

PATIENCE + PERSISTENCE PAY OFF by Emily Becker

When Emily Weiser moved into her Airports Heights home in 2021, she was looking forward to gardening. Like many of us, she soon became well-acquainted with the dreaded purple monster, aka creeping bellflower, *Campanula rapunculoides*. While the bellflower is certainly a beauty, it's also a persistent weed that vexes gardeners, farmers, and even lawn enthusiasts. Introduced to North America from Europe and Asia as an ornamental plant, this bellflower is now widespread across the U.S. and Canada. The UAA Alaska Center for Conservation Science ranks it 64 (out of 100) on its invasiveness scale; the higher the number the more troublesome the plant. The satisfaction of digging up a mothership tuber—which is edible, by the way—is dimmed by the fact that it can reproduce from any tiny bit of rhizome left behind, not to mention the 3,000 to 15,000 seeds one plant can produce. As [its UAA profile](#) notes, it's impossible to control by pulling alone, and many chemical herbicides have no effect.

Weiser was undeterred. She wanted a native perennial garden in front of her house. She placed layers of cardboard over the bellflower area, added a few inches of leaves, and then covered the whole thing with two layers of tarp. She left it covered for a full year. She removed the tarps then added composted horse manure, topped it with leaves again, and planted her native varieties. For now, it seems to have worked!



Yes, it's pretty. It's also a nuisance. Miles618 photo of an Anchorage bellflower via iNaturalist, CC-BY-NC.



Thick layers of cardboard, leaves, then two tarps. For a year. Emily Weiser photo.



Time will tell if she has successfully smothered the bellflower! Emily Weiser photo.

AMGA BOARD MEETS

APRIL 2026 TREASURER'S REPORT



Your AMGA Board met May 6th for a marathon strategy session to hammer out revisions to the bylaws, standing rules, grant policies, and more. The board also reviewed website updates and discussed the need for better onboarding processes for new members and volunteers. There is always room for more volunteers willing to help make a difference with this great organization! Is that champagne, Rich?

Volunteers Needed!

The Alaska State Fair Crops Department supports people learning to garden. Volunteers are needed to get the exhibit entries smoothly accepted on Tuesdays, August 25 & September 1, 2026. Noon to 8 pm. Then judge clerks are needed on Wednesdays, August 26 & September 2, 2026, to get exhibits wisely judged, then beautifully displayed. **Contact Julie Cascio, Crops Superintendent, jmcascio@alaska.edu**

Balances on 3/31/2026

Checking S-88	\$18,546.66
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 17,225.80
CD General 2 year mature; 1/3/27	\$ 11,720.13
CD General 1 year; mature 1/30/26	\$ 10,893.54
Total Assets	\$ 58,391.38

Interest/Dividends \$4.25

This month's revenue

Membership	\$561.04
Donations	\$127.34
Fundraising/Plant sale	\$2567.26
Advanced M.G course	
Total revenue	\$ 3,255.64

This month's expenses

NEON 1	\$125
Grants	\$500
Operations	\$ 280.24
Website Hosting	\$96.36
Pioneer Home Garden	
Postage/Box Rental	\$
Fundraising/plant sale	\$1,594.11
Newsletter	\$39.99
Postage/Box rental	\$
2026 Special Events	\$600
Total Expenses this month	\$ 2,635.70

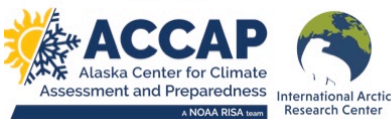
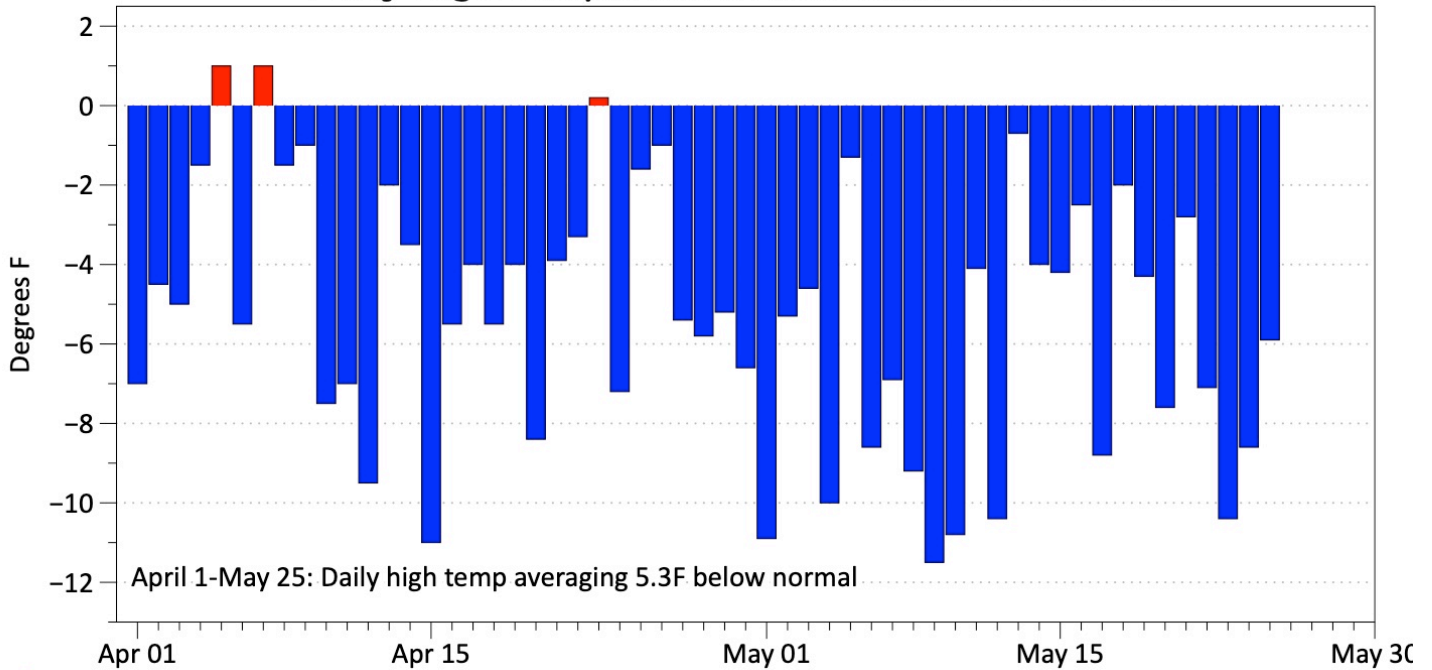
Balances On 4/30/2026

Checking S-88	\$ 19,166.60
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 17,230.05
CD General 2 Year 2.71%, (1/3/27)	\$ 11,720.13
CD General 1 Year 4.07% (1/30/27)	\$10,893.54
Total Assets on 3/31/26	\$ 59,015.57

Prepared by Jan van den Top

A CHILLY SPRING

**Anchorage (Merrill Field), April 1-May 25, 2026
Daily High Temperature Difference from Normal**



Data: NOAA/NCEI & NWS

While overnight low temperatures since April 1st are not far from normal, on every day since April 23, the high temp has been colder than average. The April 1-May 25 average high temperature is very close to what it was during the same period in 2023, and it's milder than 2013. However, this is the latest in the spring that Merrill Field has gone with the temperature getting to at least 60°F since 1998, when the first 60° day was May 28th. *Map and caption courtesy Rick Thoman, Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Preparedness, International Arctic Research Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.*

VOLUNTEER CATALOG

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

Updated 2026 Anchorage

Connect with other gardeners, have fun, learn something new! [Check out our catalog of gardening volunteer opportunities](#) in Anchorage.

GARDEN TOURS BEGIN!

Tours on this list are free and are for AMGA members and their guests. All tours start at 6 PM. Details will be emailed to members. Make sure your membership is up to date by emailing president@alaskamastergardeners.org. The special Homer garden tour scheduled for July is sold out; stay tuned for info on other special tours.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Garden</i>	<i>Features</i>
June 1	Forget-Me-Not Nursery	Behind-the-scenes tour of Courtney's nursery. And you can buy plants!
June 8	Boyer's Orchard	Apples, cherries, the only quince tree in all of Alaska, and much more.
June 15	Sharon Davies	A gorgeous garden with many special features for inspiration.
June 22	UAA Campus	A guided tour of the arboretum.
June 29	Barbara Rowland	Flowers, vegetables, and more.
July 6	Lighthouse Gardens	Unique and inspiring must-see.
July 13	English Potager Garden	Garden antiques, apples, cherries, and more.

more to come in July and August!

Free Soil pH Test at the June 8th Garden Tour

Healthy soils grow healthy plants! While many gardeners collect soil samples to submit to a laboratory to test for essential nutrients, a simple pH test can be done in the field and can give gardeners reassurance that available nutrients can be used by plants. pH is the fundamental part of any soil test; the "one test" to rule them all!

Learn more about what this means and get a free pH test at the garden tour at Boyer's Orchard on June 8th. Collect a sample from your garden about 4-6 inches below the surface of the soil. About a quarter cup will do! Place the sample in a jar or other container and bring it with you to the tour. We will add distilled water and use an electronic pH meter to test your soil. Brought to you by the Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District.



Your sample should be collected from the root zone, about 4-6 inches below the soil surface. Remove any grass or leaves. That's it! Bring it with you to the tour on June 8th.

MASTER GARDENERS IN SERVICE!



Master gardener Dennis Ronsse leads a plant walk at Windy Corner for the Alaska Native Plant Society. Dennis and wife Annie have scaled back their vegetable gardens and have become experts in native plant ID.



AMGA member Susan Miller, right, collects flowers for the Pioneer Home garden grown by students at Airport Heights Elementary under the guidance of teacher Moana Rolfzen. Susan leads the garden crew for the fabulous Pioneer gardens and can always use another member; email: smiller.ret@gmail.com



Master gardeners and friends enjoy a sunny day planting the garden of AMGA member, legendary reporter, and Alaska Women's Hall of Fame honoree Sheila Toomey, seated middle. Diane Kaplan photo.

EMPOWERING ANCHORAGE YOUTH THROUGH GARDENING

by Larissa Wright-Elson

Anchorage 4-H is getting a new start! 4-H is the largest youth development organization in the country, and its strength lies in supporting youth through a club model. Under the umbrella of UAF's Cooperative Extension Service, Anchorage 4-H clubs give young people from 5-18 years of age a safe space to explore all kinds of projects, from agriculture and gardening to robotics and creative arts.

While 4-H has been primarily associated with agriculture projects and thrives in other parts of Alaska, it is being rejuvenated in Anchorage with an initial focus on urban agriculture and horticulture projects. This focus helps transform the city into a more sustainable community, while teaching young people practical skills of growing plants. Through this work they also learn career-readiness skills like project management, networking, and problem solving, fulfilling the 4-H mission of "Beyond Ready" youth with skills that are transferable to life beyond K-12 education.

4-H needs Master Gardeners as club leaders and volunteers who can work with Anchorage youth to teach what Master Gardeners are passionate about: gardening. The bridge between the Master Gardener program and 4-H is built on mentorship. Whether you are leading a short workshop on starting and caring for dahlias, learning to grow your own food, helping a club design pollinator projects, or serving as a judge for culminating student projects, your expertise is the "fertilizer" to help the next generation of gardeners grow and thrive.

Using the 4-H club structure for this work provides research-based curriculum and materials (like the Master Gardener course itself), background checks and insurance, and a leadership structure for the youth. If you are interested in sharing your own green thumb with the young people of Anchorage, contact me, Anchorage 4-H Coordinator, in the Anchorage Cooperative Extension Outreach Office. lawrightelson@alaska.edu or 907-786-6345.



College Gate students built new lasagna beds with help from three newly-minted Master Gardeners and Anchorage 4-H in May.



Your membership dues provided grant funding to help College Gate start a school orchard. Thank you!



Blossom Festival



LIVE MUSIC



VENDORS



FOOD TRUCK



TREES FOR SALE



FREE CHAIR MASSAGE



KIDS ACTIVITIES



June 13, 2026

12-4pm



Tickets

\$10 each

— or —

\$30 for a group



**Boyer's Blossom
Festival 2026**

alaskaorchard.org



**645 E. 81st. Ave.
Anchorage, AK**



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, all are welcome to observe. Email president@alaskamastergardeners.org for details.

AMGA Board of Directors

Dawn Groth	President
Troy Weiss	Vice President
Jan van den Top	Treasurer
Diane Peck	Secretary
Brenda Adams, Roz Goodman, Ellen Kirchner, Rich Ervin, Jerelyn Miyashiro, Nancy Tone	At Large

Committees, Program Coordinators & Volunteers

Casey Matney	CES Master Gardener Statewide Coordinator
Roz Goodman	Broadcast Email
Nick Riordan	Calendar of Events
Brenda Adams	Advanced MG Course
Kathy Liska, Cindy Walker	Facebook
Nancy Tone	Meetings/Programs
Janie Odgers	Garden Tours
Mary Rydesky	Google Group Manager
Ellen Kirchner, Nancy Tone, Rich Ervin	Grants Program
Merlin Hamre	Hospitality
Diane Peck	Membership Database
Emily Becker	Newsletter Editor
Vacant	Ask a Master Gardener
Board of Directors	Lifetime Achievement
Susan Miller	Pioneer Home Garden
Board of Directors	Volunteer Coordinators
Nancy Grant, Sue Negus	Plant Sale Coordinators

Renew/Join AMGA

[Join or renew your AMGA membership here.](#)

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. Please disclose use of AI. Contact/send items to the editor at newsletter@alaskamastergardeners.org.

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: dawn@alaskamastergardeners.org
 General emails: AskMG@alaskamastergardeners.org
 Mail: AMGA, P.O. Box 221403, Anchorage, AK 99522-1403

