

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Emily Becker

Well, hello, Winter! I'll be curious to see how this November's average temperature stacks up against Novembers of yore.

We started the month peculiarly above freezing and then got summarily tossed into the ice locker.

Yes, I'm grateful we got a thick blanket of snow to protect our perennials before the sub zero chill descended. Was it enough? I'll know in May.

Anyway, a warm welcome to our new AMGA Board members: Meg O'Mullane and Kat Karabelnikoff. They, along with returning members Jan van den Top and myself, were elected by acclamation at the November member meeting. We're looking forward to their new perspective on the AMGA organization.

Our November meeting featured a very intriguing history presentation from Dr. Talis Colberg; make sure to check out the summary in this issue.

It's time to renew your membership for 2022! You can get it done [online on our website](#), or the renewal form is included in the newsletter. Please make sure you renew in time to be included in the member directory. Are you signing up for one of the spring classes? You can renew at the same time!

A reminder, the two spring classes are: [Mastering Garden Design](#) with Brenda Adams and [Introduction to Botany and Plant Identification for Alaska Gardeners](#) with Dr. Marilyn Barker. More information, including the [syllabi for both classes](#), can be found on our website.

By the time you read this, I will have eaten my favorite meal of the year: Thanksgiving.

I'm ever so grateful for the growing number of items on my plate that are Alaska-grown.

I was very disheartened by the closing of Havemeister Dairy in October, but I recently picked up milk from Delta Junction's Alaska Range Dairy (available at Blue Market AK) and, after the sticker-price shock passed, swooned over the milk. It's delicious.

Thank you, thank you, to all our persistent Alaskan farmers, and gratitude to the land that provides so much.

This time of year is tough on those who are missing family. My condolences to all who loved AMGA member FX Nolan, who passed away recently. Make sure to read the tribute in this issue.

Warmhearted holiday wishes to one and all. 🌿

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NOVEMBER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS by Beth Norris

Dr. Talis Colberg of Palmer gave an exciting history lesson on the seven original agricultural research stations in Alaska at our November 15 member meeting.

Unlike similar programs in the Lower 48 which were started after the establishment of university systems, the federal experimental stations in Alaska were established before the university system. This was due to the fact that Alaska was not yet a state and had no university system in place.

Three pieces of legislation made the experimental stations possible. The first was the Morrill Act of 1862 which established the land grant university system; the second was the 1884 territorial status granted to Alaska; and, the third was the Hatch Act of 1887 which provided funding for federal experimental agricultural stations.

A major historical figure in the development of the program was C. C. Georgeson. In 1896 the federal government funded a botanical survey of coastal regions in south-central and southeast Alaska to decide the best location options for the first experimental stations. Georgeson established the first two locations in Sitka (which was the territorial capitol at the time) and Kenai.

It was assumed that the best locations would be south and coastal, but, it was soon discovered that there were opportunities in the interior as well. The next two stations to be established were in Rampart (northwest of Fairbanks) and Copper Center. The Copper Center station was the shortest lived, from 1903 to 1908, and closed due to access issues and early frosts.

Another major figure in the development of the experimental stations was Milton Snodgrass. He studied at the University of Kansas under Georgeson and moved to Alaska to first dismantle the Kenai station and then develop the Kodiak station.

The fifth station to open was on Kodiak Island and contained the Kelsin Bay Farm Site. This site was impacted by the 1912 Katmai volcanic eruption and with the air and streams choked with ash, the local brown bears decimated the farm's sheep. The cows were spared by evacuating them to Washington state until conditions improved to allow their return to Kodiak.

The remaining two experimental stations were

established in Fairbanks (at the site where they still exist and where UAF's main campus is located) and in the Mat-Su Valley. In the 1930s, the experimental station network was aligned and absorbed by the university system and currently, UAF oversees the program. The Mat-Su and Fairbanks stations are the only ones still active today.

Considerable materials and historical documents associated with this history are located at the UAF Rasmuson Library. 🌿

OCT. 2021 AMGA TREASURER'S REPORT

Balances on 10/01/2021

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Checking S-88 | \$19,276.31 |
| Savings S-1 | \$5.25 |
| Savings S-19 | \$16,925.24 |
| CD General 2 year 1.95%; 1/23 | \$10,742.83 |

Total Assets \$46,949.63

Interest/Dividends \$3.12

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| This month's revenue | |
| Membership | \$200.42 |
| Donations | |
| Fundraising/Plant sale | |

Total revenue \$200.42

This month's expenses

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Grants (scholarships) | \$50.00 |
| Hospitality | |
| Operations | \$102.00 |
| Website | \$52.99 |
| Plant sale | |
| Public Relations (State Fair) | |

Total Expenses this month \$204.99

BALANCES ON 09/30/2021

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Checking S-88 | \$19,271.74 |
| Savings S-1 | \$5.25 |
| Savings S-19 | \$16,928.36 |
| CD General 2 Year 1.95%, (1/23) | \$10,742.83 |

Total Assets on 8/31/2021 \$46,948.18

Prepared by Jan van den Top on 11/06/2021

2021 COMMUNITY GRANT REPORT from Polaris K-12

This summer was a blessing with the amount of rain (it made watering a little bit easier for all of us).

At Polaris, we work closely with our community to provide a well-rounded education that includes understanding how to be sustainable. We have a large outdoor garden space, aptly named “The Habitat,” with seven large beds and four smaller beds for flowers and herbs.



Each year, we work with our earth science students in middle and high school to coordinate with our elementary students in cleaning, planting and

tending the habitat to grow a variety of vegetables, herbs, and gorgeous flowers that bring the community together.

Students from kindergarten to high school spent a good part of the spring cleaning out the habitat (many of them played in the dirt while “cleaning” but oh how good it was to get students outside after a year of Zoom!) and planting a variety of veggies using the new tools we were able to purchase using the grant we were given.

The hoses were so amazing to have as they allowed us

to water with ease by turning on the hose and attaching a sprinkler.

Wheelbarrows made moving massive roots (like the one pictured) a dream and students were competing in “wheelbarrow races” to drop the grass off the fastest.

We began the renovation of our beds in a slow overhaul, but we got it started and that was the first step.

This fall, kindergarteners and 1st graders spent a wonderful time digging potatoes up so they could make potato soup!



Suffice to say, with new materials we were able to purchase, our community really came together and is working to reclaim our habitat to make it an enjoyable place for all. We are SO very grateful to the AMGA for their support in our progress.

Here’s to many more years in the habitat! — Jessica Winn, National Geographic Certified Educator, Secondary Science and Math, Polaris K-12

IN MEMORIAM: F.X. NOLAN

We’re sad to share news of the passing of F.X. Nolan, a former AMGA Board member and steadfast supporter of this organization.

F.X. passed away suddenly at the end of September. He was a 50-plus year resident of Alaska who, along with his wife, Susan Reilly, experienced many of the joys and frustrations of gardening in the Last Frontier in both the Fairbanks and Anchorage areas.

Retired from a career in public safety, F.X. became a Master Gardener in the Anchorage class of 2013 and was an Advanced Alaska Master Gardener and a student of the many aspects of permaculture. He was also an accomplished hydroponic



F.X. Nolan

grower. F.X. was especially devoted to promoting the continuous offering of the MG course, the careful monitoring of the AMGA bank accounts, and, with the gratitude of his fellow Board members, parliamentary procedure.

His daughter Maia recalls her parents as “hippie gardeners” growing vegetables in the Goldstream Valley when she was little, and later, her dad later maintaining a meticulous yard in Anchorage. However, she believes the gardening he did post-retirement—especially cultivating his apple and cherry trees—brought him the most joy, and that he cherished his AMGA involvement. 🌱

HERB STUDY: VIOLAS, VIOLETS & PANSIES by Elaine Hammes

The Herb Study Group's November topic was the International Herb Association's 2022 Herb of the Year "Viola, Violet, Pansy, Heartsease, et al."

Attendees were overwhelmed with information about this group of herbs. Who knew there were so many species and who knew about the many subfamilies and tribes within the *Viola* genus? This is the largest of about 25 genera and about 600 species in the large clade, the Eudicot family *Violaceae*. Much more information can be found in Wikipedia.



Johnny Jump Ups and a native *Viola* growing along a trail in the Anchorage area. Photos by Mary Contrary.

Many *Viola* species, varieties and cultivars are grown in gardens for their ornamental flowers. In horticulture, the term "pansy" is normally used for multi-colored, large-flowered cultivars which are raised annually or biennially from seed and used extensively in bedding. The terms "viola" and "violet" are normally reserved for small-flowered annuals or perennials, including wild species.

In local experiences, it seems that the terms *Viola tricolor*, Johnny Jump Up and Heartsease are used for the same and/or very similar *Viola* species.

From the website iNaturalist, six Alaska native species are included: Dog Violet (also known as Hooked-spur Violet, *Viola adunca*; White Violet, Kidneyleaf Violet, *Viola renifolia*; Stream Violet, *Viola glabella*; Alaska Violet, *Viola langsdorfii*; Northern Marsh Violet, *Viola epipsila*; and Twoflower Violet, *Viola biflora*. iNaturalist also includes numerous photos, a great resource for native plants in Alaska and worldwide.

Since *Viola tricolor* is easily grown locally, this led to suggesting its inclusion into the Herb Garden for the next summer season.

Culinary uses of *Violas* include flowers for numerous decorations and sweet flavors; and young leaves as a leafy raw or cooked vegetable.

Medicinal uses have included cough suppression, atopic dermatitis and insomnia. Further discussion of plants in different Herb Garden beds ensued and will be continued! 🌿



Herb Study Group Meeting Topics

December 10, 2021: Herbs for Holiday Celebrations: Bayberry, Rue, Frankincense, Myrrh, Ginger, Sage, Bed-straw

January 14, 2022: Marigolds (*Tagetes*)

February 11, 2022: Nasturtiums, Canarybird Vines

March 11, 2022: Native plants for ABG's Herb Garden

April 8, 2022: Herb Garden Plans for 2022

May 13, 2022: Yet to be determined

Anyone interested in learning about herbs is welcome to send an email to anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com to receive our notifications, join the monthly meetings via Zoom, noon to 1:30 p.m. on the 2nd Friday of each month, September-May, or volunteer in ABG's Herb Garden during the growing season. There are no dues or membership requirements.

SIGN UP FOR THE 2022 AMGA CLASS OFFERINGS

Mastering Garden Design with Brenda Adams

Sign up for [Mastering Garden Design with Brenda Adams](#).



This class was so popular this spring it's back for another run! Join expert garden designer and Alaska Master Gardener Brenda Adams for a deep exploration of garden design elements, including color, structure, layers, and more.

[Click here for a detailed course outline.](#)

Brenda has been hard at

work incorporating suggestions to make the class even better! Registration will be open to AMGA members only for the first two weeks; we will then open the class to the general public. The class will meet six consecutive Wednesdays, 6-8 pm, starting on Feb. 9, via Zoom. The member cost is \$50.

Participation is open to all AMGA members.

Intro to Botany and Plant ID for Alaska Gardeners

Join Dr. Marilyn Barker for an [Introduction to Botany and Plant Identification](#).

In this 12-hour class, we will start with foundational concepts of plant physiology and life cycles and then begin building the skills to identify plant characteristics and families.

The class begins Tuesday, Feb. 8, and will meet 12 consecutive Tuesday evenings from 7-8 pm, via Zoom. [A more detailed syllabus can be found here.](#)

Students who complete the requirements for this class, including 15 service hours, will earn the Advanced Master Gardener certificate. The member cost is \$50. The class is limited to 50 people.

Participation is open to all voting AMGA members.



BIRD CHATTER

Looking for new farm land? Over the next 30 years, the Alaska Division of Agriculture plans to auction up to 140,000 acres of new agricultural land in the Nenana area, beginning with 2,000 acres next fall. Learn more in this short [Alaska Public Media video](#) or watch APM's [longer program about food security](#) in Alaska.

Bee informed Fran Durner recently shared a free online Ohio State University "Pollinators in the City Speaker Series." Additional sessions are planned December 1-3. All sessions are recorded and will be posted [here](#).

Learn about pesky invasives Check this month's event calendar for a few UAF CES classes on how to manage some of Anchorage's most obnoxious invasive

weeds, including bird vetch and orange hawkweed. The calendar didn't have enough room for all of the classes available. Classes are also offered on white sweetclover and exotic plant diseases, for example. Now if only someone could link [the course catalog](#) off the main CES website ...

Hold the date The 2022 Alaska Master Gardener Conference will be Saturday, April 2 at Evangelo's Restaurant in Wasilla.

What's new, interesting, confounding and delightful? Send your bits of interesting garden news to birdchatter@alaskamastergardeners.org.



DECEMBER 2021 EVENT CALENDAR

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Tuesday, December 7, 6-7:30 pm

Turning Honey into Mead – An Urban Harvest Event taught by Two Season Meadery and hosted by the Anchorage Museum. [Registration and more info.](#)

Tuesdays, February 8-April 26, 7-8 pm

AMGA Class: Intro to Botany and Plant Identification with Dr. Marilyn Barker on 12 consecutive Tuesdays. View the [course outline](#) and [sign up](#). Member cost: \$50.

Wednesdays, February 9-March 16, 6-8 pm

AMGA Class: Garden Design with Brenda Adams on six consecutive Wednesdays. Member cost: \$50. View the [course outline](#) and [sign up](#).

Anytime (self-paced course)

Cooperative Extension Service: Bird vetch in Alaska. Self paced independent study online course worth 1 continuing education unit for certified pesticide applicators. This course details the biology, impact, and management of the invasive plant bird vetch as well as decision tools for control and how to report invasive species. [Registration and more info.](#) Cost: \$15.

Anytime (self-paced course)

Cooperative Extension Service: Orange hawkweed in Alaska: Self-paced independent study online course worth 1 continuing education unit for certified pesticide applicators. This course details the biology, impact, and management of the invasive plant orange hawkweed and decision tools for control and how to report invasive species. [Registration and more info.](#) Cost: \$15.

Anytime (self-paced course)

Cooperative Extension Service: Spruce Beetle in Trees and Forests: Self-paced independent study online course worth 1 continuing education unit for certified pesticide applicators. This course details the biology, impact, and management of spruce beetles in Alaska and decision tools for control. [Registration and more info.](#) Cost: \$15.

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Wednesday, December 1-Monday, December 13

Mat-Su Experimental Farm & Extension Center: Virtual Holidays at the Farm. Online contests for

kids and adults, including local harvest dish (locally grown, foraged or hunted) and food preservation (most interesting way to preserve your harvest). Facebook Live tree lighting. Via Zoom. [Get details.](#)

Thursday, December 2, 10 am-noon

Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska: Holiday Wreaths at Dimond Greenhouses. [Get details.](#)

Monday, Dec. 6, 6-8 pm

Alaska Native Plant Society Meeting: Plants as Traditional Food and Medicine in the YK Delta. Via Google Meet. [Get meeting link.](#)

JOBS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

AMGA is seeking volunteer instructors for a four-session Olé (Opportunity for Lifelong Education) class in February. The 75-minutes classes will begin Feb. 11 at 9 a.m. on the UAA campus. The emphasis is on beginning gardeners. Don Bladow and Debbie Hinchey have signed up as instructors and more are welcome. Topics could include houseplants, fertilizers, specific crops, exhibiting at the State Fair. Contact Don at (907) 830-5723 or at dfbladow@gmail.com if you are interested. You can also be an assistant if you are not interested in leading a class.

The Harvest of Hope Memorial Garden is seeking to fill volunteer roles: a grant writer, blogger, and volunteer coordinator. The grant writer would look for grant opportunities and write up proposals, the blogger would assist with posting and updating the existing blog, and the volunteer coordinator would coordinate activities like garden tours and enlisting volunteers. If interested, please contact Don Bladow at (907) 830-5723 or email him at dfbladow@gmail.com.

Alaska Seeds of Change has many volunteer opportunities this winter. Many of their summer interns and employees are back in school. Sign up for a shift using [Seeds Sign Up Genius](#), or if it's your first time volunteering, email volunteer@akseedsofchange.com for an orientation.

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW!

Now is the time to renew with AMGA for 2022. [Use this online form to renew and pay online.](#) You can also fill out the online form and mail in a check. OR you can submit the paper form below with a check.

As a member, you support AMGA and its mission of gardening education in partnership with the University of Alaska Cooperative Extension Service. We provide continuing education, grants for garden projects, garden tours, and more, all in service to the community.



ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ANCHORAGE

Membership/Membership Renewal Form for the Year _____

AMGA's membership year is January 1st through December 31st
To ensure listing in the next MG Directory, dues must be received or postmarked by December 31st

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voting Membership (\$20) | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-voting Membership (\$20) | <input type="checkbox"/> Dual Membership* (\$30) |
| MG Class Year: _____ | | |
| MG Class Location: _____ | | |
| 40 volunteer hours complete? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | | Donation: \$ _____ |

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Last/First: _____ | Day phone: _____ |
| Address: _____ | Other phone: _____ |
| City/State: _____ | Zip Code: _____ |
| E-mail: _____ | |

***Dual Membership** (Two current AMGA members living at same address).

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Last/First: _____ | Day phone: _____ |
| E-mail: _____ | Other phone: _____ |

| | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voting Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-voting Membership |
| MG Class Year: _____ | |
| MG Class Location: _____ | |
| 40 volunteer hours complete? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Cash and/or check payments can be made at AMGA meetings with completed form.
If paying by mail, send form & payment to: AMGA, P. O. Box 221403, Anchorage, AK 99522-1403.
Make checks payable to Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage.
Memberships, renewals and donations may also be submitted online at www.alaskamastergardeners.org
Gift membership forms are also available online.

AMGA runs on volunteer power!

Needs vary, and may include such tasks as writing educational articles or postings, presenting monthly programs, Pioneer Home gardens' maintenance, photography, social media, web design, annual plant sale, workshops, etc. Volunteer opportunities will be provided as they occur for which AMGA will very much appreciate your support.

Your suggestions for educational program topics of interest and speaker recommendations are also welcomed: _____

AMGA Use: Date: _____ Check #: _____ Amount: _____ Cash: _____ Donation: _____



Bonus photo: *Viola adunca* (known as dog violet or hookedspur violet) blooming in May at Windy Corner along Turnagain Arm. Photo courtesy Elizabeth Bluemink

AMGA Board of Directors

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Emily Becker | President |
| Troy Weiss | Vice President |
| Jan van den Top | Treasurer |
| Beth Norris | Secretary |
| Kathleen Kaiser | At Large |
| Keenan Plate | At Large |
| Nick Riordan | At Large |
| Faye Stiehm | At Large |

Committee Chairs, Program Coordinators & Volunteers

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Emily Becker | CES Liason |
| Steve Brown, Gina Dionne | CES Master Gardener Program Liaison |
| Faye Stiehm | Broadcast Email |
| Vacant | Calendar of Events |
| Don Bladow, Troy Weiss, Emily Becker, Fran Pekar, Gina Dionne | Advanced MG Course |
| Janice Berry | Directory Editor |
| Kathy Liska, Cindy Walker | Facebook |
| Troy Weiss | Meetings & Educational Programs |
| Troy Weiss | Garden Tours |
| Mary Rydesky, Gina Docherty, Jane Baldwin | Google Group Managers |
| Troy Weiss, Jan van den Top, Beth Norris | Grants Program |
| Lynn Hansen, Ruthe Rasmussen, Sharon Schlicht, Wendy Willie | Hospitality |
| Alexis St. Juliana | Membership Database |
| Elizabeth Bluemink | Newsletter Editor |
| Gina Docherty | Website |
| Lynne Opstad | Lifetime Achievement |
| Lynne Opstad, Julie Ginder | Pioneer Home Garden |
| Emily Becker, Keenan Plate | Volunteer Coordinators |

Become a Member

AMGA memberships are based on calendar year. If you have not renewed, [you can pay online](#) or you can print and mail [the form on our website](#). Questions? Contact Alexis St. Juliana at astjuliana@hotmail.com

Next AMGA Meeting via Zoom!

January 17, 2022

“Spruce Beetle — What’s New in ‘22!”

Jessie Moan, CES Anchorage

Check your email, our website or Facebook page for connection instructions.

Member Meetings: 7 pm every 3rd Monday of the month, September through May (except December). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, AMGA meetings are currently being held online via Zoom. These monthly educational programs are free and open to the public. Visitors and guests are welcomed and encouraged.

Board Meetings: 2nd Monday of the month, 6-7 pm, anyone is welcome to observe. Send an email to president@alaskamastergardeners.org for the meeting link.

The Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage welcomes letters, opinions, articles, ideas and inquiries. Contact the editor at: newsletteramga@gmail.com
AMGA, Newsletter
P.O. Box 221403
Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

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 (400-600 words ideal), Bird Chatter, calendar items and announcements are always welcome.

Connect with AMGA

Website: www.alaskamastergardeners.org
Facebook: [facebook.com/Alaska-Master-Gardeners-Anchorage](https://www.facebook.com/Alaska-Master-Gardeners-Anchorage)
Youtube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCvZehJprKkjQzivQvNDKopQ
Google Group: <https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups#!forum/AkMGA>
Mail: 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

