

December 2019



CENTRAL PENINSULA GARDEN CLUB

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www.cenpengardenclub.org

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From The Editor

Hello Garden Club members! It is time for the last newsletter of 2019. What an amazing growing season we had this summer. It is truly exciting to imagine what next year has in store for us.

Time has flown by during my brief time as the newsletter editor. I am excited for the new year and for more chances to share news, events and information about the garden club and about gardening with you.

It is my hope for the new year that, with your help, we can continue to create a newsletter that is engaging and fun to read. Please share your questions, feedback and talent with me. I want to hear all about it! We also have ad space available – what better way to get your business' name out to local gardeners?!

I look forward to talking with and continuing to learning from you!
Have a safe and happy holiday season.

Mallory Millay



CPGC General Meeting Guest Speaker: A Special Garden in Ireland



Ron and Kathy Sexton have lived in Alaska for 45 years. For most of that time they have co-owned, owned and operated Trinity Greenhouse in Soldotna. In their “spare time” over the years they have traveled and visited interesting gardens in many places. In 2019 Ron and Kathy retired from owning/operating the greenhouse but not from traveling.

In their travels Ron and Kathy visited a small but marvelous private garden in Ireland, the main subject of our December 10 Kenai Peninsula Garden Club meeting.

Ron says that it is not the size of the garden or volume of the plants that is important but how the garden feeds your soul—a clear cut case of where “small is beautiful”.

Join us December 10th at 7:00p.m. for our CPGC General Meeting

The Alaska Botanical Garden



5:00-8:00pm

Wednesdays-Saturdays

\$5/Members

\$7/Non-Members

Kids age 6 and under FREE

Holiday Lights in the Garden - Opening Weekend

Holiday Lights in the Garden will open to the public on November 30th and run Wednesdays-Saturdays from 5:00pm-8:00pm (closed major holidays).

Join us for live music, warm drinks, bonfires, vendors, model train displays, and of course the lights! Check our schedule to see what's happening each night. Please carpool if you can and **bring your own mug** to enjoy warm drinks, or you can purchase an ABC mug when you get here!

More information at

<https://www.alaskabg.org/workshops.html>



CPGC MINI GRANTS!

The Central Peninsula Garden Club mini-grant committee is now accepting applications for a mini-grant project for this year. The grants are set up to support other organizations' efforts that directly promote local agriculture. The mini-grant request form may be found on the CPGC website.

Last year's grants were awarded to: The Kenai Local Food Connection, Kenai Peninsula Fair, Soldotna Montessori Charter School and K-Beach Elementary School.

Please call Susan Larned at 907-262-6389 or e-mail sblarned@gmail.com if you have any questions.

LOOKING TO GET YOUR COMPANY'S NAME OR INFORMATION OUT TO KENAI PENINSULA GARDENERS?



We have the ad space for you!

Offering a variety of sizes to fit your advertising needs.

For more information please email Mallory at cpgcnewsletter@gmail.com.

Alaska's climate is changing fast. Garden accordingly.

By Jeff Lowenfels

From the internet at: <https://www.adn.com/alaska-life/gardening/2019/11/14/alaskas-climate-is-changing-fast-garden-aoccrdingly/>

I usually get a few questions this time of year about what to do with spring-flowering bulbs that arrive via the mail well after the hard frosts have begun and the ground is hard as a rock. The choices were toss them or pot them up for indoor forcing. I guess I won't be getting any of those this year!

Who would have ever imagined that you could still plant bulbs on the third weekend of November? Or that you could probably even get away with waiting an additional week after that?

It reminds me of those pictures you see in National Geographic of what Alaska looked like in the days of the dinosaurs, a lush, tropical lunch room for them. Are we headed that way? Palm trees, tar pits and more? This month, temperatures in Anchorage are 13 degrees above normal, with Fairbanks temperatures 7.5 degrees higher. We're on a run of whopping 20 months of record-breaking temperatures, with no let-up in sight.

Is this settling in for you? Did you miss the article about pussy willows flowering right now in area woods? We are still harvesting herbs. What is going on?

As I write this, my brothers in New York are wearing their down jackets while I don't even know where mine is yet. I sure plan on teasing them ("Global warming? It's our turn now!" Ha, ha!). However, the joke is most probably on me, not them. Pussy willows flowering? Are lilacs next? Can raspberries be far behind?

Climate change is affecting places in the world in different ways. Water levels are raising. Glaciers are melting. Fires are burning. In the Arctic, however, a key characteristic is that warming is happening faster than in other places on Earth. In fact, it is two to three times faster.

In Alaska our average temperatures are up 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit). I use Celsius because the whole world needs to be on the same page and Celsius is the global norm, so we have a common understanding of the disaster we are facing. Southcentral and Interior are up even higher than the Alaska average, a whopping 5 degrees Celsius.

We need to confront this huge change when it comes to gardening. I am just not sure how we should do it. I know we have to be concerned about non-native plant species, but at some time warming makes for invasions of invasives. I know we need new trees in Southcentral. I know we have a moth problem hitting wild berries that many rely on for subsistence. I am thinking on it, and you should as well.

Next year, I will definitely be urging all Alaska gardeners to start second crops of broccoli and cauliflower in the middle of the summer, anticipating the longer season will allow for a second harvest. I will be rethinking when we should approach pulling potatoes, dahlias and gladiolas. Maybe we should be re-mulching beds a couple of weeks later. Starting dates for outdoor gardening need to be changed. Should we be clearing outdoor greenhouses as early in the fall as we do now, or are there now a few more weeks of tomatoes to get? And better yet, aren't nights staying above 55 degrees, so we can plant tomatoes outside in our gardens like gardeners do elsewhere?

I am already studying if this longer period of warm weather will allow us to deal with weeds in a different way. Are there seeds we should now be planting in the fall instead of spring? What should our local nurseries be doing to deal with and take advantage of both warmer temperatures and longer seasons?

Nothing is for sure when it comes to nature or Alaska. And even if it is certain that we are in a warming era, there may well be a transition where one year we get really warmer weather like this year's and the next year we get a killing frost by October and snow by November. I am one who believes the experts here.

Weather changes make it tough to be a garden columnist anywhere, but I am thinking it is going to be a bit more difficult here than elsewhere. Help me, please: If you see anything unusual or weird going on in the yard you think is a result of the warmer weather, let me know. We are going to have to figure it out and work this all out together. No one is left from those tar pit days to let us know what to expect, so we have to figure it out on our own.

Jeff's Alaska garden calendar:

Mulch beds: There are leaves all around your property that you can use to put around raspberry canes to stop grass and weeds from growing in your patch while feeding your plants. Cover strawberry beds as well. It won't hurt to put leaves on all the containers remaining outdoors. Don't forget beds in greenhouses. There are no bare soils in nature.

Plantskydd: It's still warm enough to apply this moose repellent around the property.

Are You Allowed To Cut Christmas Trees On Refuge Lands This Year?

Author: Jennifer Williams

From the internet at: <https://www.radiokenai.net/are-you-allowed-to-cut-christmas-trees-on-refuge-lands-this-year/>

It's been the big question on everyone's mind, when can they trek out onto the Kenai National Forest lands and pick out that perfect Christmas tree for their home this holiday season?

Well, a Christmas miracle has arrived and the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge announced that the Refuge will open for Christmas tree cutting from Thanksgiving Day through Christmas Day.



Trees are free for personal use with a limit of one per household, and may not be taller than 20 feet.

Trees may be taken anywhere on the Refuge with hand tools, except within 150 feet of a road, lake, stream, trail, campground, or picnic area.

No tree cutting is permitted in the Refuge Headquarters/Visitor Center area and along Ski Hill Road.

The refuge asks the public to trim the stumps as close to the ground as possible for aesthetic reasons.

For additional information, contact the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge office during regular business hours at (907) 262-7021.

Winter Solstice is just around the corner – December 21st!

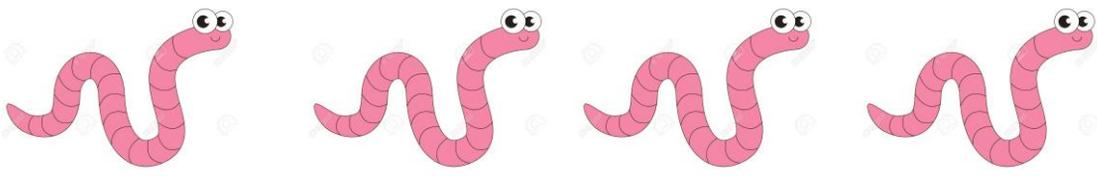


Daylight

9:47 am – 4:00 pm
6 hours, 13 minutes

Current Time: Dec 3, 2019 at 7:29:28 pm
Sun Direction: 266.08° W
Sun Altitude: -23.49°
Sun Distance: 91.623 million mi
Next Solstice: Dec 21, 2019 7:19 pm (Winter)
Sunrise Today: 9:47 am \ 138° Southeast
Sunset Today: 4:00 pm / 222° Southwest





Grandpa's Wonderful World of Worm Poo
By John Trent, Programs Chair

Worm poo tea anyone? Cucumber sandwiches don't come with this kind of tea but plants love it and it's good for tree leaf damage treatment too, as a foliate spray.

On November 12 Michael Hicks spoke to garden club members about Vermiculture and the use of worm castings in organic gardening. Michael is Pastor of the New Life Christian Fellowship in Kasilof and also a serious worm rancher. The name of his business is Grandpa's-- named after him. In recent years it has produced about 39 yards of castings a year which is an incredible 23 tons of digested worm poop. That represents a lot of hard working garden worms.

The purpose of Michael's talk was to inform our audience on what worm castings are, their benefits, and practical uses for them in the organic gardening environment.

For an organic gardener or agriculturist there are as many as eleven benefits to using worm castings. These include that they are pathogen free, soften soil, are non-toxic, promote plant growth and also cause fungus control that helps release soil nitrogen.

Michael also discussed practical applications for castings. For seed germination, use up to thirty percent castings in a growing medium that drains well. As a soil conditioner put a layer of castings on the top of soil in the evening and then water well. For houseplants and perennials sprinkle around or lightly dig into the soil and then water.

We got a lot more information at the meeting. It was a regular worm poo seminar!

Our club will be selling bags of Grandpa's worm castings next spring as a fund raising event. We will be taking orders at the March 2020 general meeting.

At this November 12 meeting 54 people attended. Come and attend our next meeting January 14 when guest speaker Dr. Henry Krull will give us the lowdown on his version of hydroponics at his new facility, Fresh 365.



S H E E P

When someone tells you they raise sheep for fiber and meat, you think to yourself, "that is cool...."

When someone tells you that they have a small home garden and a stand at the farmer's market, you think, "wow, that's cool, I should do that."



G A R D E N

B E E S



When you meet someone who raises bees and makes honey, you think to yourself, "that is so COOL!"

When someone tells you they raise chickens and sell their fresh colorful eggs, you think,

"wow, pretty cool!"



C H I C K E N S

For more information about joining visit us on the web at www.ALASKAFB.org

40 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

EVERYONE WELCOME!

KENAI PENINSULA CHAPTER

This can be you. Join the movement. It is COOL to grow things, nurture plants and animals and SHARE with others. Support local farms and buying local. Support your local FARM BUREAU. Support agriculture - small farms, big farms. That helps us to help YOU be a healthy and happy locivore!



15th ALASKA SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

in Anchorage at the BP Energy Center February 20-22, 2020

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS AND REGISTRATION OPEN

The 15th Alaska Sustainable Agriculture Conference and Workshops will be held February 20-22 at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage, Alaska. The conference, made possible by a grant from Western SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension), has developed an excellent reputation among farmers and producers. It is viewed as a truly unique opportunity to advance sustainable innovations to agriculture in Alaska.

This year's conference will feature a Plenary Session and Technical Sessions the first day of the conference (Thursday February 20), followed by two days of Technical Sessions and Workshops (Friday February 21 and Saturday February 22). There is a flat fee of \$100, which gains you access to any and all three days of the Conference and Workshops.

Visit <https://mailchi.mp/4fc771f2c531/2020-alaska-sustainable-agriculture-conference-february-20-22?e=1869dd7ee1> **for more information!**



10 INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT POINSETTIAS

- Poinsettias are part of the *Euphorbiaceae* or Spurge family. Botanically, the plant is known as *Euphorbia pulcherrima*.
- Many plants in the *Euphorbiaceae* family ooze a milky sap. Some people with latex allergies have had a skin reaction (most likely to the sap) after touching the leaves. For pets, the poinsettia sap may cause mild irritation or nausea. Probably best to keep pets away from the plant, especially puppies and kittens.
- Poinsettias are not poisonous. A study at Ohio State University showed that a 50-pound child would have to eat more than 500 leaves to have any harmful effect. Plus poinsettia leaves have an awful taste. You might want to keep your pets from snacking on poinsettia leaves. Eating the leaves can cause vomiting and diarrhea.
- The showy colored parts of poinsettias that most people think of as the flowers are actually colored bracts (modified leaves).
- Poinsettias have also been called the lobster flower and the flame-leaf flower, due to the red color.
- Joel Roberts Poinsett introduced the poinsettia plant to the United States from Mexico. Poinsett was a botanist, physician and the first United States Ambassador to Mexico.
- In Mexico the poinsettia is a perennial shrub that will grow 10-15 feet tall.
- There are more than 100 varieties of poinsettias available today. Poinsettias come in colors like the traditional red, white, pink, burgundy, marbled and speckled.
- The Paul Ecke Ranch in California grows over 70% of all Poinsettias purchased in the United States and does about 50% of the world-wide sales of Poinsettias.
- December 12th is Poinsettia Day, which marks the death of Joel Roberts Poinsett in 1851.

Facts from: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/poinsettia/facts.cfm>