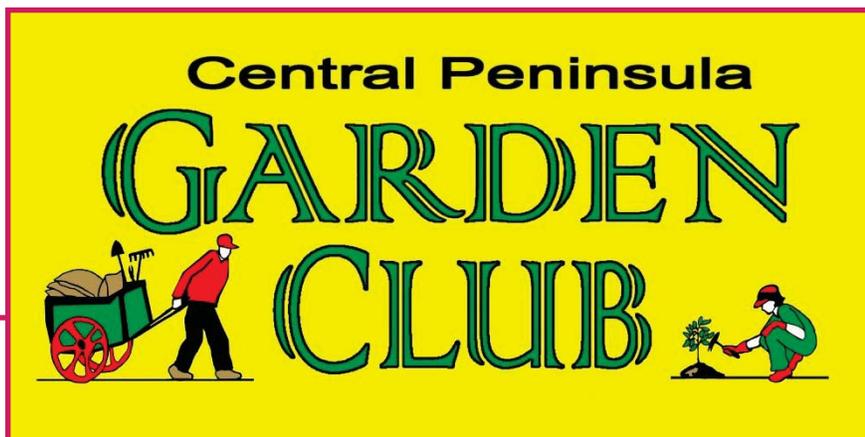


April 2013

Central Peninsula Garden Club



PO Box 767 · Kenai, Alaska 99611 · www.cenpengardenclub.org



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- Marion Nelson - *President, program chair*—
(907) 283-4632, (907) 398-8669 (cell)
- Liz Leduc - *Vice president, web site coordinator, hospitality*
- Kay Gardner - *Secretary, special events*
- Peggy Morris - *Treasurer, plant sale*
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- Don St. John - *Tech chair, Sea Ag sales chair, special events*
- Renae Wall - *Publicity chair, nominating committee*
- Don Thompson - *Special events, plant sale*
- Velma Bittick - *Hospitality*
- Lee Bowman - *Sea Ag*

April 9th—Basic Garden Irrigation

U-Plan, U-Install, Start Small and Add On as You Can

Presented by Amy Olmstead, Master Gardener from Anchorage

Now that lots of CPGC members are making plans and starting seeds, many of you may be thinking about how you're going to keep everything watered. Automatic irrigation set ups take the pressure off in the garden or high tunnel, greenhouse, yard or even containers. But where does one start if you want to do-it-yourself? The April 9th program presenter, Amy Olmstead, will answer your questions.

Amy has been a Master Gardener since 2003 and an admitted garden junky who loves to get others interested in growing, and taking the on-line MG classes as well. Her Anchorage home location has extreme weather swings and lots of microclimates. She has a passion for Lasagna Gardening and *creating drip-watering systems* for friends and family! "My garden is forever changing with add-ons, re-dos and anything interesting that catches my fancy." "My garden has been on tour twice now and I enjoyed opening my yard to MG classes in Lasagna Gardening and *Self Installed drip irrigation systems.*"

Bring your questions about how to get an irrigation system started in your location. Amy will have the answers in her power point presentation. She will also have some irrigation supply booklets to hand out.

Time: 7pm. Free and open to the public.

Location: Cook Inlet Aquaculture Building, on K-Beach Road.

Refreshments and, often times, door prizes! We appreciate your contributions!

Membership forms always available at www.cenpengardenclub.org.



Planting Patterns

Challenge to quilter-gardeners: Consider planting veggies & flowers in quilt blocks or patterns. Sort of like square foot gardening with an eye to color.

Photo top left: Seattle blossoms in March from CPGC board member Chris Cook's travels.

March 12th Program—Planning & Seed Starting Round Tables



Above: Round table group getting grower information from table leader, Sarah Donchi (on left).

Bottom: CPGC board member, Cathy Hass, was this group's leader.



WOW, where do I begin? I am sure that is what many people thought upon entering the March 12th CPGC meeting. I know I was. There were so many tables, so many experienced gardeners leading discussion groups about planning and seed starting, but each leader had different techniques, and how and where they started and transplanted young seedlings.

On the planning portion, most everyone expressed the need of keeping good records, such as in a notebook or a bound journal or the computer. They stressed keeping records of the dates you start planting indoors, how long plants take to germinate, how long before you set them out to harden off and then plant. They also explained how to make a drawing or schematic of how your garden was laid out each year for crop rotation and note how each type of plant did in that location. Keeping good records of your harvest and preservation of your foodstuffs is also helpful in planning next year's garden.

Some had greenhouses, heated and unheated; some did it in their basement, garage or spare room. Many used different types of lighting, depending on the amount of available natural light. All leaders shared their means of seed sprouting, germination, seed starting soils or mediums (soil, amendments, etc), when to fertilize and with what.

Some tables had goodies that the leaders brought in to share. These might consist of seeds, tomato clamps, special fertilizer samples, or even live Gold Nugget tomato plants. Many people also brought in seed catalogs and useful printouts from the CES that they had extras of. A lot of good, useful information here. The evening ended much too soon, after gathering much information from our gardening professionals, it was time to go home.

A big Thank You to the Gardening leaders' at each table, those who brought refreshments (was that carrot cake I glimpsed several people eating? I know the brownies were great), and to all the participants. I think we can say the evening was a great success.

NOW, don't forget, if you have a few too many plant starts, they would be most welcome at the plant sale, June 8th, which will be here before we know it.

~Donna Endresen, CPGC Member

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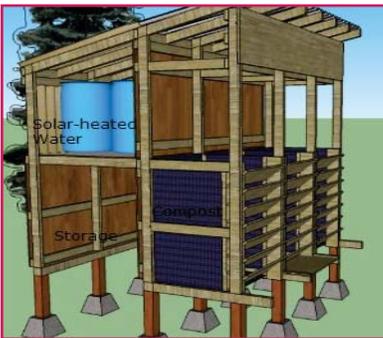
Chays' Multi-purpose Composter Shed—By Dan Chay

Inspired by urban farmer Dohnn Wood's back-saver composter featured in the Central Peninsula Garden Club newsletter last April 2012, I used Google's Sketch-up (free) to model a variation on his composter for our use.



Above: The Chay's multi-purpose composter shed.

Below: Sketch-up model.



As you can see in the image, the multi-purpose composter shed needs finishing, but it's functional, and handy. It's conveniently located near the house for receiving kitchen plant waste, and it's impervious to moose and hares.

The concatenated water barrels face south to be warmed by insolation through the roof and sides, which are made of corrugated transparent polycarbonate. An inexpensive stock tank valve keeps the water barrels full when attached by a quick-connect to garden hose with access to cold well-water under pressure. A manifold on the west (far) side allows control for warmed-water gravity feed to the raised beds. The two doors on the east (facing) side are hinged.

Another hose on the manifold is used to water the compost piles. The wheel barrow fits easily under the compost piles, and the compost pile containers are lined (3 sides each and the bottom) with hardware cloth. The compost container sides are gapped with 2x4-width space between the plywood walls and the hardware cloth as well as between the dividing walls, which allows for air flow. The slats on the north side, of course, are easily removed for easy, measured access to the compost piles. The cantilevered ledge can be stood upon when-if turning the compost pile.

The storage space with its entrance at the lower left in the image has been handy for easy access to the lawn mower in the summer and the snow blower in the winter. In the upper right, there's more storage for more water tank -- or whatever. We're storing lumber and salvaged windows in there, now.

Looking for Gardens in the Warm - By Lee Bowman

In mid February, Julie and I took a trip to visit our two granddaughters in Bozeman Montana and Ft. Collins Colorado. As we always do when we travel, we checked out some of the local garden stores and greenhouses. To our surprise we didn't find any opportunities in either town. The ones we saw were all closed for the season. Since both areas had and were having days that were in the 50-60 degree range, we expected them to be open.

From there, we went to Tucson, where it was unseasonably cold. They had been having frost nightly for a few days before we arrived, which was disappointing, as many of the flowers and flowering trees were gone. We did have the opportunity to go to a plant sale for one of the local garden clubs in Green Valley. With our provincial ideas of gardening, we expected to see vegetable plants, but to our surprise, they only had cactus, succulents, and fruit trees. I ask one of the helpers about the lack of vegetables. His answer was "They don't sell. Nobody gardens around here." I'm sure there are challenges gardening in Arizona just as there are in Alaska, but that certainly wasn't

the answer we expected. Our Arizona relative, does grow lettuce and some tomato's in pots, and we did see truck garden plots, but we did not see any traditional home garden plots in our travels. I'm sure there must be some traditional gardening going on, because there are seeds for sale in the local hardware stores, but we sure didn't find out where. Since most have cacti in their yards and I know much of the cacti produce fruit is edible.... Maybe that is the local garden produce!

Burger Bus



OPEN YEAR ROUND
Monday—Saturday
11am to 6pm
CLOSED SUNDAY
283-9611

Take Your Time Verbalizing on Garden Changed

Ramblings by Will Hightower

Went to a Garden Club meeting the other night, one of those round table things. Actually I had never partaken of such a format before, it was like setting in on a board or committee meeting, but much more friendly.

Cathy gave her spiel on starting seeds. Very interesting, she does some things I never thought about. I'm of the school "throw some seeds in the soil and see what comes up", then transplant the good seedlings. Cathy sprouts in wet paper towels and then plants. I tried her way, it works, but already learned that you don't want to wait too long as the root grows into the paper towel.

After Cathy's presentation the discussion was opened up to general garden questions. Participants around the table varied from 9 to 11 people. Two young ladies sat down to my left, this always does an old man's ego good, but I suspect that it was because the seats were the only ones open and the ladies didn't consider me a threat. It developed that they were both fairly new to gardening. In due course the blond one (I'm very bad on names) had a question about her garden. She has raised beds, a garden fence and a garden path. She also has left over cinder blocks from some project. She wondered if she could place the cinder blocks along the fence, place dirt in the block holes and grow beans, using the fence for the beans to climb on.

Several of us around the table, being gardeners of great experience, chimed in and said that she did not want to do that. The cinder blocks would dry out the soil too much. I even went so far as to make suggestions about raised beds with wood boarders as a better way to go. We all totally failed to stop and reflect on the idea. As a group, we failed to ask for enough information. Example: we did not ask about what would be under the blocks. It turned out that the path is road fabric covered with gravel. Very good drainage and weed control - remember how wet it was last summer?

Next, we failed to take into consideration the value of the block as a heat sink. Soak up heat during the day and release the heat during dark hours. Remember the cool summer? Most important was the cost and availability factors. The lady has the blocks and most likely the dirt or something organic to fill the block with. The only "expense" involved is her time, and every gardener knows that comes under the "love of gardening".Oh, and remember that cinder blocks are only one ingredient away from hypertufa. The third ingredient, peat, can be added to the inside of the block. Don't forget a little TLC.

Dear blond lady, please accept my apology for my short sighted response. Happy gardening.

PS The current issue of Organic Gardening magazine uses dirt filled cinder blocks for raised bed borders and plants the holes with herbs.

Lentils—More Ramblings by Will Hightower

We have a daughter who is a vegetarian, a 100% vegetarian. Planning family meals is very interesting, never gave much thought to how much animal products are in our diet. Went food shopping with Monti, she shops and I push the cart. She was attacking the bulk food bins and threw a bag of lentils into "my" cart.

With my mind not having anything to occupy it, I picked up the bag of lentils. Shock - I realized I knew nothing about lentils. The only information my mind had was "a bland soup served at Octoberfests". You could have given me a container of these little round things and I would not have been able to identify them.

A knowledge void must be filled. First step the seed catalog - nothing. Next catalog, nothing. Wait a minute, lentils look like a seed thingy. Are they a prepared food, like a dog biscuit? Time to go to ground zero for information; Wikipedia. About this point in time, my eyes must have reflected my questing mode. Monti started chirping I could not take up valuable gardening space with something that was so cheap at the store. But, but, I'm just increasing my knowledge.

Continued on next page

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Lentils—Continued

Lens culinaris, lens is Latin for lentil. This is about right, lentils are about the shape of an eyeball lens. A large part of the world use lentils as a base part of their diet. How do they grow them? What special care do the plants need? Must not be hard to grow as humans have been doing it for 13,000 years. Long before engineered compost and drip irrigation.

What I really want to know is how do you harvest the “seeds”? With two little seeds per pod it would be more boring than shucking green peas. Sprouting may be the way to use lentils: an amino acid bonanza. Or enough hot sauce on that German soup might make it eatable. At this point in my knowledge quest, Monti maybe is right about using garden space. Well, perhaps just one 5 gallon bucket for some hands on experience?

Aphids in Green House to No Aphids!

By Don St. John

I grow tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers in my green house. I was overwhelmed with aphids the first two years. Then I read on the internet too much nitrogen could be the problem. Over the next two years I reduced the amount of water soluble 20-20-20 fertilizer by about 1/3 each year. The first year there appeared to be fewer aphids, the second year I only had aphids on a couple of tomato plants by the entrance door.

Last year I stopped using water soluble 20-20-20 and used Fritz Miller’s TNT as my only additional fertilizer and had no aphids. I diluted the TNT by adding 1 part TNT to 4 or 5 parts water and water daily.

Treasurer’s Report, March 2013

Beginning Balance		\$15,837.22
Income:		
Dues	\$430.00	
Newsletter Ads	\$130.00	
T-Shirts	\$12.00	
	\$572.00	
Expenses:		
Printing	(\$21.50)	
T-Shirts	(\$348.00)	
	(\$369.50)	
Ending Balance		\$16,039.72

Submitted by Peggy Morris, Treasurer

iButton Data Loggers in the Garden

Nate Berga, high tunnel owner and operator, plans to use ‘ibuttons’ to keep track of soil and air temperatures for his two high tunnels. To track soil temperatures, he will put an ibutton in the ground inside each high tunnel and one outside. For air temperatures, he will suspend ibuttons inside and out. He’ll use a total of six ibuttons.

He plans to program the ibuttons to take readings at 12am, 6am, 12pm, and 6pm. They will record the time, temperature, and date. Nate will download the data at the end of the season and create graphs to view how temperatures varied by day, week, or month throughout the summer.

Nate, with two other high tunnel owners, ordered their ibuttons online. For the system, you will need a thermachron, fob, wire adapter, and cable.

Read the Fish & Wildlife News

The informational Alaska Fish & Wildlife News is a wealth of short, well written articles on.....guess what, fish and wild critters.

Looking through their archives, I found last spring’s article on “The Brief Busy Life of the Arctic Bumblebee” (*Bombus polaris*) written by Anne Sutton with information from Brend Heinrich, well know author on ravens and retired entomology professor. Read about the interesting spring start up and life of these impressive bumblebees:

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=wildlifeneews.view_article&articles_id=558

~Marion Nelson

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Upcoming CPGC Events & Volunteer Opportunities!

April 9th – SeaAg fertilizer fundraiser. Order now and at the April 9th meeting. 50lb bags and 5 lb jugs. Advance order and pay only. Tim Meyers uses SeaAg as do many local growers. **Delivery May 11th. Don St. John 394-4474**

April 13. Peninsula Ag Forum- “Putting Peninsula Agriculture on the Map!” 9am – 4pm. Location: Challenger Learning Center of Alaska - Kenai. Co-sponsored by the CPGC. \$20 advance, \$25 at the door. 6 local ticket outlets.

April 27-28. Home Show Booth! at the Soldotna Sports Arena. It’s a great opportunity to help hundreds of people with their grower questions, get new members and register people for the May workshops. We will also have two seminars in the multi-purpose room, one on soil block makers and the other on high tunnels. Sign up for a shift or two at the fast and fun Garden Club booth: Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5.
Contact: Tiffany Grimm, 740-0033, beachjunkysusa@gmail.com

May 4, 11, 18, 25 – Workshop Weekends! Lots of workshops every Saturday: Raised beds, compost, greenhouse management, bee keeping, high tunnels, chicks to chickens, photographing flowers & plants, hanging flower basket how to, building a budget greenhouse, getting high production from small areas, plant ID and uses, glass garden totems (gather your 2nd hand glass now and lots of it), backyard plant ID, and more. Workshop Weekends Chair, Liz Dowler 632-2590. Schedule and Registration via email and at the Home Show booth.

May 11th - SeaAg fertilizer delivery day help with 50 lb bags and 5 lb jugs, contact Don St. John 394-4474 Advance orders.

(Kenai Birding Festival May 16-19.)

May 18th, 3pm - Carla Stanley will give a presentation on “Gardening for the Birds” at the Kenai Visitor Center, co-sponsored by CPGC. Gardening tips to draw birds to your location. kenaibirdfest.com

June 4, 7pm - Presentation: “PARADISE ON EARTH: The Beautiful Flowers of Kashmir” from Chris Chadwell, Freelance Lecturer, Himalayan Consultant from the National Rock Garden Society. His adventures in the Himalayas, and elsewhere are quite amazing. Location TBA. ***We need one night’s lodging and host for this speaker.* Contact Marion, 283 4632.

June 8th - Annual Garden Club Plant Sale! Divide your plants and pot up those extra starts/volunteers in the early spring for the sale. Proceeds go toward 4-H awards and club programs. Plant Sale Chairs, Cathy Haas, Judy Platz.

July & August- Summer Garden Tours! Paid up members only – a membership benefit. Advance registration required. These are very popular and fill up fast. Make sure your dues are paid up so you don’t miss this summer highlight. cenpengardenclub.org

More Volunteer Opportunities

-August (date tba) – Area Garden Tour Fundraiser, co sponsored by the Soldotna Chamber. There will be 5-8 area destinations and we need 20-30 volunteer hosts for 3 hour shifts. Greeter *Hosts are essential for this event.* Please help with a shift or two plus see all the destinations on the free advance tour with other volunteers. This is a fun event for destination hosts, volunteers, visitors. Please add your name to our list. contact Chris Cook, 252-7929

-June-Sept. - Summer, weekly garden maintenance at the Aquaculture Bldg., contact Peggy Morris, 262-8374

-Aug17-18 - Niniichik Fair CPGC info table. (Take a shift or two) Contact Chris Cook, 260-6616

-Some months –Videographer back up for programs and workshops. Contact Marion, 283 4632

-Tech backup person to learn the relatively simple club computer & speaker/mike set up. Contact Don St. John, 394-4474

- Guest speaker lodging needed occasionally for out of town speakers. In or near town location best, contact Marion, 283 4632

- Grant writing talent - contact Marion, 283 4632

Your suggestions and involvement are essential and greatly appreciated.

To place ads, submit stories or pictures, contact Marion Nelson, 283 4632 or mmkn@ptialaska.net

Eggstra!!

Take a look at these delightful deviled egg recipes.
<http://my-indiana-home.com/deviled-eggs-come-out-of-their-shell/>



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