

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Emily Becker

I'll put on some rose-colored glasses and say: we've had some great weather for hardening off and transplanting our tender starts. Cool, cloudy, not too terribly windy. Dare I say, reminiscent of "the old days." But our climate scientists show evidence of an El Niño warming event on the horizon, so we'll see how the summer shapes up. I've gotta admit, I like it warmer.

I've been spending hours and hours gardening, working on all kinds of satisfying spring tasks. One of them is to pull out as many *Campanula rapunculoides* (Creeping Bellflower) tubers as I possibly can. This invasive plant, with its pretty purple flowers and cream colored tubers, lives all over my yard. It's a battle I've been engaged in for more than 10 years now, with no end in sight. Digging up tubers and sifting soil for tiny root pieces definitely gives a gardener time to think.



Campanula rapunculoides growing in Emily Becker's garden in May 2023.



One thought that keeps occurring to me: Why? Why spend so much time fighting this plant? Of course, I want room to plant vegetables and other plants of my choosing, but truthfully, some other gardener must have welcomed it at some point. And now it's just a plant doing its thing. Is this plant a danger to a natural ecological system, like *Prunus padus*, or is it just an

annoyance to a home gardener?

Like many other gardeners, I am accustomed to using the language of warfare to describe invasive plants. Even the word "invasive" is a judgment. Nuisance plants are commonly referred to as "invaders" or "aliens," portrayed as hostile forces infiltrating and dominating foreign territories. It's a little much given the help humans gave the bellflower, and doesn't *Homo sapien* corner the market on deliberate acts of aggression anyway? It weighs a little heavy to be calling a plant an invader as we bear witness to the ongoing war in Ukraine. Many scientists are moving away from this type of language, for a variety of reasons, including recognizing that ecosystems are dynamic and that harsh language doesn't help educate people about the subtleties of plant communities.

And what about the invasives I admire, like earthworms? They are such great garden helpers and

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contribute so much to a healthy soil ecosystem. And they've only been in North America for a few hundred years! But when I read about the jumping worms (*Amyntas* species) multiplying in the Lower 48, it's hard not to be afraid. Here comes the xenophobia!

AMGA NEWS IN BRIEF

- In late May, AMGA President Emily Becker presented briefly to the Anchorage Heritage Land Bank Advisory Commission about the native plant rescue working group, an informal project of the Alaska Native Plant Society, the Anchorage Soil & Water Conservation District, and the Alaska Community Forestry Council. The working group is interested in conserving native plants at construction sites, road projects and any other public or accessible places where they need rescue! Emily asked the HLB to keep native plants in mind and notify the working group of opportunities for plant rescue. Right now, there is a huge demand for native plants for use in everything from homeowner landscaping to huge civil engineering projects, and unfortunately, a scarcity of native plants in nurseries. The ASWCD recently hired a native plants manager who will be working on developing a nursery, but volunteer plant rescuers/seed collectors will be needed. Stay tuned for more information and volunteer opportunities.

- Susan Negus reported AMGA members sold 310 plants at the April Midtown Mall Garden Show and wants to thank all of the members who brought plants, helped sell plants, or answered gardening questions. A special thank you goes to Jan van den Top for being the cashier all day! 🌿



All of this makes me appreciate our native plants. Plucking horsetail out of the garden bothers me so much less than bellflower. *Equisetum* has been around for several hundred million years. It's probably wondering how to get rid of us. 🌿

APRIL 2023 TREASURER'S REPORT

Balances on 4/1/2023

Checking S-88	\$ 34,735.76
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 16,976.05
CD General 2 year 1.95%; 1/23	\$ 10,941.87

Total Assets \$ 62,658.93

Interest/Dividends \$ 22.72

This month's revenue

Membership	\$ 341.85
Donations	\$ 305.58
Fundraising/Plant sale	\$ 1,537.65
State Conference	\$ 8,425.19
Name Tags	\$ -
Total revenue	\$ 10,670.27

This month's expenses

Postage	\$ 37.66
Pioneer Home Plants	\$ -
Operations	\$ 107.00
Website	\$ 255.00
Hospitality	\$ -
Name tags	\$ -
Newsletter	\$ 29.99
AMG speaker fee	\$ -
Lifetime achievement	\$ -
2023 AMGA conference	\$ 6,544.50
Total Expenses this month	\$ 6,974.15

BALANCES ON 3/31/2023

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 on 3/31/2023 \$ 66,377.17

Currently outstanding checks \$2,185.00

Prepared by Jan van den Top

MAY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: BEEKEEPING by Nick Riordan

For May's membership meeting, Alexa Pullen and Ian Frazier from the Alaska Honeybee Sanctuary provided an introduction on beekeeping, entitled 'Keeping the Bees.' The sanctuary is based in Eagle River with a focus on promoting beekeeping as well as protecting pollinators, their habitat, and the food systems they support.

Motivation for these two beekeepers extends beyond honey being so delicious. They shared with us how one-third of our food relies on bees for pollination and their habitat is threatened by the loss of habitat and misuse of pesticides. The speakers also emphasized how commonly people mistakenly attribute the aggressive, carnivorous behavior of wasps to bees. In the words of our guests, 'Bees are like cows and wasps are like velociraptors.'

To get started with beekeeping, their recommendation was to take a year to prepare: gather the equipment, plan the property, and consider salvaging bees from another beekeeper in autumn to help build comb in your shiny

new, waxless hive. The answer to one of their most commonly-asked questions—the cost of startup—is in the ballpark of \$750, fetching you protective clothing, hive, feeder, four pounds of bees and a queen. Much like gardening, you'd be well-served during this year of preparation by connecting with a club and mentor. Nearby clubs include the Southcentral Alaska Beekeepers Association and Midnight Sun Bee Club.

We'd love to invite these two back for another presentation delving deeply into the pollinator habitat that supports these amazing insects. In the meantime, the sanctuary's website hosts a list of the many pollen-producing plants we can grow in our gardens. Especially beneficial are plants that bloom in early spring and late summer, when other options are slim. The [Alaska Honeybee Sanctuary](https://alaskahoneybees.org/) website is information rich, including a 20-page guidebook on pollinator-friendly habitat available for download, and we were encouraged to reach out with questions by email. 🌱

THE SCOOP ON LADYBUGS (LADY BEETLES) by Joey Slowick

If you've ever looked into buying lady beetles as a biocontrol, *Hippodamia convergens* is probably the species sold. About this time every year I see a post or I'm asked about using lady beetles for controlling aphids and such in the garden. And I suppose every year I may make a post about why you should not.

To begin with, this species is not native to Alaska. So, purchasing them and releasing them is really introducing a non-native species. Like the boa constrictor in Florida, or pigs in Texas, they can become a real problem.

The second is they are not reared. They are collected in the wild where the species aggregates to ride out the winter. People just come along and take thousands from their winter sleep to sell. This has decimated populations in their native range in the Sierra Nevada. Could you imagine going and taking thousands of monarch butterflies from the trees in Mexico? Many of the online "sellers," even on Amazon, are not reputable agents and lack proper business licenses or permitting to sell to Alaska.

My other reason is they don't work. Being that they were taken from their period of torpor, they first want to



Photo source: Creative Commons

feed for a week or two, then migrate. Some will be sold as already fed, so they really just want to leave. If you release them in a garden they will leave. If you contain them in a greenhouse, they will feed for a few days, then try to migrate, then lay eggs. Then you have to wait for the eggs to hatch, and the larva to grow. So, the only impact they will make is when the adults feed that first

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Ladybugs, continued from Page 4

week and then when the larger larva feed a few weeks later. Add to this they are not all that impactful when they do stay around.

Studies have found much higher concentrations are needed than what suppliers recommend to be effective. In the greenhouse, 200-350 beetles are needed per plant for noticeable aphid control. In the outdoors, try 2,000 per plant. So, if you have ten dahlias you're trying to protect from thrips, that's a \$500 gamble. Whereas cheap and reliable cultural or synthetic options are much, much cheaper. There are other reasons, like competing or introducing pathogens to our native lady

beetle fauna which are also good reasons. Really, it's just not a good idea, regardless of what the Facebook says.

Joey Slowik is an Integrated Pest Management technician with the UAF Cooperative Extension Service and can be reached at jaslowik@alaska.edu. His article was originally posted on the Alaska IPM Facebook page and has been adapted for this newsletter with permission.

Did you know? You can submit unknown pests (plants, insects, diseases, etc.) through the UAF Citizen Scientists Monitoring Portal: www.alaskapestreporter.org. 🌱

HERB STUDY GROUP: SUMMER IN THE ABG GARDEN

Herb Study Group volunteers joined staff members in ABG's Herb Garden on May 19. Pasque flowers were blooming and some of the perennials and reseeded plants were up: angelica, artemisia, motherwort, chives, rhubarb. Even a mayapple had sprouted about an inch. Cleanup was the main activity and a bit more early the next week. Some new plants and annuals should be planted soon, and the garden should have a lot more color into June! – Elaine Hammes



Anchorage Garden Club Plant Sale

ANCHORAGE
Garden Club



As well as plants to sell, we will have members available for information.

This year the Anchorage Audubon Society will be giving away white spruce trees at the plant sale.

Date: June 3, 2023

Time: 9am-5pm

All kinds of hardy perennial and some annual plants.

3734 W 35th Avenue
West on Northern Lights Blvd. South (left)
on Wisconsin, West (right) on Milky Way
Drive, South (left) on Scarlet, West (right)
on 35th.

Voice Mail: 566-0539
www.alaskagardenclubs.org/anchorageclub.htm
anchoragegc@gmail.com
Facebook: AnchorageGardenClub



Join us each month, the first Thursday
At 7 pm at Central Lutheran Church
1420 Cordova

Public Education Meeting

PO Box 242811
Anchorage, AK 99524

Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska ~ Annual Plant Sale ~

A Wide Variety of Locally-Grown Plants!



June 3, 2023

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

**1300 W Benson Blvd
(Old DMV building)**

Native Alaskan Plants

Perennials & Annuals

Berries

Houseplants

Trees, Shrubs, Roses

Herbs and Vegetable Starts

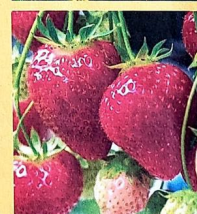
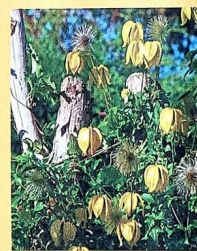
Garden Craft Corner

Arrive early for best selections!

Sale proceeds help fund the WGCA
Grant Program & Community Projects

Find us on Facebook!

www.wildflowergardenclub.org



JUNE 2023 EVENT CALENDAR

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Saturday, June 3, 2-5 pm

Lasagna Garden Class: Join the CERSC Community Garden Club for a free, hands-on class all about lasagna Gardening. We will be filling three garden beds with organic material and are excited to invite the community to learn about this gardening method. [Learn more.](#)

Tuesday, June 6, 6-7 pm

Research on Managing Weeds and Pests: Visit the UAF Matanuska Experimental Farm with Gino Graziano as he shares research on managing weeds and pests. This in-person-only class will be outside, so please dress appropriately. Registration required: [click here.](#)

Tuesdays, 6-7 pm

Composting workshops at the Midtown Depot (2930 Cheechako Street). Drop off organics, learn about composting, and lend a hand making the different kinds of compost. Send questions to garden@akaction.org.

PLANT SALES (see flyers on page 4)

Saturday, June 3, 9 am-5 pm

Anchorage Garden Club Plant Sale, 3734 West 34th

Saturday, June 3, 9 am-3 pm

Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska Plant Sale, 1300 West Benson Blvd (old DMV office).

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Saturday, June 3, 12-4 pm

Friends of Boyer's Orchard Blossom Festival. There'll be live music, refreshments, vendors, and trees/shrubs for sale. Tickets available at <https://alaskaorchard.org>.

Sunday, June 4, 2-5 pm

Seedling Exchange at the Midtown Garden Depot (2930 Cheechako Street, Midtown). Learn more at <https://www.facebook.com/Yarducopia>.

Monday, June 12, 6-7 pm

What's In Bloom Walking Tour at the Alaska Botanical Garden, highlighting flowering plants in the surrounding boreal forest and in our collections. [Register here.](#)

JOBS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

The **AMGA Plant Sale** will be **August 12**. Susan Negus would like to remind members to start potting, separating and dividing plants. More details to come!

Join the **Anchorage Public Library** for Part 2 of its Growing Together gardening program. In June, they will be covering Garden Infrastructure. Activities include making your own mini-trellises for the pea plants started in May. To-go packets available at all APL locations for the duration of the month or as long as supplies last.

Stickleback Farm's volunteer workdays are every Monday and Friday, 12-4 pm, starting June 2 and continuing through the summer. Contact Cole Murphy at cole.murphy@akseedsofchange.com for more information.

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?

Boyer's ORCHARD

2023 BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

LIVE MUSIC
LOCAL VENDORS
FREE CHAIR MASSAGE
TREES AND SHRUBS FOR SALE
COME & JOIN THE FUN!

Sat - June 3, 2023
From 12 - 4 pm

Boyer's Orchard and Greenhouse
645 E. 81st Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska

Ticket sales begin April 1
www.AlaskaOrchard.org

AMGA SUMMER 2023 GARDEN TOUR SCHEDULE

Garden tours are a benefit of AMGA membership and attendance is for members and their guests. Directions are emailed to members the week before the event. If you are not sure if you are a member, email Membership Coordinator Jamie Lang: jamie@alaskamastergardeners.org

Date	Time	Name	Description	Location	Host
Monday, June 12	6:00 PM	Rich's Garden & Greenhouse	Garden and greenhouse	East Anchorage	Rich Irwin
Monday, June 19	6:00 PM	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Saturday, June 24	11:00 AM	AMGA Bus Tour to Coyote Garden	World-famous perennial garden	Willow	Les Brake
Monday, June 26	6:00 PM	Galewood Gardens	Outdoor garden train replica of White Pass, built to scale. Flowers from Verna Pratt and Jaime Rodríguez.	Midtown	Sean Monico
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

BIRD CHATTER



WOW...If you missed Prez Emily and Sec'y Nick Riordan on "Hometown Alaska" a couple weeks ago, go to KSKA online and listen to the show. They were terrific. Emily started by outlining the provenance of AMGA, (being a lot nicer to UAF than BC would have been); then she and Nick visited a whole range of subjects: what veggies grow best here, composting, root maggots, replacing lawns with ground cover, nitrogen-rich spent grain, garden design on the cheap, raised beds on the cheap—everything on the cheap.

They kept it light—meaning understandable for garden wannabes. "How do you get fireweed to grow in containers," was one question. "How do you get it not to grow," quipped Emily. Then they explained how to do it.

BC ranks it VIP—Very Impressive Performance. Even though they missed one of the questions designed to "stump" them: Who said "Cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education?"

BC didn't know either. Look it up.

SEETHING JEALOUSY...As BC writes this, we know of three members who are in London at the world-famous Chelsea Flower Show. There could be more. We will be expecting a full report when they get home.

HELP WANTED...Sue Negus is putting together the late-season plant sale set for August 12, a Saturday, in the parking lot adjacent to the Botanical Garden. She's looking for an assistant so please step up. (Hey, we're supposed to be a service organization!) She mostly wants help with publicity.

This is also a reminder to start re-potting baby plants for the sale as soon as they start to appear. Everything is late this season, so don't wait!

ON THE WILD SIDE...That's the word for the native plants garden down at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center near Portage. The Wildflower Garden Club created it two years ago and maintains it with lots of help from local garden clubs. They go down every two weeks. If you're interested, or want to donate native plants, get in touch with Paul Marmora at pmarmora@aol.com or 907-360-3728. This is actually fun.

BZZZZ...Only about 30 people showed up at May's meeting to hear a lesson on bees. BC understands. BC was prepared to be soooo bored. But OMG! It was fascinating. Who knew bees could be that interesting, thanks to presenters Alexa Pullen and Ian Frazier. And we now have a morally superior reason not to go after all those dandelions in the lawn: bees love and need them!

A few days later, newspaper articles appeared warning that bee keeping was making life tough for wild bees. Alarmed, BC called Alexa who said it isn't a problem if keepers stick to indigenous plants for pollen and don't cater to their honeybees by switching only to clover, etc.

Whew! That's a relief. (Ha! Like BC is ever going anywhere near a beehive).

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



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

Next AMGA Meeting

“New Website for Garden Design”

Presented by Elise Huggins

Monday, Sept. 18 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 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
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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
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Janice Berry	Directory Editor
Kathy Liska, Cindy Walker	Facebook Meetings & Educational Programs
Troy Weiss	

Troy Weiss, Janie Munson-Odgers, Rich Ervin	Garden Tours
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Mary Rydesky, Gina Docherty, Jane Baldwin	Google Group Managers
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Jan van den Top, Lili Naves, Sheila Toomey	Grants Program
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TBD	Hospitality
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Jamie Lang	Membership Database
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Elizabeth Bluemink	Newsletter Editor
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Gina Docherty	Ask a Master Gardener
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Lynne Opstad	Lifetime Achievement
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Lynne Opstad, Julie Ginder	Pioneer Home Garden
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Emily Becker, Keenan Plate	Volunteer Coordinators
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Nick Riordan, Keenan Plate, Alexis St. Juliana, Janice Berry, Emily Becker	Tech Committee
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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 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

