

October 2014

Central Peninsula Garden Club



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

## So You Want a High Tunnel or Have a New One....Then What?

Now that some years have passed since the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program made it possible for record setting numbers of high tunnels to be constructed on the Kenai Peninsula as well as many more purchased privately, we have significant tunnel gardening history to draw from for people contemplating a tunnel purchase or who have a new one.

Local gardeners who have had a tunnel for some years, like Lee and Julie Bowman, Don Thompson, Velma Bittick and Tom Gotcher, Liz and Bill Lynch, frequently have visitors stop in to ask about what to do now that they have this fabulous structure.

This is the topic of our October Garden Club program featuring a panel of local growers with over 4 years of high tunnel growing experience to share regarding tunnel features, the current news from the NRCS program, and best practices so new tunnel growers don't waste tunnel growing space, time and money reinventing the wheel.

Get answers to basic questions such as, what vegetables do better outside or inside a tunnel? Why should you take the plastic off for the winter or leave it on? What about fruit trees or growing corn in tunnels? Most don't but some do. They take up lots of space, so hear the pros and cons first. What about raised beds in high tunnels? Pollinators in the high tunnel? What happens to them?

Find out more at the Garden Club program on Tuesday, October 14th.

Time: 7pm

Location: Cook Inlet Aquaculture Building at mi 16.5 on K-Beach road, not far from the Bridge Access intersection.

Refreshments and some times door prizes. Free and open to the public.

Marion Nelson

President

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## The Great Fall Clean-Up Program, Sept. 9th



Panelists, L to R: Jeff Rypka, Paulette Coleman, Velma Bittick, and Shonia Werner.

These experienced gardeners brought a wealth of information and fielded questions from the audience. Between the panelists, there are high tunnels, outdoor gardens, greenhouses, animals, chickens, bees, a school garden, irrigation set up/take down experiences and lots more.

Thanks to all who brought goodies and door prizes.

And thanks to all who signed up to help with committees for 2015. The committee coach's will be contacting the names on their respective lists soon for an initial familiarization meeting and preliminary planning.

~Photo by CPGC Historian, Cathy Haas

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## From The Fiber Side, Sept 2014

The rain has stopped. I stood on the deck and inhaled the smell of earth, and the patches of blue in the sky were a welcome sight. Puddles still stand everywhere to the delight of my geese, but not the chickens or goats. If you do not know goats, they hate rain and wet feet and they have experienced both! At first the goats did not want to go out and browse due to the rain, but then they gave up and went out in spite of the hay in the barn. The paddock and parts of the barn are awful mud! Cloven hoofs are great for opening soil but with this much rain they are sinking into muck, which is just too much for their sensitivities.....yes, goats have many sensitivities, which surprises some, they hate dirty water, dirty food or wet....so the rain has been hard on them.

In the meantime, the yearling geese are in water heaven splashing, playing and bathing in all the puddles, each to their own!

With the rain stopped, I will put the garden to rest, I still have more Calendula to harvest with the hopes of making ointment this winter, the pretty English daisies and some of the poppies are still blooming, happy day! I have harvested so much rhubarb this year, have given some away, and still have a healthy crop in the freezer for jams and deserts this winter. My little wormwood plant was huge this year, and that is drying in the house too, for a liniment recipe I want to try. Maybe I can make my winter bouquets this weekend.

Driving into town, I am blessed with the changing beauty of this land I call home. The colors of fall have intensified. All the colors from deep gold to vivid yellow, from bright reds to rich russets, seem to change daily, making the trip never boring. The trees draw my eyes up while the rich tones of the wetlands draw my eyes down and out; the rushing water of the rivers and calm mirror of the lakes add textures of beauty to enjoy and reflect on. I know that a killing frost will come, that a wind will strip the trees of their jewels, yet I like to celebrate each season while it is here and the beauty that it brings to us. I enjoy celebrating all the seasons of life.

Lee Coray-Ludden/Shepherd's Moon Keep/Clam Gulch, AK  
Coordinator Fireweed Fiber Guild, President AK Natural Fiber Business Association

P.S. Lee and Jan Rowell just completed an article for AgroBorealis (UAF/CES) on the AK Natural Fiber Business Association. It's in the latest issue. Lee farms, raises goats, chickens and more in the Clam Gulch area.



Lee Coray-Ludden's goats which are her primary source of fiber for spinning, weaving and more. Note the color variety.

## Kasilof-Ninilchik Garden Tour, July 14th

The large, picture perfect garden area at John and Delores Linderman's home in the Ninilchik area. We saw lots of richly composted soil and large, beautiful vegetables. Delores does a weed walk every morning and it shows.



Delores Linderman pointing out plant, and ventilation details in the greenhouse at their Ninilchik home. CPGC board member Juanita Owens on the right.

*Photos contributed by Linda Dunn*



## Ninilchik Fair Memories, August



Left: 2014 Kenai Peninsula Fair (Ninilchik Fair) goes check out the award winning horticultural entries.

CPGC sponsors awards in the "Open" category and 4-H awards.



Right: Looks like these kids grew prize winning peppers! CPGC hopes it promotes even more gardening next season.

*Photos contributed by CPGC member, Troy Castimore*

<p><b>KENAI FEED &amp; SUPPLY</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.kenaifeed.com">www.kenaifeed.com</a></p> <p>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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## Pedro and the Cup Hook—A Ramble by Will Hightower

In the July issue I rambled about the garden “doers.” What I over-looked was the sidekick. You know, that person that you can call on a moment’s notice to hold the end of the string while you are laying out a plant row.

For the last month I have been receiving reminders of the importance of this person. For all the time you may want to be alone there is even a greater time that you need to be near someone. No matter how self reliant we feel, we are a herd or “pack” being. We need help and support from others.

Our garden is up a slight incline. So? Gravity plus an upward slope seems to make everything going up heavier than it should be. We compensated by adding a second wheel to each wheelbarrow. That didn’t make the loads any lighter but they were more stable and the load seldom ended up on the ground in mid-hill.

On the way to town this summer we saw that the neighbor had a very odd vehicle for sale. This thing looked like a sheet of plywood with four wheels under the sheet. The driver’s seat was in one corner and required his feet to hang over the front to reach the foot controls out in space. We learned that this odd vehicle was a military “mule,” used in some campaigns. It was just what we needed until we learned the price. At \$6000 it was way out of our range! This thing is a collector’s item. However, the encounter got my brain in gear trying to figure out some machine that would lighten our work load and fit between rows in the soon to be new high tunnel. The brain had not solved the problem when the “sidekick” noted another “odd” vehicle at the local rental place. It was smaller than a mule; no riding (walk behind); would fit between rows; and go up hills in a single bound! It is a motorized wheel barrow with a hydraulic dump feature. We “tested” it for a couple weekends, shopped around (DR still makes the Power Wagon), “kicked some tires” at the rental place, and “Pedro” the burro (barrow) had a new home. A burro is smaller than a mule, get it?



The importance of the sidekick in this transaction was, she found the answer to the problems, saving wear and tear on my old brain. Also, she knew that such a tool would get a few more miles out of the old “doer” body.

Ah, the cup hook. All solutions do not have to be big ideas. The Sidekick was fussing about something for several days, including asking me about buying a cup hook. I told her where to find such items in the shop and that was the last I heard of the subject.

We have Alpacas and they need a daily mineral supplement, a quarter teaspoon with their feed. The mineral supplement comes in a one gallon bucket and the measuring spoon was always buried in the supplement. I was doing the evening chores a few nights ago and could not find the measuring spoon. Finally I looked up inside the feed bunk and there the spoon was on a cup hook.



The most important item for grumpy old doers is a good “Sidekick.” I have the best. Thanks.

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



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

## Monarch Butterflies Could Be on the Rebound

<http://hereandnow.wbur.org/2014/09/29/monarch-butterflies-rebound>

While we have precious few Monarchs in Alaska..... as in Zero, they are a fascinating butterfly species with a dramatic emigration (1 way). Monarchs thrive on milkweed and the npr story (link above) speaks to the increased planting of milkweed starts, where to get them and encouragement to get more and plant more. Honey bee survival is also part of this story.



Our local butterflies that look a little like a Monarch are the Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, Old World Swallowtail, Painted Lady, Green Comma, Arctic Fritillary, Mountain Fritillary, and others with orange/ivory and black/brownish wing patterns.

## Giant Orchid Cactus

Penny McClain's giant orchid cactus (*Epiphyllum Hylocerus* - South America) benefited from a little neglect that forced it to bloom on September 24. The lovely blossom is about 10 inches across, and the leaves are 18-24 inches long by 2/3 inch wide. She got a start about a year ago and said "They take a bit to get started but you see it paid off."



## Thai Chillies

Thai Hot peppers glowing red on green in Cathy Haas's productive greenhouse. She said these very hot peppers are dependable producers each year. She is evaluating which of this year's tomato choices will be repeated next year, along with seed sources. "Not all seeds are created equal," sez Cathy.

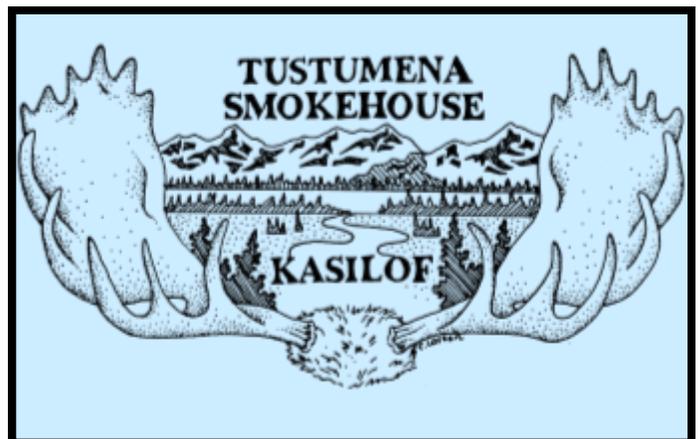
*Photo contributed by CPGC Board member Cathy Haas.*

### 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!



## 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.

-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, [alaskancindylou@yahoo.com](mailto:alaskancindylou@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 pro- grams, 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

Oct. 14, 7pm. Program: **So You Want a High Tunnel or Have a New One....Then What?:** What to plant and how to maintain them. It's a great gardening environment for Alaska growers. Learn from a panel of tunnel owners who have had them for over 4 years, plus an update on the NRCS Cost Share Program.

Nov 1, 10am-3pm HEA Energy Fair info booth.

Nov. 11, 7pm. Program: TBA (Maybe Tim Meyers from Bethel if we're lucky.)

Dec. 9, 7pm. Program TBA

Committee development on going for 2015.




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### Proof of Too Many Zucchiniis....

The Bonanza Gang on a Far North adventure, with the wind blowing through "Hop Sing's" hair. I attached outriggers to keep their boat afloat, however, it would have floated without the extra buoyancy.

*Cheryl Wickstrom, Master Gardener in the Sterling area*

