

How long until planting season?



Rusty Raven Plant Ranch on Facebook

November Program Announcement: How to Put Your Garden to Bed This Fall

Speaker: Bobbie Jackson, Jackson Gardens Nursery

Bobbie Jackson and her husband co-own Jackson Gardens Nursery at 48195 John's Road, Soldotna AK 99669, 103 Mile Sterling highway. They began selling roses and perennials there in 1980. They now offer a full range of nursery services and U-Pick opportunities, even proven recipes on how to cook your fresh-picked food. The nursery also offers a unique opportunity to work in the gardens for food.

Bobbie will share her knowledge on how to put a garden or high tunnel away after the growing season so that it wakes up all happy and ready to grow again in the spring. After her presentation, club members can ask questions or add their own

CENTRAL PENINSULA



GARDEN CLUB

November 2018

PO Box 767 Kenai, Alaska

www.cenpengardenclub.org

tips on fall put-away and spring garden preparation.

Monthly programs are free and open to the public; bring a friend! Refreshments and sometimes door prizes.

Date: Tues., November 13, 2018

Time: 7pm

Location: Peninsula Grace Brethren Church,
44175 Kalifornsky Beach Road (at mi. 19.5,
across the road from Craig Taylor Equipment)

Soldotna, AK 99669

Membership and general club information is available at www.cenpengardenclub.org, on Facebook, or contact Renae Wall, cenpengardenclub@gmail.com

October Program Recap: Growing Corn Panel Discussion



Wow – You CAN grow corn (mostly under cover) in our area!

At the October general meeting, Marion Nelson moderated a panel discussion of growing corn in our local gardens and high tunnels. Panelists included Lee Bowman, Cheryl Beeson, Will Hightower and Velma Bittick.

All four gardeners had developed tricks that has helped them increase their yield of corn over the years. Here are just a few tips offered:

- *Starting:* Most start corn early (mid-April?) inside and transplant to the high tunnel or greenhouse in multiple rows (blocks)
- *Varieties recommended:* Early Sunglo Hybrid; Quickie; Sweetness; Strong Start; Gold Nugget
- *Watering:* Most use drip irrigation
- *Pollination:* Pollinated by shaking the stalk, using fans, tapping, hand pollinating with a child's paint brush
- *Yeild:* 1-2 ears per stalk

Great information, and lots of inspiration at this meeting! If you missed it, be sure to order the DVD (\$5 prepaid) at the next general meeting.

November Announcements



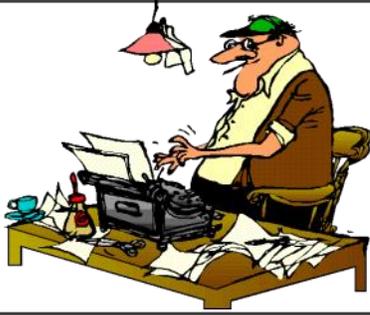
Conservation Planning First! Thinking ahead for EQIP? Be **sure** to stop by the NRCS office ASAP to start the conservation planning process. Working with a NRCS planner and having documented decisions about your land, including NEPA compliance work, is the first step in applying for NRCS programs. Most planning works needs to be completed without too much snow, so contact your NRCS office today to get started. We don't know what a new farm bill will require, but to be ready for 2019 get a 'Plan in the Can'!

14th Annual Alaska Sustainable Agriculture November 4-8, 2018, Anchorage

Highlights from the Conference Agenda

- Over 70 presentations across three days
- Located at the BP Energy Center and SpringHill Suites Anchorage University Lake Hotel, Anchorage
- Pre-Conference Produce Safety Training Workshop
- Post-Conference Ag in the Classroom Workshop
- Registration cost for three days is \$125 or \$50 for one day.
- **Registration Link** - <http://bit.ly/AKAGConference14>
- **Agenda Link** - <https://uaf.edu/ces/agriculture/sare/conference/agenda/>

Register Now!



Newsletter Editor still needed! December's edition is Sharon's last newsletter, so consider stepping up if you enjoy getting a monthly Garden Club newsletter!

Will's Ramble

by Will Hightower

Ah! Fall is the time when the leaves turn color and hunters take a week away from work. It is also the time when gardeners switch tasks from trying to get plants to make a crop to harvesting the crop, however good that crop is.

Fall is also the time of getting started on next year's garden. Garlic, it is time to plant the garlic. In my case, it is also time, to transplant the garlic that I missed digging up from this year's garlic crop. There sure are some nice green shoots.

An instruction brochure that came with my purchased seed garlic says to mulch the fresh planting for the winter. That is great as there is currently a good supply of fresh leaves. The problem is getting me inspired to take the time to rake the darn things up. The number of tasks that I get done each day has now dropped into the low single digits. Isn't aging wonderful?



Once again Monti has saved the day. I wonder if she likes having me around? A month ago she bought me a John Deere riding mower with bagger. (I didn't want the bagger.) Boy, is this a long way from the homesteading days when we were new-lweds!



The height of cut can be adjusted on the mower. Run the mower deck up high and wipe around the yard once and you have two bags full of leaves. Bags can be emptied directly onto the garlic bed. Job done in the time it used to



take me to find the rake. (I think Monti nudged me into learning this new trick).

Speaking of learning new things, as many folks know, I am into raised bed gardening. A few days ago, Monti and I visited a gardening neighbor and my mind had a Eureka moment when I

saw how they had constructed their raised beds.

I have always constructed my raised bed by making my boxes out of wood. The most recent boxes were constructed of treated wood with plastic linings. They should last longer than the previous version but the price definitely rose. I had seen beds made from sections of garage doors, but metal was never in my thinking. I did make some metal frames with treated plywood sides, but metal sides, never.

The neighbor had found some scrap metal roofing, the modern colored stuff, and used it for sides in a wooden frame. The ribbing gives strength and there are no chemical worries.

We have covered our many sheds and buildings with metal roofing and always end up with extra pieces plus the scrap sheet that the dealers use to protect bundles for shipping. I have saved all these miscellaneous pieces, trying to figure some way to use them. I think I have enough junk roofing to reside all of my existing raised bed boxes plus future boxes. The concept just never came together in my mind. Thanks Neighbor!

Old dogs can learn new tricks, sometimes it just takes us a little longer to scratch.

2018 Garden Report

By Roberta Hilgendorf, CPGC Member



As we're clearing out the garden this fall, there are several things that come to mind that others might want to hear about. We're new to Alaska, moving here 3 years ago, but we're definitely not new to gardening. My husband, Bill, loves to garden and I love to freeze and can my own veggies.

One thing I love about Alaska is the lack of garden bugs. No potato bugs! We moved here from Wisconsin and picking off potato bugs was a ritual. We usually gave up and used some dusting powder. We're not totally committed to organic veggies

but find it's a whole lot easier to do here when it comes to outdoor crops. Slugs in the cabbage have been the most common but a squirt of ammonia water after harvesting each head seems to keep them down.

Speaking of cabbage, I can thank Bei Johnson of Sterling for her easy method of making sauerkraut. We have never been big fans of it before so never tried it. But with 10-12-pound heads of cabbage, I wanted to at least try. It does go well with sausage and is definitely good on a brat bun.



I finely shredded about half of my 12-pound head and stuffed it in layers into my 1 gallon glass jar, layering 3 tablespoons of Kosher pickling salt as I went, stomping it down with the handle of a wooden spoon, until the jar was not quite full, and the juice of the cabbage was covering the cabbage. To keep the kraut under the juice, fill a sandwich zip lock bag about half full of water and lay it across the top of the kraut. I then boiled a piece of cloth – woven cotton, not knit – and laid it across the jar opening and held it down with a rubber band. I put it in the back of one of my kitchen cabinets in the dark and just left it there. In 2017, the first time I tried this, I got a fine powder of yeast spores that would develop just above the water line, but I kept wiping it off once a week or so. I read that it is harmless if you keep it wiped off. This year I didn't get even that.

I should end up with 3 quarts of sauerkraut. It's still in the jar as of October 1st, but smells like I could jar it any day. Last year I just kept them in the refrigerator and didn't can them. It kept all winter.

We've had a few light frosts, but the veggies that do well here in Alaska seem tolerant to light frosts. Yesterday, October 1, I went out and picked fresh lettuce. My kale is gorgeous. Will probably take a bag of it to the Sterling Senior Center for their cook and for their food bank distribution. I thought I'd cut off the last of my Swiss chard two weeks ago, but it has grown back until I can have another couple of meals off from it. And my broccoli is still bearing those wonderful little heads. The carrots are patiently waiting until we have time to dig them. Donna Brown showed us last year how to layer them in ground peat in a pail to keep all winter. I kept it in Bei Johnson's garage, which is slightly

heated, and only had 2 carrots out of two 5-gallon pails full that started spoiling. Donna keeps hers in her entryway and lightly sprays them with water to keep the peat moist the first few weeks.



And then my husband loves potatoes. This year we planted Yukon golds left over from last year's crop. He also picked up a few seed potatoes at Cadre Feeds in Soldotna, a German butterball and a native potato, that sends out side shoots and is "lumpy." They taste good, but not easy to peel, so have been just boiling with skin on or making cottage fries. The Yukon golds keep the best. Be sure to move your potato patch each year. The moose don't eat potato plants so they don't have to be in the garden fence.

We're not sure why the zucchini and summer squash never got going this year. We had generous crops the past 2 years. This summer out of 6 hills of zucchini and yellow crook neck squash, none of the zucchini even germinated (new seed too), and 2 hills of yellow came up but didn't actually grow until August. We got 2 tiny 5-inch squash off them before frost. I'm sure we'll try again next year.

A lesson to be learned for next year: don't plant Bok Choy all at once. It came up and did well, but 2 people can only eat so much and it all seemed to grow so terrifically fast. I'm going to try to plant a few seeds in a designated row every 2 weeks to make it develop.



I'm not sure how many people have raised the Kassok Kohlrabi. A neighbor back in Wisconsin introduced it to us 15 years ago. They are a special variety that get sweeter the bigger they are, starting when they are over 6 pounds. We planted 4 this year and harvested the first when it was 7 pounds. They are delicious raw but can be steamed or boiled or included in stews. I just picked the last one, a 22 pounder. I've had them up to 30 pounds. This one should last us until Thanksgiving. I simply chop off slabs with my butcher knife and keep the cut edge covered with plastic. I'll put it in the refrigerator when it gets down to a smaller size. A member of the cabbage family, but with its own flavor.

Now it's time to start day dreaming about what to grow next year.

CPGC membership and general
information available at www.cenpengardenclub.org,
on facebook, or by contacting
Rena Wall, cenpengardenclub@gmail.com