

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Emily Becker

Hooray for the return of the sun. I know we'd all like the ice and snow to make a quicker exit, but the sun on my face feels great right now. My indoor grow lights are humming and I have a few trays of herbs, tomatoes, and other fun friends keeping me company.

We've been busy! This month marked the awarding of two AMGA Lifetime Achievement Awards: to Cindy Walker and Harry Deuber. You can read about these two wonderful volunteers in this newsletter.

Thank you to the Alaska Botanical Garden for allowing us to present the awards at their online conference, and to the volunteers of the Lifetime Achievement Award committee, especially Julie Riley and Lynne Opstad. We so appreciate all of you.

Brenda Adams' "Mastering Garden Design" class wrapped up a few weeks ago, and Dr. Marilyn Barker's "Intro to Botany and Plant ID" class will finish this month. About 80 students participated in these classes. What should we learn next, and who should teach us? Please drop a note if you have any ideas. Huge thanks to the Advanced Education committee for organizing these classes. There is always space if you want to help guide the next offerings.

Next up is the Garden Show at the Midtown Mall on April 16th. We'll be looking for volunteers to answer gardening questions and, of course, sell plants! Susan Negus is coordinating this and will soon have an online sign up for volunteers.

Looking ahead: summer is the time for garden tours! It was so fun to return to weekly tours in 2021. To do that

again, we need volunteers to show your gardens. Please email our Vice-President Troy Weiss if you're willing. Remember, it doesn't have to be perfect. We learn from, appreciate, and enjoy all kinds of gardens.

Summer is also the time when volunteers are in high demand. New requests for AMGA volunteers land in my email box all the time. Have you taken a look at our [volunteer catalog](#) lately? There is a job for every seeker! Growing extra produce to donate is also very much appreciated. Our food pantries will appreciate it.

We're also looking way ahead to the 2023 statewide Master Gardener conference. We've chosen a theme and a keynote speaker—a secret for now! Feel free to join the organizing committee and help out, as we'll have a lot of tasks to do.

In the meantime, enjoy the peace and beauty of our seasons. Once again, Congress is set to designate April as National Native Plant Month. How wonderful it is to live in a place where many native plants thrive and where we can see and enjoy them so easily. Happy Spring! 🌱

IN THIS ISSUE

- » March Meeting Highlights
- » Treasurer's Report
- » AMGA Lifetime Achievement Awards
- » Herb Study: Chocolate lily
- » Growing Ginger Indoors
- » April Event Calendar
- » Bird Chatter

MARCH MEMBER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS by Elizabeth Bluemink

At our March 21 member meeting, CES Invasive Plants Instructor Gino Graziano spoke on “**Invasive Plants in Alaska and How You Can Help.**”

A complete overview of Gino’s talk wasn’t prepared for this newsletter. However, many of the invasive species he discussed are described in the CES brochure, “**Don’t Plant a Problem**” which is available for download on the [CES Publications webpage](#).

Gino also touted the **Alaska Invasives ID** app which can be downloaded to your smartphone. This app lists invasive species by region and includes many problem plants for our area, including chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), European bird cherry/Mayday tree (*Prunus padus*) bird vetch (*Vicia cracca ssp. cracca*), Siberian peashrub (*Caragana arborens*), rampion bellflower (*Campanula rapunculoides*), and the dreaded orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*). If you spot a listed plant, you can click on the image in the app and follow the instructions to report it to the weed police.

People can also submit new, unusual sightings in their gardens via the [CES Citizen Monitoring Portal](#).

Want to dig deeper to learn more about the distribution of invasive plants in Alaska? Visit the [Alaska Exotic](#)

[Plants Information Clearinghouse](#) (AKEPIC) online database.

Finally, the **Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District** is launching a pilot Hiker-Spotter Project to help find and document a few highly-invasive plants on public lands. Read more on page 10 and contact Anne Billman at 907-903-4779 if you are interested. 🌱

FEBRUARY 2022 TREASURER’S REPORT

Balances on 1/31/2022

Checking S-88	\$24,513.16
Savings S-1	\$5.25
Savings S-19	\$16,936.65
CD General 2 year 1.95%; 1/23	\$10,771.26

Total Assets \$52,226.32

Interest/Dividends \$2.60

This month's revenue

Membership	\$589.10
Donations	\$31.00
Fundraising/Plant sale	
Advanced M.G. course fees	\$205.77
Total revenue	\$825.87

This month's expenses

Grants (scholarships)	
Hospitality	
Operations	\$102.00
Website	\$359.98
Plant sale	
Public Relations (State Fair)	
Newsletter	\$19.99
AMG speaker fee	\$1,500.00
Refund	\$50.00
Total Expenses this month	\$2,031.97

Balances on 1/31/2022

Checking S-88	\$23,307.06
Savings S-1	\$5.25
Savings S-19	\$16,939.25
CD General 2 Year 1.95%, (1/23)	\$10,771.26

Total Assets on 1/31/2022 \$51,022.82

Prepared by Jan van den Top on 3/10/2022

2022 AMGA GRANTS AVAILABLE!

AMGA is offering grants up to \$500 to individuals and organized groups for gardening education or community garden projects.

Applications due April 15!

3 kinds of grants are available:

- A tuition grant for the CES Master Gardening class
- A community gardening project grant
- A continuing education grant

Visit www.alaskamastergardeners.org/grant-program.html for program requirements and grant application.

AMGA 2022 LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS by Lynne Opstad

The AMGA Lifetime Achievement Award was established in 2009 to recognize those individuals who have an established history of committed service and have made a lasting contribution to the organization. Since then 10 people have received the award.

It is with great pleasure that we announce that Harry Deuber and Cindy Walker are recipients of the 2022 Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage Lifetime Achievement Award.

Harry Deuber

Harry has been awarded this designation due to his unselfish and continuing volunteerism as a Master Gardener. From 2016-2018 Harry served on the Board of Directors as President, presiding over the organization during difficult, transitional years. Afterwards, he served as the Volunteer Coordinator and has put in countless hours volunteering at the AMGA Annual Plant Sale and at the Anchorage Pioneer Home.

In addition to his work with the AMGA, he also volunteers at the Centennial Rose Garden, the Refugee Gardens, the Fairview Gardens, and at the Alaska Botanical Garden, including working the "Ask a Master Gardener" table. He has opened his own garden for the AMGA Garden Tours and grown dahlias for the Anchorage Pioneer Home gardens.



Harry Deuber

The overwhelming success of the 2016 Master Gardener Conference was in large part due to Harry's leadership and unflinching perseverance. It involved pure dedication, patience, and much hard work for many months.

Harry's contribution to the Anchorage gardening community can only be described as "Dedication." He

is a model of volunteerism, and as such we award the 2022 AMGA Lifetime Achievement Award to him.

Cindy Walker

Cindy has been awarded this designation for her dedication and strong sense of commitment in her AMGA leadership positions.

Cindy served on the Board of Directors as Treasurer from 2012 to 2018. As such, she established the AMGA financial records on sound accounting principles. After her term expired she showed the spirit of working with others by serving an extra two years as Treasurer as well as mentoring the incoming Treasurer to insure a smooth transition. She has served as Treasurer for the AMGA Annual Plant Sale and very graciously opened her own garden for the AMGA Garden Tours.



Cindy Walker

Cindy's largest contribution has been to establish the AMGA as a non-profit. Her work on the 501(c)(3) went beyond the scope of just volunteering and showed a true dedication to the organization. The IRS status of non-profit will benefit the Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage well into the future. As a non-profit, our organization will be exempt from Federal Taxes and makes the AMGA eligible for grants on a federal, state, and local level.

Cindy has shown an exemplary model of giving one's time and effort to further the stability and success of the Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage.

The awards were presented by Julie Riley and Emily Becker during the Alaska Botanical Garden Spring Conference on Friday, March 11th. 🌿

HERB STUDY: CHOCOLATE LILY by Sharon Schlicht

Fritillaria camschatcensis is an Alaska wildflower with many common names, widely known as chocolate lily because of its dark-colored flower. Other common names include rice lily because of the rice-like appearance of the root and skunk lily because of the unpleasant aroma of the flower.

Its range in North America is coastal areas of Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, Yukon Territory and Alaska. It is also found in northern Japan and the Russian Far East. Look for chocolate lily near lakes and streams, in wet meadows, marshes, sphagnum bogs and forest wetlands from sea level to 3,000 feet. It can survive short periods of salt water flooding and can be difficult to spot in the wild because of its subdued coloring.

A chocolate lily plant grows 6 to 24 inches tall and 3 to 4 inches wide. It is hardy in Zones 4 through 8 and spreads but is not invasive. This self-fertile plant is pollinated by flies that are attracted to its foul odor. Voles like to eat the bulbs; protect them with hardware cloth or plant them in containers if necessary. Slugs and rabbits like the young shoots. Mature plants are deer and rabbit resistant.

Only one lance-shaped leaf appears on a new plant. In subsequent years, the plant develops one or two more single leaves and then tiered whorls of leaves along the stem. Dark brown flowers grow in clusters and may be streaked, spotted or mottled with yellow. Each flower has three petals and three sepals which are similar, making the flower appear to have six petals. Bell-shaped flowers hang downward and open to reveal yellow anthers and stamens. Bulbs can grow to about the size of a finger joint and produce a cloak of fleshy scales called bulblets that look like grains of rice.

Bulblets break off when the plant is disturbed, allowing propagation to occur. Seeds can be planted shortly after they are collected, but older seeds develop germination inhibitors. Seeds should be started in a cold frame as they need a cold period. Do not transplant until at least the second year. Typically they will bloom in 4 to 6 years. To purchase mature plants, check local plant sales.

Coastal Native people have used the bulbs for food. The Aleutian-Pribilof Islands Association produced [an informative video](#) on how to harvest, prepare and preserve chocolate lily bulbs. 🌿



Chocolate lily blossoms and seeds. Photos provided by Sharon Schlicht.

GROWING GINGER INDOORS by Susan Miller

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) is a perennial plant with annual leafy stems that grow about three feet high. It is native to the tropical rainforests of Southern Asia and the top-producing countries are India, China, Nepal, Indonesia and Nigeria. Ginger is also grown year round in the southern United States and in Hawaii. It belongs to the family Zingiberaceae together with cardamom, galangal, and turmeric.

Ginger root has many medical benefits as well as providing flavor to a wide array of dishes, from Chinese stir-fry or Indian curry to ginger snaps, ginger bread men and, of course, ginger ale, the carbonated beverage long-used for soothing upset stomachs.

We call the part we eat a root, but botanically speaking, it is a rhizome (a stem that grows underground). The rhizome sprouts green foliage upward, while producing small roots from its undersurface. The rhizome usually grows horizontally, just below the soil's surface.

We cannot grow ginger outdoors in Alaska, but we can grow it indoors. Here's how:

1. Get an organic ginger root (rhizome) in the produce section of your grocery store. I got mine at Fred Meyer, but I believe Carrs also carries organic ginger. The root should be two or more inches long and at least as wide as your thumb. Choose a root that is firm, plump and has tight skin with several "eyes" or growth buds on it. Note: If the root is not organic, it may have been irradiated and treated to stop it from sprouting at the supermarket.

2. Soak the ginger root in **warm** water overnight to prepare for planting. Note: this will also help in case the root has been sprayed with a growth retardant.

3. Fill an 8-inch wide plant pot with rich, damp, well-draining potting soil (around four inches of soil). Ginger roots grow horizontally. So, be sure the container has sufficient room for growth and has drainage holes.

4. Place the ginger root horizontally with the best eye buds pointing up and cover it with 1 to 2 inches more soil. Water lightly.

5. Place the pot in a warm spot. Ginger is a tropical plant that loves heat (71-77°F) and constant humidity. It needs at least 70-degree temperatures to do well.

6. Keep the soil moist, but be careful not to over-water. Water only when the soil surface is dry.

7. Ginger is slow to grow. Be patient. It will probably be at least 2-3 weeks before you see some shoots coming up. It will be months more before the shoots reach their full height. Keep it consistently moist after the growth starts. **Ginger loves humidity.** If you have problems with dry air, then regular spraying and misting might help.

8. It takes about 8-10 months for the plants to reach maturity but the roots can be harvested after about four months (although they will not be nearly as flavorful as those allowed to grow to maturity). Move the soil at the edges of the pot to find some ginger rhizomes. Cut the desired amount off toward the edge of the pot and then replace the soil to allow the plant to continue to grow. Be sure to leave at least two inches of the rhizome.

9. When grown outside, ginger naturally goes through a period of dormancy during the winter or the drier months of the year. It will do so when grown inside too. So, do not get worried when it starts to die back. Just reduce the water. The foliage will die off, but the rhizome is still alive and will start sending up new shoots after a few months. Maintain the soil at 70 degrees and moist to the touch, watering only when the soil dries.

You can also google for articles and YouTube videos if you need more instructions. Here's a good article: www.tropicalpermaculture.com/growing-ginger.html.

Susan Miller also provided a presentation on ginger to the Herby Study Group in December 2021.



A ginger plant started by Susan in March 2018 at her office where it is warmer, has fluorescent lights on all day, and (used to have) a nice south window.

APRIL 2022 EVENT CALENDAR

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Monday, April 4, 6-7 pm

Alaska Botanical Garden: Starting your own seeds is easy with the right tools and a little planning. Join Education Specialist and Master Gardener Patrick Ryan for tips on when and how to plant different types of seeds. [Register here.](#)

Friday, April 8, 5:30–7:30 pm

Anchorage Parks & Rec: Cold Frame Gardening at the Dr. Lidia Selkregg Chalet. Learn how to protect your seedlings or plants from the frost with cold frames. A cold frame is a removable glass or plastic covered frame that fits over the ground or over a raised bed. Sign up to learn the benefits and how to make one for your garden. Cost is \$15. [Register here.](#)

Saturday, April 16, 11-1 pm

Good Earth Garden School: Beyond Compost - Other Ways to Build Soil (Virtual) taught by Ellen Vande Visse and hosted by Alaska Mill & Feed. [More info here.](#)

Friday, April 22, 5:30–7:30 pm

Anchorage Parks & Rec: Container Gardening at the Dr. Lidia Selkregg Chalet parking lot. The class will cover the basics of container vegetable gardens; from supplies to green-thumb growing tips. Cost is \$15. [Register here.](#)

Saturday, April 23, 11-1 pm

Good Earth Garden School: Pre-emptive Protection from Plant Diseases (Virtual) taught by Ellen Vande Visse and hosted by Alaska Mill & Feed. [More info here.](#)

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Saturday, April 2, 8-5:30 pm

State Alaska Master Gardeners Conference: You Can Grow It! All day, in -person event hosted at Evangelo's Restaurant off the E Parks Hwy in Wasilla. This year's program has a focus on beginning and new-to-Alaska gardeners. [More info here.](#)

Monday, April 4, 7-9 pm

Alaska Native Plant Society Meeting: "Monitoring Salt Marshes and Coastal Meadows in Southwest Alaska National Parks." [Get meeting link.](#)

Friday, April 8, 8am-5pm

2022 Alaska Farmers Market Association Summit & Annual Meeting: [Register here.](#)

Thursday, April 14, 10 am-noon

Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska Meeting: "Pioneer Peonies" presented by Denise Bowlan. Contact akwildflowers@gmail.com.

April 16th, 2022 10 am-4:30 pm

Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show: Many vendors and garden clubs host booths at this fun annual event. See our PSA on page 9 if you are interested in volunteering at the AMGA booth or selling plants.

Saturday, April 23, time unlisted

Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association Grafting Workshop: [Details TBD.](#)

JOBS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

Catholic Social Services is advertising an **AmeriCorps position** to join its Refugee Agriculture Program team this summer at the Fresh International Garden and Grow North Farm in Mountain View. Inspiring work and people. [Read the advertisement here.](#)

AMGA is planning for the **2023 Master Gardener Conference** and the conference committee is meeting once per month. By the end of the summer, we need to fill the following positions:

- Vendor Coordinator: Contact vendors, collect vendor forms, determine layout of vendor area and tables needed. Communicate with vendors on conference day.
- Gifts/Door Prizes Organizer: Select and solicit gifts for speakers and door prizes. Coordinate prize distribution during the conference.
- Silent Auction Organizer: Write request letters, coordinate donations, label and price donations, set up auction tables, supervise volunteers.

AMGA also is seeking a third member for its **Grants Committee**, serving with Jan and Sheila. Be part of the dream team!

Email president@alaskamastergardeners.org if you are interested in any of these AMGA volunteer positions!

BIRD CHATTER

A noxious rose? ... During our March meeting, Gino Graziano briefly discussed how Rugosa rose (*Rosa rugosa*), a garden ornamental rose also known as Sitka rose, has jumped the garden fence in Southcentral and Southeast Alaska.

While it may not be as noxious as some weeds, Rugosa rose (which actually smells very nice) has an international reputation for escaping to the wild. As of 2010, it was listed as a noxious weed in 15 states. Cultivated in Southeast Alaska since the early 1900s, it has naturalized in several Panhandle communities.

Three native roses can be confused with *R. rugosa*, including *R. acicularis*, *R. nutkana*, and *R. woodsii*. According to the Alaska Invasive ID app, Rugosa rose differs from these native roses by the presence of this combination of traits: flowers 1.5-3.5 inches across, length of stems covered in thick sharp thorns; and leaves that are smooth on top and hairy underneath.

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



Herb Study Group Meetings

- April 8: Herb Garden Plans for 2022
- May 13: Yet to be determined

Anyone interested in learning about herbs is welcome to send an email to the Herb Study Group at anchorageherb-studygroup@gmail.com to receive our notifications. There are no dues or membership requirements.

Monthly meetings are via Zoom, noon to 1:30 p.m. on the 2nd Friday of each month, September-May. We also volunteer in ABG's Herb Garden during the growing season.

April 22

EARTH DAY 2022

TAKE ACTION:

Plant a Pollinator Garden

- **Help critters out by planting native plants around your home. Native plants help provide species like insects and birds with food, shelter and proper habitat to reproduce.**
- **Native plants are your best bets as the species in your area are specially adapted to pollinate the plants indigenous to their habitat.**

#InvestInOurPlanet

Download a basic [pollinator planting guide](#) featuring Alaska native plants.

THE ANCHORAGE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (ASWCD) HAS BEEN REVIVED!

A small team of volunteers with fresh ideas is crafting the group's Mission and getting the organization up and running.

The ASWCD has launched an Invasive Species Program, focusing on highly invasive plants. If you hike beyond the trailheads of Chugach State Park or Chugach National Forest and would like to help find and document locations of a few highly invasive plant species, join our pilot Hiker-Spotter Project; contact Anne Billman at 907-903-4779 if you are interested. You do not need to be a plant expert!

The ASWCD website is anchorageswcd.org and we can be reached at anchorageswcd@gmail.com.

Stay tuned as we get our feet on the ground, and email us if you want more information or would like to help.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR APRIL 16 MIDTOWN MALL SPRING GARDEN SHOW!

Meet other gardeners and get volunteer hours at our AMGA/CES booth at this fun annual event!

Master Gardeners can bring up to 2 flats of plants/starts to sell. Plants need to be identified with a white plant stake. There also needs to be a yellow plant stake with the selling price and the seller's initials.

Yellow plant stakes can be obtained from Susan Negus (907-227- 6288 or senegus@gci.net) who lives near the zoo, or Emily Becker (907-306-7011 or president@alaskamastergardener.org) who lives in Midtown. Yellow plant stakes will also be available at the March 5 Fur Rondy AMGA/CES Ask a Master Gardener table.

[SIGNUPGENIUS LINK TO VOLUNTEER!](#)

Earth Day Community Plant Swap

At



804 E 15th Ave Anchorage Ak 99501

Swap plants and chat with fellow enthusiasts at this one of a kind event! Special silent auction will be held featuring prizes from local vendors.

April 22nd

2:30pm - 5:00pm

Admission: \$5.00

Must Pre-register at

<https://earthdayplantswapanchorage.eventbrite.com>

Proceeds will go to the Anchorage Municipal Community Garden Projects.



Many thanks to Alaska Botanical Garden and Anchor Gardens for hosting a seed exchange at ABG on March 13. Photo courtesy Elizabeth Bluemink.

AMGA Board of Directors

Emily Becker	President
Troy Weiss	Vice President
Jan van den Top	Treasurer
Nick Riordan	Secretary
Kathleen Kaiser	At Large
Keenan Plate	At Large
Kat Karabelnikoff	At Large
Meg O'Mullane	At Large

Committee Chairs, Program Coordinators & Volunteers

Emily Becker	CES Liaison
Steve Brown, Gina Dionne	CES Master Gardener Program Liaison
Keenan Plate	Broadcast Email
Nick Riordan	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
Jan van den Top, Sheila Toomey	Grants Program
TBD	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 an AMGA Member

[Use our online form to join/renew and pay online or by mail.](#) Your membership supports 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.

Next AMGA Meeting via Zoom!

April 18, 2022

"Garden Insect Ecology"

Alex Wenninger

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

Meeting Schedule

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.

Newsletter Submissions

We welcome letters, opinions, public event announcements, articles, ideas and inquiries. 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 articles (400-600 words ideal), Bird Chatter, calendar items and announcements are always welcome. Contact the editor at newsletteramga@gmail.com and send Bird Chatter items to birdchatter@alaskamastergardeners.org.

Connect with AMGA

Website: www.alaskamastergardeners.org
 Facebook: facebook.com/Alaska-Master-Gardeners-Anchorage
 Youtube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCvZehJprKkjQzivQvNDKopQ
 Google Group: <https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups#!forum/AkMGA>
 Membership issues/address corrections: contact Alexis St. Juliana at astjuliana@hotmail.com.
 Mail: AMGA, P.O. Box 221403, Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

