

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Emily Becker

Fellow vegetable gardeners, it's time to level up. You've long since turned your back on synthetic fertilizers. You've embraced composting and organic farming, and maybe you've dabbled in regenerative or permaculture techniques. You know soil health is critical, but you're not quite sure what to do. The 2023 Master Gardener conference is here to help: Homer gardeners Don "Iceman" McNamara and Donna Rae Faulkner will be sharing their knowledge of Korean Natural Farming (KNF) on Saturday, April 8th.

According to McNamara, KNF practices have been developed by Korean farmers over the past 1,000 years. South Korean farmer Cho Han-Kyu studied this foundation and has been documenting and generously teaching KNF principles since the 1960's. The heart of KNF is harnessing the natural processes of microorganisms and using them to feed your plants, working as locally as possible.

McNamara and Faulkner recently completed KNF certification training in Hawaii. With composting, cover cropping, and regenerative KNF practices, they have increased their soil's organic matter for the past seven years, along with gangbuster plant growth and production. Essentially, they capture and propagate indigenous microorganisms, using a carbon carrier, such as brown sugar, brewery waste, and sawdust. They ferment plant materials to extract valuable fluids ("exudates") to make shelf-stable solutions which can be diluted and used as a foliar spray or soil amendment. The result is extremely happy plants and very rich soil.

Lucky for us, McNamara and Faulkner have been "Alaskan-izing" KNF techniques for the past few years

and have written a book, *Korean Natural Farming - Alaska Style: A Practical Guide To Customizing KNF To Improve YOUR Farm or Garden, Wherever YOU and Your Microbes Live*. It will be available for purchase at the conference. McNamara even mentioned that two recipes use horsetail, so you are welcome, if needed, to collect some from my yard!

If you are looking for garden design ideas, we'll have plenty of time devoted to that, too. Husband and wife team Chad Taylor and Vania Hawkins are the founders of Intrinsic Designs, a landscape architecture studio that plans and builds their designs. Taylor will be showcasing their integrated approach to design that incorporates both social and natural systems, and he'll bring stunning visual examples of what that means!

When I spoke with him recently, he described a recent project in which he emphasized the space's natural elements, especially sunlight, so beloved by Alaskans, while incorporating structural elements that foster a "sense of neighborhood and vitality." Privacy,

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lighting features, the winter landscape and plants are just some of the elements he considers. He and



Chad Taylor of Intrinsic Designs

Hawkins, who is a Master Gardener, love learning about plants, and they strive to incorporate native plantings in their projects.

But they are also intrigued by Alaska's industrial landscape. Taylor loves reusing and repurposing relics and scraps. Partly, this is due to necessity since our isolation limits our palette of affordable materials. But Taylor also finds joy in industrial treasures, reimaging and fabricating them

into something new and useful with his own hands. Similarly, their design work continues to evolve and change as new possibilities expand.

I hope you find these topics as tantalizing as I do! See you at the conference. 🌿

JAN. 2022 TREASURER'S REPORT

Balances on 1/1/2023

Checking S-88	\$24,529.47
Savings S-2	\$5.25
Savings S-29	\$16,967.69
CD General 2 year 1.95%; 1/23	\$10,884.81

Total Assets \$52,387.22

Interest/Dividends \$3.51

This month's revenue

Membership	\$1,105.45
Donations	\$30.00
Fundraising/Plant sale	\$-
State Conference	\$2,220.43
Name Tags	\$102.28
Total revenue	\$3,458.16

This month's expenses

Grants (scholarships)	\$-
Pioneer Home Plants	\$-
Operations	\$131.00
Website	\$40.00
Plant sale	\$-
Public Relations (State Fair)	\$-
Newsletter	\$29.99
AMG speaker fee	\$-
Lifetime achievement	\$-
2023 AMGA conference	\$1,793.71
Total Expenses this month	\$1,994.70

BALANCES ON 1/31/2023

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 on 1/31/2023 \$53,848.19

Prepared by Jan van den Top

START YOUR PLANTS!!!

...for the April 22 MIDTOWN MALL GARDEN SHOW.

Master Gardeners can bring up to 2 flats of plants/starts to sell. This is also an opportunity to earn volunteer hours.

The event will be 10 am to 4:30 pm at the Midtown Mall. Contact Susan Negus at 907-227-6288 or senegus@gci.net with any questions. Volunteer signup will begin in April.

FEBRUARY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS by Debbie Hinchey

Deanna Ercolani and Bridget Danielson of Green Connection hosted and presented AMGA's Feb. 20 in-person meeting on "Troubleshooting Tropical Plants in an Arctic Climate." Their presentation provided facts and examples of various troublesome things that can happen to houseplants.

The major requirement for plant happiness is to maintain the right proportions of light, soil moisture, humidity, temperature, and nutrition.

Most plants sold as houseplants originate from the understory of jungles, mostly in Africa. These plants evolved in low light and high humidity. For the most part, our homes and offices are low light as well, but even in Alaska, plants can get sunburned if they are placed too close to a light source or a sunny window. If the light is too low, however, the internodes (the spaces between leaves) will elongate and make plants leggy, sometimes unable to support themselves.

Too little soil moisture and/or humidity can be as detrimental as too much water, and both can cause a plant to wilt. If it's unclear if a wilting plant is too dry or too wet, the following methods are more reliable than a moisture meter. You can probe the soil with your finger, about an inch below the surface, or if possible, remove the plant from its pot and check soil and roots to see if they are healthy or not. Most plants have whitish roots when healthy. If a plant is overwatered, the roots can rot and won't take up water, causing wilt. Or, the plant could be pot-bound and not have enough soil to hold moisture.

The lack of humidity in our homes in the winter is challenging, but adding a humidifier can cause problems with window condensation and mold. Our speakers suggested placing cups of water at the base of and among

houseplants to increase the humidity through evaporation from the cups. If the tips of the leaves turn black or brown, especially on plants like palms and dracaenas that are prone to drying out, use scissors to trim off the unsightly parts.

A temperature range of 60 to 80 F is ideal for most houseplants. Drafts from forced air heating or cold air

blasts from open doors can hurt the whole plant or just the leaves on one side. Transporting plants from one location to another in winter is also precarious. The resultant damage from freezing is wimpy, slimy leaf tissue.

Nutrition is also something to monitor. Deanna and Bridget usually fertilize no later than August and then do it again in the spring when there is more active growth with the increased light. They mentioned briefly about the buildup of too much salt being a problem with over-fertilizing.¹ See next page for information on other deficiencies.



Bridget Danielson of Green Connection shows a houseplant adapted to Alaska's climate (on left) compared to the same plant recently arrived from the Lower 48. Photo courtesy Jamie Lang.

There was a bit of discussion about fungus. Fungal lesions should not be cut off like dryness-induced damage. Instead, the whole leaf should be removed to reduce the likelihood that the whole plant could become infected. Also, misting water on fungus-infected plants can spread the fungus spores to more plants, and does little to increase humidity.

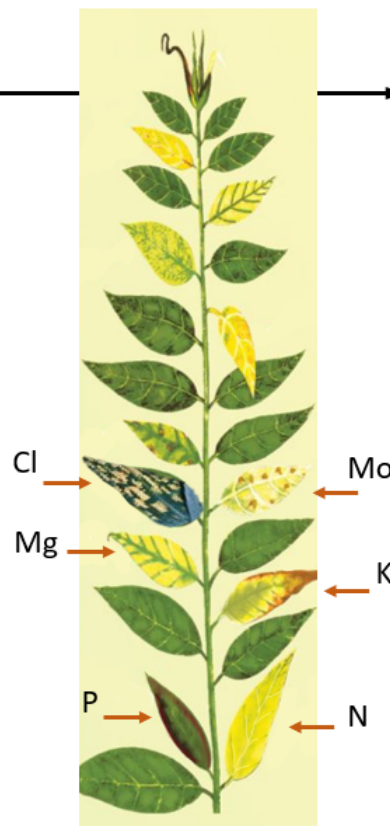
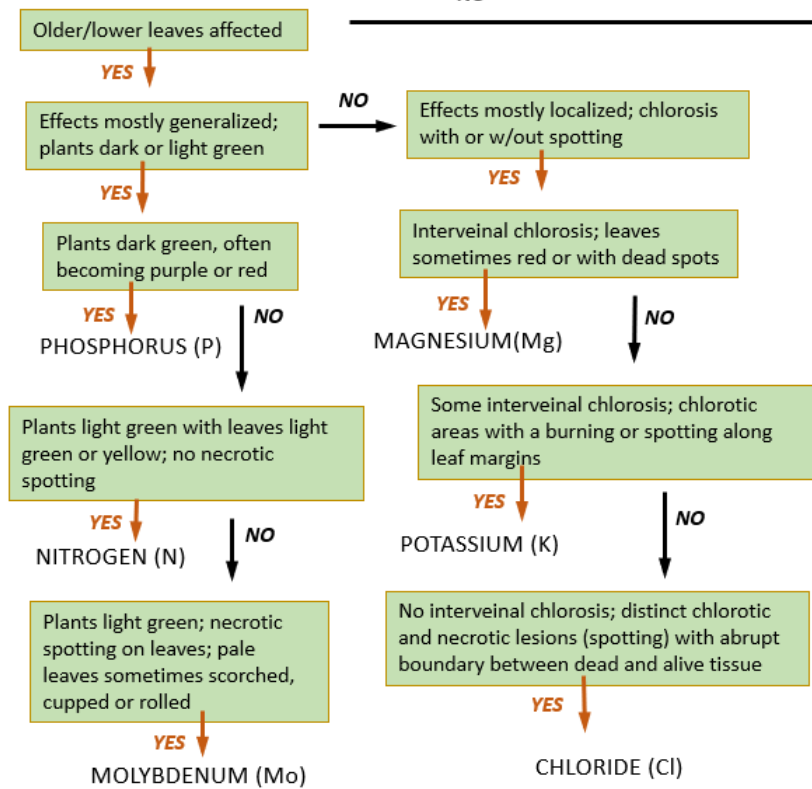
Sharon Schlicht brought the homemade cookies, veggies, and hummus, and Elizabeth Bluemink brought hot lemon verbena tea for the "Munch and Mingle" – the very best part of in-person meetings! 🌿

1 Most fertilizers are salts, and just like table salt, fertilizer salts can be toxic to roots. I would error on the side of under-fertilizing, if in doubt. — Debbie

Visual tissue assessment

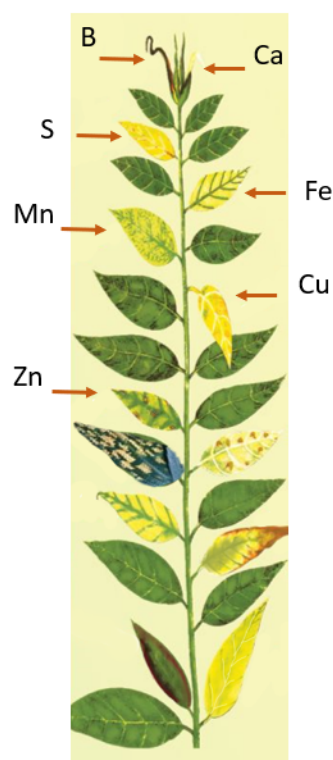
In Nutrient Management Module 9
<http://landresources.montana.edu/nm>

MOBILE NUTRIENTS



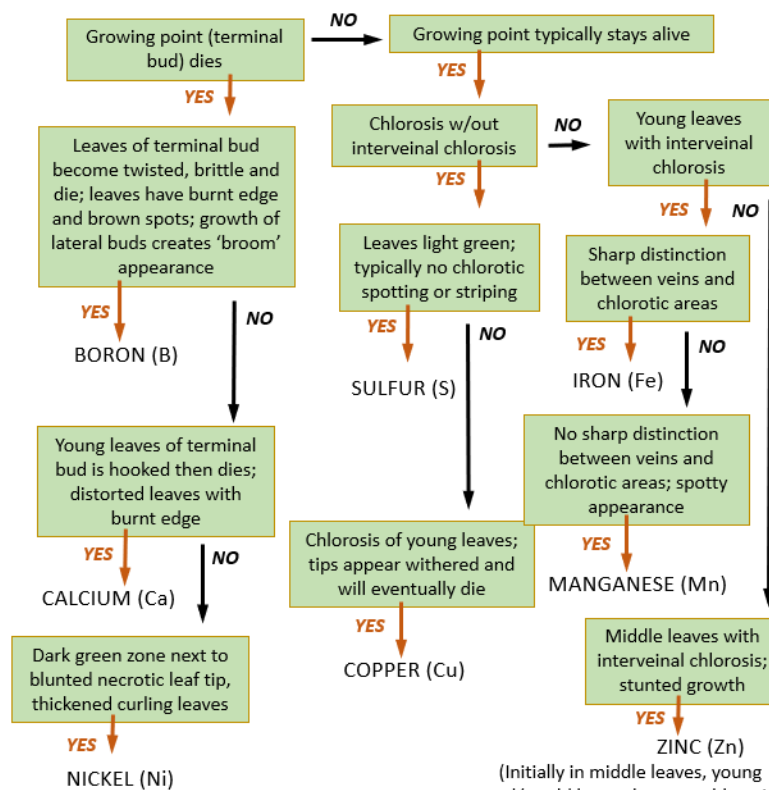
Leaf image source unknown

IMMOBILE NUTRIENTS



Leaf image source unknown

Newer or younger leaves



(Initially in middle leaves, young and/or old leaves become chlorotic in later stages of deficiency)

Charts provided by Deanna Ercolani of Green Connections. Click on the images to view online.

HERB STUDY: GINGER, PART TWO by Susan Miller

This article covers medicinal and culinary uses of ginger. If you are on any medications, it is important to discuss the use of any herbal supplement with your doctor to avoid contraindications.

Medicinal Uses

Ginger has been used for thousands of years to treat ailments such as indigestion, colds, nausea, arthritis, migraines, hypertension, and flatulence.

Gingerol, a natural component of ginger root, relieves discomfort by increasing gastrointestinal motility, the rate at which food exits the stomach and continues along the digestive process.

Ginger is used by some cancer patients to take the edge off post-treatment nausea, and for generations, women have praised the power of ginger to ease morning sickness and other queasiness associated with pregnancy. The American Academy of Obstetrics and Gynecology mentions ginger as an acceptable nonpharmaceutical remedy for nausea and vomiting. Eating ginger also can cut down on fermentation, constipation, and other causes of bloating and intestinal gas.

Ginger root also contains a very high level of total antioxidants, surpassed only by pomegranate and some types of berries. These molecules help manage free radicals, which can damage cells when their numbers grow too high.

Is ginger anti-inflammatory? There is some scientific evidence to support this but the data is contradictory and incomplete. So, it is still unclear whether eating ginger has any impact on conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis or respiratory inflammation.

People should talk to their doctor before taking ginger if they have gallstones, a bleeding disorder, or if they are

taking blood-thinners such as warfarin or aspirin (because high doses of ginger may increase the risk of bleeding).

Some additional medical articles on ginger can be found at the following links:

- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK92775/>
- <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/ginger-benefits>
- <https://www.mountsinai.org/health-library/herb/ginger>

Culinary Uses

Ginger root is used all over the world, from the curries of India and stir-fries of China to kimchi in Korea and a liqueur in France. Add it to fruit salads, meats, poultry, fish, preserves, pickles, sweet potatoes, winter squash, carrots, beets, pumpkin, rhubarb, and peaches. Combine it with onions and garlic. Ginger enhances sweet puddings, quick breads, muffins, cakes and cookies. Use it in beverages like tea, ginger ale, ginger beer, ginger wine, ginger lemonade, and Ginger Rogers (gin and ginger ale cocktail). Fresh ginger can be substituted for ground ginger at a ratio of six to one.

How to store fresh ginger:

Kitchen counter: Only if you plan to use it within a few days.

Refrigerator: Store in a resealable plastic bag or airtight container in the crisper drawer. It can last more than a month in the refrigerator. Peeled ginger will only last about two to three weeks, so it's best to keep it unpeeled.

Pickling: Peel, slice thinly, and put in a glass jar filled with equal parts vinegar, sugar, and water (adjust this mixture to suit your taste). Store in the refrigerator for up to two months. Pickling provides the healthy components of ginger together with the probiotic benefit of pickles. Also, compared to other pickled items, pickled ginger is not as high in sodium.

Freezing: Wash and dry the ginger root. Put it in an airtight freezer bag or freezer-safe container and freeze. You can cut pieces from the frozen piece later or grate it

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HERB STUDY GROUP Winter Meeting Schedule
2nd Friday of the month, 12-1:30 pm, via Zoom

March 10: Nigella (Elaine) and Poppies (Shirley)

April 14: Herb Seed Exchange (TBD)

Request Herb Study notifications by emailing
anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com.

while it's still frozen. You can peel the root first, but you do not have to. Note: Ginger skin is edible. Also, frozen ginger is easier to peel and grate than fresh. Use frozen ginger within six months.

Ginger Paste: Before freezing, you can puree the ginger in the food processor to make a ginger paste. Freeze the puree in an ice cube tray, then move the ginger blocks to a freezer bag to prevent freezer burn.

Peeling ginger: The easiest way to peel ginger is to use the back of a spoon. Using a knife peels too much

of the flesh along with the skin. Google “how to peel ginger” for YouTube video.

Ginger Tea: Peel a piece of fresh ginger, cut a few thin slices and put them in a mug. Pour in boiling water and cover. Let the slices steep at least ten minutes. The longer the better. You can add a little lemon or lime, and a small amount of honey and make a great beverage

Homemade Ginger Ale. Recipes to make ginger ale or “ginger bug” can be found online. 🌿

You're Invited to a...

Friday, April 7
Party with Garden Friends
Herbal Syrups Demo · Auction · Appetizers
5:30-7:30 at The Nave
\$50



MOLLY CERRIDWEN
Traditional Healer

Saturday, April 8
Conference
10 Speakers · Lunch
8:30-5:00 at UAA
~~\$120~~ **Early Bird Pricing Through March 1!**



ELLEN ZACHOS
The Wildcrafted Cocktail Backyard Foraging



LES BRAKE
The Coyote Gardener

Party in the Garden

ALASKA MASTER GARDENERS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

APRIL 7-8, 2023

Sponsors



FALTZ
LANDSCAPING & NURSERY



PAUL'S TREE SERVICE
ALASKA



Alaska Botanical Garden



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN !
ALASKAMASTERGARDENERS.ORG
BOOTH AND SPONSOR SPOTS OPEN NOW

VENDOR AND SPONSOR SIGN-UP

REGISTRATION

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

SPEAKER BIOS

MARCH 2023 EVENT CALENDAR

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Thursday, March 2, 7 -9 pm

Know Your Land series, Part 5: Learn how cover crops and crop rotation can improve your soil health, help control pests, build organic matter, and conserve water in your garden. Questions? Email monica@homerswcd.org. Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7151014697>

Friday, March 10, 5:30 -7:30 pm

Anchorage Parks and Rec Green Thumb Series: Seed Starting: Time to Turn Up the Heat. Learn to start seeds with high-efficiency techniques, tools, and timing our horticulturalists have been cultivating for decades, and how to adapt professional growing techniques to your home environment. Participants receive a 10"x10" plug tray full of soil and seeds. Costs \$15. Register at the [Green Thumb Class website](#).

Monday, March 13-June 9, 2023

UAF Cooperative Extension: Anchorage Master Gardener Class: Teaches the fundamentals of gardening in Alaska. Weekly classes are 5-8 pm at the Lousaac Library. This class fills fast! Tuition is \$300. [Register online here](#). Contact Steve Brown at scbrown4@alaska.edu or 907-745-3639 for more info.

Friday, March 24, 5:30-7:30 pm

Anchorage Parks and Rec Green Thumb Series: Fertilizer Fundamentals: What's Up with NPK. Just like us, plants need a healthy, balanced diet to thrive. Learn which nutrients your plants need and how to deliver them in a way that fits your budget and your schedule. Learn the difference between compost and fertilizer, and how to use the two together to make your garden bloom and boom. Costs \$15. Register at the [Green Thumb Class website](#).

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Thursday, March 2, 7-9 pm

Anchorage Garden Club: Starting from Seed, at the Central Lutheran Church.

Saturday, March 4 and 18, 12-3 pm

The 2nd installment of Seedy Saturday seed exchange hosted by Anchor Gardens at the Anchorage Museum on March 4 and the 3rd will be at the Mountain View Library on March 18. More information via the Anchor Gardens [website](#) or [Facebook page](#).

Monday, March 6, 7-9 pm

Alaska Native Plant Society: the monthly membership meeting will feature talks on Lycopodium (club moss), aquatic plants in the ditch grass and water nymph families, and the weird and wonderful plants of Shemya Island . [Zoom link](#).

Wednesday, March 8 & Friday-Saturday, March 10-11

Alaska Botanical Garden: Spring Garden Conference. Virtual only on March 8 and in-person March 10 and 11. [Check agenda and register](#).



Thursday, March 9, 10 am-noon

Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska: 'Riley's Believe It or Not: Alaska Insects' presented by Julie Riley. Central Lutheran Church. [Contact club](#).

Friday, March 10, noon-1 pm

Herb Study Group Meeting: Nigella and poppies via Zoom. Contact anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com to join.

JOBS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

It isn't too late to start plants for the **April 22 Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show**. This is also a chance to get volunteer hours. Master Gardeners can bring up to 2 flats of plants/starts to sell. Plants need to be identified with a white label. A yellow label is needed with selling price and seller initials. Yellow labels are available from Susan Negus (contact info on page 2). Watch for volunteer recruitment in April!

[Catholic Social Services](#), [Spring Creek Farm](#) and [Calypso Farm](#) are hiring!

BIRD CHATTER



WE USED TO LIKE SNOW... Hey, it's time to think about what we're going to plant in our gardens this year. HAHAAHAHAHAHA!

Yeah, right after we pay the plow bill, find someone to crack those roof ice jams and try to remember what a plant looks like. However, the catalogs have started to arrive in the mail. "Territorial" was first as usual (And, to push BC further into depression, they sent two copies.)

Here are the alleged facts: The latest recorded snowfall in Anchorage was May 22nd, in 1964. But we can blame that on the earthquake. No, BC has no idea if that's scientific and doesn't care. It is NOT going to happen this year.

The average date by which snow is gone from yards is April 17th.

IT'S NOT JUST

US...In the February 9th edition of the Anchorage Daily News, the second most-read story was "There's plenty to consider when staring seeds. Here's a guide." It beat out a story about "the balloon."

ALOHA...Prez Emily Becker was back from Hawaii (Kauai to be precise) in time to run the fun February meeting at Green Connection, a slight tan evident. A highlight of her trip was a Botanical Drawing class at the National Tropical Botanical Garden—see her attached drawing of a hibiscus.

But what shivered BC's feathers was finding out she got to see the Garden library's first edition of Darwin's "On the Origin of Species." Awesome!

SPREAD THE WORD...Plans are ramping up for our big spring conference—April 7-8 at UAA. In accordance with our primary mission, which is education and making new gardeners, this year we're offering free passes to full-time students. Know one? Tell

them to email the special address (coming soon) and get on the gate list. Then they just have to show their student I.D., and voila!

Lunch won't be included so tell them to pack a sandwich.

HORRORS—SO UNALASKAN...A retired Episcopal bishop in Guilford, Connecticut melts

down guns and turns them into garden tools -- trowels, etc. He runs an organization called Swords to Plowshares Northeast; goal is to repurpose things that destroy into things that create. They also make the gun metal into jewelry and works of art.

GOT GIFTS?...Hey, let's all raise a toast to member Sharon Schlicht, in charge of rustling up donations for the silent auction at the spring conference. This is a seriously labor-intensive task—contacting merchants and getting them to donate. She reports generally positive responses but the event could

use some donations from us.

So check your storage space. It's a perfect chance to "re-gift" that present you don't need but failed to return or exchange when you had the chance.

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



Emily Becker escaped to Kauai and attended a botanical drawing class at the National Tropical Botanical Garden.

Next AMGA Meeting via Zoom

“SNAP Tool and Climate Change in Gardening”

Presented by Nancy Fresno
Monday, March 20 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

Troy Weiss	Meetings & Educational Programs
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Troy Weiss	Garden Tours
Mary Rydesky, Gina Docherty, Jane Baldwin	Google Group Managers

Jan van den Top, Lili Naves, Sheila Toomey	Grants Program
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TBD	Hospitality
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Alexis St. Juliana	Membership Database
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Elizabeth Bluemink	Newsletter Editor
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Gina Docherty	Website
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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

