Blaylock

We only have four months left of 2020! Are you harvesting your garden bounty? Thinking of all the fall preparations yet to come? We are in thick of berry harvesting, the garlic is dug and curing, and the apples are almost ready to pick! With the state fair not happening, I'm finding myself with a bit more time on my hands, for which I'm both thankful and a bit sad. The berries were abundant this year and we've just put our fourth batch in the freezer and/or freeze dryer.

We invested in a freeze dryer last year, and it's working hard as freezer space is at a premium. I highly recommend checking one out to see if it meets your needs. Freeze-dried raspberries and strawberries are great! It's also great for those leftover bits of soups and stews. With jars and canning supplies flying off the shelves as fast as stores put them on, freeze drying is a great way to store your harvest. There are a couple of Facebook groups devoted to freeze drying if you're interested in the process. We purchased a Harvest Right freeze dryer and I've heard they might be locally available. Here's their website if you want more details: <https://harvestright.com/>.

A few folks have responded to the survey sent out a few weeks ago. A BIG thank you to those who responded. We're still in need of some volunteers for the Board of Directors positions as well as some of the committees. Please take a moment of your time and review pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter and decide which committee or Board of Director position you would like to volunteer for. We're an all-volunteer organization, and without volunteers we risk not existing at all. I know this has been a hard year to be a member with the cancellation of the plant sale and our in-person meetings. Hopefully, 2021 finds us able to meet again and see all our garden friends and acquaintances. I know I miss seeing your faces every month!! Here's the link to the survey, <https://form.jotform.com/201721866318052>

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GENERAL MEETINGS FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH NEXT GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY, SEP 14, 2020, 7 P.M.

LOCATION:

ONLINE ZOOM MEETING. INFORMATION WILL BE EMAILED OUT WITH THE LINK AND CALL-IN PHONE NUMBERS.

SPEAKER/TOPIC

DR. STEPHEN BROWN, MAT-SU COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE AGRICULTURE AGENT WILL GIVE A PRESENTATION ON HIS FEBRUARY 2020 TRIP TO GUATEMALA. WHILE IN GUATEMALA, STEVE VISITED MANY LOCAL FARMS. HE ALSO HELPED HIS CHURCH TEAM BUILD FARMHOUSES FOR THREE WIDOWS. IT WILL BE AN INTERESTING AND ENTERTAINING PRESENTATION.

Our September meeting will be through Zoom. I hope to see a lot of you there! Here's to a bountiful harvest and long fall!

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE: BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

Photo submitted by the author

The peasant has enjoyed more than fifty years of Alaska. During that time, the climate has become milder and more perennials have become available that are reliably hardy in our area. Over the years the peasant has experimented with various plants with some successes and more than a few failures. In recent years experimentation has waned, and dependable hardiness has become the mode, with plants requiring minimal care gaining importance.

There have been certain varieties of blueberries developed that can be coaxed to do well here, and some grapes that will survive and in hopes bear, but wine country this is not. Mosesian of Alaska Greenhouses has grown some indoors, but outdoor grapes have been elusive. As for blueberries, the peasant has decided to go with the plentiful wild ones which are to be found somewhere even in an off year. There is enough variation in areas favorable to wild blueberries so that anyone who is persistent will be able to find a decent crop.

This brings up the subject of the peasant's daughter, Dawn. Although she has never taken the formal Master Gardener course, she is still a master gardener in her own right. She has taken on the growing of domestic blueberries and even a grape. The blueberries are beginning to produce; the grapevine still has some questions. Dawn has purchased her plants at the big box stores. Her blueberry varieties that hold promise are Northblue and Chippewa. Another variety was to be given a name and isn't doing much. She plans on expanding her planting with more Chippewa which is bearing large berries. The Northblue is prolific with smaller berries.

The main method of successful growing of blueberries is soil acidification. Some of you are probably growing high bush blueberries and are well aware that soil acidity is key. Our native blueberries will always be found in very acid soil. Recommended pH is from 4.5 to 5.5. For growing in a garden area incorporating a soil acidifier into the soil is the way to achieve this. It takes some dedication to develop a productive plot of blueberries.

The peasant got a look at Dawn's project and came away with some photos. This is the third year for her plants, and they are still growing but have begun to produce a fair crop. The taste of the Northblue is similar to that of the wild berries, with the berries being of a good size. The Chippewa berries are large and similar in size to what you'll find in a store's produce department. The peasant actually prefers the flavor of the Northblue; they are tarter, but the flavor is more intense.

The accompanying photos will help to round out this essay. Thanks, folks.



This is an example of Dawn's Northblue blueberries. They've already been picked a couple of times. Visible in the upper left corner are leaves from a grapevine.



This is a Chippewa blueberry. Soil PH for these berries was dropped to 5.5 according to an electronic soil tester. The label in photo reads 'Chippewa half high'.

Charitable Organizations that Accept Donations of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

It's that time of year when we have extra veggies and fruit and might be looking for a good organization to donate to. Below is a list of some of them in the Mat-Su Valley and Anchorage Bowl areas. If you know of any other organizations in our area, please feel free to send an email to matsumastergardeners@gmail.com. Please provide the organization name, location, phone number and a web page or Facebook link if possible. This list can be found year-round on our Facebook Group, Mat-Su Master Gardeners. Thank You!

Mat-Su Senior Services, 1132 S. Chugach Street, Palmer, Alaska 99645. Webpage: <http://www.matsuseniors.com/>

Mat-Su Food Bank, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 501 E Bogard Rd, Wasilla, AK 99654. Phone: 907-357-3769; Website: www.matsufoodbank.org; Hours: Monday-Friday 10am-1pm

Kids Kupboard, 3700 E Bogard Rd., Wasilla, Alaska, (907) 360-9476, Website: <http://www.kidskupboard.org/index.html>; Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Kids-Kupboard-1533857823595450/>

Lutheran Social Services of Alaska-Direct Services, 1303 W 33rd Ave, Anchorage, AK 99503

Food Bank of Alaska, 2121 Spar Ave, Anchorage, AK 99501, (907) 272-3663.

Catholic Social Services, 3710 E 20th Ave, Anchorage, AK 99508, (907) 222-7300.

Wasilla Area Seniors, 1301 S. Century Circle, Wasilla 99654, 907-376-3104, <https://www.facebook.com/WasillaAreaSeniorsInc/>

Palmer Food Bank, 221 South Valley Way, Palmer 99645, 746-3565

Frontline Mission 2001 E Palmer-Wasilla Hwy, Wasilla, AK, 357-8600

St. Francis House Food Pantry, 3710 E 20th Ave, Anchorage, AK 99508, Phone 907-222-7323 (front desk), Chris Kukay, Program Director, ckukay@cssalaska.org. <https://www.cssalaska.org/our-programs/st-francis-house/>

The Alaska Zoo, 4731 O'Malley Rd, Anchorage, AK, 99507, (907) 346-2133, <https://www.alaskazoo.org/food-donations>

Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, Mile 79 Seward Highway, Portage, Alaska 99587, phone: 907-783-0058, email them at: donations@alaskawildlife.org, website: <https://www.alaskawildlife.org/support/wish-list/>

Mat-Su Master Gardeners Association Board of Directors Information & Committees

The Board of Directors shall consist of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary plus one Member-at-Large. All Board members shall be elected by the membership. The Board shall provide full direction to all business between general membership meetings, outline yearly goals and programs, and take action to assure that the records of the Treasurer are audited annually. The Board may further establish standing rules and revise as needed.

Officers

Officers: The officers shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

The President shall preside at regular and Board meetings, call Board meetings when necessary, appoint chairs to standing committees and make other appointments as needed.

The Vice-President shall conduct the business of the Association in the absence of the President.

The Secretary shall record the minutes of the Board meetings and regular meetings, initiate, and respond to correspondence and assure that the general membership is informed of chapter activities.

The Treasurer shall collect all monies and dues, pay all bills, and retain records of receipts and expenditures and present a financial report to the Board. The Treasurer shall present the monthly bank statement to the Board for monthly audit.

The Member-at-Large serves as a liaison between the Board of Directors and the rest of the organization.

Election, Terms of Office: If more than one person is nominated for an office, the Officer shall be elected by ballot. If there is only one nominee for an office, a vote on that nominee may be taken by show of hands. If there is only one nominee for each of the offices, the President may ask for unanimous consent by show of hands. The Officers as well as the Member-at-Large shall serve a one-year term. The term of office shall begin the following January.

Committees

Newsletter - The newsletter committee shall prepare the monthly newsletter and send it to the web master to post it online and send an email with a link to the web page. This committee will also send out emails and other notices to Association members and interested parties on various club activities and as requested by the Association. Members without email will get a newsletter mailed to them after they provide the Board with their mailing address.

Rebarcheck Farm - Rebarchek planning committee will make recommendations and submit plans to the MG members for approval and participation.

Palmer Library Planting - The committee shall arrange for members to donate plants or, if needed, buy plants in accordance with the Association's budget. The Association traditionally does this the first Monday in June. If soil in beds needs amending the committee will arrange for amendments to be donated or purchased.

Parade participation - The committee shall arrange to sign the Association up for parades if so requested by the membership, and for a float to be made if so desired. The committee will coordinate workdays and a location to build the float if needed.

Palmer Veterans and Pioneer Home Planting - The committee shall buy plants in accordance with the Association's budget and arrange for a planting date to be announced to the members. If soil in beds needs amending the committee will arrange for amendments to be donated or purchased.

Plant Sale - The committee shall arrange for the Palmer Pavilion reservation, supplies and advertising, provide sign-up sheet for sellers at April and May meetings, get table, chairs, and plant sale signs from the CES office, help the Treasurer tally yellow plant price labels, and give yellow plant labels back to selling members.

We have signs to hang on fences to advertise (this is usually done a few weeks ahead of time). There is also a sign to hang up on the shelter at the Pavilion.

State Fair - The committee shall coordinate with the State Fair Flower and Crops Department Superintendent on which Division and Class the Association will sponsor for each year's Alaska State Fair. The committee will coordinate with the Treasurer to purchase gift cards and take them to the main office at the fair with labels indicating which winners the prizes are for. The State Fair representative will mail the cards to each winner. The Board decides how much to give for each prize.

Summer Garden Tour - The committee shall arrange for garden tour/events that may occur on dates other than monthly meeting dates, announce the dates at the meeting and submit the information for inclusion in the newsletter the month before the event.

Webmaster - The Webmaster shall keep the Mat Su Master Gardener website up to date with Association activities and information. Each Planting Committee Chair will provide a summer weeding and watering schedule to the webmaster to post on the website for members to sign up.

Yearbook - The yearbook committee shall compile, format, submit for printing and distribute the annual yearbook for the members.

Midsummer Garden and Art Faire – The MGAF committee will coordinate with the Palmer Chamber of Commerce regarding MMGA participation, submit an application as required, coordinate with the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center to arrange for publications to display and any other items from the ME FEC, coordinate with the ME FEC to pick up the MMGA table and chairs and items from the ME FEC to display, coordinate with MMGA members to staff the table and set up and take down the MMGA booth.

Guest Speakers for September thru November and January through May meetings. Develop a list of topics and guest speakers for the 2021 regular meetings. Coordinate with the guest speakers on what their equipment needs are and where and when to be at for the meetings. Let the guest speakers know the Association can pay them a small stipend for their time and expenses.

2021 State Master Gardener Conference. Coordinate with other Association members on the committees needed to put on the conference, determine a theme and location, guest speakers, etc. There is a lot of information available from past conferences to help the committee.

Meeting Space Coordinator Coordinate with the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center for meeting space for 2021. If this space is not available, find an adequate space centrally located in the Mat-Su Valley to hold our Monday night meetings.

The Photographic Saga of Scar Face, the “Giant” Cabbage
 (Lesson Learned: Hook up the Darned Electric Fence!) By Deb Blaylock
 Seeds were started on February 9th with hopes of entering a cabbage into the giant cabbage contest at the Alaska State Fair



A “Scar” is born - Feb 11



In the 3x3 pot - Mar 25



Into a ½ gallon pot - Apr 3



Moved out to greenhouse -
Apr 21



Moved outside and into 3-
gallon pots - May 19



Growing & growing! Jun 9



Moved to raised bed - Jul 12



Head is forming nicely! Jul 19



Ain't she purty! Jul 28



Moose attack!! Aug 2



She's still growing! Aug 9



and growing! Aug 24

Planting was delayed because of the fair cancellation. Learning of the possibility of a weigh-off, the cabbage was finally planted in July. She was growing nicely and then Mr. Moose discovered the garden on Aug 2nd. The electric fence was then fixed and charged. Several days later, “Scar Face” arose from the ashes of disaster. She continues to grow - a bit subdued from her former glory days. She will go to the Harvest Fest weigh-off on September 3rd.

Garden Links (updated Nov 2019)

Alaska Botanical Garden

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

Alaska Center for Conservation Science

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

Arbor Day Foundation

www.arborday.org

Alaska Division of Agriculture

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/>

Alaska Farm to School

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

Alaska Garden Clubs

<http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org>

Alaska Grown

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

Alaska Grown Source Book (online)

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

Alaska Master Gardeners Association, Anchorage

<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 Peony Society

<https://alaskapeonysociety.wixsite.com/alaskapeonysociety>

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.akrockgardenociety.org/>

Good Earth Garden School

<http://ellenvandevisse.com/>

Grow Palmer

<http://growpalmer.org/>



Integrated Pest Management Program

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

Junior Master Gardener

<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.com

Master Gardener Research Link (Extension)

<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

<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 Georgeson Botanical Garden

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

UAF Herbarium

<http://www.uaf.edu/museum/collections/herb/>

UAF Alaska Master Gardener Program

<https://www.uaf.edu/ces/garden/mastergardeners/>

UAF School of Natural Resources & Extension

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

University of Saskatchewan Fruit Program

www.fruit.usask.ca

USDA/NRCS Plant Data Base

<https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Deb Blaylock	746-6045/kdblalock@ak.net
Vice President	Gregory Kalal	339-1966
Secretary:	Carolyn Johnson	619-857-6614
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 send to the MMGA email.

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com/

Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 2020 AND BEYOND

Sep 3, Palmer, Giant Cabbage & Giant Vegetables – Thursday, September 3, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm (Must pre-register),
<https://www.alaskastatefair.org/site/harvest-fest/>

Sep 4-6, Palmer, Harvest Fest,
<https://www.alaskastatefair.org/site/harvest-fest/>

Sep 14, Palmer, MMGA meeting, Zoom Online Meeting, Steve Brown, Presentation on Guatemala Farm Trip.

Oct 5, Palmer, MMGA meeting, TBD

Nov 2, Palmer, Annual MMGA meeting, TBD

Dec 7, Palmer, Christmas Party (Tentative)

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 January 15, 2020 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 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--



September 2020



Like us on
Facebook

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

**MAT-SU MASTER GARDENERS
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