

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Emily Becker

We had a rough start, all right, but summer is here and life is good. I just returned from an inspiring work trip to the Bering Strait region to help build community gardens in Golovin and Elim, along with a quick check-in with the new coordinator for the established community garden in Nome.

Interest in food security projects like gardens is surging across Alaska. People want more access to fresh and healthy produce. Of course, foraging and “forest gardening” is a long tradition in Alaska Native culture and rural communities. In addition, several people I met talked about how many years ago, big gardens were quite common in Alaska villages. People are hustling to get them back!

One of the biggest hurdles for garden creation in the Bering Strait region is how to build soil. Shipping in

even trickier.

Golovin has some superb soil sources. While last fall's powerful Merbok storm sadly washed out Golovin's entire just-built community garden, the storm also eroded the beach banks and exposed a huge amount of new soil ready for collecting. Large piles of dead eel grass washed up on the beach quite close to the village. Called “beach peat” by some gardeners, we're hoping this makes excellent compost. I've read that Southeast Alaska gardeners plant potatoes and garlic directly into the beach rack line!

Golovin also used some recycled wood from storm-ruined buildings to make new garden boxes. You will not be surprised by the only garden plant that survived the storm: rhubarb.

It was tougher to find soil resources in Elim. Despite miles of beach access, Elim has no washed-up seaweed. But it does have trees, with thick soil cover and lots of leaf litter. Elim also has vast gravel and sand, providing

IN THIS ISSUE

- » 2023 Conference Report
- » Treasurer's Report
- » The Pioneer Home Gardens Need You!
- » Late Season Plant Sale
- » July/August Event Calendar
- » AMGA Garden Tour Schedule
- » Bird Chatter



Left to right: Building raised beds in Elim and harvesting “beach peat” in Golovin. Photos courtesy Emily Becker.

bagged soil or amendments is very expensive. Cheryl Thompson, a gardening teacher in Nome, swears by a recipe of one-third native soil, one-third sand, and one-third compost. However, collecting native soil can be hard, and composting in bona fide bear country is

Continued on Page 3

2023 MG CONFERENCE REPORT by Emily Becker

Your AMGA Conference Committee had its final meeting in June 2023 to reflect on the conference and evaluate our efforts. When we started meeting about a year ago, we established our goals: to have fun, to learn something new, and to break even!

We accomplished this. 165 people attended and the feedback was very positive. The conference cost about \$21,000 and we took in about \$22,500.

A few highlights from our evaluations: attendees enjoyed our speakers. Alaska has a very talented pool of gardening experts, and perhaps it's no longer necessary to look out of state for our next keynote. The Friday night event was very successful, and having the silent auction then helped keep the Saturday focus on education. The auction, which required a lot of organizational work,



Thank you to our conference committee!

also helped us to keep our ticket price at the break-even level. Attendees liked the venue, especially the UAA classrooms; speakers were easy to hear and the rooms very comfortable. Since we are a program of UAF, the venue cost was very low compared to using, for example, a local hotel. While lunch was greatly improved from 2019, it was still the lowest scoring element on our evaluation. We made a specific choice to spend more money to improve lunches, since that was a sore spot from earlier conferences. At UAA, we are required to use Seawolf catering.

Attendance was down from the previous conference in 2019. Although we do not have direct evidence, we think the ticket price was on the higher end and, in addition, people did not want to attend both AMGA and ABG conferences. In 2019, ABG did not have a conference but this revenue is important to ABG, and they want to continue to have a conference each year.

The next AMGA-sponsored conference is scheduled for 2027. We could consider merging with the ABG conference at that time, or continue on our own.

There are lots of advantages and disadvantages to that decision, which will be made by a future Board and conference committee. Your input and feedback is appreciated. Huge thanks to the conference committee, lots of other volunteers, and all who attended the conference. 🌱

MAY 2023 TREASURER'S REPORT

Balances on 5/1/2023

Checking S-88	\$38,431.88
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$16,978.84
CD General 2 year 1.95%; 1/23	\$10,961.20

Total assets \$66,377.17

Interest/Dividends \$ 2.88

This month's revenue

Membership	\$ 174.50
Donations	\$ 25.00
Fundraising/Plant sale	\$ -
State Conference	\$ -
Name Tags	\$ -
Total revenue	\$ 199.50

This month's expenses

Postage	\$ -
Pioneer Home Plants	\$ -
Operations	\$ 107.00
Website	\$ 23.17
Midtown Mall Plant Sale	\$ 1,052.25
Garden Project Grants	\$ 1,500.00
Newsletter	\$ 29.99
AMG speaker fee	\$ -
Lifetime achievement	\$ -
2023 AMGA conference	\$ 5,122.59
Total expenses this month	\$ 7,835.00

Balances on 5/31/2023

Checking S-88	\$30,896.38
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$16,981.72
CD General 2 Year 1.95%, (1/23)	\$10,961.20

Total assets on 3/31/2023 \$58,844.55

Prepared by Jan van den Top

President's Message, continued from Page 1

a nice gravel pad for the garden space. We used corrugated steel raised beds, along with a few tires, to get the garden started. We used sand for the bottom layer, then native soil mixed with sand, and finally some Fishy Peat (shipped bypass mail) for the very top. One of Elim's priorities will be figuring out how to compost to build soil for the future. Got any ideas? Send them my way!

I hand-carried plant starts on the airplane, as it's already late June and I don't even want to think about daylight hours right now. It was amusing to watch a team of three TSA agents carefully hand inspect each plant. You never know what's under that dirt! Although it was a pain, it was worth it to be able to see some green immediately in the gardens. Good luck little plants! 🌱

AMGA LATE SEASON PLANT SALE

August 12, 2023

- **Get your plants ready to sell! Gently-used pots and tools can also be sold.**
- **You'll need white tags to ID plants; yellow tags for pricing plants can be obtained from Susan Negus.**
- **Volunteers will be needed to help sell plants, check out, cashiers, and for setup/takedown. Watch for the Signup Genius, ~ 3 weeks before the sale.**
- **Setup will be Aug. 11, around 5 p.m.**
- **Questions? Contact Susan Negus, 907-6288 or senegus@gci.net.**

THE PIONEER HOME GARDENS NEED YOU! by Lynne Opstad

The Anchorage Pioneer Home Gardens were started more than 30 years ago by Master Gardeners Judy Christianson and Mary Shier to fulfill their volunteer hours requirement. With help from many AMGA members, the gardens evolved into what they are today. They bring joy to the residents, families, staff, and even the neighbors. They are also one of the most visible contributions the AMGA makes in our community.

After 10 years of leadership, Julie Ginder and Lynne Opstad have decided to step back from most of the Pioneer Home gardening tasks, and are looking for 4-5 volunteers willing to take up this work next spring.

Spreading tasks over more people means it would

not be as much work for one or two individuals. For instance, one person could take on ordering the plants and making sure they are available on planting day, another person could organize the garden clean out and planting, and someone else could schedule the volunteers. Everything is well laid out and training available so the transition should be easy.

Please consider helping to continue our tradition at the garden. Contact either Lynne at Lynne.Opstad@gmail.com, 529-1039, or Julie at jkginder@gci.net, 240-4877 for more information. We would like to have a new committee formed by the end of the summer to start the planning for next year's gardens. 🌱



Left to right: Anna Denis and Ruthe Rasmussen; Susan Miller, Marjorie Williams and Julie Ginder; Martha Jokela. Photos are from AMGA's Pioneer Home Gardens Planting Day in June 2023, courtesy Lynne Opstad.

JULY-AUGUST 2023 EVENT CALENDAR

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Monday, July 17, 6-7 pm

Alaska Botanical Garden: What's in Bloom Walking Tour led by Patrick Ryan. Each month highlights the garden's different flowering plants and surrounding boreal forest. [Register here.](#)

Tuesday, July 18, 6-7 pm

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

Wednesday, July 19, 6-8 pm

Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center: Spruce Utilization after the Spruce Beetle: In collaboration with the Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District, join UAF Cooperative Extension Forester Glen Holt to discuss wood utilization for beetle-killed spruce. Local artist Jeremy Franklin will discuss creative uses. This class will be in person in Room 208 of Kerttula Hall and via Zoom. Register here: [bit.ly/3NuU1km](https://forms.office.com/r/8nghUJeYgN).

Saturday, July 22, 2-4 pm

Anchorage Museum: Food Security and Tyonek Grown Farm. Learn from Brenda Trefon how the Tyonek Grown Farm uses high tunnels and garden beds to produce a high yield of fruits and vegetables for the families of Tyonek. Then, learn how to grow your own strawberries with strawberry plants gifted from the Tyonek Grown Farm. In person at the Discovery Center Art Lab. [Register here.](#)

Tuesday, August 22, 5:30-7 pm

Anchorage Museum: Urban Harvest: Seed Saving: A joint program between the Anchorage Public Library and the Seed Lab to learn about how to save seeds and think ahead to future gardening. Participate in hands-on activities and exchange seeds with others. Free and in-person at the Seed Lab (111 W. 6th Ave.) [Register here.](#)

Various dates/times in July and August

Anchor Gardens: Backyard Composter and Vermi-Composter classes. These free classes taught by Anchor Gardens instructors and sponsored by MOA's Solid Waste Services will be held at various times and locations in the Anchorage Bowl. Check out the [class schedule.](#)

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Saturday, July 1-15

Join the Alaska Native Plant Society for the [2023 Alaska Botany Bioblitz](#) to record as many plant observations as possible in the first two weeks of July!

Thursday, July 13, 11 am-2 pm

Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska Summer Garden Tours. [Contact club for more details.](#)

Friday, July 14, 9-10 am

Join Spring Creek Farm for a free educational workshop on integrated pest management, hands-on farm experience, and a community BBQ. Program is for adults and kids. Special guest speaker Patti Armbrister. Register here: <https://forms.office.com/r/8nghUJeYgN>.

Sunday, July 30, 12-5 pm

Anchorage Garden Club's annual garden tour. Six to eight gardens will be open for the public to visit. Check back a couple of days before the tour for a list of gardens. We are actively looking for gardens now. Email anchoragegc@gmail.com to nominate a garden. Event page on Facebook.

Thursday, August 3, 7 pm

Anchorage Garden Club monthly meeting: Processing Herbs and Vegetables. The meeting will be held at Central Lutheran Church.

Saturday, August 5-Sunday, Aug. 6

Anchorage Garden Club's 78th Annual Flower Show. Starts at 1 pm Saturday. Visit the AGC website for more info and to see categories and rules. Contact Carol Norquist at norquistic1219@gmail.com or AlaskaGardenClubs@gmail.com with questions.

Saturday, August 12, 10-3 pm

AMGA Late Season Plant Sale: Will feature plants, gently used good pots and tools for sale, and three classes running from 10:30-12:30. Volunteers will be requested via Signup Genius. Will be held outside the Alaska Botanical Garden. Contact Susan Negus at 907-227-6288 or senegus@gci.net.

Continued on next page

Sunday, August 13, 12-2 pm

AMGA members are invited to a Sunday lunch to celebrate the successes of the Midtown & Spenard Community Garden. These gardens received an AMGA grant last summer and have benefited from many AMGA volunteer hours. The celebration will be at the Spenard Community Garden, 1303 West 33rd.

VOLUNTEER EVENTS

Saturday, July 8, 10 am-2 pm

Chanshtnu Muldoon Park Community Food Forest Work Party. Tools will be provided but you may want your own work gloves. Tasks include weeding, planting, pruning, applying compost tea, and spreading soil amendments (this involves physical labor with wheelbarrows, buckets, and shovels). Location: 8100 DeBarr Road, behind the Muldoon Mall. Contact Kristi Wood for information, bikemoredriveless@hotmail.com or 907-278-2453.

Wednesday, July 12, 9 am-12 pm & Sunday, July 30, 10 am-12:30 pm

Campbell Creek Science Center Wildflower Garden Work Parties. Join Alaska Native Plant Society volunteers who maintain the Campbell Creek Science Center's wildflower gardens. Equipment is provided. Sign up and view more dates and times here: <https://bit.ly/CCSC-Work-Parties>.

Saturday, July 22 & Saturday, August 5, 12 - 4 pm

Matsu Master Gardeners Rebarcheck Plot Work Parties. July 22 projects include planting, raised bed construction, and planning for future garden projects. On August 5, projects are mainly to be determined (or finish what was not accomplished at the July workday). Work can be counted toward fulfilling master gardener hours. RSVP to matsumastergardeners@gmail.com.

JOBS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

Alaska Food Policy Council is searching for an Operations and Strategic Planning Coordinator. Learn more here: <https://www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org/job>.

Late Season Plant Sale

 ALASKA MASTER
GARDENERS
ANCHORAGE



Sat Aug 12  10am-3pm

Outside Alaska Botanical Garden
4515 Campbell Airstrip Road
Anchorage, AK

www.alaskamastergardeners.org

AMGA SUMMER 2023 GARDEN TOUR SCHEDULE



Garden tours are an AMGA membership benefit and attendance is for members and their guests. Directions are emailed to members the week before the event. Email Membership Coordinator Jamie Lang at jamie@alaskamastergardeners.org with membership questions. Photos above are from the June 2023 tours at Les Brake's Coyote Garden, Sean Monico's Galewood Gardens, and Rich Ervin's garden.

Date	Time	Name	Description	Location	Host
Monday, July 10	6:00 PM	Barb and Hank's Garden	Water features, 80-plus containers, conifer garden, new rock garden and perennial and annual borders.	South Anchorage	Barb Krizman
Monday, July 17	6:00 PM	Lighthouse Gardens	Amazing riverside garden	Eagle River	Susan Brushaber
Monday, July 31	6:00 PM	Lutheran Church of Hope	Large vegetable garden and orchard	Central Anchorage	Don Bladow
Monday, Aug. 7	6:00 PM	Chanshtnu Muldoon Park Food Forest and Community Garden	Community garden with 40 10x20 plots & 11 raised beds, and a food forest, with hardy fruit trees, berry bushes, roses and more!	West Anchorage	Kristi Wood
Monday, Aug. 14	6:00 PM	Northland Orchard and Berries	Large greenhouse, with 50 apple and 10 cherry trees, honeyberries and gooseberries.	Muldoon	Gary Masog
Thursday, Aug. 17	6:00 PM	Grow North Farms	Urban farm and community space	East Anchorage	Keenan Plate
Monday, Aug. 21	6:00 PM	Erika's Garden	Fruit trees, hellebores, & chickens.	South Anchorage	Erika Kienlen
Monday, Aug. 28	6:00 PM	Teeny Metcalfe	Raised bed, compost	East Anchorage	Teeny Metcalfe
Tuesday, Sept. 5	6:00 PM	Boyer's Orchard	A unique orchard and greenhouse with hundreds of Alaska-hardy fruits.	Midtown	Yael Hickok
Monday, Sept. 11	6:00 PM	Moose Gardens	Awesome garden with dahlias and gnomes.	East Anchorage	Marya Morrow

2023 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 23 & August 31

2 shifts still available... 12-5 PM (Full), 3-8 PM and 5-9 PM (Most Need)

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 24 & August 31 from 8 AM-Noon

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

~ Extra Hands Needed ~

Tuesdays, August 22 & 29 from 10AM-2PM & September 5 from 9 AM-1PM

Looking for a handful or two of volunteers to help with 1st Entry set-up, 1st Entry take down & 2nd 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 Manager
(907) 301-0317 or akliska@aol.com

2023 BOTANY BIOBLITZ

July 1-15th

What is a bioblitz?

A bioblitz is a citizen science project to document as many species as possible within a designated time and place.

Who can join?

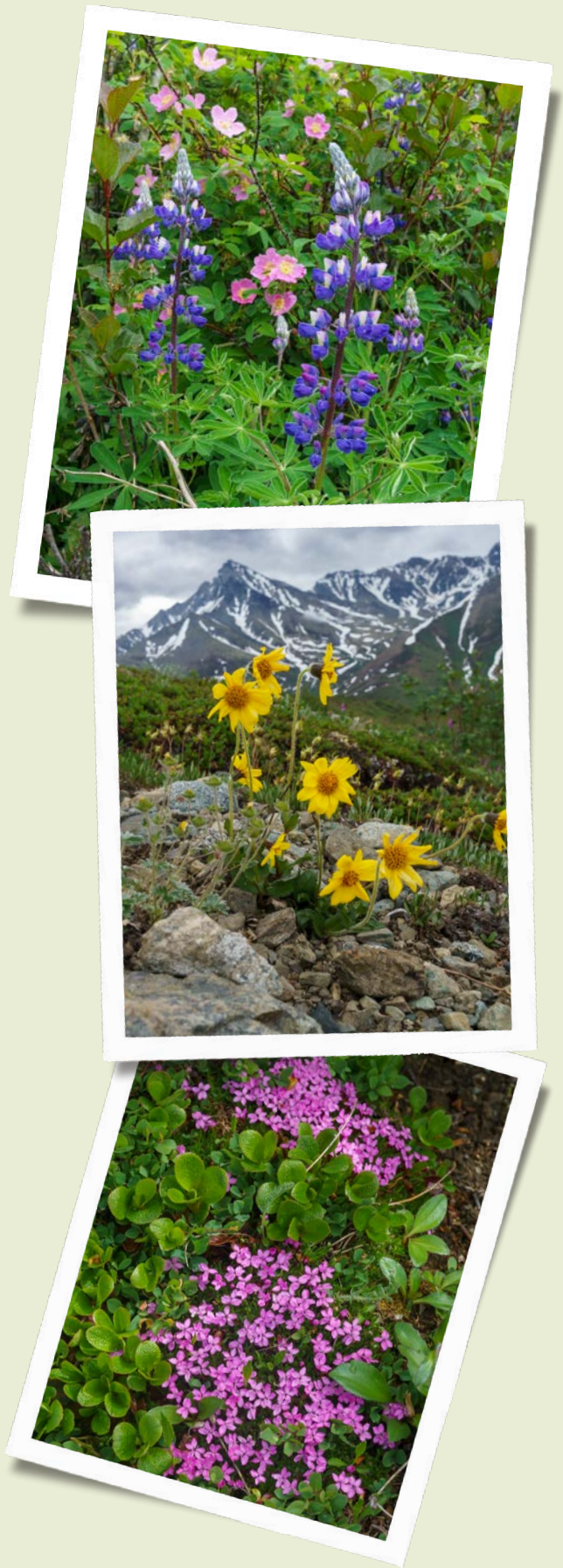
Anyone in Alaska can join! This is a family friendly event!

How do I join?

Simply join the event below and then upload photos of plants taken between the 1st-15th of July to the iNaturalist app or website

Prizes!

- 1) Most species observed
- 2) Most identifications
- 3) Best research grade photo



JOIN HERE!

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/alaska-botany-bioblitz-2023>



BIRD CHATTER



ON THE ROAD...Twenty-five MG's bused to Willow last month to bid farewell to Les Brake and Jerry Conrad's Coyote Garden. The guys are moving to Ohio and the 40-year-old garden on 4.2 acres is on the market.

MG's Sharon Schlicht and Cheryl Chapman were among those saying goodbye and Sharon reports the amazing array inspired her to "look for uncommon plants to add to my garden. . . He has some plants that I hadn't seen before," she said, including a pink *Nomocharis*. (They look like lilies).

Les shared his gardening philosophy with Cheryl: "No straight lines...I take the garden as close to chaos as I can and then stop. A garden makes itself. I let plants find their spots where they'll be happy."

Bon voyage guys. We'll miss you!

HOME AGAIN ... Turns out the Chelsea Flower Show—that's Chelsea in London, England—was only one stop on member Fran Durner's dream European garden tour.

"Chelsea was huge and crowded!," Fran reports. "The large show gardens were impressive but hard to see with the crowds, and you couldn't walk in the gardens - only around them, so that was a disappointment. . . The smaller show gardens were as impressive and much easier to see . . . The flowers, trees, shrubs, vegetables, hardscape and water features were absolutely perfect."

As if that weren't enough, she also visited the King Charles garden at Highgrove, and Highclere Castle (where *Downton Abbey* was filmed).

"The highlight of the trip though, was the two nights spent at Great Dixter House and Gardens, nestled in

the East Sussex countryside, as guests of head gardener Fergus Garrett, who I met when he spoke in Alaska in 2019. What a magical place! The main house dated back to the 1200's, with later additions. My bedroom was dated 1595!"

BC isn't too envious!

MEOW...Many people would complain about neighbors letting their five cats run free. But member Gina Docherty says she's cool with it -- "especially when I see them carrying a vole away to drop on the neighbor's doorstep."

Aww. Really? But voles are so cute.

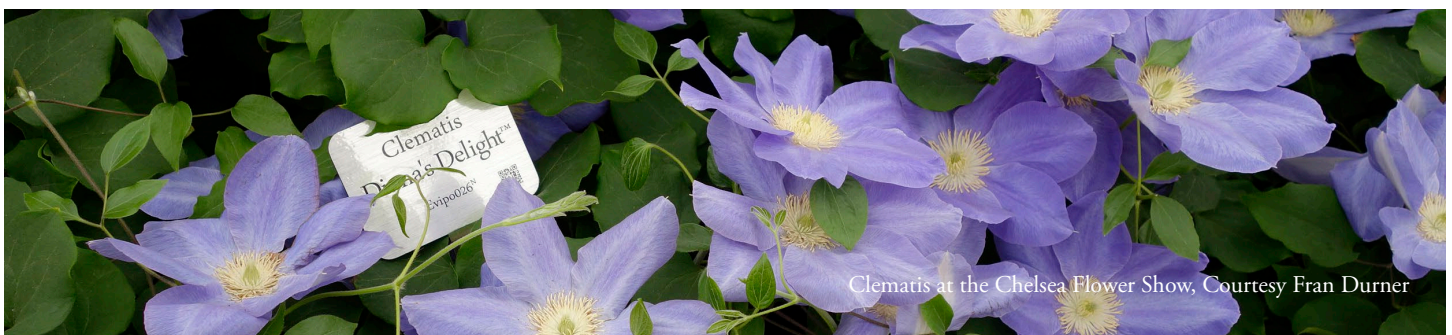
Well, maybe not: Voles killed Gina's ornamental quince, killed her last Rose Tree of China and ate a lot of rhododendron buds.

RIP plant killers!

REMINDER...Have you transferred the plants you plan to sell at the annual late-season sale? Don't put it off any longer—it's July. The sale is in early August—the 12th. We all know time moves faster in the summer than during those long, dark, dreary winter days. And, sorry to be the first to say it out loud, but June 21st is history, which means the days are now getting shorter. So chop-chop, do it today!

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...July 1st was National Wrong Trouser and National Lasagna Awareness Day. July is National Dog House Repair Month.

What's new, interesting, confounding and delightful? Send your bits of interesting garden news to stoomey@ymail.com.



Clematis at the Chelsea Flower Show, Courtesy Fran Durner

VOLUNTEERS 4 GARDENS

Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage and the Alaska School Garden Network have compiled [this list of public gardening projects](#) in Anchorage. Why not join one?

Member Mtgs: 3rd Monday of the month, 7 pm, September-May (except December), unless otherwise specified. 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 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/Programs

Troy Weiss, Janie Munson-Odgers, Rich Ervin Garden Tours

Mary Rydesky, Gina Docherty, Jane Baldwin Google Group Managers

Jan van den Top, Lili Naves, Sheila Toomey Grants Program

TBD Hospitality

Jamie Lang Membership Database

Elizabeth Bluemink Newsletter Editor

Gina Docherty Ask a Master Gardener

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

The deadline for submitting an item for publication is the 20th of every month. We welcome educational articles (400-600 words ideal), Bird Chatter, calendar items and announcements. Educational articles qualify for MG volunteer hours. Contact/send items to the editor at newsletteramga@gmail.com and send Bird Chatter items to stoomey@ymail.com.

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: Alexis St. Juliana at astjuliana@hotmail.com.
 General emails: AskAMG@alaskamastergardeners.org
 Mail: AMGA, P.O. Box 221403, Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

