



## AMGA NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2016  
Volume 18, Issue 2

### Message From Harry

February has never been one of my favorite months. Sorry, but I'm just not a big fan. Although I do enjoy the winter season and find a fresh snowfall on a crisp sunny day incredibly beautiful, I've usually had my fill of the cold and dark by now. Even though it's the shortest month of the year it does seem to drag on longer than necessary.

There are a few things that rescue it from my scorn, however. One nice feature of February is that our amount of daylight is rapidly increasing and our energy levels are picking up a bit. If one is lucky enough to travel out of state for a vacation or get a chance to visit the Northwest Flower and Garden Show in Seattle, February starts to look a little more acceptable. And it does bring us Valentine's Day and Fur Rondy. The seed racks will be freshly stocked and we will be starting our early seed planting. Hmmm, maybe it really isn't as bad a month as I sometimes let myself think. Perhaps I'll give February another chance.

One thing that I am looking forward to is our monthly membership meeting on the 15th. This is our annual photo recap, potluck and seed exchange meeting. As much as we all appreciate and enjoy our guest speakers it is nice to have a meeting with enough time to share garden photos, discuss our gardening successes (or failures) and just have more time in general to eat and socialize. If you have a few photos of your plants or gardens that you are willing to share, please bring them on a thumb drive. If you have something for the potluck, a modest dish is always appreciated. This is also a great time to take a look at your seed collection to see what you may have saved from last year. It will help you plan this year's seed buying spree and give you a chance to share extras with your fellow Master Gardeners.

One last item on the agenda for the upcoming meeting will be a review of volunteer opportunities for our members. In addition to our traditional activities, there are a few new ideas floating around out there that are well

worth discussing. This is a good chance for us to talk about where we want to go as an organization and how we want to serve our community and our membership. I hope to see you all on the 15th. To those lucky ones going to the flower show in Seattle, remember that it doesn't start until the 17th so no excuses for not being in town for our meeting!



Photo: Facebook "The Running Garlic"  
<https://therunninggarlic.wordpress.com/>

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# YOU SHOULD-A BEEN THERE

By Sheila Toomey

A near-record crowd showed up Monday, January 18, for our official 2016 annual membership meeting, which meant the first 15 minutes was spent trying to find seating for 87 Master Gardeners (and friends). The annual meeting is a legal requirement and was efficiently handled by outgoing co-president Lynne Opstad. Refreshment were furnished by Sandy Harrington and Margorie Williams.

But let's be honest. What drew the hordes was the promise of a mid-winter trip through the lush gardens of Dohnn and Kristi Wood. Many of us have visited their place on a garden tour so we know it's all about vegetables -- about organic, economic, sustainability. His theme for this talk was "The Miracle of (Almost) Free Food." The focus was getting the most for the least -- meaning least amount of money and labor.

According to Dohnn, he bought his property in 2000 and did everything wrong at first: anemic soil, herbicides, pesticides, MiracleGro, unproductive plants, inappropriate seeds, and way too much hard work for a paltry showing on the dining room table: 20 pounds of veggies for 300 hours of labor.

Then he started reading, learning how to do it right. He began with a book published in 1892, "Traditional American Farming Techniques," which may be a bit of a tome for most backyard gardeners but aimed Dohnn in the right direction. Soon he was composting, extending the growing season with row covers and mini hoops, taking advantage of micro climates -- even creating them: He harvests fully grown greens in mid-May.

The payoffs multiplied as he experimented: Mulch and highly organic soil hold moisture so only minimal watering is required. The greenhouse is almost completely solar heated -- rocks suck up daytime heat and keep the temperature even. Inter-planting compatible crops uses every inch productively.

Dohnn discovered the joys of container gardening and now harvests 400 pounds a year off his deck. He employs every shortcut he can dream up, repurposes materials, rarely buys expensive packaged tools or supplies and, in general, invents the cheapest and easiest of everything as he goes.

"It can't get any simpler," he told the crowd, not all of whom bought his claim that he works only seven hours a week once the plants are in.

"We set things up for Mother Nature and she does the work," Kristi confirmed later.

There's no way to summarize Dohnn's journey here. But anyone can travel the same road by doing the same

reading. Kristi says their favorite, meaning most useful, books are: "How to Grow More Vegetables," by John Jeavons; "Square Foot Gardening," by Mel Bartholomew and "Four-Season Harvest," by Eliot Coleman.

Dohnn's message is that we all can grow our own food. His garden is his proof.



Part of the record breaking crowd attending Dohnn Wood's talk. Photo by Mary Rydesky (from the AMGA Google Group)

## Treasurer's Report

	Balances 11/30/15
Checking account	12729.17
<u>Savings account</u>	<u>11702.02</u>
	\$24431.19

Dedicated Funds \$3414.03

Revenue:	
Donations	130.00
Interest	13.66
<u>Membership</u>	<u>4254.64</u>
	\$4398.30

Expense:	
Education	1062.50
Membership	167.30
Operations	101.95
Programs	79.99
<u>Website</u>	<u>85.00</u>
	\$1496.74

	Balances 12/31/15
Checking account	10617.07
<u>Savings account</u>	<u>11703.51</u>
	\$22320.58

Dedicated Funds \$8426.20



## Become a Wildlife "Action Hero"

By Chris Wood

This past year, The National Garden Clubs reached out to their regions in a special two-year, (2015-2017), Presidential campaign called "Service in Action." This project focuses on increasing awareness of the seriousness of the demise of pollinators and amphibians, in an attempt to encourage conservation and protection of these garden partners. We are asked to consider, "the first bio indicators, amphibians and pollinators, by their presence, abundance or lack of, reveal the health of the surrounding ecosystems."

Populations of amphibians have declined dramatically around the world. Sensitive to environmental changes, it is thought that possible causes include: the intensified predation by introduced fish and non-native frogs, damage to immune systems from use of pesticides and other pollutants, UV-B radiation, disease, and habitat destruction.

A call to action is needed by gardeners close to the soil to be "Wildlife Action Hero's." By committing to gardening for wildlife, you can encourage a habitat to attract pollinators, amphibians and other beautiful wildlife to a safe zone to live and flourish.

Sustainable wildlife habitat can be established in backyards, community gardens, apartment balcony's, School grounds, churches, senior centers and commercial buildings. The possibilities are endless really and gardeners are in a perfect position to help. By providing cover, water and food for wildlife, you provide shelter for them to raise their young and thrive. We can also encourage our neighbors and friends to do the same by role modeling a friendly back yard habitat.

Alaska has only a small number of amphibians due to our climate. In the Southeast portion of Alaska, *Ambystoma marodactylum*, a long-toed Salamander and *Ambystoma gracile*, a North-western Salamander can be found.

We have one true Toad, *Bufo boreas* or Western Toad, which can be found in South Central and Southeast Alaska. In the last category of amphibians, are two species of frogs called the *Rana luteiventris*, Columbia

Spotted frog in Southeast and *Rana sylvantica*, or Wood frog as it is known. The Wood frog has been found in Southeast, Southwest, Southcentral, West and Central Alaska.

In Alaska, amphibians are managed and protected by the Department of Fish and Game under statute 16.05.030 in the legal definition of "Fish." Fish and Game, share our concern and has an ongoing volunteer Alaska Wood Frog Monitoring program. This program is designed to

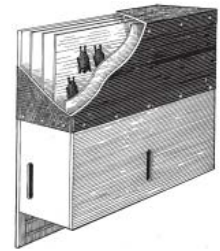


Wood frog, *Rana sylvantica*, Willow, AK  
Photo by Julie Riley

assess the current status of the Wood frog in South-central and Interior Alaska. If anyone is interested in participating, there are monitoring forms that suggest locations where documenting the presence of the Wood frogs would be helpful. <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=citizenscience.woodfrog>

Since habitat loss is considered to be one of the top causes of pollinator and amphibian decline, we have a lot at stake. It is said, that roughly 75% of all flowering plant production on Earth is dependent on pollinators; making them responsible for one in every three bites of food we eat. Whoa, whoa, whoa?

What can we do to help? The campaign to register a million gardens and landscapes to support the health of bee's, butterflies, bird's, bat's and other pollinators is underway. This program is called "The Million Pollinator Garden Challenge." <http://blog.nwf.org/2015/06/million-pollinator-garden-challenge/>



Bat Box  
Photo: Penn State Extension

Whether you are a farmer of many acres, a gardener with a small lot, own a large track of land; you can increase the number of pollinators in your area by your choices of plants and flowers that provide essential habitat, food and shelter to encourage their existence. Choose nectar and pollen-rich plants like wildflowers, perennials and a succession of blooming annuals in your garden. Every spring my bees and butterflies just show up and I am amazed that they live through the cold and wonder where they winter over. Artificial nesting boxes can also help increase the population of pollinators in your yard. You can drill  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch holes in wooden blocks to encourage bee nesting. Bat boxes can be made to encourage a place for bats to nest and raise their young. A downed tree can be a place for pollinators to nest.



Orchard Mason Bee Box  
Photo: North Carolina CES website

Bees, birds and butterflies also need water. A water feature, birdbath, or a catch basin for rain is very important for these little creatures during dry times. I was surprised last summer to see my bumble bees drinking from my birdbath.

I have to admit, I was unaware of the decrease in pollinators and amphibians. I have taken for granted that they just show up and do their thing. In the future, I plan on being a responsible gardener, especially when I spray for pests, considering these little partners in the garden. I will think of insects as beneficial and essential to my backyard habitats success and find ways to control the unbeneficial ones considering my actions as a whole on the rest.

## **Growing Young Gardeners: Enjoying the Bird-feeding Tree**

By Amy Reed, MG

My hiking buddies and I have an annual tradition of picking a tree in Far North Bicentennial Park and decorating it for the birds. This year we found the perfect tree just off of Tank Trail from the North Bivouac Trailhead. While half the fun is the hiking, selecting, and decorating the tree, joy and memories were found in making the birdseed ornaments with my child.

Making a bird-feeding tree benefits the birds and the decorators. The birds love the nutritious nuts, berries, and seeds while finding shelter in the branches away from the frigid wind and snow. The decorators enjoy stringing popcorn, shaping seed ornaments, and making a visual display that hikers, bikers, and skiers can enjoy while traversing the trail.

My daughter and I set up a birdseed ornament workstation on our kitchen island. We used a nut/berry mixture of seeds in order to attract a variety of birds with our treats.

What you need:

- 4 cups birdseed
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cups flour
- 1 envelope of unflavored gelatin
- 3 tbsp. corn syrup
- Cookie cutters
- Cookie sheets
- Waxed paper
- Cooking spray
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water
- 4 straws
- Twine

- 1) In a large bowl, mix together the flour, water, corn syrup, and gelatin until it makes a paste.
- 2) Slowly add birdseed to paste and combine until birdseed is fully coated.
- 3) Place the cookie cutters on the waxed paper-lined cookie sheets and coat the cookie cutters with cooking spray. Spoon the birdseed mixture in the cookie cutters and pack the mixture with a spoon as tight as possible.
- 4) Cut straws into 3-inch segments and press the straw through the cookie cutter towards the middle of the shape. This will be the hole the twine goes into.
- 5) Leave the ornaments to dry a full 24 hours.
- 6) Remove the straws and carefully remove the cookie cutters from the birdseed ornaments.
- 7) String twine through the hole.
- 8) The best part---find a fun tree to hang the ornament for the birds to enjoy!

We learned through trial and error with this recipe to leave the ornaments to dry a full 24 hours in order to hold shape. We also discovered the best ornaments are the least fussy designs. Our moose shape lost legs and antlers, and our candy cane turned into a candy stick. Meanwhile, the star and heart turned out perfect. We also put the twine hole towards the middle of the ornament rather than the top to support the weight on the branches.

If you come upon the decorated bird-feeding tree off Tank Trail, please feel free to add your own ornaments. We want this to be a tree that everyone, human and aviary, enjoys!

## **Rhodiola Rosea -- Alaska's Next New Cash Crop?**

By Janice Berry



Photo by Dr. Petra Illig - [alaskarhodiola.com](http://alaskarhodiola.com)

A brief description of the Rhodiola plant - it is a perennial succulent, related to the Hens and Chick seedum rosea family of Crassulaceae, and thrives in alpine arctic and sub-arctic parts of the world. The roots are harvested and dried and used as a tea, an extract, or pulverized into a powder and used to increase stamina, and reduce stress and anxiety (and much more). It's used in traditional medicines in Russia, China, Scandinavia, Tibet, Finland and Canada. Rhodiola is an adaptogen, like ginger. One of its most active ingredients is rosavin. Best of all it has no known toxicity!

The Cooperative Extension held a presentation called "Cultivating and Processing Rhodiola Rosea in Alaska," on January 10, 2016. Previously I knew very little about rhodiola until someone pointed it out to me in the herb garden at the Alaska Botanical Garden last summer. I wanted to know more about this plant that looks like

**AMGA 2016 Conference Speaker Profile:  
Dr. Patricia Holloway  
By Rosemary Shinohara**

it belongs in the desert, yet thrives in colder climates only. However, it became apparent that the presenter, Dr. Petra Illig, a medical doctor who lives in Anchorage, was there to encourage Alaskans to grow the plant for profit. She is a founding member of the Alaska Rhodiola Products Cooperative and they have organized an impressive system for processing rhodiola to sell to companies on the world-wide market. Dr. Illig emphasized she is not an herbalist or a naturopathic doctor, but has studied how to grow and harvest rhodelia quite extensively.

We learned all about how to grow rhodiola rosea, not to be confused with rhodiola integrifolia, both of which occur naturally in Alaska. There are male and female flowers which when started from seed take 2-3 years to mature. Apparently rhodiola is very easy to grow as it doesn't need to be fertilized. The main chore would be making sure weeds don't overtake it. Presently there are 1,000's of plants being raised at UAF's experimental farm. As well, there are about 13 growers in the valley, on the Kenai Peninsula and Delta Junction in this new cottage industry, which began in 2010 with seedling production.

The cooperative suggests that those interested in growing rhodiola for profit start with about 1,000 plants. They can be harvested in 4-5 years. The cooperative processes the roots by cleaning and slicing the roots. They also have machines to mill, grind, and dehydrate them. So far, the yield has been in the 100's of pounds, but companies are requesting 1000's of pounds in their orders. A feasibility study was done at UAA, but no one has done a business plan. The world price is between \$12-15/pound. However, Alaska is getting close to \$30/lb. The cooperative needs a bigger processing facility already! The Swedish are large producers as is Canada. Ideally the aim is for Alaska to do the processing in-state instead of shipping the raw product to outside companies.

With an urgent need for Alaska to diversify its income sources, it sounds like if you have a spare acre or two and are interested, this could prove to be a lucrative project. Seeds are available from the cooperative.

For more information go to:

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

And to learn more about rhodiola's medicinal benefits:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uzd2wQEM-HI>



Photo by Pat Holloway

Dr. Patricia Holloway has stories about seeds to tell: "Treat a seed right, and most of them can last a long time."

"People tend to forget it's a living, breathing organism," she said.

Holloway retired last June after a long career as a horticulture professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She will talk about plant propagation techniques and seed storage at the Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage conference in Anchorage April 16.

Among other accomplishments, Holloway founded and directed the Georgeson Botanical Garden at UAF, and was instrumental in development of a commercial cut-flower peony industry in Alaska. In the late 1990s, Holloway learned that Alaska peonies, which bloom towards the end of summer, could be in demand because peonies in warmer climates have already flowered by spring and early summer, according to a Feb. 2, 2009 story in the Anchorage Daily News. She oversaw research on which peony varieties did best in Alaska, and wrote scientific papers about them. That attracted international flower brokers, and eventually led to commercial peony growing in Alaska, the Daily News reported.

Holloway is an expert at propagating plants, especially native Alaska plants.

"I've been very interested in people not picking plants from the wild, and using seeds," she said. Most seeds are designed for storage. You need to keep them dry, and at a steady temperature and humidity, she said. Some plants are more challenging to germinate than others.

"One of the most complex I tried to do was cranberries." The high bush cranberry embryo is not mature when you collect the seeds, and it can take two years to get one seed to germinate, she said. Raspberry plants are also complex to propagate, she said.

Cont. on page 6



## Bird Chatter

**HOLY RHODIOLA** . . . How many of the 50 people who showed up at 10 a.m. on a Sunday for a CES presentation on the newest wonder herb were skipping church? Wonder if it also cures sin.

**YEA!** . . . On Thursday, January 14th, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Board approved the design plan for the new park in Muldoon. This means things can start happening this spring. Theoretically, anyhow. BC is afraid to assume The Powers That Be are just going to fall in line. But maybe BC is too cynical. We'll see.

**ARBOR DAY IS MAY 16th.** . . . It's the 50th anniversary of Arbor Day in Alaska -- we were the last state on the tree-love bandwagon. To help celebrate, The Alaska Community Forest Council is offering a variety of grants from \$100 to \$500 to plant a tree or sponsor other activities.

Larger grants are also available for Community Orchard and Food Forest projects.

For info, check out Community Orchard Food Forest Grants RFP 2016 (Word doc.). Or call Julie Riley at 786-6300. But don't delay. Applications are due February 12th.

**SPEAKING OF TREES.** . . . A bunch of tree-savvy MGs touring member Diane Kaplan's garden last summer were stumped by an unusual tree in her yard, including Queens of Knowledge like Verna Pratt and Nickel LaFleur. Diane reached out to Bud Hooker who proclaimed it a Black Ash (*Fraxinus nigra*) --- probably the biggest and best specimen in Anchorage, he told her.

**SECOND CHANCE** . . . Did you miss Cheryl Shroyer's Capsicum presentation to the Herb Study Group? It ended with a story about a snow cone as the saving grace for someone who had eaten way too many hot peppers. (Hint: It wasn't his mouth that was burning.) Get the full 4-1-1 when Cheryl reprises her talk at ABG's April 19 conference.

**DARE TO DREAM.** . . . It's coming, the season we dare not name. We've passed seven hours of light (OK, maybe not sunlight but ...), and the seed catalogues are piling up at the Post Office.

Which one did you get first? My winner this year was Territorial -- one of the more fun ones to cruise. Some people are already planting things in the garage, but BC is sticking to fantasy for a while. What exotic plant with no real chance of surviving here are you dreaming about trying to grow this summer? BC is above such nonsense of course. But, has anyone spotted Kent Oregano for sale?

### Pat Holloway....cont. from page 5

Holloway won the 2015 Emil Usibelli Distinguished Service Award from UAF for her contributions. The university cited the fact that she did research relevant to Alaska gardeners, and dedicated time to guide every kind of grower from commercial enterprises to people in garden clubs.

The statement accompanying the award also notes her contributions to the Georgeson Botanical Garden, and the peony industry.

### AMGA 2016 Conference Speaker Profile: Dennis & Annie Ronsse By Rosemary Shinohara



Photo from Dennis Ronsse

Take ordinary dirt. Add shredded paper, coffee grounds, leaves and other natural products, and you can create excellent organic garden soil, says South Anchorage gardener Dennis Ronsse.

Ronsse has become an expert at making soil that yields a great variety and quantity of organic vegetables. He and his wife, Annie, also preserve food they grow to last the year round.

Ronsse will speak on those topics at the Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage conference in Anchorage April 16. The Ronsses are retired from the Anchorage School District. Dennis was a counselor and head teacher at McLaughlin Youth Center for many years. Annie taught in middle schools and elementary schools.

Both of them also taught in the Lower Kuskokwin School District in western Alaska before moving to Anchorage. They enjoyed learning the subsistence lifestyle of Yup'ik villagers, Ronsse said.

In South Anchorage, they built large terraced garden beds on a slope behind their house. They also participate in a collaborative neighborhood garden across the street, known as Mardane's Garden.

# Garden Event Calendar

## MEETINGS and EVENTS

The Ronsses grow a long list of crops. Here's a sampling: asparagus, globe artichokes, fava beans, carrots, cabbage, cauliflower, parsnips, garlic, horseradish, kohlrabi, shiso, and herbs.

They give excess vegetables to Beans Café, or trade for wild meats, Ronsse said.

When they're not travelling, they start growing some plants such as basil and begonias about now, he said. "The house becomes a kind of greenhouse in itself," with south-facing windows.

Besides gardening organically, they also recycle and produce very little trash. Ronsse said making good organic garden dirt was "a lot of trial and error for me."

"It started with purchasing a load of topsoil," he said. The soil was sterile, and produced dismal results, he said.

"After that I just started adding things....I saw big improvements."

Coffee grounds were an early success, as well as shredded paper.

"We grew tremendous potato crops mostly with shredded papers with some soil on top," he said.

He also learned some things, like that wood chips, don't decompose well, and therefore don't work, he said.

## Silent Auction Donations

We are looking for Silent Auction donation items for the 2016 Master Gardener Conference.

- Do you create garden art, quilt or sew?
- Would you be willing to donate time to help someone in their garden?
- Do you take garden photos and be willing to create a garden album for someone?
- Do you have items that you feel would fit as a silent auction item and would like to donate to help raise money to cover the conference expenses?
- Are you willing to help contact people for donations to the silent auction?

Please contact Lynne Opstad if you answered YES to any of these questions!

Email: lopstad@gci.net Phone: 529-1039

### Monday, February 1

\*\*Alaska Native Plant Society Monthly Meeting: Flower Photography by Chuck Maas and Ray Bulson; Plant Family by Glenn Brown. 7:00 pm at Campbell Science Center, Anchorage. Details at: <http://aknps.org/Pages/Meetings.php>.

\*\*Mat-Su Master Gardener's Monthly Meeting: Grow Palmer by Jan Newman. 6:30 pm at MTA building, Palmer. Details at: <http://www.matsumastergardeners.com/calendar-of-events.html>.

\*\*Meadow Lake Bloomers Garden Club Monthly Meeting: Tomatoes by Mark Oathout, Mid Valley Greenhouses, Wasilla. 10:30 am at Meadow Lakes Senior Center, 1210 N Kim Drive, Wasilla.

### Thursday, February 4

Anchorage Garden Club Monthly Meeting: Save Time Money and Our Environment With Drip Irrigation by Amy Olmstead, Master Gardener. 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Pioneer Schoolhouse at 437 E 3rd Avenue, Anchorage. Details at: <http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/anchorage-club.htm>.

### Friday, February 5

Herb Study Group, Topic: Native and Naturalized Plants: Nettles, Chickweed, Plantain, Lambsquarters. 12:00pm - 1:30 pm at CES - 1675 C Street, Suite 100, Anchorage.

### Saturday, February 6

Petroleum Wives Garland of Roses Charity Gala: Growing Our Children's Future through the Alaska Botanical Garden. 6:00 pm - 11:00 pm at Anchorage Marriot Downtown, 820 W 7th Ave, Anchorage. Cost: \$100. Tickets at: <http://petroleumwives.weebly.com/charity-gala.html>.

### Thursday, February 11

Wildflower Garden Club Meeting: Is There Anything We Can Be Doing to Lower Our Energy Bills by Karl Solberg of Renewable Energy Systems of Alaska. 10:00 am - 11:30 am at Renewable Energy Systems of Alaska, 145 West Dimond Blvd. Details at: <http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/apps/calendar/>.

### Monday, February 15

Anchorage AMGA Meeting: Summer Photo Recap, Seed Exchange and Annual Harvest Potluck and Presentation of Volunteer Opportunities. 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at CES - 1675 C Street, Anchorage. Details at: [http://www.alakamastergardeners.org/2015\\_2016\\_AMGA\\_Programs\\_2.pdf](http://www.alakamastergardeners.org/2015_2016_AMGA_Programs_2.pdf).

### Wednesday, February 17 - Sunday, February 21

NW Garden Show, Seattle, WA. Details: <http://www.gardenshow.com/>.

### Tuesday, February 23

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/>.

## CLASSES and WORKSHOPS

### Thursdays, February 4 - March 3

Greenhouse Design and Operation: An Overview of the Design, Construction and Operation of a Greenhouse in Southcentral Alaska, by Greg Terry, UAA Adjunct Horticulture Instructor. 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm at University Center, 3901 Old Seward Highway, Rm 134. Cost: \$149. Details: <https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/continuing-education/upload/continuing-education-schedule-2.pdf>.

### Wednesday, February 3

Beginners Mind: Learn the Basics about Bees, Bee Keeping, and Bee Products by Maria D'Agostino, Bee Expert. 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm at Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage. Cost: ABG members \$40, ABG Non-members \$45. Class is limited, pre-registration is required. Details at: [www.alaskabg.org/events/](http://www.alaskabg.org/events/).

## Tuesdays, February 2 - March 1

Sustainable Container Gardening in Southcentral Alaska: A Beginning Ornamental and Vegetable Gardening Course Covering Soils, Plant Nutrients, Variety Selection, Season Extension, Soil Warming Techniques, Seed Starting and Transplanting, Disease and Pest control, Weed Control, Planning a Garden and More, by Greg Terry, UAA Adjunct Horticulture Instructor. 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm at University Center, 3901 Old Seward Highway, Rm 134. Cost \$149. Details: <https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/continuing-education/upload/continuing-education-schedule-2.pdf>.

## Wednesday, February 3

Potato Lovers Bash: Join Potato Lovers for Potato Tasting- Baked, Boiled, and in Prepared Dishes. Learn Potato Nutrition, Growing Facts, Potato Trivia, Potato Songs and Cooking Tips. 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Sons of Norway, Viking Hall, 8141 Briarwood St. Tickets available at Cooperative Extension Service. Preregistration is required. Cost: \$15. Details at: <https://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/anchorage/>.

## Friday, February 19 - March 25 and Saturday March 26

### Field Trip

Organic Gardening: The Comprehensive Course by Ellen Vande Visse. Fridays 1:30 pm - 4:00 pm or 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm; Saturday 8 am - 4:00 pm at Mat Su College, 8295 E. College Drive, Palmer. Tuition Costs and Details at: [http://matsu.alaska.edu/wp-content/uploads/SP16\\_Schedule\\_web1.pdf](http://matsu.alaska.edu/wp-content/uploads/SP16_Schedule_web1.pdf).

## Sunday, February 21

Singing Plants! Listen to Plants With a Special "Music of the Plants" Device By Ellen Vande Visse. 6:00 pm- 7:30 pm at Artemisia Acres, Palmer. Cost \$10. Details at: <http://ellenvandevisse.com/classes/?ee=144>.

## CONFERENCES

### Tuesday, February 23 - Thursday February 25

2016 Alaska Sustainable Agriculture Conference: <https://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/conference/>.

## ARBOR DAY GRANTS DUE DATES:

### Friday, February 12

The Alaska Community Forest Program Arbor Day Grant Deadline. Grants are Available to Increase Awareness and Benefits of Trees. Information and Grant application are available at: <http://www.forestry.org/alaska/arborday2015/>.

### Tuesday, February 16

Alaska Community Forestry Program Arbor Day Grant Deadline. Grants are Available for Community Orchards or Food Forests. Information and Grant application are available at: <http://forestry.alaska.gov/community/grants>.



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.

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](mailto:amga@alaska.net)  
AMGA Web Site: [www.alaskamastergardeners.org](http://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:  
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If you have questions or want to make address or email corrections, please contact Jane Baldwin at:  
[ak.jbaldwin@gmail.com](mailto:ak.jbaldwin@gmail.com)

### **AMGA Board of Directors**

Harry Deuber	President
Phyllis Rogers	Co-Vice President
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Hospitality:	Kathy Liska & Marjorie Williams
Volunteer Coordinator:	Sue Looney
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Newsletter & Website:	Gina Docherty
2016 Statewide Master Gardener Conference:	Barbara Baker
Lifetime Achievement:	Lynne Opstad
Grants:	Barbara Baker
Pioneer Home:	Erma MacMillan (design)
	Lynne Opstad
Volunteer Coordinators:	Julie Ginder, Joyce Smith, Lynne Opstad

### **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:  
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1675 C St, Suite 100  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
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