

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Emily Becker

Spring is on the way once again!

My husband cried what I can only assume are tears of joy while setting up my grow lights, and my artichoke seedlings have two true leaves. I am also growing calendula and dahlia flowers for the first time from seed. I've probably already gotten behind in starting something, but luckily I don't know what yet.

Our spring Advanced Master Gardener class, "Mastering Garden Design" with Brenda Adams, filled up fast!

It's clear we are all hungry for more beauty. If you know Brenda, then you know she is a conscientious and diligent teacher. She is excitedly preparing a grand experience for her students. AMGA is considering offering the class again in the fall, so if you are interested, please fill out the form here.

There is no final word yet on Midtown Mall's usual spring garden show, but it's likely not happening. It's possible they will have a May event.

It's very tough to make decisions in a rapidly changing environment, but hopefully things are changing for the better.

At our February Board meeting, we made a decision to make garden tours happen this summer.

This means we are also committed to educating ourselves about best practices for hosting safer events. Board Secretary Beth Norris is heading up our COVID mitigation working group, and she welcomes any help from members. Please email her at secretary@alaska-mastergardeners.org.

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

sponsors free webinars and other resources for groups who are planning in-person events, and we will be following that advice carefully as summer arrives.

We are also taking another step into 21st century technology. AMGA recently signed up for Google's G-Suite for Nonprofits, a free set of services that will help professionalize our communication and hopefully make the sharing of information easier! Members might notice some changes and probably some mistakes as we learn the new technology.

In the meantime, I am ever grateful for the work of Janice Berry, who created and managed the production of our 2021 member directory. It's so beautiful, and it's nice to hold something in hand every once in a while instead of staring at a screen.

Speaking of technology, have you tried winter sowing?

It requires...milk jugs. I tried it last year and it was a banging success.

Now is the time. Get on YouTube (there are a million videos), join the Winter Sowing Facebook group, and hop on down that rabbit hole! 🌱

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FEBRUARY 2021 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The February 2021 Monthly Membership Meeting included a presentation by local climatologist, Dr. Brian Brettschneider on “Climate Change and Alaska Gardeners.”

Brian opened his talk by explaining the difference between weather and climate. Weather is typically measured on a time scale of 7 to 10 days whereas climate is measured in longer timescales.

A couple catchy phrases for remembering the difference are: “Weather are the clothes you wear on any given day; climate is your seasonal wardrobe,” or “Climate is what you expect; the weather is what you get!”

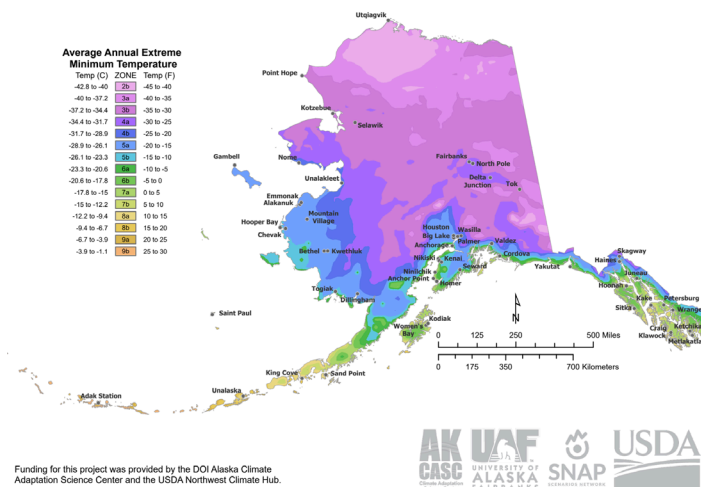
By the end of this century, the number of days below freezing could reduce by 30 to 59 percent, he said.

In that same time period, Alaska experienced a state-wide average of 1.5 days per year above 77 degrees. Brian said this could increase to 30 days per year by the end of the century.

A big takeaway from the presentation is the anticipated shift in hardiness zone temperatures on the USDA Hardiness Zone Map. The current USDA map uses a 30-year time period to calculate averages. Comparing a recent zone map (1976-2005) to a conceptual one shifted 15 years into the future (1991-2020) there is a 1.8 degree increase in average temperature, he said.

- Compiled by Beth Norris

Alaska Hardiness Zone Map: 2010 - 2039



UAF has a **Alaska Garden Helper Tool** where you can explore current and future predicted growing season length, annual temperature minimums, growing degree days, and hardiness zones at the community level, for the rest of the century. Visit <https://www.snap.uaf.edu/tools/gardenhelper/>

Why is Alaska cold? It's all about solar radiation. The farther north, the less solar radiation; the farther south, the more solar radiation.

Climate affects what's at the ground surface, above the ground surface (e.g. glaciers) and below the ground surface (e.g. permafrost). For the most part, the Anchorage area is permafrost free unlike the rest of the state, and in Anchorage, our average annual temperature is 38 degrees Fahrenheit.

Brian noted that between 1981 and 2021, Alaska experienced a statewide average of 219 days below freezing.

AMGA TREASURER REPORT January 2021

BALANCES ON 01/01/2021

Checking S-88	22159.43
Savings S-1	5.25
Savings S-19	16866.96
CD General 2yr. 1.95% (1/21)	10658.37
	\$49723.01

REVENUE

Interest/Dividends	4.01
Membership	1070.20
Donations	91.34
	\$1165.55

EXPENSES

Operations	268.29
Website	535.00
	\$805.29

BALANCES ON 02/01/2021

Checking S-88	24223.25
Savings S-1	5.25
Savings S-19	16902.88
CD General 2 yr. 1.95 (1/21)	10659.51
	\$51690.89

Jan van den Top, 02/06/2021

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: BONNIE TISLER

We are thrilled to announce Bonnie Tisler is the newest recipient of AMGA's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Bonnie Tisler was born and raised in Anchorage to one of the original pioneering families. Her father was a potato and stump farmer and her mother was always gardening. Bonnie raised her own family in Washington State, living a subsistence lifestyle. They grew all of their food (except the meat and beer) in a one-acre vegetable plot.

Bonnie's mother was one of the founders of the Anchorage Senior Center and donated plants to the gardens.

In 2004, Bonnie took over management of the gardens at the Center. Nothing was written down so Bonnie started cataloging the plants. She recognized the raspberries, poppies and a few others from her mother's gardens.

Bonnie started composting the cut grass and leaves in the back of the Center and was able to produce fabulous compost to use in the gardens.

The Center property is large and Bonnie didn't let any of the leaf litter go to waste. She continues to recycle to this day. She has been observant to changes of the landscape at the Center and is always eager to enhance the grounds for the future.

Bonnie had years of gardening experience when she joined the AMGA in 2012 after a gentle nudge from Julie Riley.

In 2013, when Judy Christianson and Mary Shier (both past recipients of the award) retired from maintaining the gardens at Anchorage Pioneer Home, volunteers and supplies were needed. Bonnie stepped up and continues to support the Pioneer Home service project to this day.

Bonnie has opened the gardens at the Anchorage

Senior Center numerous times for AMGA summer garden tours and is always ready to answer questions.

She helped the AMGA secure the Senior Center for a past Statewide Master Gardeners Conference. She continues to mentor new and old AMGA members at the Center. Bonnie has also donated plants for the AMGA annual plant sale.



Bonnie is also active with the Anchorage Weavers and Spinners Guild, including being a longtime volunteer at the Alaska State Fair. She is a long time member of the Anchorage Chapter of Gold Prospectors Association of America and the Pioneers of Alaska, teaching classes on Anchorage history and gold prospecting, and has served on OLE committees.

Bonnie is an exemplary model of the volunteer spirit of the Master Gardener program.

Congratulations Bonnie! 🌱

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!

Want to contribute to your community, learn more about gardening, or complete your volunteer hours?

Join our Pioneer Home service project!

AMGA has provided beautiful gardens for the residents at the Anchorage Pioneer Home for almost 30 years.

Sign up for as many hours as you like, at times convenient for you. Training is available. We also need someone to update the garden maps and are looking for a garden designer to join our team. To be added to our email list of volunteers, contact Julie at jkginder@gci.net or contact Lynne at Lynne.Opstad@gmail.com for more info.

BUILDING A RAIN GARDEN by Lisa Balivet

When my husband and I purchased our South Anchorage home on Old Klatt, in late spring 2012, we soon discovered very poor soil and even worse drainage.

We considered options for improving the esthetics of our yard, its garden viability and improved drainage. We attended several classes on home improvement and energy efficiency offered by the Alaska Craftsman Home Program.

One class, in particular, inspired us: The Anchorage Rain Garden Grant Program presented by Kari Sherman. That's all it took! We began to search online for additional information and ideas.

Requirements for the grant (which has since been discontinued by the municipality) included a rain garden consultation, design, photo documentation, inspection and maintenance. While these requirements were simple, the work was more than anticipated. However, it was creative, energizing and rewarding.

A few facts about our project:

Total Area:

Initial Hole – about 10'x25'x4.5'

Finished Garden – about 12'x25'x1'

Materials:

Reclaimed driveway concrete

Gravel 2" minus, ¾ minus, pea

Sand

Top soil

Lime

Steer Manure

Found Rocks

Municipal Wood Lot Wood Chips

Plants

Hours of Labor: 100s + (hard to be exact as it occurred over 2 summers as time permitted)

Volunteers: 2 homeowners

Total Cost: <\$1,700

Project Timeline:

In 2012, starting with a compact clay yard, lacking topsoil and with poor drainage, we began ditching the yard to encourage snow melt to drain to the backyard.

By summer, we were digging around the house foundation to install insulation and a French drain that would further percolate into the Rain Garden.

Ken excavated a large hole in the backyard and we progressed through the summer with various fills: concrete, rock, gravel, sand and topsoil.

Many of the fill materials were obtained free through Craigslist. The water drained after the first rainfall in 24 hours, leaving a compact dirt path.

Adding gravel was the finishing touch and helped to further compact the soil beneath it. I landscaped with found rocks, driftwood, and old bricks found in the yard and added perennials.

In 2013, the perennials established and returned beautifully that summer. I added honeyberry, gooseberry and current bushes.

In 2020, the rain garden was thriving and had become a bit overgrown. Several volunteer berry plants will be transplanted in summer 2021. The drainage and soil issues are resolved, and the garden brings much joy. 🌱



What is a Rain Garden?

A rain garden is a depression in the landscape designed to catch and filter the water that runs off your roof, driveway, sidewalk, and other hard surfaces. Rain gardens often contain native plants that help absorb and filter runoff, leading to cleaner waterways.

Rich sizes and textures are created by use of different types and shapes of stone from around the yard, various rivers and found along country roadsides.

Plants are selected on the basis of their height, color, shape, and above all, their adaptability for rain, meaning moist soils followed by occasional dry spells.

Pictured above is Lisa Balivet's completed rain garden.

HERB STUDY: CBD OIL by Debbie Hinchey and Elaine Hammes

CBD (hemp) oil is a concentrated extract from the *Cannabis L Sativa* plant. Although cannabis and industrial hemp both derive from the species *Cannabis sativa* and contain the psychoactive component tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), they are distinct strains with unique phytochemical compositions and uses. Hemp has lower concentrations of THC and may have higher concentrations of cannabidiol (CBD), which decreases or eliminates its psychoactive effects. The legality of industrial hemp varies widely between countries. Some governments regulate the concentration of THC and permit only hemp that is bred with an especially low THC content.

Cannabis contains over 500 natural compounds. Cannabinoids make up at least 113 of those compounds. Some cannabinoids (mainly Tetrahydrocannabinol, THC) are psychoactive, but most are not. The most common cannabinoids are THC, Cannabinol (CBN) and Cannabidiol (CBD). Cannabinoids are the chemicals that provide actual relief to patients by inserting themselves into specific receptors in the tissues and cells of the human body.

Cannabinoid receptors are an important class of cell membrane receptors, with two main subtypes known as CB1 and CB2. They are mostly differentiated by what tissue or organ system they are associated with in the body. People have different amounts of each receptor type in different parts of the body. So, some people have an increased sensitivity that can otherwise give others little reaction at all to that same dose.

CB1 receptors are mostly associated with the brain, with some presence in the lung, kidney, liver, fat, heart, muscle, and bone. CB1 receptors are mostly associated with the psychoactive and euphoric aspects

of THC.

The CB2 receptors are mostly found within the immune system and blood cells (and related organs like the tissues of the spleen, tonsils, and thymus gland) and secondarily in lesser density within the nervous system, liver, gut, muscle, and bone. CB2 receptors are common in the brain although they do not appear as densely as CB1 sites and are found on different types of cells. CB2 sites are also found in greater concentrations throughout

the gastrointestinal system, where they modulate intestinal inflammatory response. Some sufferers of Crohn's disease and Irritable Bowel Syndrome gain relief from cannabis medicining.

Epilepsy, for example, may prefer a high-CBD, low-THC strain that seems to reduce the incidence of seizures in both children and adults but doesn't provide so much psychoactive effect that it interferes with one's school, job, or family life. Common

THC-to-CDB ratios of commercial products in legal states are 1:1 and 1:20, although experimentation is occurring with many ratios. THC has given many patients relief from pain, nausea, or depression while delivering a strong euphoria to lifestyle users. Significant efficacy seems to be gained by some people undergoing chemotherapy and patients suffering from inflammation like arthritis and lupus.

So far, the endocannabinoid system seems to be the largest receptor system known to exist in the human body. It's a system that helps maintain homeostasis, to keep things running in tip-top shape. More science applied to the potential effects of cannabis is always needed to open up the potential benefits. 🌿

A significant amount of this information was derived from a research paper from Alaska Cannabis Exchange.



Industrial hemp growing in Kentucky. Photo courtesy Debbie Hinchey.

MARCH 2021 EVENT CALENDAR

CONFERENCES

Friday, March 5-6, 3-8 pm

Alaska Botanical Garden Spring Garden Conference: Seeds of Sanity. ABG's annual spring conference is going virtual for 2021. [Check the schedule and buy tickets.](#)

Saturday, March 20, starting at 8 am

Alaska Women in Ag Virtual Conference: Strong Then, Strong Now. Women represent 47 percent of the farmers in Alaska. Here from producers across many different industries and decades. Free registration required [here](#).

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Tuesday, March 2, 12 pm

Matanuska Experiment Farm & Extension Center: Composting. An online event on the basics of making compost. [Register here.](#)

Tuesday, March 9, 6:30-8:30 pm

Yarducopia and Adrift Gardens are partnering to run a two-hour Design Your Garden Workshop. This will be activity based, so pencil, paper, and your imagination are a must. Registration is on a sliding scale. All welcome. Reach out to garden@akaction.org for more info.

Wednesday, March 10, 12-1 pm

UAF CES Anchorage Outreach Center: Season Extenders. Grab your lunch and join Gina Dionne for the center's In the Virtual Garden bi-weekly series, filled with tips and tricks for successful home gardening in Alaska. [Register here.](#)

Thursday, March 11, 6-7 pm

Join Sarah Lewis and the Cooperative Extension Service, as part of their Reset, Refocus, and Recharge series for an hour-long cooking class - Veggie Slam: A Week of Vegetables in One Hour. [Learn more/Register here.](#)

Wednesday, March 24, 12-1 pm

UAF CES Anchorage Outreach Center: City Check-ins. Grab your lunch and join the center's In the Virtual Garden bi-weekly series, filled with tips and tricks for successful home gardening in Alaska. [Register here.](#)

Tuesday, March 30, 6:30-8:30 pm

Yarducopia and Adrift Gardens are partnering to run a two-hour Seed Starting from Scratch Workshop. This will be a hands-on session starting your seedlings in your own home with live instruction and Q&A. Seeds, trays, soil, and a limited number of lights available for participants. Sliding scale fees, so pay what you can so we can support those who can't! Contact garden@akaction.org for more info and to register.

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Monday, March 1 @ 7-9 pm

Alaska Native Plant Society monthly meeting, botanist Marilyn Barker will present on "AKNPS Visits Pinnell Mountain Trail" and Elizabeth Bluemink will give a short introduction to the plant family Apiaceae. Via Google Meet. Contact president@aknps.org for meeting link.

Continued on next page



MARCH 2021 EVENT CALENDAR

Continued from previous page

MEETINGS & EVENTS, *cont.*

Thursday, March 11, 10-12 pm

Wildflower Garden Club Regular Meeting and Program: "Summer Bulbs" by Debbie Hinchey; contact [Paul Marmora](#) for details.

Thursday, March 11, 7-8 pm

Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association has invited UAA's Matt Carlson and Justin Fulkerson to present on "Pollinators and Their Habitat" at its membership meeting; join www.apfga.org to receive meeting details and instructions.

Friday, March 12, 12-1:30 pm

The Herb Study Group will discuss Angelica (Korean, Angelica, etc.); for details, contact anchorageherbstudy-group@gmail.com or call Elaine at 276-4295.

Thursday, March 25 @ 7-8:30 pm

Alaska Common Ground's Climate Action Plan Series continues with Food Systems. The Muni Climate Action Plan goal is to 'support local, sustainable food systems', and the event will consist of 10+ speakers giving short presentations on this topic. [Learn more/Register here.](#)

JOBS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

The Alaska Botanical Gardens is advertising for several 2021 garden positions. [Read more here.](#)

Anchorage Community Garden sign-ups are open for renewals until April 5, and will open for new gardeners on April 10. [More info on their website.](#)

The Alaska Native Plant Society has an online seed inventory including dozens of Alaska native plant species available for distribution. Seeds can be ordered via donation. [Find out more.](#)

Seeds of Change, in partnership with the Food Bank of Alaska, is seeking volunteers to package seeds for distribution to food-insecure households throughout Alaska (including Anchorage). If people want to get involved they can email Grace at gjohnstonak@gmail.com for more information.

BIRD CHATTER

Someone please buy the compost farm! Do you enjoy using Susitna Organics compost in your garden? You know, the bag with strawberries on it? Well, the farm producing this excellent compost and top soil, located in Big Lake, is up for sale. We sure hope someone will buy it and keep it going. [Here is the listing.](#)

Currently in our inbox AMGA board member Nick Riordan has started a new e-newsletter called Currant Affairs to share local events of interest to people interested in local food/sustainability issues. You can check it out and sign up [here.](#)

Did you know? AMGA has a grant program that could help you improve our town. Last year we had some money left over. [Check it out on our website.](#)

The winter sowing craze As Emily said in the president's message, google it ... it looks like great way for Anchorage gardeners to save indoor growing space, lighting costs, and watering time. For those of us who lack the raw materials because we stopped buying milk jugs and pop bottles, it looks like we can google that, too.



In the Virtual Garden

Grab your lunch and join us for a bi-weekly series hosted by the UAF CES Anchorage Outreach Center filled with tips and tricks for successful home gardening in Alaska.



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!

March 15, 7 pm

**Simple Tips for Flower Arranging
with Paul Marmora**

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

AMGA regularly meets at **7 pm 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

2021 meetings are currently being held online

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 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

Youtube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCvZehJprKkjQzivQvND-KopQ

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



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