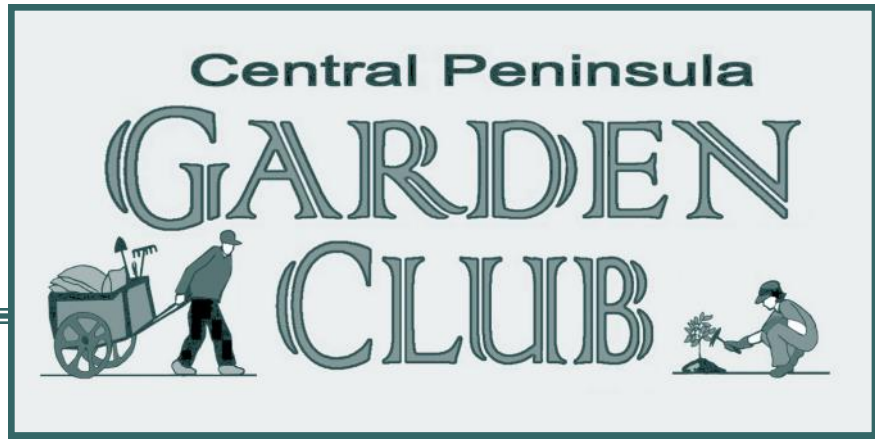


**November 2014**

Central Peninsula Garden Club



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

## **Irrigation! Plan, Prepare & Assemble**

CPGC's November 11th program can benefit outdoor gardeners and high tunnel growers who want to set up an automated system and spend more time doing something other than watering.

The program presenter is Jeff Rypka, Civil Engineer for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Jeff is an experienced gardener and has a high tunnel and outside garden himself.

He will explain the evaluation and preparation one has to do prior to putting in a system and will have the parts and pieces of his own system for show and tell. Irrigation points to consider: Time savings, water sources, water pressure evaluation, water movement from source to soil/plants, irrigation control system, drip tape procedures, and more.

Now is a great time to start planning a customized system for next year's growing season. Gather information, parts and pieces for your early-as-possible installation.

*Program Time: 7pm*

*Location: Cook Inlet Aquaculture Bldg, Mile 16.5 K-Beach Rd, not far from the Bridge Access Road intersection.*

*Free and open to the public.*

*Get there early for good parking. We've had 100 people in attendance at each of the last two program meetings.*

*Refreshments (bring some) and door prizes most of the time. We have wonderful door prizes donated by our gardener members. Thank you!*



### **Board Members**

President & Program Chair & Newsletter— Marion Nelson

Vice president—Renae Wall

Secretary—Kay Gardner

Treasurer—Peggy Morris

Plant sale Chair, Director & Historian—Cathy Haas

Director & Hospitality Chair—Juanita Owens

Director & Tech & Sea Ag Committee Chair—Don St. John

Director & Publicity—Velma Bittick

Director & Special Events Chair—Cindy Barnes

Director, Special Events—Don Thompson

Director, Special Events—Lee Bowman

## High Tunnel Panel, Oct 14th

The October 14th CPGC program panel on high tunnels and learning from those who've been growing in them for several years. Panelists were (from left) Pam Voeller, NRCS Soil Conservationist; Rupert Scribner, Kenai Feeds—retail source for high tunnels; Matt & Kim Bowser, high tunnels growers (and Matt is an Entomologist with the Moose Range); and Lee Bowman, long time tunnel grower and gardener.



### High Tunnel Resources

\* Kenai Soil & Water Conservation District sends occasional e-newsletters with information relevant to current and prospective high tunnel growers. To sign up, send an email to [kenaiswcd@gmail.com](mailto:kenaiswcd@gmail.com).

\* The District also has a webpage of helpful resources:  
<<http://kenaisoilandwater.org/projects/high-tunnel/resources/>>

\* Facebook groups dedicated to high tunnel growers:  
Homer High Tunnel Growers  
<<https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/205303872824772/>>

Soldotna/Kenai High Tunnel Growers  
(<https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/soldotnahightunnel/>)

Heidi Chay, District Manager  
**Kenai Soil & Water Conservation District**  
110 Trading Bay Suite 160, Kenai, AK 99611  
(907) 283-8732 x108

[www.kenaisoilandwater.org](http://www.kenaisoilandwater.org) <<http://www.kenaisoilandwater.org>> <<http://www.kenaisoilandwater.org>>  
[kenaiswcd@gmail.com](mailto:kenaiswcd@gmail.com)

*Nurturing sustainable agriculture on the Kenai Peninsula*



## Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil” Poster Contest Winners!

The Kenai Soil & Water Conservation District has announced the winners of the 2014 poster contest. This year’s theme – Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil – challenged students to research information about the complex living world beneath their feet and convey what they learned in their artistic posters.

### CONTEST WINNERS

#### Grades K-1

1st prize – Daniel Steffensen, 1st grade - age 6 - Connections - Teacher- his parents

#### Grades 2-3

1st prize – Emelia Malone, 3rd grade – age 8 - Mountain View Elementary - Teacher – Mrs. Morrow

#### Grades 4–6

1st prize – Maria Shaginoff, 6th grade - age 12 – KMS – Mrs. Beck

2nd prize – Arielle Hamar, 6th grade – age 11 – KMS – Mrs. Beck

2nd prize – Kaylee Lauritsen, 6th grade – age 11 – KMS – Mrs. Rolph

3rd prize – Sammy Baker, 6th grade – age 11 – KMS – Mrs. Beck

3rd prize – Owen Rolph, 6th grade – age 11 – KMS – Mrs. Beck



**First place winners in each age category (K-1st, 2nd-3rd, 4th-6th) win \$50. Second place in each age group wins \$30, and third place wins \$20.**

**Winning posters can be viewed on-line at [www.kenaisoilandwater.org](http://www.kenaisoilandwater.org).** All winners will be honored at the Central Peninsula Garden Club’s November 11th meeting, 7pm, at the Aquaculture Building, Mile 16.5, Kalifornsky Beach Rd. First place winners go on to the state contest, and state-level winners proceed to a national competition sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts.

This year’s local contest was co-sponsored by Central Peninsula Garden Club, Kenai Watershed Forum, UAF-Cooperative Extension Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Kenai Field Office. The judges were very impressed with the information and creativity shown in the posters.

**The theme for next year’s poster contest is: “Local Heroes - Your Hardworking Pollinators.”**

Deadline for entries is around September 30th, 2015. Encourage youthful artists to do some research on pollinators (start now!), create a poster and enter the local contest. They will learn a lot about our valuable, local pollinators and might go on to the state and national level competition! For more information

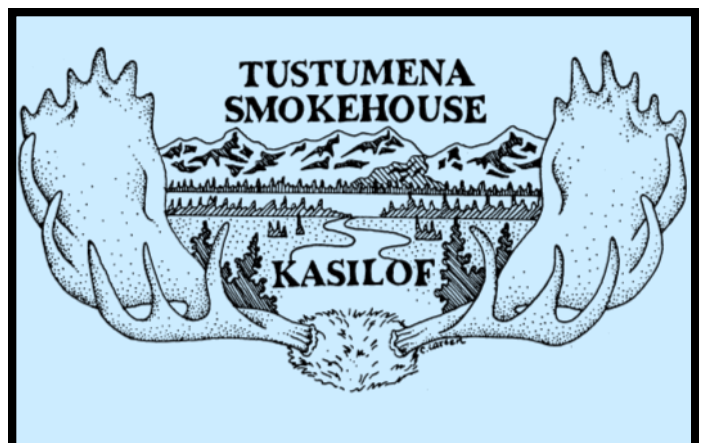
<http://www.nacdnet.org/education/contests/poster/2015>

### ALASKA FOOD FESTIVAL & CONFERENCE

Nov. 7-9, 2014 at University of Alaska Anchorage

Agenda and on-line registration at

<http://akfoodpolicycouncil.wordpress.com/conference/agenda/>



## Hot Tips on Tomatoes!

Here's the list of favorites from CPGC members. I can taste the BLTs right now!

### Lee Bowman

Orange Paruche Orange Cherry - best flavor for eating

Campari - medium red, grows well, prolific, good flavor

Principe Borghese - small Roma style, great flavor, very prolific, stores very well in the fall

Rutgers Large Red - very prolific, good flavor, good for sauce

Long Keeper - large red, good production and flavor, stores very well



### Cathy Haas

Tomato Berry- red cherry, indeterminate variety. Source - Parle Seed

Orange Paruche Orange Cherry - indeterminate. Source - Parle Seed

Nugget - very sweet, oblong orange cherry, indeterminate. Source - PMK Seed through Don Adams.

(I don't have a recommendation for a larger tomato yet, but will keep trying.)

### Don St. John

Black Cherry - 64 days to maturity; open pollinated. Large, sprawling, indeterminate, regular-leaf, vigorous tomato plants that yield abundant crops in huge clusters of 1", round, deep purple, mahogany-brown cherry tomatoes. Fruits are irresistibly delicious with sweet, rich, complex, full tomato flavors that burst in your mouth, characteristic of the best flavorful black tomatoes. Once you try it...you want MORE.

### Velma Bittick

EARLY GIRLS - HYB, SLICER, 55-70 days, RED med size fruit, indeterminate and bush varieties, prolific, taste is not spectacular, but is a good reliable producer, and I grow a few plants every year. Good for beginning tomato growers because it ALWAYS produces tomatoes.

LEMON BOY - HYB, SLICER, 70-75 days, BRIGHT YELLOW med size fruit, indeterminate, wonderful flavor, heavy producer.

EVA PURPLE BALL- HEIRLOOM< OP, SLICER, 75 days, round 4-5 oz fruit RED FLESH, indeterminate, very good flavor.

BURPEES JUBILEE- HEIRLOOM< OP, SLICER, 75 days, DEEP GOLDEN ORANGE, indeterminate, mild flavored 3 inch globes. Some fruit have a bit of red at the blossom end. An All American Selection tomato.

BLACK FROM TULA - HEIRLOOM< OP, SLICER, 75-85 days. This is not a pretty tomato, good yields of flattened reddish brown globes, 8-14 oz. Superb, rich full flavor, indeterminate.

PURPLE CHEROKEE - HEIRLOOM< OP, SLICER, 85 days, DARK PINK FLESH, purple shoulders, fruits are large but few, complex flavor that I love so I always grow a plant or two, indeterminate.

TIGERELLA- HEIRLOOM< OP, 55-65 days, RED-ORANGE STRIPED SKIN, rich tangy flavor, indeterminate, 2-3 inch globes, high yields.

BOX CAR WILLIE - HEIRLOOM< OP, 80 days, RED FRUITS, high yields, better than most hybrids, 8-14 oz, old fashioned sweet-tart flavor, crack resistant, disease tolerant, indeterminate.

PEAR TOMATOES - HEIRLOOM< OP, CHERRY TYPE, 70-75 days, vigorous, long term producers, good flavored cuties, indeterminate.

SUNGOLD - HYB, 60-70 days, CHERRY TYPE, ORANGE fruit sets on long trusses, productive, have a sweet tomato flavor, I love this one.

CHOCOLATE CHERRY- HEIRLOOM< OP, 70 days, 1 inch fruits, round with dark purplish brown skin, complex flavor, indeterminate.

TINY TIM MINIATURE CHERRY - 55 days, 12-18 inches tall, cherry-size RED fruits, I like to tuck these into small odd places, containers and hanging baskets.

PRINCIPE BORGHESE - HEIRLOOM< OP, 75 days, RED PLUM, 1-2 oz, meaty with few seeds, excellent flavor and yields, great for drying, determinate.

*NOTE from Velma: ED HUME SEEDS carries OREGON SPRING, SIBERIA, SILETZ, STUPICE, SILVERERY FIR TREE, and LEGEND tomato seeds. They were all developed in Oregon for colder areas. For those who have no indoor facilities to plant tomatoes, these do well outside in a protected area (wind sheltered south exposures next to a building) with cover available when temperatures drop.*

## Soil Tests—A Ramble by Will Hightower

Soil testing, as Marion says, is one of my pet topics. I feel that I can have a pet peeve about soil tests after investing in them and figuring out there was zero gain.

If you grew up around old farmers, in my case old German farmers, you would see them reach down and pick up a handful of soil. As they carried on a conversation about most anything, the farmer would squeeze the soil, feel the soil, smell the soil and look out across the crop. That was soil testing before “Agro Business” got all kinds of fancy lab tests.

September 2014, I attended the Garden Club monthly meeting. During the question and answer time the advice was given, as was the case many times before, “You need to get your soil tested”. My reaction, as many times before, “Why?” There are so many unknowns and “ifs” here that the results are next to useless.

First, did you get a representative sample of your garden soil? The far left corner of the patch may be quite different, soil wise, from the front center. So a mixed sample tells you nothing of your garden’s soil needs. You may need 2, 3 or more soil tests to get soil pictures of your garden. At \$16 or more per sample, the expense rises quickly.

If you really want a soil test, where can you get the samples tested? I know of three places: do-it-yourself, the Extension Service in Palmer, or Brookside Labs. Most do-it-yourself kits have been pulled from retail stores because of very poor results and incomplete results from these kits. You can still purchase professional testing units for between \$600 and \$800. You would need to go into the testing business to justify this cash outlay.

The Palmer Extension Service has one person doing tests as of 2014, resulting in long waits for results. Soil tests from the Extension Service maybe a thing of history when this lady retires.

With self testing and Extension testing not being in the best of shape, this leaves commercial testing. Brookside Labs is the only commercial firm, I know of, with good results. In my earlier gardening days I used Brookside over a three year period and tested everything: the garden soil; the compost; and different soil mixes that I “built”. I even tested local commercial mixes for comparing with my home-built soils. The best growth was the cost of the testing.

If you get a soil test, I’ll bet that you have trouble understanding the results and what to do if there is a soil problem. Our local Extension Service can help you read the results and give some guidance as to what you need to do.

Remember, a soil test is a snapshot in time. Two or three months after a test you may be dealing with a very different soil. Water can quickly leach soil goodies below the plant’s root zone, especially if you are using chemical fertilizers. In Alaska the root zone is shallow, the top 6 to 8 inches. Any soil goodies below that point do the crop little good. This is why top dressing is good.

If you buy your soil “goodies” in a box, be it “Dow Chemical” or organic, then the possibility of a balanced soil is “somewhat” straight forward. A pinch of this or that and you have the “perfect” NPK soil. Did the soil test talk about trace elements? Do trace elements come in a box?

If you are homebuilt organic, you need to get another soil test of the ever changing compost. Compost is always changing, depending on the base material and the stage of completeness.

Say you have the soil nutrients under control; the crop may not be able to access these nutrients. The consistency of the soil may leave the nutrients unavailable to the plants. I’m referring to soil texture. Texture may not be covered in your test results. Texture also changes with the addition of nutrient medium. Back to the lab for another soil test.

Texture is basically the result of three components: sand (or rock fines), clay, and silt. Sand and clay give little to plants. Silt is where the nutrient action is. General rule is 40% sand, 20% clay and 40% silt. Too much clay and the soil becomes hard when dry, locks up water when wet. Too much sand and water runs off quickly, leaching away the nutrients. Too much silt, poor root support. Each change requires a new soil test.

## Ramble (continued from previous page)

Confusing isn't it? Rather like a dog chasing its tail. A little respect is due to the old farmer who takes a handful of soil, squeezes and does a sand and clay test. Then he or she takes a smell of the soil for the nutrient content (sweet smelling soil). This is followed by the long stare at the crop foliage (nutrient balance). Best of all, the farmer has not spent a dime on testing. The "doer" has spent time learning to listen to the soil and plants.



## Selecting a Dehydrator

(Reprinted from an earlier edition of the CPGC Newsletter)

When selecting a dehydrator there are many options. As the saying goes, you get what you pay for. Consider your purchase as an investment that will provide years of safe, successful and enjoyable food preservation. Choose a brand and model carefully after reviewing all of its features. The most important features to pay attention to include air flow, trays, and heating control.

Proper air flow is extremely important in the process of removing moisture from your food. Inexpensive dehydrators tend to rely on natural convection to remove moisture, while higher quality units tend to have a fan to assist in this process. The inclusion of a fan will greatly increase the likelihood of proper air circulation. Multi speed fans are even more desirable, and give you the option of high fan speeds during initial drying period when moisture is plentiful and lower fan speeds during the end of the drying period to slowly remove any remaining moisture. There are two types of air flow systems, one moves air up or down (vertical, fan located on top or bottom) and the other moves air across (horizontal, fan located in back). Vertical air movement is very easily obstructed by trays and food; these units will require frequent rotation of trays for proper dehydration of the entire unit. Horizontal air flow is considered to be the better of the two systems by most users. Horizontal air will flow less obstructed over and under trays, evenly removing moisture from food.

Tray size varies from model to model, along with the number of trays per unit. Look for units containing anywhere between 4 and 10 trays. Each tray should have a ¼" to ½" raised edge to allow maximum air flow between trays while securing your food and preventing spillage. Be aware that stackable units can have insufficient air flow across trays. Trays should be of high quality food grade plastic with a grid or mesh bottom sized large enough to allow good air circulation yet small enough to prevent drying food from falling through.

The majority of dehydrators have some type of heat source or heating element. Adjustable heating controls allow you more flexibility when drying different products or making adjustments due to elevation or relative humidity. Look for models that allow a wide range of temperatures between 80 and 165 degrees Fahrenheit. If you select a unit with adjustable temperature control look to make sure there is a thermostat to monitor and maintain your selected temperature. Find the location of the heating element. Quality units will have the element enclosed to prevent burns to the user as well contact with food product that may spill or drip during the dehydration process. Some models come with automatic shutoffs and timers that can provide more flexibility during longer periods of dehydration. Watch out for models requiring multiple rotations of trays during dehydration: this can lead to improper heat and exposure within the dehydrator.

*Contributed by Rob Carter, Natural Resource Specialist  
Seed Cleaning and Conditioning, Plant Materials Center, Palmer*

<p><b>KENAI FEED &amp; SUPPLY</b> www.kenaifeed.com MILE 14.5 K-Beach Rd. <b>907-283-1929</b></p> 	<p>HIGH TUNNELS ORGANIC FERTILIZER PEAT • SEEDS FENCING LIVESTOCK &amp; PET FEED/SUPPLIES PRODUCE</p>	
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## Upcoming CPGC Events & Volunteer Opportunities!

### Volunteers Needed & Appreciated!

It's your club.....Jump in and help with a committee or event! It's fun. Most are just once a year events. Sign ups available at the October 14th meeting. Let the reception table folks know what you want to do or that you want to help where needed.

-Newsletter: Editor, or share pictures, articles on local gardening topics. Contact Marion [mmkn@ptialaska.net](mailto:mmkn@ptialaska.net) .

-Event booth staffing & decorating: Home Show in April, Ninilchik Fair in August. Contact Cindy Barnes, [alaskacindy-lou@yahoo.com](mailto:alaskacindy-lou@yahoo.com) or 262-1395.

-Workshop Weekends in May. Arranging workshops, presenters, and venues. Contact Marion [mmkn@ptialaska.net](mailto:mmkn@ptialaska.net) .

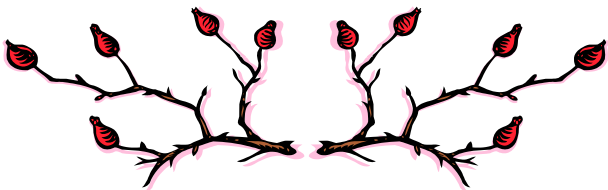
-Program Committee: Meets occasionally. Contact Marion, [mmkn@ptialaska.net](mailto:mmkn@ptialaska.net) .

-Publicity Volunteer: Email publicity information to the media. Contact Velma Bittick, [velee@acsalaska.net](mailto:velee@acsalaska.net) or 252-7579.

-Hospitality Committee: Help at the registration desk for program meetings or certain special events, greeting, taking memberships etc, room set up, refreshments, clean up. Contact Juanita Owens, [samowens0969@yahoo.com](mailto:samowens0969@yahoo.com) or (318) 557 -9876.

-Co-Videographer/photographer for programs and workshops: Contact Linda Dunn, [lindadunn78@gmail.com](mailto:lindadunn78@gmail.com) or 283- 7857.

-Tech committee: Power Point programs and mike set up for programs, occasional workshops. Contact Don St. John, 398- 4474.



-Sea Ag Fertilizer Fundraiser: Order & Pick-up help, March-May delivery day. Contact Don St. John, 398-4474.

-Summer Garden Tours committee. Coordinate local garden tours during June, July, August. 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 area plantings are a thank you to CIAA for meeting room use throughout the year. We appreciate their valuable meeting space contribution. Contact Peggy Morris, 262-8374.

"Get Ready for Spring" round table event. Contact Marion [mmkn@ptialaska.net](mailto:mmkn@ptialaska.net) .

-Face book administrator. Approve/deny requests to join the club's group page. Contact Marion [mmkn@ptialaska.net](mailto:mmkn@ptialaska.net) .

-Occasional guest speaker lodging or local transportation: Great opportunity for expert information. Contact Marion, 283-4632.

### Programs & Events:

Nov. 11, 7pm. Program: IRRIGATION! Jeff Rypka, Civil Engineer from the NRCS office and Sterling gardener, on evaluation, preparation and system parts and pieces in an automated system.

Dec. 9, 7pm. Program: TBA

### Got a story or photos to share?

Contact Marion Nelson, 283-4632 or [mmkn@ptialaska.net](mailto:mmkn@ptialaska.net)

Advertising space available at very reasonable prices!

*Check out the club's Face Book page!*

Newsletter layout by Becky Holloway and Pam Voeller

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



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