

December 2016



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

“Back to the Future”: A 465 Million Year Old Solution for Future Soil Health,

presented by David Ianson, Ph.D.

There are more microbes in a teaspoon of soil than there are people on the earth. Mycorrhizal fungi can have up to 8 miles of fungal hyphae (analogous to roots) in a teaspoon. There can be 38 miles of total fungal hyphae in a teaspoon of soil and 300 miles beneath every footstep you take in an old growth forest.



These organisms are primary decomposers of organic matter, but they do other things, such as provide nitrogen through fixation to help growing plants, detoxify harmful chemicals (toxins), suppress disease organisms, and produce products that might stimulate plant growth. All good things! Increase your garden and high tunnel productivity by understanding and learning how to feed these soil microorganisms that feed your plants.

David Ianson, Ph.D., has a B.S. in Botany, an M.S. in Plant Physiology, and a Ph.D in Plant Pathology and Rhizosphere Biology. Among his many accomplishments, Ianson was the former USDA curator of the National Arctic Plant Genetics Resources Unit in Palmer, AK. He currently serves as a USDA-NRCS Soil Conservationist in Kenai, providing assistance to organic and transitioning farmers.



Bring your soil questions and a friend and join us!

Date: Tues., December 13th Time: 7pm

Location: Cook Inlet Aquaculture Bldg,

40610 Kalifornsky Beach Road, Kenai. Free and open to the public.

Refreshments and sometimes door prizes.

Membership and general club information is available at www.cenpengardenclub.org, on facebook, or contact Renae Wall, cenpengardenclub@gmail.com.

2016-17

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Will's Ramblings

Personal Industrial Production *by Will Hightower*

What does “personal industrial production” have to do with gardening? Bear with me and I’ll try to link them.

Now and then I listen to TED talks on my cell phone. (TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design) This happens when I am “in between,” mainly in between being awake and sleeping. The last time this happened, the speaker was Olivier Scalabre. His topic was, “The next manufacturing revolution.” Oliver says that there is a production revolution about every 60 or so years. The first industrial revolution was highlighted by the invention of the steam engine, around 1850.

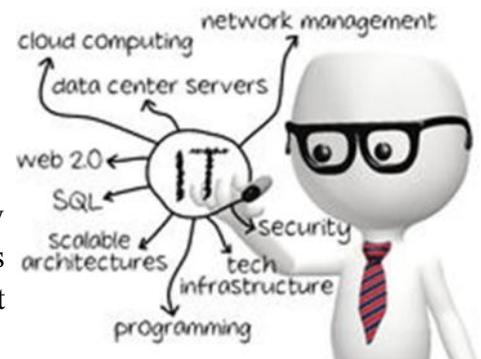


The second revolution was at the start of the 20th century. This revolution brought mass production, large factories, and hundreds of thousands of exactly the same item, thank you Henry Ford.

Industrial revolution number three was the Information revolution. When I was a kid, if someone had told me that the richest man in the world would be the result of keystrokes, bits and bytes, I would have asked what a “bit” is. A bite is what the neighbor dog gave you. And, no one would want to buy little switches that you have to look through a microscope to see. What good are they? Can’t turn machines on, can’t even find them in the dark.

The second revolution resulted in messing up our world. We have smog, weather changes, and on and on. The third revolution informed us what a mess we had made of our living space.

It is said that the fourth industrial revolution will give the displaced, angry masses some individualized life. You may have heard of 3D printing. This revolution will allow you the opportunity to sit in your house and print out a new car with custom wheels. The people in the know have already printed out assault rifles. Here remember the words, “Personal Industrial Production”.



OK, let us tie the industrial revolutions to gardening. For most of the 20th century we watched farms become larger and turn into giant factories, one can of beans fits all customers. The family farm went the way of the do-do bird. This was at the time of the second industrial revolution. In the third industrial revolution, technology has given us genetically modified foods. Need I say more?

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In the fourth or “Personal Industrial” revolution, one can of beans will not fit all. The need for foods that fit individuals will come to the front - foods that do not cause health problems. You can see this in some government programs already. One example is the high tunnel program; the government is encouraging people to grow more of their own foods.

You thought that you were just growing your own food because you thought it was healthier and tasted good. Now you know that you are on the front edge of a revolution. You are a trail blazer!

Now if I could get the idea of a trail blazer over to Monti as she sits at the table making “personalized” socks for me. I think I’ll wait until tomorrow to float that idea.



Gardener’s Latin – ‘Tis the Season!

Holly – *ilex aquifolium* – with pointy leaves

Mistletoe – *viscum album* – white



Frazier fir – *abies fraseri* – named after Frazier

Noble fir – *abies procera* – tall or long

White pine – *pinus strobus* – sharp leaves



Norway spruce – *picea abies* – spruce, fir

Pointsettia – *euphorbia pulcherrima* - beautiful

Amaryllis – *hippeastrum amaryllis* – resembling a horse (???)



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Holiday Greens from your Garden and Refrigerator

By Sharon Gherman, CPGC Newsletter Editor

Whether your holiday decorations are starting to show their age, or you're new to decorating a house for the holidays, or you are looking for a new holiday project, look to your yard, garden and refrigerator before you spend your hard-earned funds at the local craft or department store. Combined with a bit of imagination and creativity, these materials – and many others - can be used to make beautiful and festive holiday decorations.

Fruits and Vegetables:

- Limes, lemons and oranges
- Pomegranates
- Cranberries
- Clementines
- Pink pepperberries, from the shrub, *Schinus molle*
- Bird's eye chilies
- Cinnamon bark
- Hop vines - great for garlands
- Arctic Beauty kiwi vines - for curly wreath bases or great in a Christmas vase
- Pine cones
- Tamarillo -- ruby red fruits, nice for swags
- Whiteheart cherries
- Pattypan squash
- Miniature pumpkins, squash and gourds
- Tropical seedpods
- Walnuts in the shell -- spray gold or silver if you aren't going for a rustic look
- Crabapples -- these will last a few weeks when attached to their stems
- Red chilies -- they stay shiny even as they dry and become more wrinkled
- Cranberries
- Dried mushroom cones
- Dried corn husks

Use these dried:

- Field poppy
- Artemisia
- Delphinium
- Sunflower
- Statice
- Rose
- Lavender
- Bird of Paradise



- Yarrow
- Horsetail
- Love-in-a-mist
- Cockscomb celosia
- Bottlebrush
- Manzanita
- Strawflower



Fresh Flowers:

- Chrysanthemums
- Dendrobium orchid
- Delphinium
- Alstroemeria
- Strawflower
- Hydrangea
- Sunflower
- Yarrow
- Kangaroo paw
- Lavender
- Elderberry or mountain ash berry clusters

Fresh Foliage:

- Viburnum
- Japanese maple cuttings
- Eucalyptus
- Blue spruce
- Dogwood
- Rosemary
- Fishtail palm
- Bells of Ireland
- Moss
- Holly
- Birch twigs (paint them white or silver, or leave natural)

Decoration-Making Tools:

- A good-quality pair of florist's scissors that can cut wires and woody stems
- A knife with a short, sharp-edged blade that is not too flexible
- Floral wire in fine, medium and heavy-gauge varieties
- A trusty glue gun with extra replacement glue sticks
- Wire cutters
- Pruners
- Pliers
- Floral tape
- Mosses: bun, sphagnum, Spanish and reindeer
- Raffia strands
- Sturdy cord
- Thick twine
- Dry foam balls for dried flower spheres
- Wet foam brick, which can be cut into any shape for a wreath of fresh flowers and/or foliage
- Wet foam wreath base, also a good choice when using fresh flowers and foliage
- Ready-made circles or bases formed from natural plant materials, like grapevine
- A wire wreath frame
- A variety of ribbons, including wire-edged, thick, thin, cloth, paper, etc.

***Design Starters***

Wreath or Candle Ring: Use fresh or dried vines or flexible branches – arctic kiwi vine, grape vine, hops vines, spruce branches. Some of these are best shaped fresh (like hops and spruce), but others can be cut after freeze-up and shaped. Add flowers, berries and decorations with a glue gun or light wire. Or start with a straw wreath form from the craft store.



Garland: Use a piece of rope or a rope light and wire vines, flowers or berries along the length. Some vines can be wired end to end without having to use twine. Decorate as above.

Door or Wall Hanging: Use a short piece of rope or the bottom of a broom as the base. Twine grasses to make a handle at the top, then add short branches or vines and decorate. Or cut a birch or spruce branch and use it as the foundation for your holiday decorations.

Plan Now for Future Holidays

Pick two or three of the plants you'd like to use for decorating and add them into your landscape next year. In a few years, you'll have a ready supply of holiday-making supplies from your own garden. Your new garden catalogs should be arriving soon!

Program Summary—November

By Yoshi Yamaoka

Out of your gourd over a lack of squash during winter? Fortunately, this is not necessary. Those who attended the November 8th meeting were able to hear Velma Bittick's presentation of "Growing Winter Squash". Velma and her husband Tom have a great deal of experience and expertise in this area. Topics covered included seed sources, planting, transplanting, pollination and harvesting. The presentation was both interesting and informative. It is not practical to repeat all the details here. However, some of her key points are highlighted below.

- To maximize the harvest with available space, Velma alternates between horizontal (bush type) and vertical (vine type) plants in the row.
- When the new plants have developed two leaves, it's time to transplant.
- Do not waste a lot of time trying to nurture a plant that does not appear to be strong and healthy.
- The root system is very sensitive to any rough handling when being transplanted. Minimize contact with air. Dig a hole large enough to easily accommodate the transplant. Fill the hole with soil then water sufficiently to ensure all roots are covered with soil and not in a pocket of air.
- Squash plants are pollinated as early as possible by picking a male flower and then touching it to female flowers. They also can cross-pollinate.
- When ready for harvest, the squash stem will develop a "corky" appearance.
- Flavor seems to improve if squash is stored for a period after harvest.

Shown below are five of Velma's favorite types of Winter Squash.



Sunshine Squash
MAXIMA



Gold Nugget
MAXIMA



Red Kuri
MAXIMA



Burgess Buttercup
MAXIMA



Burgess Bush
Buttercup MAXIMA

Her selections are based on flavor, sweetness, and high production per plant. You may note that the word Maxima appears in the name of each of these types. This is an indication that it is a type that will grow in the climate associated with our latitude. Through experimentations, you might find one you like better than these five. Most will be from the Maxima family, but some come from both the Moschata and Pepo families.

There are at least two excellent sources of additional information on Winter Squash: territorialseeds.com (click on vegetables, seeds, squash, then Winter Squash.) The other source is: johnnyseeds.com

We are confident that on a chilly night this winter, there will be some smiling faces with a warm serving of a buttery squash or a bowl full of heartwarming soup made from baked rinds

Thank you Velma for this excellent presentation.