

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Emily Becker

Willow gardener Les Brake is moving to Ohio.

Les and his partner, Jerry Conrad, are selling their extraordinary property, including their lovingly hand-built home, shop, furniture, cabins, and of course, Les' marvelous, sensational Coyote Garden.



Les Brake and Fran Durner during a 2022 AMGA tour at Coyote Garden. Photo courtesy Emily Becker.

Les has been here for 40 years. "I do not want another winter," he says. What he does want is crocus and snowdrops blooming in February, a YMCA with a swimming pool, a store he can walk to, and especially, being near Jerry's family near Canton.

Also, it's zone 6, he says.

The decision was terribly difficult, and he still feels some waves of grief. Can he adjust to having neighbors close by? Why move back to a place Jerry couldn't wait to leave? Will he still be able to howl at the full moon?

But dreams of magnolia blossoms are dancing in Les' head, and he feels really good cleaning out the place,

getting rid of books, photographs, and a lifetime of stuff.

You won't be surprised to hear Les is already making garden friends in Ohio, talking with people, developing plant lists, and planning garden and nursery visits.

Ideally, Les and Jerry will stay through this summer, but that depends on the buyer and what deal can be worked out.

Les will be our closing keynote speaker on Saturday, April 8, at the Master Gardener Annual Conference. His talk "Recipe for Making a Garden that is Snug in its Setting," will show you the gems from Les' garden and how he arranges them, complete with plant lists.

Les is warm, funny, and very knowledgeable, and his West Texas accent makes his stories even better.

Join us for a journey through Les' garden as we bid him an affectionate von voyage during our April 8 conference. 🌱

### IN THIS ISSUE

- » Treasurer's Report
- » Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show Volunteers Needed
- » Master Gardener Conference: Speaker Highlights
- » Yarducopia 2022 Grant Report
- » Herb Study: Poppies
- » Earth Day 2022 Activities
- » April Event Calendar
- » Bird Chatter

# SPRING GARDEN SHOW VOLUNTEERS NEEDED by Susan Negus

The Annual Spring Garden Show at the Midtown Mall will be on April 22 from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

This is popular event. It's a chance to visit with other Master Gardeners and members of other local garden clubs, get volunteer hours, and sell some of your own plants.

## Sell Plants!

AMGA members can [sign up](#) to bring up to two flats of plants to sell. Plants must be dropped off between 9:30 and 10 a.m. on the day of the event, and each plant must be identified with a white stake label. There also needs to be a yellow stake label with the selling price and the seller's initials.

Yellow stake labels can be obtained by contacting me (Susan Negus) at 907-227-6288 or sending an email to [senegus@gci.net](mailto:senegus@gci.net). I live in South Anchorage near the zoo. Yellow stake labels can also be picked up from Emily Becker who lives in Midtown. Emily can be reached at [president@alaskamastergardener.org](mailto:president@alaskamastergardener.org).

I will bring some yellow stake labels to the Master Gardener Annual Conference on April 8.

## Get Volunteer Hours!

Volunteers are needed to provide garden information and cashier support. Two volunteers are needed for each two-hour shift.

Volunteer setup begins at 9:30 a.m and the last two-hour volunteer shift ends at 5 p.m. Your hours will satisfy Master Gardener volunteer requirements.

## Sign Up Here!

To sell plants or volunteer, use our [SignUp Genius volunteer online form](#). Or, contact me by phone or email, and I can sign you up. \*\*\*\* **Sign-Up Genius is free for those that sign up. If contacted to pay a fee to sign up, it is a scam.** \*\*\*\*

Missed our March program, "SNAP Tool & Climate Change in Gardening?"

**WATCH THE RECORDING**

Password: AMGA%32023 Link expires April 10.

## SIGNUP GENIUS

To sell plants or sign up for volunteer shifts at the April 22 Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show, [sign up here](#).

### FEB. 2022 TREASURER'S REPORT

#### Balances on 2/1/2023

Checking S-88	\$ 25,986.93
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 16,970.57
CD General 2 year 1.95%; 1/23	\$ 10,885.44

**Total Assets** \$ 53,848.19

**Interest/Dividends** \$ 2.60

#### This month's revenue

Membership	\$ 617.65
Donations	\$ 34.00
Fundraising/Plant sale	\$ -
State Conference	\$ 3,559.53
Name Tags	\$ 14.00
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>\$ 4,225.18</b>

#### This month's expenses

Grants (scholarships)	\$ -
Pioneer Home Plants	\$ -
Operations	\$ 132.00
Website	\$ -
Hospitality	\$ 200.00
Name tags	\$ 269.65
Newsletter	\$ 29.99
AMG speaker fee	\$ -
Lifetime achievement	\$ -
2023 AMGA conference	\$ 3,670.00
<b>Total Expenses this month</b>	<b>\$ 4,301.64</b>

#### BALANCES ON 2/28/2023

Checking S-88	\$ 25,910.47
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 16,973.17
CD General 2 Year 1.95%, (1/23)	\$ 10,885.44

**Total Assets on 2/28/2023** \$ 53,774.33

Prepared by Jan van den Top



# Meet Your 2023 Master Gardener Conference Speakers April 7-8



**Ellen Zachos** delivers the opening keynote address, ***The Garden Party*** and a track talk on edible ornamentals. Let's celebrate!



Our closing keynote speaker, **Les Brake**, will share secrets of Coyote Gardens: a garden snug in its setting.



**Molly Cerridwen, Friday night only!** A traditional healer and herbalist, Molly will share recipes for herbal syrups.



**Brenda Adams** will demystify color in the garden!



**Steve Brown** will dish on how to grow a giant cabbage.



**Don McNamara and Donna Rae Faulkner** on Korean Natural Farming, Alaska style!



**Justin Fulkerson** will share how to protect pollinators and plants that will help.



**Pat Holloway** has partied in the garden for 30+ years, so come hear all about it!



**Trevor Kirchhoff** can help you grow indoors and answer all your hydroponic questions.



**Josh Smith** is pushing the boundaries for fruit and nut trees in Alaska.



**Chad Taylor** is innovating design + build and reimagining landscapes.

## AlaskaMasterGardeners.org

# YARDUCOPIA 2022 GRANT REPORT by Samarys Seguinot-Medina

## Spenard Garden

The Spenard Garden is not a traditional farm producing tons of food crops, rather, it is a place of learning, interacting, and sharing. We allow plants considered ‘weeds’ to grow alongside their cultivated neighbors. These include edible and medicinal plants like chickweed, plantain, yarrow, fireweed, dandelion, and lamb’s quarter. Every week she comes, one woman from México harvests lamb’s quarter (known as quelites in Spanish from the Náhuatl “quilitil” meaning tender edible). Others from different countries also harvest these weeds to eat fresh and to preserve. This offers a perspective and learning opportunity for the gardeners and Lutheran Social Services food pantry clients who are in line next to the garden.

To increase access and comfort in the garden, we have also introduced new signage. Crops are labeled in English and Spanish with a key designating its name and which parts of the plant to harvest. We are looking for folks to add the names of crops in additional languages so the garden can accommodate a wider variety of non-native English speakers. We would like to expand the project to include a QR code for those that enjoy receiving information digitally.

Each year’s experiences at the garden informs the next year’s efforts. In 2022, one of our most beloved crops was stinkweed (aka wormwood). Multiple visitors were ecstatic to see the plant and harvested it for their personal apothecaries. They have also shared their knowledge about how to preserve and use the plant at home. We hope to grow more stinkweed and other



Spenard Garden in 2022. Source: Yarducopia

medicinal plants in the future.

It’s such a joy to see folks sharing knowledge and joy in the garden. The grant money we have received has helped to make these and many other stories possible.

## Midtown Cheechako Street Garden



Composting event at Midtown Garden Depot in 2022. Source: Yarducopia

We gained access to the Midtown Garden Depot, just off Benson, in 2021, using it to stash material for Yarducopia garden projects. With an abundance of materials, we decided to offer it up as a community garden in 2022, filling over 20 raised bed planters with the help of seven gardeners.

The garden is a community space for free garden materials and weekly ‘community composting’ gatherings where we build and turn compost piles that are available for community use. This year the garden was also a stop on the Yarducopia Bike Tour, which had over 20 attendees. For the second year, we used the space for a collaborative “Pot Swap” with Anchor Gardens, keeping used pots that are still in good condition out of the landfill. This year we concurrently held a perennial plant swap, where berries, fruit trees, herbs, and more were donated and given new homes.

This plot has a lot of visibility, and we will continue to expand signage and information so more people can access toxic-free gardening materials and garden space. Tools and materials purchased through grant funding this year have helped to make daily gardening activities, weekly programs, and access to materials available.

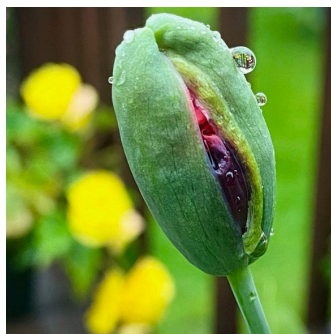
*Samarys Seguinot-Medina is the environmental health director for Alaska Community Action on Toxics.*



## HERB STUDY: POPPIES by Shirley Matthews

Humans have used poppies through the ages for ornamental, culinary, narcotic, medical, and remembrance purposes. They have been documented as far back as 3400 BCE in Mesopotamia.

Poppies are an herbaceous plant in the Papaveraceae family, native to Eurasia, Africa and North America. Usually grown as an annual, some poppies can also be a biennial or perennial. You can find varieties that will grow in any of the USDA Hardiness Zones, from 1–11. They come in a range of colors including red, orange, pink, violet, purple, white, and yellow. Size varies from less than one inch to over 20 inches tall. Many varieties work well in rock gardens.



Poppy photos courtesy Shirley Matthews. The second photo is a Blue Himalayan poppy and the fourth photo is an opium poppy.

Most poppies have hairs covering the stems and leaves; some even have prickles. They have lobed or dissected leaves and milky sap. The flowers are often nodding, on solitary stalks, and can be single or double, all one color or with a dot of another color on the base of the petal. Most have four to six petals with numerous stamens surrounding the ovary. The ovary develops into a spherical, pot-like capsule, topped by a disk formed by the stigmas. The color of the pollen ranges from yellow/orange to grey/blue. The two sepals drop off as the wrinkled petals unfold.

Poppies germinate best in freshly turned soil and they have a tap root, so they do not transplant easily. To grow from seed, some varieties need to be stratified and all need light to germinate. Thinning plants as well as removing the first flower produces larger subsequent flowers and hardier plants. Most varieties will flower in the first year and don't need a lot of water.

Most poppies are toxic to humans and pets due to their powerful alkaloid compounds which are found in the white latex. These compounds are used in opioid medicines. Even some parts of the poppies we have in

our yards have narcotic properties, including the seeds.

The seeds from the opium poppy are used in breads and pastries. They are rich in oil, protein, carbohydrates, iron, magnesium, potassium, and calcium. Poppy seed oil is used in cooking, salad dressings, varnishes, cosmetics, and paints. The Pentagon has recently issued an advisory to service personnel to avoid poppy seed because it can cause a positive drug test result.

Native Americans use California poppies for medical and narcotic properties. A tincture is used for its calming effect and is a sleep aid. Many California poppy products are available online and in stores. Tea can be

made from the petals. The California poppy is not an opium poppy, it is considered a sub-opiate.

There is still debate about its proper genus, but Blue Himalayan Poppy is now in the genus *Meconopsis* ("poppy-like" in Greek) and is native to the Himalayan region of the world with a wide range of colors including blue, red, yellow, and white. Blue poppies are hardy in Zones 3–7. Seedlings are prone to damping off.

The seed head of a *Meconopsis* poppy is a distinguishing factor from true poppies. Instead of being pot shaped with a flat top, it is elongated and slender.

Alaska Botanical Garden has a Nationally Accredited *Meconopsis* Collection. Since *Meconopsis* cross-pollinates easily, ABG has carefully chosen the planting locations throughout the garden.

Members of the British Commonwealth use the red poppy to observe Remembrance Day marking the end of WWI.

Poppies are an easy to grow, colorful addition to any garden and they attract pollinators! 🌱



# CELEBRATE EARTH DAY ON APRIL 22



Find out about  
other Earth Day  
events in the  
Anchorage area.

Get additional  
ideas on how to  
celebrate Earth  
Day.

Check out the

[Earth Day](#)  
[Action Toolkit](#)

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

A poster for an Earth Day Plant Swap. The background is light green with large green leaves. On the left, a hand holds a small potted plant. On the right, a hand holds a larger potted plant. The text "EARTH DAY" is in green, and "PLANT SWAP" is in large green letters. Below it, "Swap plants and chat with fellow enthusiasts at our Second Annual Swap!" is in green. Then, "Featuring a Fabulous pop up shop by FashionPact Resale Boutique" is in green. Below that, "\$5 ADMISSION" is in green. Then, "Proceeds will go to Anchor Gardens and Anchorage Community Land Trust" is in green. Below that, "SAT, APRIL 22ND" is in green, and "2PM" is in green. Then, "804 E 15TH AVE" and "ANCHORAGE, AK 99501" are in green. At the bottom, "REGISTER AT: GREENCONNECTION.NET" is in red. On the left, there are logos for FashionPact, Anchor Gardens, and ACLT.

# APRIL 2023 EVENT CALENDAR

## CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

### Friday, April 7, 14, 21 & 28, 10-11 am

AARP & Alaska CES Gardening Series. Topics include seed starting, weed management, vegetable gardening, and smart solutions to avoid gardening aches and pains.

[Free with registration.](#)

### Tuesday, April 11, 6 pm

Anchorage Museum Urban Harvest Series: Weeds vs Invasive Plants. Learn how invasive species pros distinguish between 'weeds' and invasive plants that threaten Alaska fish and wildlife. Explore alternative uses for weedy species in your yard and learn about Alaska's invasive plant ranking system (AKEPIC) and how it is used. [Free with registration.](#)

### Friday, April 14, 5:30-7:30 pm

Anchorage Parks and Rec: Container Gardening. Choosing pots, soil, and plants; finding the right location for containers; when to put plants outside; and how to care for containers so they bloom and thrive all season. Lidia Selkregg Chalet. Costs \$15. [Register here.](#)

### Tuesday, April 18, 11 am

Cooperative Extension: Backyard Pollinators class presented by UAF CES IPM Technician Alex Wenninger. Learn to recognize some of our common bees and other pollinators in Alaska, ways to attract them and how to be good pollinator stewards in your own gardens. [Zoom registration.](#)

### Thursday, April 20, 12 pm

Cooperative Extension: Composting Basics. Learn how to make a great soil amendment from garbage and how this helps the landfill. In person at the UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center in room 208 of Kerttula Hall and also via Zoom. [Zoom registration.](#)

### Friday, April 28, 5:30-7:30 pm

Anchorage Parks and Rec: Tree Care for Homeowners. How to plant, prune, and fertilize a tree. Lidia Selkregg Chalet. Costs \$15. [Register here.](#)

## MEETINGS & EVENTS

Friday, April 7, 5:30-7:30 pm and Saturday, April 8, 8:30 am-5 pm

Alaska Master Gardener Annual Conference. Speaker

details on page 3. Register at our [conference webpage.](#)

### Thursday, April 6, 7-9 pm

Anchorage Garden Club: How to Create a Low-Cost Water Feature, at the Central Lutheran Church.

### Monday, April 3, 7-9 pm

Alaska Native Plant Society: Presentations by award-winning conservation scientist/writer Lauren Oakes on "Forest Loss and Gain in a Changing Climate," as well as short talks from Lorene Lynn on *Urtica dioica* (stinging nettle), and Glenn Brown on Juncaginaceae (Arrowgrass) family. [Zoom link.](#)

### Thursday, April 13, 10 am-noon

Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska: 'Growing Arctic Garlic' presented by Deb Blaylock. Central Lutheran Church. [Contact club.](#)

### Saturday, April 22, 10 am-5 pm

Midtown Mall Annual Spring Garden Show. Many vendors including AMGA and other garden clubs.

### Saturday, April 22, 2 pm

Earth Day Plant Swap at Green Connection. \$5 admission.

## JOBS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

If you like garden tours, we need your help! We need a garden tour coordinator (or a team) to prepare for the upcoming AMGA garden tour season. Contact Troy Weiss at [troydweiss@gmail.com](mailto:troydweiss@gmail.com).

Missed our March program, "SNAP Tool & Climate Change in Gardening?" Watch the recording, using the password: AMGA%32023, and please be aware that the recording will expire on April 10.





# BIRD CHATTER



**TOLD YA...**We MGers have been saying it for years; now we have proof: Gardening makes us healthier! Especially community gardening.

According to the January issue of *Lancet Planetary Health*, a study done in Denver and Aurora, Colorado, found that gardeners given a community plot to work experienced reduced stress and anxiety, and ate more fruits and vegetables. The control group were people on the waiting list to get a plot. Everyone claimed not to have gardened for at least two years before the study. (There was no mention of aching backs or aphids.)

**JUST IN TIME...**to take advantage of the benefits of gardening, the Anchorage Senior Activity Center has created a new community garden —raised-bed boxes for those who might prefer not kneeling and getting up a dozen times an afternoon (if only BC really had wings!).

The boxes are 4x6 feet, weather-resistant wood with a built-in liner and 4.5-foot pathways between them. Apply ASAP: \$35 for ASAC members, \$75 for non-members. The center is also offering a couple of workshops and classes. Check with them. 907-770-2000.

**ANOTHER OPTION...**for those who really don't want their own garden but like gardening, check out FIG (for Fresh International Gardens). BC is in love with this program. It offers refugees who somehow end up in godforsaken Anchorage, Alaska (be honest, you know this is true) a comfortable, non-scary way to ease into a strange new culture—by doing something most of them feel comfortable with: planting and sowing. Plus, they learn the rudiments of capitalism by selling their freshly grown produce at their Mountain View farm. (Unsold stuff is taken to the Food Bank).

The program was invented by Julie Riley (as were we). MG member Keenan Plate is the current director. It's a really fun volunteer opportunity.

**GIVE AND TAKE...**OK, “donate and bid for” to be exact. But it's fun shopping any way you look at it.

Sharon Schlicht, who is running the conference auction, reports a lovely pile of donated items to bid on when the time comes (April 7-8): art work, quilts, books, journals, garden art and so on. Sharon says

there's still time to donate something but please hurry. (She's so polite. BC would have said “Move your butt!”).

**FORGET-ME-OOPS...**Sen. Lisa Murkowski has to spend a lot of time in Washington, D.C. So BC smiled understandingly at this note to constituents sent out last week showing the Alaska state flower blooming in her D.C. yard.

Well, until a gaggle of MGers pointed out that they're not forget-me-nots. Too many petals for one thing, said one expert.



What are they? BC, ignorant as usual, has not received a satisfactory answer. They kind of look like violets but anybody out there know for sure? Please share.

P.S. Let's be honest here: The notice was probably sent out by one of Lisa's aides, right?

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



## Next AMGA Meeting: BP Energy Center

### “Tree Care & Maintenance”

Presented by Luis Lemus

Monday, April 17 at 7 pm

**Member Mtgs:** Unless otherwise specified, **7 pm every 3rd Monday** of the month, September through May (except December). Free and open to the public.

**Board Mtgs:** 2nd Monday of the month, 6-7 pm, anyone is welcome to observe. Email [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, Katherine Karabelnikoff, Jamie Lang, Meg O'Mullane, Keenan Plate	At Large

#### Committees, 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, Deb Blaylock	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, Lili Naves, 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
Nick Riordan, Keenan Plate, Alexis St. Juliana, Janice Berry, Emily Becker	Tech Committee

## Become an AMGA Member

Use our [online form](#) or [fillable PDF](#) to join or renew your AMGA membership. By joining, you support 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 [stoomey@ymail.com](mailto:stoomey@ymail.com).

## 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/UCvZehJprKkjQzivQvNDKopQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvZehJprKkjQzivQvNDKopQ)

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).

General emails: [AskamG@alaskamastergardeners.org](mailto:AskamG@alaskamastergardeners.org)

Mail: AMGA, P.O. Box 221403, Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

