

February 2013

Central Peninsula Garden Club



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

February 12th, *Garden Planning 101*

How to Get Started and Keep it Going and Growing!

Board Members

- 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*
- Chris Cook - *Hospitality chair*
- Cathy Haas - *Plant sale co-chair, historian chair*
- 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 committee, special events*

A stellar panel of local gardeners will share their planning practices and probably have their notebooks with them, showing how they keep track of crop rotation and a lot more. If you're new to any aspect of gardening, this program is for you. If you're experienced, this is also for you to see how other experienced gardeners plan and plant. Timing is everything and is sure is with gardening.

Panel members are:

1. Carolyn C. Chapman, long time local, in-town gardener, Farmer's Market organizer and seller with a colorful gardening history at her Knight Drive location. Carolyn has taught gardening methods to children and many others (and Jay Parker how to make sauerkraut). She keeps her decades-old garden planning book handy all year long.
2. Amy Dimmick is the owner, grower, manager of Wintergreens Organic Gardens & Products in Kasilof. Amy is a frequent speaker about her various gardening methods as well as lots of how-to information. Amy has many fans of her organic methods and apprentice type gardening programs. She sells her plants annually from her email plant catalog, wintergreens@gmail.com.
3. Judy Fischer of "Fischers' Fresh Farm Produce" is another organic grower in the Kasilof area, who grows and sells a variety of vegetables as well as hanging flower baskets. Judy will share her planning methods as well as compost information and plant variety choices. She recently spoke at the joint Chamber program that addressed concerns of local produce growers and buyers since she's been selling produce to local restaurants for some time.
4. Don Adams, is a Farmer's Market seller and high tunnel grower. Don grows an impressive and beautiful variety of vegetables that he sells at local markets. He is a record keeper and planner and like all the high tunnel growers, has learned a lot since his first "tunnel season." Also like all the high tunnel growers I've seen, he has one or more outside gardens that he plans and plants with several varieties of potatoes and other vegetables.

Garden club programs are open to the public. Refreshments served, and sometimes door prizes.

Time: 7pm. Please car pool and park efficiently

Location: Cook Inlet Aquaculture Building on K-Beach Road between KSRM and the Bridge Access Road intersection.

Membership information is available at www.cenpengardenclub.org. (Have you paid your 2013 dues?)

January 8th Program—Dr Stephen Brown with Sarah Donchi of Kenai Feed—Chicken U!



Stephen Brown charmed the large Chicken U! audience with his information-filled, good humored presentation on raising chickens, chicken tractors, chicken breeds and how some communities support backyard chickens.

Sarah Donchi of Kenai Feed brought one of her Chantecler chickens and one D'ucle breed chicken for show-and-tell and added some local information about chicken raising.

Stephen spoke of the many advantages of the Chantecler chickens for egg production or as meat birds. Fresh is good and the difference between grocery store eggs and fresh, local eggs is stunning in taste and looks and, of course, nutritional value. The Chantecler chicken breed is especially good for Alaska because of their cold tolerance and as an excellent all purpose bird.

He had practical tips for housing chickens all seasons of the year and showed heat and light examples of his own chicken keeping structure. Stephen also spreads wood chips on the floor to mix with the chicken manure which made interior maintenance cleaner and easier as it all goes into his compost pile.

Stephen is off to Indonesia in March to teach small flock chicken farming. He said, "Hopefully the "Chicken University" program that I developed in Alaska will have far-reaching impact on poor Indonesians."

Above left—Dr Stephen Brown.



Left- Sarah Donchi of Kenai Feed, Sarah's D'ucle breed chicken, Emily Grimm petting the chicken, and club president, Marion Nelson. Sarah also brought one of her Buff Chantecler breed chickens to the program.

Asexual Reproduction and an Introduction to Mitosis From Cloe, Holly, & Brighton in Mrs. Werner's 6th grade class, Tustumena Elementary

Mitosis is the reproduction of asexual cells, it happens in both animal and plant cells. Without it, plants and animals would have no way to repair themselves after injury, replace dead cells or to grow. It isn't something that an organism needs to think about to do, it happens naturally. The way it occurs is the chromosomes inside the nucleus of a cell uncoil themselves into chromatin, almost representing noodles. They do this so that they can replicate themselves. After replication, they recoil into their original form and are connected with a centromere. The next step of this process is the centrioles move to opposite ends of the cells and spindle fibers begin to form. Meanwhile, the chromosomes begin to line up on the 'equator' of the cell and spindle fibers then attach themselves to the centromeres connecting the chromosomes and slowly pull back each chromosome to the centriole on each side of the cell. After this has occurred, the cell membrane in animal cells begins to furrow and eventually 2 separate cells with identical genetic information are created. Mitosis is a fascinating example of asexual reproduction and it is going on inside you at this very minute.

Our hydroponics project continues to grow. We have pepper plants that Mrs. Werner grew in dirt first and then we transplanted into the hydroponics, which are beautiful. They are big and bushy and green but we are having problems with them. They were covered with white blossoms but then they fell off. Does anyone know what is wrong? Are there some plants that don't do well hydroponically? We also planted lots of seeds directly into the hydroponics but they are getting tall and skinny. We might start the seeds in dirt next time and then transplant them.

Along with mitosis, we have been learning about types of asexual reproduction. Many plants reproduce using asexual methods. Two types of asexual reproduction are fragmentation and budding.

Fragmentation Fragmentation is a form of asexual reproduction where one object breaks itself into parts that regenerate into new, complete organisms. This form of asexual reproduction usually results in the original organism breaking up into between separate pieces. This is a very common type of reproduction in plants and can happen naturally or artificially with human help.

Budding Budding is another way to reproduce asexually, and this way includes an offspring grows from the body of its parent. Potatoes are a good example of budding.

<p>KENAI FEED & SUPPLY  www.kenafeed.com MILE 14.5 K-Beach Rd. 907-283-1929</p>	<p>HIGH TUNNELS ORGANIC FERTILIZER PEAT • SEEDS FENCING LIVESTOCK & PET FEED/SUPPLIES PRODUCE</p>	
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Winter Seed Sowing Workshop a Success



If you missed Saturday, January 26th's Winter Seed Sowing Workshop presented by Patrick Ryan of the Alaska Botanical Garden, you missed a very informative event. Patrick informed us of why stratification is very important for certain seeds and also different ways to scarify seeds to speed up germination of certain hard shelled seeds. You missed an even better "Hands-On" choosing of seeds and containers. Everyone shared with others who didn't have enough of the appropriate types of seeds or containers. Patrick brought lots of seeds to share, and he EVEN brought scented geranium cuttings for us to plant. No one went home empty handed.

Everyone had a great time, and now we have containers to bury in the snow to get an early jump on spring seed planting/transplanting of our starts. Plus, it helped break up the winter and allowed us to get our hands in some soil/dirt.

Left: Patrick Ryan

~CPGC member Donna Endresen



Left: Workshop presenter, Patrick Ryan discusses with Gemma Amoreli and Heidi Swan, what seeds to plant next in their various containers

Right: PGC member Jeanette Pedginski planted containers to go in the snow. A great way to repurpose clear plastic salad bar or fruit containers and milk or juice jugs.



Left: CPGC member, Jacquie Steckel cutting drainage slits in a recycled container for winter seed sowing. Note her prized gardening apron.

Right: Ron & Georgene Parkhill and CPGC board member Don Thompson plant seeds and discuss the appropriate seeds for winter seed sowing and where to place the planted containers in the snow.



Left: Julie Bowman (in black) and CPGC board member, Velma Bittick. Note the recycled milk jugs. Jugs had drainage holes drilled into the bottoms, then cut around the center, leaving a uncut hinge by the handle. Soil, seeds and plant markers were placed in the jugs, then were taped shut (no cap) for placement in and under a snow blanket 'til spring.

Left: Donna Endreson and CPGC Tech & SeaAg Chair, Don St. John evaluating seed packet information for winter seed sowing viability.



More Information About Fall/Winter Seed Sowing

Visit the CPGC website for Dr. Ryan's presentation handouts including presentation notes as well as a list of great plant choices for fall/winter sowing.

http://www.cenpengardenclub.org/winter_seed_sowing.htm

Growing Alaska Native Plants from Seed

Here is a short list of some the more desirable Alaskan wild-flowers that you may want to propagate for your garden. For a more detailed list see "Growing Alaska Natives-The propagation of Alaska's Native Plants" by Richard L. Baldwin 1997.

Web Sites:

ALASKA PLANT MATERIALS CENTER
www.plants.alaska.gov

ALASKA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
http://www.aknps.org.

Chiming Bells - *Mertensia paniculata* (60 day moist stratification)
Columbine - *Aquilegia formosa* (easy from seed)
Delphinium glaucum - (moist stratification and exposure to light)
Forget-Me-Not - *Myosotis alpestris* (easy from seed)
Geranium - *Geranium erianthum*, Cranesbill (scarify seed and stratify)
Harebell - *Campanula rotundifolia* (easy form seed, do not cover)
Iris setosa—(slow from seed, keep moist)
Lousewort - *Pedicularis langsдорфii* (easy from seed, do not cover)
Pasqueflower - *Pulsatilla patens* (worth a try with plenty of seeds)
Shooting Star - *Dodecatheon macrocarpum* (60 day moist stratification)
Siberian Aster - *Aster sibiricus* (do not cover)
Yellow Money Flower - *Mimulus guttatus* (dust-like seeds, do not cover)

Will Hightower's Rhubarb Ramblings by Will Hightower

Unlike most of you, I am a person who likes to wake up slowly while laying a-bed. It is great when I can take half an hour and run through my mind all of the great things that I will have completed by day's end. The seed catalogs are here and the temperature is staying above zero at night: surely spring is here. This morning I was planning to finish fabricating the barrel stands for the greenhouse drip irrigation system.

Then my smart phone (way smarter than me) tells me that I have Email. The Email tells me that I've doubled-booked trips for this coming weekend (I can only drive one bus at a time) and that one of the main buses is frozen in the ice, just because it is parked in a former lake. Things went downhill from there. I got breakfast at 12:30, because Monti got tired of getting her head bit off.

It is now 9:30 in the evening and I decided that I need to ramble. Two glasses of wine have also helped loosen up the tongue.

For a couple months I've wanted to tell you about our last growing season's fall rhubarb crop. Note: rhubarb is not a fall crop. Last spring, while drooling over the seed catalogs, I ordered some asparagus sets. When the sets came, the instructions said to dig out the rows deeply, fill the trench part way full with rich compost, place the sets with roots spread and finish filling the trench with compost. Or something like that. Actually, the asparagus appeared to do OK with this setup.

The new asparagus bed is in a large terrace and the bed measures about 10 ft by 10 ft. I hauled away tractor buckets of old dirt. This area is right beside the rhubarb patch.

The rhubarb patch has been in its location for years and has received varying degrees of care or neglect depending on your view. The patch delivered the family's annual demand for rhubarb but not much more.

The rhubarb plants next to the asparagus patch were sad examples. Last August, when rhubarb crisp was over for the year, these rhubarb plants came to life with big green leaves and wonderful, juicy stalks! Monti and Gail were processing rhubarb right up to freeze up.

The rhubarb roots snuck over and tapped into the asparagus compost. I'm waiting for spring to arrive to see which of two things are the next year's results: One, the rhubarb plants used up their stored food reserves and there won't be a sign of them come spring. Or, two, the plants will have built such a strong root that I'll have to use a machete to harvest the stalks.

I sure wish that spring would get here, that's something to dream about tomorrow morning.

**Refreshing Libations
for Your Next
Garden Party!**



Country Liquor
140 S. Willow St.
Downtown Kenai
283-7651

Members Plan Their Gardens & Prepare for Spring



Garden Planning & Encouragement—by *Dennis Spindler*

My garden planning is kind of loosely based. Mostly, during my daily garden walkabouts, I make mental notes of what can be done better or different next year. What actually gets done depends on time & money. I do keep written records on my potato and garlic plots, noting planting and harvest dates, relative size and yield of the crop. My garden space for veggies has shrunk over the years as I plant and try out more flowers. In my main veggie area, one half is planted in potatoes and one half in cole crops (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kohlrabi). The two halves are rotated each year to prevent potato scab and root maggots in the cole crops. I also have two garlic plots that are rotated annually, this leaves an experimental plot for something each year. My lettuce and carrots are planted in dedicated plots just outside the kitchen door. The closer it is, the more it gets eaten.

One sunny day last summer, I walked around with a camera and a notebook. I took pictures of lovely flowers, shrubs, trees and veggies. I also made notes of where to move around some flowers and shrubs in the springtime and measured flowers for wire cages, to keep them from flopping. In the springtime, I have the urge to fill in all of the bare spots in the yard and flower garden, but throughout the summer those small and dormant plants explode in size and grandeur.

I consider gardening to be one big experiment, to see what will or won't grow and do well in your own yard and garden environment. I don't ever have full sun or a southern exposure, which limits me from successfully growing some flowers and veggies. However, this does not prevent me from growing other hardy, lush, beautiful and delicious plants. Take some time to look through garden catalogs, but be aware that many of the items will NOT thrive in Alaska. Visit local plant sellers to browse their offerings and see what is available, but do NOT buy sickly looking plants. High quality plants are available. If you have a chance visit greenhouses in Anchorage, there a lot of different plants available, especially in early spring. I am always amazed at the different plants that actually thrive in Alaska. I started gardening in Alaska in 1979, back then I didn't think or know that you could grow beautiful flowers here. I remember the first time I saw delphiniums in blossom, while at a garage sale in Kenai, I wanted some of them.

- Don't be afraid to try new plants, it makes dreaming and planning the next garden season even more exciting.
- Keep some written records and take pictures, we can't remember everything.
- If at all possible, take a yard and garden walkabout at least once a day. Why do so much work if you don't take the time to enjoy the beauty of plants that God has given us? This a great time to unwind, take mental notes and bend down to pull some pesky weeds that grow so faithfully.

Our New Plans—by *Kirsti & Bjorn Kviteng (ages 16 & 11)*

We are excited to begin planning our very first flower garden. Using all the helpful information we learned at the 2012 CPGC workshops and the two large compost piles that were started in the spring of 2011, we'll fill our pots and new beds with Tulips, Iris, Violets, Daisies, Daffodils, and Columbines.

We plan on making a pretty photo album and keeping notes of all our work. And Mom said she would buy us a Flower Dictionary!!

Preparation for Spring—by *Bruce King*

After one year of vegetable gardening in Alaska, we learned a lot including:

- It's not the same as gardening in the Lower 48. Obvious, but it is hard to let go of past successful practices that don't work here
 - Planning and early starts are essential. Follow the Loenfels list for when to plant, but listen to veteran local gardeners for their secrets to getting started earlier.
 - Leave some room for experiments. Serendipitous discovery is a constant theme of Alaskan gardeners. This year one of our surprises was bringing jalapeno and banana peppers inside from the greenhouse in October and having them grow and produce peppers until Christmas.
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As seen in the December 2012 edition of “Currents” from the Kenai Watershed Forum

What Happens to All the Leaves?

By Dr. David Wartinbee, Kenai Peninsula College—Professor of Biology, KWF Board of Directors

There are estimates that large trees can produce more than 200,000 leaves each year. As Fall approaches, valuable nutrients are extracted from the leaf and drawn into the trunk and roots. During that removal of nutrients, changes in biochemistry within the leaf, and changes in temperatures, we get the beautiful “fall colors”. Then the millions of leaves are dropped and they cover the ground some distance from the parent trees.

The leaves pile-up along the ground and many get blown into our rivers and streams. The smaller streams receive a larger proportion of leaves than larger rivers since smaller streams may be completely shaded by overhanging limbs & trees. Leaves falling into moving waters get swept into piles above rocks, roots, or in-stream obstructions. Other leaves settle-out into deeper, slow-moving pools.

Initially these leaves contain mostly cellulose and are of little nutritional value for most organisms. (While cellulose is a polymer of glucose, only a few bacteria or fungi can break down cellulose.) However, after soaking in the stream for only a few days, the leaves become covered by aquatic fungi and bacteria that are able to break-down cellulose. As the fungi & bacteria layer grows, the overall nutritive value of the leaves increases significantly. Now the leaves become a desired food source for a variety of in-stream insects. The fungi and bacteria are the source of the nutritive value...and were once described by Stream Ecologist Ken Cummins as the “peanut butter on a tasteless cracker”.

The guild of aquatic insects that work on those leaves are called “shredders”. Basically, they feed on the leaves and convert the leaf into a skeleton of its former self. The fine particles that were chewed from the leaves provide nutrition for the growing insects. A couple of the common shredders in our area are the large, dark stoneflies called *Pteronarcella*. We don’t often see them unless we dig into a pack of leaves and specifically look for them. Another group of shredders are called crane-flies. As fat, worm-like larvae, they borrow through the leaves and chop them into fine particles. (Craneflies are often seen as adults during the summer since they look like giant mosquitoes buzzing around. Note that they don’t feed as adults.)

The particles that the shredders create from leaves will pass through their gut mostly intact. Insect guts are able to extract only about 5% of the leaf particles that passes through. So, there are lots of small particles released into the water by these shredders. The fine leaf fragments are then a food source for another guild of aquatic insects called collectors. Collectors trap the fine particles drifting with nets, leg hairs, or special antennal fans. They then consume the particles and pass them through their gut for a second round of nutrient extraction. Some of the common insects that use these fine leaf particles are the mayflies, many chironomids, many caddis-flies, and the black flies.

After the particles have passed through a number of guts, they are then so small that it only takes bacterial action to completely transform the leaf particles. Eventually all the sugars and nutrients that were in the leaf have been transformed into a water soluble or animal form. The leaves no longer exist.

This spring when the ice melts from our rivers and streams, there will be only a few fall leaves left from September. They will be gone. Where have they gone? During the coldest time of the year, the aquatic insect community, the collectors and the shredders, has been busy feeding on the leaves that arrived a few months earlier. These stream insects that fed on leaf particles all winter will become the food for young salmon fry as they emerge from stream gravels in the spring. Leaves truly provide some of the fuel needed for a healthy river system. Without one piece of the puzzle, the aquatic insects or the leaves, the system ceases to function as a healthy river system.



Leaves gather in the water on the Kenai River shoreline. Through bacteria and fungus, leaves provide critical, usable nutrients for river systems, including the aquatic insects that are a food source for fish..

Photo taken by Dr. David Wartinbee.



Heads Up! 2013 Programs & Volunteer Opportunities

March 12th – **Seed Starting Stations, with seeds and lots of how-to** information. There will be an experienced seed starter at each station demonstrating that step in the process.

(Date TBA) - **Tomato grafting** workshop with Joseph Belcastro from Homer. Joseph led this same workshop last May and while it was very well received by participants, it was a bit too late for tomatoes to develop by the end of the 2012 season. Holding it earlier in the spring will help get the grafted plants to produce worthy tomatoes. It's a great way to get hearty, good flavored tomatoes by harvesting the seeds from your very own grafted plant tomatoes.

April 9th – **Garden Goof Ups! Everything I Learned By Mistake!** Wow, this will be interesting. What was *your* biggest gardening goof up and what did you learn from it?

May 14th - Maybe a program, maybe not, depending on guest speaker dates.

May 4, 11, 18, 25 – **Workshop Weekends!** Lots of workshops every Saturday in May. There may be a couple of special guest speakers, arrangements pending. Some of the Workshops: raised beds, compost, piglets to pigs, greenhouse management, bee keeping, apple tree grafting with Mike O'Brien (one of these spring months), high tunnels, commercial peony farming, chicks to chickens, photographing flowers & plants, hanging flower basket how to, building a budget greenhouse, glass garden totems (gather your 2nd hand glass now and lots of it), and more.

June 8th - **Annual Garden Club Plant Sale!** Divide your plants and pot volunteers in the early spring for the sale. Proceeds go toward 4-H awards and club programs.

July & August- **Summer Garden Tours.** Paid up members only – a membership benefit. Advance registration required.

August (date) – **Area Garden Tour Fundraiser**, co sponsored by the Soldotna Chamber. 5-8 area destinations. 20-30 volunteer hosts for 2-3 hour shifts are essential for this event. Please help with a shift or two and 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.

Needed - More membership help on committees in 2013.

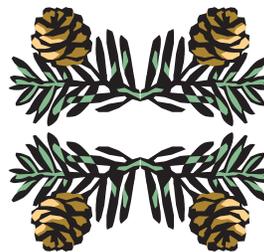
These are various short term involvements, for important CPGC events. Here are some volunteer opportunities:

- Newsletter articles & pictures**—contact Marion, 283-4632
- 20-30 garden tour hosts** (2-3 hour shifts) early August community tour co-sponsor Soldotna Chamber—contact Chris Cook, 252-7929
- Home Show booth, April 27-28** (set up 11am-9pm on the 26th) contact Renae Wall, 260-6616
- SeaAg** fertilizer delivery help with bags, jugs, May 11th, contact Don St. John 394-4474
- Summer**, weekly garden maintenance at the Aquaculture Bldg., contact Peggy Morris, 262-8374
- Ninilchik Fair** Aug 17-18, Contact Renae Wall, 260-6616
- HEA Energy Fair** booth, Nov. 2 (take a shift or two), 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-town location best, contact Marion, 283 4632
- Grant writing experience** -contact Marion Nelson, 283 4632 .

These are great opportunities to meet other club members, learn more about gardening and help the club. Your suggestions and involvement are essential and greatly appreciated.

Treasurer's Report, January 2013

Beginning Balance		\$15,382.69
Income:		
Dues	\$860.00	
T-shirts	\$126.00	
Seed Sowing Workshop	\$278.00	
	\$1264.00	
Expenses:		
Gift Cards	(\$25.00)	
Airfare	(\$378.00)	
Storage Unit	(\$330.00)	
Misc	(\$4.65)	
Seed Sowing Workshop	(\$400.00)	
	(\$1,137.65)	
Ending Balance		\$15,509.04
Submitted by Peggy Morris, Treasurer		



To place ads, submit stories or pictures, contact Marion Nelson, 283 4632 or mmkn@ptialaska.net
 Newsletter layout/production—Pam Voeller

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