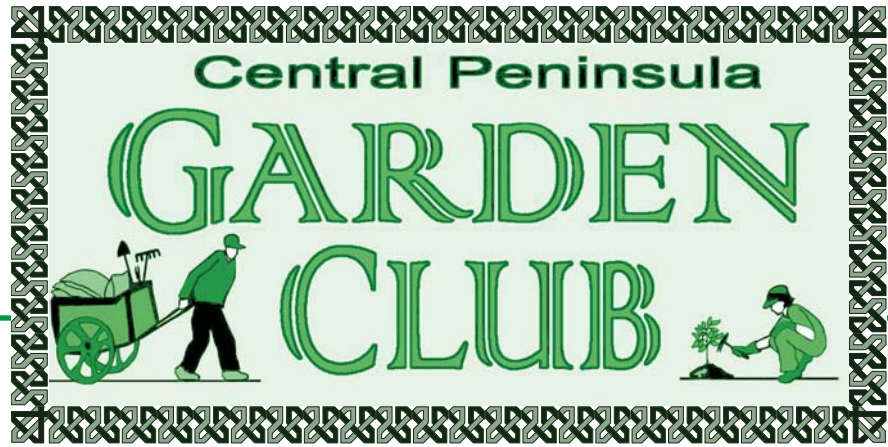


March 2013

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)
- 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*

March 12th—*One-on-One Discussion Groups* Seed Starting & More Garden Planning..Round Tables!

Given the eager-for-more-information crowd at February's program, the decision was made to offer MORE Garden Planning & Seed Starting information with about ten small group Round Tables for One-on-One communication. Several of the CPGC board members and other experienced growers will lead tables and share their expertise. Bring your questions and get the low down on where to start, discuss your new challenges, or talk about how to keep what you have going and growing.

Some of the table leaders will be Cathy Haas, Judy Fischer, Don Adams, Sarah Donchi, Don Thompson, Will & Jane Madison and more.

Be sure to pick up a copy of Jeff Lowenfels seed starting schedule at every round table location, and don't forget about the incredible grower resources at the Extension Office on K-Beach, next to Doors & Windows glass business.

FYI, the parking area will be a bit larger with the snow pushed back further than it was in February. And of course, we'll have more than an hour of increased daylight between now and then for easier maneuvering.

Time: 7pm

Location: Cook Inlet Aquaculture Assn. on Kalifornsky Beach Road, between KSRM and the Bridge Access Road intersection.

Free and open to the public. Refreshments and sometimes door prizes.

Thanks to those who help out with cookies and door prizes! Greatly appreciated.

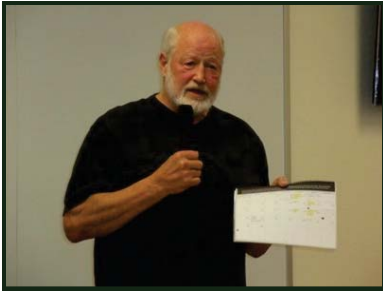
Great Cabin Fever Reliever Found on Netflix

Need a good mid-winter gardening "fix"? **Rosemary & Thyme** is a British miniseries set in the beautiful countryside of England and Spain.

Plant pathologist Rosemary Boxer and Laura Thyme, former constable and avid gardener, are in business together creating and renovating gardens. Somehow a body or two always turns up so, along with their gardening skills, help solving mysteries and catching criminals comes into play. If a dose of colorful flowers and greenery set amid gorgeous old homes and estates seems in order, try **Rosemary & Thyme**.

~Contributed by Becky Holloway, potter & gardener, Clay Otter Pottery

February 12th Program—Garden Planning 101



Above: Garden Planning 101 program panelist and CPGC board member, Don Thompson, shows his calendar for handy record keeping in the garden. Don has two high tunnels, several smaller greenhouses, extensive outside gardens and much more.

Below: Garden Planning 101, panel members, Judy Fischer, Carolyn Chapman and Don Adams visit with audience members after the program.



Talk about a room full of gardeners, hungry for information. I don't know that I've seen a group more eager to learn and in light of that, the March 12th program is now Seed Starting and More Garden Planning 101 – Round tables. More on that on page 1.

Panelists for the February program were Judy Fischer, Don Adams, Carolyn Chapman and Don Thompson, all with extensive and varied gardening experience. (I hope to have most of them serve as round table leaders on March 12th.) Don Adams brought seed starting equipment that works well for him; Judy Fischer shared her fertilizer information and brought compost tea to share; others in the audience shared their simple to complex seed starting methods.

There were a number of questions about fertilizer/compost and a variety of answers but all the panelists agree that the soil has to be built up first and that does take time.

Record keeping was also emphasized by the panelists. Each one talked about what worked for them from a detailed notebook to noting information on a calendar placed in a handy location. Seed starting records included: seed viability, germination time for each variety, growth record, transplant dates, production of plants and flavor (such as tomatoes), and then the end-of-season results. Of course, weather conditions would also be noted during the season. The first year of record keeping is important but having years of your own records (like all our panelists) provides valuable guidelines for decision making and what needs to be done to maintain and improve your growing methods and soils.

~Marion Nelson



Above & right and also on page one: Fischer's Fresh Farm Produce images thanks to Judy Fischer who was one of the February 12th program panelists. She spoke about her organic gardening methods and soil building.

An Item from the information filled February 2013 online edition of the Avant Gardener newsletter (avantgardener.info)



ROUNDUP SHOWING SEVERE HEALTH RISKS. Both the Food and Chemical Toxicology magazine and the American Chemical Society Journal are reporting that Roundup, a popular weed killer, and other glysohate weed killers (the same chemical used in Agent Orange to defoliate jungles during the Vietnam War), are showing severe health risks in new studies, not only as residue on fresh food crops such as corn, but also in many of the packaged foods we eat. A way to avoid foods contaminated by Round-up is to grow your own, buy locally from organic farmers at local farmers' markets, and shop for organic certified foods in the grocery store.

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

High Tunnels & Potatoes—Ramblings by Will Hightower

I had a pleasant surprise at the grocery store (we still have plenty of potatoes from last year’s garden, but are running low on baking size spuds). Stopped by the store for some big ‘taters and all of the potatoes at the Soldotna Safeway were Alaskan grown! Sometimes when a person gets involved in or supports a cause, it feels like you’re beating your head against a brick wall. On Jan 27th, I saw good results. I do not even own a “Grown in Alaska” shirt, shame on me.

Different topic: last fall we were in the kitchen and the idea struck me that a high tunnel might be a good idea. What a change of mind for me! We had talked about high tunnels, but where could we place one on our property? The tunnels that friends have were large affairs. Such a structure would take up most of our yard. The alpacas would not like loosing that much grass.

Three years ago I started making DIY tunnels. I call them mid-tunnels. My tunnels are not as big as the standard high tunnels but they do extend the growing season and allow for a wider variety of plants to be cultivated.

I had placed my DIY tunnels in the fenced garden area. This chopped up the garden and left areas under-used. Why not rip out the garden area? The entire garden. The DYI tunnels, the dead birch, the apple trees, the berry bushes, etc. Do some leveling and put one of ‘them” big high tunnels in the “new” garden spot. Measure, measure, and yes it will work! Let’s get started. The apple trees will love living in an large high tunnel.

The government even has a program to make high tunnels affordable. A good idea. With financial backing what could be better? Oh, I forgot, I’m looking for assistance from “the government of gridlock”. A farm bill and “my high tunnel” are so far down the list....

A month ago I was reading a “back to the land” magazine that had an article on DIY arched greenhouses. The arches were laminated ribs top and bottom with spacers between the ribs. An arched truss, so to speak, that could span the width of a high tunnel. The author, I believe, lived in Skagway when he built the greenhouse.

I cannot remember if the greenhouse article was in “Mother Earth News” or “Countryside”. The issue would have been published in the last year. If anyone has knowledge of which magazine and issue, would you please contact me? I figure, even as slow as I am, I can have a high tunnel before “the government” passes a farm bill.

In the meantime I think I’ll start preparing my DIY greenhouses, replace end doors, ripping out dead tomatoes, organizing the strawberry boxes, and hauling chunks of (frozen) compost.

Does anyone have lentil growing knowledge?



Shrubs and flowers in Mexico, sent by Elaine Pate.

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



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

The Midwinter Wish for Color

By Mary Starrs Armstrong

We just spent a few days at our lakeside cabin. We trudge through gorgeous white snow unblemished by sand or plows. We notice only moose and rabbit prints.

Eight inches of white covers the frozen lake. Perfect for cross country skiing, snow shoeing and snow machining. The mountains encircling the lake offer a hint of blue gray up to the edge of it heavy snow cover. Brief sunshine illuminates the glittering white. This is Alaskan winter at its finest.

Back at home I continue to marvel at the frosty beauty surrounding me. I stare out the window and am amused by the dozens of red-polls that found the sunflower seeds. Then I'm startled by a big, bright, red grosbeak that suddenly joined the herd. Oh my! What a sight! I froze, not wanting to disturb the scene.

The grosbeak's color matched my still-blooming Thanksgiving cactus and made a memorable tableau. I found my camera and snapped a few. And then it dawned on me: Color! That's what I am craving. The red feathers drew my eye from the red of the bloom and made me smile and laugh. Color! I'm starved for it.

I don't think I'm going to resort to growing celery or ginger, as Jeff suggested a few weeks ago, to break the cycle of whiteness and relieve the itchiness to grow something. While his ideas are intriguing, I'm going for some color: cut flowers, a new tablecloth and tie dye colored paper napkins. Color. Let's jazz it up with some of those primary and secondary shades and tints. I'm going for it.

I strung my red green and yellow chili pepper lights around the bay window. In fact I'm going to paint one of my walls red. Today.

The poet Mary O'Neil writes:
The colors live between black and white
In a land that we know best by sight.
But knowing best isn't everything,
For colors dance and colors sing
And colors laugh and colors cry—*...

I say we should dance and sing and laugh with some color. Let's get beyond white.



A red visitor outside the Armstrong's window near the Thanksgiving Cactus.

*From *Hailstones and Halibut Bones* Doubleday Publishers, 1989

Lowenfels in Space

From the Anchorage Daily News Sunday, Feb 24th column, the "Alaska Ear", written by Sheila Toomey:

WOW . . . Guess who our own Jeff Lowenfels is schooling in planting? Astronaut Don Pettit, recently returned from six months on the International Space Station (his third sojourn there).

Dr. Pettit, a chemical engineer, experimented with growing plants in space on this trip and filed "Diary of a Space Zucchini" from the station. (Plant people can find it on the NASA blog fragileoasis.org.) Space Zuc also has a [Twitter account](#).

"I had no soil but due to your teachings, I brought a teaspoon of dry soil in my personal effects in which to start my (compost) tea," Pettit wrote Jeff in an email after he got back. How cool is that!

Jeff Lowenfels Feb 20th A D N column on "Gardening with Kitchen Scraps" is timely for all who just have to get something growing now and it's easy!

<http://www.adn.com/2013/02/20/2796563/lowenfels-start-gardening-with.html>

Heads Up! 2013 Programs & Volunteer Opportunities

April 9th – **Basic Garden Irrigation.** U-Plan, U-Install. Start small and add on as needed or afforded. Presented by Amy Olmstead, Anchorage Master Gardener and Gardening Instructor.

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** Aug17-18, 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 or near 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, February 2013

Beginning Balance	\$15,382.69
Income:	
Dues	\$610.00
Newsletter Ads	<u>\$300.00</u>
	\$910.00
Expenses:	
Monthly Programs	(\$150.00)
Printing	(\$31.82)
4-H Jr Master Garden Program	(\$200.00)
Extension Service Sponsorship	<u>(\$200.00)</u>
	(\$581.82)
Ending Balance	\$15,837.22

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

**MARION'S
PLAN & PLANT**

MARION K. NELSON
phone 907.283.4632
cell 907.398.8669

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

2013 Alaska Master Gardeners Conference

April 6, 2013, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Palmer Community Center (The Depot)
610 S. Valley Way, Palmer, AK 99645

Presented by
MAT-SU Master Gardener's Club



Key Note Speaker:
Tim Meyers
of
Meyers Farm,
Bethel, Alaska

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Space is limited so register early

Name: _____

Name of Business: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email: _____ Fax: _____

Phone: (Day) _____ Phone: (Other): _____

- Conference registration fee \$75 (includes lunch and snacks) Please Pay by March 15th
- Payment enclosed \$_____, Check # or Cash: _____. (Please make check payable to: MMG or Mat-su Master Gardeners). Receipts will not be mailed, they will be included in your registration packet on the day of the conference.

Register and pay online at: www.matsumastergardeners.org
Mail registration to: Mat-Su Master Gardeners, PO Box 598, Palmer, AK 99645