

FALL IN OUR GARDENS by Brenda C. Adams

Fall is always such a pretty and exhilarating season. The crisp air brings back memories of high school and college football games with all of their excitement. It also seems to increase our energy and heighten our senses. From a gardener's point of view, October can be absolutely wonderful. The light is soft and slanted; it casts new and interesting shadows across the land. Late blooming plants are finally showing us their stuff. The colors are strong and vibrant. Reds, yellows, deep pinks, and oranges dazzle us with their intensity.

Grasses have put out their frothy seed heads. A wide variety of sedum are covered in their waxy-looking flowers. Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium*, formerly known as *Eupatorium*) has finally bloomed and yarrow continue their display. *Astrantia major* and *Aconitum* are hanging in there. Even some *Filipendula* may be in bloom along with the golden spires of *Ligularia stenocephala* 'The Rocket'. Many clematis, including the wonderful shrub clematis, *Clematis integrifolia*, are sporting their charming, fluffy seed pods. With all these intrepid stalwarts adding beauty to our landscapes, what a perfect time to take photos of our gardens!

It's also an excellent time to prepare for next year, especially so if you plan to create a new garden or do a major renovation to an existing one. If you lay out your new or modified bed, till the soil if necessary, and put in your hardscape elements now, you will be ready to plant much earlier in the next season. Even with all the rain we typically have in early fall, our soil is not nearly as saturated now as it will be in spring – and there are no load limits on the roads at this time of year. If you need heavy equipment or deliveries of rock or top soil for your new project, do it now.

Once you get your hardscape in place, take lots of photos of the area as well as detailed measurements of it. With these at the ready, you can spend your winter



Astrantia major with *Calamagrostis acutiflora* 'Overdam' in the background. Brenda Adams photo.

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One of the hundreds of colorful cultivars of Sedum. Recently many have been moved into the genus Hylotelephium. Brenda Adams photo.

looking leisurely at gardening magazines and books to get ideas for your new or updated garden. What style will you choose? What colors will you use? What plants do you want to feature? There are many things to think about and if you start now, rather than waiting to do it all in the hectic days of spring, I think you will be happier with your results. You will also be ready to get the first pick of the plants at your local nurseries, several of which now post the plants they have ordered for the following season on-line during the winter. This is a huge help if you want to plan ahead and shop locally. Another bonus you will gain from planting your new garden early is that your hardy perennials will be surprisingly mature by mid-summer and any trees and/or shrubs you include will be well established.

Fall is also a good time to prepare your greenhouse and vegetable beds for spring. Remove plants that have worn themselves out. There's no need to leave all that foliage for unwanted critters to use as habitat. It's much better to add the spent foliage to your compost pile where it will be transformed into rich, organic fertilizer over time. Add amendments including compost to your beds now. If you have soil in beds or pots in the greenhouse, remove and

replace it. Do the same with big containers that you may use. Amend the new soil in those as well.

Wash down the walls and floor of your greenhouse with a sterilizing agent. I do this again once it begins to warm in the greenhouse but I'm a bit crazed about tidiness and avoiding contamination from year to year. I also sterilize all the pots I will reuse in spring for seedlings and potting up. While you're cleaning up, don't forget to clean, sharpen and condition your tools before storing them for winter. The overall point is this: do whatever you can now to reduce the number of tasks in the spring.

Another example of shifting spring tasks to fall is to do one last weeding in October. Oh, aren't you just sick of weeding? Me too! But if you do it just one more time, every weed whose root you eliminate, with the notable exception of horsetail, will not visit you in April or May. Now doesn't that sound wonderful?

Finally, pour a glass of your favorite beverage and take a leisurely stroll around and through your gardens. Look at only the things that please you. Savor them. Have a seat and really drink in the beauty you've created and tended all year. It's definitely time to simply enjoy your garden.



The charming fluffy seedheads of Clematis integrifolia. More people ask about this plant when visiting my garden than any other. Brenda Adams photo.

AUGUST 2026 TREASURER'S REPORT

October Member Meeting

Balances on 7/31/2026

Checking S-88	\$10,671.33
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 17,245.20
CD General 2 year mature; 1/3/27	\$ 11,793.18
CD General 1 year; mature 1/30/26	\$ 10,988.60
Total Assets	\$ 50,703.56

Interest/Dividends \$4.39

This month's revenue

Membership	\$341.22
Donations	\$257.37
Fundraising/Plant sale	\$10,801.83
Palmer Garden Tour	\$653.07
Total revenue	\$12,053.49
fees included in revenue	\$ 342.34
Net Revenue	\$11,711.15

This month's expenses

NEON 1	\$125.00
Badges	\$
Operations	\$ 232.00
Website Maintenance	\$1015.00
Pioneer Home Garden	\$
Postage/Box Rental	\$
Fundraising/plant sale	\$5,231.00
Newsletter	\$39.99
Postage/Box rental	\$330.00
2026 Special Events	\$1,969.30
Total Expenses this month	\$ 8,612.29

Balances On 8/31/2026

Checking S-88	\$ 13,770.19
Savings S-2	\$ 5.25
Savings S-29	\$ 17,245.59
CD General 2 Year 2.71%, (1/23/27)	\$ 11,793.18
CD General 1 Year 4.07% (1/30/27)	\$10,988.60

Total Assets on 8/31/26 \$ 53,806.81

Prepared by Jan van den Top

Year in Review and Volunteer Appreciation

October 19th

6:00 - 7:30 pm

BP Energy Center

**Photo highlights of this year's garden
tours and activities.
Celebration with food and fun for our
awesome volunteers.**

All are welcome.

Tell us how you want to be involved!
Fill out the [AMGA Board & Volunteer
Interest Questionnaire](#)



Nancy Grant's state fair ribbons in the garlic division were among several she earned this year. Congrats, Nancy!

THANK YOU, GARDEN TOUR HOSTS



*2026 garden tour hosts received very special thank you cards from AMGA Board Member Jerelyn Miyashiro, center. Jerelyn captured sketches on the garden tours and then created an illustrated card as a token of appreciation for each garden host.
Tony Flores photo.*

GARLIC PLANTING TIPS by Nancy Tone

'Tis the season for garlic! September 21st re-opened our member meeting schedule, with the Alaska Botanical Garden's Will Criner front and center, to get us going with our last planting of the year with garlic. Will has run the garlic program there for over a decade. We should embrace the fact that garlic grows in 40-degree soil, and we still have some time to get it into the ground by early October.

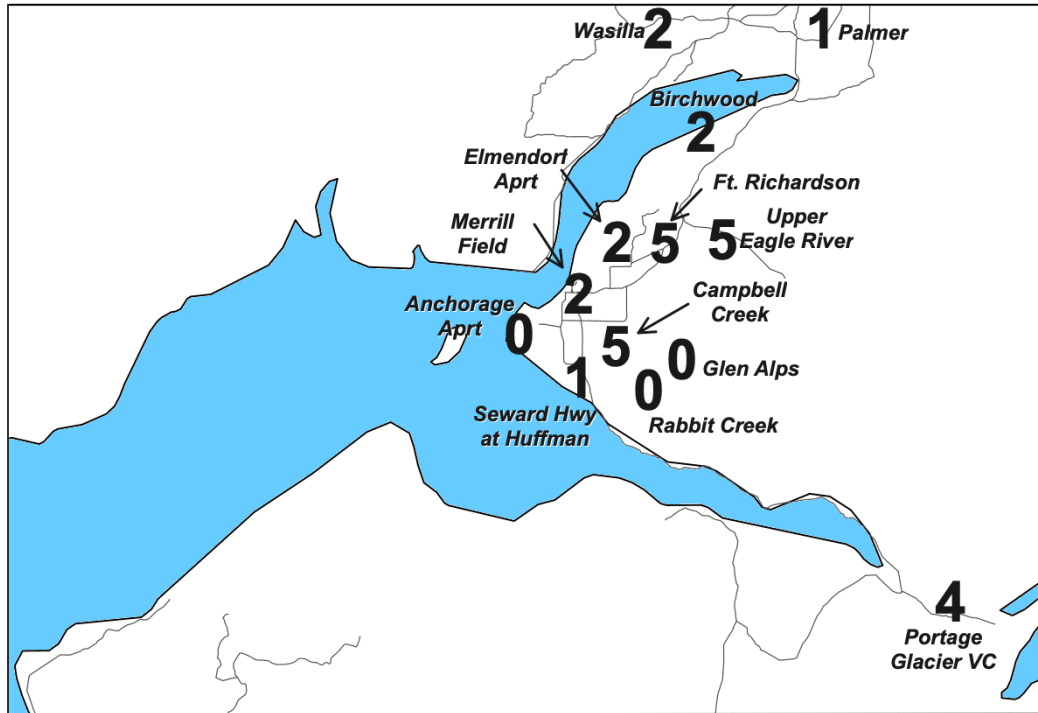
Will's advice:

- Get it in the ground 1-2 weeks after our first frost, in the window of 2-4 weeks prior to frozen ground. Early October is about right.
- Plant about 4" deep, 5-6" apart, then add compost, and mulch with straw or leaves, 4-10".
- In early spring, move that mulch away and ensure that the plot gets sufficient water (if we have a dry spring). Feed with fish emulsion for bulb growth.
- In early to mid-July, when scapes grow, garlic is in its reproductive stage, so harvest scapes for eating prior to the scape growing upward after forming its loop. The plot needs phosphorus now, to further fill out the bulb and good wrapper development. This gives you the best chance for long storage.
- Harvest when the top leaves are green and lower are dry or fallen away.
- Do treat the bulbs with respect and tender care in forking the soil, loosening the bulbs. To cure, these can be bundled in small batches (you need ventilation) and hung for about 3 weeks.
- Then you can trim to 2-3" above the bulb.

Nancy's tip for finding great soft, weed-free straw in compressed half bales: M bar D Feed and Tack, 907-349-2051, off 88th.

A GENTLE AUTUMN

Number of days with low temperature 32F or lower
September 2026



Did your tomatoes get to ripen? Some parts of town have yet to see a frost, as of Sept. 27, 2026. Apologies to Girdwood, but unfortunately, the cooperating weather station at Alyeska is no longer reporting daily temperatures. *Map and caption courtesy Rick Thoman, Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Preparedness, International Arctic Research Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.*

Did you know? Thoman is an editor for the [Arctic Report Card](#), the annual peer-reviewed assessment of the state of the warming Arctic. After the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration pulled funding for the report card, the American Geophysical Union stepped in to provide support, and the report card will continue. [Read more here.](#)

SOIL BASICS WEBINAR from the Cooperative Extension Service

Soil Basics: Soil Formation and the Soil Nitrogen Cycle

Description: Good soil is essential to growing food and supporting human and animal life. Join us for this free webinar to learn more about soil properties and soil health. Dr. Victoria Monsaint-Queeney will discuss how soil forms and how physical, chemical, and biological properties affect soil health. She will also provide a brief overview of nitrogen cycling in soil.

When: Oct. 7, noon - 1 p.m.

Where: Zoom, register at https://alaska.zoom.us/meeting/register/T5e2j_eNQNuQwkiEumlztQ

Cost: Free, but registration is required.

HERB STUDY RETURNS!

The Herb Study Group resumes educational Zoom meetings next month on October 9 with Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*), named herb of the year named by the International Herb Society.

Meetings are held the 2nd Friday of the month, 12:00-1:30 pm. Meeting notices are sent on the Monday before the meeting and a reminder with the Zoom link on the Thursday before.

Email: anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com to sign up.

Some of the other interesting tidbits that were gleaned from the September planning meetings discussions:

- Nasturtium leaves infused in vinegar create a purple vinegar with a peppery kick
- Wool pellets are an effective slug barrier and also break down as slow release nitrogen fertilizer
- Always pick French tarragon for culinary use; the Russian tarragon is tasteless.
- Wasp or bee stings can be treated by applying a vinegar soaked cotton ball and ice to neutralize the venom and reduce swelling.



Herb Study Group members met to plan this year's educational programs. All are welcome! Email: anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com

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Herb Study Group dates and topics for 2026-2027:

2026

October 9 - Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*)

November 14 - Nettle (*Urtica dioica*)

December 11 - Monkshood (*Aconitum napellus*)

2027

January 8 - Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*)

February 12 - Angelica (*Angelica archangelica*)

March 12 - Curry plant (*Helichrysum italicum*)

April 9 - Arnica (*Arnica montana*)

May 14 - Herb Study Tea Party

May 21 - Plant Exchange



"Dahlia Parton," AMGA's creation for ABG's Beer Garden.

Your AMGA Dues in Action! Reports from Grant Recipients



From Ceclia Karoly-Lister, **Grow North Farm**: We spent our AMGA grant improving our childrens' garden along with supplying attendees to the weekly storytime with occasional "market bucks," which they were able to spend on fresh vegetables being sold at the market! Participation from neighborhood families increased, and we also collaborated with Luke Halter, an educator and Mountain View resident, to create some of our activities. We purchased a small mud kitchen and supplied weekly popcorn snack too!

From John Horstkoetter, **Downtown Hope Center**: The 2026 \$500 AMGA grant to the Hope Center was used to help purchase bags of potting mix, organic fertilizer and vegetable start plants (more than 125 Lacinato Kale plants, 30 tumbler cherry tomato plants for hanging baskets/wall containers, 50 Broccolini plants, 12 Zucchini plants and various herb plants). That donation was very much appreciated.



From Emily Becker, **Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District**: We used our AMGA grant to support neighborhood weed pull events, like this [Invasive Species Singles Club meeting in Tikishla Park](#). The next event is Friday, October 2nd, 5:30 PM, same place! All adults are welcome.

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
Vacant	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
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Susan Miller	Pioneer Home Garden
Board of Directors	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. 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>
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