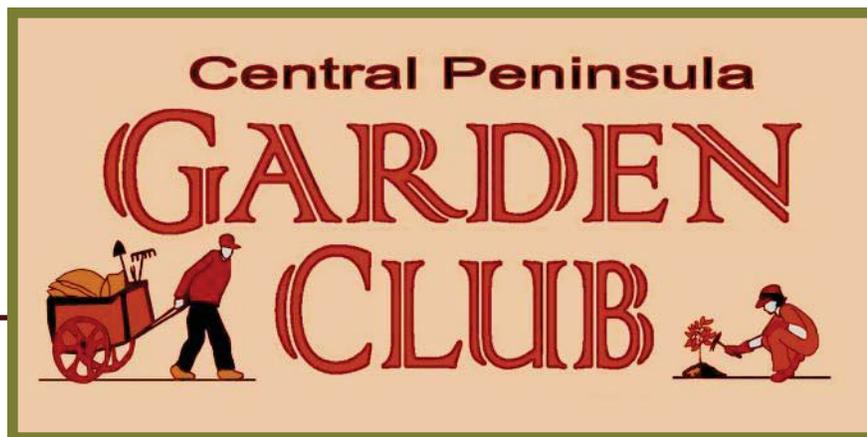


November 2012

Central Peninsula Garden Club



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



## Men Who Compost and the Worms Who Love Them—November 13th Program

### 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*

The guys who will make up our panel for the November program will have a lot of compost information to share and vermiculture! If you don't know, that's the 50¢ term for worm composting. "Red Wigglers" are the most common home composting worm but there are others that get introduced to your compost pile accidentally or that ride in by other means. We'll hear about them, see samples and learn about what they do in outdoor compost or garden areas vs. what happens if they choose to venture elsewhere.

**Time: 7pm**

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

Programs are free and open to the public. Refreshments served and sometimes door prizes. For more information, check out the club website, or email Marion Nelson at [mmkn@ptialaska.net](mailto:mmkn@ptialaska.net).

In the meantime take a look at the three minute home how-to composting with worms video at **Fine Gardening.com**: <http://www.finegardening.com/how-to/videos/worm-composting-vermicompost-worm-castings.aspx>.



"A pound of worms can eat 3-5 pounds of scraps a week!"



## Vermicomposting from the Fine Gardening Web Site

Vermicomposting makes the most of small spaces. The worms do the work—you just need to bury your food waste under moistened bedding material. The bedding is made from shredded paper, dead leaves, or straw. It is an excellent option for those living in apartments or other small spaces. Depending on what region of the country you live in, it can be done outdoors, in your basement, or in an attached garage. It can also be done in a 15-gallon con-

*Continued on page 2.*

## Vermicomposting (continued from page 1)

tainer kept under the kitchen sink.

Worms are amazing little workers. Red wigglers (*Eisenia fetida*) are best suited for home composting. They are comfortable living in an opaque box filled with bedding material, and will reproduce and happily eat your food waste. Worm castings are a rich, desirable amendment for everything in your garden.

There are several options for harvesting the finished compost. One of the simplest methods is to move all of the contents to one side of the bin, adding fresh, moistened bedding material and fresh food waste to the empty side. The worms will migrate over to the newer bedding over a period of several weeks, and you can harvest the finished side—worm-free. When vermicomposting, however, you'll need to keep all food scraps buried to keep fruit flies from becoming a nuisance.

## Dr. Stephen Brown to Present “Chicken U” at the CPGC January 8th, 2013 Program

Mark your calendar for Stephen Brown's “Chicken U” presentation to the CPGC on January 8th, just after he returns from leading a group to the highest mountain in the Caribbean, Pico Duarte. He's currently raising Chanticleer chickens that are cold hardy. Sarah Donchi of Kenai Feed will bring in a few of her own Chanticleer chickens for show and tell.



*Extension Agent, Dr. Stephen Brown of Palmer, with a tiny chick.*

## “Chicken U” Goes to Indonesia

In 1958 William Lederer and Eugene Burdick published the now iconic book "The Ugly American". It chronicles the failures of American Foreign policy in the fictitious Southeast Asian country of Sarkan. Sarkan is trying to resist communist ambitions to overthrow the country. Through American government incompetence, hypocrisy and corruption, the communists make easy headway in convincing locals that communism is in their best interests.

What the communist most fear and want to stop, though, is the individual efforts of ordinary Americans to make a difference in Sarkanian lives. Through several vignettes the authors tell the story of these positive yet far reaching efforts.

One individual, a Catholic priest, wins the trust of locals by learning to speak their language and eating native foods...unlike the American ambassador who does neither. Another story is about an American engineer who figures out how to create a manual water pump for farmers out of locally available bicycle parts...unlike the U.S. State Department's desire to bring in expensive electric water pumps (Sarkan has little electricity) for which there are no spare parts or knowledge of how to fix them when they break.

My favorite character is about an American Cooperative Extension Service Agent who visits the country and teaches peasant farmers how to better raise small chicken flocks. Learning to grow their own source of low cost protein is worth far more than the tons of free grain the American government is providing. If anything, this book should be called "The Wonderful American" because it illustrates how effective America can be when it gives a "hand-up" rather than a "hand-out".

I first read that book more than 20 years and its premise has formed my core philosophy ever since. Its premise is also the underpinnings of the Cooperative Extension Service nationwide and the reason I so love my job.

In a wonderful twist of fate, I will likely be heading to Southeast Asia (Indonesia) this March to, among other things, teach small flock chicken farming! Hopefully, the "Chicken University" program that I developed in Alaska will have a far-reaching impact on poor Indonesians.

~Stephen C. Brown

## Berry Picking Memories With My Grandma

As a boy I would spend a month of each summer at my grandparents ranch in the high Rocky Mountains of Colorado. It was true working ranch where my daily chores included feeding the cattle and horses, gathering eggs from the chickens, and helping my grandma Martha in the garden. The garden was such an important part of the ranch; the vegetables harvested from it would feed my grandparents and others on the ranch throughout the summer, and after having been "put up" in one form or another, the vegetables would feed them throughout the winter as well.

My recollection of the garden was that it was free of weeds, and the soil was rich and dark as coffee grounds. It got that way with tender care from my grandma, and the occasional addition of a load or two of the prior year's cow manure gathered from one of the surrounding pastures. There were many rows of carrots, turnips, rutabagas, and other root vegetables in the garden, as well as strawberries and raspberries. I don't know if my grandma loved working in the garden, but I loved being there with her. I didn't realize it at the time, but spending time in that garden, helping her, was imprinting on my brain and I suspect the reason why I enjoy my garden as much as I do today.

My grandma was an expert at making various jams and jellies from not only the garden berries, but from wild berries that were abundant on the ranch. One of her favorite wild berries was the gooseberry. She would enlist her free labor (myself and my sister Dru) for regular outings to pick gooseberries. When we would arrive at an area to pick she would hand each of us an old lard can with a handle, and tell us to go to work. My grandma's hands were tough, and well worn from years of ranch life, and as I recall she would maneuver her arms and hands between the thorny branches and limbs of the gooseberry bushes, and pick the berries with ease. I on the other hand required a pair of gloves to protect my hands from the thorns, and although the gloves did protect my hands, they did not make it easy to pick the berries. I was always amazed at how little time it took my grandma to fill her bucket, and how long it took me to get an inch or two of berries in mine. I recall always wanting to be done with the berry picking, and get back to the ranch to do something that I felt was more important.

When my wife and I moved into our home in Kenai years ago, we planted a number of gooseberry bushes along one of the borders of the property in memory of my grandma. The bushes serve as a nice hedgerow, and produce quite a bit of fruit each year. Above all, the bushes remind me of the time I spent with my grandma years ago. I would give anything to spend one more afternoon with her, but that won't happen in this lifetime. Ralph Waldo Emerson said "Life is journey, not a destination". I look back at my summers at the ranch and I wish I had worried less about the thorns and wanting to be somewhere else, and more about the fruit and enjoying time with my grandma.

~Charlie Weimer



*Above: A handful of the orange gooseberries that grow on one border of the Weimer yard.*

*Below: Beautiful shades of red gooseberries that remind Charlie of his grandma Martha and berry picking season at her ranch.*



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## The Greenhouse

Three summers ago my husband built a wonderful greenhouse for me. It has all the features that make my time in the greenhouse enjoyable. The raised beds are waist high, the watering system is on a timer, the split door keeps small animals out while letting those bees inside. I love just sitting in there on a rainy day, sometimes to read, sometimes to talk on the phone.

Fall cleanup is part of caring for my greenhouse. At the end of the season, each raised bed is emptied and the soil sifted through a wire screened box. The roots are removed and the soil returned to the beds. I test and add needed nutrients. The floors and walls are cleaned with a mild bleach solution as are the pots and tools. All of this makes for an easier spring.

This summer we enjoyed cabbage, kale, celery, carrots, tomatoes and squash. I also planted pansy and sweetpeas to make the whole place smell great. I am already planning for next spring and looking forward to using my greenhouse next summer.

~Gwen Preston



# POSTER CONTEST

- Where does the food you eat come from and how does it get to your plate?
- What's the connection between soil conservation, healthy soil, and the food we eat?
- Why is soil so important to life?
- Illustrate the theme "Soil to Spoon" with an eye-catching poster.

**Who Can Participate?** The poster contest is open to all students in grades K-12, in public, private or home school in Niskiski, Kenai, Soldotna, Sterling, Kasilof, and Clam Gulch

**Contest Deadline:** Friday, Nov. 2, 2012

**Location:** Drop off contest entries at

**4-H/Cooperative Extension Office,**  
43961 K-Beach Road OR

**Kenai Soil & Water Conservation District,**  
110 Trading Bay Rd., Suite 160, Kenai.

**PRIZES:** \$20 cash prize for 1st place in each category, K-1st, 2nd-3rd, 4th-6th, 7th-9th, 10th-12th. First place posters will be entered in the state competition.

### Contest Sponsors:

Kenai Soil & Water Conservation District  
Central Peninsula Garden Club  
UAF Cooperative Extension and  
4-H Boys & Girls Clubs of the Kenai Peninsula

**QUESTIONS?** Call Kenai SWCD 283-8732 x108

## Wartinbee's Hardy Gentian Plants

This Fall, after numerous frosty mornings and all the leaf raking was done, we noticed a couple gentian plants preparing to bloom in one of the rock gardens. They seemed to be suffering a seasonal mix-up.

The temperatures dropped even more and we had an early snowfall that covered all the plants. We figured that was the end to their attempt to flower. Much to our surprise, these gentians continued to bloom and the flowers pushed up through the snow.

Cold weather and snow are apparently no major hurdle for these alpine plants. So, we'll enjoy them no matter when they want to bloom.



~David & Kathy Wartinbee



## Coming up...

Nov 3 - HEA Energy Fair - CPGC Booth at Kenai Middle School. 10am—4pm. Volunteers welcome.

Nov 13 - Men Who Compost & The Worms That Love Them - Panel

Dec 11 - Rock Garden Construction and Hardy Alpine Plants - Jaime Rodriguez

Jan 8 - Chicken U-2013! Dr. Stephen Brown & Sarah Donchi & Chanticleer Chickens.

~Brief Annual Meeting immediately prior to the regular program meeting.

## Redoubt Reporter Article on Local Food Production

Jenney Neyman wrote about many of the local issues regarding growing, selling, and supplying local food in the October 24th Redoubt Reporter. See the online version at:

<http://redoubtreporter.wordpress.com/2012/10/24/homegrown-revolution-gardeners-expand-to-tackle-alaskas-food-insecurity/>

**MARION'S  
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## Treasurer's Report, October 2012

<b>Beginning Balance</b>			<b>\$14,674.24</b>
Income:	Dues	\$280.00	
		\$280.00	
Expenses:	Printing	(\$79.50)	
	Storage Unit	(\$55.00)	
		(\$134.50)	
<b>Ending Balance</b>			<b>\$14,819.74</b>
Submitted by Peggy Morris, Treasurer			



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