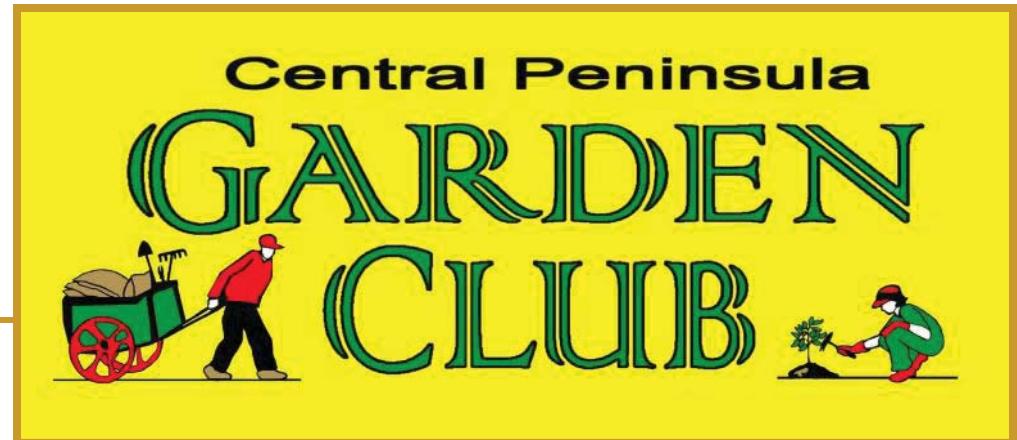


October 2015

Central Peninsula Garden Club



PO Box 767 · Kenai, Alaska 99611 · www.cenpengardenclub.org

October 13th Garden Club Program *O'Brien's Gardens & Trees* **More Apples, More Fruit in Our Future**

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Presenters: Orchard Owner, Mike O'Brien and Mike's General Manager daughter **Michelle LaVigueuer** will share their considerable expertise on growing all kinds of fruit trees and bushes. While the majority of their trees are varieties of apple trees, they have big plans for increased varieties that will include plum, peach, apricot and more. High tunnels make all the difference with their current count at five and more going up each year. They will also expand their outdoor tree and bush varieties.

This is your chance to ask apple and fruit growing questions from people who live it 24-7, and who live right here in our area. Why didn't your apple tree produce this year or why did it do so well? What are the recommended fertilizers? What about having a bee hive to help with pollination or are our wild bees/pollinators enough? What varieties should I start with and what about cross pollination between varieties?

Mike and Michelle will have a slide show, many fruit examples plus additional products for show and tell.

Date: Tuesday, October 13th, 7pm

Location: Cook Inlet Aquaculture Bldg.

Free and Open to the Public

What is a Farm? Will's Ramble by Will Hightower



As some of you know, I've gotten myself involved with the US Department of Agriculture. I'm a committee person for the Farm Service Agency. This agency has nothing to do with dirt; it's all about money, honey. Each month the committee meets and each committee person is asked to report on how they promoted agriculture in the past month. I think they are really asking, "Did you get any business for the agency?"

So that I do not look completely stupid, over the past year, I've been reviewing the FSA programs. There are a lot of them. After a while programs start to blend together, but one requirement stuck in my head. One of the programs is designed to loan money to 'beginning farmers.' The beginning farmer cannot have been farming more than 10 years and cannot own a farm in excess of 30% above the county's average size farm. Interesting, read on.

FYI, the USDA considers that Alaska is made up of two counties, the Northern and the Southern counties. You live in the Southern county.

I asked the people in the Palmer office, "What is the average size farm in the southern county of Alaska "? They did not know but they did research the question. It turns out that the NASS Census of Agriculture 2007 places the average size farm at 1,285 acres in Alaska; I think this is the average for the whole of Alaska. 130% would be 1,670 acres. Anything less than 1,670 acres could then qualify for beginning farming.

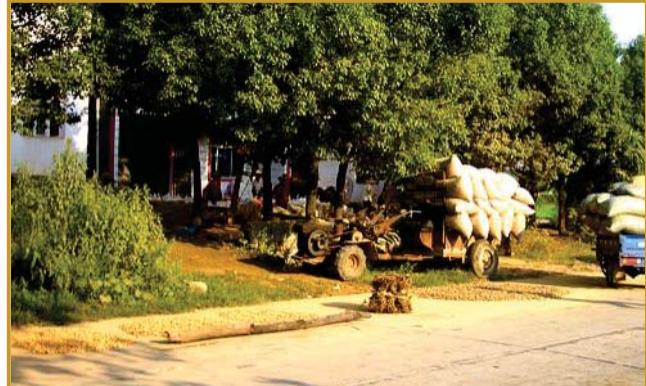
As far as "years farming", this means the number of years that a person has been producing/selling commercially. The only selling that Monti and I have done is when we sold rhubarb to Bear Creek Winery. We moved from gardening to farming is because the USDA assigned us a farm number when we applied for the high tunnel program. This means we have been farming for two years. It appears that raising food to feed your family does not count.

The paper work with the high tunnel states that our farm is 0.1 acres. It appears that the USDA considers any plot of ground under crop cultivation is a farm. So...you just have to take money from them to make the deal complete. Maybe the Government is starting to see that big agribusiness is not all that great an answer to supplying food to people. In China and Russia agribusiness was practiced as collective farming and was a failure. The USA is years behind in figuring out that there is a great cost in fuel, displaced population, food quality, etc. In the world, small stake holdings are back. Actually, small farms never left, except in the "developed world."

Thinking about Chinese farms, brings to mind rice paddies. I wonder if I could build a rice paddy in a high tunnel? Rice is part of rice and beans in non meat diets.

I could make the paddy deep enough to crop rotate fish with rice. A side benefit: I could have aqua therapy while in the paddy pulling weeds. A three year rotation would work: fish, rice and fallow. I wonder what the USDA take is on having cup holders along the sides of the pool? Paddy, I mean paddy, not pool.

Peanut farming in China



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Late Summer Events

O'Brien's Apple Tasting, Sept 20th and Oct 4th. Participants tasted and offered comments on 20-some apple varieties at each tasting. Fresh apple cider was pressed on site and caramel apples offered on the 4th. O'Brien's will take the public's comments into consideration for variety selections.



OCT. 3rd - Garlic Planting Workshop

Location: KP Food Bank Garden and Lunchroom. Participants learned how to plant garlic bulbs and took home a bulb plus growing information. Workshop instructor was Lori Jenkins of Synergy Gardens in Homer and co-founder of the Alaska Garlic Project



Above: Lori Jenkins listening to participants relate their past garlic planting experience.



Right: Workshop group watching Lori poke planting holes for the garlic with the butt end of a hoe. Various soil amendments were included in the soil: SeaAg Fertilizer, blood meal, compost from Fritz Miller, and more. Kenai Feeds donated straw for mulching the planted area.



Raspberry/Strawberry & Jalapeno Jam Recipe

Thanks to Amanda and Fred Perez for sharing this recipe on the CPGC face book page and now in this newsletter. It's been a hit. Fills the house with "divine" cooking fragrances according to Fred. Amanda adapted her mom's salmonberry recipe to use their raspberries and then added the peppers for spice. As Fred says, "It's Eskimo meets Mexican" in this great recipe.

Place in pot

9 cups raspberries/strawberries

1/4 cup lime or lemon juice

6 cups sugar

4 whole jalapeno peppers, chopped up

Rolling boil for at least four hours. Four hours helps break down the pepper seed. If you want it thicker, add pectin. Pour in clean jars, cover and cool completely.

**Refreshing Libations
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Garden Party!**



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Upcoming CPGC Events & Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers Needed & Appreciated!

Help with a committee or event! Most are just once a year events.

-Newsletter: Editor or write about gardening adventures, plants of interest, or construction of garden features. We like to know how the other guy/ gal does it. Contact Marion at marioknelson090@gmail.com.

-Event staffing & decorating: Ninilchik Fair in August, Home Show in spring, HEA Energy Fair in fall. Contact Cindy Barnes, alaskancindylou@yahoo.com or 262-1395.

-Saturday Seminars in May. Arranging presenters, and venues. Contact Marion marioknelson090@gmail.com.

-Program Committee: Meets occasionally. Contact Marion, marioknelson090@gmail.com.

-Publicity Volunteer: Email publicity information to the media. Contact Marion marioknelson090@gmail.com.

-Hospitality Committee: Room set up/take down, help at the registration desk for programs or other events, greeting, taking memberships. Contact Juanita Owens, [318-557-9876](tel:318-557-9876).

-Co-Videographer/photographer for programs and workshops. Contact Linda Dunn, 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: Prepaid orders March-May. Delivery in May. Contact Della Bridenburg, 776-3908.

-Summer Garden Tours. Coordinate local garden tours during June, July, August. Contact Marion at marioknelson090@gmail.com.

-June through September: Weekly, or so, summer flower bed maintenance at the Aquaculture Bldg. Light weeding and some planting. The entrance area plantings are a thank you to CIAA for meeting room use. We appreciate their valuable meeting space contribution. Contact Peggy Morris, 262-8374.

-Face book page administrator. Preview requests to join the club's group page. Contact Marion marioknelson090@gmail.com.

-Occasional guest speaker lodging or local transportation. Opportunity for more expert information. Contact Marion, 283-4632.



Programs & Events

-Dues for 2016 payable now as the club fiscal year now runs from Sept. to Aug 31. \$20 individual, \$30 family. Thanks to all for your support.

Oct. 13. - Apples, Plums, Peaches and More, presented by Mike O'Brien and Michelle O'Brien LaVigueur of O'Brien's Trees and Orchard. Exciting news. Free and open to the public.

Nov. 10th.... TBA

Dec. 8th... TBA

January 2016 – 12th Annual meeting, & election of 2016 Board members. Monthly program...TBA

August 2015 Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance:	\$ 20,902.72
Income:	
Dues \$ 70.00	
Expenses:	
Sandor Katz speaker at Harvest	
Moon Festival	\$ (500.00)
Farmers Market tent in honor of Lydia Clayton	\$ (349.99)
Ending Balance:	
	\$ 20,122.73

September 2015 Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance:	\$ 20,122.73
Income:	
Dues \$ 390.00	
Donation	\$ 2,572.74
Expenses:	
Office Supply	\$ (14.00)
PO Box Rent	\$ (156.00)
Apple Tasting Event	\$ (80.00)
Tustumena School Garden Project	\$ (394.85)
Ending Balance:	
	\$22,440.62

Submitted by Peggy Morris, Treasurer

Got a story or photos to share?

Contact Marion Nelson, 283-4632 or mmkn@ptialaska.net

Advertising space available at very reasonable prices!

Check out the club's Face Book page!