

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Emily Becker

As a Master Gardener, have you ever found yourself trying to explain the term “Cooperative Extension?”

Yes, the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) has been around for over 100 years, and it may be well known among farmers, but for most people, the name consists of two rather strange words that require explanation. Furthermore, few people know the connection between the Master Gardener program, CES, the federal government, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The CES was formed in 1914 to “extend” the agricultural knowledge gained by researchers at land-grant universities. Agriculture professors had been making new discoveries—for example, how to combat pests like the cotton-killing boll weevil—but the information in their research papers did not reach the farmers who needed it.

CES educators built a cooperative bridge between university academics and the public. They worked in local communities and employed an educational approach highly dependent on workshops, demonstrations and hands-on examples, just like they do today. The program is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which provides some funding, and looks slightly different in every state, where it's usually associated with a public university, another source of funding.

4-H is probably the most widely recognized of the CES programs, but Master Gardeners is not too far behind! We help to form a bridge between the university and the public in all researched-based gardening topics. In fact, our mission statement, available here on our website, states:

The Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage was organized to enhance and supplement the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska Cooperative Extension Master Gardener program. Our mission is to promote availability of gardening information to Alaska citizens as a result of University study and experimentation.

Why Fairbanks and not Anchorage? UAF is Alaska's designated land grant university. The idea to set aside lands that schools could use to generate money to fund operations pre-dates our nation's founding and was signed into law by President Lincoln in 1862. The parcels granted to colleges included indigenous lands often taken without fair payment, a legacy that increasingly demands modern remedy.

Land grant universities now exist in all states, territories, and in many of our tribal nations, and these universities are usually the sponsors of CES programming.

It's worth noting that through a series of unfortunate circumstances, Alaska has never fully been given the land grants that were intended for it. This greatly contributes to the university's funding issues and persists despite occasional attempts to solve the issue with legislation. Reduced University and CES funding is unfortunately an issue year after year, and it's another reason why the

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services our organization provides are so critical.

Currently, AMGA is very fortunate to have the help of Gina Dionne, CES Program Assistant. Among her many duties are teaching and organizing a wide variety of classes, including the Master Gardener and Advanced Master Gardener classes. She also organizes, via Zoom, a number of AMGA meetings, including our Board

meetings, the Herb Study group, our membership meeting, and more.

AMGA's role as a bridge from the University to the public is core to our identity. CES offers an astonishing variety of educational programming, and AMGA members can be proud that we are a critical part of that mission. 🌱

SIGN UP TO HELP AT THE MIDTOWN MALL GARDEN SHOW!

The Midtown Mall Garden Show is happening on **May 22!** AMGA will have four tables for selling plants, gardening Q&A, and distributing Cooperative Extension materials.

Interested in volunteering or selling plants? [Sign up here!](#) Members receive 75% of all sales and 25% is donated to AMGA.



[Information on prepping plants for sale can be found here.](#) If you need yellow tags, we have plenty

to share. You can pick them up at Susan Negus' house (South Anchorage) or Emily Becker's (Midtown); just call or email.

Plant drop-off is from 9:15-10 am. The show begins at 10 am. You will need to return to pick up plants by 4:30 pm or they become property of AMGA.

AMGA TREASURER REPORT March 2021

BALANCES ON 03/01/2021

Checking S-88	26406.06
Savings S-1	5.25
Savings S-19	16905.42
CD General 2yr. 1.95% (1/21)	10659.51
	\$53976.24

REVENUE

Interest/Dividends	32.39
Membership	262.64
Donations	15.00
	\$307.49

EXPENSES

Directory	770.64
Adv. Master Gardener	1350.00
Workshops, Seminars, Programs	266.25
Operations	246.99
	\$2633.88

BALANCES ON 04/01/2021

Checking S-88	24049.82
Savings S-1	5.25
Savings S-19	16908.29
CD General 2 yr. 1.95 (1/21)	10686.49
	\$51649.85

Jan van den Top, 03/06/2021

HEAT UP YOUR GARDEN WITH HOT COMPOSTING

To learn about composting in a cold, wet climate, there is no one better to talk to than Lisa Daugherty, the force behind Juneau Composts! Since the compost recycling company's beginnings in Lisa's backyard in 2017, Juneau Composts! has diverted 520,000 pounds of food scraps from the Juneau landfill.

For home composting, Lisa prefers to create a cube, fastening three pallets together and cutting a fourth in half. She adds 2x4s to hold the halves of the fourth pallet in place for the front wall. This allows you to slide one half over the other and remove the boards when turning compost and emptying the bin.

If the pile dimensions are smaller than 3x3x3 feet, the temperature in the bin will remain low. Cold composting isn't necessarily bad but requires more time for the transformation to occur and people usually need several bins. Hot composting requires temperatures of 131 degrees Fahrenheit for three days to kill weed seeds and pathogens. Unlike cold composting, hot composting requires time and physical energy to complete.

At the initial pile build, Lisa suggests filling the bin to the top with materials such as food scraps, ferns, moss, leaves, and straw. Drier and chunkier materials assist with air flow and prevent a funk from developing in your pile. The more diverse your compost is, the more nutrient rich it will be. A source high in nitrogen, such as comfrey or chicken bedding, may be necessary to achieve high temperatures.

Often, compost is simplified to greens, the nitrogen source, and browns, the carbon source, but not all carbon sources are the same. Look at what the pile is doing, add and adjust the amount of carbon or nitrogen materials, depending on the temperature or telltale signs such as how it smells.

After the initial fill and shrinking, more material is added by creating a nest, pushing off the top layer to the outer edges and filling that hole with whatever scraps are available. Lisa places weeds in the center of the nest. "If they stay on the outside, they might continue growing, or seeds might sprout." She also adds shredded paper fouled by chickens but avoids adding thick layers of

paper, which will glom together like *papier-mâché*. The manure acts as a catalyst for breakdown. She then adds a three-inch layer to the nest, filling in the hole by adding a combination of leaf matter and dead spruce needles. Lisa says it's important to add plenty of browns such as leaves, straw, and sawdust. "If you don't, it attracts flies and other critters. Times I've skimmed out and not added as much, I've regretted it."



Lisa Daugherty of Juneau Composts! Photo courtesy Corrine Conlon.

Steam will come off a pile when it's only 90 degrees, but it doesn't qualify as hot composting until the temperature reaches 131 degrees. The pile may be turned to raise the temperature as it cools down. The more you turn the pile, the hotter the compost will be and the sooner it will be done. Lisa recommends using a compost thermometer to track the temperature and covering the bin with a simple wood frame covered with plastic roofing material such as Suntuf. Although you want a certain amount of moisture in the compost, rain will interfere with the process.

Composting is not only good for our garden beds, it is also great for our environment. Unlike a landfill, a controlled compost bin does not emit methane. Happy composting!—Corrine Conlon

Author Corinne Conlon is a Master Gardener in Juneau who wrote a gardening column for the Juneau Empire and a book, "Gardening Near Glaciers: Growing Vegetables in Southeast Alaska."

HERB STUDY: ALL ABOUT PARSLEY by Elaine Hammes

Marjorie Williams gave a detailed presentation on several varieties of parsley at the March Zoom meeting of the Herb Study Group. Parsley is the 2021 Herb of the Year for the International Herb Association. It is in the Apiaceae (Umbelliferae) family.

Parsley is a hardy biennial with a long taproot. It grows in soft, rounded, leafy rosette mounds about 10-12 inches wide with divided feathery leaves and a strong aroma. In its second year, parsley has yellow-green umbels of flowers about two to three feet tall with oval compressed seeds.

while germinating. Germination is generally two to three weeks. Germination time is shorter with bottom heat and as long as two months if started outside. Presoaking and/or freezing may hasten germination.

According to The Herb Society of America's Essential Guide to Growing and Cooking with Herbs, "legends says that parsley must go to the devil and back nine times unless it is planted on Good Friday. Others say to plant it on St. Patrick's Day. Both dates are in early spring, a time when seed has a cool period in which to germinate."



From left to right: 'Green Dream' parsley, courtesy Burpee Seeds, Italian Parsley in the ABG Herb Garden, and 'Arat' root parsley, courtesy johannyseeds.com.

Some common varieties are Curly Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum* var *crispum*) and Italian (flat-leaf) Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum* var *neapolitanum*). A new, very feathery variety from Burpee Seeds is 'Green Dream' and an unusual variety, the Hamburg Root Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum* var *tuberosum*) can be found in the Baker Creek seed catalog. *Petroselinum crispum* var 'Festival 68' (a stabilized cross between parsley and celery) is a unique variety widely grown in Europe for fresh and dried use and is included in the Richters Herbs catalog.

Planting

The ease of growing many varieties of parsley makes it a favorite herb for gardeners. Usually treated as an annual, parsley can be started inside in deep starter cells, except for root parsley which must be planted directly in the ground. The seed must be kept moist

Seedlings can be transplanted outside after the last frost. If transplanting into a pot, it is best if the pot is 12-18 inches deep and at least 5 inches wide or in a parsley pot (similar to a stretched version of a strawberry pot). A deep pot is needed for the long taproot to grow straight. If seeding outdoors, put boiling water in the planting row, then seed and cover with 1/2 inch of soil or slightly less. Soil should be rich, moist and well-drained with a pH of 6-8.

Parsley does best in full sun to partial shade. It makes a great edging for both herb and ornamental garden beds.

Cultivation and Harvest

To harvest parsley, cut at the base of the leaf stem. Fresh parsley can be stored up to two weeks in water or in a plastic bag with a moist paper towel. If drying parsley, do it quickly in a 400F oven or microwave.

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ALL ABOUT PARSLEY, CONT.

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Parsley leaves can be frozen in plastic bags with air removed. Chopped or pureed parsley can be frozen with water in an ice cube tray and then bagged. Roots of Hamburg parsley can be stored like carrots for using fresh or cooked.

Pests

Parsley problems include carrot fly, root aphid, cabbage looper, parsley worm (black swallowtail butterfly larva), spider mite, crown rot (usually drainage problems) and septoria leaf spot (small yellow specks on leaf). Some solutions to parsley problems are agricultural fleece early in the season, hand picking and Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*).

Parsley can be used in vegetable gardens to repel asparagus beetles.

Culinary Uses

Parsley's nutritional value is low but in an amount of only 3.5 ounces, it contains 160% of vitamin C, 53% of vitamin A, 38% of folate, 1562% of vitamin K and 48% of iron of the daily requirements. Parsley is a source of flavonoid, antioxidants (luteolin & apigenin), lycopene, alpha & beta carotene, and lutein plus zeaxanthin.

The origin of parsley is believed to be Eastern Europe and Western Asia. In Ancient Greece, parsley was used to crown victors at Isthmian games and to decorate tombs, as it was linked with Archemorus, the herald of death in Greek mythology. In Homer's time, the Greeks also planted parsley along herb beds, used it in medicine and fed it to their horses.

Parsley is one of the most common and basic cooking herbs, a major ingredient in the *fines herbes* combination used in French cuisine, and an edible garnish. Root parsley can be eaten raw, cooked as a root vegetable or put in soup and stews.

Romans were first to use parsley as a food, consuming parsley in quantity and making garlands for banquet guests to counter strong odors and intoxication. They used Petroselinon (Rock Parsley) which could refer to parsley's ability to relieve bladder and kidney stones.

Other Uses

In the Middle Ages, parsley appeared in herbal medicines to cure a great range of human ills, especially of the liver and kidneys. It was also used for plague, asthma, dropsy, digestive aid and jaundice.

Parsley is now used medicinally as a breath freshener, to promote healthy skin, lighten skin spots and as a digestive tonic. Parsley pureed in ice cubes is used to relieve bruises and contusion swelling. Parsley can be used as a vitamin therapy and diuretic for bladder UTI and water retention. The parsley root has mild laxative properties.

Historically, parsley has been used for gallstones, dysentery, prostate, liver, spleen, cancer, kidney and bladder stones, asthma, arthritis, gout, expectorant, antimicrobial, aphrodisiac, hypotensive, scalp lotion for hair growth, carminative for decreased flatulence.

Essential oils extracted from parsley seeds and herb are blended with other extracted oils for aromatherapy, and other uses, but must be used with care, especially if taken internally. Parsley is used in hair tonics and conditioners, facial steams and lotions for dry skin, to minimize freckles, and as a soothing eyebath. Seeds are used in manufacturing masculine scents.

Parsley is used in funeral rites and Passover meals.

Precautions

Excessive consumption of parsley should be avoided by pregnant women (uterotonic effects), people with kidney disease (causes increased urine flow), and people on warfarin (Coumadin) or other blood thinners sensitive to vitamin K. High amounts of vitamin K reverse the effects of these types of blood thinning medicines. 🌿



Contact the Herb Study Group

If you want to volunteer, have questions or you just want to receive notifications of Herb Study meetings, please email us at anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com or call Elaine at 276-4295 and leave her a message.

MAY 2021 EVENT CALENDAR

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Saturday, May 8, 4-5:30 pm

Alaska Botanical Garden: Mother's Day Spring Floral Design. Learn to work with spring seasonal blooms and foliage (all Alaska or US grown) to create an amazing floral work of art! Class taught by Greta Lewanski of Turnstone Farm. In person sold out, virtual only access. [Price/Registration details.](#)

Monday, Aug. 23-Monday, Dec. 3

The next Alaska Master Gardener Online Class will be Aug 23, 2021 - Dec. 3, 2021. Registration is now open for all students. The class fills up every year. The cost of the course is \$393. [Learn more/Register here.](#)

Wednesday, May 5, 12-1 pm

CES Anchorage Outreach Center: Amazing Annual Flowers. Join Gina Dionne for the center's *In the Virtual Garden* bi-weekly series, filled with tips for successful gardening in Alaska. [Register here.](#)

Thursday, May 6, 5:30-8 pm

The Anchorage Museum continues its Urban Harvest in-person workshops with "Building Your First Greenhouse." [Register here.](#)

Thursday, May 11, 5:30-7 pm

The Anchorage Museum continues its Urban Harvest in-person workshops with "Growing Fruit Trees in Your Backyard." [Register here.](#)

Tuesday, May 18, 12-1 pm

CES Anchorage Outreach Center: Control of Bird Vetch. Join Gino Graziano, Invasive Plant Instructor, as he shares his expertise. [Register here.](#)

Wednesday, May 19, 12-1 pm

CES Anchorage Outreach Center: Perfect Perennials. Join Gina Dionne for the center's *In the Virtual Garden* bi-weekly series, filled with tips for successful gardening in Alaska. [Register here.](#)

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Monday, May 3, 7-9 pm

Alaska Native Plant Society monthly meeting, featuring: "The western exploration of Alaska's flora; almost 300 years of adventures, discovery, and a few mishaps," presented by botanist Carolyn Parker. Contact president@aknps.org for meeting link.

Saturday, May 22, 10am-5pm

Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show, featuring AMGA and many other vendors. Masks are required.

JOBS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

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

[Anchor Gardens](#) is recruiting neighborhood garden coaches. Coaches serve as community mentors for those interested in learning about growing food in their own neighborhoods and assist in linking people to resources. Reach out to anchorgardensanc@gmail.com.

AMGA is seeking program topics for future monthly member meetings. Most of the spaces are filled for 2021 but we are looking for 2022 topics. If you have ideas, please contact AMGA vice president Troy Weiss at troydweiss@gmail.com.

Check out a wide range of volunteer opportunities with local garden projects at [Volunteers 4 Anchorage Gardens](#), a list compiled by AMGA and the Alaska School Garden Network.



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.

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CALENDAR, CONT.

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Did you miss Brenda Adams' "Mastering Garden Design" class? AMGA will offer it again in the fall. Date/time TBA. [Sign up here](#) to make sure you get the first notice. Please note that this class will not be offered for an Advanced Certificate and will be open to all gardeners.

AMGA is surveying members on topics for the next Advanced MG class. Give your input by filling out [our online survey](#).

BIRD CHATTER

Do it yourself Shirley Kelly's niece noticed her tomato flowers weren't producing fruit and had a hunch that the flowers weren't getting pollinated. A light touch with her electric toothbrush to the plants started getting results, with many more flowers producing fruit!

Sprucing up the neighborhood Jan van den Top mentioned the Alaska Community Forest Council has grants available for tree planting projects in your neighborhood. [Find out more](#).

Don't toss your food scraps If you aren't able to compost yourself, people in Anchorage would love to take your food scraps. Go to sharewaste.com, type in Anchorage, and drop-off locations will pop up. (You'll need to create a sign in to connect with the actual participants.) This is a way to connect people who need to feed their chickens/worm farms and compost heaps with people who don't have the time, space or energy for composting.

Speaking of compost Solid Waste Services is offering a curbside organics (food and yard waste) collection program for people who live in the SWS service area. If you participate in this new program, or if you have been taking advantage of SWS's Community Compost program, you will only be allowed to pick up finished compost on one day of the month at the two transfer stations. [Here is the schedule](#).

Don't put this in your worm bin Recent flooding in Australia prompted a giant earthworm to seek shelter in a motel, oozing under a closed door. The harmless Giant

Gippsland earthworm, a threatened species, averages 3.3 feet long and 3/4" in diameter. The worms are usually sluggish but when they move rapidly in their burrows, they create an audible gurgling or sucking sound.

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



ANCHORAGE PIONEER HOME VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!

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

Flowers are on order and garden cleanup and fertilizing will be the week of May 10th. Planting is scheduled for May 25-26.

During the summer 2 people sign up to maintain the gardens each week. You can sign up for as many hours as you like and work at times convenient for you. Training is available. We are looking for a garden designer to join our team.

To sign up, contact Julie at jkginder@gci.net or for more information contact Lynne at Lynne.Opstad@gmail.com.



Preview of AMGA Summer Tours

5/17 Forget-Me-Not Nursery
 5/24 Mile 5.2 Greenhouse
 5/31 John & Madge Oswald
 6/7 TBD
 6/14 Lighthouse Gardens
 6/21 Birchwood St. Garden
 6/28 Marsha Burns & Lynn Highland
 7/12 Steve & Lou Ann Hennig
 7/19 Brown Hen Farm
 7/26 Opa's Garden
 8/2 Hope Center: Downtown Soup
 Kitchen's Rooftop Garden
 8/9 Faye Stiehm
 8/16 Carrol Samuelson
 8/23 Pioneer Home Garden
 8/26 Grow North Farms

Watch your AMGA emails for additional tour details.

**COVID-19 Protocols: Masks, Temperature, Sign-up
& Contact Sheets, Hand Sanitizer**

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!

May 17, 7 pm

**Verna Pratt: Carried Away By Flowers
with Ginger Hudson**

**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). Meetings are 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. **2021 meetings are currently being held
 online.** 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@](mailto:president@alaskamastergardeners.org)
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/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvZehJprKkjQzivQvNDKopQ)
[UCvZehJprKkjQzivQvNDKopQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvZehJprKkjQzivQvNDKopQ)
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 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@](mailto:astjuliana@hotmail.com)
[hotmail.com](mailto:astjuliana@hotmail.com)

