

# It's Time To Plan For 2019!



**DECEMBER 2018**

PO Box 767 Kenai, Alaska

[www.cenpengardenclub.org](http://www.cenpengardenclub.org)

## November Program Announcement: Strategies for Gardening in Moose Country

Speaker: Rosa Meehan, retired biologist and Master Gardener

Gardening with moose can be challenging and occasionally frustrating. Moose are prone to eating treasured plants, tearing up shrubs and can generally be a nuisance. In reality, Moose were here first and given how long their legs



are, they can go pretty much where they want to go. So, this talk is about strategies for gardening in Moose country – and bring your ideas to share as well.

Rosa Meehan is a retired biologist with continuing interest in gardening. She grew up in southern California and had an extensive rose garden and several fruit trees. Mov-

ing north, she maintained an interest in flowers and over the years added vegetables to the mix. Becoming a Master Gardener helped her develop a network of like-minded enthusiasts and she is active in her neighborhood garden. Always interested in animal behavior, the intersection of moose and gardens continues to fascinate and entertain her. As a result, she has collected a variety of strategies to protect gardens from moose that she will share with us at the December meeting.

Monthly programs are free and open to the public; bring a friend! Refreshments and sometimes door prizes.

Date: Tues., December 11, 2018

Time: 7pm

Location: Peninsula Grace Brethren Church, 44175 Kalifornsky Beach Road (at mi. 19.5, across the road from Craig Taylor Equipment)

Soldotna, AK 99669

**Membership and general club information is available at [www.cenpengardenclub.org](http://www.cenpengardenclub.org), on Facebook, or contact [Renaewall, cenpengardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:Renaewall@cenpengardenclub@gmail.com)**

## November Program Recap:

### **Bobbie Jackson on How to Put Your Garden to Bed This Fall**

Bobbie Jackson and her husband co-own Jackson Gardens Nursery in Soldotna. They began selling roses and perennials in 1980 and now offer a full range of nursery services and U-Pick opportunities. Bobbie presented at November's general meeting about putting your garden away in the fall to maximize your production next year.

Bobbie has a "waste not, want not" life philosophy, and food is very important to her. She believes we can all grow some of our own food so we can save our money for things that we cannot make for ourselves like gasoline.

She is very organized and is doing activities with or for her gardens every month of the year except December. She keeps several file boxes where she tracks all hers

## December Announcements

### **Now Germinating a Garden Club Youth Program**

Are you a gardener with a knack for teaching? Or a teacher with a desire to see more garden education in local schools? Join club member Heidi Chay and board mem-

## **Editor's Note – Thanks for Your Support!**

**By Sharon Gherman, CPGC Newsletter Editor**



This is my last newsletter as editor, and I didn't want to leave without thanking all of you for your support. You've been very complimentary of our newsletter over the past few years, and I've appreciated all your kind comments, ideas, and contributions. Thank you!

It's been fun for me to explore topics that interest me and then share them with you, my gardening friends. Besides keeping up with what's going on in the garden club through the newsletter, we've enjoyed reading Will Hightower's Rambles and seeing what we've missed with garden tour photos and program summaries.

I've decided to sit out serving on the garden club board for at least a year. You see, my husband Ron and I have been "long-distance commuting" between Funny River, Fairbanks, North Pole and Nenana for the last four years, and Ron is finally home full-time. He's retired for the second time (first from Ohio public schools and this time from

seeds, related information and monthly chores on a day-by-day basis. (She says the only way you can let your husband buy a \$30,000 farm tractor is if he promises to use it to turn the compost piles over with it! )

Weeding and composting are two important activities at her gardens. She said something to the effect that the four most important garden activities are: weed, weed, weed, & weed! Bobbie and her husband Harold are a hard-working team of gardeners who treat the Alaska soil with great respect and try hard to promote food independence with everyone they meet.

At Jackson Gardens Nursery it is even possible to work for food there, just talk to Bobbie. Thank you, Bobbie, for a great presentation!

If you missed the November program, don't forget you can purchase a DVD of the program at the December meeting.

ber Susan Larned in creating a Garden Club youth program. You don't have to be an expert gardener to share gardening fundamentals with kids, and we have a ready-to-use gardening curriculum. We'll schedule an organizational meeting in early January with the hope of launching at least a couple of indoor growing projects by the end of the school year. Interested? Please contact Heidi at [kenaiswcd@gmail.com](mailto:kenaiswcd@gmail.com) or 283-8732 x 5.

Alaska public schools), but because he loves kids and teachers, he's working as the Administrator at Cook Inlet Academy in Soldotna for a few years before "really retiring".

His being home gives me the opportunity to spend more time supporting him at Cook Inlet Academy and also finishing up some projects together that have been languishing for the past four years. I hope to have a yard and garden worthy of a garden tour one of these days, and our little fruit farm, Funny River Fruit, will soon be producing enough to offer fruit for sale in our neighborhood.

We don't have a new newsletter editor yet, and the board will be deciding how to handle disseminating news until we recruit a new editor. I'll be available to orient them once they are on board.

I hope to remain a contributor to the newsletter with an article now and then so I can still explore my interests and share them with you. You'll see me around at meetings and activities, so this isn't really farewell – just "see ya later!"

## Zone 4 Shade Loving Plants – Best Shade Plants For Zone 4 Gardens

It can be hard finding plants that last through the winter in zone 4. It can be just as daunting finding plants that thrive in the shade. If you know where to look, however, your options for zone 4 shade gardening are pretty great. Keep reading to learn more about picking cold hardy plants for Choosing cold hardy plants for a shade garden need not be a daunting task. There are actually plenty of zone 4 shade-loving plants out there:



Hellebore <sup>[1]</sup> – Suited to dappled light to heavy shade.

Hosta <sup>[2]</sup> – Available in hundreds of varieties with varying shade requirements.



Bleeding Heart <sup>[3]</sup> – Beautiful, signature flowers, partial to full shade.

Japanese Painted Fern <sup>[4]</sup> – Full shade or some sun if soil is kept moist.



Ajuga <sup>[5]</sup> – Tolerates full sun to full shade.

Foamflower <sup>[6]</sup> – Groundcover that prefers partial heavy shade.



Astilbe <sup>[7]</sup> – Likes rich, moist soil and full shade.



Siberian Bugloss <sup>[8]</sup> – Likes partial to heavy shade and moist soil.

Ladybell – Tolerates full sun to moderate shade and produces blue bell-shaped flowers.



Oriental Lily – Tolerates full sun to partial shade. Not quite all varieties are hardy to zone 4.

New England Aster <sup>[9]</sup> – Tolerates full sun to light shade.



Azalea <sup>[10]</sup> – Does very well in shade, but only some varieties are hardy to zone 4.

When planting shade plants for zone 4, it's important to pay attention to the plants' needs. Even if a plant is rated for full shade, if it's languishing, try moving it! See what works best with your climate and your level of shade.

## Will's Ramble: Winter Rereading

By Will Hightower

Recently I was asked to be on a local radio program. The topic was “getting your garden ready for winter”. We did “briefly” talk about winterizing the garden, but very soon we were off to other garden subjects.

The experience got me to thinking about gardening tasks I could accomplish during the dark months and catch up on some of the neglected garden projects. Number one on my list is reading garden books and special topics from all those piled up garden magazines. But, where do I start? I love to scrounge and have come up with a Feb/March 2015 Organic Gardening, Special Collector's Issue, featuring short articles from as far back as 1948. I'm not sure which dumpster this magazine came out of, but it is proving interesting. One thing I have learned: I have been cutting my seed potatoes incorrectly for years!

What to read next? I have decided this is the winter of rereading. Among the treasures are books covering many subjects, including aspects of gardening. Some have been skimmed quickly. Others have ragged covers attesting to in-depth reading.

The start of my winter rereading list include the following:

- Jeff Lowenfeld's book on micro organisms. Good soil and how to accomplish this soil quality is the topic that I am rereading. I'll get started just as soon as I determine where I laid the book down last week.
- “Cold-Climate Gardening” by Lewis Hill has a wealth of information. Here I am reviewing espaliers for my apple trees.
- “All New Square Foot Gardening” by Mel Bartholomew should be helpful. I tend to crowd plants, such as celery. Celery planted too close together becomes long and spindly. The stuff won't ever hold peanut butter!
- Old magazines still contain good advice. Remember that some articles were cutting edge technology when they were first printed.

Reading, to me, is like watching British mysteries on PBS. I have to watch episodes as many as four times to understand what they are saying. The same is true of reading, especially anything technical. Remember that rereading is cheaper than buying new. Also, there are many recycle places to check out. Don't forget to recycle your garden publications when you are done with them, I may not have seen them.

Now, where did I leave Jeff?

### **CPGC Board of Directors and Committee Chairpersons**

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# Snow or not, it's time to turn on grow lights for your indoor plant

Author: *Jeff Lowenfels*

Taken from the Internet at *adn.com*



The experienced reader might have noticed that so far this season, I haven't said a word about setting up supplemental lights for your plants. It is true: I have

been holding off due to the weather.

But it is time for readers to fire up their grow light systems and start using them on indoor plants.

Here is the point: We may end up with a permanently warmer climate in the 49th state (and I believe we will, unfortunately), but we will still experience the annual loss of daylight that announces the approach of every winter. Unless I am mistaken, our location with respect to the sun is not changing. So if you are not already, get used to it!

I realize that many are new to Alaska, and to these readers I simply state: You really must have some sort of light system so your plants will not have to struggle through the next eight months. You need to protect your investment in your plants. And as a bonus, you will use these same lights to start your seeds for next summer's garden. This is how things are done here.

To those who, however, have been lining their birdcages with this column for more than a year, don't even try to tell me why you still don't have winter lights under which to grow or maintain your houseplants. What? Really? And

for those who have been loyal readers for years and years of my insisting that you must set up some sort of lighting, what gives?

In truth, I have been pleading, berating and cheering on readers for more than 40 years, sort of a horticultural "Lights! Plants! Action!" call. When I first wrote about lights, I had no idea it would be so difficult for any Alaskan to admit that when it comes to winter, we live in the land of the Noon Moon. (Alert: T-shirt rights belong to my friend Wayne Lewis.)

Unlike some of the other advice I have given over the decades, not one person has ever, ever said adding lights in the winter was a mistake or that they wished they had not listened to me, yet I even failed to convince when the news came out that these lights help our mood too. There is simply no downside. If there is, I want to hear about it!

So get out your lights and fire them up. Those who don't have any, get going. Whatever suits you, from the two-bulb fluorescent fixture to newfangled T-5 lights or some that are even more complex. You can find what



you need in specialty lighting stores, hardware stores, grow shops, some nurseries and all chain box stores' lighting departments. No excuse.

You have to have a timer to turn these lights off as well. In the past I have emphasized a timer's utility so that you don't have to be home to do it. However, there is another reason. Plants that love short days include popular ones grown here (chrysanthemums, kalanchoe, Thanksgiving and Christmas cacti and begonias). They do best with less than 12 hours of light per day. It is necessary, in fact, for them to set buds.

Vegetable plants, on the other hand, especially seedlings, are long-day plants. They do best with 14 to 18 hours of light. If your plans are to grow vegetables indoors (and that includes cannabis), be aware and set the light timer accordingly.

Fortunately, "house" plants, as with all our leafy friends, do well in most any light from eight to 12 hours of light winter or summer. Set your timer so you are not woken up by the lights going on, unless you want to be!

Regardless, I am pleading on behalf of all of your indoor plants: Set up the supplemental lights for the winter. It may not seem like winter temperature-wise outside, but the diminution of light is telling them it is time for you to act.

## **Alaska Garden Calendar**

**Wreath-making:** Alaska Botanical Garden. It is fun to visit in all seasons.

**Houseplants:** Start checking for spider mites at the base of branches. You will see their fine webbing.

**Watering:** As the heat comes on, the water needs of plants change. Don't let yours dry out.

### **About this Author: Jeff Lowenfels**

Jeff Lowenfels' new book, "Teaming With Fungi: The Organic Grower's Guide to Mycorrhizae" is now available at stores and online. He can be reached at [jefflowenfels@gmail.com](mailto:jefflowenfels@gmail.com) or via his website, [www.jefflowenfels.com](http://www.jefflowenfels.com).

