

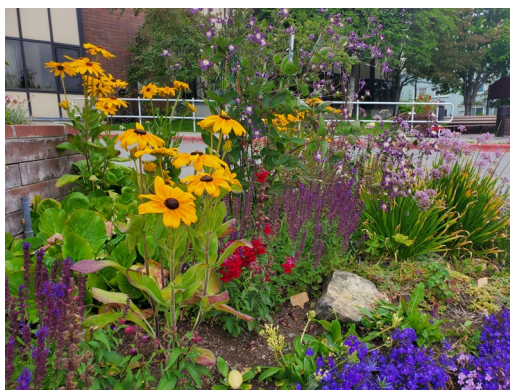
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Emily Becker

We need you!

Are you a fan of the Pioneer Home flowers? Do you love shopping for Alaska-grown plants? Do you have ideas for speakers and programs? If so, this is the moment for you!

AMGA runs on the energy of volunteers. Year after year, an incredible group of organizers and workers steps forward and accomplishes [great acts of gardening service for our community](#). From publishing this newsletter (thanks, Elizabeth!), to maintaining our membership records (Jamie), balancing the checkbook (Jan), organizing programs (Troy & awesome team), and much much MUCH more, the work of AMGA is largely accomplished by volunteers.

Our work is especially critical given the decreasing support for the University of Alaska, of which Master Gardeners is an official program. We are the bridge from the university to the public for providing the best, most trusted, science-based gardening information.



Floral display at the Pioneer Home garden in 2022.

Longtime Pioneer Home flower gardeners Julie Ginder and Lynne Opstad have decided to step back from their duties, and we are looking for their

replacements. They are ready and willing to train and advise the new leader(s), and the job comes with a traditional crew of wonderful volunteers. The flowers are so appreciated by all the residents, community members, and visitors. Do you love designing with flowers? The Pioneer Home garden designer is the job for you!

Susan Negus has helmed the biannual AMGA plant sales for so many years I've lost count. She is also ready to hand off this event to a new organizer. She can give you all the tips and tricks. Our plant sales are lots of fun for the community and our members, who make some money while raising funds for AMGA. Do you love this event? Please consider leading it!

Finally, we are looking for new AMGA Board members. The Board meets once a month in the winter months and provides advice and leadership for the group. The time commitment is about an hour a month, more if you decide to take on organizing tasks. I know serving on the Board has been a very enriching and rewarding experience for me. Who's next?

Please consider serving AMGA. If any of these projects pique your interest, please email: president@alaskamastergardeners.org. 🌿

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HERB STUDY REPORT

The first Herb Study Group meeting of the fall season was held al fresco in the ABG Herb Garden on September 8, doing double duty as a near-final work party for 2023.

Over the summer, 22 people signed up for 76 work party slots, performing 152 volunteer hours in the Herb Garden. Many thanks to all who were able to contribute some time to the garden! Our work parties have ended, and activities at ABG have shifted to Halloween and planning for winter events.

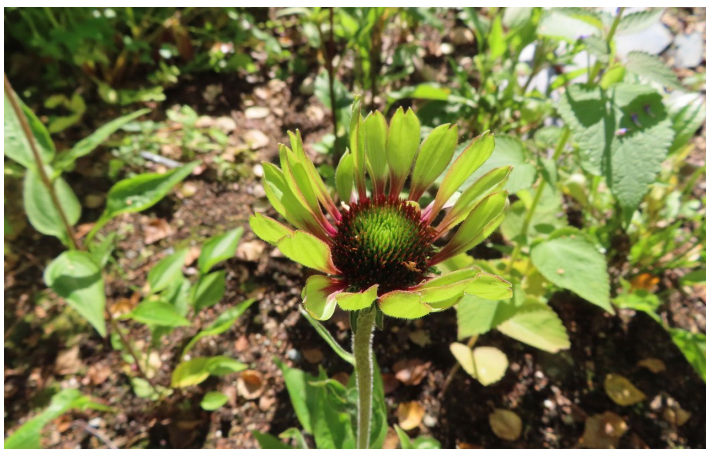
The Herb Study Group will resume its monthly educational Zoom meetings on Oct. 13. During this meeting, the group will discuss topics for the remaining monthly meetings through April or May.

No membership dues or other requirements to participate in Herb Study meetings other than your interest in herbs. This group was started umpteen years ago (thanks to Julie Riley!) and is still enjoyed by many who joined our Zoom sessions.

Many thanks to DeShana York with the Anchorage Outreach Center, Cooperative Extension Service for hosting the Zoom meetings.

Anyone who would like to receive our Herb Study email announcements should contact us at anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com.

—Elaine Hammes



An unknown Echinacea cultivar that “magically” appeared in the ABG Herb Garden, photographed on September 19. Courtesy Mary Contrary.

AUGUST 2023 TREASURER'S REPORT

Balances on 8/1/2023

Checking S-88	\$ 26,218.71
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 16,992.44
CD General 2 year 1.95%; 1/23	\$ 11,000.59

Total Assets \$ 54,216.99

Interest/Dividends \$ 7.94

This month's revenue

Membership	\$ 77.80
Donations	\$ 101.89
Fundraising/Plant sale	\$ 4,593.27
State Conference	\$ -
Name Tags	\$ -
Total revenue	\$ 4,772.96

This month's expenses

Postage	\$ 18.82
Pioneer Home Plants	\$ -
Operations	\$ 181.91
Website	\$ -
Directory	\$ -
Garden Project Grants	\$ -
Newsletter	\$ 29.99
Fundraising/Plant sale	\$ 2,987.33
Lifetime achievement	\$ -
2023 AMGA conference	\$ 1,000.00
Total Expenses this month	\$ 4,218.05

BALANCES ON 8/31/2023

Checking S-88	\$ 26,773.62
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 17,000.38
CD General 2 Year 1.95%, (1/23)	\$ 11,000.59

Total Assets on 8/31/2023 \$ 54,779.84

Prepared by Jan van den Top

FALL 2023 GARDEN PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



A year ago, [in this newsletter](#), Emily Becker wrote about her attempts to grow garlic from bulbils, the tiny seed-like clones that develop in the garlic scapes. “I collected the bulbils in fall of 2021, planted them in spring of 2022, then dug them up and re-planted three of them in fall of 2022. Here’s the result, pulled in August 2023.”



Sharon Schlicht had an interesting harvest of Russet potatoes. “My biggest potatoes had knobs. The larger one in the photo weighed almost 1.5 pounds. The smaller potatoes from this plant had a couple of small bumps but nothing as impressive as these.”



Several Master Gardeners joined a native plant rescue on Sept. 29-30 in the Campbell Tract, collecting various mosses and flowering plants for local restoration projects and for personal landscaping.



A new mural honoring beloved Anchorage gardener Soledad Lescas was unveiled at her memorial on September 28 at Grow North Farm. Friends and family gathered to remember Soledad, a wife, mother, expert cook, business owner, and woman of incredible warmth and talent. The mural was created by artist Rejoy Armamento.

OCTOBER 2023 EVENT CALENDAR

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Thursday, Oct. 5, 6-7 pm

Homer Soil & Water Conservation District: **KNOW YOUR LAND** series: Funding for Your Farm. Learn about grants and loans for Alaska farmers from the Alaska Division of Agriculture and AgWest Farm Credit Service. [Join via Zoom](#).

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Monday, Oct. 2, 7-9 pm

Alaska Native Plant Society monthly meeting: Members share photos of the native plants they saw in 2023. Meeting in person at the Campbell Creek Science Center and [via Zoom](#).

Thursday, Oct. 5, 7-8 pm

Anchorage Garden Club: Growing Pumpkins: From Seed to Fruit at Central Lutheran Church.

Tuesday, Oct. 10, 6-8 pm

Anchor Gardens end of season coach gathering to celebrate successes and talk about lessons learned. At the Seed Lab, 111 West 6th Ave.

Thursday, Oct. 12, 10 am-noon

Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska: Succulent Gardens in Glass with Paul Marmora at Central Lutheran Church.

Friday, Oct. 13, noon-1:30 pm

Herb Study Group Meeting: Lively discussion on specific herbal topics. Via Zoom, free and open to the public. Email anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com for information on how to join.

JOBS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

AMGA is seeking board members, Pioneer Home garden leaders, and a plant sale leader. Please contact Emily Becker at president@alaskamastergardeners.org for more information.

Job opening: Plant ecologist at Alaska Center for Conservation Science – Are you a plant ecologist with a passion for working across Alaska's diverse habitats and regions? <https://careers.alaska.edu/en-us/job/525667/plant-ecologist-research-professional>

Job opportunity at Seeds of Change – Agricultural Specialist - You can reach out to Sara Renard at srenard@akbh.org for a detailed job description and job preview.

ABG is hiring a Facilities Maintenance Associate this Fall – Great people and organization to join. Check out the [job advertisement](#) and ABG website for more info.

Big Cabbage Radio's AG Matters program: Dahlias, bees, and berries. Lots of new content uploaded in September, check it out on the [Radio Free Palmer site](#).

NOVEMBER 10-12

EGAN CENTER, ANCHORAGE, AK



2023 Alaska FOOD & FARM FESTIVAL
Better Together: CELEBRATING OUR ABUNDANCE & DIVERSITY

Registration is open for the Alaska Food Policy Council's Food and Farm Festival, Nov. 10-12 at the Egan Center, and with virtual options. [Get info.](#)

BIRD CHATTER



GUILTY...Well, the verdict is in, and BC loses: That pretty little pink thing that suddenly colored a lawn in Cheryl Chapman's neighborhood last month really is—gasp—a fungus. Fran Durner recognized the BC photo from a piece she wrote when she did a column/blog for the Daily News. It's *Clavaria rosea*—a so-called coral fungus. Her ID was confirmed by Patrick Ryan, education director at ABG.

But why it suddenly appeared—and just as mysteriously disappeared—on a Russian Jack lawn is still a mystery. A fungal website, forestfloornarrative.com, says *Clavaria rosea* is rare and “threatened” in multiple countries throughout Europe and Asia.

“Like many other species of coral fungi, *Clavaria rosea* tends to fruit in unperturbed old-growth habitats amongst moss and grass. Habitat degradation and the deforestation of these timber-rich, old-growth ecosystems are a main reasons for the reduction of this incredible little species,” the site says.

Perhaps that explains its sudden appearance in an urban lawn: It's searching for new habitat.

AND HOW WAS YOUR SUMMER...As crappy as it was for those of us who like to sit on the deck and pretend we're working, gardening reports reaching BC are wildly mixed. Super gardener Sharon Schlicht's review could make strong dirt lovers weep:



Sharon's beets, pictured next to a quarter.

“My worst tomato-growing season ever!... Only about one-quarter of my pea seeds germinated...Onions that are usually baseball-size look more like scallions...More than half of my broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower plants died before they had a chance to mature. It was likely due to root maggots...beets that grew about 6” long...in past years are about the size of my thumb.”



Diane Kaplan's lush garden harvest.

Sharon is in midtown. Out in West Anchorage, Diane Kaplan's harvest overfloweth—piles of greens, herbs, cabbage and potatoes. Our Prez Emily Becker, in Airport Heights, also harvested lots of food.

Other people report the same weird variance. It's not like different parts of town had different weather. It rained rained rained everywhere. Mother Nature is seriously messing with us.

ON THE OTHER HAND...If you're into dahlias, this was your summer. Apparently, dahlias had a fabulous year all over town.

THE RED AND THE GREEN...It was also apparently a good year for orach. One bright spot for Sharon was her orach plants that normally grow about two feet tall were seven and a half feet and still growing at the end of September.

OK, BC is going to admit having no idea what orach was until consulting Prof. Google. But BC is, by definition, a bird brain so presumably you all know orach, right? Sure you do. Turns out it's a spinach-like green that vanished for maybe a thousand years—since medieval times—but is making a comeback. Also known as saltbush or red mountain spinach, orach is a member of the Amaranthaceae family. It comes in several spectacular colors: red, purple, blue-green, and bright lime green.

Something to try out next year.

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

Next AMGA Meeting: Via Zoom "New Website for Garden Design"

Presented by Elise Huggins
Monday, Oct. 16 at 7 pm

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	CES Master Gardener Program Liaison
Keenan Plate	Broadcast Email
Nick Riordan	Calendar of Events

Don Bladow, Troy Weiss, Emily Becker, Fran Pekar, 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@gmail.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 updates: Jamie Lang, jamie@alaskamastergardeners.org
General emails: AskAMG@alaskamastergardeners.org
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