



**ALASKA MASTER
GARDENERS**
ANCHORAGE

**AMGA
NEWSLETTER**

**OCTOBER 2017
Volume 19, Issue 10**



Message From Harry

This mild, no-frost September weather has made it really easy for many of us to delay putting our gardens to bed for the year. No doubt I will regret not getting ahead of the curve, but this year I am taking my time and trying to get a few extra weeks of enjoyment out of the hanging baskets and containers of annuals and vegetables.

In fact, the flower beds at the Pioneer Home are still looking so nice that the cleanup has been delayed for an extra week or two until Wednesday October 4th at 10AM (hint hint). I know every year the plantings there look great but this has been another outstanding season of colorful flowers for all to enjoy. Many thanks to the volunteers and team leaders for their efforts.

By now, it is old news that the fall Master Gardener course has been cancelled due to low enrollment numbers. This should not have happened. In hindsight, it's easy to see that better communications and promotion could have changed this outcome and a new class of Master Gardeners would have been well on their way.

Many of us are still very disappointed and even angry about the class cancelation. Jeff Lowenfels suggested in his garden column that we contact the decision makers and funders to demand that Anchorage once again have its own Horticulture Agent to serve our area. We have been down this road before, trying to prevent the loss of Julie Riley and others at our local C.E.S. office. Due to budget cuts at the University and staffing issues at the department level, our concerns and arguments did not sway the final decisions. The idea that the Palmer office could support Anchorage programs doesn't seem to be working well for anyone.

For the present, I would encourage anyone who would still like to contact the University Board of Regents or Fred Schlutt, the Vice Provost for Outreach and Director of Extension or even our Senators and Representative in Washington to do so. It is important to be polite and respectful and also to be concise and to the point that a fully staffed Anchorage C.E.S. office is vital to our community.

I have found the remaining staff at the Anchorage Outreach Office to be very cooperative and helpful, given their changed circumstances and the uncertainties that they face day to day. They are trying their best to accommodate their user groups, all the while being unsure what impact further budget cuts and decisions will have not only on the various programs but on their own employment.

AMGA is not going to stand still as things sort themselves out at C.E.S., however. We will continue volunteering in the community and continue to offer monthly educational meetings and garden tours. Next year, we will begin the planning process to host the 2019 State-wide MG Conference. We will also consult with our members to find out how you want to keep our organization interesting and relevant.

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Photos from AMGA's Final Garden Tour of 2017

August 28th -
Don Bladow's Lutheran Church of Hope's farm
Photos by Mike Baldwin



Outdoor Tomato Varieties By Julie Riley

I grew tomatoes on my deck this summer. Years ago Marilyn Barker had recommended 'Siletz' as one of her favorites for outdoors. I got off to a late start, planting the third week in June, but have managed to ripen one 6.5 oz fruit on-the-vine by moving it in and out of the furnace room at night. Frost had slightly touched the foliage of the tomato the night of Sept. 2 while I was out of town. The flavor of 'Siletz' was good, texture very meaty.



The other varieties I grew were developed by the late Jim Holmes of Fairbanks, 'Polar Baby' and 'Polar Beauty'. Both were delicious. Old MG notes showed that Marya Marrow once said she preferred 'Polar Star' because of its productivity. 'Polar Baby' (about 1.5 oz) beat out an unnamed heirloom from the store and 'Polar Beauty' (largest fruit 8 oz) was tastier than a locally grown hydroponic tomato.



Photos by Julie Riley

Honey 'N Spice by Sheila Toomey



One of the highlights of Deb Blaylock's talk at the September membership meeting about growing garlic in SouthCentral (plant it now!) was her suggestion we all try mixing garlic and honey. Sounded kind of weird -- and interesting. Here's her recipe:

First time out, Deb suggests making just a small amount, to be sure you like it -- a half-liter fido jar, for instance.

Separate and peel cloves from about five garlic bulbs, enough to loosely fill the jar to just below the shoulder. Then fill the jar with honey to about two inches from the top. Don't overfill. Stir with a chopstick to get rid of air pockets. Close jar. Put in a bowl to catch possible overflow when fermenting starts. Put the whole thing in a cool, dark spot for about a month.

Worried about pressure build-up? Use an airlock if you want to or just burp the jar periodically. Deb says pressure is usually not a problem but do what you're comfortable with. Look online for advice if you're not sure. The honey and garlic will foam and bubble. It will darken and the garlic should start to sink. The honey will thin out. Store in refrigerator at this point. If you used an airlock, you can remove it and transfer contents to a different jar.

The garlic and honey mix can be used in cooking, in savory sauces and dishes. Deb says a spoonful of the honey is excellent if you feel a sore throat coming on.

Garlic Trivia

- Egyptian slaves were given a daily ration of garlic, as it was believed to ward off illness and to increase strength and endurance. As indicated in ancient Egyptian records, the pyramid builders were given beer, flatbread, raw garlic and onions as their meager food ration. Upon threatening to abandon the pyramids leaving them unfinished, they were given more garlic. It cost the Pharaoh today's equivalent of 2 million dollars to keep the Cheops pyramid builders supplied with garlic.

- Garlic (*Allium sativum*) has been used for thousands of years for medicinal purposes. Sanskrit records show its medicinal use about 5,000 years ago, and it has been used for at least 3,000 years in Chinese medicine. The Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans used garlic for healing purposes. In 1858, Pasteur noted garlic's antibacterial activity.

During World War 1, the Russian army used garlic to

treat wounds incurred by soldiers on the Front Line. Although Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin in 1928 largely replaced garlic at home, the war effort overwhelmed the capacity of most antibiotics, and garlic was again the antibiotic of choice. The Red Army physicians relied so heavily on garlic that it became known as the "Russian Penicillin".

- Garlic Caution: Olive oil infused with fresh, raw garlic should not be left at room temperature to cure. While it may produce an awesome flavor, botulism threatens its safety. Garlic infused vinegar, on the other hand, is safe because the high acidic level of vinegar prevents spores of botulinum bacteria from incubating.

- Dramatic results in treating animals infested with ticks showed that garlic was able to effectively kill the ticks within 30 minutes, while garlic proved to be a repellent toward new infestations. Garlic was also successful in treating cattle with hoof and mouth disease.

Source: http://americanfolklore.net/folklore/2010/10/garlic_superstitions_folklore.html

Treasurer's Report

Balances 7/31/17	
Checking account	4422.95
Savings account	<u>11731.42</u>
	\$16154.37
Dedicated Funds	
Interest Bearing CD	<u>8582.15</u>
	10061.05
	\$18643.20

Revenue:	
Education/Fundraising/Logo	58.00
Education/Fundraising/Plant Sale	5017.55
Interest	1.49
Membership	40.00
Public Relations (vests)	<u>240.00</u>
	\$5357.04

Expense:	
Education/Fundraising/Plant sale	3286.30
Operations	<u>128.99</u>
	\$3415.29

Balances 8/31/17	
Checking account	6363.21
Savings account	<u>11732.91</u>
	\$18096.12
Dedicated Funds	
Interest Bearing CD	<u>8582.15</u>
	10061.05
	\$18643.20



Tree Roots In Your Garden By Ginger Hudson

I'm Expanding my Garden, Can I Cut my Birch Tree Root?

Yes, with some qualifications.

It always happens this way: you go to improve or repair one thing and three other problems arise. You take your car in for an oil change and you are told your brake lines are leaking. A new roof, uh oh, the rafters around the fireplace are rotten. Expanding your deck or garden, wow, didn't realize the roots were so close to the surface!

I have worked on landscape designs for several customers who have encountered the tree root problem in different ways. Solutions ranged from removal to root trimming.

In one case, an overgrown bird cherry was brushing against a studio causing rot at the eaves. The tree was growing where a new garden was desired. That situation was easy: as a noxious weed, the bird cherry was totally removed. To ensure the tree will not return, damage or remove as many main roots as possible. If you are not able to take out long roots, cut them to keep them from re-sprouting. Using a hand saw or small pruning saw—I like the curved folding saws that can cross-cut segments out of the roots two-inches in diameter and larger.

At the Alaska Botanical Garden, and probably your garden too, a constant battle is waged between birch trees and decorative plantings for water and nutrients. For one bed most in need of help, our plan was to remove as much of the birch root mass as possible. We carefully dug out all the perennials from the bed, set them in a shady area, and covered their roots in mulch. Next a team of hardy souls moved all of the rocks from the border. To remove the roots, a crew worked with hoe-axes, sometimes called a pulaski. The axe side of the tool was used to cut a line on the edge of the bed that bordered the trees, severing the roots. Other crew used shovels and digging forks to lift out the roots past the cut line. It was hard work and took almost a full day to clear 120 square-feet. The Garden was blessed with volunteers that day for Day of Caring. You might want to call all your sons and brothers home to help if this is your case!

This summer, I worked with a homeowner who wanted to expand an entertainment area. Near the space there is mature birch tree with one twelve-inch and one eight-inch diameter trunk. While the ground was being prepared, a large root was found running diagonally through the project space. The root was two to three inches in diameter. The person performing the labor called me for advice; he did not want to cause any damage to the tree. (This is a wise and conscientious move on his part! I hope you all have equally attentive contractors working with you!)

Since I was on the other side of town, I called an arborist to ask their opinion. He confirmed my instinct, if it is only one root we are cutting, it would not damage the tree. I asked if he recommended removing any of the crown to compensate for the lost root. Since this was in August, the arborist said it was not necessary. The tree would be losing leaves and going dormant soon and it would recover over winter.

Stability might be a concern since wind storms are common here in fall. In this case, the root was small enough that it would not have compromised the tree in question. This tree was protected from wind by a two-story house on one side and a shed on the other. In the end, the homeowner did not want to cut the root, so we elevated the pad where pavers would go to create the sitting area.

Each tree situation will be different. With a little research, I learned that it is generally considered safe to cut roots that are one-third the diameter of the main trunk. In the case of birch trees, they are extremely resilient to our abuse. Haven't you noticed birch trees right up against driveways? Or in two foot wide parking lot curbs? But always consult an arborist if you are not sure of your situation.



Photo taken before the project with an arrow to the root; you can see the location and size as it compares to the trunk.
Photo by Ginger Hudson

AMGA Election Information



Photo by Barbara Baker

Hawk Moth Caterpillar, *Hyles gallii* By Barbara Baker

Nestled among my geraniums in this picture, *Hyles gallii* is a striking hornworm caterpillar measuring around $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches. In its pupa stage, the chrysalis is brown with scarab-like markings and found in sand.

Once it reaches its adult stage, this magnificent moth will have a wingspan reaching $2\frac{1}{4}$ - 3 inches. Forewings will be olive to brown with a broad irregular whitish stripe along the middle, hind wings black at the base; a broad pinkish-white band near the body, bright pink about the middle, a distinct black band and grey margin; thorax and body will be olive-brown, with black and whitish spots.

Found in sunny and sandy habitats, it feeds on fireweed. They are active from dusk to daylight. Dominique Collet's field guide on Insects of south-central Alaska, also notes the insect flies like a hummingbird.



Photo: Bedstraw Hawk-Moth - Dorsal side
From Wikipedia by Didier Descouens - Own work

AMGA Nominations for 2018 Board of Directors:
Nomination period: September 18th through October 5th 2017. There are four Director vacancies with a 2-year term. Those interested in serving on AMGA's Board may self-nominate or nominate others with their permission. Nominee names should be submitted to Sheila Toomey, Harry Deuber or Jane Baldwin on or before October 5, 2017. Photos and brief bios should be received by the end of the following week, and will be featured in the November MG newsletter and on the voting ballot.

Contact Sheila 271-3195, Jane 562-5451 or any Board member for questions. Email contacts may be found in the MG Directory. Now more than ever, AMGA's needs an active, involved and committed Board of Directors and committee chairs.

AMGA Electronic Balloting for 2018 Board of Directors:

Electronic ballots will be sent to voting members the first week in November. The voting period will be approximately 10 days. Voting members without access to email will be mailed paper ballots to manually complete and return by U.S. mail. In the case of dual voting members who share the same email address, one of the dual members will receive an electronic ballot and one will be mailed a paper copy to vote manually. USPO mailed ballots must be received or postmarked by the final day of the electronic voting period.

About the Board: Board meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of the month except for the summer months. Meetings are currently scheduled from 6-8 pm, but times maybe re-set by the newly elected Board. Meetings may be once a month, but changes may occur related to ongoing and projected AMGA activities. Ideally, candidates should be comfortable with email and opening standard email attachments such as word documents and an occasional Excel spreadsheet.

One year terms of office for executive offices (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) and other positions will be determined by the newly constituted Board at the December Board meeting and announced in the January newsletter and at the annual meeting in January.

About AMGA Committees: Besides AMGA's Board of Directors, there are many different committees, projects and volunteer needs throughout the year. Some are on-going with regular and recurring responsibilities and some are more event-focused. 2018 will once again be time to begin focusing on planning another state wide MG conference in 2019. The last page of this newsletter shows some of the committees and yearly projects. Our volunteering members are highly needed and appreciated.



Bird Chatter

GOOD 'n PLENTY . . . The results are in -- namely, how much produce member Don Bladow harvested from the Lutheran Church of Hope's farm on West Northern Lights: 1,400 pounds, Don reports. That's one thousand four hundred pounds of local, organic veggies headed for the church's food bank.

And expansion is already in the works: Don tells BC he's planted four apple trees.

Speaking of our Don, he's been named Social Services Volunteer of the Year by the city's Lutheran churches. Way to go! (Pssst-- Don't tell anyone where you heard it, but BC hears Don is maybe going to run for the Board this fall. You might want to encourage him.)

MORE THAN FAIR . . . AMGA Board member Kathy Liska, Crops Boss for the Alaska State Fair, reports 80 volunteers logged a total of 686 hours at this year's version of the annual SouthCentral extravaganza. Wow!

DAMN! . . . If you missed Charles Wohlforth's Dispatch story about the Sutton sisters, Anna and Patty, check it out. Alas, looks like there's no hope for the future of BC's favorite funky greenhouse. Sounds like the business is headed the same way as the Northern Lights Inn -- the bizarre collection of structures will likely be bulldozed to clear what is a highly desirable piece of commercial property.

The boat that sat in the front yard all spring has gone fishing -- and it looks like Anna and Patty will soon follow. They've earned a happy retirement but we'll miss them.

The story has some interesting history and a nice photo.

SMACKDOWN. . . Once again, our Fairbanks overseers made a decision that affects our survival without consulting us . . . big surprise, huh? Claiming they were seven enrollees short, they cancelled this fall's Master Gardener class, for the second year in a row.

If we had known, could we have rustled up seven candidates? What do you think? For one thing, the Board almost certainly would have offered a couple of scholarships to people who would like to take the course but can't afford UAF's extortionate fee -- especially the young blood we need. (full disclosure: graduates get a lot of the \$\$ back after completing their 40 volunteer hours but have to fork up the fee initially).

For those of you who missed it, discussion at the September 18th membership meeting veered strongly toward political action as our best recourse. We have a lot of retired government and political folks who know people, and know how the system works. Talk to Harry if you want to get involved. Could be fun!

This dissing of Anchorage has lit a fire under ADN gar-

den writer Jeff Lowenfels. See his Sept. 15th column and make the calls!

PEARS IN ANCHORAGE? . . . Ira Edwards report they picked 800# of cider pears recently and they're not even done picking! His press holds just over 400# of pulp per pressing. These are cider pears, fairly inedible, for fermenting only. He writes: "Ever eaten wine grapes? They are horrible, but wine is fantastic."

If you want to purchase locally grown apple juice, contact Ira & get put on his 'juice list'. He's asking \$15 per gallon & always sells out. He writes: "Apples are \$3 a pound at the orchards and it takes 13-14# to make the gallon. So my juice is a steal!"

Call Ira at: (907) 440-9112



Ira writes: "These are unknown Perry pears brought over from England in the 50s or 60s. They are < 2" average size, very high in sugar and tannins and are inedible. But like wine grapes, they make a fantastic finished product."

Photo by Ira Edwards

Message From Harry....cont. from page 1

Our plan is to continue to offer Advanced MG classes to our members. For those who have taken advanced classes in the recent past and have not received their certificates or wondered how to submit your volunteer hour commitments I ask for your patience. We are working with Julie Riley to resolve any remaining issues. Her transfer to Fairbanks interrupted the entire process.

I hope to see you all (or at least room capacity numbers) at a future meeting. We have some great upcoming programs and its always a pleasure to catch up with our fellow members. Have a great October and please DO NOT follow my example of being caught still doing garden cleanup when the snow hits town.



Maren E. Carey
Aug. 4, 1945 - Sept. 5, 2017

Garden Event Calendar

MEETINGS and EVENTS

She loved gardening and was a Master Gardener, actively involved with Alaska Botanical Gardens in Anchorage. Maren had a passion for art, music and loved walking in Alaska's great outdoors. She treasured spending time with family and close friends, who were her family. A familiar face at the ABG, she will be missed.



IT TAKES TEAMWORK: Master Gardeners Michelle Semerad (center) and Shirley Matthews (right) pose in the nursery of the Alaska Botanical Garden on September 24 with ABG's Program Director & Volunteer Coordinator, Stacey Shriner and a bucketful of herbs (on bench) destined for the Downtown Soup Kitchen. The herbs are harvested by MGs and delivered by Shriner weekly. (Photo by Pat Ryan with Michelle Semerad's camera)

Freezer Slaw Recipe from the 9/18/17 Meeting (yields about 5 pints) Submitted by Susan Saltmarsh

"Ball Blue Book of preserving", 2003, page 9

2 pounds cabbage
1 large green pepper
3 large carrots
3/4 cup chopped onion
1 teaspoon salt
2 cups sugar (I used 1 & 3/4 cups)
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1 teaspoon celery seed
1 cup vinegar (can different kinds without problems)
1/2 cup water

Shred cabbage, green pepper, and carrots, Add onion. Sprinkle with salt; let stand 1 hour. Drain. Combine remaining ingredients in a saucepot. Bring to a boil; boil 3 minutes. Cool. Ladle liquid over cabbage mixture; let stand 5 minutes. Stir well. Pack slaw into can-or-freeze jars or plastic freezer boxes, leaving 1/2 inch head space. Seal, label and freeze.

Monday, October 2

** Mat-Su Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting. 7:00 pm at MTA Building, 480 Commercial Drive, Palmer.

** Alaska Native Plant Society Monthly Meeting - Potluck and slide show; opportunity to show slides or talk about summer plant sightings.

Tuesday, October 3

Valley Garden Club Monthly Meeting: Hands on Make and Take Fall Decorations by Heidi Garditee of Aurora Flowers. 10:30 am at the First Baptist Church, 900 Leatherleaf Loop, Wasilla.

Thursday, October 5

Anchorage Garden Club Monthly Meeting: Growing Alaska Giants by Kathy Liska, Alaska State Fair. 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Pioneer Schoolhouse, 437 E 3rd Avenue, Anchorage. Details at: <http://www.alaskagardenclubs.org/anchorageclub.htm>.

Friday, October 6

Herb Study Group: Review of the Summer ABG Herb Garden and Discussion of Agendas for the Remaining Year. 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm at Anchorage Cooperative Extension Service, Chugachmiut Building, 1840 Bragaw Street.

Tuesday, October 10

** Greater Eagle River Garden Club Monthly Meeting. 7:00 pm at the Community Covenant Church, 16123 Artillery Road, Eagle River.

** L.U.V. Garden Club Monthly Meeting: Over Wintering Your "Favorites", Storage of Seed, Growing Indoors for Easy Winter Crops. 7:00 pm at 1710 Tammy Avenue, South Anchorage.

Monday, October 16

Anchorage AMGA Meeting: **Hydroponics for the Home Gardener** by FX Nolan. Learn How To Implement a Simple Drain to Foster a Home Hydroponic System. 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at Anchorage Cooperative Extension Service, Chugachmiut Building, Room 116, 1840 Bragaw Street. Details at: http://alaskamastergardeners.org/AMGA_Programs_2017-2018.pdf.

Tuesday, October 24

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

Saturday, October 21

Worm Bins and Vermi-Culture by Ellen Vande Visse.
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at Mat-Su Borough Central Landfill
Complex, Palmer. Preregistration required. Details at:
<http://ellenvandevisse.com/classes/?ee=182>.

Tuesday, October 24

Alaska Botanical Garden: Composting with Worms by
Will Criner. 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm at Alaska Botanical Gar-
den, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage. Prereg-
istration is required. Details at: [http://alaskabg.org/
events/](http://alaskabg.org/events/).



Herb Garden bed at the Alaska Botanical Garden - a nasturtium
cloaked obelisk, encircled by silver artimisia
Photo by Kathy Sage



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 Office
Chugachmiut Building,
1840 Bragaw St.
Anchorage

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
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:

Harry Deuber, President
denali542@yahoo.com
907-440-6372

AMGAMGA Board of Directors

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Cindy Walker	Treasurer
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