



AMGA NEWSLETTER

JULY 2016
Volume 18, Issue 7

Message from Harry

As much as I am enjoying our summer season and working in my garden, something just seems off. I can't quite shake the feeling of sadness and concern that I know most of us share regarding the announced closure of the Anchorage C.E.S. office and the transfer or layoff of faculty and staff.

Although the current office will be closed at the end of October, there are discussions and options being discussed regarding finding other locations for a scaled down C.E.S. office. We have a working committee that is dedicated to communicating to University officials our concerns, ideas and possible solutions. Their final decisions have not been made (or at least announced publicly) about what the C.E.S. will look like in the future. We don't know what their ultimate goals and visions are regarding the C.E.S. We have met and will continue to meet with them at every possible juncture.

Our intent is to not let them just phase everything out but to be actively engaged in how the University plans to deliver services and programs to the many user groups and individuals who depend on the C.E.S. We will continue to lobby University officials to find solutions that will keep what we consider vital services available to the largest population center in the state.

Speaking only for the Master Gardener program, we are requesting that office and classroom space be found that will enable the public to obtain information and attend classes. We want to see the continuation of the Master Gardener as well as Advanced MG classes. Currently there are over 135 people on the waiting list for the next MG class. These classes are critical to the public who are not only seeking to learn how to grow their own food but also how to be environmentally responsible citizens. Another important and critical aspect is the continual building of an energetic volunteer group who share their knowledge throughout the community. The positive networking effect of our volunteers cannot be underestimated and I believe contribute greatly to our community.

Of course, none of this is possible without qualified faculty and staff to teach, consult and coordinate the various programs and volunteers. We are seeking the retention of our local experienced Horticultural, Home, Family and Nutrition and IPM agents as well as administrative staffing to be based out of an Anchorage office. They would remain located in Anchorage with their well-established connections and relationships.

These are the basic, bottom line needs that we will continue to advocate for at every opportunity. Although we are facing some difficult challenges ahead, I remain hopeful that solutions will be found that will enable us to continue our mission of education and public service. We appreciate the support from our membership and I know we have many allies within the community who will be willing to step forward as needed.

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**June's AMGA Garden Tour:
Sandy St. George's garden**



MGs enjoying a warm day in a lovely garden
Photo by Mike Baldwin

"Message from Harry" cont. from page 1...

I'd like to thank Sandy St. George for opening her beautiful garden to us last week. We really do appreciate those of you who share with their fellow gardeners. I am learning that many of you would like to have more frequent garden tours than we scheduled for this year. I agree, hopefully next year we will schedule more. This year was an experiment to see if we could encourage more spur of the moment "pop up" garden tours offered by individuals. Please feel free to do so. Your garden doesn't have to be perfect and the tours don't necessarily have to be on Mondays for that matter. Many of us will thank you for the opportunity for a pleasant outing to see what you are growing and the chance to meet up with our gardening friends.

The Pioneer Home flower gardens are really quite stunning again this year. Kudos to Erma Macmillan for her beautiful design and to Julie Ginder and her fantastic volunteer maintenance crew. If you get a chance, check it out. Also, when in the area you might stop by the Centennial Rose Garden on the Park Strip and see what Debbie Hinchey and crew have been up to.

Happy gardening to everyone and hope you all have a great 4th of July.

Treasurer's Report

Balances 4/30/16	
Checking	15259.11
<u>Savings</u>	<u>11709.32</u>
	\$26968.43
Dedicated Funds	8451.91
Revenue:	
April Conference	52.50
Education/Fundraising	126.00
<u>Interest</u>	<u>1.49</u>
	\$179.99
Expense:	
Conference	1158.82
Operations	227.99
Pioneer Home	293.15
Programs	74.99
<u>Website</u>	<u>45.00</u>
	\$1621.95
Balances 5/31/16	
Checking account	13815.66
<u>Savings account</u>	<u>11710.81</u>
	\$25526.47
Dedicated Funds	\$8451.91



Cerastium tomentosum and geranium combination
Photo by Debbie Hinchey



Rock paths define Sandy St. George's garden
Photo by Mike Baldwin

How I Saved My Strawberry Bed

By Janice Berry

Many years ago I was given some strawberries and, like old friends, they came back every year. The best part was that I never had to do anything to the bed, but was always rewarded with sweet little fruits every summer. As time went by, however, I noticed that weeds were starting to take over. As a matter of fact, the strawberries starting scouting out new territory all by themselves, they were so unhappy with that bed.

I was able to make my strawberries happy again, and here is how I did it. So easy! But first, a little background on the plant that I was growing. The strawberry I was given is called a Sitka hybrid. It was bred at the Sitka Experiment Station using the wild beach strawberry in the early 1900's. The very best hybrids were distributed to homesteaders new to Alaska. In fact, it was so hardy it could grow in the Interior as well. The fruit is soft, pale pink with white or pale pink flesh and is quite sweet.

The proper way to maintain your strawberry bed is described by Lori Adams in a 2012 gardening column of the Sitka Daily Sentinel:

"Strawberry plants can be grown from seeds or 'runners.' Runners look like a stem/root that grows from the mother plant. This runner grows about a foot long and then produces a baby strawberry plant that will take root and start to grow on its own. To harvest runners simply cut rooting baby plants free from the mother plant and plant on their own.

The life expectancy of any one plant is about six years with only the first three years being highly productive, so the best plan is to grow a row of plants and consistently remove every single runner for two years. On the third year allow no more than five runners to grow on each plant then harvest the runners mid-summer and plant them in a different bed being sure to diligently remove any runners that they themselves might produce. At the end of the season, just tear out the old bed. Repeat.

Strawberries like soil that is full of organic material and low in nitrogen. If the nitrogen level is too high then you will end up with fabulous greens that will make your neighbors jealous but very few berries, and the berries you do get will not be able to ripen because of the shade of the foliage."

I had not followed these methods in the past, but will certainly make it a point to do them from this point forward. Now here's how I fixed the soil. I had a lot of leftover straw from mulching a raised bed one winter, and not knowing what to do with the straw the next spring, one suggestion was to till it into the strawberry bed. Well, that's what I did. It took only one season to decompose into the soil. The next year, the strawberry plants were bigger and happier than I'd ever seen them. [Wonder why they call them STRAWberries?!]

Ligularia Love

By Sheila Toomey

OK, here's why I'm writing this: I spent a couple of hours last month cruising the main perennial sources in Anchorage, looking for a Ligularia that wasn't 'The Rocket.'

I found a couple -- "Midnight Lady," a *dentata*, and *L. przewalskii*, aka 'Dragon Wings'. But only a few of each, and each at a single nursery.

Don't get me wrong. I treasure 'The Rocket (*Ligularia stenocephala*'). It's the cultivar that fanned the flame of love for this wonderful genus. When I bought my house 25 years ago -- when I was too busy with work to know or care what grew in the yard, I noticed this big-leafed green thing that kept returning each spring despite my neglect. It produced large deeply serrated leaves with amazing purple stems. And then, sometime in late summer, these tall yellow flower spikes shot up, not so much like a rocket as like a miracle considering how untended they had been all season.

Jump forward to today when I know a little more: Ligularia is a huge family of perennials -- Wikipedia lists 140. It's part of the Aster family and native mostly to Asia. It likes water, even boggy beds, and most don't like direct sun. Sun makes them faint. Really. They bend right over, looking like they're dying then revive when it cools off.

A bunch of cultivars live under the umbrella of 'The Rocket,' aka 'Elephant Ear.' Sometimes 'Bottle Rocket' and few other choices are available to us -- a 'Midnight Lady' here, maybe an 'Othello' there, but that's about it.

The various cultivars are fun because they're like a real family -- each is different but similar enough to be recognizable as related. For instance, 'Midnight Lady' has rounded leaves with slightly wavy edges, green with hints of burgundy on top, all burgundy on the bottom and burgundy stems. The label claims it grows to three feet. We'll see.

Ligularia is an adventure. Delve into its world and you'll soon learn the difference between orbicular and palmately lobed leaves. (Yes, this is the stuff that excites gardeners.) As wonderful as 'The Rocket' looks by itself, three or four different kinds of Ligularia growing together is spectacular.

So here's my plan. If everyone visiting a local nursery this summer asks for a Ligularia that is not 'The Rocket', local buyers will sense a hungry market and start buying a few more of the 140 possibilities.

Anna Sutton laughed when I told her I wanted one of each -- understandably. But more than two or three choices would be lovely.

Growing Young Gardeners: Learning Opportunities All Around Us By Amy Reed

This has been a month of new discoveries and learning opportunities! As I mentioned in last month's newsletter, our family embarked on gardening vegetables aeroponically. It has been a overwhelming success. We learned that greens do VERY well in aeroponics Tower Gardens, so much so that my freezer is packed and we have had salads at every meal. Every visitor, play date, and delivery person has parted with a Ziplock bag of spinach, arugula, kale, or lettuce.

Pollination was another educational topic we were able to demonstrate with my child. Bees are needed to pollinate the flowering squash and strawberries, yet we didn't have any in the greenhouse. We taught our daughter how to manually pollinate by shaking the flowering stalks, and we also demonstrated how to use a paintbrush to gently distribute the pollen. We also opened the greenhouse doors during the day to welcome bees in. My daughter enjoyed getting out her bug catching kit and trying to trap bees to release in the greenhouse. (No one has been stung in this process thus far!)

My family has learned about food preservation as well. My previous experience with harvesting and preserving was as a child watching my mother can applesauce from apples we picked at the local orchard. One of the jars exploded all over the pantry, leaving a very sweet residue on every surface and ceiling. Needless to say, I have shied away from canning ever since. I received the book: ***Keeping the Harvest*** by Nancy Chioffi and Gretchen Mead, for Christmas and it has been an invaluable resource. It reviewed the methods for blanching greens to preserve in the freezer. My daughter and I found using the microwave method provided the fastest and easiest way to blanch our spinach, kale, and Swiss chard. My five year old was able to help harvest, stuff Food Saver bags full of the greens, push microwave buttons, (Mommy did the ice bath because it was too cold), and work the Food Saver to vacuum and seal our harvest. We had a great system going with no exploding produce!

We were asked as a family to join a pumpkin growing contest with some friends. Pumpkins aren't the easiest to grow aeroponically (it technically can be done, but the pumpkin wouldn't be able to get out the greenhouse door if it became too large!), we needed to dig a root vegetable garden. We also added potatoes, onions, beets, parsnips, asparagus, and turnips to the garden. My daughter had a great time digging trenches, labeling vegetable names on sticks, and planting. My husband got a crash course in electricity, as he erected an electric fence around the perimeter of the garden. We have many rabbits, an occasional bear, and a family of moose

who like to frequent our yard, and the moose have already tested out the voltage. In fact, they like to lie down next to the fence...

One last learning opportunity to share so far this summer was the felling of a spruce tree in our backyard. My husband brought down the tree due to its proximity to our house, and the top appeared dead. After it fell, we were able to see spruce beetle tracks in the bark. My husband also had my daughter help count the rings to determine the tree's age. She was astonished that the tree was over 100 years old!

With school out for the summer, it is often hard to find activities to stimulate the young mind. However, opportunities abound to teach in the garden, the kitchen, and nature.

What do the terms "Trademarked and Registered" as applied to plants mean? By Jane Baldwin

The following information is extracted from the Lazy S Farm website:
[http://www.lazyssfarm.com/Inquiring%20Minds/
trademarked_plants.htm](http://www.lazyssfarm.com/Inquiring%20Minds/trademarked_plants.htm)

The text is quoted but some bolding, underscoring and italics are mine, added for emphasis. The subject matter is the dilemma the plant and nursery industry's faces with the use of the terms "Trademarked and Registered". The article notes that the Trademarked and Registered plants' names do not make them patented plants. The information is reasonably brief and well written - and conveys information that can help with a basic understanding of the potential confusion for the buyer when buying plants.

A further understanding can be gleaned with a little subject matter Googling type search or by visiting the link to Plant Delights Nursery provided in the article.

What is a Trademarked (™) or Registered (®) plant?

"... it's a plant that's part of a marketing strategy meant to give the plant more perceived value because it has a trademarked name. This does not make it a patented plant. That's a separate issue. It's almost more like part of the Common Name and it's always a delightful sounding, come-hither-and-buy-me name!

"The International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants (ICNCP) is the only true source for plant names and each plant only has one true name. In 1952 when the first International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants (known in the trade as the Code) was published it was intended to standardize the often confusing way in which plant Cultivars were named.

Photos from AMGA's First "Pop Up Garden Tour"
Thanks to Fran Durner for sharing her garden!

"This code applies to everyone and everywhere around the world and is designed to avoid confusion on each plant's name. **We commonly call it a plant's Botanical Name and each plant has one and only one where they may have dozens of Common Names.** And everybody in the world has the right to use that Botanical Name in conjunction with that plant -- on websites, on tags, in marketing, wherever they need to. This is not true with Trademarked or Registered plants which have their own set of rules for usage of the name -- even in the way they are typed and presented.

". . . if that's not confusing enough, some plants have more than one trademarked name . . .

"Rosa 'Korlanum' is marketed under three different trademark names, each owned by a different company, SurreyTM, SommerwindTM, and Vente D'eteTM.

". . . if the plant's one and only true Botanical Name is not on the tag, you could come home with three identical plants (Rosa 'Korlanum') and think you had 3 different plants.

". . . issue is with the progressive mix up that's occurring with plant names and we in the business should be the most concerned with this. Trademark offices have no clue about correct Botanical Nomenclature, that's not their business, and when they issue a Trademark name that looks like a Botanical Name, it isn't their problem but it becomes ours!

"This is a tiny tip of this iceberg and in my mind no one writes more eloquently or in a more informed manner (and with, as needed, a sharp point to his pen) than Tony Avent of famed Plant Delights Nursery. If you want the real, long version of this interesting story and how it may affect you and where plant nomenclature is headed, the following article on his website is well worth the read:

Name that Plant - The Misuse of Trademarks in Horticulture by Tony Avent . . ."

<http://www.plantdelights.com/Article/Trademarks-in-Horticulture>

-- Debby Sheuchenko, Lazy S'S Farm Nursery"

*Whoever makes a garden has never worked alone;
the rain has always found it,
the sun has always known;
the wind has blown across it,
and helped to scatter seeds.
Whoever makes a garden
has all the help he needs.
Anonymous*



Fran Durner's rustic firepit
Photo by Debbie Hinchey



Bleeding Heart
Photo by Debbie Hinchey



An interesting campanula in Fran's garden
Photo by Debbie Hinchey



Bird Chatter

BETTER READ THAN FED. . . Best not put those newspapers in the compost pile. This advice is from Cheryl Chapman who got it from ADN people. Ink is the issue. The colored inks are soy-based and OK, says Cheryl, but the black ink is petroleum-based and apparently not good for plant or human consumption.

DEADLY TWO-STEP. . . What's up with all the man-eating plants in greenhouses around town? OK, maybe "man-eating" is a slight exaggeration. The Sarracenia (bug Bat) and Dionaea muscipula (Venus flytrap) eat bugs, not people. Yes, they're fascinating, but also creepy. The Venus flytrap's "jaw" is triggered by an insect or spider stepping on one of its hairs, then stepping on a second hair within 20 seconds.



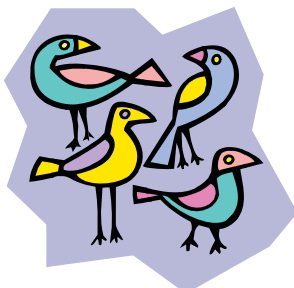
"The requirement of redundant triggering in this mechanism serves as a safeguard against wasting energy by trapping objects with no nutritional value," according to Wikipedia. Talk about premeditated murder. Creepy!

REFUGEE HORTICULTURIST. . . BC hopes you all caught Julie Riley on KTVA CBS News last month -- showing the wonderful Refugee Garden to the world (we hope). Word from the nabobs of the north (UAF) is that Julie's transfer to Tanana effective Oct. 31st is carved in stone.

No, this is not a joke. They are really planning to leave the largest city in Alaska with no horticulturist - not to mention all the other hats Julie wears. Your Save Our CES committee is working on it, but your letters to UA President Jim Johnsen and members of the Board of Regents are needed. Do it NOW. Please!

SAFETY FIRST. . . This food for thought is from "Building Food Security in Alaska 2014," a 180-page report commissioned by the state:

Oil sector: 2,900 jobs. Total payroll \$339 million.
Food sector 36,000 jobs. Total payroll \$829 million
Thanks to Jane Baldwin for this. The report is on line.



ANC Community Composting Program

The Municipality of Anchorage Solid Waste Services Department (SWS) is implementing a new community composting program! A main goal of SWS is to promote a "circular economy," through Zero Waste policies such as composting.

How it works:

1. Upon signing up for the pilot program Anchorage residents will receive an organic waste receptacle.
2. Anchorage residents must transport their organic waste receptacle to the Anchorage Regional Landfill (ARL) 15500 E Eagle River Loop Rd and dispose of their food waste at the designated community drop-off site.
3. Upon dropping off their food waste, program participants will be entitled to finished compost provided by the private entity. The compost will be placed at ARL and residents will be able to take what compost they need for individual home use. (No more than one regular pickup truck load per week).
4. The program will run from July through October 2016.
5. Please adhere to a "take a penny leave a penny," mentality. Meaning, if you bring a lot of food waste, take a large amount of compost. However, if you bring little amounts of food waste, take less compost.

To sign up or find out more, please call:

343-6275 or email smithtj@muni.org



AMGA's Late Season Plant Sale Information

When: Saturday, August 13th, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Where: Cooperative Extension parking lot

Who: YOU. Members provide all plants and other items for sale. The split is 75% of sale price for you, 25% of sale price for AMGA. Sale is open to the public but sellers must be current AMGA members.

What: Plants of all kinds in good condition, with the emphasis on perennials that have lived through at least one season in your garden -- potted and weed/pest free; Some house plants and late season veggies acceptable. Yard/garden art; gently used garden tools, pots and containers (no junk please). The sale has a reputation for high quality -- let's keep it that way.

Tagging: All plants and other items must have TWO tags-- a yellow and a white. Use permanent ink marker. Put the name of the plant on the white tag. On the yellow tag, put your initials at the top and the price just below it. Tape the tags to non-plant items if necessary.

If you need yellow tags, see Jane Baldwin.

Deliver all sale items to CES starting at 8 a.m. on sale day. You do not need to remain with your plants, but we do need volunteers to work the sale and answer questions from customers, so stay if you can. You are responsible for retrieving any unsold plants.

NOTE: All plants will be paid for at a single check-out point. Checks for your 75% will be distributed in the week following the sale.

For more complete information, see "Plant Sale, Guidelines & Suggestions" on the AMGA website.

This is our big fund-raiser of the year; it depends on YOUR participation. And it's FUN!



The 2015 Plant Sale was a big success!
Photo by Mike Baldwin.

Garden Event Calendar

MEETINGS and EVENTS

Tuesdays and Fridays, July 5 - July 29

Herb Study Group: Join the Herb Study Group in the Herb Garden at Alaska Botanical Garden. Learn to care for the 100 different species of herbs. Bring tools, kneeling pads and a bucket for weeds. 1:00 pm at Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage.

Thursdays, July 7 and 28

Dandelion Removal for the Lowenfels Trail: Led by Verna Pratt. 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Lowenfels trail, Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage. Helpful tools to bring: Dandelion digger, kneeling pad and a 5-gallon pail or plastic bag.

Saturday, July 9

Mid Summer Garden and Art Faire: Celebrate Summer: Gardening, Gourmet Food, Art, and Music. 10:00 am - 6:00 pm in Downtown Palmer. Details at: <http://palmgardennandart.org/>.

Monday, July 11

**Mat-Su Master Gardener's Monthly Meeting: Spring Creek Farm Tour. Times and Details at: <http://www.matsumaster-gardeners.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.

Tuesdays, July 12 and July 26

Tragopogon Pull: Led by Verna Pratt. 6:30 pm at Potter Marsh Section House Parking Area. Adults only. Bring garden gloves and dandelion digger. Details at: verna@acsalaska.net.

Wednesday, July 13

Campbell Creek Science Center Work Party: Join Verna Pratt to Weed the Wildflower Beds. 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at the East Entrance of the of the Science Center, 5600 Science Center Drive, Anchorage.

Thursday, July 14

Alaska Botanical Garden Beer Garden: Local Breweries, Food Vendors and Live Music. 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm at The Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage. Cost: \$40 in advance and \$50 at the door. Details at: <http://alaskabg.org/events/>.

Saturday and Sunday, July 23 and 24

Willow Garden Club: Les Brakes Coyote Garden Tour. 10:00 am - 5:00 pm Saturday and 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm Sunday at Coyote Gardens, Mile 71 Parks Highway. Suggested donation: \$7.00 to support the Georgeson Botanical Garden in Fairbanks and the Willow Garden Club. Details at: <http://willowgardenclub.blogspot.com/>.

Tuesday, July 26

**Alaska Orchid Society Monthly Meeting: Tour of a Private or Public Garden. 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Location and Details at: <http://www.wayne-toups.squarespace.com/events/>.

Wednesday, July 27

Campbell Creek Science Center Work Party: Join Verna Pratt to Weed the Wildflower Beds. 10:00 am - Noon at the East Entrance of the of the Science Center, 5600 Science Center Drive, Anchorage.

Sunday, July 31

Anchorage Garden Club: Annual City Garden Tour. 12:00 pm - 5:00 pm. No Pets, Strollers or High Heels. Details at: <http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/>.

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LECTURES

Monday, July 11

Alaska Rock Garden Society: Off the Wall: How an Artist Views the Garden by Ian Young, Scottish Gardener, Artist and Photographer. 7:00 pm at Cooperative Extension Office, 1675 C Street, Anchorage.

Thursday, July 28

Alaska Botanical Garden: Renee Shepherd Lecture: Presentation on Seeds, Seed Quality and Seed Use by Renee Shepherd of Renee's Gardens. 8:00 am - 5:00 pm at BP Energy Center, 900 Benson Blvd. Cost: \$30 - \$35. Details at: <http://alaskabg.org/event/renee-shepherd-lecture/>.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday and Sunday, August 6 and 7

Anchorage Garden Club 73rd Annual Flower Show. Details to follow at: <http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/anchorageclub.htm>.

Saturday, August 13

Alaska Master Gardener's Plant Sale - Plant Now for Spring Bloom! Perennials, Berries, Trees and Shrubs, Garden Art. 10:00 am - 4:00 pm at Cooperative Extension Office, 1675 C Street, Anchorage.



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

Harry Deuber	President
Phyllis Rogers	Co-Vice President
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Calendar of Events:	Martha Farris
Advanced MG:	Ginny Moore
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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

The Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage welcomes letters, opinions, articles, ideas and inquiries. Contact the editor, Gina Docherty, at:

Mail: 14051 Fejes Road
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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.jbdawin@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

