

President's Message by Susan Negus

Happy New Year to all! May all your resolutions work out, like put in more gardens, try new plants, thin the old ones to save them for the August plant sale and Volunteer more! Another thing to keep you out of trouble is to start

Julie Riley
Master Mistress
of the
Master Gardeners



some plant starts to sell at the Garden show, April 11th. I think we will allow 4 flats/person with the usual rules (yellow tags and white tags). Just a few suggestions to work on.

The new Year will bring new Board members. See the annual report and the end of the newsletter for details. I hate to repeat everything.

The AMGA Directory is coming along and should be out soon. Many thanks to Janice Berry for putting it together and to Cheryl Chapman for doing the proof reading.

Looks like there will be three conferences in February in Anchorage this year (see the Calendar). Nothing has firmed up yet but we will probably have a table at some of them. We will also have an AMGA table on Saturdays, February 28th and March 7th, at the MidTown Mall during Fur Rondy. This will give people many opportunities for volunteering.

I would like to thank all the past Board members for a great job and all the volunteers that have made this such a great organization.

Above: Solstice sun dog over Anchorage. Photo by Ginger Hudson.
Above left: Julie Riley announces her retirement plans at the 2019 Master Garden Conference in Anchorage. Left: Another successful fall plant sale thanks to all the AMGA volunteers. Photo by Paul Marmora. See AMGA's Annual Report page 2 for more 2019 highlights.

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AMGA 2019 Annual Report submitted by Elaine Hammes

2019 proved to be a busy and successful year for AMGA!

While the Anchorage Cooperative Extension Service (CES) Outreach Office has settled in at the Loussac Library, AMGA meetings continue to be held at the BP Energy Center. AMGA maintains our official presence and relationship with CES at the Loussac Library. AMGA appreciates coordination with Gina Dionne and DeShana York at the CES Outreach Office.

A highlight of AMGA's 2019 was the Statewide Master Gardener Conference. The AMGA committee was established in early 2018 and its work culminated in a successful conference held April 6th at UAA's Lucy Cuddy Center. The theme was "Urban Gardening in the Last Frontier." Robert Kourik, author of Understanding Roots, was the main speaker. Julie Riley was honored for her many contributions to the Master Gardener program, including many years at the Anchorage CES Office.

Two Master Gardener courses were completed in 2019. The first class began in late 2018, completed in early 2019, with over 40 students taking the exam. Nine have completed their 40 volunteer hours. The most recent class finished in December 2019, and one person has already completed volunteer hours. All new Master Gardeners have been offered free AMGA membership for their first year after completing the course, and we look forward to their volunteering with AMGA.

An Advanced Master Gardener course, "Flower Show Horticulture: Iris, Lilacs, Pelargoniums and combination plantings," took place in June. Fourteen Master Gardeners and Advanced Master Gardeners took the classes and several have already completed the program's volunteer requirement.

Eight general membership meetings were held during the year with a wide variety of expert speakers and interesting topics. Programs included "The Science of Planting Trees," "The CES Naturalist Program," "Pruning 101," "Butterflies, Birds and Spring," "Strange Things Done in the Midnight Sun: Gardening Eccentricities and Bizarre Facts of Nature," "Making Your Yard a Wildlife Habitat," "Landscaping with Alaska Native Plants," and the annual photo recap of members' gardens.

AMGA published 12 monthly newsletters in 2019. Newsletter editor Ginger Hudson, along with many others, contributed garden related articles, a calendar of events, newsworthy announcements and our ever-popular "Bird Chatter" column. In addition to our newsletter, outreach efforts included maintaining a Facebook page, a Google Groups forum and regular email announcements and reminders via email. Our annual membership directory was updated, published and distributed.

AMGA members once again planned, planted and maintained the Anchorage Pioneer Home flowerbeds. This is our primary service project and we are fortunate to have such a dedicated crew of volunteers. Our efforts have provided much pleasure to the residents, staff and visitors at the Pioneer Home for many years.

AMGA sponsored several outreach events to the general public. Master Gardeners presented a series of four Olé classes on gardening in January at UAA. AMGA had information tables at Fur Rondy in February and the Spring Garden Show in April, both at the Midtown Mall. In May, AMGA volunteers assisted CES on the Loussac Library grounds for the "Reading Rendezvous" event where Gina Dionne provided children's gardening activities.

In early June, AMGA volunteers provided gardening program activities for more than fifty children in the Campfire Program, one day downtown and another day in south Anchorage. Activities included learning about composting and developing plants from seeds.

AMGA members teamed up with ABG during the summer to staff an "Ask-A-Master-Gardener" table several times each week on days that volunteers were available. The volunteer management program "Signup Genius" continues to be used successfully to schedule volunteers for events.

During June, July and August AMGA members had the opportunity to tour many private gardens along with a nursery, including eight scheduled and five "Pop Up" tours. We are lucky to have so many who are willing to host and share their fabulous variety of gardens and knowledge.

The AMGA Grant Committee reviewed applications and offered two types of grants in 2019. One grant was for gardening projects combined with housing. Three scholarships for partial tuition assistance were provided for students in the 2019/2020 Master Gardener class.

In August, AMGA was a Special Sponsor for the Alaska State Fair in Palmer by providing gift cards for each week's Division Champion winner in the Division 12 Outdoor Grown Vegetables.

AMGA's Late Season Plant Sale was held in August at the Alaska Botanical Garden. In addition to a parking lot full of plants and happy gardeners, free classes and demonstrations were offered: "Beautiful Bouquets," "The Secret Life of House Plants," and "How to make Elevated Raised Beds." The day's sales netted over \$1,700.

Election of the full slate of nominees to the 2020 AMGA board was conducted at the November membership meeting. Emily Becker, Beth Norris, Jan Van Den Top and Faye Stiehm joined Nancy Grant, Elaine Hammes, Susan Negus and FX Nolan to form the 8-member AMGA board for 2020. AMGA recognizes outgoing board members Don Bladow, Fran Pekar, Marilyn Barker and Marjorie Williams for their extensive volunteer service for AMGA activities.

At the December board meeting, officers and areas of responsibility were determined for 2020. The AMCA operating 2020 budget was approved at this meeting and the financial audit for 2019 has been scheduled for January 2020.

We look forward to another successful year in 2020.

—Submitted by Elaine Hammes, AMGA Co-President 2019

AMGA Treasurer's Report, November 2019 By Nancy Grant			
Balances 10/31/2019			
Checking S-88	\$14,855.34	Expense:	
Savings S-1	\$5.25	Operations	\$52.99
Savings S-19	\$16,860.48	Programs	\$125.00
CD-Education 5yr 1.650% (12/20)	\$5325.98		\$177.99
CD- General 2yr 1.95% (1/21)	\$10,401.36		
i i	\$47,448.41	Balances 12/08/2019	
Revenue:		Checking S-88	\$15,244.35
Interest/Dividends	\$ 2.77	Savings S-1	\$5.25
Membership	\$540.00	Savings S-19	\$16,863.25
Donations	\$20.00	CD-Education 5yr 1.650% (12/20)	\$5325.98
merchandise	\$ 7.00	CD- General 2yr 1.95% (1/21)	<u>\$10,401.36</u>
	\$569.77		\$47,840.19

Bird Chatter

THE FIX IS IN... And not the good kind of fix. We can't win this winter can we? First, we didn't have any winter, and who knows how our northern plants are going to adjust to that.

Then, either it's cold-and-no-snow—bad for plants. Or it's thaw-and-melt—worse for plants. BC is already dreading what seems like an inevitable loss of perennials.

But, hey, you guys all followed Jeff Lowenfels' advice and super-mulched, so no worries for you, right?

Yeah, right.

Actually, a series of freeze and thaw episodes is no joke. When the temperature bounces above freezing it ramps up chemical reactions that screw with the carbon/nitrogen balances. And that eventually messes with growth. Time for prayers to the weather gods.

LITTLE KNOWN LAW... Know why one of the Christmas colors is green? Because you're supposed to give gardeners gardening gifts.

The two best BC heard about: Gina Docherty gave her husband insulated twine for his tomato plants. (There's such a thing as insulated twine?) Another gardener got a kit with pad, pencils and an instruction booklet showing how to draw plants.

TOMATO HASTE... MG Rosemary Shinohara attributes the following to her husband, Vincent.

As the story goes, about now hubby is repotting his tomato starts—In the living room. Where they have germinated and sprouted up to a foot. Under the big side table. Next to the heat register. With gro-lights.

Plants and lights will then be moved to the table-top and soon vines will twine. In the requisite number of weeks, tomatoes of several varieties will fatten and, as day and night even out, salads will be made.

BC believes this tale because, well—crunch crunch, yum yum.

A PITCH FOR BIRCH... The following is from a CNN story via the above-mentioned Gina Docherty: "Stone Age chewing gum holds clues to the life of a young girl who lived 5,700 years ago."

Along with attaching stone tools to handles & straps, birch pitch was chewed to help relieve the pain of a toothache, act as a tooth brush, stave off hunger; or, much as we use modern gum, simply to have something to chew. Birch pitch also contains betulin, which acts like an antiseptic.



The Alaska School Garden Network

The Alaska School Garden Network was formed to empower Alaska's youth and educators to use gardens as a tool for experiential learning and community building. We provide support, guidance, communication, and infrastructure to develop and sustain school and community gardens.



We're on Facebook. Join our group to ask questions, share success stories, challenges, needs, resources, news, inspiration, and anything else school garden related. This is a group for Alaskan school and garden educators to share ideas and connect with one another.

Join us on February 20th for an ASGN social mixer! Time and location TBA.

Liz Snyder is teaching an undergrad/grad class via distance at UAA this Spring — called GrowU: School Gardening as Early Intervention. You'll learn about designing and delivering school gardening curricula and work with some local school partners — with a focus on health and pedagogy.

If you're interested in taking the course or would be interested in having a student deliver lessons in your own classroom, email Liz at ehodges4@alaska.edu

Children in the School Garden Network. Photo courtesy of Emily Becker.



Quick Indoor Plant Tips

This time of year, gardeners suffering withdrawals may turn too much attention onto their house plants.

Beware of over-loving indoor plants: too much water or too much fertilizer in the low light months can lead to mold, rot, and weak over-growth. Let plants dry between waterings—the soil should slightly pull away from the edge of the pot. Watch out for drafts from air vents to prevent over-drying. A spritzer water bottle will help their

leaves take in moisture between waterings.

House plants do not need huge amounts of fertilizer, especially in the deep winter months. Start fertilizing as the days get longer: late February the earliest, March, and April. Mild fertilizer is best since they have restricted growing space—unless it is a specialty plant such as an orchid or African violet.

Have plants that should bloom, sometime in their life? Consider re-potting. Chances are plants have become root-bound, especially larger specimens like the auralia at left that had become so root bound there was barely any soil. It was leggy and the owners never saw it bloom. Rehabilitation was in order. The roots were sheared about two inches all around and on bottom, then loosened up so soil and nurtrients could flow. Long stems with mop heads were cut down to nodes where new leaf sprouts would grow. Six months later the plant began forming a bud, and then bloomed in May. It is located in a south-facing window.

For pest problems, see the UAF CES publication "Houseplant Pests and Controls" PMC-10073.

Photo by Ginger Hudson.



In Memoriam

Mourning a loss, celebrating a life

It is with a heavy heart that we hear of the passing of Master Gardener Rosemary Kimball of Sterling. Rosemary was an avid Master Gardener and a good friend to many. She was a dependable writer of monthly columns for our AMGA newsletter for many years. Her column, "Central Peninsula Master Gardener News," was always upbeat, educational and filled with her humorous take on things. She had an enduring sense of humor, a keen intellect and a generous heart. She will be missed.

Rosemary with an arm-load of king bolete mushrooms. Photo courtesy of Gina Docherty.

Herb Study Group: Raspberries (Rubus idaeus L.) by Elaine Hammes

The International Herb Association (iherb.org) has established the 2020 Herb of the Year as *Rubus* ssp. (Blackberries, Raspberries, et al). Thanks to Peggy Cobey, 2018/2019 Master Gardener, who provided copies of the CES publication FNH-00116, "American Red Raspberry" and led the December meeting discussion with additional information focusing specifically on raspberries.

Numerous varieties of wild and cultivated raspberries grow in Alaska and other parts of the world. They have been considered a "superfood," containing high levels of vitamin C, manganese, fiber and many antioxidants. Research suggests raspberries help with metabolism, lowering cholesterol, aid in fighting or preventing cancer, help fight off fatigue; they may decrease inflammation, reduce heart disease, preserve brain health and more. Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity (ORAC) is a method of measuring antioxidant capacities in biological samples in vitro and has rated berries highly. However, the USDA withdrew published information on ORAC because no physiological proof in vivo existed in support of the free-radical theory.

Raspberries are perennial in the rose family with woody stems called canes. Primo canes are the first year growth that is required for the second year brown floricanes to produce the berry fruits. Some everbearing varieties do not have the two-year cycle. Sometimes the brown canes may bear again, but are generally trimmed at the end of the season of bearing fruit. The fruit is an aggregate berry with many drupelets. Raspberries are well-known to reproduce freely by suckers and seedlings.

Raspberries are easily transplanted, best in spring or fall. Add organic matter when planting and mulch them after they have been established. Water plants heavily (at least 1 inch per week) at the base and especially while they are producing fruit. Gray mold (a common fungal infection) is prevalent in wet conditions includ-

ing rainy weather. Trellising may help to hold canes in place.

Other problems may include aphids, root weevils, leaf roller larvae, wasps and spidermites. Some Lepidoptera species may eat raspberries.

Raspberry plants should not be planted where potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, or bulbs have previously been grown. These crops are hosts for the disease Verticillium wilt, a fungus that can stay in the soil for many years and can infest the raspberry crop.

Both wild raspberries and cultivars include red, black,

purple and gold-yellow colored fruits. Various features of yellow raspberries were discussed. People at the meeting noted that the vellow berries were more vigorous, sweeter, milder and had fewer seeds. Others thought the yellow berries were softer and not so aggressive.

Many methods of picking, preparing and keeping raspberries were discussed. One major take-away is that raspberries should not be washed unless they are dusty, and even then it would be best to rinse (in dry weather) and let them dry, all before picking. The CES publication and many of the attendees have many yummy raspberry recipes—syrups, fruit leather, jellies, jams, crisps, cake, and more detailed storage and preservation methods. Fruits and leaves have been used medicinally but there are warnings not to use during pregnancy and the efficacy of raspberry leaf is not well documented.

There are several other Rubus species that grow wild in the Southcentral area. For more information, refer to CES Publication FNH-00028 "Wild Edible and Poisonous Plants of Alaska", and to Janice J. Schofield, Alaska's Wild Plants. There are most likely no blackberries in the Anchorage area or generally in a similarly cool climate although rare incidents have been reported.

The Herb Study Group is an informal group open to anyone who is interested in discussing and learning about herbs. There are no membership requirements and no dues. For any questions, please email the anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com.

UAF CES Publications website:

http://cespubs.uaf.edu





support system for raspberry bushes. Right: Raspberry preserves are a favorite. A quick and tidy way to preserve berries for later use is to freeze them spaced out on parchemnt before putting them in bags so they don't glob together. Photos by Ginger Hudson.

January 2020 Garden Event Calendar

Classes / Workshops

No Classes this month

Meetings and Events

Through January 11

"Holiday Lights," Wednesdays-Saturdays, 5p-8p. \$5 members; \$7 nonmembers, children 6 and under free. Various activities different dates: bonfires, music, and childrens activities. See their website for more information. Alaska Botanical Garden, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Rd, Anchorage. alaskabg.org

January 2, Thursday

Anchorage Garden Club, 7p-9p. TBA. Pioneer School House, 437 E. 3rd Ave. Anchorage. alaskagardenclubs.org

January 5, Sunday

Audubon's Annual Winter Bird Count for Eagle River/ Chugiak. All Day. Volunteers meet at Jitters at 9a for instructions and assignments. 11401 Old Glen Hiway, Eagle River. Contact hawkow168@gmail.com for more information

January 6, Monday

Alaska Native Plant Society, 7p-9p. Zoe Meade presents "Artic Coastal Plain Research." Rosaceae: Beth Baker presents, *Comarum* (march five fingers). Alpine Berengian endemics: Dennis Ronsse presents *Douglasia beringensis*. Campbell Creek Science Center, 5600 Science Center Dr. Anchorage. aknps.org

January 6, Monday

Mat-Su Master Gardeners Association, 7p. Rob Brown "Flat Top Farm." Meeting at the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center, 1509 S. Georgeson Dr, Palmer. in Kerttula Hall, "Blue Room." matsumastergardeners.com

January 7, Tuesday

Valley Garden Club, 10:30a. TBA. Includes a potluck lunch. First Baptist Church of Wasilla on the corner of Leatherleaf Loop and Bogard Rd. Wasilla. valleygardenclub.com

January 9, Thursday

Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association. 7p- 9p. TBA. BP Energy Center, 1014 Energy Court, Anchorage. www.apfga.org

January 14, Tuesday

Eagle River Garden Club program meeting, 7p-8p. Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 18444 Old Glenn HWY. Eagle River. alaskagardenclub.org

January 10, Friday

Herb Study Group, Noon-1:30p. Ginseng by Elaine Hammes. At CES Learning Commons, 4th floor of Loussac Library, 3600 Denali St. If not on Herb Study email list or for questions, send e-mail to anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com

January 12, Sunday

Cook Inlet Bonsai Study Group, 1p. "Arboricola and Jade." Dimond Green Houses, 1050 W. Dimond Blvd., Anchorage. pmarmora@aol.com; Put Bonsai in subject line. alaskabonsaiclubs.org

January 18, Saturday

Alaska Rock Garden Society, "Four Seasons of Interest in the Rock Garden. Sharing members Rock Garden photos. Eagle River Elk's Lodge, 17111 Eagle River Loop Rd. Eagle River. akrockgardensociety.org

January 19, Sunday

Homer Garden Club, 2p-4p. Aspen Suites Hotel, Homer

January 20, Monday

Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage, 7p. "A Flora Carnivora" by Mike Baldwin. BP Energy Center, 1014 Energy Dr., Anchorage. alaskamastergardeners.org

January 28, Tuesday

Alaska Orchid Society, 6:30p-9p. Graham from the Lehua Orchids on the Big Island. Location TBA. akorchid.org

Conferences

January 30 - February 1

"2020 Alaska Peony Growers Association Winter Conference." Fairbanks, Westmark Hotel. alaskapeonyconference.com

February 10-14

Alaska Forum on the Environment. A statewide gathering of environmental professionals from government agencies, non-profit and for -profit businesses, community leaders, Alaskan youth, conservationists, biologists and community elders. Dena'ina Center, 600 W. 7th Av. Anchorage. akforum.org

February 20-22

15th Alaska Sustainable Agriculture Conference at the BP Energy Center, 1014 Energy Court, Anchorage. https://alaska.augusoft.net/index.cfm?method=course.classin-formation&course.number=5200001

February 22, Saturday

ABG Spring Garden Conference. More details at alaskabg.org

January 2020 Garden Event Calendar



February 26 - March 1, 2020

63 presenters, judges, and speakers —including Patrick Ryan of the Alaska Botanical Garden.

Workshops, seminars, show gardens, plant introductions, competitions, a large exhibition, children's activities, and much more.

Registration now open; special rates at nearby hotels.

https://gardenshow.com/

AMGA would like to thank the Northwest Flower & Garden Festival for providing tickets to the silent auction at the 2019 AMGA Annual Conference.



ALASKA SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE FEB. 20-22, 2020 BP Energy Center, Anchorage

February 29 and March 7

Fur Rondy at the Midtown Mall. AMGA will have a table with CES. There will be volunteer opportunities to help at the table. AMGA send out Sign up Genius to members.

February 26-March 1

North West Flower and Garden Festival, "Spring Fever"-Tickets available online. Washington State Convention Center 705 Pike St, Seattle WA. gardenshow.com



2020 Alaska Peony Conference January 30 - February 1, 2020

Sponsored by the Alaska Peony Growers Association Network with friends and expand your knowledge (and maybe see Julie Riley!)

This year's conference focuses on peony research, transporting peonies to market, and making farms successful.

Learning opportunites through school sessions for growers: Effective herbicide management; Cold chain management; Grant updates; workshops; and more.

Attendees can meet with industry partners and vendors in the exhibit hall.

Register by day, by the workshop, or by full conference.

Registration is open

https://www.alaskapeonyconference.com

March 20, 21, 23

The Southeast Alaska Master Gardners Association will be sponsoring a conference at Centennial Hall in Juneau. More information to come.

April 11, Saturday

Garden Show at the Midtown Mall. 10a-5p. This is a great event where all the garden clubs have a table and many are selling plants for this spring. Our table will have members' plants for sale; limit 2-4 flats per person with white plant name labels and yellow seller ID/price labels. Volunteers will be needed.

July 18-22

Botany 2020, Organized by the Botanical Society of America, will be in Anchorage. In association with the American Fern Society, Society of Herbarium Curators, International Society for Plant Taxonomy, and more: cms.botany.org/home.html

Winter Meetings 2019 - 2020

January 20, 2020 Meeting

"A Flora Carnivora" by Mike Baldwin

Reminder:

Gather up your flats and seeds to start for the Spring Garden Show at MidTown Mall!



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

Meetings are held at the BP Energy Center, 1014 Energy Court, Anchorage, accessed through the BP tower parking lot, the Energy Center is just south of the main building. *NOTE: meeting location may change*

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

AMGA Board of Directors

Susan Negus President Emily Becker Vice President Nancy Grant Treasurer Beth Norris Secretary Elaine Hammes At Large F.X. Nolan At Large Faye Stiehm At Large Jan Van DenTop At Large

Committee Chairs, Program Coordinators & Volunteers

CES Liaison: Elaine Hammes

CES Master Gardener Program Liaison: Steve Brown or Gina Dionne

Broadcast Email: Faye Stiehm Calendar of Events: Susan Negus

Advanced MG: Don Bladow, Fran Pekar

Directory Editor: Janice Berry

Meetings and other

educational programs: Emily Becker
Garden Tours: Emily Becker
Google Group: Mary Rydesky
Managers: Gina Docherty and Jane Baldwin
Grants Program: Elaine Hammes

Hospitality: Lynn Hansen, Ruthe Rasmussen, Sharon Schlicht, and Wendy Willie

Membership & Database: Alexis St. Juliana
Newsletter Editor: Ginger Hudson
Website: Gina Docherty

Lifetime Achievement

and Grants: Lynne Opstad

Pioneer Home: Lynne Opstad, Ginger Hudson

Volunteer Coordinator: Julie Ginder Volunteer Coordinator: Susan Negus



Far left: Seed starting in a south-facing window near downtown last February. Left: How will they adapt to the changing winters? Ptarmigan in winter plumage minus the forest's winter plumage. Photos by Ginger Hudson.

Membership Renewal

Memberships are based on calendar year.

If you have not renewed, bring your cash or check to the January meeting. Or, find a membership form in the November or December newsletter and mail to the address below. Or,

contact Alexis St. Juliana: astjuliana@hotmail.com

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

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.

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 Alexis St. Juliana at: astjuliana@hotmail.com





