

January 2017



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

Changes Taking Place on the Kenai Peninsula

presented by Dr. John Morton

What's an exotic plant in a climate-changing world? The impacts of a warming climate on the Kenai Peninsula are already dramatic and forecasted to become even more so. The peninsula was the epicenter of a spruce bark beetle outbreak that culled 4 million acres of spruce forest in south-central Alaska over a 15-year period. In more recent years, wild-fires have changed from summer canopy fires in spruce to human-caused spring fires in grasslands. Although native species will generally move northward in latitude and upward in elevation as the climate warms, this concept is challenged on the peninsula where peculiarities in our climate suggest an uncertain ecological outcome, influenced by human fire starts and exotic species that are being deliberately and accidentally introduced. A recent inventory of non-native trees planted in local communities will be discussed in this context of a warming climate.

Dr. John Morton has been a biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for 3 decades, working previously in the Mariana Islands, Maryland, Wisconsin, California and stints at Arctic NWR and Yukon Delta NWR in Alaska. He's been the supervisory biologist at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge since 2002, where he and his staff have been actively involved in climate change research and adaptation (among other things).

And don't forget to come early on January 10th – Our annual meeting and Board elections will take place at 6:50 p.m.!

Location: Cook Inlet Aquaculture Bldg, 40610 Kalifornsky Beach Road, Kenai. Free and open to the public. Refreshments, sometimes door prizes.

2017

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Will's Ramblings

Sweet Potatoes and Concrete Cobble Stones *by Will Hightower*

This year was the third year for trying to grow sweet potatoes - the 'do or die' year. The first year I purchased sets from one of the mail order outfits and at the end of the season, was rewarded with tubers the diameter of pencils.

I decided to place the first year crop in the frig to be dealt with in a day or two. About four days later I checked on the pencil tubers and threw them out. Sweet potatoes need to be dried like a regular potato, if not, the tubers mold very quickly.

The second year the sweet tubers made it to fat pencil size. You will note that I am not calling them potatoes, just not big enough to dignify as potatoes. The tubers did slice and fry well with onions - good flavor.

So, along came the third year and five sweet potato plants. They were transplanted into a warm high tunnel with rich sandy soil in a raised bed. I had started the plants in the house approximately the first part of March. (Sweets have a six month growing requirement).

This was the year of "show or no return". We got a crop, three whole tubers that I would call sweet potatoes, lots of pencil tubers, but three whole sweet potatoes! So, I guess there will be a sweet potato patch in the tunnel next year, unless I can figure out some other crop to try. Maybe it is time to research bread fruit, don't remember seeing those seeds.

Change of subject, have any of you ever wanted a better walkway in your heavily used outdoor path areas? This could even be the paths between raised beds in a high tunnel. You have thought of wooden boardwalks, gravel, etc. as the base of the walk. I'll even bet you have thought of concrete, either blocks or poured.

Concrete blocks or poured walkways can be hard work, expensive, and a lot of time. Or you can do it on the cheap. I used to level the site, put up forms, and call the ready mix place. Not any more. Most of the time I don't even clear the spot. Well, maybe big sticks and big rocks.

Now, I mix a *small* batch, plop it where it is needed, smooth and shape the blob with a piece of 2 X 4, and walk away. The resulting 'cobble stone' will give good footing and last longer than the garden, greenhouse, or me. All that is needed is a container for mixing, something to stir the materials together and a board to smooth and pat the cobble stone into the shape you want, kind of like playing with mud pies.

The concrete is made up of Portland cement, sand and gravel, and water. Portland cement can be purchased at any building supply. It comes in 94 lb. bags, so take someone with muscles to help get it home. You can buy smaller bags with both gravel and cement in one bag but this drives up the cost. Keep the bag protected from moisture and plan on using up the bag in the current year.

I use pit run gravel, this is the stuff that the Western Kenai Peninsula is made of, it's the rocky stuff under foot. This "gravel" should be of various sizes from sand to $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter. Throw away sticks, grass, and big rocks and you have the second part of the mix. Do not to use beach sand because it contains too much salt.

I mix (rough measure) one part Portland cement to four parts "gravel". Water as you mix, not much at a time. What you are looking for is a mix that holds its shape but is "soupy" enough to be spread into the shape needed.

If it looks like you don't have enough for the job you are doing, add some more gravel and cement. The real rule of thumb is that when the mixing is done, all the gravel needs to be coated with wet cement.



Place the mix where needed and shape with your board. Do not smooth the walking surface too much, as you need some grip when you walk on the cobblestone.

If you find that you want more area covered, make a second, third, or fourth cobblestone.

They can be free standing or blend around one another. Surprisingly, you will find that 94 lbs. of Portland cement will make lots of stepping stones.

Now you have a good path when you walk out to check on the 'tater crop.



Programs & Events

Dues for 2016-2017 payable now. Dues schedule runs from Sept. 1, 2016 to Aug 31, 2017. \$20 individual, \$30 family. Thanks to all for your support!

January 10, 2017, 6:50pm— Annual meeting: Election of 2017 Board of Directors.

Slate of CPGC members presented for election:

- Cathy Haas – new 3 year term
- Susan Larned – new 3 year term
- Mark Scheffert – new 3 year term
- Donna Brown – complete 1 year of term remaining
- John Trent – complete 1 year of term remaining

January 10, 2017, 7:10pm—Program guest speaker John Morton, Ph.D., Supervisory Fish & Wildlife Biologist with the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Native/non-native trees, shrubs, and other flora in our changing climate.

Upcoming Gardening-related events:

- Great Alaska Beer & Barley Wine Festival, 1/20-21/17, Anchorage <http://auroraproductions.net/beer-barley.html>
- Alaska Peony Conference, 1/26-29/17, Fairbanks, <http://www.alaskapeonyconference.com/>
- Northwest Flower & Garden Show, 2/22-2/26/17, Seattle, <http://www.gardenshow.com/>
- Alaska Sustainable Agriculture Conference, 2/21-2/23/17, Fairbanks, <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/conference/>



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Re-sprouting Fuchsias

by Sharon Gherman, adapted from a blog post at www.northcolandscapes.com

Last summer's fuchsias can sprout for you again!

To save a fuchsia over the winter, cut back all the branches (and any other plants growing in the pot – I had creeping Jenny in mine), clean the soil surface of any fallen leaves, and set the whole in a cool place once the evenings begin to approach freezing or when the plant starts looking straggly.

I kept my plant in my 40-degree garage – look for a place that remains cool but not freezing. Light isn't necessary, but is acceptable (we use our garage all winter). Water the plant lightly about once or twice a month throughout the winter. The creeping Jenny in my pot started sprouting not long after the first of the year. A short time later, the fuchsia plant started showing pale green sprouts.



As soon as the fuchsia sprouted in several places, move the entire pot into the house under a plant light and water it well. After a week under the lights, fertilize and continue watering it regularly.

As the plant establishes, pinch it well to encourage the plant to fill out. Once the plant is growing well, trim back any dead branches.

By June 1st, your fuchsia will be full and blooming again!

Seed, Plant and Garden Supply Catalogs to Send For

Are you tired of winter and ready to start thinking about next year's garden? Here's a list of seed, plant and supplier catalogs to take a look at in preparation for this year's growing season:

Logee's www.logees.com
 Dixondale Farms www.dixondalefarms.com
 Harris Seeds www.harriseseeds.com
 Pinetree www.superseeds.com
 Bluestone Perennials www.buestoneperennials.com
 Plant Delights Nursery, Inc. www.plantdelights.com
 Territorial Seed Company www.territorialseed.com
 Four Seasons Nursery www.4seasonsnurseries.com
 John Scheepers www.johnscheepers.com
 Van Engelen Inc. www.vanengelen.com

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

Brent and Becky's Bulbs www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com
 Wood Prairie Family Farm www.woodprairie.organic
 Uprising Seeds www.uprisingorganics.com
 Seeds of Italy www.growitalian.com
 Wild Garden Seed www.wildgardenseed.com
 Park Seed www.parkseed.com
 Bountiful Gardens www.bountifulgardens.org
 Tomato Growers Supply Co. www.tomatogrowers.com
 Henry Field's Seed & Nursery www.henryfields.com
 Jackson & Perkins www.jacksonandperkins.com
 A.M. Leonard www.amleo.com
 Prairie Nursery www.prairienursery.com
 One Green World www.onegreenworld.com
 High Country Gardens www.highcountrygardens.com
 Burgess Seed & Plant Co. www.eburgess.com
 Seed Savers Exchange www.seedsavers.org
 Johnny's Selected Seeds www.johnnyseeds.com
 Ball Seed Company www.ballseed.com (also wholesale)
 Oregon Perennial Company www.oregonperennial.com (wholesale)
 Harris Seeds www.harrisseed.com (wholesale)
 Gulley Greenhouse www.gulleygreenhouse.com (wholesale)
 Burpee www.burpee.com
 DripWorks.com www.dripworks.com
 Honeycreek Nurseries www.honeycreeknurseries.com
 Stokes Seeds www.stokeseeds.com
 Annies Annuals & Perennials www.anniesannuals.com
 Wayside Gardens www.waysidegardens.com
 Raintree Nurseries www.raintreenursery.com
 Kitazawa Seed Co. www.kitazawaseed.com
 High Mowing Organic Seeds www.highmowingseeds.com
 Peaceful Valley Supply www.groworganic.com
 Sow True Seed www.sowtrueseed.com
 Veseys Seeds www.veseys.com
 Burpee www.burpee.com
 Rimol Greenhouse Systems www.rimolgreenhouses.com



**Central Peninsula Garden Club
 membership and
 general information
 is available at
www.cenpengardenclub.org,
 on facebook,
 or by contacting
 Renae Wall,
cenpengardenclub@gmail.com**

If you have another garden source you use and like, please drop me a note at sgherman677@gmail.com and I'll add them in a future newsletter.

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26 Vegetables That You Can Grow In Partial Shade



If you're starting your own veggie garden, you may be wondering which vegetables don't need full sun to grow. This [informative article](#) on [Gardening Channel](#) will give you 26 ideas for vegetables that can grow in partial shade.

Growing your own veggie garden can be very exciting and rewarding. If you're new to gardening, you may be under the impression that all vegetables need full sun to thrive. This can be a worry if you have lots of shade in your garden. Luckily, there are many vegetables that don't need full sun, and even thrive in partial shade.

Certain vegetables are actually better off in partial shade than in full sun. For example, carrots grow more foliage in full sun, but in partial shade they grow less foliage and larger carrots. Radishes and turnips also do better in partial shade. There are many other vegetables that thrive in partial shade:

Full Sun Vegetables

1. Cucumbers
2. Eggplant
3. Peppers
4. Squash
5. Tomatoes

Partial Sun Vegetables

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Beans | 8. Leek |
| 2. Beets | 9. Onions |
| 3. Broccoli | 10. Pea |
| 4. Cabbage | 11. Radish |
| 5. Carrots | 12. Rutabaga |
| 6. Cauliflower | 13. Turnips |
| 7. Coriander | |

Source: [Gardening Channel](#) via thinkstuff.com

Light Shade Vegetables

1. Arugula
2. Endive
3. Kale
4. Leaf Lettuce
5. Mustard Greens
6. Spinach
7. Swiss chard



December Program Summary

Soil Health and How to Build Your Soil

Presented by Dr. David Ianson, NRCS Soil Conservationist

Dave Ianson is known to some of us as the "high tunnel site visit expert" on the central peninsula. He knows more about soil than most of us will learn in a lifetime, and he shared some of that knowledge with us in December's general meeting presentation.

For instance, did you know that lightning fixes nitrogen in the soil similarly to legumes? Or did you know that snow has been called "poor man's fertilizer", or that alders are a nitrogen-fixing plant?

Most importantly, here's what he recommends to improve your own soil:

- Keep your bare soil covered with a cover crop
- Plant a variety of plants to increase your soil's diversity, i.e. health
- Keep living roots in the soil as long as possible
- Disturb the soil as little as possible

Thanks Dave for a great educational presentation!