

January 2012

Central Peninsula Garden Club

Central Peninsula GARDEN CLUB



Special points of interest:

- It's time to renew your membership! \$20 for Individual, \$30 for Family.
- Membership forms are always available at www.cenpengardenclub.org/membership2011.pdf

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

“Chicken U” - January 8th Program Presented by Dr. Stephen Brown

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*

Dr. Stephen Brown is an Associate Professor and District Agricultural Agent for the Cooperative Extension Service, UAF, Palmer. Brown teaches the Master Gardener classes in the Palmer area and is a frequent garden conference speaker and MC because of his expertise and well known sense of humor.

Dr. Brown's power point will show many chicken tractors both practical and fanciful, along with best practices for keeping chickens for egg or meat production. Sarah Donchi, owner of Kenai Feed, will assist with the presentation and bring some of her chanticleer chickens to the meeting. Both Brown and Donchi favor chanticleers for their cold hardiness and other physical characteristics. Donchi has presented “Chicks to Chickens” workshops during the club's Workshop Weekends, and raises numerous farm animals including a variety of chickens.



Dr. Brown has climbed Denali many times as well as higher peaks in other parts of the world. Just prior to this January meeting, he will be returning from climbing the tallest mountain in the Caribbean (Pico Duarte). He has also run marathons in almost all, if not every, state in the USA and elsewhere. This spring he will be heading to Indonesia to teach sustainable small flock chicken rearing in rural villages.

Immediately prior to the program, there will be a very brief annual meeting with board of director elections and 2013 budget approval.

Membership information, and general club information is available at www.cenpengardenclub.org or contact Marion Nelson, 283 4632 or mmkn@ptialaska.net

Time: 7pm

Location: Aquaculture Building on K-Beach Road, located between KSRM and Bridge Access intersection.

Open to the Public. Refreshments and sometimes door prizes.

December Program— Rock Garden Construction & Alpine Plants

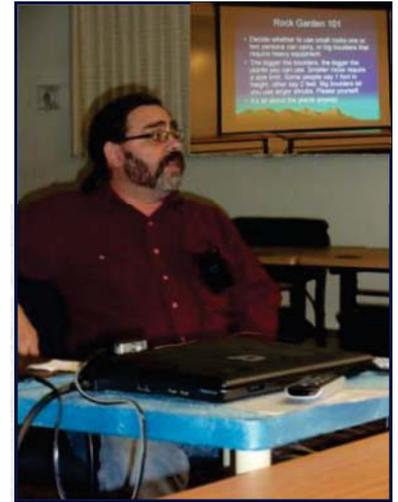
Presented by Jaime (Hi May) Rodriguez

Jaime's program had a lot of practical advice as to the size and number of rocks and boulders to acquire for rock garden construction. As he noted, think of an ice berg in that at least half or more of the first layer of rocks will be buried in the dirt and your construction goes up from there. The bigger the rocks, the bigger the plants you can accommodate.

He showed a variety of very interesting construction methods and how they affect water getting to the plant roots as well as the long term health of a rock garden planting. The handout at the meeting did not contain all of the slide show information but that is, or will be, available soon via email by contacting Marion, mmkn@ptialaska.net. (The list of alpine plants is available on the CPGC web site, www.cenpengardenclub.org)

Jaime is the owner of Alpine Garden Nursery in Palmer, that specializes in hardy alpine plants. He can be reached at [<jrtinker@mtaonline.net>](mailto:jrtinker@mtaonline.net)

All of the slide show information is available and can be emailed. Contact Marion. The power point program is now posted on our web site -www.cenpengardenclub.org. Thank you, Jaime, for sharing.



CPGC End of Year/New Year Business

New Years Greetings CPGC Members,

Notice of the (very brief) CPGC Annual meeting, immediately prior to the program on January 8th, 2013. Election of board members and 2013 budget approval are the agenda items as well as a quick look back at 2012 events and forward to the coming year's plans.

As per our CPGC bylaws, we are mandated to hold an annual meeting at which time club members vote for board members, and the 2013 budget. There is also a brief review of the past year and goals for the new year.

Board members standing for reelection are:

- ~Kay Gardner (current secretary)
- ~Peggy Morris (current treasurer)
- ~Chris Cook (current hospitality chair)
- ~Liz LeDuc (current vice president & web site chair)

All for 3-year terms.

~Velma Bittick (current hospitality/events committees) is up for election to the seat she was appointed to in 2012 due to a vacancy. Velma is running for the remaining 2 years of a 3-year term.

Nominations may also be made from the floor by CPGC members.

Be sure to get your dues in for 2013 to stay on the email list. Membership forms available on our website, [<http://www.cenpengardenclub.org>](http://www.cenpengardenclub.org) on the Membership page. Just mail it in with a check to PO Box 767, Kenai 99611 or bring to the next meeting. \$20 annual individual, \$30 annual for families/couples. We purge the list of lapsed dues during the year, so stay current. The more the merrier!

Current Board Members:

Marion Nelson, President, Programs, Newsletter
Liz Leduc, Vice President, Web Site
Kay Gardner, Secretary, Hospitality, Events
Peggy Morris, Treasurer, Events
Cathy Haas, Historian, Plant Sale CoChair
Chris Cook, Hospitality, Events
Don St. John, Tech, SeaAg, Events
Renae Wall, Publicity, Events
Don Thompson, Workshops, Events
Lee Bowman, Events, Newsletter, Workshops
Velma Bittick, Events, Newsletter, Workshops

The BOD passed the 2013 CPGC budget for the membership to approve and is included in this newsletter. We plan very conservatively for anticipated expenses as well as estimated income and are carrying over a healthy reserve.

Needed - More membership help on committees in 2013. These are short term involvements, one, two or three times during the year. Here are some volunteer opportunities: A backup person to learn the relatively simple club computer and speaker/mike set up with Tech Chair- Don St. John, 20 garden tour hosts (2-3 hour shifts) for our August community tour we co-sponsor with the Soldotna Chamber, booth staffing for the Home Show, Ninilchik Fair & HEA Energy Fair (take a shift or two), SeaAg fertilizer delivery day help, summer garden maintenance at the Aquaculture Bldg.

These are great opportunities to meet other club members, learn more about gardening and help the club.

Your suggestions and involvement are greatly appreciated.

Marion Nelson

Tom & Velma's Chickens



Left: Scruff is a Bantam Cochinchina cross as a juvenile and adult, who grew to be the same size as the barred rock hens. He was truly an ugly duckling when small.



Right: Spring 2012 -The flock has Americana, Buff Orpington, and Barred Rock hens and Americana, Austolorp, and Rhode Island Reds.



Left: The winter run is framed and has concrete wire reinforcing sections, with 1" x 48" chicken wire around the bottom. Two inch chicken wire covers the top part of the walls. The roof is also concrete wire reinforcing sections, covered with tarps and sheets of plywood. Over this run is a portable garage frame covered with plastic--double roof to insure they stay DRY,DRY,DRY! It is open to the south so the chickens get natural light when they are outside. I don't let them out unless its 10 degrees or warmer and they are always ready to go. With tarps around three walls they are protected from the wind and the tarp on the floor is secured around the edges to keep them from digging out and to keep the bedding, grit, scratch grains and manure confined for easier handling in the spring.



The coop is insulated and I have one 60 watt bulb on for 14 hrs plus one small red bulb on 24/7. I use a deep litter bedding method and their water is heated to about 50-55 degrees. I feed extra heavy before they roost so their crops are full at night, and they make a lot of body heat. I keep good air circulation with drafts at an absolute minimum. At -25 outside, it was 23 above in the coop.

The 24 hens are laying an average of 18 eggs a day which is pretty good considering the miserable cold weather we have had this winter. Aren't these beautiful?



Speaking of Chickens, check this out from the NY Times: In Hopes of Healthier Chickens, Farms Turn to Oregano
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/26/science/chicken-farms-try-oregano-as-antibiotic-substitute.html?hpw&_r=0

Fowl Nightlife

In another lifetime, before moving to Alaska, we had poultry. The chickens acted appropriately and came home to roost so that we could lock them up at night. The ducks were another story.

They found a spot to their liking way back under a trailer. There was no way we could chase them out. The main draw of that location was its proximity to the "guard light." That was the Midwestern term for the on-at-dusk and off-at-dawn yard light which, much to the duck's delight, attracted insects. The favorite winged delicacy was "Junebugs." They are a large, brown, hard shelled beetle, aerodynamically not well suited for flying.

We spent untold amounts of time watching and laughing as the ducks flapped their wings and darted around chasing those erratic brown missiles. The next morning we again laughed at the ducks as they staggered around groggy from the nightlong hunt and their painfully bulging crops.

~Monti Hightower



<p>KENAI FEED & SUPPLY www.kenafeed.com MILE 14.5 K-Beach Rd. 907-283-1929</p>	<p>HIGH TUNNELS ORGANIC FERTILIZER JOHNNY'S SEEDS SEED POTATOES FENCING LIVE CHICKS & PIGS LIVESTOCK & PET FEED/SUPPLIES</p>	
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“Eating Local” Topic at Joint Chamber Luncheon

All are invited to attend the January 16, 2013 joint luncheon meeting of the Kenai and Soldotna Chambers of Commerce at the Kenai Visitors Center, when "eating local" will be the theme of the day.

This luncheon offers the opportunity to learn about *Alaska Grown Restaurant Rewards*, a program which offers financial incentives (\$\$) to restaurants that purchase local food products and hear from both restaurant and producers about the value and benefits, as well as the potential barriers in local food sourcing.

On hand will be Alaska Division of Agriculture Development Specialist, Amy Pettit as well as, local suppliers and restaurateurs who have formed successful local food buying-selling partnerships. Suppliers may include fish, meat, produce, and others.

This event is open to the public and all are invited to visit informally after the luncheon to explore possibilities for future local food expansion in the central peninsula. Cost is \$15/person which includes a delicious lunch and doors open at 11:45 am.

For more information and reserve your lunch spot, please contact either Kenai Chamber (907) 283-7989 or Soldotna Chamber (907) 262-9814.

Will Hightower's Chicken Ramblings

At Tuesday's meeting (December 11th), Marion asked me to ramble about chickens. My reaction was I didn't have a single thought on chickens. Not one single, caring, thought about chickens. Did you ever have a dream about chickens? Tuesday night I dreamed about chickens, talk about weird.

It has been years since Monti and I have had chickens. But I have been reading about and thinking about trying them again. My thinking has centered around a chicken "tractor".

There is no one point that can make the case for keeping chickens, but a group of points may give wings to keeping chickens. (You may suspect several intended puns in this piece).

1. Cost may be a deal breaker. Shelter, livestock purchase, feed and time all need to be considered in the start-up costs.
 2. Eggs are always a positive selling point: fresh, free range, no chemical eggs. Figure out how many beautiful eggs you use daily. That is the starting number for hens needed - one egg per hen per day. That is top production, so add at least 40% more hens. Hens do not work everyday. You most likely will start by raising chicks, so double the number because half the chicks will be roosters. (It is extremely difficult to tell the difference between girls and boys unless you are another chicken. Hatcheries are much more accurate than they used to be). This brings us to point 3.
 3. Meat is what happens to the roosters. One lucky rooster will get to live for happy hens producing eggs. This reminds me of Sherman, a big, dumb, slow rooster we had in Nebraska. Sherman was a master of the sneak attack on hens.
- If you are thinking "cost effective" by raising your own meat, you have never raised chickens. And, you have never butchered chickens. It is easy to get chickens dead. After that comes the time consuming cleaning. When all costs and time are figured, the package of chicken from the store is a real buy.
4. Chicken fertilizer is the top of the compost heap. It is so "hot" that it needs to be spread thin on the garden. A chicken is a compost machine. Hardly anything, including seeds, gets through a chickens' system intact. I know about the alleged health benefits of home raised chicken, but your free range chickens can and do eat some strange things!
 5. Weeding is a chicken's highest skill. Look at a chicken yard, can you find a weed?
 6. The "chicken tractor," to me, is the wave of tomorrow for keeping small chicken flocks. A two story model is the best for flock management. In the two story tractor the flock is protected from weather and vermin (from the air or on the ground). The top story is for nest boxes, feed and water. Ground floor is the "chicken yard." Hinged stairs connect the two floors. When it is time to move to new ground, raise the stairs to lock the chickens upstairs, then wheel the tractor to a new location needing weeding and fertilizing.

Next, I think I'll ramble about "Fall Rhubarb".

~Will Hightower

Heads Up on Programs for 2013 as We Head Into the New Year!

February 12th – **Garden Planning 101.** Panel of great gardeners who plan, have tips, and journal their efforts in writing or with pictures.

March 12th – **Seed Starting Round Tables, with seeds and lots of How To** info. There will be an experienced seed starter leading each round table group, with seeds, soil and lots of showing and telling how to get started.

(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 – **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 volunteer hosts for 2-3 hour shifts are needed for this event. Please help out for 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 and volunteers. Please add your name to our list.



**MARION'S
PLAN & PLANT**

MARION K. NELSON

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P.O. BOX 3612 • KENAI, ALASKA 99611 • mmkn@ptialaska.net



Allamanda cathartica *Common Allamanda (P) Apocynaceae (Dogbane Family)*

A lovely blossom in the yard of a former Alaskan, now living in Hawaii.

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

Newsletter layout/production—Pam Voeller

Treasurer's Report, December 2012	
Beginning Balance:	\$15,220.99
Income:	
Dues	\$250.00
Newsletter Ads	\$600.00
T-Shirts	\$157.00
	\$1,007.00
Expenses:	
Airfare	(\$189.00)
Gift card	(\$29.50)
Speakers Expenses	(\$195.00)
Checks	(\$55.50)
Tax exempt card	(\$10.00)
Web page main. Fee	(\$25.75)
Printing	(\$54.50)
2013 Home Show	(\$200.00)
Storage Unit	(\$55.00)
Historian	(\$31.05)
	(\$845.30)
Ending Balance:	\$15,382.69
Submitted by Peggy Morris, Treasurer	

2013 Proposed Budget

	Projected Gross Income	Projected Budgeted Expenses
Dues	\$4,300.00	
Plant Sale	\$2,850.00	-\$350.00
Sea-Ag	\$3,500.00	-\$2,300.00
Workshop Week-ends -gift cards, travel	\$1,150.00	-\$600.00
Monthly Programs -gift cards, travel		-\$2,000.00
Annual Business Expenses - Chamber dues, web page, PO box, storage unit		-\$1,400.00
Printing		-\$800.00
Historian		-\$50.00
Hospitality – paper goods, refreshments		-\$200.00
Technology equipment		-\$200 (\$1000)
Special event - home show, special speaker, tours	\$1000.00	-\$4000.00
Sponsorship - fair, 4H, Jr. Mas- ter Gardener, Ag Forum		-\$1600.00
Newsletter ads	\$1500.00	
Misc.	\$300.00	-\$100.00
2013 Projected Totals	\$14,600.00	-\$14,600.00
2012 Income	\$17,445.79	
2012 Expenses		-\$13,809.40
2012 Beginning Balance	\$11,746.30	
2012 ending Balance	\$15,382.69	

A Few Excerpts from *Avant Gardener* Articles in their Online Publications

HERONSWOOD CHANGES HANDS. After 12 years of ownership of Heronswood Gardens and Nursery, W. Atlee Burpee & Co. has sold it to the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, headquartered in Kingston, Washington, near the nursery's propagation facility and display garden. An announcement from George Ball, CEO of Burpee, confirms that the Tribe intends to continue the nursery business, although with an emphasis on Native American food, fiber and medicinal plants...Some choice Heronswood varieties will be available from www.burpee.com. In addition, a personal blog will continue to be published by George Ball (www.heronswoodvoice.com).

GRAHAM & MICHELE KINSMAN, CONTAINER GARDENING EXPERTS...

Kinsman mail order garden catalog features 100 pages of merchandise in full color, of which 25 pages are containers. For gardeners there are some really innovative ideas such as a mason bee nest. Graham explained that the mason bee is similar in appearance to a honey bee, but a single mason bee will do ten times more pollination than a honey bee, and of course if you grow fruit trees you need bees to pollinate the flowers in order to set fruit. The nest consists of small tubes packed horizontally inside a water-proof cylinder that is best placed 6-7 feet off the ground, on its side facing the sun under some shelter, like the eaves of a house or shed. The female bees crawl along the tubes and lay eggs at intervals, with a ball of food for the larvae. Each mason bee lives only a year, and so its survival is entirely dependent on the next generation. Asked if he would ever consider adding plants to his mail order catalog, Graham laughed. "Years ago we made a policy decision," he said. "If it can die we want nothing to do with it." <http://www.kinsmangarden.com> .

For the latest information from the Division of Ag, take a look at the January newsletter at http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_newsletters.htm

Miscellaneous Items

Alaska 'Buyer/Producer Planning Meeting'

· **January 30th, 3:15-4:30pm, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Anchorage** – The FTS program will facilitate a meeting to prepare for the upcoming growing season. We are inviting anybody interested in this discussion, specifically looking for producers, distributors, and processors. Pass this along to anyone you see fit. **If you are interested in being a panelist or part of the discussion please contact Johanna Herron at Johanna.herron@alaska.gov

Other updates

- On Jan. 21, 12:00pm, there is a webinar, sponsored by the New Jersey FTS network, about Winter Planning for the Spring School Garden. To register go to: <http://www.instantpresenter.com/AccountManager/RegEv.aspx?PIID=EB53D887854A>
- The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy released new research on small and mid-size strategies for freezing locally grown vegetables for the k-12 marketplace. School Food Service Professionals might be interested in the "Freezing at School" section of the report. Information can be found at: <http://www.iatp.org/documents/frozen-local-strategies-for-freezing-locally-grown-produce-for-the-k-12-marketplace> and the full report can be found at: http://www.iatp.org/files/2012_12_11_FreezingReport_JB_web.pdf
- The USDA School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study IV, Nov. 2012, is out: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/MENU/Published/CNP/cnp.htm> This report provides comparisons of the nutritional quality of school meals between SY 2009-2010, SY 2004-2005, and SY 1998-1999.