

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Emily Becker

I just returned from a week visiting my mother in Florida, where the temperatures were in the upper 80s every glorious day.

I won't bore you with the specifics, but a definite highlight, other than getting to wear a bathing suit outside, was a visit to Mounts Botanical Garden in West Palm Beach. What a treat to sit under a real baobab tree with the dream of visiting one in its native home some day!

We visited lots of other parks, gardens, and natural areas. Two things were clear to me: one, our beloved Alaska Botanical Garden rivals any of its peers. Two, Alaskans are so very fortunate to have an abundance of clean water and wild spaces.

Warmed to my core, I am preparing for winter. I've started organizing my seeds and plan to list a couple gems on the Seed Savers Exchange, including my La Ribera marigold. SSE is a fantastic organization devoted to collecting and sharing heirloom seed. Since my lemon bee balm didn't survive to seed production, I just bought some from a grower in North Carolina. Each year I am trying to buy a few seeds from somewhere new, so feel free to reach out and share your favorites.

Your AMGA Board and committees are also zooming

along. The Advanced MG committee is organizing two spring classes, Garden Design with Brenda Adams and Intro to Botany and Plant Identification with Dr. Marilyn Barker. Read more on page 7 of the newsletter and watch for sign-ups in your email, as these classes will fill quickly. If you do not have email, give me a call.

The Tech committee is working on an updated AMGA membership renewal/sign-up form, and we plan to have it available in about two weeks. To simplify sign-ups and reduce paperwork, we've also floated the idea of a permanent membership, so you never have to remember if you have renewed again! The proposed rate is \$200. Feedback is welcome.

Speaking of the AMGA Board, it's time to recruit a few new members. Our new and returning candidates appear in this newsletter.

Finally, congratulations to all the members who earned the Advanced MG certificate! Thirty-one students completed the requirements and volunteer hours for classes we offered over the last year, Permaculture for Alaskan Gardeners and Advanced Garden Design. Continuing education in service to the community is our primary mission. Thank you! 🌱

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Baobab at Mounts Botanical Garden

2021 COMMUNITY GRANT REPORT by Pacific Northern Academy

Summary: Our initial goal was to install rain barrels and improve the aesthetics of our garden with decorative fencing designed by students. While the project didn't go according to plan, we are very excited by the results.

Throughout the summer and fall, campers of Create Academy and students at Pacific Northern Academy continued to make improvements to our educational garden with the help and support of the AMGA Education Grant.



With resources provided by the support of this grant, 74 Create Academy campers in grades K-6 learned about gardening, and planted and maintained eight raised garden beds. Campers grew flowers, carrots, peas, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, lettuce, turnips, beans, zucchini, strawberries, herbs, and potatoes, and

experimented with growing corn and tomatoes in the greenhouse.

Our goal was to teach children about the value and joys of gardening and to support the community by growing produce for Bean's Cafe and The Children's Lunchbox.

From this grant we were able to purchase two rain barrels from Alaska Mill and Feed, which provided a source of water in our garden area. The rainwater catchment



system will not be installed until next summer.

Our decorative garden fence project evolved over the summer as well. Rather than installing a decorative

fence by the garden, we instead moved our decorative art installation to the exterior fence around our garden and play yard so that it would be more visible to the public. Each student and staff member personalized a wooden

fish with acrylic paint to hang along the fence.

At this point in time, 162 fish have been added to the art installation and the hope is to continue to add more fish throughout the years. This was truly a community effort to achieve this goal and was only possible with the help of faculty, staff, parents, and students.

Everybody loves how the art project brightens our campus. — Renae Bookman, PNA Director of Enrichment and Special Programs

SEPT. 2021 AMGA TREASURER'S REPORT

Balances on 09/01/2021

Checking S-88	\$ 21,452.25
Savings S-1	\$ 5.25
Savings S-19	\$ 16,922.46
CD General 2 year 1.95%; 1/23	\$ 10,714.47

Total Assets \$ 49,094.43

Interest/Dividends \$ 31.14

This month's revenue	
Membership	\$ 60.07
Donations	\$ 15.00
Fundraising/Plant sale	

Total revenue \$ 75.07

This month's expenses

Grants (scholarships)	\$ 786.00
Hospitality	\$ 36.57
Operations	\$ 102.00
Website	\$ 137.99
Plant sale	\$ 1,138.45
Public Relations (State Fair)	\$ 50.00

Total Expenses this month \$ 2,251.01

BALANCES ON 09/30/2021

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 on 8/31/2021 \$ 46,949.63

Prepared by Jan van den Top on 10/08/2021

GARAGE HERBS by Scott Aker

Editor's note: While not all of this article applies to AMGA gardeners in Zones 3 or 4, the tips for "garage growing" seemed to warrant sharing.

Throughout much of the country, now is the time to face the coming cold. Any plants you want to keep must be moved to warmer quarters. For many gardeners, that might be a sunny windowsill indoors. But is this the best place to overwinter your herbs?

Unless you have a room that you can keep below 60°F in your home, they may suffer. Many herbs hail from Mediterranean and subtropical climates and are programmed to thrive with distinct seasons of heat and chill. Bring them indoors, and they experience temperatures much higher than they ever would in winter in their native lands. The result is stress and conditions that favor pests, such as mites, powdery mildew, and scale insects, that can quickly overwhelm your plants.

I live in USDA Hardiness Zone 7B, and winters generally have long periods of mild weather with temperatures hovering around freezing punctuated with short periods of cold that may reach the single digits. I grow all my herbs in pots on the deck, because they are just steps away from the kitchen. Some stay there through the winter. Marjoram, parsley, oregano, chives, and mint have no issue with the cold, even in pots. Bay, sage, gardenia, and citrus go in the garage for winter. My garage is not heated, but it seldom freezes since the walls and door shared with the house are not terribly well insulated. Night temperatures dip into just above freezing and may rise to about 55°F during the day, on average.

While herbs would like more light than can be supplied even by a sunny windowsill indoors, they don't really need light when held at temperatures in the 40°F to 50°F range. At these low temperatures, they are nearly dormant. They do need to be watered from time to time, but at low temperatures, they don't need or appreciate

frequent watering.

My garage herbs fall into two tiers. The hardy ones, such as the bay, gardenia, and sage go outside on the front steps whenever temperatures are forecast to remain above 25°F for a week or more. The citrus stay in the garage unless weather is above 30°F. Since watering is a chore that I dislike, I tend to move the plants outdoors anytime precipitation is forecast. My bay and gardenia

have taken a heavy snow load with no damage, and they do appreciate sunny warm winter days.

If you are going to use your garage to overwinter herbs, pay close attention to weight. I grow all my large garage herbs in large plastic pots to keep the weight to a minimum and make them easier to move the short distance to the front steps. Terracotta and ceramic pots are more attractive, but I suggest using them in smaller sizes for smaller plants. Some pruning to keep things in bounds is helpful, too, since winter wind can easily topple top heavy plants.

On pleasant winter days, the sight of my mandarin orange, with its full complement of ripening fruit, is a cheerful one, and one that has

attracted much attention from passersby. When cooking, it is only slightly less convenient to step in the garage to get what I need.

When spring arrives, I find that the plants grow more vigorously because of the chill winter they experienced, and mites and other pests have been unable to prosper on my plants. Give some thought to your garage when it's time to bring your herbs in for the winter.

Scott Aker is Head of Horticulture and Education at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, DC. He authored Digging In in The Washington Post and Garden Solutions in The American Gardener.

This article was originally published [here](#) by the Herb Society of America and is republished with permission.



Mandarin orange, *Citrus reticulata*, in its winter quarters in the author's garage.

HERB STUDY: RAMPS by Marjorie Williams

Allium tricoccum goes by many names—wild leeks, wood leeks, spring onions and ramson—but most commonly called by the name ramps.

Ramps are North American native plants which normally grow in wood leaf litter from Nova Scotia south to Georgia and west to Minnesota. There are only two North American species, *A. tricoccum* var. *burdickii*, with narrow leaf and white stems, and *A. tricoccum* var. *tricoccum* with wider leaf and red stems. The name ramps is thought to come from its similarity to the English plant ransom or ramson, *Allium ursinus*.

A member of the onion family (*Alliaceae*), ramps have a strong, garlic-like odor and sweet spring onion flavor and are collected and sold at farmers' markets or sold to upscale restaurants in the spring.

Ramps grow in colonies in soil rich in organic matter and they reproduce from seeds and side bulbs. Seeds germinate within 12 months. In the first year, the bulb and roots form and in the second spring, thin top growth appears. This habit makes it important to pull weeds and not disturb the top of the soil and mulch.

Historically, Native Americans and early settlers used ramps for food and medicine. They are a foraged food and have not been cultivated. In many Appalachian festivals, ramps are celebrated because they are one of the first plants to emerge with the onset of spring. New harvesting methods are being recommended for sustainability of the ramps for the future. Harvesters are now encouraged to dig down and cut the bulb above the roots while still in the ground and not pull up the whole plant.

Ramps' primary use is as culinary vegetable, raw as a spring onion or greens in salads, or cooked with potatoes and eggs and added to soups. Both the top and bulbs are used.

Ramps are high in vitamins and minerals (vitamins A & C, selenium and chromium), and due to blood-cleansing properties, they were highly prized by Native Americans. Roots were decocted to induce vomiting and the leaves consumed to treat colds and croup. Ramps also were used in spring tonics. Juice from the plant was used to treat earache. A tonic from ramps was used by some tribes to treat intestinal worms.

Other uses include using the juice as a moth repellent and the whole plant to repel insects and moles. Consumption by cats and dogs is considered toxic in large quantities.

According to Herb Study Group's research, the ramps at ABG have been perennial, and *A. tricoccum* is considered hardy to Zone 3.

One year, some ramps disappeared from the northeast bed, so ABG replanted remaining plants elsewhere to ensure they wouldn't be completely lost. The ABG ramps have since been moved to one of the mint beds and they have been reappearing for several years now. 🌿



The ABG Herb Garden has a raised bed of ramps with Joe Pye Weed and a young hardy kiwi flanked by mint beds. Photo by Mary Contrary.

Herb Study Group 2021-2022 Plans

The Herb Study Group's discussion topic for the noon (Zoom) meeting on Friday, Nov. 12 is "Violets, Violas and Pansies." Bring your experiences, what you know and what you'd like to learn. Topics for future meetings this season will also be determined during the November meeting,



Anyone interested in learning about herbs is welcome to send an email to anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com to receive our notifications, join the monthly meetings September through May, or volunteer in ABG's Herb Garden during the growing season. There are no dues or membership requirements.

2022 AMGA BOARD NOMINEES

Emily Becker

I have really enjoyed my first term on the AMGA Board and would love to continue to serve the members of this wonderful service organization. In particular, I am excited to help offer great continuing education programs and to guide the group's transition to easier technology. My primary gardening interest is growing food, but I often get distracted by pretty flowers. I completed the MG program in 2014 and earned an advanced certificate in 2017. I'm looking forward to strengthening our relationship with the university and planning a fun and educational conference for 2023.



other boards, but there is plenty of time available.

AMGA is an organization that I enjoy and have learned from, so it may be time for pay-back. My wife Jeri and I arrived in Anchorage in 1969. And even though I had done some gardening for my parents in the Netherlands, as a mechanical engineer, I have no formal background in horticulture. I do believe that a home should have some flowers in the front and some vegetables and/ or fruit in the back. That's what I usually had. How traditional can you get?



When I retired and the Master Gardeners course was offered it seemed like a good thing to do and so I completed that one in 2007/08 and have been moderately active since then.

Meg O'Mullane

Meg O'Mullane completed the Alaska Master Gardener Program in the fall of 2020. She runs a small business named Garden Keeper that specializes in garden design, installation, and maintenance. She also grows cut flowers in her home garden to sell to local floral designers. This year Meg worked as the volunteer Denali Montessori School Garden Coordinator, growing food to donate to Beans Café. She is committed to organic gardening and sustainable design and completed her Permaculture Design Certificate in 2003.



Kat Karabelnikoff

I was born and raised in East Anchorage and still reside there. I come from a long line of gardeners from my grandmother and mostly my mother Mary, who is also Master Gardener, as well as my Aunt Sally who was an avid gardener and plant collector. I followed them down the garden path and fell in love with gardening, too. I took the Master Gardener course in 2012/13 and have taken a few of the Advanced classes. I work for the Muni Parks and Rec's Horticulture Dept., which grows the city's flowers, flower baskets and maintain the Mann Leiser Memorial Greenhouse. I feel blessed to have my profession also be one of my passions.



I would like to contribute back to the Master Gardener program by serving as a board member to help further the knowledge we have as a collective and to promote what the AK Master Gardeners offers and can share that with those who want to learn more. I feel you can never learn it all. Gardening and plants are such amazing things, they can teach us all something new every day. Thank you for your consideration. 🌱

Jan van den Top

When asked if I wanted to join the Board of AMGA, I said, I could if you like me to. I currently serve on two

NOVEMBER 2021 EVENT CALENDAR

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Wednesday, November 3, 12-12:30 pm

CES Anchorage Outreach Center: Freezing food for extended storage. Grab your lunch and join this bi-weekly series designed for people interested in learning how to preserve their harvest, including canning, dehydrating, and freezing for extended storage. Via Zoom. [Register here.](#)

Wednesday-Thursday, November 3-4

The 2021 Alaska Invasive Species Workshop will be held via Zoom from 9am to 4:30pm both days. Registration is free this year. Topics include urban forest pest readiness, biocontrol opportunities and invasive species legislation. The agenda and registration information are available at alaskainvasives.org. For more information, contact workshop coordinator Gino Graziano at 907-786-6315 or gagraziano@alaska.edu.

Wednesday, November 10, 12 pm

CES Anchorage Outreach Center: Exploring Freeze Drying with Leif Albertson. In the last few years, home freeze dryers have been gaining popularity as a food preservation tool. We'll look at their safety, value, practical application and how this technology compares to other traditional food preservation methods. No registration details provided, contact gdionne@alaska.edu.

Tuesday, November 16, 12 pm

Mat-Su Experimental Farm & Extension Center: What's in your woodpile? Have you ever wondered what bugs live in your firewood pile? This talk will discuss the different species of firewood, and the pests which reside in them. It will cover some practical advice about storing firewood so that pest populations stay where they belong, outside. Via Zoom. [Register here.](#)

Thursday, November 18, 12 pm

Mat-Su Experimental Farm & Extension Center: Chainsaw Safety. Chainsaw accidents are the leading cause of severe injury to legs, arms and hands ... especially in Alaska. This slideshow and talk will introduce you to the fundamentals of chainsaw operation and safety and includes a special emphasis on necessary Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) and how

to use it. [Register here.](#)

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Monday, Nov. 1, 7-9 pm

Alaska Native Plant Society Meeting: 2021 Alaska Native Plant Photo Slide Show. Via Google Meet. [Get meeting link.](#)

Thursday, November 4, 7-9 pm

Anchorage Garden Club: History of Plants in Our Celebrations. Contact anchoragegc@gmail.com for details.

Thursday, November 11, 10 am-noon

Wildflower Garden Club: Annual Meeting: Member Photo Share. Via Zoom. [Get details.](#)

Friday-Sunday, November 12-14

Alaska Farm Bureau Convention and Trade Show: First-ever trade show will be held at the Egan Center. If you are a current farmer or looking to get into farming, this 3-day event is the perfect chance to learn. Includes roundtable discussions, workshops, leadership training, etc. [Get details.](#)

Saturday-Sunday, November 13-14

Garden Club's 60th Annual Holiday Flower Show "Holiday Traditions" at Central Lutheran Church. [Get details.](#)

JOBS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

The Alaska Botanical Garden is looking to hire an outgoing, cheerful, and reliable individual to support its holiday lights event, with additional daytime support during kickstart days. Email a resume and cover letter to garden@alaskabg.org. Start date: November 22. View the [full job description.](#)

Alaska Seeds of Change has many volunteer opportunities this winter. Many of their summer interns and employees head back to school in the fall/winter, so it's a good time to step up to help this great organization. Sign up for a shift using [Seeds Sign Up Genius here](#), or if it's your first-time volunteering, email volunteer@akseedsof-change.com for an orientation.

JULIE RILEY WINS 2021 YWCA AWARD by Sharon Schlicht

Congratulations! UAF Professor of Horticulture, Emerita, and former long-time Anchorage CES horticulturist Julie Riley has been selected to receive the YWCA Alaska Women of Achievement Award for 2021. This award is given annually to ten Alaska women and five youth based on their demonstrated leadership and service to the community, as aligned with the YWCA mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

Among Julie's many achievements is her extensive work in founding Fresh International Gardens where she provided horticultural and marketing education. The program gave refugees from all over the globe a place to learn Alaskan agriculture and practice their English by selling produce to customers at weekly farmers' markets.

Julie also worked with Alaska Women's Aid in Crisis, Inc. (AWAIC), assisting with the planning

and development of its garden and greenhouse project.

Julie trained 1,500 Master Gardeners and Advanced Master Gardeners—most of them women, empowering them to become leaders in gardening clubs, teach gardening classes, start their own horticulture-based businesses, and volunteer with local projects.



Julie Riley discusses success in trialing Tlingit/Haida potatoes at ABG, 2016. Photo by Ginger Hudson

This year's YWCA award celebration will be held virtually. Julie will be honored on Friday, Nov. 5, during a [Facebook Live event](#) from 6-7pm. 🌱

SAVE THE DATE(S)!

Two AMGA Classes will begin in February, watch your email for registration details!

Garden Design with Brenda Adams will run six consecutive Wednesdays, 6-8 pm, starting on Feb. 9.

Intro to Botany and Plant Identification with Dr. Marilyn Barker will run 12 consecutive Tuesdays, 7-8 pm, starting Feb. 8.

BIRD CHATTER

Garden magazines without the clutter Janice Berry recently discovered all kinds of gardening magazines in the Alaska Digital Library, using the Overdrive app. All you need is a library card. She says there are too many magazines to mention, and they are current editions!

A garden of 1,000 bees Brenda Adams recommends that all gardeners watch PBS's Nature program, [My Garden of a Thousand Bees](#). She says it's the most amazing video she's ever seen on bees and thanks Martha Farris for sharing it with her.

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





Bonus photo: A bumblebee and ant on sedum in Fran Durner's 2021 garden. Photo courtesy Fran Durner.

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!

November 15, 2021

"The Story of the Seven Federal Agricultural Experiment Stations in the Territory of Alaska"

Dr. Talis Colberg

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@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

