

### Editor's Message by Ginger Hudson

We're giving our President a break this month while she travels to the Lower 48 for medical treatment.

Good news for current Master Gardeners, an Advanced Master Gardener class has been scheduled, Permaculture. See page 4 of this newsletter for details and how to sign up.

Did you know that your board members and special committee volunteers organize the Advanced Master Gardener course? These folks also plan –and this year agonize over–special events, tours, and plant sales. Our organization is made up of over 200 eager garden enthusiasts, sometimes the board is not able to respond to all educational requests. In November, AMGA will hold elections to replace retiring Board members. If you believe there is an event or outreach opportunity missing on our horizon, here is your chance to be a part of that planning committee. The leadership keeps AMGA moving forward and a prominent anchorpoint in the local gardening community. Add your fertile ideas to the compost that makes up our landscape and helps the master gardener program thrive. As we saw this year with the rush on garden plants and supplies, citizens are more interested than ever in creating home gardens to feed their families. Many of you have the experience, or know what the questions are that we can answer. Please contact Sue Negus, [senegus@gci.net](mailto:senegus@gci.net), or any other board member listed on page 8, to put your name on the Board election list. It's a much nicer campaign than running for President of the US, we promise!

A perfect example of how AMGA knits together the gardening fabric of South Central Alaska is the new native plant demonstration garden at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center. The idea sprouted from a presentation by AWCC at the Wildflower Garden Club one month. Co-Presidents of WGC Paul Marmora and Kathy Liska were quickly inspired to add to the property. Paul and Kathy are both Master Gardeners, and used their contacts here and with other clubs to rally plant donations and volunteers to bring a new garden to life. It goes

to show, no club operates in an individual container, we all cross-pollinate to produce positive results in the region. We'll present more on the native garden in future issues.

Other opportunities to work with your fellow gardeners this fall are putting gardens to sleep. Contact Debbie Hinchey: [dhinchey@alaskan.com](mailto:dhinchey@alaskan.com) to help clean out The Centennial Rose Garden at the Park Strip. Contact Julie Ginder at [jkginder@gci.net](mailto:jkginder@gci.net) to help close down the Pioneer Home gardens. You never know, at any location you could learn about a new species or collect seed to try in your garden next year while earning volunteer credit.

I cannot thank the master gardeners enough who opened their gardens to me for documentation this summer. It has been a great privilege and pleasure to visit these lovingly craved environments, even while maintaining appropriate health protections. I have collected bushels of videos with many still to process. Hopefully these will pass along beauty and inspiration to everyone planning for next year's season. If you have an interesting fall garden, with late fruit, late season flowers, or fun seed heads, please feel free to contact me to take photos, [ginger@growingtall.llc](mailto:ginger@growingtall.llc), or Emily Becker, [emilyandZeke@yahoo.com](mailto:emilyandZeke@yahoo.com).

In the spirit of the UnFair, if you documented your award-winning fruit, veggies, or flowers, please send a photo with the plant and your name to the newsletter, we'd love to share with the community, [newsletteramga@gmail.com](mailto:newsletteramga@gmail.com)



Top: A view of bright flowers in Catherine's garden. Left: Three bleeding hearts in Fran's garden. Photos by Ginger Hudson.

#### Inside This Issue...

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# Messing Around with Mushroom Growing Medium by Emily Becker

Lots of local mushroom growers use hardwood sawdust as a growing medium for their gourmet mushrooms, producing a scrupulously clean and flawless product. However, this type of production also produces a lot of waste: the leftover blocks of sawdust. For what might gardeners use this waste product?

Sawdust and wood chips are great for paths because they smother weeds and make a nice, soft trail. Sawdust is not usually a great mulch for growing plants because it has a reputation for “robbing” nitrogen. It has a very high carbon:nitrogen ratio, and the microorganisms digesting the wood need to use a lot of nitrogen, delaying its availability for your growing plants!

But mushroom growing medium is a little different. It’s been heat-sterilized and it’s full of wheat berries and mycelia. Would it make a great soil amendment? I decided to do some informal experimenting and find out.

I filled some 7-gallon fabric pots with the mushroom medium and planted potatoes. The only extra additions were a few table-

spoons of organic fertilizer, a spoonful of potassium around the seed potato, and a little brown grass mulch on top.



The potatoes were happy as clams! I harvested a pot early, just to report for this article (and because I was hungry), and the potatoes were robust, with glowing skin! (Not a hint of scab!)

Master Gardener Sheila Toomey also experimented with planting potatoes in the mushroom medium. She reports that it took a while for them to sprout, but they are currently growing well. She has not harvested them yet, though.

I also tried planting a few beet starts in the mushroom medium. This was a complete failure. The plants are about an inch taller now than when I planted them a few months ago. I’ve even tried watering them with some worm tea, and it didn’t help. They have all the signs of starving to death. MG Madge Oswald also experienced some frustration with the mushroom medium. She mixed it with grass for her compost bin and reported that it did not even start to compost. She ended up using it as mulch for her veggie garden.

I had good luck composting it. I mixed it 1:1 with spent grain from Midnight Sun Brewery in my tumbler, and it heated up and decomposed rapidly into some of the prettiest brown compost I have ever made. It looked like the stuff you buy at the store! I cannot say for sure how nutritious it is, but it looks wonderful. I used it to help hill the potatoes, propping up the stems.

I also mixed the mushroom medium into some old potting



soil at about a 1:1 ratio and planted some sunflower starts. These plants have done fine, and I’ve even harvested some edible shrooms that must not have finished fruiting!

Finally, I placed the mushroom medium around my fruit trees: cherries and apples. They definitely suppress weeds and hopefully invigorate the fungal community. I have no specific evidence of success or failure here.

I really enjoyed playing around with the mushroom growing medium in the garden.

I will definitely use it for growing

potatoes next year. It was especially helpful for hilling the taters. It’s a great way to recycle and reuse what otherwise might go to waste.

For more information on how sawdust is used in growing mushrooms, [check out this blog.](#)

Above left: Happy potatoes growing in the mushroom medium.

Above right: Beets not growing in the mushroom medium (they are about 2 months old here!)

Photos by Emily Becker.

## AMGA Treasurer’s Report, July 2020

By Nancy Grant

### Balance 06/31/2020

Checking S-88	\$14,758.25
Business MBR Shares	5.25
Business Premium Share	\$16,882.92
CD Education 5yr.	
1.650% (12/20)	\$5,392.22
CD General 2yr.	
1.95% (1/21)	\$10,554.36
	\$47,593.00

### Revenue:

Interest/Dividends	\$2.87
Membership	\$61.14
Donation	\$48.25
	\$112.26

### Expenses:

Operations	\$149.99
Website	\$195.00
	\$344.99

### Balance 06/31/2020

Checking S-88	\$14,522.65
Business MBR Shares	\$5.25
Business Premium Savings	\$16,885.79
I 60 Certificate 5yr.	
1.650% (12/20)	\$5,392.22
I 24 Certificate 2yr.	
1.95% (01/21)	\$10,554.36
	\$47,360.27

## Herb Study: Herb Garden Updates by Elaine Hammes

This is the time of year ABC's Herb Garden is full and over-flowing! Just about every plant in the garden has already or is now flowering.

The Korean Angelica (*Angelica gigas*) now has tall, deep red stems and compact flower heads above the leafy growth. The Garden Angelica (*Angelica archangelica*) has long ago flowered, with seeds maturing, leaves and stems already yellowing, nearly gone by. [Ed. note: the Editor knows of one intrepid plantsman that traveled all the way from Fairbanks to view the Angelicas!]

One somewhat slow but very successful plant this summer was Chervil (*Anthriscus cerefolium*). The 2019 Chervil was transplanted and grew less than successfully in the West Bed (as part of the Fines Herbes group). For 2020, the Chervil was direct-seeded and took some time to germinate. Its lacy leaves then covered the ground nicely. Recently, stalks have shot up with flowers and seed heads.

Vietnamese Coriander (*Persicaria odorata*) is new in the Herb Garden in 2020. The leaves are distinctive with the topside of dark green and tan spots. It is a perennial plant in tropical and subtropical zones and rarely flowers outside of the tropics.

Volunteer slots in the Herb Garden are open 1-3 pm each M-W-F for two people on each day to allow for physical distancing in the garden. Work in the Herb Garden is expected to continue through September and likely into October. Virtual Herb Study Group meetings are planned to begin in October. For additional information, email the Herb Study Group at [anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com](mailto:anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com).

*Note: New open hours for the Alaska Botanical Garden*

There is still a lot to see at the end of summer!

Gate Hours Starting Tuesday, Aug 25 (except special events):

Tuesday ..... 10am-4pm

Wednesday ..... 10am-4pm

Thursday ..... 10am-4pm

Friday ..... 10am-4pm

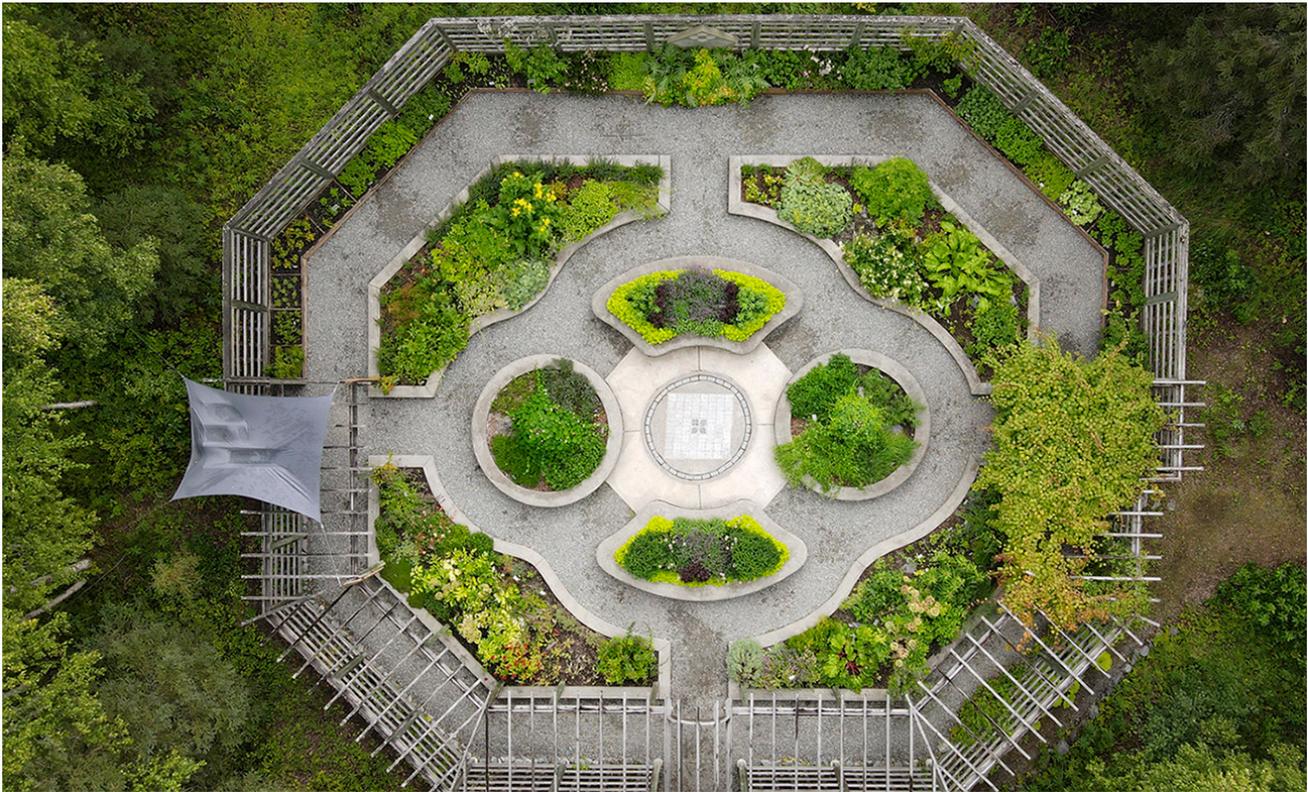
Saturday ..... 10am-4pm

Sunday ..... CLOSED

Monday ..... CLOSED

South beds

S



North beds

N

Often the Herb Study Group refers to bed locations when discussing plants in the Herb Garden at the Alaska Botanical Garden. Here is an aerial visual to help understand the garden's orientation since it's often hard to determine direction in the garden in the midst of the boreal forest. For reference, the arctic kiwi arbor is on the right, and the main entry is on bottom in this photo taken August 19. Photo by Ginger Hudson.

# Advanced Master Gardener Training

## Permaculture for Alaskan Gardeners



### Details

Location: Online via Zoom

Tuesdays, 6-8 pm

beginning Oct. 20th and ending Nov 24th  
(12 hours total instruction)

You must attend all 12 hours of class,  
and complete 15 hours of volunteer work to earn an  
Advanced Master Gardener Certificate.

This course does NOT lead to a  
Permaculture Design Certificate.

Class is limited to 50 students, so enroll today!

Sign up Here: <https://bit.ly/2G0Bkq1>

This intensive course will take you on a journey to understand the patterns and principles in nature, and how we can use them to create more abundant gardens that are less toil and trouble. By enlisting the help of nature as our ally, we can create more harmonious gardens that have natural beauty and productivity.

### About the Instructor

Saskia Esslinger is a certified Permaculture Designer and Teacher residing in Homer, Alaska. Through her business, Teach Gardening, she has taught over 400 people how to grow more food with less work.

A lifelong Alaskan, Saskia grew up in Anchorage eating garden veggies and wild game. She believes in the transformational effect gardens can have on people and the planet, and she is doing her part to cultivate a garden revolution.

### Questions?

Contact Gina Dionne,  
Program Assistant  
Cooperative Extension Service,  
Anchorage Outreach Center  
907-786-6313

[gddionne@alaska.edu](mailto:gddionne@alaska.edu)

**Course Fee:** \$50 for AMGA members; \$70 for non-members

## WANTED: POTS

**Seeking 2-5 gallon sized pots.  
Didn't get a chance to recycle your pots this year?**

**I'm planning on working with the St. Francis House food pantry again next spring to connect their clients with fresh food they can grow themselves. If you have pots to donate, please email Emily Becker, [emilyandzeke@yahoo.com](mailto:emilyandzeke@yahoo.com)**

# Bird Chatter

**HARVEST...** Did you catch photos of the Grow North Farm in a recent ADN? Very nice, but the captions didn't mention a most important fact: The adjacent stand that sells its produce is open Monday to Friday from 4 to 7 p.m. — unlike the weekend-only farmers' markets. The garden and stand, run by Catholic Social Services on Community Land Trust land, is up on Mountain View Drive, just off the Glenn at Bragaw — an easy stop on the way home from work — oh, right — who's going home from work these days.

Sigh.

Anyhow, the former parking lot is farmed by refugees from places people have to get away from. Many of them were farmers in their former lives and the farm is an acculturation technique that lets them learn about their new country while also learning how to be a small business person — selling at their own stand and at two of the weekend markets.

BC applauds the noble motives but mostly BC just loves the lettuce and broccoli. (BC's lettuce all bolted).



**ANOTHER BAD BOY...** Meet the lanternfly. It's currently destroying trees in Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. It particularly likes ornamental fruit trees — It also likes grapevines.

The Napa Valley is nervous.

The lantern fly is moving — on all kinds of vehicles. Plus, it's originally from China. Guess what's closer to China than Pennsylvania?

Right. Us. Maybe the fact that ships don't dock here from China will save us. Or our climate. But BC wouldn't count on it. In case you haven't noticed, our climate is changing. And planes fly everywhere.

Don't even get BC started on the Asian Ladybug or the "murder hornet" — Seriously, could this year get any worse?

Above: Don't let its beauty hypnotize you, the larvae are damaging US forests. AP image.



A reminder that CES has moved to a new office: 219 E. International Airport Road, Anchorage. CES is only seeing people by appointment during Covid. Check their web site for the schedule: [www.uaf.edu/ces](http://www.uaf.edu/ces). CES is still planning on a Master Gardening class, however, no date is set.

**WHY WASTE IT...** Note that the Municipal compost program will be accepting "donations" until October 30th. After that, you'll have to rot your own garbage or — you know — throw it away.

The program was so popular this year that they ran out of finished compost in July. Assuming there are enough donations and they ripen nicely over the winter, the program is expected to resume in April, according to the lady at Solid Waste.

As always, fruit and veggie scraps, coffee grounds, egg shells. No meat, bones, paper, plastic, grass or other yard rakings. And it's bring some, take some. Check Solid Waste's website for locations.

**SHE'S A CHAMP...** A overdue shoutout to Ginger Hudson for her series of virtual garden tours that helped keep us sane during this Covid summer. They were beautifully shot and informative. Plus, a member who sought Ginger's advice on improving output from her greenhouse tomato crop sent BC the following photo as proof of how effective Ginger's advice was: Yum yum! Ginger brought her friend Jackie who has a similar greenhouse for co-advising. And yes, Ginger is BC's boss at the Newsletter.



**HER TOO...** As long as we're shouting out loud, let's hear another one for Julie Ginder, who has the thankless task of chivvying people into working on the Pioneer Home grounds. Evidence of her success? The beautiful flower beds that cheer up the whole neighborhood, not just PH residents. Rah rah for Julie! Say thanks by signing up to help put the beds down for the winter.

Above: After a plea to the community for help in treating unproductive tomatoes, this bounty burst from the greenhouse. Photo courtesy of Madam Bird Chatter.

Master Gardener in the news: Don Bladow and the Lutheran Church of Hope's Harvest of Hope Memorial garden was recently featured on KTVA. See the story [on the KTVA website here](#).

Warning to gardeners: those seeds arriving across the Lower 48 have gotten to Alaska, [see this article on Alaska Public Media](#).

If you receive suspicious seeds, contact David Schade, head of the Alaska Division of Agriculture, 745-7200, in Palmer.

# September 2020 Garden Event Calendar

**NOTE: All events subject to cancellation or rescheduling due to Covid-19 precautions. Please check group websites or other social media to find out if there are alternate arrangements to events. Be mindful of the Muni's daily changes. Remember to follow Muni and State regulations for travel and meetings.**

## Classes /Workshops

**Tuesday, September 8, 6:00 – 7:30 PM** via Zoom

Garlic Planing Workshop (Virtual) Sign up online. It's time to start thinking about garlic! Join ABC's Will Criner for a virtual workshop on planting garlic and other bulbs. You'll learn the difference between soft-neck and hard-neck varieties, how to prepare and amend your soil for maximum growth, and how to care for your garlic next summer. [Here is a link to the website.](#)

**Mondays, September 30 – November 18, 6 – 8 PM**

Registration is open for the Fairbanks gardening class. First Presbyterian Church, 547 Seventh Avenue, Fairbanks. [Here is a link to the website.](#)

## Meetings and Events

**Tuesday, September 1, 7 PM**

Monthly meeting of the Greater Eagle River Garden Club at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church at 18444 Old Glenn Hwy [Here is a link to the Facebook page.](#)  
[Here is a link to the website.](#)

**Thursday, September 3, 7– 9 PM**

"Basic Orchid Care," Anchorage Garden Club Program. 437 E 3rd Avenue, Anchorage. [Here is a link to the website.](#)

**Thursday September 10, 10 AM - 12 PM**

"Alaska Raptors – Owls" by Wildflower GC and presented by Bird Treatment and Learning Center. 1420 Cordova Street, Anchorage. [Here is a link to the website.](#)

**Tuesday September 15, 6:30 - 8:30 PM**

Ketchikan Garden Club Program Meeting. Ketchikan Public Library, 1110 Copper Ridge Lane, Ketchikan. [Here is a link to the website.](#)

**Wednesday September 16, 12 PM - 2 PM**

Fairbanks Garden Club Program Meeting. Members only. [Here is a link to the website.](#)

Alaska Rock Garden Society, meeting details to be determined. [Check their website for updates here.](#)

## Conferences

**September 12-17, 2021**

International Master Gardener Conference 2021 in Norfolk, Virginia. [Here is a link to the website.](#)

## Plant Sales

All Summer

ABG Plant Sale. Order plants online with curbside pick-up or visit the nursery in person. 4601 Campbell Airstrip Rd, Anchorage.

[Here is a link to the website.](#)

Paul Marmora's perennials, [pmarmora@aol.com](mailto:pmarmora@aol.com); 3516 Cottonwood St., Anchorage.

## Weekly Gardening Opportunities

### \*Herb Study Group

Work at the Herb garden at ABG throughout the summer. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, there is a sign-up Genius. If you don't have the Sign-up Genius, contact Elaine Hammes, [marye.hammes@acsalaska.net](mailto:marye.hammes@acsalaska.net) Check-in at ABG office, and take a radio. Two people at a time with social distancing and need to wear masks ABG, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage.

Email contact: [anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com](mailto:anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com)

### \*Alaska Rock Garden Society

Maintenance at ABG Rock Garden. Two people at a time with social distancing and need to wear masks. Talk to Will Criner at ABG for times. 4601 Campbell Airstrip Road, Anchorage.

\*To volunteer for ABG you need Bear Awareness training by Stacey Shriner/ABG

### Palmer Visitor Center Rock Garden

Maintenance on Thursdays-Volunteers needed throughout the summer. Contact Jaime Rodriguez: [jrtinker@mtaonline.net](mailto:jrtinker@mtaonline.net) or 907-355-2463

# September 2020 Garden Event Calendar

## Online classes

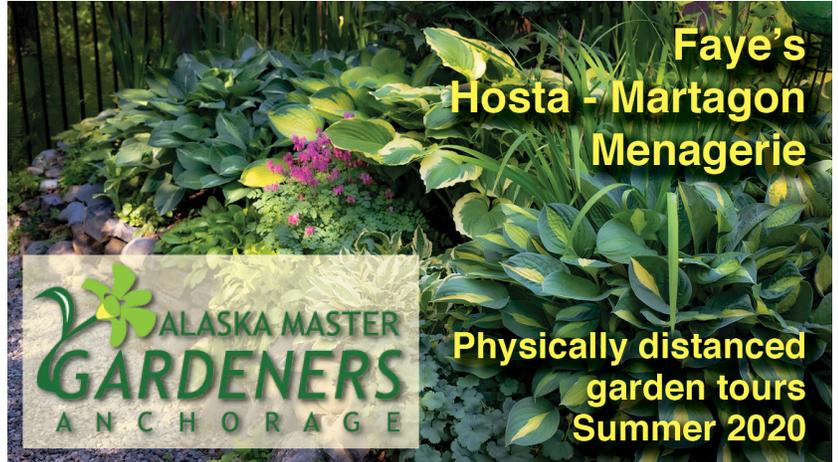
Alaska Mill and Feed has multiple topics on gardening.  
[See their Facebook site here.](#)

Good Earth Garden School by Ellen Vande Visse.  
 Will have online classes this Fall.

[Here is a link to the website.](#)

Garden Tours of Master Gardeners gardens on YouTube. Ginger Hudson is doing this and will keep adding more. As of this writing, there are nine videos, and they are all wonderful!

[Access the channel \(and subscribe\) here.](#)



## Send in your "award-winning" UnFair photos!

Did you grow something fabulous that you know would have placed in the State Fair? Share your hard work with AMGA here since we may not see each other for a while. Email photos to: [newsletteramga@gmail.com](mailto:newsletteramga@gmail.com)

Visit the new [AMGA youtube channel](#) to see your fellow gardeners' landscapes. We may not have been able to socialize in person, but we can still share and learn from each other.

Do you have a fabulous late summer or fall garden? Share with us. Contact Ginger to arrange for a video walk through. Shy, no, you don't have to be on camera yourself! [ginger@growingtall.llc](mailto:ginger@growingtall.llc)

### Accepted Materials



- Fruit & Veggie Scraps
- Coffee grounds
- Egg shells

### Not Accepted



- No leaves, grass or garden debris
- No fish, meat, dairy or poultry
- No "compostable" containers
- No inorganic material
- No animal waste or manure
- No cooked food



Left: Golden raspberries at Paul's garden in Roger's Park.  
 Right: Two varieties of heirloom corn produced in Catherine's garden in Fairview. Photos by Ginger Hudson.

## Community Compost is Open— NOTE: for drop-off only!

Due to high demand, finished compost is no longer available this year.  
 Recycle your kitchen scraps at Anchorage Solid Waste Services and disposal sites.  
 The remaining materials will continue to compost and be available in the 2021 season.

For more information including types of materials to compost and hours of operation visit:  
<http://www.muni.org/Departments/SWS/Recycling/Pages/CommunityCompost.aspx>

# A LITTLE SPACE GOES A LONG WAY

## WHAT DOES 6 FT LOOK LIKE?



Two picnic tables between friends



A moose's antlers



A Yoga mat



A national park sign



Two information waysides



One Grizzly bear

Looking for the best place for #socialdistancing? Many park areas remain accessible to provide that distance, but please do it safely and responsibly!

## STAY SAFE AND RECREATE RESPONSIBLY



*Lonicera caerulea*, honeyberry or haskap berry bushes in Cindy's Stuckagain Heights garden.  
Photo by Ginger Hudson.

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\***

**2020-2021 meetings may be held online**

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

## Membership Renewal

**Memberships are based on calendar year.**

If you have not renewed, bring your cash or check to the next meeting. Or, find a membership form in last November's newsletter and mail to the address below. Or, contact Alexis St. Juliana: [astjuliana@hotmail.com](mailto:astjuliana@hotmail.com)

### 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

## Summer Garden Tours

Keep an eye on your inbox for notifications of tours: some virtual, some by invitation, or in person. We hope!

**Watch your email, check our website or facebook page, or call a friend for tour status.**

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](mailto: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](http://www.alaskamastergardeners.org)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/Alaska-Master-Gardeners-Anchorage](https://facebook.com/Alaska-Master-Gardeners-Anchorage)

AMGA Google Group:  
<https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups#!forum/AKMGAs>

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](mailto:astjuliana@hotmail.com)

