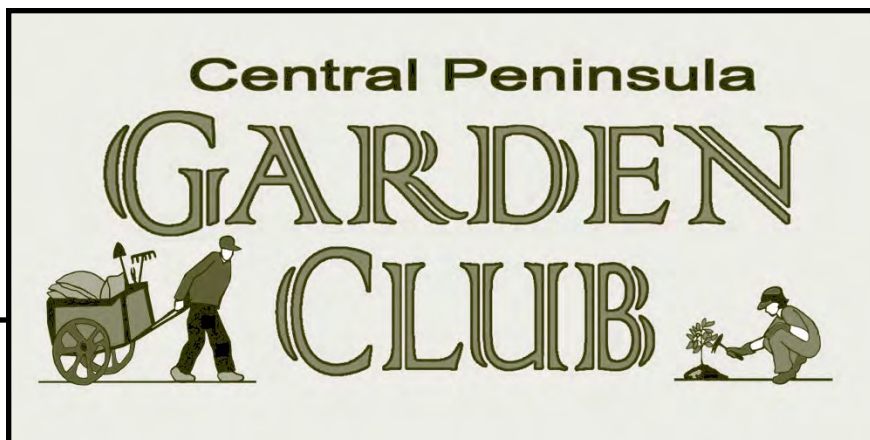


May 2013

Central Peninsula Garden Club



PO Box 767 · Kenai, Alaska 99611 · [www.cenpengardenclub.org](http://www.cenpengardenclub.org)

May 14th—Presented by Pam Voeller

## What About These High Tunnels and the Cost Share Program?

Remember the weather last summer? Did it seem cooler than usual or just a typical season? Most gardeners in Alaska, almost every year, feel they could use a few more warm days. More and more Alaskans are gardening in high tunnels to extend and warm the growing season to ensure their crops mature or so they can grow those vegetables that are barely hardy in Alaska. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can cost share the purchase and construction of a high tunnel for eligible growers through the Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative.

If this sounds interesting to you but you're wondering how the program works, whether you are eligible, and how to apply, Pam Voeller, Soil Conservationist, will take you through the process from application to contract and answer any questions you might have. She will have a brief power point presentation including pictures of a variety of high tunnels in this area.



Pam is a Soil Conservationist and has worked out of the NRCS Kenai field office since 2008. She has helped many growers in our community work through the process of planning, applying, and contracting for high tunnels and other NRCS practices.

**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.

## NRCS Program Application Deadline

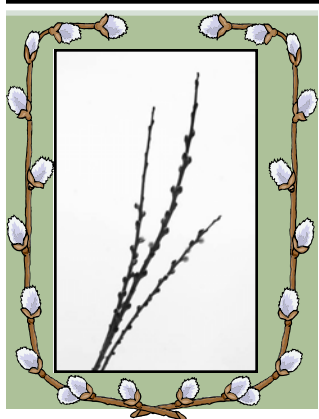
~The Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative, funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), is designed to assist producers in addressing a resource concern by improving plant and soil quality, reducing nutrient and pesticide transport, and reducing energy use by providing consumers with a local source of fresh produce.

~NRCS can also help address other resource concerns through practices such as animal waste management, pasture management, and electric bear fencing.

~NRCS is accepting applications to cost-share the purchase of a high tunnel or help with other resource issues. Applications received by **June 15, 2013** will be considered for funding in 2014. Applications submitted after that date will be evaluated and considered for later funding opportunities. Producers, including individuals, legal entities, Indian Tribes, or joint operation, must submit a complete program application to be considered for financial assistance through EQIP.

~If you are interested in participating in the EQIP, contact your local NRCS office at:

110 Trading Bay St, Suite 160, Kenai, AK 99611,  
(907) 283-8732, or email [pamela.voeller@ak.usda.gov](mailto:pamela.voeller@ak.usda.gov)



### 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*

## Gardening Workshops May 4, 11, 18, 25 – Every Saturday

Our popular, annual spring Workshop Weekend event has become one of those “rites of spring” for CPGC members. Some have said, “Oh I just love May because of all the workshops!” They are fun and informative. Thanks to Liz Dowler’s volunteer help we have a great line up and lots of variety from which to choose.

Advance registration is required for most workshops as group sizes vary and they take place in several locations. Some workshops are close to filling, so email your selections now. The full schedule can be seen on the club’s web site, [www.cenpengardenclub.org](http://www.cenpengardenclub.org) or by contacting Marion Nelson for an email version, 283-4632. Registration will also be available at the club’s Home Show booth on Saturday, May 26 and Sunday May 27, at the Sports Arena. The fee for most is \$5pp, some are free. Proceeds support CPGC’s programs and workshop expenses.

The club is co sponsoring the Kenai Birding Festival speaker, Carla Stanley, for her garden-birding presentation “Wildscaping: Sharing your Space with Wildlife”, 3pm, May 18th at the Kenai Visitor Center. This event is open to the public and does not require registration.

### Workshop Topics:

#### May 4

Making a Hanging Flower Basket  
Integrating Gardening & Honeybee Keeping  
Parasites: Advantages, Why Do I Want Them?  
Seed Saving Made Easy  
Making & Using Compost  
Growing Food in Limited Space & Season Extender Tools

#### May 11

Home Greenhouse Management (X3)  
Ask The Plant  
Recycled Glass Garden Totems  
Composting & Successful Crops in Raised Beds

#### May 18

Ergonomics of Gardening  
Bigger, Better, Faster Compost  
Garden Planning & Charting  
Photographing Flowers & Plants  
Raised Beds  
Wildscaping: Sharing your Space with Wildlife  
(shared with the Kenai Birding Festival)

#### May 25

Advantages & Disadvantages of a High Tunnel  
Compost and Ready Dirt (X2)  
Biodiversity  
Clematis Flowering Vine  
Lawn Development and Maintenance  
Chicks to Chickens!

BTW, we could really use help videoing the workshops! Please notify asap.

And, please take pictures during the workshops in which you participate and send a couple of the best ones to Marion, [mmkn@ptialaska](mailto:mmkn@ptialaska) for the June newsletter.

Thank you to all the workshop presenters who volunteer their time and share their knowledge with us.

~Marion Nelson

*Thank you to Linda Dunn  
and daughter Krista*

*for volunteering their time and videoing most of  
our monthly programs. This is a wonderful gift  
of time and talent to the club.*

*If you ordered disks and haven't picked them up,  
please contact Linda asap and pay the nominal  
cost of \$3 each for your order. Linda - 262-  
4465.*

## Burger Bus



**OPEN YEAR ROUND**  
**Monday—Saturday**  
**11am to 6pm**  
**CLOSED SUNDAY**  
**283-9611**

## April 9th Program—Irrigation, U-Plan It, U-Install It Presented by Amy Olmstead of Anchorage



*Amy Olmstead demonstrating how to use irrigation system components for the "U-Plan It, U-Install It" irrigation program on April 9th.*

Amy gave all of us many things to consider when planning to self-install a home irrigation system. She explained the logic of an irrigation layout, drew diagrams and explaining as she drew, what pieces and parts to use and why. Then came the actual small scale assembling of all the pieces to properly irrigate a garden, around a tree, and a shrub area. Amy left the demonstration assembly with us to share at future meetings. She also gave us some irrigation supply references.

She complimented the club, saying "What a warm group."

Amy lives in Anchorage, is a teacher, a Master Gardener, and gives this irrigation talk to gardening groups and friends.

Thank you Amy for a very informative and entertaining program.

Amy can be reached at [KAOlmstead@pci.net](mailto:KAOlmstead@pci.net)

~Marion Nelson



*Amy showing how to place irrigation lines near plants, trees and general growing areas. Photos by Tiffany Grimm.*

## Annual 4-H Tree & Shrub Sale, May 18th

This is to announce the Kenai Peninsula District 4-H Leader's Council, Annual Tree and Shrub Sale. The event will be held on May 18th at the Soldotna Creek Park sales will promptly begin at 10 AM. All sales will be first-come-first-serve and no pre-orders will be taken.

Customers are encouraged to be earlier rather than later as it is common for much of the stock and variety of available species to be sold within the first hour or two. Participating 4-H clubs also have the opportunity to sell hand-crafts and baked goods at the sale, so be sure to bring plenty of cash to support your local 4-H's as they work to, "Learn By Doing," and to, "Make the Best Better!"

For more information contact: Jason Floyd, 4-H and Youth Development Agent, 907-262-5824.

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## Urban Gardens - Will's Ramblings by Will Hightower

RaeEllen sent me an email the other day with a link to a TED talk. TED stands for Technology, Entertainment and Design. It is a series of short (18 minute) talks on many topics by known and unknown people. These talks can be watched online. There is also "The TED radio show" on public radio. The talk Rae wanted me to watch was by Ron Finley. Ron is a "gorilla" gardener in south central L.A. He plants street parking strips (the area between sidewalks and streets) with vegetables. The idea is to provide inner city people with produce. Try to watch his talk.

I got to thinking about the Kenai Peninsula. We really have many people in need of food. We also have master gardener programs planting many public areas with flowers for the tourist trade. What if we planted the public areas with vegetables? This could be a collaboration between the Food Bank and the master gardeners. Like Ron says in his talk, who cares if people take produce? The object is to feed people and it saves time harvesting.

Please watch: [www.ted.com/talks/ron\\_finley\\_a\\_guerilla\\_gardener\\_in\\_south\\_central\\_la.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/ron_finley_a_guerilla_gardener_in_south_central_la.html)

Ideas worth spreading.

## Gemma and Gramdma Tutu in the Garden—By Gemma Amorelli

Every year my Grandma Tutu and I try something new in the garden. Two years ago we attempted Purple Brussels Sprouts, and ended up with one handful of leafy "peas" for the entire harvest. We planted some potatoes in the yard last Spring, a bad year for potatoes in Alaska, and had teeny little "jelly bean" sized red potatoes. Moral of the story? Some of the growables up here in Alaska are at the mercy of Mother Nature. However, our unique weather and light patterns can, every once in a while, fluke an amazing crop. This was the case last Summer, when we harvested our "Dinosaur Kale".

We purchased a six-pack of them at Anchor Point Greenhouse along with all of the other garden plants. They were pretty little starts, with long, slender leaves. The leaves were such a dark green, almost purple in color. It was the first year we had ever seen this particular plant. We knew immediately that it was going to be something special, because it grew like a weed after planting it. After just two weeks in the ground, we were able to harvest some of the leaves. In another month, the leaves were three feet long and six inches across! There are a few things that set Dinosaur Kale apart from generic, every-day Kale. It is a much darker variety, with long flat leaves, unlike most "crinkled" leaf Kale. This variety has much more flavor and produces more crop than you will know what to do with! There is something about this plant that absolutely thrived in our beautiful (sometimes finicky) Alaskan garden on the bluff. It is great hardy plant for beginning gardeners, and a trophy plant for experienced ones.



If you would like to grow "Dinosaur Kale", you may need to order starts from a local greenhouse, or get it early. This variety sold out last year from many places, and has been highly requested. Plant it in full sun, in either a raised bed, planter, or directly into the ground. Leave a foot and a half (at least) between different starts, and know that it is such a beautiful plant, you may even want to include it in a flower garden or a visible area. Try laying cut leaves on a greased cookie sheet, and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and salt. Bake it until crisp, and you will have a healthy snack food that tastes better than potato chips!

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## Dream Coming True—By Larissa Phillips

I grew up in the suburbs of Salt Lake City, UT on 1/8th acre city lots, and lived in four different houses. At each home, my parents were adamant about eking out a garden. We grew tomatoes, squash, lettuce, cucumbers, carrots, all kinds of herbs, flowers and even tried corn once, along with other great vegetables you can grow in the desert climate. My parents always made sure I had a little plot of dirt so I could plant my own little flower garden.

At 19, I moved to Alaska and it was difficult finding apartments with any garden space. The first one I lived in with growing space, I planted only perennials but when I moved some years later, I couldn't bring any of my beautiful, mature flowers with me so I dug them up and gave them away. I vowed then, that I wouldn't grow perennials again until I had my own home and would only plant vegetables and annuals in flower pots and hanging baskets.



*Raised beds made of concrete blocks.*

Two years ago my fiancée Chris and I bought our first house that sits on 2.75 acres, all wild, no landscaping, no yard,



*Walkway leading to fire pit surrounded by pavers.*

no garden. I finally had a clean slate where I could build my very own dream garden. We saved our money, did our research, watched lots of how-to YouTube videos, sought advice from gardening friends and came up with a plan. Last summer, we hired a contractor to rip out tree stumps, bring in some dirt to level out the grade and put down some top soil and a built a gravel pad for a garden. Chris and I built a fire pit (see picture) surrounded by a 19' diameter circle out of pavers and a path to the garden with the pavers as well. We made three raised beds (see picture) out of cinder blocks, 40' long, two are 4' wide and one is 3' wide, built a 6' tall rail fence and put in a lawn. As if that wasn't enough, with the help of our grandpa, we assembled one of those 12x12 greenhouse kits from SBS. The roof went on two hours before the first snowfall. Amazingly, I was able to plant a few herbs and strawberries at the beginning of August and harvested a few bunches of mint and a couple strawberries in September.

The moose destroyed our new grass so we will need to fix that this spring, put the gate on the fence and figure out a heating system for the greenhouse and build shelves. I will also try to start all my plants from organic, heirloom, open-pollinated seeds. It's snowing as I write this and it's going to be a few months before I can start enjoying the "fruits" of our labor but with a lot of work, a little luck and huge dose of loving support from Chris, I can finally see my garden dreams coming true!

~Larissa Phillips

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MARION K. NELSON  
phone 907.283.4632  
cell 907.398.8669

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## Upcoming CPGC Events & Volunteer Opportunities!

**Now-May 11th** – SeaAg Fertilizer Fundraiser. Order 50lb bags and 5 lb jugs. Advance order and pay only. Tim Meyers uses SeaAg as do many local growers. Delivery May 11th, 9am-2pm at Snug Harbor Seafood parking lot. Contact: Don St. John 394-4474 or email: [akdon@acsalaska.net](mailto:akdon@acsalaska.net)

**April 27-28.** Home Show booth at the Soldotna Sports Arena. Order SeaAG Fertilizer and sign up for Workshop Weekend workshops! Some are full, others are filling. We will also have two seminars in the multi-purpose room: 2pm - Soil Block Makers, 3pm - High Tunnels. Volunteer for a shift in the booth - Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5. Contact: Tiffany Grimm, 740-0033, [beachjun-kyusa@gmail.com](mailto:beachjun-kyusa@gmail.com)

**May 4, 11, 18, 25** – Workshop Weekends! Lots of workshops every Saturday: Raised beds, compost, greenhouse management, parasites and their advantages, seed saving, making compost, ergonomics of gardening, garden planning and charting, pros and cons of high tunnels, Wildscaping, biodiversity, lawn development and maintenance, bee keeping, high tunnels, chicks to chickens, photographing flowers & plants, hanging flower basket, high production from small areas, plant issues, glass garden totems (gather lots 2nd hand glass to share/trade). Schedule and Registration via email and at the Home Show booth. Register now: [mmkn@ptialaska.net](mailto:mmkn@ptialaska.net) or call 283 4632 for more information.

**May 11th - SeaAg fertilizer delivery day.** Be prepared to load your 50 lb bags and 5 lb jugs into your vehicle. There will be help on hand. Don St. John 394-4474 Advance orders.

**\*\*May 14th Monthly Program: What about these High Tunnels & the Cost Share Program?** Presenter Pam Voeller, USFA & Natural Conservation Service and others. 7pm. Location: Aquaculture Bldg. Open to the public. Refreshments and sometimes door prizes.

**May 18th, 10AM, 4-H Tree & Shrub sale.** Soldotna Creek Park. First come, first served.  
[http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/kenai/4-h-Tree Sale Brochure 2013-\(2\)-\(1\).pdf](http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/kenai/4-h-Tree%20Sale%20Brochure%202013-(2)-(1).pdf)

**(Kenai Birding Festival May 16-19.)**

**May 18th, 3pm - Carla Stanley will give a presentation on "Wildscaping"** at the Kenai Visitor Center, co-sponsored by the Kenai Birding Festival and CPGC. Gardening tips to encourage birds to your area and live with wildlife in your location. Free and open to the public. [kenaibirdfest.com](http://kenaibirdfest.com)

**June 4, 7pm - Presentation: "PARADISE ON EARTH: The Beautiful Flowers of Kashmir"** from Chris Chadwell, Freelance Lecturer, Himalayan Consultant from the National Rock Garden

Society. His adventures in the Himalayas, and elsewhere are quite amazing. Location- Aquaculture Bldg. K-Beach Rd. **\*\*We need one night's lodging and host for this speaker. Contact Marion, 283 4632.**

**June 8th - Annual Garden Club Plant Sale!** Divide your plants as they start popping up and pot up those extra starts for the sale. Early plant drop off Fri evening 6-7pm, Saturday am plant drop off, 8-9am. Sale opens 10am sharp. Proceeds go toward 4-H awards and club programs. Plant Sale Chairs, Cathy Haas, Judy Platz.

**July & August- Summer Garden Tours!** Paid up members only – a membership benefit. Advance registration required. These are very popular and fill up fast. Make sure your dues are paid up so you don't miss this summer highlight.

### More Volunteer Opportunities

**August (date tba)** – Area Garden Tour Fundraiser, co sponsored by the Soldotna Chamber. There will be 5-8 area destinations and we need 20- 30 volunteer hosts for 3 hour shifts. Greeter Hosts are essential for this event. Please help with a shift or two plus 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. contact Chris Cook, 252-7929

**June-Sept.** - Summer, weekly garden maintenance at the Aquaculture Bldg., contact Peggy Morris, 262-8374

**Aug17-18** - Ninilchik Fair CPGC info table. (Take a shift or two) Contact Chris Cook, 260-6616

**Some months** –Videographer back up for programs and workshops. 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. Central location best, contact Marion, 283 4632

**Grant writing talent** - contact Marion, 283 4632

**Your suggestions and involvement are essential and greatly appreciated.**

To place ads, submit stories or pictures, contact Marion Nelson, 283-4632 or [mmkn@ptialaska.net](mailto:mmkn@ptialaska.net)  
Newsletter layout/production—Pam Voeller