

#### President's Message By Harry Deuber

Earlier today I walked about a block from my house to watch the sled dog teams running down Cordova St. on this first weekend of the Anchorage Fur Rondy. It's a lot of fun to witness the World Championship Sled Dog Races and all of the eager dogs and mushers racing by. This year it has been a little strange due to the abnormally warm temperatures we are experiencing. Normally trucks bring in snow to spread on the streets for the racers. This year they hauled in slush. Instead of dressing up warmly against the cold, most of the spectators were dressed rather casually and were more concerned with navigating the large puddles of water and patches of ice. I even observed a few youngsters in shorts. Yikes, this is too weird. It just doesn't seem right to me. Fur Rondy and the upcoming Iditarod are supposed to be COLD!

Could this be breakup season? I know many of us are wondering what this means for the plants in our gardens. Although it hasn't been super cold this winter the lack of snow cover combined with all of these freeze thaw cycles will make for some interesting stories this spring when we start to compare notes with each other. I would bet that those of us who have good drainage for our plants and took the time and effort to add a good covering of mulching material will be glad that we did.

Now that we are entering March, the daylight hours will be adding up fast. The first day of spring is only a few weeks away and the gardening season has begun as far as I'm concerned. It's a good time to start planning this year's garden and deciding what to grow. As soon as I start sowing seeds, potting up the Dahlia tubers and hitting the nurseries' the SEASON is officially here. I don't care if we are still a couple of months away from actually working in the garden, I'm just happy to start collecting and sowing my seeds and getting my hands into some soil.

If you haven't heard yet there is something happening that will be of great concern to many of us in the gardening community. As we all know our state is experiencing an unprecedented budgetary deficit this year and into the foreseeable future. Our state legislature is wrestling with different ways to balance the budget. At this moment they are considering major cuts to the University of Alaska Research and Outreach budget. If passed, these particular cuts would essentially eliminate most if not all of our Cooperative Extension Service programs. That could mean the closure of our local office and the loss of staff. I don't think I have to say how devastating this would be to so many of us.

AMGA

From what I understand this proposal has passed from the subcommittee responsible for the University budget onto the House Finance Committee. Public testimony will probably begin around Mar. 3-4.

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# This and That: February Meeting Notes by Sheila Toomey

Our February members meeting is always fun. Just as the drear and dank of waning winter threatens to erase all memory of summer, a group of smart, talented gardeners reminds us why we dig dirt: color, light, flowers, fruit, veggies, trees, herbs and garden art elicited oohs and aahs at the annual garden photo show.

Professional photographer Fran Durner led off with her glimpses of gardens around the world, followed by Robbie Frankevich, Kathy Liska, (in charge of crops at the Alaska State Fair), Marya "I'm a plantaholic" Morrow, Gina Docherty, Jane Baldwin and Tony Flores.

The business of the night -- transacted as we all enjoyed potluck goodies -- included a pitch from President Harry Deuber for volunteers, especially for our Pioneer Home maintenance project and the Centennial Rose Garden on the Park Strip.

This year's plant sale is set for the second week in August and the big April 16th "Grow Your Own" conference is on track. But organizers are asking for Silent Auction items. They don't have to be anything spectacular and gently used is fine. Do you have a nice basket you aren't using, one that can be filled with seeds, a new pair of gloves, a small flower pot -- voila! People will bid on it. For ideas, talk to conference organizers.

# **Treasurer's Report**

Balances 12/31/15	
Checking account	10617.07
Savings account	11703.51
	\$22320.58
Dedicated Funds	\$8426.20
Devenue	
Revenue:	
Dedicated Donation	500.00
Donations	14.00
Education- AMG	700.00
ED/Programs	300.00
Interest	1.49
Membership	802.15
·	\$2317.64
Expense:	
Directory	1248.49
Education/Programs	200.00
Operations	49.99
	\$1498.48
Balances 1/31/16	• • •
Checking account	11434.74
Savings account	11705.00
	\$23139.74
Dedicated Funds	\$8426.20
	•

## Letter to all members of the House/Senate budget subcommittee from Cheryl Chapman

Dear Rep./Sen. XxXXX,

The Cooperative Extension Service is not a frill in this state. Perhaps only the public schools have done as much to improve the day-to-day lives and health of ordinary Alaskans, so I was horrified to read in this morning's online Alaska Dispatch News that your subcommittee is shutting down the program.

Through CES I learned how to safely can fish and moose. I learned better budget practices. The agents taught me what wild plants could be safely harvested and eaten and which should be left alone. All us Master Gardeners put in 40 hours of public service each year to start out, and at least 20 hours after that annually (more recommended), plus constantly upgrading our knowledge. To you this may seem trivial, but to the food banks, that benefits from our gardens, the fresh vegetables and fruits we donate aren't trivial.

With help from the horticulturist, we work with refugees to make them self-sustaining and off welfare. CES teaches us how to keep our homes warm and how to adapt them so we can stay there safely as we age. Cooperative Extension trains those who use or sell pesticides to prepare them for the state-required certification. It also trains home cooks who want to go into business. Cooperative Extension conducts regular Strong Women classes to help the elderly improve their balance and cardiovascular and bone health.

If something is leaving foamy saliva all over your flowers, take a stem into a CES office for a free pest diagnosis, and a prescription for what to do about it (spittlebugs; blasts of water from the hose).

If you want interesting reading, you should go online or stop by a CES office and check out the free publications.

You may think of Cooperative Extension as exclusive to 4-H, and though the state's young people are important to the program (8,420 4-H members statewide, 11,000 others in other programs for youth in 2014), the list of benefits to us all goes on and on and on.

Under the current system, Alaska's needs and funds to cover them do not match. Please understand that the "t" word [tax] is not a bugaboo for Alaskans. We get reality.

I urge you to leave funding for this vital statewide outreach, Cooperative Extension, intact so it can continue to improve the lot of ordinary Alaskans.

Another word for us is, of course, "voters.

# Fertilizing and Amending Soil Organically by Sharon Gherman

[with permission from the author] http://www.cenpengardenclub.org/newsletter.htm

The older I get, the more I find myself seeking out organic fertilizers and problem solvers in my gardens and orchards - maybe it has something to do with having children and grandchildren and wanting the safest possible food for them? Or maybe it was recalling the dusty chemical cans in the back of the garden shed when I was a youngster, skull and crossbones warnings prominently displayed. Whatever the reason, I look for organic solutions first and only resort to non-organics when nothing organically has worked and the crop is too important to lose.

We've learned from Jeff Lowenfels and others that building healthy soil makes more sense than fertilizing individual flowers and vegetables, and organics are great for building soil. Organic fertilizers usually have lower NPK ratios than chemical compounds, and often add valuable trace minerals that chemical compounds lack.

Caution: Use organic soil amendments in soil for transplants and established plants, but not for soil used for seed sprouting or very young seedlings because the organics they introduce can damp off seedlings in the warm, moist environment of propagation. I use a sterile planting mix to sprout seeds, water with organic additives once seeds are sprouted and have their second set of leaves, and only add organic fertilizers directly to the garden soil or final planting mix.

Here are a few locally-available organic fertilizers and soil amendments to consider using to replace that old bag of 8-32-16:

Alfalfa: You can buy alfalfa at the garden center, but you'll save \$\$ if you buy it from the feed store instead. It's available in powdered and pelleted forms (ask for "rabbit pellets" - or better yet, just get the cheapest form of alfalfa they sell.) Made of dried, ground alfalfa (a plant crop used to feed livestock), it also contains traces of calcium, iron, magnesium and zinc and has an average NPK ratio of 2-1-2.

How to use it: Mix alfalfa into the first few inches of your soil at a rate of 2-5 lbs. per 100 square feet of planting space. (See this month's Garden Planning Tip for how to make this measurement easier.) Don't add it to the planting hole though - it's too hot and will burn plant roots - instead scratch it into the surface of the soil. Since alfalfa's used as a livestock feed, your local critters will love it, so get it under the surface of the soil where it will "melt" into the soil as you water. Alfalfa is my favorite compost pile energy booster - just sprinkle a generous layer of it between your "browns" and "greens" and watch the temperature of your pile spike! It also makes a good substitute for compost tea if you don't have any finished compost to use - add about a cup of pellets to a 5 gallon bucket of water, let it steep overnight, then water or strain and spray it on your plants. The leftover sludge can go onto your compost pile.

SeaAg/Alaskan Granular Fish fertilizer: We're blessed with an abundance of fish byproducts on the central peninsula. CPGC sells SeaAg fertilizer as an annual fundraiser, so this is an easy product to get in our location. Also known by the more descriptive name of Alaskan Granular Fish, this fertilizer is made of steamed and ground Alaska fish bone and has an average NPK ratio of 5-9-0.4, depending on the type of fish used.

How to use it: Spread SeaAg into your beds at a rate of 2 lbs. per 100 square feet.

**Fish Meal:** Fish meal also consists of dried and ground fish byproducts, and has an average NPK ratio of 10-2-2. You can buy it at the garden center, but like alfalfa meal, it's cheaper from the feed store.

How to use it: I spread fish meal in my planting beds at a rate of 1-1.5 lbs. per 100 square feet. NOTE Fish meal smells faintly of its' source, so dig it in below the surface so dogs and bears aren't attracted to it. It will also burn if applied to plant roots

**Worm Castings:** This organic soil amendment is made of worm excrement collected from worm composting bins. Its' NPK ratio is negligible, but worm castings add valuable trace minerals, good bacteria and microorganisms that improve soil health. Worm castings are expensive to buy but easy to "grow" in a worm composting bin using your own garden and kitchen trimmings.

How to use it: Spread in your planting beds at the rate of 3-5 lbs. per 100 square feet if you have worm castings in sufficient quantity. If you must purchase them, just topdress plants you want to give a growing boost.

Greensand: Greensand looks like greenish sand, and it comes in a (heavy) box as a soil amendment. Greensand is primarily the mineral glauconite, which is mined from the ocean floor. Its' NPK ratio is 0-0-6 (so very high potassium) and is full of valuable trace minerals.

How to use it: Greensand can be used as a general soil improvement agent in areas where your soil is potassium deficient - dig in 2-4 lbs. per 100 square feet, or use it to topdress plants in the garden or containers. Sprinkled into your compost pile, it will boost trace minerals that plants need. I first discovered greensand when some of my plants yellowed along their veins. After watering in a light sprinkling of greensand, the yellow veining reversed in a matter of a day or two - it was dramatic. My plants loved it.

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## Growing Young Gardeners: Carnivorous Plants By Amy Reed, MG

What child doesn't love exploring and trapping bugs? My husband and daughter came home recently from a trip to the nursery with four carnivorous plants to add to mommy's indoor garden. I was queasy at the idea of watching a Venus Fly Trap clamp it's jaws around a fly while I weeded my ground cover nearby, but who was I to stifle the excitement of a five year old finding bugs to feed to her new plants?

It actually has been a very interesting science project in learning about carnivorous plants. There are five basic types of trapping mechanisms in these plants:

Pitfall traps, like pitcher plants, flypaper traps, snap traps, bladder traps, and lobster-pot traps. Pitfall traps contain a pool of digestive enzymes that ensnare their prey.

Flypaper traps use sticky mucilage or glue glands that may be short or long on the end of their leaf. The insect flies into the gluey area and the leaf rolls around it to entrap its prey.

Venus Flytraps fall under the category of snap traps. The interesting mechanism of closure is a case of thigmonasty or indirected movement in response to touch. When the insect further struggles in the trap, the lobes close even tighter, called thigmotropism and form a stomach in which digestion occurs over one to two weeks!

Bladder traps, such as Utricularia contain long trigger hairs that when touched activate a door by lever action releasing a vacuum which sucks the insect inside.

Finally, lobster-pot traps, such as Genlisea violacea, contain a modified Y-shaped leaf that allows prey to enter but not exit.

How to you care for these plants? The nursery employee gave my family some helpful hints. First, water from the bottom and always keep the carnivorous plants moist. We bought four small 4-inch glass containers, added rocks, 1/2 inch of water, and placed the nursery plastic pots inside. Next, mineral-free water is key. Collected rainwater works best as carnivorous plants thrive in nutrient poor soils. Saying this, sphagnum peat moss or horticultural sand works best, usually at a 1:1 ratio. Place the plants in a very sunny spot or under artificial light for 12-14 hours. An interesting fact is that many carnivorous plants require a period of 3-6 months of dormancy. Venus flytraps and pitcher plants will form winter leaves. Usually in the winter months, water the plants less, leaving the soil only slightly damp and then reduce the amount of sunlight. Some plants form flowering stalks, which should be trimmed to allow the plant to conserve energy.

Feeding the plants was my main question. What do they eat? The flypaper trap plant, D. capensis, was interesting in that it pretty much took care of itself. Within a week of it had scores of no-see-ums glued to it's tentacles. The Venus Flytrap loved the flies and ants we collected outside and gently placed in its jaws with tweezers. The pitcher plant tended to be a bit finicky. The insects we placed in there had to be at least stunned or they would sneak back out. We were told not to feed the plants raw meat or cheese or to fertilize, as they would kill the plants. Also, spiders tended to crawl out fast of the plants, making them not ideal prey.

Having carnivorous plants has been a very fun and interesting experience for my family. We enjoy hunting for the bugs and watching the plants as they enjoy their meal. In a tiny way, we are also controlling the insect population!

# President's Message...cont. from page 1

If I have this correct the following address will guide you to the various committee members. You may write them and express your concerns about this particular budget item and ask that your email be included in the public testimony record but you are also encouraged to state whether or not you are willing to accept new taxes, or changes to the permanent fund or if you have specific suggestions on where additional cuts could be taken. New info might be presented to us via constant contact in the next few days. Meanwhile, here is the address:

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Committee/ Details/29?code=HFIN

There are a few events coming up this month that should be of interest to many. Jessie Moan from C.E.S. will be the guest speaker at our March membership meeting. The program is titled "Yard and Garden Pests in South Central" and it will include tips on prevention and mitigation of pests. Our educational programs have proven to be quite popular and you are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities to learn more about gardening, and to meet and socialize with the best gardeners in town. Did I mention the yummy food provided by our dedicated volunteers?

Another event coming up this month is the 10th Annual Spring Garden Conference sponsored by the Alaska Botanical Garden. This year's conference is titled "Thyme for Gathering". The date is Saturday March 19th and it will be held at the BP Energy Center. They always know how to put on a first class event. Check out www.alaskabg.org for detailed info on the schedule of speakers and topics.

# AMGA 2016 Conference Speaker Profile: Paul Marmora By Rosemary Shinohara

So, you grew a bunch of potatoes and you've run out of ideas for ways to eat them?

Paul Marmora of Anchorage, a gifted cook and Master Gardener, will show how to turn herbs and vegetables from the garden into tasty dishes, in a presentation at the Alaska Master Gardeners conference in Anchorage April 16.

"I wanted to make it something easy for people to cook and grow," Marmora said.

Two of the recipes he will demonstrate are "dead easy," he said. Those are a pasta



Photo from Paul Marmora

dish with fresh herb's such as oregano, thyme, garlic and basil, and a potato dish with garlic and parsley.

A third dish, tortilla española, is a Spanish tapa that can be eaten hot or at room temperature. It is a potato omelet.

Marmora worked in restaurants in New York, ran a catering business with his wife in the Bay area, and now teaches cooking classes in the Continuing Education department of the University of Alaska Anchorage. In March, he is scheduled to teach one Continuing Education class on tapas, one on meatless meals, and another on Chinese Cuisine.

Marmora is no ordinary gardener. He is a founder of the Cook Inlet Bonsai Society, and nurtures about 300 little trees on his Midtown property.

Retired from a job as trainer for FedEx, he now grows miniature orchids and perennials.

The Master Gardeners conference will be on the UAA campus. Anyone interested in attending can register at alaskamastergardeners.org.

## AMGA 2016 Conference Speaker Profile: Brian Olson By Rosemary Shinohara

Brian and Laurie Olson, owners of Alaska Berries in Soldotna, specialize in growing a type of berry that is relatively new to Alaska – haskaps.

"They are an excellent berry crop for our region for several reasons," Brian Olson said in an e-mail. "They are extremely hardy, very few diseases or pests, and are one of the most nutritious berries there is."

The berries are blue, and have been described as tasting like a combination of blueberries, raspberries and strawberries.

Olson will give tips on how to successfully grow haskaps in your own backyard in a presentation at the Alaska Master Gardeners conference in Anchorage April 16.

The Olsons began growing fruits and vegetables more than 20 years ago, and during the last 10-12 years, have focused primarily on berries.

"I started researching lesser known berry plants ... and read about the Japanese variety called haskap," he said. "We decided to try growing them to see how they would do in our area."

The answer was: excellently.

The haskaps Alaska Berries grows comes from the Hokkaido region in northern Japan.

To grow your own berries, you need two different varieties - they cross pollinate to produce fruit.

The Alaska Berries web site, alaskaberries.com., says some haskap plants are known to have lived 50 years or more. They grow up to six feet tall. The plants can take very cold winters. The berries are ready to harvest in late July to early August.

"They will grow in a wide pH range but prefer around 6.5 to 6.7," Olson said.



"There isn't much to not like about this plant," he said. Alaska Berries sells wine, jam, syrup and plants.

Photo from Brian Olson



COMING EVENT?... Word in the garden is that an Anchorage version of "Edible Seattle" may be on its way north. A guy handing out free copies of the magazine there told an Alaska visitor he's sent a bunch of old issues to "Mary" in Anchorage. She's planning a quarterly called "Edible Anchorage." Or so BC is told.

RATS... The Northwest Flower show attracted a bunch of MGs south last month but, once again, Bird Chatter missed the plane. Luckily they've invented cell phones, so here's some of what us laggards missed:

Cheryl Chapman reported the crowds were three times a big as they were two years ago, when she last attended. The event is a major do for Seattle and for gardeners all over the Northwest. The crowds might be explained by the fact that, for the first time, organizers got a liquor license. Chateau Ste. Michelle Wine Estates was the official vintner and presenters urged audiences to drink up, promising it would improve the experience.

Sparkling sangria with an edible flower floating in it was the official drink; and a round tea cake with white icing and a schematic pink flower decorating the top was the official cookie.

The hottest item for sale was -- Cheryl swears this is true -- a broom made of coconut palm fronds. Its bristles are so stiff they pull leaves and debris out from between pavers. It allegedly picks up leaves and lets gravel alone. (Check it out on www.shopdepalma.com if you like). Other MGs spotted: Cynthia Walker, Debbie Hinchey, and Fran Durner who, reached on the last day, summed her experience up this way:

"... the usual - walking into a wall of humidity and fragrance on the first day that is so heady it explodes within your deficient senses and makes your eyes spin, beautiful show gardens to die for, lots of zone envy, spending too much money on plants and gardening ephemera that, once bought, you kinda wonder how you're going to get it all home on the plane."

SNOW BIRD SPECIAL... MG and fabulous fotog Annie Nevaldine reports Hawaii has sprouted a new type of tree. 'Lava trees' are formed when a living tree comes in contact with lava. If you're wondering what this species might look like, check out Lava Tree State Park!

#### Fertilizing and Amending Soil Organically... cont. from page 3

Manure: Animal manure varies widely in NPK ratio depending on the source and collection method, but be aware that some manures (chicken manure for example) are high enough in nitrogen that they need to be composted before being spread on your planting beds to avoid burning tender plant roots. Others, such as rabbit manure, are mild enough to sprinkle the little round manure pellets around individual plants and water them in. How to use it: Once composted, spread at a rate of 1" per surface foot and turn it under thoroughly before planting. Mild manures can be left at the surface and watered into the soil.

Bone meal: Bone meal is made of steamed, ground animal bones. It can be purchased in powdered form at the garden center, and has an average NPK ratio of 2-11-22. How to use it: Sprinkle it on the soil at a rate of 10 lbs. per 100 square feet, and turn it under. CAUTION: Bone meal can attract rodents, rabbits, and other critters, so dig it in

Blood meal: Blood meal is the powdered blood from slaughtered animals with an NPK ratio of 12-0-0. It contains micronutrients and minerals as well. How to use it: Blood meal can burn plants, so use it carefully! I prefer to sprinkle it on my compost pile rather than add to the soil directly. You can also spread it thinly on your planting bed and turn it under, or use it to sidedress plants. Blood meal deters moose, deer and rabbits, and is also available as a deer/moose repellent mix called Plantskyyd. It's the only thing that keeps the moose from munching my unfenced yard.

Limestone: Our soils in the central peninsula are acidic, so adding lime is an important step for healthy garden soils for many crops. (Blueberries and cranberries are an important exception – they love acidic soil, so don't add lime anywhere close to them!) There are two forms of lime for gardening - agricultural lime and dolomitic lime. Both forms contain calcium, but dolomitic lime also contains magnesium. Most of us use dolomitic lime in our gardens. How to use it: Limestone is one soil additive that should be applied specifically according to the results of your garden's soil test. When I mix up a soilless planting mix of 2 parts peat and 1 part each of perlite and vermiculite, I add  $\frac{3}{4}$  - 1 c. of dolomitic limestone to the mix, and I sprinkle several cups per 100 square feet into my garden. Some years I skip that completely and turn under my wood ashes in the planting beds instead, since they're mildly alkaline like limestone.

# Garden Event Calendar

## **MEETINGS** and **EVENTS**

## Tuesday, March 1

Valley Garden Club: Planting a Bird Friendly Garden by Jill Parson. 10:30 am at First Baptist Church, 900 Leatherleaf Loop, Wasilla.

## Wednesday, March 2

Alaska Botanical Garden Annual Meeting. 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm at BP Energy Center, Seward Hy and Benson Blvd. Details at: http://alaskabg.org/events/.

## Thursday, March 3

Anchorage Garden Club Monthly Meeting: Cold Climate Greenhouse Design by Michael Burke, Master Gardener. 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm at Pioneer Schoolhouse at 437 E 3rd Avenue, Anchorage. Details at: http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/anchorageclub.htm.

## Friday, March 4

Herb Study Group, Topic: Lovage and Other Perennial Herbs. 12:00pm – 1:30 pm at CES – 1675 C Street, Suite 100, Anchorage.

#### Saturday, March 5

Master Gardeners at Fur Rhondy: Visit the Master Gardeners with Your Garden Questions. 10:00 am – 7:00 pm at The Mall at Sears, 600 E. Northern Lights Blvd.

#### Monday, March 7

\*\*Alaska Native Plant Society Monthly Meeting: Arctic Mosses by Dr. Bjartmar Sveinbjornsson; Mini Botany: Juniperis horizontalis by Mary Rimland; Plant Family: Boykinia by Verna Pratt. 7:00 pm at Campbell Science Center, Anchorage. Details at: http://aknps.org/Pages/ Meetings.php.

\*\*Mat-Su Master Gardener's Monthly Meeting: Stephen Brown. 6:30 pm at MTA building, Palmer. Details at: http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/calendar-of-events.html.

\*\*Meadow Lake Bloomers Garden Club Monthly Meeting. 10:30 am at Meadow Lakes Senior Center, 1210 N Kim Drive, Wasilla.

#### Thursday, March 10

Wildflower Garden Club Monthly Meeting: The History of Using Wildflowers in the Anchorage Urban Garden by Verna Pratt. 10:00 am - 11:30 am at Central Lutheran Church, 1420 Cordova, Anchorage. Details at: http:// www.alaskagardenclubs.org/apps/calendar/.

## Monday, March 14

Anchorage AMGA Meeting: Yard and Garden Pests in South Central by Jessie Moan, CES IPM Technician. 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at CES - 1675 C Street, Anchorage. Details at: http://www.alaskamastergardeners. org/2015\_2016\_AMGA\_Programs\_2.pdf.

#### Wednesday, March 16

Anchorage Permaculture Guild Seed Exchange: Bring seeds of vegetables, flowers and herbs to share. Mini-presentations on seed topics. 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Cooperative Extension Office, 1675 C Street, Suite 100.

## Tuesday, March 22

Alaska Orchid Society Monthly Meeting. 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm at BP Energy Center, Seward Hy and Benson Blvd. Details at: http://www.wayne-toups.squarespace.com/ events/.

#### Friday March 25

Willow Garden Club Monthly Meeting: Growing Dahlias by Rob Wells. 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm at the First Baptist Church on Leatherleaf and Bogard Road. Details at: http://www.valleygardenclub.com/.

#### Saturday March 26

Alaska Rock Garden Society Monthly Meeting: Flora of Patagonia by Dennis Ronsse. 2:00 pm at Anchorage Cooperative Extension Service 1675 C Street, Suite 100.

#### CLASSES and WORKSHOPS

#### <u>Saturday, March 5 – Saturday March 26</u>

Alaska Mill and Feed Spring Classes. 1501 East First Avenue. Reservations are required. Register at: http:// www.alaskamillandfeed.com/#levents/.

\*March 5: Potatoes by Greg Kalal, Local Potato Farmer at 10:30 am – 11:30 am and 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm. Free.

\*March 12: Dahlias and Begonias by Stephanie Flynn, Master Gardener at 10:00 am – 11:00 am and 11:30 am – 12:30 pm. Cost: \$5.00.

\*March 12: Advanced Chicken Class at 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm. Free.

\*March 19: Bee Keeping by Greg Groeneweg at 11:00 am - 1:00 pm and 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm. Cost: \$5.00

\*March 26: Birch Tree Tapping by Valerie Barber. 10:30 am - 11:30 am. Cost: \$5.00.

## Saturdays, March 5 and 12

Stretch Your Garden Season: Learn Methods To Warm Your Garden and Extend the Growing Season by Ellen Vande Visse. 9:00 am - 1:00 pm. Cost: \$65. Location and Details at http://ellenvandevisse.com/classes/?ee=35.

#### Monday, March 7

Success with Seeds by Patrick Ryan, Educational Specialist, Alaska Botanical Garden. 11:00 am – 1:00 pm at Anchorage Cooperative Extension Service 1675 C Street, Suite 100. Details at: https://www.uaf.edu/ces/ districts/anchorage/calendar/.

#### Wednesday, March 9

Greenhouse Heat: Learn about Passive Solar Boxes, Heat Sinking and Thermal Mass Storage by Art Nash, Energy Specialist. 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm at Anchorage Cooperative Extension Service 1675 C Street, Suite 100. Details at: https://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/anchorage/calendar/.

#### Thursday, March 10

Super Hardy Perennials by Marya Morrow, MG. 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm at Anchorage Cooperative Extension Service 1675 C Street, Suite 100. Details at: https://www.uaf. edu/ces/districts/anchorage/calendar/.

#### Friday, March 11

Peonies for Fun and Profit by Julie Riley, CES Horticulturist. 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm at Anchorage Cooperative

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Extension Service 1675 C Street, Suite 100. Details at: https://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/anchorage/calen-dar/.

#### Wednesday, March 23

Seed Starting: Learn To Everything To Start Seeds Including Lightening and Build Soil Blocks by Will Criner. 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm at Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage. Cost: ABG members \$30, Non-members \$35. Class is limited, pre-registration is required. Details at: www.alaskabg.org/events/.

#### CONFERENCES

#### Saturday, March 19

**Thyme for Gathering** - Alaska Botanical Garden's 10th Annual Spring Garden Conference & Reception -Guest Speakers Include: Les Brake, Julie Riley and Mary Kate Reeder and Others. 8:45 am - 6:30 pm at BP Energy Center, 900 E. Benson Blvd, Anchorage. Cost and Details at: http://alaskabg.org/events/.

## <u>Saturday, April 16</u>

Grow Your Own from the soil up -

Statewide Master Gardener Conferences, Lucy Cuddy Center on UAA Campus.

For information and registration: alaskamastergardeners.org/AMGA\_Conference.html





AMGA regularly meets at 7:00pm every third Monday of the month, September through May (except for December).

Meetings are held at the Anchorage Cooperative Extension Center 1675 C Street, Suite 100 (access off of 16th Avenue)

Monthly educational programs are free and open to the public. Visitors and guests are welcomed and encouraged.

#### AMGA Board of Directors

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# Committee Chairs, Program Coordinators & Volunteers iaison: Julie Riley

CES Liaison: Broadcast Email: Calendar of Events: Advanced MG: Directory Editor: Field Trips & Programs: Google Group: Hospitality: Volunteer Coordinator: Membership & Database: Newsletter & Website: 2016 Statewide Master Gardener Conference: Lifetime Achievement: Grants: Pioneer Home:

Fran Pekar Martha Farris Ginny Moore Sandy Harrington Melanie San Angelo & Phyllis Rogers Mary Rydesky Kathy Liska & Marjorie Williams Sue Looney Jane Baldwin Gina Docherty

Barbara Baker Lynne Opstad Barbara Baker Erma MacMillan (design) Lynne Opstad Julie Ginder, Joyce Smith, Lynne Opstad The Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage welcomes letters, opinions, articles, ideas and inquiries. Contact the editor, Gina Docherty, at:

Mail: 14051 Fejes Road Anchorage, AK 99516 Phone: 345-4099 Email: amga@alaska.net AMGA Web Site: www.alaskamastergardeners.org

AMGA Google Group: https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups#!forum/AkMGA

To send concerns or information to the AMGA directly, mail to: AMGA P.O. Box 221403 Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

If you have questions or want to make address or email corrections, please contact Jane Baldwin at: ak.jbaldwin@gmail.com

#### Newsletter Submission Deadline

The deadline for submitting an item for publication in the following month's edition of the AMGA newsletter is the 20th of every month. Items arriving after this date may or may not be included.

Educational or garden related articles, Bird Chatter, calendar items and announcements are always welcome.

For information about membership or upcoming programs, contact: Cooperative Extension Office 1675 C St, Suite 100 Anchorage, AK 99501 Phone: 786-6300 Fax: 786-6312





Volunteer Coordinators: