



Sep 2023



President's Patch

By President Kevin Johnson

We are now coming to the end of our "summer". Hopefully, because the summer was sporadic, we can have some nice fall weather before the first frost. Around our house, the greenhouse enclosed, four flower beds updated, rock garden planted with perennials but still working the rocks. We updated three flower beds at my mother-in-law's new home, plus much more. Was busy summer.

MMGA has been busy also with:

- Planting & maintaining the flower beds at the Alaska Veterans and Pioneer Home
- work at the MMGA area at the Rebarchek Farm Project
- State Fair parade float
- June plant sale fundraiser
- clean up perennial flower bed at Matanuska Experiment Farm
- sponsoring special awards at the Alaska State Fair
- booth at Midsummer Flower and Art Faire
- monthly meetings with speakers

All these projects were completed with planning by MMGA members and then members showing up in force. I hope next time to see many volunteers helping with the event.

Currently, the Alaska State Fair in Palmer is happening. I will be going soon to enjoy the flowers of the fair, landscaping, and the many exhibits. Everyone put lots of energy and time into this annual event. The thousands of volunteer hours make work easier for everyone.

After the Fair, the next big event will be the first frost. Then we all will be preparing our flowerbeds for winter. Hopefully the snow depth will be a great insulator for the ground.

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REGULAR MEETINGS

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

NEXT MEETING

SEPTEMBER 11TH, 2023, 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION:

MATANUSKA EXPERIMENT FARM AND EXTENSION
CENTER, KERTTULA HALL, "BLUE ROOM"
1509 S GEORGESON DR, PALMER

GUEST SPEAKER:

BOB VAN VELDHIJZEN

COME JOIN US AND FIND OUT WHY SOIL TESTING IS
IMPORTANT, HOW AND WHEN TO DO IT, AND
PARTICIPATE IN A HANDS-ON DEMONSTRATION OF
HOW TO TAKE A SOIL SAMPLE.

I hope to see everyone at the September 11 meeting, 7:00 PM at the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center off of Trunk Road, near the hospital.

PEASANT'S PERSPECTIVE:

BY CURT MUELLER, MASTER GARDENER

The question has been asked, "When is the best time to plant trees or shrubs"? The answer is now! It takes many years to grow a mature tree in Alaska, so we hope to get good survival and gain some time in the planting process. Autumn is often suggested, and it can have several advantages. Good planting stock must be available however, whether from a nursery or stock that you have grown from bare root plants in containers over summer. By planting well rooted plants in the fall they will begin to grow next spring as soon as the soil has warmed sufficiently. Tree size can be a factor as smaller trees are much easier to transplant and usually have a better chance at survival. Sometimes larger trees purchased at a nursery or big box store are in containers too small for tree size and can be rootbound, definitely not a good situation. In Alaska we need to give trees every advantage to ensure successful growth.

The first three weeks of September are probably the best time for fall planting in our area. The soil will still have some residual heat as opposed to early spring. The plant is done growing and can put its energy into growing more roots. Usually there is sufficient moisture in the soil and cooler air temperatures help prevent desiccation of the plant. Planting procedures are basically the same as for spring planting. Mulching within a few inches of the tree will help keep the soil warmer for a longer time.

Protecting the tree from animal damage is always a must. Deer and voles can easily kill a young tree. Fencing and making a cage for the tree and wrapping the trunk are methods to be used. The peasant uses moth balls for vole and rabbit damage with very good success. At least insect damage won't be a winter problem.

Tree support may also be necessary to keep winter winds from damaging a tree. A substantial root development is a definite help in this area.

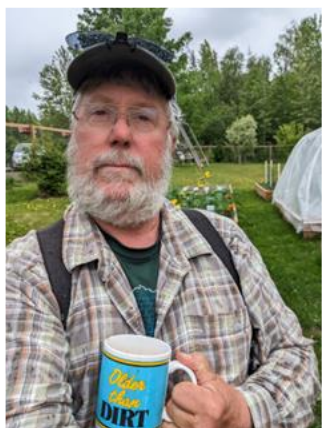
Trees and shrubs are great assets for property improvement and providing habitat for birds and perhaps fruit and beauty for us.

Thanks, folks.



This photo shows four Evans cherry trees that were received as bare root in spring of this year and planted into five-gallon buckets. They had been dug this spring and were budding when received. They leafed out readily and are ready for transplanting this fall. Spring dug plants have the advantage of not having been stored over winter as fall dug plants would have. I'd sell two if you make offer. They are on their own Evans roots which is hardier than others sometimes used.

September Guest Speaker Introduction Bob Van Veldhuizen



Bob Van Veldhuizen has lived in Alaska since he and his family arrived in Fairbanks in 1963. An avid gardener since his earliest summers as a young kid on his Grandparents Iowa dairy farm through today, he parlayed that interest into a career working at the UAF Agricultural & Forestry Experiment Station (AFES).

A 53-year career that started in May of 1970 as a student horticultural technician at the UAF-Fairbanks Experiment Farm while he earned a Natural Resource Management degree, and then as a forestry graduate student and finally for the last 43 years as an agronomy technician. Over the years of working at UAF-AFES, there has been soil related research in synthetic and organic fertility, soil - plant nutrient cycling, tillage methods, cover cropping and rotations, and dryland - irrigation fertilizer use efficiency.

Semi-retired since 2016, he still works part time every summer at the UAF-Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center (for a paycheck), but full time as a soils and crops consultant for the gardeners and farmers across the state (for free or pie and coffee). In semi-retirement he authored a book, *Alaska's Agricultural Soils - Sampling and Interpretation of Test Results*, a manual for gardeners and farmers on soil sampling, laboratory testing, and interpretation of the results.

Midsummer Garden & Art Faire Photos

Photos from Committee Chair Sue Glenn



MMGA Rebarcheck Farm Project Plot Update

Photos by Eva Cohnen-Brown



Beyond the Mountains into the valleys and anywhere else we can plant!

Article and photos submitted by Jenny Weaver

The Mat-Su Master Gardeners Alaska State Fair Float turned out beautiful! Complete with pergola, decorative fencing, 4 hanging basket posts, and a painted backboard with Matanuska Peak and Lazy Mountain, the float presented a garden feast for the eyes. The trailer and truck simply overflowed with lovely planters, tubs and hanging baskets, thanks to contributions from Eva Brown, Ann Eagerton, Sue Glenn, Bonnie Hager, Mike and Phyllis Kircher, Dorte Mobley, Theresa Phillips, Julie Polard, Kristina Thornquist, and the Weaver Family.



Plant drop-off at Palmer Carrs.

Theresa Phillips provided the trailer and our only veggies - a huge cabbage and corn stocks. Dave Thompson loaned us green turf and Deborah Learned donated a wheelbarrow and galvanized tub. Special thanks to Ann Eagerton for her constant support, smiling face on the parade route and help with plant pickup!

Heartfelt thanks to Todd Weaver for his patience and endurance these past weeks, and for putting together the pergola, moving heavy tubs all about (endlessly), helping with construction, etc. etc. Our daughter, Pearl, rode a kayak down the Matanuska River (in the bed of the truck) with her sunflower garden hat, greeting parade goers.

We didn't anticipate how fun it would be to ride in the parade! As we drove "Main Street" Palmer we waved to parade goers,

thanked them for coming out, wished them a good day, and told them to look for the girl in back riding a kayak. They responded with, "Beautiful!", "Lovely!", "Drop that trailer at my house!" One lady responded, "I want to join!"



Parade float and truck going down parade route.



Pearly in her kayak.



In construction pre-parade.

The Making of My Trough Heaven

By Dorte Mobley
Photos by the author

Many moons ago, when the Alaska Rock Garden Society got started, I was very excited about those cute little plants they showed beautiful slides of. I had gotten some plants from my husband's out-of-town work adventures - instead of bringing me t-shirts from those places, I asked him to bring me plants. I created a rock garden for them and heard about seed exchanges and a seed gathering expedition to China. How exciting it could be to try and grow some of the beauties from seed!

So in between his trips, I asked him to build me a bed that I could fill with dirt and start growing. Since bigger is almost always better, I had him make it 6x10 ft and two 2x8s tall. I wheelbarrowed a lot of gravelly dirt from my truck in the driveway back to my "alpine propagation bed," bought some seeds from the expedition and seed exchanges and planted them. Little white labels went into the dirt next to little areas of seeds.



Well, the magpies decided that it should be a surprise what came up and pulled all the

labels out, children's activities took up a bunch of my time, and weeds started to grow. Many alpine take several years to germinate which I did not really know about before I started and meanwhile.

The little weeds got bigger and bigger and soon I had a willow and a birch tree growing in between other opportunistic weeds in that nice raised-bed warm soil. I think the only two plants I really got from the seeds I planted were some alliums and iris - not overly exciting ones either.

Fast forwarding to kids being out of the house and me looking out my kitchen window at this weed patch with two trees that I absolutely had no interest in. For several years I wanted to do something about it and then last year I decided that I needed to do something. I pulled the boards apart and started digging. But the roots I met were just too much for a shovel. Luckily, my oldest had rented a skid steer for a project that he was doing, so when he was done, I asked him to stop by on the way to take it back and give me a "hand." The strong machine lifted up clumps, roots and all and shook it around so I had a chance of winning the battle.



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Meanwhile I had gotten three metal rings - sold as fire pits - but I had the idea when I got them, that I could use them for small vegetable gardens. Looking at the piles of dirt and the rings all winter, a new plan started to form. I have these hypertufa troughs, that I cannot lift myself, and that I needed to find a permanent place for. I knew the piles of dirt would not be ideal for vegetables as it is very rocky so maybe I could find a different use for it. I also had a lot of scree material and rocks in different colors, and I needed a place for it. So, I figured that I could move the piles, set the rings down, fill them up with the dirt and then top dress with the smaller rocks and scree material and set my troughs on them.

After numerous days of digging and moving the dirt around, I finally have something that looks better than weeds and trees. I made enough room for a chair, and I have already sat out there several quiet evenings after my husband went to bed and just enjoyed the beauty already looking forward to spring when I will be able to look out my window and see little patches of color - just like the plan was in the beginning.



Photo Update of the Flower Beds at the Palmer Veterans and Pioneers Home

Photos by Tony Leoni



Garden Links (updated March 2023)

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 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 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 *New*

<https://georgesonbotanicalgarden.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

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)

<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/>

Alaska Non-Native Species List

<https://accs.uaa.alaska.edu/invasive-species/non-native-plant-species-list/>

Palmer Soil & Water Conservation

<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>



CLUB CONTACT INFO

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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

JULY 2023 AND BEYOND

Aug 18 – Sep 4 (closed Tues and Wed), Palmer, Alaska State Fair

Sep 11, Palmer, Regular Meeting, Bob Van Veldhuizen, Soil Testing Basics w/hands-on demonstration

Oct 2, Palmer, Regular Meeting, 2023 Garden Year Recap Slideshow & Discussion and Potluck.

Nov 6, Palmer, Annual Meeting/Elections, Dr. Jeff Smeenk

Dec, Palmer, Christmas Party

Do not forget to check out the photos tab on our webpage! Eva updates it periodically from activities our Association participates in.
<https://www.matsumastergardeners.com/photos.html>

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, 2023, 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--



September 2023



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Facebook

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