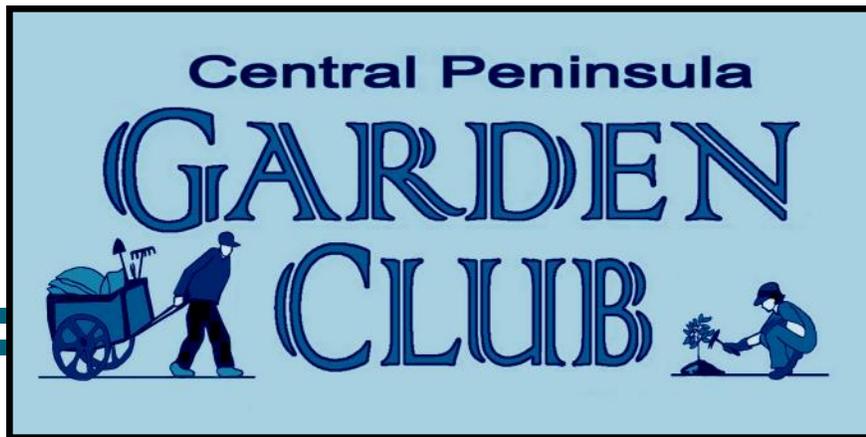


January 2014

Central Peninsula Garden Club



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

Board Members

- ◆ Marion Nelson - *President, program chair*—(907) 283-4632, (907) 398-8669 (cell)
- ◆ - *Vice president*
- ◆ Kay Gardner - *Secretary, special events, hospitality*
- ◆ Peggy Morris - *Treasurer, plant sale, CIAA gardens*
- ◆ Juanita Owens- *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 - *Special events programs*
- ◆ Lee Bowman - *Sea Ag committee, special events*
- ◆ Cindy Barnes—*Special Events*



JANUARY 14TH PROGRAM

DART A.M. FARMS IN MANLEY HOT SPRINGS PRESENTED BY JOHN DART

Central Peninsula Garden Club's January program features the amazing agricultural development at historic Manley Hot Springs, by John Robert Dart, owner/manager/grower of Dart A.M. Farms. He has engineered this intriguing farm in the unique Alaska environment of a hot spring that provides geothermal heat. Hear, see and learn about this productive farming enterprise and the plans John has engineered for dramatic energy conservation. See photos of their extensive produce, high tunnels, market photos, huge solar panels and more on Dart AM Farms face book page. www.manleyhotspringsproduce.com.



John Dart, owner of Dart AM Farms

John and his family own and operate a grower-packer-shipper style of vegetable/fruit and flower business (farm). His formal training was received at Purdue University, University of California-Davis, and the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. Agricultural Engineering Technology and Agricultural Education were fields of expertise. John also delved into studies and research regarding the *Primula vulgaris* (Primrose).

After over a decade of teaching high school level agriculture, he followed his other passion, engineering, and worked for a decade as a materials specialist and trainer for the Alaska DOT, finishing that career as a Project Engineer. Throughout his tenure with the state he traveled statewide on government related business and was fortunate enough to meet and learn of the many cultures and the use of native plants while inspecting airport runways. Upon retirement and after seeing the many villages he returned to his most loved village, Manley Hot Springs. Work experiences in Ruby taught him how to start a new farm: operating bulldozers, repairing farm tractors, welding, batching and pouring concrete and lots of general labor.

In the middle 1970's John learned the greenhouse tomato business from his late uncle Chuck who was a botanist by training; they studied plant life wherever they vacationed together. It was shortly before Chuck's death that John asked to buy a piece of geothermal ground from the family trust in Manley Hot Springs. Ultimately, his Aunt Gladys sold a 7.5 acre tract to develop a greenhouse and horticultural business.

Continued on page 2

January 14th Program—Continued from page 1

Dart A M farms has been evolving for seven years and is now in a major energy development. Through a USDA conservation innovation grant, the farm is investing in green energy to lower its production costs tied to electricity. Since the ground is geothermal, opportunities exist to cascade energy (heat) for different uses throughout the farmstead and greenhouse range. Because the 120 degree F water is low-grade heat, it was necessary to pursue the engineering and design of a peaking system. For the last five years a design developed by John has begun to take shape. This spring he is presenting information on the progress and economics of a Combined Heat and Power System for Dart-AM Farms, Manley Hot Springs, Alaska.

Visit his web-site www.manleyhotspringsproduce.com and Facebook page for detailed information and pictures of the past history of agricultural development of Dart AM Farms. This storied homestead was the first patented in the Tanana River Valley during the gold rush days in Alaska. Now it has solar panels, high tunnels, impressive market sales and equally impressive energy conservation plans for the future.



Get your questions ready for John about his uniquely located farming business.

Program Date: Jan 14

Time: 7pm

Location: Cook Inlet Aquaculture Bldg, Mile 16.5 K-Beach Rd.

Open to the public.

High Tunnels Collapse

Ivan, of Oregon Valley Greenhouses, would like an alert to go out to all high tunnel growers telling them to practice good maintenance by way of snow removal. Apparently the freezing rain has been crusting up, not allowing snow to slide off. Plus, the rain soaked snow is heavy.

Two high tunnels (two different manufacturers) have recently collapsed in this area.

Alaska Farmer Featured in Magazine

Tim & Lisa Meyers Story in *Modern Farmer*

No doubt about it, Tim is Alaska's farming rock star. Great pictures.

<http://modernfarmer.com/2014/01/permafrost-farming->

Marion Nelson's moose friend realized she couldn't munch the silk poinsettias on the window ledge once her lovely nose bumped the window.



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MILE 14.5
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HIGH TUNNELS
ORGANIC FERTILIZER
SEEDS, SEED POTATOES
LIVE CHICKS & PIGS
LIVETOCK & PET FEED
PASTURE RAISED MEAT
DRIP IRRIGATION
FENCING



CPGC Members Invited to Annual Meeting

Notice of the **Annual CPGC Meeting** on January 14th, 6:50pm, just before the regular monthly program.
 Location: Cook Inlet Aquaculture Building, mile 16.5 Kalifornsky Beach Road.

Agenda items include membership voting for the 2014 board of director candidates offered by the Nominating Committee and presenting the 2014 budget, which is attached for your review.

Slate of Candidates for the Board of Directors—5 openings:

- Don St. John (incumbent) 3 year term
- Cathy Haas (incumbent) 3 year term
- Marion Nelson (incumbent) 3 year term
- Juanita Owens (appointed to fill vacated seat) 2 year term
- Cindy Barnes (appointed to fill vacated seat) 2 year term

Persons appointed to the board have to stand for election to fill the remainder of the vacated term at the next election after appointment. The membership votes for the Board and, once elected, the Board votes for the officers at the next board meeting. Officers are: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer. Other positions are deemed “Chairs.” Staggered board terms are for 3 years each.

Nominations may be made from the floor for board seats at the Annual Meeting.

2014 Proposed Budget:

	Gross Income:	Expenses:
Dues:	\$3,800	\$0
Plant Sale:	\$2,200	\$250
Sea-ag:	\$4,700	\$3,000
Newsletter Ads:	\$1,200	\$0
Workshop Week-ends:	\$2,500	\$2,500
Programs:	\$500	\$2,000
*Business Expenses:	\$0	\$2,000
Printing:	\$0	\$800
Historian:	\$0	\$50
Hospitality:	\$0	\$200
*Technical Equipment:	\$0	\$400
*Special Events/ project	\$1,000	\$3,000
*Sponsorships:	\$0	\$1,900
T-Shirts:	\$200	
Misc:	\$100	\$100
	\$16,200	\$16,200
Business Expenses:		PO box rent, Soldotna and Kenai chamber dues, web hosting, storage unit, software
Technical Equipment		\$1500 savings for equipment replacement
Special events/Projects:		Special speakers, home show
Sponsorships:		4-H, Fair, Kenai Birding Festival, Harvest Moon Local Foods week, Agriculture Forum



Board Members

Marion Nelson—President, Program Chair, Newsletter Editor

The many educational opportunities that have resulted from starting the CPGC almost seven years ago have been very rewarding. When I think of all the incredible workshops, summer garden tours and program presenters we've had the opportunity hear and meet, it boggles my mind. My main role from the beginning has been to come up with programs, relevant events for area gardeners of all stripes, find presenters for all those events and get the word out. I've made a point of attending conferences to scope out possible presenters and network with others regarding our activities. And for the past two years, compiling what you read and see in the club newsletter. (Many thanks to Pam Voeller and Becky Holloway who do the layouts.)

My own gardening and landscape experience has been hit and miss over the years, but restarted in earnest when moving into my current home, about 14 years ago. Like many new homes, there was no yard much less flowers and trees of choice. I also received a 35 lb puppy that same Christmas, that dictated installing a big fenced dog area, grass and an underground sprinkler system. I planted a variety of trees rather helter-skelter (apple, pine, larch, weeping birch, mountain ash, etc.). Now, some years later, the yard and growing areas have expanded, and I wish I had known then what I know now. Making a comprehensive plan didn't occur to me, much less what would be involved with what I eventually developed. There are now many large/huge raised flower beds (thanks to truck loads of soil), a "shrub cage" for moose favorites, crushed rock pathways, and several extensions to the sprinkler system. The later being the biggest no-plan problem with the expanded growing areas, yard and pathways. Again, if I had known what I know now, it would have cost less, saved a lot of time and would have functioned better from the get go. That's the lesson we sometimes learn the hard way.

I create about 50 containers every spring along with flower bed maintenance of mostly perennials, which includes at least a couple hundred lilies. My goal every year is to cut back, but so far it hasn't happened. At this point, I get quite a few visitors to see what and how things are growing. I'm happy to share what I know but that doesn't always include the Latin plant names! (I appreciate all the farmer's markets that have sprung up in the area over the past few years. They keep me well supplied with our local veggies.) The Garden Club has had a series of great Boards with a variety of talents and gardening experiences and your current Board of Directors is no exception. All of us are continually impressed with the depth and breadth of knowledge at our events/programs. Those networking opportunities continue to be one of the biggest reasons to get involved with the club along with what our program presenters share. Here's to an even more educational 2014.



Kay Gardner—Secretary, Special Events, Hospitality

After attending the first meeting of the Central Peninsula Garden Club in 2007 I knew I had to be part of this adventure! I knew from the beginning that it was going to be big and I wanted to be a part of it – I actually raised my hand to be on the board and was accepted as the assistant secretary. I've held the Secretary position for several years, and am part of the Hospitality Committee and Special Events.

The knowledge and diversity of this group is amazing. Each month the speakers reveal and share their own unique growing techniques and this has totally changed my views of looking at dirt, gardening, growing healthy foods and sustainability. There is not enough time even with our long Alaskan days for all the great plans and ideas that I would like to start.

I've been awake at night dreaming and planning for a High Tunnel and the great potential for bumper crops of broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, beets, squash, corn! The possibilities are endless! Santa didn't bring me a high tunnel for Christmas this year – Maybe next year.....

I'm looking forward to another event filled year and I hope to see you at the next meeting. I'll have your name tag ready and waiting for you at the reception desk!

~Kay is such a dependable secretary and so much more for the club. You'll see her hosting workshops, and helping to staff event booths as she is a great communicator about all club activities. She and her family have extensive gardens, a root cellar, and much more.



Board Members—Continued

Peggy Morris—Treasurer

My gardening experiences have actually been going on for many years but I still consider myself at the beginning level because there is just so much to learn and try, and the fact that everything keeps changing! It is so rewarding to grow, harvest and enjoy a meal from the plants that have been nurtured from a tiny seed started under lights indoors.

I am lucky enough to have a heated greenhouse which extends the season and also lets me grow the most delicious tomatoes and usually too many cucumbers. Before any plants even make it out to the greenhouse though and before the heat is turned on, I have found it to be a wonderful place to sunbathe while there is still snow on the ground!

My greatest challenge is gardening on a hillside with fairly new soil. I try to add compost when I can to amend the soil. My Christmas present this year was a used DR garden wagon (motorized wheel barrow!) My work load should be easier this next year and the crops should just get better with time.



How the Garden Club has progressed. The first charter members began the garden club in April of 2007. Three of the original board members are still active on the board. Thank you to Marion Nelson, Kay Gardner and Cathy Haas. The original by-laws stated our purpose was to conduct business as a non-profit to educate and exchange reliable information about gardening and related activities. Later our by-laws were rewritten with the help of Attorney Phil Nash, to include charitable, educational and scientific purposes. The revision of language was in preparation for our official non-profit status.

We became incorporated with the state of Alaska in May of 2009 and received our official EIN, (employer identification number). We became legitimate, for all that were concerned!! Since we were now recognized as an official organization, we applied for our non-profit status with the state as a preliminary step to applying for our non-profit status with the IRS. We became non-profit with the state of Alaska in April of 2010. Both of these were accomplished with the help of Marion Nelson the current president and Sue Kent a past treasurer for the club.

In December of 2011 we submitted our application for 501c3 non-profit status with the IRS, with the help of accountant Janice Tutor and myself as treasurer. After many mailings, telephone calls and an amendment to our articles of incorporation, we were notified in May of 2013 that we were approved to be a 501c3 non-profit organization retroactive to May of 2015.

The club has held to its mission statement of educational, scientific and charitable goals with responsible business practices and management. The range of topics and activities that the club has covered this past year has been incredible! Something for everyone, that is for sure!

Juanita Owens—Hospitality Chair

Hello fellow gardeners,

I am a southern girl at heart and will always miss old favorites such as okra, tomatoes, hydrangea, lemons, etc. Oh, the list I could make. But in Alaska, I had to make new favorites and continue on. I have been plugging along in my vegetable plots and rock gardens for three summers now. Every year I have huge expectations, which means my 'eyes' are bigger than my abilities...but each year progress is made. I have learned over the years that a garden is never completed, and new dreams are made with each catalogue that comes along.

This year I refuse to add another rock garden and will try to complete all of the ones that I have started. I also enlarged my vegetable area, so there goes any free time I might have planned. Sure glad the sun is up for long periods of time in the summer.

I joined the garden club when I first arrived in Sterling. It has been a godsend for me. Not only does it fill me up with great information each month, but also has given me something to look forward to in the winter. My favorite part is enjoying what other members are doing with what they are given, and incorporating it into my own yard. We have some truly talented people in our club. Speaking of which, I was appointed to the board this fall and I am the Hospitality Chair, a new position for me, so you will see me at the reception desk helping you sign up for upcoming events. My give away is the southern accent...some things are not going away any time soon.

~Juanita's rock gardens, pathways, composting, vegetable growing are a lot more than plugging along. She's done a great job creating her attractive Sterling area gardens.



Board Members—Continued

Cathy Haas—Plant Sale Co-chair, Historian Chair

I have been on the board for the Garden Club since 2010. I started coming to club meeting in 2007, the year it started. I was hooked immediately, wanting to meet other gardeners and learn as much as possible. I was raised on a potato farm in WI, did 4-H gardening as a child for over 8 years, and gardened most all of my 42 years in AK. I plant a large vegetable garden, a sizeable annual flower bed, and have a large perennial flower garden. I also have strawberries, raspberries, and starting some honeyberries. I built a 14x16 greenhouse with natural gas heat 4 years ago and have had great success with tomatoes and cucumbers.



In addition to being on the board, I am the club Historian. I keep copies of club pictures, newspaper articles, and events in an album which you can see at the Jan 14th meeting. I have also been co-chair of the plant sale for the past years which is a major fund raiser for the club that helps to support some of our 4-H & other club events. I also spent many hours helping with other club activities (Home Show booth, HEA Energy Fair, Community Garden Tour, & Workshop Weekends).

I feel that the garden club is a great resource to the community and hope everyone will participate in it, learn from it, & enjoy it as much as I do.

~Heroically, Cathy starts all her own seeds and raises a great variety of vegetables. She can always use more help with event pictures. Please take a few at workshops, on summer tours, etc. and email them to Cathy at chaas@gci.net

Don St. John—Tech Chair, Sea Ag Sales Chair, Special Events

I am the Tech Committee Chair and have been on the Board of Directors since 2010. I research and make suggestions to the board regarding any equipment we need. I also set up the computer, projector and audio system for club meetings and other club events. I welcome your suggestions on ways to improve our presentations.



I am also the coordinator for the annual spring Sea Ag Fund fertilizer fundraiser. Money raised helps to fund/sponsor club activities. This crushed fishbone meal helps grow healthy, strong vegetables and beautiful flowers. Anyone who wants to represent the club and take orders at club or other gardening related events is welcome to contact me. Additional help on delivery day is always welcome.

The garden club has helped me learn more about gardening and help others with my ever increasing gardening experiences and knowledge.

I enjoy growing vegetable's in raised beds. I also grow heirloom tomatoes in my green house in the Alaska Grow Buckets self watering system, using a modified Meisner growing medium. My wife grows flowers and I help with creating raised beds, fences and what ever other projects she comes up with.

If you have any questions or comments please contact me at akdon@acsalaska.net.

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Board Members—

Renaë Wall—Publicity Chair, Nominating Committee

I have been on the board since January 2011. I have learned so much, and really enjoy spending time with the other board members. I am the Publicity Chair, which means I get the notices about our monthly programs out to the radio stations and newspapers. I also e-mail program flyers to our "Dirt Digger" members, who do such a great job of posting them around our community. My other position is Nominating Committee Chair. This committee considers potential club members to fill vacant or expired board positions and contacts them to find out if they are interested in serving on the board. The slate of candidates is sent to the membership two weeks prior to the election at the annual meeting in January. And, of course, I help out as needed with other things, like staffing event booths or scheduling volunteers. There's lots of ways to be involved with the club.



One of my gardening "aha" moments this past summer was about cover crops. My husband and I have a 7-acre field that we wanted to amend with a cover crop. I had learned that Austrian winter field peas were a good choice, because they fix nitrogen into the soil, as well as add organic material. So, we got 950 pounds of seed and broadcast seeded mid-June using our tractor. Well, you know what a gorgeous, but dry and warm summer we had. The peas just didn't seem to do much. They came up, but came in rather thin and slow. So, THEN I called Lydia at the Cooperative Extension Service, who proceeded to inform me that we should have added an inoculant to the seeds before sowing. The inoculant is a bacteria that causes the pea plant to grow nitrogen-fixing nodules on its roots. This also provides extra nitrogen to the plant, so the plant grows much better. In addition to this tidbit of information, Lydia also pointed out that Austrian winter peas can be sown the previous fall, so the plants can get a head start for the next summer. If Robert and I had done all this, the peas would have been growing gang busters by mid-June, not just barely getting started. So, all I can say is that we are learning and know a lot more than when we started. That's progress, right?

~Renaë would love to send our program flyers to more members who would post at least a couple every month. It's a huge help. She can be reached at wallrenae@yahoo.com

Don Thompson—Special Events, Plant Sale

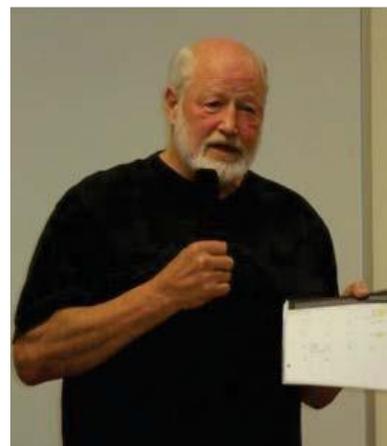
A carpenter by trade, a gardener by choice, an agronomist by ones who know less than me, and called a farmer by my wife. My carpenter skills kicked in when I decided to design and build my first green house (10 X 22), a second one (12 X 24) followed real fast. I needed more room so I became a logger as I had to log off my back yard. It looked terrible but I quickly planted it with potatoes. Then, I knew I wanted to be a farmer and grow lots of veggies and to do that, I needed to know more about growing them, and get more ideas and information.

I attended my first Garden Club meeting about this same time and at first I thought, BAD mistake. There were women everywhere talking about growing flowers (I wanted to grow food) but it didn't take me long to start asking questions and get answers about vegetable gardening. I knew then this was the place for me. About this time the Garden Club was talking about composting and of course I jumped right in because I knew that good soil was what I needed to grow good nourishing veggies.

This was also the time that the high tunnel program started. I was ready and acquired two of them. Now I was ready to start my own farm but what's a farm without a tractor and a dog who loves riding on it. According to my last soil test I'm almost there for growing good healthy nourishing veggies. Composting has really paid off.

It has been a great honor to serve on the Garden Club board, helping wherever I can, answering questions I can on program panels, at the club's Home Show Booth, giving workshops in May and more. There is a wealth for information just for the asking at Garden Club programs and events, and I appreciate being a part of it.

~Don's workshops during May's Workshop Weekends, are always some of the first filled. He is a wealth of information and clever how-to's.



Board Members—Continued

Velma Bittick—Special Events, Programs

Raised on a farm in Idaho, I moved to Alaska in the early 80's. I had been gardening pretty much solo for 20+ years and it was like the lights had been turned on, when I had the opportunity to take a Master Gardener class after I retired and was amazed at the network of gardeners on the Peninsula. I had been a member of the CPG Club 3 seasons when I was appointed to fill a vacant board seat and then elected to that seat for the following term. Serving on the board has been a great learning experience. The club has some wonderful programs and always needs a helping hand. I learn something new at every meeting, at special programs or at the club's work shops. Oh, and we do have so much fun during these events. Gardeners tend to be a pretty optimistic bunch, and we love to share tips and techniques.



I have helped out at most club events, led several round table planning discussions and How-To's, held workshops and tours in our several gardens, greenhouse and high tunnel. My husband and I keep bees and utilize worm castings from our productive little worm farm in a recycled chest freezer.

Winter is seed catalogue time. My brain goes into an altered state when I have several in my lap. Cheapest **entertainment in the world. When I divide my seed bill by the hours I spend looking, it costs me about 57 cents an hour.** Several cold weather gardening books, old and new, are highlighted, dog-eared, water-stained are cherished, and reviewed annually. Planning and more planning in my note book, listing wants, needs, and need to do items is handy for Aha moments and then the graph paper comes out start plotting for spring.

I willingly check on my hens 3 or 4 times a day all winter, gathering eggs and making sure they are tended and comfortable. Our great fall harvest of potatoes, root crops and winter squash was wonderful. So much good food.

I'm getting my grow lights set up and ready for spring and some early germination tests on some of my older hard to find and saved seeds. Like my gardens, I am savoring the time, resting (a little), and waiting (almost patiently). See you at the next program.

Lee Bowman—Sea Ag Committee, Special Events

My official duties as a board member consist of assisting Don St. John with Sea-Ag Fertilizer sales and help with special events that entails set up, participate in the event/program and takedowns.

Julie and I heard about the garden club through gardening friends who encouraged us to come, see what it was all about. We decided to give it a try and as they say, the rest is history. After the first meeting, we were hooked. We found the garden club programs to always be informative. Very seldom were programs outside our interest areas, plus there was always some worthwhile take away information. We were also amazed at the broad scope of interests and the huge trove of knowledge that was available. Not only was it available, it was freely shared.



After attending meetings for about a year, I was encouraged (slightly strong armed) to become a board member. That too has been a great experience. Any successful organization needs a dedicated group to keep it going. We as a club are very blessed to have such a group. It has been fun to help make decisions that guide the club in the directions we take. It has been a great experience being a part of the many programs that involve the youth of our area. Be it through 4-H or Boys and Girls Club, or local schools, it is great to see children getting involved in gardening.

I would encourage anyone who has been a gardener for a long while to come and share your knowledge and experience. I would also strongly encourage would be gardeners and novices to come and partake of the fantastic wealth of experience and knowledge that is available, and as I said earlier, so freely shared. Come join us.

Continued on next page

Board Members—Continued

Lee Bowman—Continued from previous page

See what we are all about.

As for a gardening experience, one of the most memorable experiences was our path to growing cucumbers. We have grown Sweet Success cucumbers for several years. Our success was moderate, with enough to eat fresh and occasionally have enough to make pickles. One of our visits to Mary Meeks' greenhouse, led to a discussion about why her Sweet Success were so much more productive than ours. After a lively discussion about where and why we had ours planted, she said "you need to plant them at least 5 feet in the air so their feet are warmer". I couldn't imagine how that could make that much difference, but knew enough to take the advice of successful gardeners. The next spring, I built planter boxes and put the cucumbers in them up at least 5 feet high in our greenhouse. To our amazement, using the same seeds and the same soil, our production increased 5 fold, and some years by a factor of 10. The only difference was moving the plants up in the air.

Another early experience was trying to grow carrots. Two years in a row, our carrots grew to a maximum of 3 inches long and half the size of your little finger. Certainly not worth the effort. I ask one of my favorite homestead gardeners, Loretta Knackstedt, what to do different. She said, "you need to make your row, then add twice as much lime as you think you need, then double it". I thought, wow, that is a lot of lime, but her carrots were 10-12 inches long, so what did we have to lose. The next spring I did just what she said, and lo and behold, our carrots looked just like hers, proving that listening to successful "old timers" is one of the easiest and best way to improve your gardening skills.

~Lee and Julie do it all. Gardens, greenhouse, high and low tunnels, and a root cellar. They have a wealth of knowledge and experience.

Cindy Barnes— Special Events

I have been a Garden Club member for two years and was recently appointed to the Board of Directors to fill a vacated seat. I have volunteered at the club's Home Show booth and regularly attend programs, spring workshops and enjoy the summer tours. I anticipate serving on board committees in the coming year.

I have found that the round table discussions and workshops to be most helpful. I love conversing with the other gardeners about growing ideas and problems that arise through the growing season. Last year's tomato workshop helped improve my harvest from what I learned there.

Being new to having a greenhouse I was eager to get started early last spring. I found myself out in a cold greenhouse in March anticipating the following months to come. While I was there I noticed that some very large black plastic pots filled with dirt where almost thawed. I covered them with black plastic and positioned them in the center area, then hefted them up off the cold floor onto tables. A couple days later they were thawed completely.

I was so hungry to grow and eat something fresh so I planted spinach in two big pots and lettuce in another. I recorded that the inside greenhouse temp was 48* outside it was 37*. I planted those seeds and it took 11 to 13 days for them to sprout, but that they did! Since it was so early and there was no heat, I had to haul water to my new babies. And it worked.

This being said, you just never know what will work until you try. I myself will be back out to the greenhouse in March waiting for things to thaw so I can sow my seeds.

(Cindy's name will be on the 2014 ballot to fill the 2 years remaining of a vacated board seat.)



Will's Ramblings—By Will Hightower

Fodder Growing

I sometimes wonder over the relationship of these ramblings and a garden club newsletter. I can tell a little blue flower from a big white flower. And, I can identify a rose, most of the time. My ramblings generally deal with growing plants and the equipment needed to grow them in Alaska. I like growing "agricultural" crops.

We have alpacas for fiber, fertilizer, and lawn mowing. Not having enough ground for a hayfield, late each summer we buy a year's supply of brome hay - 60 to 70 bales. In past years the price has been \$3 to \$4 per bale. This year it was \$10.50 per bale. I heard that it made it up to \$16. It was time to think about the Alaska supply chain and providing for all of a homestead's needs!

For several years I had been aware of farmers growing "Fodder." Fodder is sprouts grown for animal feed- same principle, just different seeds. Long ago there was a news clip about an English farmer having 40 milk cows on 10 acres. He had a large sprouting operation to feed the cows.

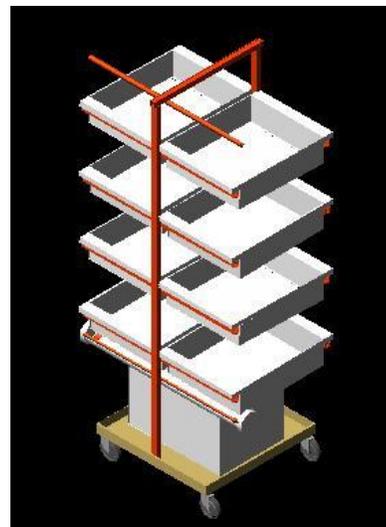
In checking the FarmTek catalog there were pages of fodder production equipment. On the web there were other fodder equipment makers. The two things they had in common were: they were large operations and the resulting price sticker shock. Three 'pacas do not need a large operation and my Welsh-German genes make a Scot look like a spendthrift.

In my world, something that can be useful and is way out of reach, pricewise, results in a "quest." Off I charge to study catalogs, the web, and YouTube. It is amazing how much information you can glean from people trying to sell you the latest and greatest!

At our house it's called "industrial espionage", oops – research. After the research phase I form designs in my head, the computer, and on paper. Soon I had the "perfect" small scale fodder production design in digital form. Then on to building and testing.

So much for the perfect design. I could not find trays of the size and strength needed. The water pump was too small for the lift needed and water distribution was just wrong.

The unit's location was wrong for the temperature required and, surprisingly, insufficient light turned out not to be a factor. The reading I did on sprouting barley said a 6 to 8 day cycle, make that 16 days under my present conditions.



The good point, so far, is the rabbits like the fodder, but top growth only, please. The animals that this "quest" was designed to feed will almost not touch the stuff. Plus, one of the 'pacas went down (threatened to die) just after I introduced fodder to them. Figured I had poisoned poor Clyde, turns out to be a sprained leg. Maybe he did it trying to get away from the evil fodder. Go figure, almost derailed the whole project.

I'm going to move the fodder operation to a warmer location and the new pump has arrived from E-bay. I have learned that a gallon hand pump-up sprayer gives a good spray pattern, but it's not the hands-off operation I wanted. With only twice daily, light sprayings needed, I may live with that until I get some of the other issues solved.

The next time we meet at Garden Club, my education will continue. In the meantime I wonder how to get alpacas to even smell barley fodder? That's not even addressing convincing them to foul their mouths with the stuff. Wonder if a different seed is the answer? Anyone for sunflower sprouts?

Upcoming CPGC Events & Volunteer Opportunities!

Volunteers Needed:

Volunteers Welcomed & Appreciated! It's your club.....

-Special event booth staffing, workshop host, few times a year: Home Show end of April, Workshop Weekends -May, Ninilchik Fair - August. Contact Marion, mmkn@ptialaska.net

-Program Committee. Meets occasionally. Contact Marion, mmkn@ptialaska.net

-Publicity Volunteer. Help with flyer distribution or PSA's. Contact Renae Wall, wallrenae@yahoo.com

-Hospitality Committee. Help w' registration desk, clean up, room set up, refreshments. Contact Juanita Owens, - samowens0969@yahoo.com

-Backup Videographer/photographer for programs and workshops. Contact Linda Dunn, 283-7857

-Tech backup. Power Point programs and mike set up for programs, occasional workshops. Contact Don St. John, 394-4474.

-Sea Ag Fertilizer order pick up on Saturday May 10th. Volunteers needed for 3 hours. Contact Don St. John, 394-4474.

-Guest speaker lodging. Great opportunity for more expert information. Contact Marion, 283-4632.

-June through September – Weekly summer flower bed maintenance and clean up at the Aquaculture Bldg. Light weeding and some planting. The entrance bed plantings are a thank you to CIAA for meeting room use throughout the year. We appreciate this invaluable contribution. Contact Peggy Morris, 262-8374.

Programs:

-January 14: The amazing Dart-AM Farms at Manley Hot Springs. Presenter: John Robert Dart

-February 11: Soil Readiness, Amendments & ZONES! Velma Bittick program coordinator

-Date TBA: Alaska Flour Company from Delta Junction Barley growers. Might include a workshop.

-February X: Beginner's Only! Special Program. Date TBA. Presented by panel of experienced gardeners.

-March 29: Get Ready For Spring! Half Day Event. Location, Kenai Visitor Center. Round Table with many topics.

-April 7: Cut Worms, Root Maggots & Slugs! What to do About Them and How.

-April 12-13: Home Show booth. Contact Cindy Barnes to volunteer for booth staffing.

-May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31: Workshop Weekends! 4-8 workshops every Saturday. Help host, schedule, present a workshop.

Contact: Liz Dowler – dr.liz.dowler@gmail.com, Juanita [Owens-samowens0969@yahoo.com](mailto:samowens0969@yahoo.com), Marion 283 4632

-June 14: Annual Plant Sale! Early plant drop off evening of 13th and then pre sale plant drop off on the 14th.

-June, July August: Summer tours. What location do you want to visit next summer? Ideas welcome.

-How about a tour to another part of Alaska?



Michael Pollan Discusses Generous Trees and "Plant Neurobiology"

The 1/3/14 Science Friday program on NPR, included a terrific interview with author, Michael Pollan, especially his description of the connectivity of trees, all trees, and how they share resources with their family and other species. Give a listen on <http://www.sciencefriday.com/segment/01/03/2014/can-plants-think.html>

In his latest piece for The New Yorker magazine, Michael Pollan discusses the scientific controversy regarding the field of "plant neurobiology," and whether plant intelligence exists. Some plants, he writes, can hear caterpillars chomping on a neighbor's leaves. Others display altruistic behavior towards kin, restraining their growth to allow relatives to thrive. But is any of that evidence of intelligence?

Michael Pollan Author, "The Intelligent Plant," an article in The New Yorker

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2013/12/23/131223fa_fact_pollan

December 2013 Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance:		\$ 16,067.53
Income:		
Dues	\$	380.00
Expenses:		
Monthly Program	\$	(199.00)
Homeshow Booth	\$	(200.00)
4H Jr Master Gardener Program	\$	(200.00)
Historian	\$	(15.19)
Borough Tax Exempt Card	\$	(10.00)
Ending Balance:		\$ 15,823.34

Submitted by Peggy Morris, Treasurer

- Got a story or photos to share? Contact Marion Nelson, 283-4632 or mmkn@ptialaska.net
- Advertising space available at very reasonable prices!
- *Check out the club's Face Book page!*
- Newsletter layout by Becky Holloway & Pam Voeller.

