

Celebrating 40 years of Master Gardener Classes in Alaska !

President's Message

The days are sure getting noticeably longer now that we are going into March and I'm sure we all are grateful that spring is around the corner. For those of us who grow at least some of our plants from seed, it is time to get those lights set up, hitting the seed racks and laying in the supplies for another growing season.

To help us with some much-needed gardening therapy, this month we have the opportunity to attend two garden conferences. The first one is the Alaska Botanical Gardens' 11th Annual Spring Conference on March 3rd at Benny Benson School. They have a great lineup of guest speakers, vendors and garden clubs to enjoy. AMGA and CES will be participating as well.

The 2nd big event this month is the Statewide Alaska Master Gardeners Conference, this year held in Fairbanks on Saturday, March 24. The conference is titled "Inspiration from the Ground Up". Search Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley to get the details from their website. It's an easy day trip up to Fairbanks and they are a welcoming and friendly group of Master

Gardeners. You will also have a chance to catch up with Julie Riley. Rumor has it that she hangs out in Fairbanks these days.

Thanks to all of you who took the time to take our membership survey. We've had great participation and much thoughtful input has been received. With so many different ideas it will be impossible to satisfy everyone completely but we will strive to deliver a balanced set of programs and focus on the activities that are the most important to our members.

Our new membership directory has been mailed. It looks great and many thanks go to our directory editor Janice Berry and Jane Baldwin who handles our membership database. Many hours of effort behind the scene go into its publication and their work is much appreciated.

Lastly, we have received word that the CES Outreach office will be moving yet again. The lease at the Bragaw Street location expires on July 31st and will not be renewed. As far as we know CES will remain open and maintain an office somewhere in Anchorage. It is unknown if their new office will include meeting or classroom space. This means AMGA will need to make contingency plans for meeting space if the need arises. We will keep our members informed as more details emerge. We have been down this road before and the uncertainty is disconcerting not only for our organization but for the local CES staff as well.

40th Anniversary Notes

Wayne G Vandre was the driving force behind the Alaska Master Gardener program and the Integrated Pest Management program. He championed horticultural education throughout the state and recognized the need and importance of working with volunteers.

The Master Gardener program started in Anchorage in 1978 and quickly expanded to other communities, sometimes creating a waiting list up to three years long! A far cry from the first graduating class of thirteen students.

The unique circumstances of Alaska's geography and its people required the program to continually evolve. Even though many adjustments were made of class times and locations, a correspondence course had to be created for those in rural areas that were not able to travel to larger towns or cities. Evolution has brought the correspondence course to the internet. *More 40th Anniversary notes, see page 6.*

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Spruce Health in Southcentral Alaska

By Jesse Moan, CES IPM Agent

Look at the spruce in your yard, your neighborhood, and your favorite recreation areas. Do you notice anything unusual? If you do, you aren't alone! We have been observing different symptoms in spruce trees over the last several growing seasons. Below are a few things to look for and some tips to keep your spruce trees healthy.

Spruce beetles, *Dendroctonus rufipennis*, are no strangers to Alaskans. When populations boom, these beetles can attack standing live trees, altering both forested and ornamental landscapes.

As observant gardeners, there are several things you can look for to determine if your tree is infested (or help your neighbor with theirs!). Initially, you may notice reddish-brown dust accumulating in the cracks and crevices of the bark or around the base of the tree. You may also see pitch tubes/masses along the trunk of the tree. This occurs when pitch mixes with boring dust and accumulates on the outside of the trunk at a beetle entrance hole.

Needle color change can also be an important symptom to observe, but be careful, needle color may change can occur for a variety of reasons. Color change usually happens the second year after a spruce beetle attack and needles change from green to yellow-ish green to red.

Typically, once a spruce beetle infestation is observed in a tree, there is very little that can be done for that tree.

Management efforts should center around protecting other spruce trees in the area. Tree removal and proper disposal or use of the infested material is important to consider. Preventive insecticide sprays may be used to protect remaining trees but are ineffective against already infested trees.

Spruce beetle boring dust. Photo by:
Edward H. Holsten, USDA Forest
Service, Bugwood.org



Pitch tube/mass. Photo by:
Darren Blackford, USDA
Forest Service, Bugwood.org



A new (to us) disease is being observed on spruce trees statewide; it is called spruce bud blight, *Gemmamyces piceae*, and it affects the new buds of spruce trees. This disease is caused by a fungus and can be identified by the small, black, bead-like fruiting bodies on the buds. I often compare the appearance to looking like the buds have been dipped in poppy seeds. So far, most trees that have the disease have very little damage from it. We have yet to see a tree in Alaska that has been killed by the disease. It can distort growth and could be a problem for newly planted ornamental trees where form is important.

This is still a developing issue in Alaska; surveys and work are being conducted on the fungus statewide. Generally, no control measures are warranted at this time. An exception might be a young tree with distorted growth. Selective pruning can correct this if done properly. Consult with an arborist or tree care professional on the best ways to prune your tree to improve its shape.

Some of the best things you can do for trees is to provide proper care. Good tree care can go a long way to keeping trees healthy and resilient.

1. Water, water, water! One of the best things you can ever do for an ornamental tree is make sure it is getting plenty of water, especially during dry periods.

2. Mulch. Mulch has many benefits; it helps the soil retain water, helps keep weeds away, buffers soil temperatures from heat and cold, and helps keep lawn equipment away from the base of the tree. Apply mulch to a depth of about 3 inches and make sure the mulch is not touching the trunk of the tree as this can keep the bark wet and encourage rot.

3. Avoid damaging the tree. In general, avoid damaging the trunk and roots of the tree unnecessarily. This type of damage typically occurs from lawn equipment like mowers and string trimmers. Did you read number 2 above? Mulch can eliminate the need for equipment to be that close to the tree.

If you have questions about these specific spruce pests, or tree pests/tree health in general, you can call (786-6309) or email (mjmoan@alaska.edu) me anytime!



Spruce bud showing spruce bud
blight fruiting bodies.
Photo by: Jessie Moan,
UAF-Cooperative Extension Service

Herb Study Group: Chervil, *Anthriscus cerefolium* By Elaine Hammes

Kudos go to Marjorie Williams for leading discussion of the herb, Chervil, *Anthriscus cerefolium*, at the February 2nd Herb Study Group (HSG) meeting. She also provided several interesting handouts including a wide range of recipes using Chervil.

Chervil is native to the Caucasus regions of the Black Sea and Caspian Sea and to western Asia. The Romans probably brought Chervil to Europe for its alleged revitalizing powers. The Greek comic playwright Aristophanes (c. 446 – c. 386 BC) refers to chervil in *The Acharnians*.

Chervil is best known by its subtle, tender flavor, as a “warm” herb with a flavor of part anise and part parsley. It is traditionally included in spices making up the *fines herbes* of French cuisine as well as a typical ingredient in béarnaise sauce. Chervil loses flavor quickly when dried or exposed to long cooking times, but the flavor may be preserved better in vinegars and leaves may be chopped and packed into ice trays, topped with water, frozen and stored in plastic bags. Chervil is best used fresh, often as a garnish, or added at the end of cooking.

In addition to being used for flavoring, Chervil has historically had a wide range of medicinal uses including easing mosquito bites, for stomach disorders, preventing the plague, as an eye bath, to stop hiccups and much more. However, there is not enough scientific information to understand how chervil might work, and more evidence is needed to rate the effectiveness of chervil for the many uses. Methyl chavicol and anethole are two of its constituent chemicals that are known to have toxic and irritant effects.

Chervil is an annual that does best in a cool semi-shady location and should be sowed directly into the flowering position about 10 inches apart and fertilized lightly. The plants will burn in hot summer sun. The plants grow to about twelve inches or more. The foliage has a delicate appearance with very finely divided leaves and small white flowers borne in compound umbels. Chervil has been grown in Alaska Botanical Garden’s (ABG) Herb Garden several years (recorded in 1999, 2003). One attendee uses chervil from her garden, noting that it has reseeded.

The Herb Study Group was treated to some special presentations in February in addition to Chervil. Thanks to Jane Baldwin for taking us through slides from the Discovery Garden in Roseburg, Oregon. Thanks to Gina Docherty for providing the photos from her visit that show examples of signage in the garden. The garden is supported by Douglas County Master Gardeners, and has a webpage with links to virtual tours of many sections of the garden. Gina wrote an article which includes photos about her visit in the June 2017 Alaska MG Newsletter (online) linked at <http://alaskamastergardeners.org/pdf/2017/AMGAJUNE2017.pdf>.

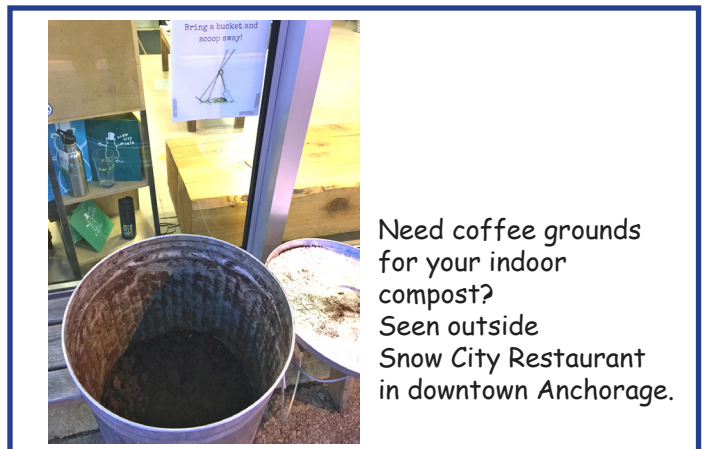


Chervil, *Anthriscus cerefolium*

Illustration acquired from the following source :
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Illustration_Anthriscus_cerefolium0.jpg

Original book source: Prof. Dr. Otto Wilhelm Thomé Flora von Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz Vol3, plate 381, 1888, Gera, Germany

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Bird Chatter

SHE WUZ ROBBED. . . Homer super-gardener, writer and AMGA member Brenda Adams was a presenter at the Northwest Flower and Garden Festival (not just a “Show” anymore) last month, and participated in the popular “Container Wars” event. This is where two people are given a huge container, dirt and a bunch of plants and told to make something terrific. Then the audience claps for the one they like best.

Her rival was Bobbie Schwartz from Ohio, also a garden writer — wait, did you have to come from a state that begins and ends with the same vowel to qualify?

Nevermind.

New Board member Don Bladow helped Brenda hoist the bag of potting soil; Brenda advised viewers she was adding a bit of moose poop to feed her creation, and the duel was on.

BC has it on excellent authority (Jane Baldwin and others) that the audience clapped way louder for Brenda than for Ohio. The emcee was starting to announce Brenda as the winner, when the guy with the sound meter shouted from the back of the room that the winner was Bobbie.

Alaskans couldn’t believe it. Was the guy so far back his meter didn’t pick up the tumultuous acclaim for Brenda? Maybe. But BC has a better explanation:

Payback for changing Mt. McKinley to Denali!

TRUE?. . . BC was afraid to believe that Sutton’s, Alaska’s funkiest nursery, was really going to survive for another season. But that’s what a big sign on the front door says. The sisters, Anna and Patty, have been trying for several years to sell the place and retire. BC distinctly remembers them saying good-bye last fall.

Only one way to find out the true facts: BC called Anna, currently sucking up rays in Arizona and, yes, she said, Sutton’s re-opens March 17th. Yippee!

BEST SENTENCE OF THE YEAR. . . so far: “I ate an entire poinsettia plant at the governor’s mansion in New York.” Spoken by CES Agent Steve Brown (the Julie Riley of the Valley and — oh yes, now Anchorage, too), during a terrific

presentation about soil at our February member’s meeting. The place was packed and much was learned. Too bad UAF has saddled Steve with two full-time jobs or he might be able to come talk to us more often.

FYI: The poinsettia chomp was to prove the plant gets a bad rap and isn’t really poisonous.

AND THE AWARD FOR . . . the membership renewal received from farthest away goes to: Mel Langdon. No, not from 99508; From Mafeteng, Lesotho — a mountain kingdom of 2 million people, completely surrounded by South Africa. Mel is there until 2019, teaching high school math. Lots of gardeners, she says.

MEA CULPA. . . It was just too much — all those beautiful little packets in so many stores. They called to BC. Worse than chocolate in the cupboard. Your avian-ess, who should know better, finally capitulated and started buying seeds — enough to green up Iowa. (BC has a garage germinating “station” — a tool shelf and a light).

But Bird Brain’s lack of control is a good excuse to repeat the warning offered by Jeff Lowenfels a few weeks ago: don’t waste money on seeds unlikely to flourish in Anchorage. Some beautiful displays are sooooo tempting but soooo not right for Alaska.

If you hear the big box stores calling to you over the ice and through the snow, handcuff yourself to the bedpost — OK, that’s a different subject. But you get the drift: Jeff approves of Denali, Renee’s Garden, Territorial, Ed Hume and Botanical Interests — a new brand to BC, who found them at the True Value on Jewel Lake Road. Ed Hume can also be found at Fred Meyers on Benson at New Seward Hiway.

Far North Garden Supply has Renee’s. Mill & Feed has a good selection of Territorial, plus some Renee’s and Ed Hume.

Compiled by stoomey@ymail.com. Got an item? Share it!



AMGA Board Meeting Summary: February

Ice derails February AMGA Board meeting

Icy roads coupled with near-zero visibility in the Anchorage Bowl shut down University of Alaska Anchorage facilities on Feb. 12, including the CES site for the AMGA Board’s

scheduled meeting. Business that was to be addressed then was pushed forward to the next meeting, which will start at 6 p.m. on March 12.

— Cheryl Chapman, AMGA secretary

Stay Connected

AMGA Facebook Page - Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage - Cindy Walker and Kathy Liska created this page to promote our group activities and broadcast gardening information to more people. www.facebook.com/Alaska-Master-Gardeners-Anchorage

A 'Suggestion Box' has appeared at the monthly meetings. If you have a suggestion, good or bad, please fill out the form & put in the box. A response is guaranteed.

An "AMGA Gift Membership" form is available online and at the meetings. Consider 'gifting' a membership to someone who would enjoy the benefits of belonging to our group.

AMGA now has a 'donation' form on the website. If you want to donate to our organization, it's easy and secure.

Sign up for next year's Master Gardener class on the CES Anchorage website: <https://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/anchorage/MG/>

AMGA and ABG educational and signage partnership on the horizon. Stay tuned!

Volunteer Opportunities

AMGA Calendar Events

Coordinator: Do you have a couple of hours to research and jot down all the local gardening events for the AMGA Newsletter? Your fellow garden friends who have children or work full time will love you for it! Contact Harry Deuber denali542@yahoo.com or Ginger Hudson, newsletteramga@gmail.com

AMGA summer 2018 Garden Tours Coordinator

Do you like finding special gardens and helping to showcase them? Do you have friends whose gardens you want to bring some attention to? It's fun to meet new gardeners and get the first look at their creations! Interested? Contact amga@alaska.net

Alaska Botanical Garden: Help organize or volunteer at the Spring Garden Conference. Contact Stacey Shriner at ABG, 770-3692

Fur Rondy Ask a Master Gardener at the Sears Mall, February 24-25, and March 3-4. Answer gardening questions at the CES/AMGA booth. Sign up through the new SignUp Genius or Contact Harry: denali542@yahoo.com

Pioneer Home: Help plant and maintain front gardens of the Pioneer Home during the summer. Contact: Julie Ginder jkginder@gci.net, Joyce haljoy@gci.net, or Lynne Opstad: lopstad@gci.net

Instructors needed on topics such as Seed Starting, Organic Soil Amendments, Vegetable Gardening, etc. Contact Harry Deuber: 440-6372 denali542@yahoo.com

There are many benefits of being an AMGA volunteer! It is an opportunity to make new gardening friends, have fun, and be involved. Your efforts are appreciated!

A volunteer interest form has been created online. When you fill this Google Form out, it will automatically be sent to the Volunteer Committee and you will be contacted when needed.

Here is the link:

<https://goo.gl/forms/FutOWGNye9KPWKd63>



Treasurer's Report Balances 12/31/2017

Checking account	8844.11
Savings account	<u>11738.79</u>
	\$20582.90

Dedicated Funds	8635.37
Interest Bearing CD	<u>10124.55</u>
	\$18759.92

Revenue:	
Dedicated Donation	500.00
Donation	160.00
Interest	1.49
Membership	<u>696.08</u>
	\$1357.57

Expense:	
Operations	367.98
OutReach	50.00
Website	<u>95.00</u>
	\$512.98

Balances 1/31/2018

Checking account	9687.21
Savings account	<u>11740.28</u>
	\$21427.49

Dedicated Funds	8635.37
Interest Bearing CD	<u>10124.55</u>
	\$18759.92

2018 Statewide Master Gardener Conference Inspiration from the Ground Up



Saturday, March 24, 2018

Pike's Waterfront Lodge

8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Lunch Included

Registration: Member-\$25.00: Non-Member-\$35.00 (Until February 28)

Regular Registration: Member-\$35.00: Non-Member -\$50.00 (3/01 to 3/23)

At the Door \$60.00

Friday Dinner & Keynote "Wild Flowers & Wildlife of Africa" by Les Brake - \$20.00

Bring your family & friends

6:30 pm at Pike's Waterfront Lodge

CASH OR CHECK ONLY

Registration form available online at fairbanksmastergardeners.wordpress.com

or at Master Gardener meetings on February 6 & March 6, 2018

Guest Speakers

Bob Bors

Les Brake

Katie DiCristina

Gary Laursen

Marsha Munsell

Come out and find your
inspiration!



INSPIRATION

40th Anniversary Notes

Correspondence courses allowed residents of rural areas and villages to provide gardening information to their community. Sometimes sharing of knowledge is on a one-to-one basis, sometimes youth or school groups are involved, and sometimes groups might even meet in the local post office-whatever is available!

The Bureau of Indian Affairs cooperated with CES by bringing village representatives to attend the first 40-hour, week-long course held at the Kenaitze Indian headquarters in Wildwood in 1984. The course was modified to meet the needs of the participants. Due to the success of that course, it was repeated at Copper Center, Kotzebue, and Sitka.

The flexibility of the Master Gardener program can be seen in the ways it meets the needs of Alaska's vast geographical range. Course flexibility can also be seen in the subjects added or removed from the Gardener's manual over the years.

The growth of the Master Gardeners program proved early nay-sayers wrong. Some did not believe Alaskan gardeners would commit to 40 hours of instruction and then 40 hours of volunteer time. According to Wayne Vandre, Alaskans rose to the opportunity!

Notes compiled from *Alaska Master Gardener Program, 20 Years in the Last Frontier*, by Wayne G. Vandre.

Garden Event Calendar

MEETINGS and EVENTS

Thursday, March 1

Anchorage Garden Club Meeting: Food Preservation – 7 pm;
Meets at the Pioneer Schoolhouse 437 E 3rd Avenue -
www.alaskagardenclubs.org

Friday, March 2

Herb Study Group discussion of Sweet Woodruff will be lead by Michelle Semerad and Barbara Baker. 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm at Anchorage Cooperative Extension Service, Chugachmiut Building, 1840 Bragaw Street. All who are interested are welcome to attend.

Monday, March 5

Matsu Master Gardener Program: Presentation of Israeli flowers and structures, by Michael Kircher – 7 pm - Matanuska Telephone Company (MTA) building, large meeting room (in the basement), 480 commercial Dr., Palmer, AK - Do not have to be a member to attend.
Contact: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com

Monday, March 5

Alaska Native Plant Society Meeting: “Ethnobotany From an Anthropologist’s Point of View”, with Dr. David Yesner; 7pm, Campbell Creek Science Center
<http://aknps.org/Pages/Meetings.php>

Thursday, March 8

Wildflower Garden Club Program: “You Don’t Need an Orchard to Grow Fruit Trees” by Kathy Liska. 10-11:30 am, Central Lutheran Church, 1420 Cordova St., Anchorage.
Contact: www.alaskagardenclubs.org

Saturday, March 10th

Alaska Peony Society Presents Harvey Buchite from Hidden Springs Flower Farm, Spring Grove, MN - Evangelo’s Restaurant Conference Room, Wasilla, Alaska; Free for members, \$20 at the door for non-members. Program begins at 11:00 am (Lunch 12:30- 1:30) resume presentation 1:30 to 5:00 pm

Tuesday, March 13th

Eagle River Garden Club, The ‘How To’s’ of Composting, with Ellen Vande Visse, of the Good Earth Garden School; 7 pm at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Chugiak at 18444 Old Glenn Hwy - contact: chriswood_ak@yahoo.com

Saturday, March 17

Alaska Rock Garden Society – 2 pm – TBA - Monthly meeting 3rd Sat. 2 pm; meetings alternate between Anchorage and Palmer - Contact: Carmel Tysver <garden@gci.net>
www.akrockgardensociety.org

March 19

AMGA Monthly Program: Cool Plants for Cold Climates with Brenda Adams – 7 pm, Anchorage Cooperative Extension Office Chugachmiut Building, 1840 Bragaw St

CLASSES and WORKSHOPS

Saturday, March 3rd

Alaska Mill & Feed Class: SEED POTATOES - Instructor: Greg Kalal; 10-11:30am and again 12pm-1:30 pm; Cost \$5

Saturday, March 10th

Alaska Mill & Feed Class: DAHLIAS - Instructor: Mayra Morrow; 10- 12pm - Cost \$5

Saturday, March 17th

Alaska Mill & Feed Class: BEE KEEPING - Instructor: Matt Hale – 10-11:30 am; Cost \$5

Saturday, March 31st

Alaska Mill & Feed Class: Birch Tree Tapping - Instructor: Valerie Barber; 10am-12pm; Cost: \$5

CONFERENCES

Saturday, March 3

Alaska Botanical Garden Spring Conference. 8 am – 4 pm at Benny Benson School and Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage. <http://alaskabg.org/alaska-botanical-gardens-11th-annual-spring-garden-conference-reception/>

Saturday, March 24

Statewide Master Gardener Conference. Fairbanks, AK; The event will be hosted by the Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley - Keynote speaker Bob Bors from the University of Saskatchewan, who will be presenting about what is on the horizon for northern fruit development and how to tend our current crop of honey berries and cherries. Pike’s Waterfront Lodge
For more information– <https://fairbanksmastergardeners.wordpress.com/2018/02/12/2018-statewide-master-gardener-conference/>

Saturdays March 24 and 31

Garden Design and Creation with author Brenda Adams from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm at the Kachemak Bay Campus. Fee is \$85. Learn the elements of garden design, plan development, cultural requirements of plants, soil preparation and plant selection, use of color, northern light, and more. Sign up by March 20th at KBC or online at <https://kbcnoncredit.asapconnected.com/>

Spring 2018 Programs

There are some exciting programs coming to this spring's regular monthly meetings. AMGA owes a big Thank You to Marilyn Barker for her time and expertise in rounding up some amazing presenters.

Mar. 19 - Cool Plants for Cold Climates...

Brenda Adams

Apr. 16 - The Joys of Being a Beekeeper.....

Beth Baker

May 21 - Rhododendron Growing.....Doug Tryck

Celebrate Alaska Master Gardener's 40th!

Call for Submissions of AMGA Memories from the Past 40 Years

The first Alaska Master Gardener training was conducted in 1978 in Anchorage. There were 13 students trained as Master Gardeners that year.

Were you a part of that year's program, or know someone who was? We'd love to hear from you! Whether it's one sentence or one page, whether it's a memory of your first year or tenth, it's time to share with those that have come after. We all appreciate the time and effort each MG has dedicated to this valuable program.

send stories to: newsletteramga@gmail.com



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, Ginger Hudson, at:

Mail: AMGA, Newsletter
P.O. Box 221403
Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

Email: newsletteramga@gmail.com
AMGA Web Site: www.alaskamastergardeners.org
Facebook: facebook.com/Alaska-Master-Gardeners-Anchorage

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

AMGA Board of Directors

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Marilyn Barker	Vice President
Cindy Walker	Treasurer
Cheryl Chapman	Secretary
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Fran Pekar	At Large
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