

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** by Rich Ervin

Walking through the woods the other day I was amazed at all the biomass that was present. I began to marvel that each of the leaves, every grass blade, the bark on the aspens, the moss, the algae, etc., are photosynthesizing and creating all this growth.

Then I started thinking about photosynthesis. How does it work again? It's really quite a fantastic process. It's been a long time since I have thought about this miracle that is going on all around us and how it works. Then I went home and refreshed my memory. So, a little science.

As we all know plants are able to make their food from the sun. They use the sun, carbon dioxide and water to make sugars. The carbohydrates produced from photosynthesis are stored and used to make proteins and oils. The waste product is oxygen which, of course, we all depend on to live.

Chloroplasts in the cell hold chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is what makes leaves green and is responsible for absorbing light energy from the sun. This complex process is responsible for nearly all life on earth. It produces oxygen and food which is vital for practically every living being to survive.

It all began with cyanobacteria. Cyanobacteria were one of the first organisms to evolve on earth. They figured out how to photosynthesize about 2.5 billion years ago. It took them about 1 billion years to produce enough oxygen to change the composition of the earth's atmosphere to oxygen.

It was catastrophic for anaerobes but led to life that we are familiar with today, including ourselves.

Enough about science and evolution. Now onto what we are all doing: harvesting the products of photosynthesis and the fruits it has produced.

This summer has been great and it is evident in the size of my flowers, amount of raspberries, currants, herbs, apples, cherries and vegetables.

The woods and mountains are full of all kinds of berries. Collecting all of this and getting it stored is quite a challenge this year and keeping me very busy as I'm sure it is you. The raspberries will not stop coming, the currants are thick on every bush, the horseradish leaves are getting taller and taller, the cabbage is getting bigger daily.

Hope you are all having a good harvest season. Seems like there is no end to the bounty or the work this year. A good problem to have. Thank you cyanobacteria for your incredible innovation!

### **IN THIS ISSUE**

- » Treasurer's Report
- » Joey's Slug Fence
- » Herb Study: Chamomile
- » Bye Bye Bird Cherry
- » August Rain



## ADVANCED CLASS UPDATE!

Your AMGA Board is working to organize a winter **Advanced Master Gardener** class, to be held via Zoom. Thank you to everyone that submitted feedback. Draft topics include:

- Soil Health & Soil Testing
- Soil Microbiology & Mycorrhizal Fungi
- The Great Mulch Study & Cover Crops
- Season Extension: High & Low Tunnels
- Irrigation Water Management & How to Make NRCS Programs Work For You
- Vegetable Varieties for Alaska

Dates and details are still TBA. Stay tuned!

## JULY 2025 TREASURER'S REPORT

### Balances on 6/30/2025

Checking S-88	\$ 16,088.93
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 17,172.59
CD General 2 year mature; 1/3/27	\$ 11,502.91
CD General 1 year; mature 1/30/26	\$ 10,581.44
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 55,351.12</b>

**Interest/Dividends** \$8.02

### This month's revenue

Membership	244.63
Donations	
Fundraising/Plant sale	
Advanced M.G course	
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>\$ 244.63</b>

### This month's expenses

Grants	\$0
Operations	\$ 127.73
Website Hosting	\$
Website Maintenance	\$145
Postage/Box Rental	\$
Fundraising/plant sale	\$
Newsletter	\$ 34.99
State Fair Crop Donation	\$
Speaker Fees and costs	\$
<b>Total Expenses this month</b>	<b>\$ 307.72</b>

### Balances On 7/31/2025

Checking S-88	\$ 16,025.84
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 17,180.61
CD General 2 Year 2.71%, (1/23/25)	\$ 11,502.91
CD General 1 Year 4.07% (1/30/25)	\$10,581.44

**Total Assets on 6/30/25** \$ 55,296.05

**Prepared by Jan van den Top**



*Marigold "La Ribera" blooming at Dr. Etheldra Davis Fairview Elementary School. The seeds for this stunning bush variety are hard to source, so saving them is a top priority this fall. Emily Becker photo.*



## A FENCE FOR SLUGS? by Emily Becker

What do to about slugs? It's one of the most frequent questions/complaints/frustrations addressed by master gardeners. UAF Cooperative Extension Integrated Pest Management Technician Joey Slowik answers the question all the time, and this summer he tried an innovative strategy: a metal slug fence.

Students from last year's IPM class will remember Joey's lively slug lecture, which included [a very memorable video](#).



*A closer look at Joey's metal slug fence. He built it from hardware store supplies. It's been very successful at deterring slugs, but more study is planned.*

You might also remember Joey's first tenet in slug control: **habitat management**. Slugs love moisture, so increasing air flow, removing grass and other weeds, and using rough mulch or tilling pathways can help make your garden less appealing to slugs.

Slugs can do a great deal of damage to gardens and crops, so new approaches to slug management are always welcome. This summer at the UAF Matanuksa Experiment Station in Palmer, Joey tried out a new form of slug control: a metal fence. The fence was installed on the edge of a wooden raised bed. The edges of the metal are bent. It was very effective at deterring slugs from climbing on or around it. ([See a news clip featuring the fence here.](#)) However, Joey wondered if it also deterred beneficial insects, and he would like to study it further. This work was supported by a USDA Crop Protection and

Pest Management program grant, one of many federal programs that have been suspended unless Congress restores funding.

Check out the CES publication, "[Slugs](#)," for more information about slug biology, slug control, and lots more techniques for dealing with garden slugs. You can also contact Joey for more information about his fence and how to build your own: [jaslowik@alaska.edu](mailto:jaslowik@alaska.edu)



# CHAMOMILE, REDUX *by Elaine Hammes*

A plant so nice we covered it twice! Read Debbie Hinchey's coverage of [Chamomile in the January 2025 newsletter](#). Part two, written by Elaine, is here:

How do you even spell it? The American English spelling begins with “ch” and the British English spelling begins with “c,” no “h.” There are so many plants commonly called “chamomile,” often in different genera, that they are best identified by their botanical names, genus and species.

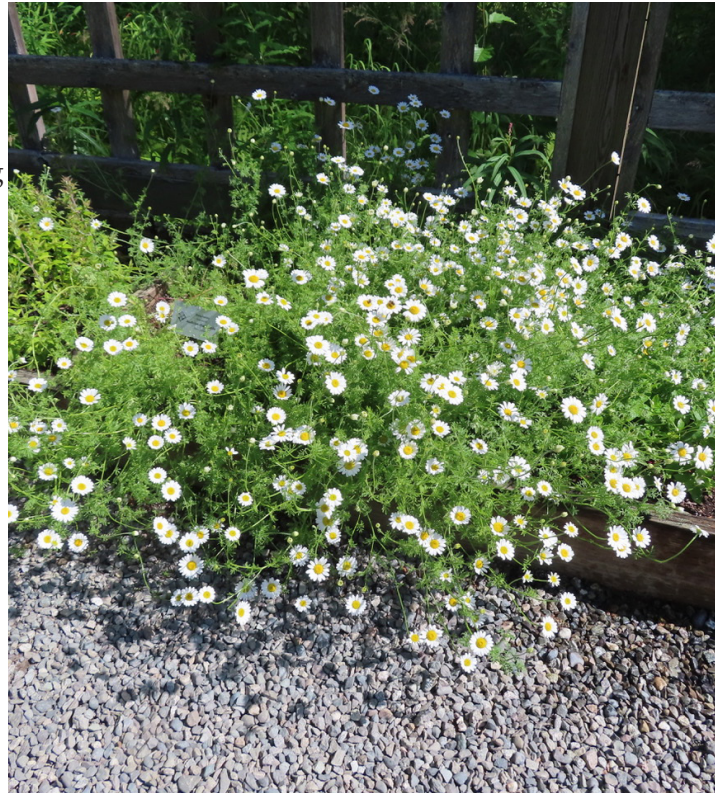
The first thought of chamomile may be as a bedtime tea. However, please note that chamomile may interact adversely with various herbs and drugs, worsen pollen allergies, and is not recommended for people with hormone-sensitive conditions or when combined with anticoagulants. Because Roman chamomile may cause uterine contractions, it should not be used during pregnancy, and its safety during breastfeeding is unknown.

More common species, *Matricaria chamomilla* (German chamomile) and *Chamaemelum nobile* (Roman, English, or garden chamomile), are commonly used to make herbal infusions for beverages. Chamomile may also be used as a flavoring agent in foods, mouthwash, soaps, and cosmetics.

*Matricaria discoidea* is well-known as pineapple weed or wild chamomile. *Tripleurospermum inodorum* (scentless chamomile) is invasive in Alaska as well as considered noxious in Canada, other countries and several US states.

*Tripleurospermum maritimum* ssp. *phaeocephalum*, also known as false mayweed, is native to Bering and Beaufort Sea coasts and can be confused with scentless chamomile. In Iceland, *Tripleurospermum maritimum*, sea mayweed, is known as “Baldr’s eyelashes” (baldursbrá), though a similar name, baldersbrár, is used for all mayweed flowers in Sweden. *T. maritima* seeds may be available from St. Isodire farm in North Pole.

A variety of other “chamomiles” include: corn, scentless or field chamomile; stinking chamomile; dyer’s, golden, oxeye or yellow chamomile; Cape chamomile; globe chamomile; and likely more. Numerous synonyms for



*Austrian chamomile in the ABG Herb Garden, photographed in July 2025 by Mary Contrary.*

the botanical names add to this mix. Two new species in ABG’s Herb Garden include *Cladanthus arabicus* (Moroccan chamomile) and *Cota austriaca* (Austrian chamomile); and they have both been putting on a good show this summer.

*Cladanthus arabicus* is typical of the West Mediterranean region and is especially abundant in Morocco. The plant is used in traditional Moroccan medicine for the treatment of diabetes and other ailments. The plant plays a role in its ecosystem by providing food for various pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Its flowers are attractive to these insects, which are essential for pollination of many plant species.

*Cota austriaca* is native to much of central and eastern Europe, as well as parts of Turkey. The plant emits a pleasant scent, and the flowers are commonly used for tea much like traditional chamomile. In Turkey the tea is used for cough, abdominal pain, and ovarian diseases. The flowers are highly attractive to pollinating insects, contributing to local ecosystems by providing nectar and pollen.

# BIRD CHERRY BANNED!

John Boyle  
Commissioner

dnr.alaska.gov



Department of  
Natural Resources

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: August 29, 2025

## Quarantine on Mayday and Chokecherry Trees Established

Selling, importing, or transporting Bird Cherry (*Prunus padus*) or Canada Red (*Prunus virginiana*) is now prohibited in the state of Alaska. The Alaska Division of Agriculture, part of the Department of Natural Resources, issued a quarantine order effective Sept. 1, 2025. The order cited the disruption to natural ecosystems caused by these invasive species. [Read the entire press release here.](#)

## LATE SUMMER BEAUTIES



*Insects enjoying a strawflower. Emily Becker photo.*

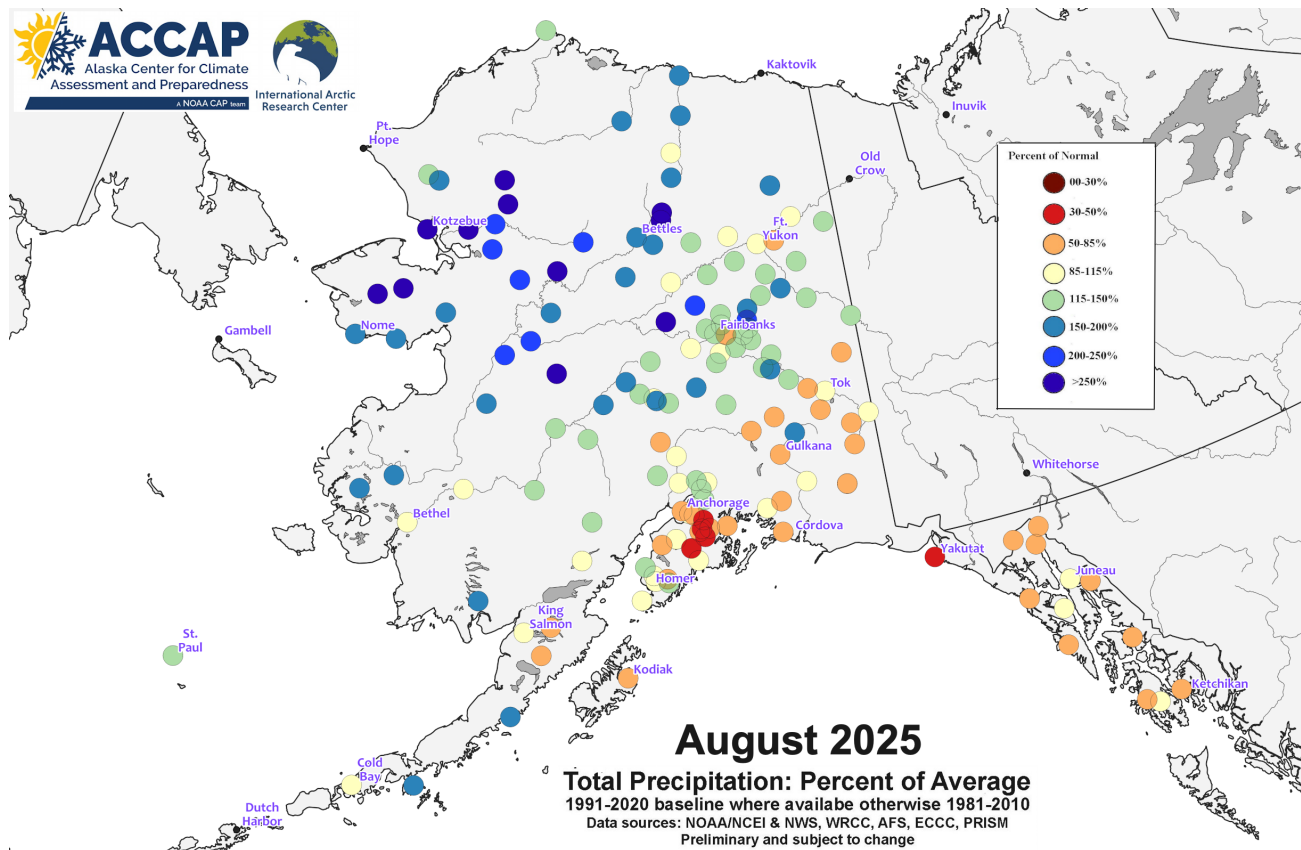


*A peach ripens inside the greenhouse at Boyer's Orchard. Emily Becker photo.*

THANK YOU to organizer **Nancy Grant** and all the many volunteers who helped with the **2025 late season plant sale**. The total amount we collected was \$4,369.86. Twenty-five percent of the total is kept by AMGA to support our activities and grants, with the remaining portion paid to the gardeners who sold plants. ♥



# AUGUST WAS DRY IN ANC, GREAT FOR RASPBERRIES



Total precipitation in Alaska for August 2025 was far above normal from Northwest Arctic Borough and south slopes of the central Brooks Range to the western Interior, including record high August total at Kotzebue. Closer to normal central Interior. Southeast interior, Southcentral and Southeast all on the dry side. *Map and caption courtesy Rick Thoman, International Arctic Research Center, UAF.*

**Editor's note:** On May 6, 2025, NOAA/NCEI announced the retroactive termination of funding for data sources used by Dr. Thoman. [Read more about the loss of scientific data here.](#)

## September AMGA Events

Bring a friend and wear a name tag if you have one!

Date	Time	
9/8/25	6:00 PM	<b>Final Garden Tour of 2025! Marya Morrow's Moose Gardens</b>
9/15/25	6:00 PM Mix 'n Mingle 6:30-7:30	<b>Member Meetings Resume at the BP Energy Center Rebecca Ligler "Harvesting the Bounty: Essential Food Preservation for Alaska Gardeners"</b>

## Join our Meetings

**Member Mtgs:** 3rd Monday of the month, 6:30 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](mailto:president@alaskamastergardeners.org) for details.

## AMGA Board of Directors

Rich Ervin	President
Troy Weiss	Vice President
Jan van den Top	Treasurer
Diane Peck	Secretary
Merlin Hamre, Brenda Adams, Rebecca Ligler, Roz Goodman, Ellen Kirchner, Dawn Groth	At Large

## Committees, Program Coordinators & Volunteers

Casey Matney	CES Master Gardener Statewide Coordinator
Roz Goodman	Broadcast Email
Nick Riordan	Calendar of Events
Board of Directors	Advanced MG Course
Janice Berry, Cheryl Chapman	Directory Editor
Kathy Liska	Facebook
TBA	Meetings/Programs
Troy Weiss, Janie Odgers, Rich Ervin	Garden Tours
Mary Rydesky, Gina Docherty	Google Group Managers
Jan van den Top, Lili Naves, Sheila Toomey	Grants Program
Lynn Hansen	Hospitality
Rebecca Ligler	Membership Database
Emily Becker	Newsletter Editor
Dawn Groth	Ask a Master Gardener
Board of Directors	Lifetime Achievement
Susan Miller	Pioneer Home Garden
TBA	Volunteer Coordinators
Nancy Grant, Sue Negus	Plant Sale Coordinators

## Renew/Join AMGA

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 the month. We welcome educational articles (400-600 words ideal), calendar items and announcements. Educational articles qualify for MG volunteer hours. Contact/send items to the editor at [newsletter@alaskamastergardeners.org](mailto:newsletter@alaskamastergardeners.org).

## 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)  
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