

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Emily Becker

I'm feeling a little whiplashed. This June was the warmest in Anchorage's recorded history, with an average high of 70 degrees. It was also the driest June ever recorded. In fact, the four-month period from March 11 to July 10 was the driest on record. Most of us probably spent a great deal of time watering, but no denying the sunshine was fabulous for gardening!

Then, in July we smashed all kinds of rain records, including consecutive days of precipitation over 0.05 inches and numerous other rain events. Sure, it's been nice to have a break in watering and a reduced level of fire danger. But I miss that incredible heat and sunshine!

Changes in "the extremes," or record-breaking events, are markers of a changing climate, and we do not need to look far to see the ill effects. The suffering around the world from extreme heat is heartbreaking. Maybe another reason not to leave the yard.

Thanks so much for your kind replies to my story of the dead cherry trees in last month's newsletter. I had many offers for replacement trees, some of which are already in the ground at Airport Heights school! I've learned so much about the best ways to plant trees.

AMGA is supporting "We Are Of: A Weekend of Relating to Race &

Continued on next page

IN THIS ISSUE

- » **Treasurer's Report**
- » **Photos: Master Gardeners Out and About**
- » **Extend an Early Welcome to Pollinators**
- » **Herb Study: Bits of Herbs**
- » **August Event Calendar**
- » **Bird Chatter**

Total Precipitation Mar 11 to Jul 10 – ANCHORAGE TED STEVENS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, AK

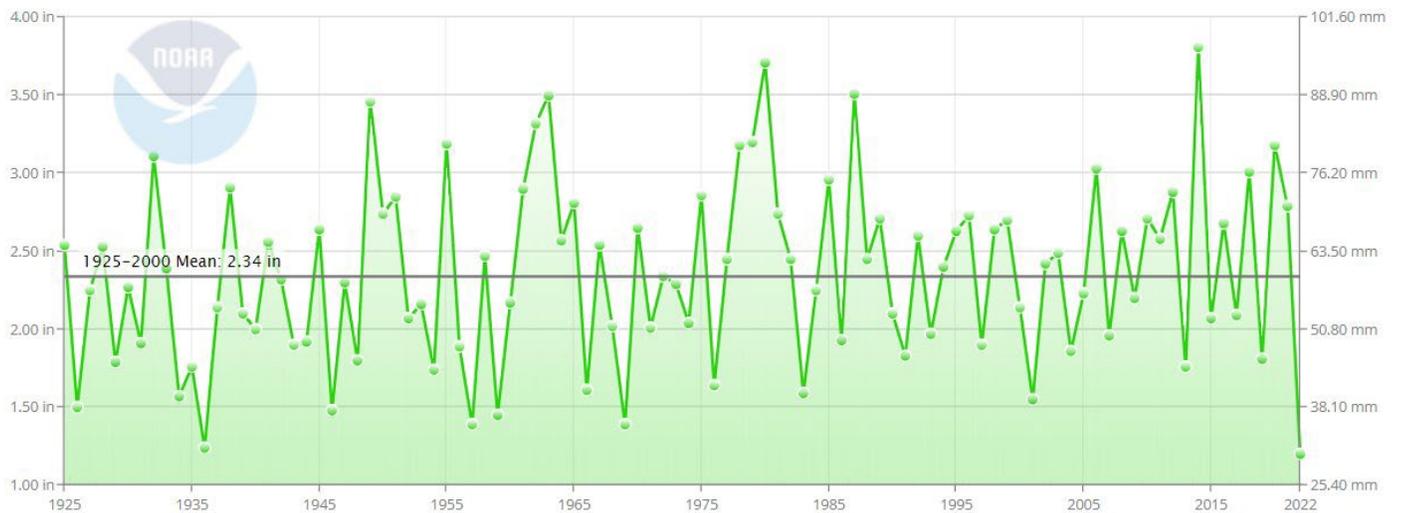
Use navigation tools above and below chart to change displayed range



Graphic: Total precipitation in Anchorage from March 11 to July 10, courtesy Applied Climate Information System (ACIS)

Cover photo: An arrangement of Queen Lime zinnias, photo courtesy Elizabeth Bluemink.

Alaska Precipitation
June



Powered by ZingChart

Driest June on record in Alaska, courtesy Applied Climate Information System (ACIS)

President's Message, from previous page

Land," presented by the Alaska Humanities Forum the first weekend in August. Mistinguette Smith from the [Black/Land Project](#) will facilitate this free, two-day event with storytelling, art and conversation about the relationship between race and land. [Register here.](#)

Get ready for the AMGA late-season plant sale on August 13 from 10 am to 3 pm outside the Alaska Botanical Garden! Look around your yard and pot up those plants you can share with others. Requirements for participating in AMGA plant sales are [here on our website](#), and you can [sign up to volunteer via Signup Genius](#). Please call or email organizer Susan Negus at senegus@gci.net with any questions. 🌿

hardy perennials • unique houseplants • outdoor art • gardening advice • free classes

AUGUST 13, 2022

10:00 - 3:00

Late Season Plant Sale

OUTSIDE ALASKA BOTANICAL GARDEN
4515 CAMPBELL AIRSTRIP ROAD
ANCHORAGE, AK

10:30 Peonies: How to not kill them! Troy Weiss

11:30 Organic soil amendments. Julie Riley

12:30 Pruning, I have a new tool! Debbie Hinchey

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THINK SMALL: EXTEND AN EARLY WELCOME TO POLLINATORS

by Patrick Ryan, Alaska Botanical Garden Education Specialist

How does the song go: “When it’s springtime in Alaska, it’s forty below.” That can be true up north, but not so much here in Southcentral. However, this spring seemed to take its time getting here, but that just means a longer period to enjoy the greening of the forest, lawns and gardens.

If you can’t wait for spring to arrive, plant some bulbs this Fall. The so-called “minor bulbs” bloom for a brief time, often right through the melting snow. Sometimes known as “ephemerals,” they don’t die after blooming, but they go dormant and their foliage disappears. Often the term “ephemerals” refers to woodland plants, but here I am talking about the common spring-blooming bulbs available locally for planting in the fall.

These small bulbs are often overshadowed by their larger relatives, tulips and daffodils, which require a little more work to plant. The smaller bulbs are generally planted only about three inches deep. I use a tool known as a dibbler, such as that from Berry & Bird (Google it). Very little effort is required.

Since these little guys are the first to bloom, they are a welcome mat for early pollinators.

My suggestions? Plant lots of whichever bulbs you choose.

Crocus. Wide variety of colors

Muscari (Grape Hyacinths). Usually found in a deep blue color, they are also available in various shades of blue, purple and white.

Scilla aka Siberian Squill (*Scilla siberica*). Blue flowers.

Pushkinia (Striped Squill): The white flowers of this plant look light blue because of the blue stripes on the petals.

Tarda Tulip is a very showy star-shaped wildflower tulip that opens to reveal a bright yellow center and white tips. This tulip naturalizes easily, meaning it will multiply and spread, returning each year. Native to central Asia. There are other varieties available, but I’ve had the best luck with Tarda.

You can order bulbs early and they will be sent at

the proper time for planting in our area. That is, if the weather cooperates. But all these bulbs (and more!) should be available locally at garden centers in the fall and should be planted in masses for the best effect.

Dibble on! 🌱

Reprinted with permission from ABG Summer Newsletter.

JUNE 2022 TREASURER’S REPORT

Balances on 5/31/2022

Checking S-88	\$ 20,813.38
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 16,947.80
CD General 2 year 1.95%; 1/23	\$ 10,799.15

Total Assets \$ 48,565.58

Interest/Dividends \$ 31.06

This month's revenue

Membership	\$ -
Donations	\$ -
Fundraising/Plant sale	\$ -
Advanced M.G. course fees	\$ -
Total revenue	\$ -

This month's expenses

Grants (scholarships)	\$ 500.00
Pioneer Home Plants	\$ 102.49
Operations	\$ 828.00
Website	\$ -
Plant sale	\$ 71.25
Public Relations (State Fair)	
Newsletter	\$ 19.99
AMG speaker fee	\$ -
Lifetime achievement	\$ -
Total Expenses this month	\$ 1,521.73

BALANCES ON 6/30/2022

Checking S-88	\$ 19,291.65
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 16,950.59
CD General 2 Year 1.95%, (1/23)	\$ 10,827.42

Total Assets on 5/31/2022 \$ 47,074.91

Prepared by Jan van den Top

PHOTOS: MASTER GARDENERS OUT & ABOUT



Don Bladow led the July 18 AMGA garden tour at the Covenant Lutheran Church of Hope vegetable garden.



Debbie Hinchey led the July 11 AMGA Centennial Rose Garden tour.



Herb Study Group volunteer Susan McIver waters the Alaska Botanical Garden herb garden on July 8 before the rains came.

HOW WE COPED WITH RECORD JULY RAINFALL.....



Anchorage gardener Theresa Zemke used a pair of umbrellas on her planters.



Cris Sanders-Porter of Anchorage placed an umbrella over her squash.



Jennifer Berger of Juneau calls this system "The Juneau."

HERB STUDY: BITS OF HERBS by Elaine Hammes

How many herbs and definitions of herbs can there be? As it turns out, the more time you have to look, the more you will find.

In botany, the term “herb” generally refers to an herbaceous plant: a small, seed-bearing plant without a woody stem in which all aerial parts die back to the ground at the end of each growing season. For this reason, some of the most commonly-described herbs such as sage, rosemary and lavender would be excluded from the botanical definition of an herb as they do not die down each year (in their native climate), and possess woody stems.

However, the Herb Society of America quotes horticulturalist Holly Shimizu who describes herbs as “plants (trees, shrubs, vines, perennials, biennials or annuals) valued historically, presently, or potentially for their flavor, fragrance, medicinal qualities, insecticidal qualities, economic or industrial use, or in the case of dyes, for the coloring material they provide.”

Some usages of the term “herb” differentiate between culinary herbs and medicinal herbs, while others distinguish between herbs and spices. According to Merriam-Webster on-line, use of the leaves versus seeds distinctions are not always as herbs to spices. Pepper (as a spice) is a dried and ground berry or fruit. The dried flower buds of cloves and stigmas of crocuses are considered spices while nasturtiums and orange flowers are described as herbs.

French cuisine uses herb mixes such as herbes de Provence, fines herbes and bouquet garni. Asian and Indian cooking use many variations of curry, mixtures of herbs and spices. Other seasoning mixtures include bजारat from the Middle East, garam masala from India and ras el hanout from Morocco. A sampling of unusual herbs include: shiso (*Perilla frutescens*), lemon myrtle

(*Backhousia citriodora*), arcayuyo (Fetid Goosefoot, *Dysphania graveolens*), calamints (in the *Calaminthus* genus), Muña muña (*Satureja odora*), culantro (*Eryngium foetidum*), nigella (*Nigella damascena*, *N. sativa*, *N. hispanica*) and epazote (*Dysphania ambrosioides*).



Myrica gale (sweet gale) is an Alaska native plant with herbal uses.

As with many plants, common names are often associated with different plants. For example, curry is more often thought of as mixtures of spices but it can also refer to the curry tree leaf (*Murraya koenigii*) or another small curry plant (*Helichrysum italicum*) in the Asteraceae family. The *Murraya koenigii* leaf is used in cooking while the *Helichrysum italicum* is grown for its scent and as an ornamental rather than for culinary purposes.

The National Institute of Health (NIH) National Library of Medicine website provides a list of herbs and flowers in its

garden as well as an introduction to Nicholas Culpeper, a British apothecary, and his classic, [The Complete Herbal](#), first published in 1649. Wikipedia, TasteAtlas.com and many other sources also provide no end to exploring herbs, spices and herb-spice mixtures. 🌿

JOIN US IN THE ABG HERB GARDEN!

Anyone interested in volunteering in the Herb Garden should contact the Alaska Botanical Garden directly for volunteer orientation.

Herb Study Group meetings are expected to resume in September; anyone interested in attending (likely by Zoom, possibly in-person) is welcome to send an email to the Herb Study Group at anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com to receive our notifications.

AUGUST 2022 EVENT CALENDAR

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Tuesday, August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 11 am-12 pm

AARP Alaska: Fall Harvest 2022: This is a weekly series of August webinars led by CES staff. The first webinar on August 2 will feature Leslie Shallcross teaching a Jam and Jelly Basics class. [Learn more about the series and register.](#)

Tuesday, August 2, 12-1 pm

RurAL CAP Grow Program: Wild Ferments: Cooking with Alaska Gathered and Grown. Learn how to make your own sauerkraut and kimchi using wild plants and veggies from your garden. [Register for free Zoom event.](#)

Tuesday, August 2, 6-7:30 pm

The Anchorage Museum's Urban Harvest: Drying Herb Harvests. [Register here.](#)

Monday, August 8, 6-7 pm

The Alaska Botanical Garden: What's in Bloom Walking Tour. [Register here.](#)

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Saturday, August 6-Sunday, Aug. 7

Anchorage Garden Club: 77th Annual Flower Show "Oceans 49" at the Central Lutheran Church. Starts at 1 pm Saturday. Visit the [AGC website](#) for more info and to see categories and rules. Contact Carol

Norquist at norquistc1219@gmail.com or AlaskaGardenClubs@gmail.com with questions.

Saturday, August 6-Sunday, Aug. 7

Alaska Humanities Forum: We Are Of: A Weekend of Relating to Race & Land. AMGA is a partner in this free event. [See agenda and register here.](#)

Saturday, August 13, 10 am-3 pm

AMGA Late Season Plant Sale: Perennials, houseplants, three classes, garden art, and Ask a Master Gardener table. Will be held outside the entrance of the Alaska Botanical Garden.

JOBS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

Many volunteer slots remain open for **AMGA's Late Season Plant Sale** on Saturday, August 13! Sign up using our [SignUpGenius form](#). For more information, contact Susan Negus at 907-227-6288 or senegus@gci.net.

The **CES Anchorage Outreach Center** is seeking a full-time Administrative Generalist 3. [Find out more and apply here.](#)

Tickets go on sale for ABG's August 11 **Wine in the Woods** event on August 1. [Learn more.](#)

Local garden-themed radio programming continues to be available, including [Ag Matters \(Big Cabbage Radio/Radio Free Palmer\)](#) and [Homer Grown \(KBBI\)](#). This comes to mind as a recent episode focused on how ['Everyone Can become a Master Gardener'](#) with Ken Blaylock.

Catholic Social Services' Grow Local, Give Local program uses monetary donations to buy fresh produce directly from Fresh International Gardens and Grow North Farm to distribute from the St Frances Food Pantry. More info on [the CSS website](#).

Midtown Garden Depot is open for the rest of the summer, accepting donations of garden supplies, has materials available to share, and offers weekly composting workshops through ACAT's Yarducopia. More information at <https://wp.me/p5affl-6xM>.

VOLUNTEERS 4 GARDENS

Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage and the Alaska School Garden Network maintain a list of volunteer opportunities at public gardening projects in Anchorage.

[View the list/join a project.](#)

BIRD CHATTER

AMGA 2022 Garden Tours

Version Date: 6/20/22

Date	Time	Name	Host
8/1/22 Monday	7 pm	Jane's Garden	Jane McClure
8/8/22		TBD	TBD
8/11/22 Thursday	6 pm	Grow North Farms	Keenan Plate
8/15/22 Monday	7 pm	Mardane's Garden	Rosa Meehan

Notes:

- Detailed addresses will be sent to members the week before the tour.
- Pop-up tours will be added as opportunities arise

WE NEED YOU TO VOLUNTEER/SELL PLANTS!

AMGA August 13 Plant Sale

Sign up to volunteer:

[SignUpGenius Form](#)

Selling plants? You will need white tags identifying what plant it is and a yellow tag with your initials and a price. AMGA is supplying the yellow tags. You can get them from Susan Negus or Emily Becker.

Additional requests:

- A few more young strong helpers for setup and takedown
- Paul Marmora would like some help to get all of his tables to the plant sale for set up and take down, maybe someone with an empty pick-up.
- Always need more tents please!

Questions? Call or text Susan Negus at 907-227-6288 or send an e-mail to senegus@gci.net.

New recycling coordinator seeks input on Curbside Compost Program Kelli Toth is the municipality's brand-new recycling coordinator. She's interested in finding ways to increase pink cart subscriptions, and generally growing the Curbside Compost program. Many local gardeners were disappointed that free, finished compost was not offered this year. (Many of us unable to maintain our own piles probably would have been willing to purchase this high-quality product.) Contact Kelli at Kelli.Toth@anchorageak.gov.

A confounding summer Bill Yeagle of Anchorage has the following musings from his work with local gardeners in 2022:

- Single biggest task in client gardens this summer: caring for pancaked spirea and potentilla from last September's heavy wet snowfall.
- What is the cheapest and safest way to untether broken tops of birch trees?
- Please don't hedge lilacs, the resulting purple hair on top of the buzzcut just ain't.

Les Brakes peony distribution The AMGA members who purchased eight peonies from Les Brakes of Willow raised \$120 for the Georgson Botanical Garden in Fairbanks. Thank you!

Hummingbirds! Several Master Gardeners reported seeing hummingbirds in their gardens in late July. Marilyn Barker, for example, had hummingbird visits to her scarlet monarda and nasturtiums.

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



Next AMGA Meeting via Zoom! September 19, 2022

“Plant Division Techniques” presented by Will Criner

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). 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.

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.

Newsletter Submissions

We welcome letters, opinions, public event announcements, articles, ideas and inquiries. The deadline for submitting an item for publication is the 20th of every month. Educational articles (400-600 words ideal), Bird Chatter, calendar items and announcements are always welcome. Contact/send items to 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](https://www.facebook.com/Alaska-Master-Gardeners-Anchorage)
 YouTube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCvZehJprKkQzivQvNDKopQ
 Google Group: <https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups#!forum/AkMGA>
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