

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** by Emily Becker

"What is going on here?" A question probably every gardener has asked while watching a plant suffer. Next: "What did I do wrong?!"

This past month, six of eight newly-planted cherry trees at Airport Heights Elementary School died. While they suffered, I discussed their plight with many people.

But let me start at the beginning. Since 2017, APH Elementary School has had an orchard on its east side, with apple, crabapple, pear, and plum trees. Third graders in the Anchorage School District who study trees decided to add cherries to the mix. They researched and selected the trees, and we received a "Treevitalize Your School" grant from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Community Forestry program.

In mid-May, I purchased eight cherry trees from local nurseries, seven from the same location and one from a different source. In the case of the seven, the manager told me the trees had been overwintered outside. This can be good, since it means the plants are hardened off, but it can also be bad, since spring weather in Alaska is so variable, and roots can be nipped. However, the trees had buds and looked to be humming with life. We strapped the trees into the pickup truck.

Travel and transport can kill a tree. You need to make sure the branches are facing the front of the car and protected from the flowing air while the car is moving. A leafed tree should be carefully wrapped or contained and the trees need to be handled gently. As Debbie Hinchey later told me, "The bark on trees is especially tender on trees just coming out of dormancy and easily damaged

by being picked up by its trunk (or maybe by ropes or any other mechanical stress.) The damage happens when the bark detaches from the previous year's wood. The connection is not much more than mucus-like during that part of spring." Julie Riley added that dropping the tree can have a similar effect, detaching the tree from its roots. However, this is not, I think, what killed our trees, and they arrived safely to the school.

Students gleefully dug holes, pounded in stakes for the protective fencing, and carried bucket after bucket of mulch. The soil was very sandy with clumps of clay. We did not amend the soil much, as I understand that trees need to orient to their new location and transition to the native soil. This is the usual advice for tree planting.

The nursery manager had shared instructions for planting: the hole should be at least twice as wide as the root ball, but about as deep (so as not to cover the flare.) This is standard advice, but he also told me not to mess with the root ball. I thought this was strange. Usually, the roots are slightly cut, roughed up, or loosened so the tree latches on to the new soil. I met his advice halfway and roughed the root ball up a little bit. This was a mistake.

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### *President's Message, from previous page*

Also, the nursery manager also said to flood the ground around each tree several times a week.

Planted in mid-May, the trees never really leafed out, just a bit of green. I worried and wondered. I called the nursery, and the manager told me to be patient. Six of the eight trees withered and died. One survivor, it should be noted, was from a different nursery.

In June, school was out but it was time to learn. I shoveled around one of the trees and it practically floated to the surface. While fairly dry on top, the tree was drowning. DNR arborist Josh Hightower helped autopsy the trees. He said newly-planted trees need about two



Root-bound cherry, photo courtesy Emily Becker

gallons of water for each inch of trunk caliper, twice per week. If the soil is moist about four inches below the surface, more water is probably not needed.

Overwatering only affected one or two trees and it probably wasn't the biggest problem. The other dead trees also popped right out of the ground, as if they had just been planted. Shaking off the soil, it was clear they were severely root-bound. The roots were wrapped too tightly to take up water or nutrients, and too thick to be untangled. This most likely caused the death of the trees. Roots of trees grown in pots grow in circles and do not adapt well to growing outward like they need to in the ground. Eventually the roots can strangle the tree.

Later, when the manager told me the trees were 4-5 years old, I realized their pots were much too small. Josh advised that in compacted soils, a wider tree hole will help roots grow unrestricted into the surrounding soil

and help the tree establish more quickly. In this case, the trees would have benefitted from widening the hole to 3-4 times the size of the root ball.

Since the nursery did not guarantee the trees, I am looking for cherry tree donations so the students can try again in the fall. Please contact me if you have one to spare. It's been a painful learning experience, but at least the Airport Heights teachers will have lesson plans ready to go for the first week of school! 🌱

## MAY 2022 TREASURER'S REPORT

### Balances on 4/30/2022

Checking S-88	\$ 23,099.94
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 16,944.92
CD General 2 year 1.95%; 1/23	\$ 10,799.15

**Total Assets** \$ 50,849.26

**Interest/Dividends** \$ 2.88

### This month's revenue

Membership	\$ 224.60
Donations	\$ -
Fundraising/Plant sale	\$ -
Advanced M.G. course fees	\$ -
<b>Total revenue</b>	\$ 224.60

### This month's expenses

Grants (scholarships)	\$ 1,500.00
Pioneer Home Plants	\$ 589.50
Operations	\$ 127.00
Website	\$ 22.17
Plant sale	\$ 202.50
Public Relations (State Fair)	
Newsletter	\$ 19.99
AMG speaker fee	\$ -
<b>Lifetime achievement</b>	\$ 50.00
<b>Total Expenses this month</b>	\$ 2,511.16

### 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 on 5/31/2022** \$ 48,565.58

Prepared by Jan van den Top  
on 6/12/2022



# PHOTOS: MASTER GARDENERS OUT & ABOUT



AMGA garden tour at Madge Oswald's rock gardens on June 1.



Nick and BJ volunteering at the ABG Herb Garden earlier this summer.



Kat Karabelnikoff leads the June 20 AMGA tour at the Mann Leiser Memorial Greenhouse.



Les Brake showing off late spring blooms, including primulas, during the AMGA June 4 garden tour at his Coyote Garden in Willow.



Left to right: Julie Ginder, Ruthe Rasmussen & Sheila Toomey on planting day at Pioneer Home gardens.



Nickel LaFleur's AMGA garden tour on June 13.



# HERB STUDY: VIETNAMESE CORIANDER by Elaine Hammes

*Persicaria odorata*, commonly called Vietnamese coriander, rau răm, laksa leaf, Vietnamese cilantro, phak phai, praew leaf, hot mint and Cambodian mint, is an herb used extensively in Southeast Asian and Northeast Indian cooking. The leaves have a coriander-like smell and a spicy, pungent, hot-peppery flavor.

*Persicaria odorata* is in the family Polygonaceae (knotweed family). The plant can grow 18 inches or taller and the tops of the green leaves have chestnut-colored spots. Vietnamese coriander is not related to the mints or the other coriander/ cilantro (*Coriandrum sativa*). It has been successfully planted and grown each spring as an annual in ABG's Herb Garden for the last several years.



*Persicaria odorata* (Vietnamese coriander) at the ABG Herb Garden

In Vietnam, *Persicaria odorata* can be cultivated or found in the wild as a perennial, growing best in tropical to subtropical zones (9-11) in warm conditions. It prefers full sun to part shade and well-drained moist soil. In milder winters, it may survive outside, although growth may slow down. It rarely flowers outside the tropics. Pests and diseases are not regarded as problems and it is resistant to deer and rabbit.

It is easy to root cuttings in water and some sources recommend against overwintering indoors unless adequate humidity can be maintained. Fresh bunches of Vietnamese coriander (rau răm) can be obtained in early spring from Asian markets. Remove the young leaves at the very top of the stems and any large leaves along the stems. Trim the bottom off stems to the first healthy internode and place in water until 1-2 cm roots appear below the lowest node and then plant in soil. Expect to harvest around two months later: Pull young leaves from stems, rinse, and dry in a salad spinner. Store clean leaves, layered between slightly damp paper towels, in an unsealed plastic bag.

The leaves are commonly eaten fresh in salads (including chicken salad) and in some soups and stews. In Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, the shredded leaf is an essential ingredient of the popular laksa dish, a

spicy noodle soup, so much so that the leaf is commonly referred to as "laksa leaf." In the cuisine of Cambodia, the leaf is used in soups, stews, salads, and the Cambodian summer rolls. In Laos and parts of Thailand, the leaf is eaten with raw beef larb.

A common saying in Vietnam is "rau răm, giá song" ("Vietnamese coriander, raw bean sprouts,") which refers to the belief that Vietnamese coriander reduces sexual desire, while bean sprouts have the opposite effect. Many Buddhist monks grow coriander in their private gardens and eat it frequently, believing it helps them remain celibate. It also is used in traditional systems

of medicine for the treatment of inflammation, stomach ailments, tumors, etc. Juice from crushed leaves was at one time taken as an antidote for treating poisonous snake bites.

A study published in 2019 on the National Institute of Health website investigated the anticancer potential of *Persicaria odorata*. It was found to possess antiproliferative, anti-survival, antimetastatic activities, and to induce cell cycle arrest. Additionally, the presence of flavonoids and quinones revealed anticancer activity of the plant. Overall, the study concluded *Persicaria odorata* exhibits anticancer properties. 🌿

## The Herb Study Group is volunteering in ABG's Herb Garden this summer!

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](mailto:anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com) to receive our notifications.

# JULY 2022 EVENT CALENDAR

## CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

### Monday, July 11, 6-7 pm

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

### Wednesday, July 20, 6-7 pm

The Alaska Botanical Garden: Nomenclature Walk led by Patrick Ryan - [Register here.](#)

### Friday, July 29, 9-5 pm

Botanical Name Changes Workshop with Linda Ann Vorobik: This class will review how plants are named and discuss some of the major changes in scientific plant names. [Register here.](#)

### Saturday, July 30, 6-7 pm

The Alaska Botanical Garden: Creating a Botanical Sketchbook (three-day course)) - More information and registration on the [ABG website.](#)

## MEETINGS & EVENTS

### Friday, July 1 - Friday, July 15

The Alaska Native Plant Society is hosting a state-wide Alaska Botany Bioblitz. All are welcome to join this event [via iNaturalist.](#)

### Tuesday, July 7, 6 pm

Anchorage Garden Club: Annual Picnic - RSVP requested. Reach out to AGC club president Carol Norquist at [norquistic1219@gmail.com](mailto:norquistic1219@gmail.com) or [AlaskaGardenClubs@gmail.com](mailto:AlaskaGardenClubs@gmail.com).

### Saturday, July 9 & 23, 4-8 pm

Stickleback Farm "Build and Beautify" days: These events will include free bags of lettuce for volunteers along with free BBQ and art activities for youth. Our location is 3rd and Ingra, near Brother Francis Shelter. Contact [anangookwe.wolf@akseedsofchange.com](mailto:anangookwe.wolf@akseedsofchange.com) with questions.

### Monday, July 11, 6-7 pm

The Alaska Botanical Garden: Gala - Summer Celebration during the garden's peak bloom with local artwork, live jazz, etc - [Read on.](#)

### Saturday, June 16, 2-6 pm

Yarducopia's Annual Garden Bike Tour: All welcome. [More info to come.](#)

## JOBS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

**Friends of Boyer's Orchard** still has trees available for sponsorship this summer. More information at <https://alaskaorchard.org/sponsor-a-tree/>

**Midtown Garden Depot** has re-opened 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>

The **AMGA Late Season Plant Sale** will be Saturday, August 13. Perennials, houseplants, three classes, maybe garden art, and a table for gently-used tools and pots. Susan Negus is looking for:

- A volunteer to spend the night in their vehicle the night before the plant sale. Susan will be there in her van, but two will be better than one.
- Someone with a truck or cargo van to volunteer to empty the storage locker and deliver the contents to the Benny Benson parking lot the day before the sale and return them after the sale.
- If someone has a topic they would like to hear about in the class or if you would like to teach a class, let Susan know.

There will be plenty of other volunteer opportunities and a Signup Genius will go live this month. For more information, contact Susan Negus at 907-227-6288 or [senegus@gci.net](mailto:senegus@gci.net).

## 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.](#)

## AMGA 2022 Garden Tours

Version Date: 6/20/22

Date	Time	Name	Host
6/27/22 Monday	6:30 pm	Sharon's Garden	Sharon Davies
7/7/22 Thursday	7 pm	Middlerock Gardens	Debra English
7/11/22 Monday	7 pm	Alaska Centennial Rose Garden	Debbie Hinchey
7/18/22 Monday	7 pm	Lutheran Church of Hope	Don Bladow
7/25/22 Monday	7 pm	Kaplan Garden	Diane Kaplan
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

## BIRD CHATTER

**Plastic pot recycling options this year** The Alaska Botanical Garden is not hosting a plastic pot recycling event this year. However, the Habitat for Humanity ReStore located at 1200 West Northern Lights is accepting plastic pots. Donations accepted Tuesday-Saturday, 11am-5 pm at the Benson Boulevard door.

**Wildflower seed option** Some Master Gardeners have complained about limited commercial availability of Alaska native wildflower seed (versus generic wildflower seed mixes found in box stores and nurseries).

BC learned recently about the [St. Isadore Farm](#) in North Pole which offers seed for native Jacob's Ladder, larkspur, columbine, Eskimo potato/alpine vetch, arnica, and a few others. The [Seeds and Soil Farm](#) in Palmer also has a few native wildflower seed options.

*What's new, interesting, confounding and delightful?*  
Send your bits of interesting garden news to [birdchatter@alaskamastergardeners.org](mailto:birdchatter@alaskamastergardeners.org).



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

AUGUST 13, 2022

10:00 - 3:00

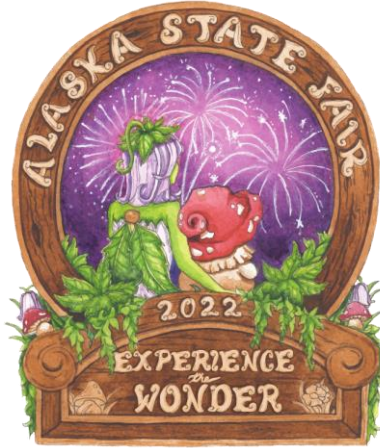
## Late Season Plant Sale

OUTSIDE ALASKA BOTANICAL GARDEN  
4515 CAMPBELL AIRSTRIP ROAD  
ANCHORAGE, AK

ALASKA MASTER  
GARDENERS  
ANCHORAGE

[www.alaskamastergardeners.org](http://www.alaskamastergardeners.org)

# 2022 Alaska State Fair Volunteer Opportunity



Entry & Judging days in the Alaska State Fair's Crops Department is a fun atmosphere to meet new people & catch up with old friends.

It is a great opportunity to learn something new and to share your own gardening experiences.

You can even earn some credits for Master Gardener volunteer hours!

## ~ Entry Clerks ~

**Wednesdays, August 24 & August 31**

**Three shifts available... 12-5 PM, 3-8 PM and 5-9 PM**

Help Exhibitors fill out entry forms correctly, explain the use of the Exhibitor Guide, assist with verbal direction on preparation of submissions for judging, and placement of entries in the display area.

## ~ Judges Clerks ~

**Thursdays, August 25 & September 1 from 8 AM-Noon**

Record winning results, set up and place ribbons for the final display.

## ~ Extra Hands Needed ~

**Tuesdays, August 30 from 10AM-2PM & September 6 from 9 AM-1PM**

Looking for a handful or two of volunteers to help with 1<sup>st</sup> Entry take down, 2<sup>nd</sup> Entry set up, ribbon sorting, and final shut down of department for the season.

## ~ Admission & Parking Passes are provided ~

For more information or to sign up contact Kathy Liska  
Crops Superintendent/Horticulture Supervisor  
(907) 301-0317 cell or [akliska@aol.com](mailto:akliska@aol.com)





*an Alaska Behavioral Health program*

## ***Build & Beautify at Stickleback***

***Help us make a community farm downtown  
by building soil in the lasagna-bed style!***

***July 9th & 23rd  
(Saturdays!)***

***4pm to 8 pm  
@  
3rd & Ingra***



***FAMILY FRIENDLY + ART ACTIVITIES!***

***BBQ, SNACKS, & WATER PROVIDED***

***Non-Smoking/Vaping/Alcohol Event***



***RSVP for a free plant to take home by  
scanning the QR code, or by emailing  
[volunteer@akseedsofchange.com](mailto:volunteer@akseedsofchange.com)  
Be sure to dress for outdoor work!***



***AKSOC***



***ak\_seeds\_of\_change***





## 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](mailto: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](mailto:newsletteramga@gmail.com) and send Bird Chatter items to [birdchatter@alaskamastergardeners.org](mailto:birdchatter@alaskamastergardeners.org).

## Connect with AMGA

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

