



## President's Patch

By Sheri Walker

Whew. It wasn't just snow flurries that December brought but also a flurry of "gardening" activities. First of all we enjoyed fabulous food and fun at the annual Christmas party at the Red Beet. Thanks to Hally for cooking the turkey and ham and also for providing the children with lovely gifts. With a little discussion and persuasion we were able to fill all the board positions as well. Michele Walker agreed to switch her nomination to Secretary, Marge Mueller volunteered to fill Member-at-Large position. Wayne Bowman will continue as VP, Arlene Bowman will continue as Treasurer. I look forward to another exciting year on the board. However, I want to let you know now that I have decided that this will be my last year as president. I have really enjoyed working in this capacity the past year but I believe that it will be time for new blood by the end of next year. So there you have it. You have 12 months to consider filling the presidency. There are many benefits: networking with gardening leaders across Southcentral Alaska, dining in the likes of Lighthouse Gardens for these meetings, gifts of plants and produce and not having to make cookies or cupcakes for my kids. It will also look good on a resume.

Next was the creation of a prize winning parade float. It was a calm, cold morning that some of us gathered at the Bowman's to deck out the trailer and it was an equally calm, cold evening that we lit all the beautiful luminaries to parade past the review stand to second place overall. Well done. Thanks to all who participated in this fun, first time for us event.

Then we had another very productive MG Conference planning session. Speakers are almost all confirmed. The budget has more or less been established, registration fee set and the registration form will be made available shortly. The next planning meeting has been set for January 14, 7:00 pm at CES.

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### Chapter Meetings First Monday of the Month

Next meeting  
Monday, January 2010, 7:00 pm  
Location:  
MTA Conference Room  
Palmer, Alaska

#### Agenda:

Standing Committees  
MG Conference Update

#### Guest Speaker:

Carol Symonds, Ewetopia Farms  
Alaska Hardy Roses

Besides all that, I've been busy getting together a program for our regular meetings in 2010. Most months are filled but there are still a couple spots to fill. If you have ideas for speakers or would like to give a presentation yourself, please let me know. Otherwise I will just continue to fill the calendar in after the holidays.

Wishing you all a productive and fruitful New Year.  
Happy gardening



## Making the Right Decision for Storm Damaged Trees

By: Stephen Brown,  
Mat Su/Copper River District Agriculture Agent

In the aftermath of a severe ice or famous Mat-Su wind storms, many homeowners ask a simple question when it comes to their trees. Will they survive? Wrapped around that question is the initial impulse to "let's get this mess cleaned up." But hasty decisions can often result in removing trees that could have been saved. Follow these simple guidelines in administering first aid to your trees after a storm.



### Be patient

Any medical first-responder will tell you rule number 1 is to stay calm. Doing the right things right can make the difference between giving your trees a good chance of survival and losing them unnecessarily.

City officials, utility workers and private tree care firms must focus first on dealing with hazards to life and property. After that, one of the city's major tasks is the removal of debris from the storm and the work of removing damaged branches and sometimes entire trees. Homeowners should remember that a tree between the street and sidewalk is typically city-owned and is the city's responsibility.

Trees are amazingly resilient and many recover with proper care and time. Despite the urge to do something immediately, try to be patient. As long as there isn't an immediate physical risk from a damaged tree, the advice is simple: if you're unsure about its condition, keep the tree for now.

### Be safe

First aid measures for trees after a major storm almost always involve the use of chain saws. Pruning and removing limbs from storm-damaged trees is not the same thing as cutting firewood from a treetop already on the ground. Branches and trees that are twisted and bent are usually under tremendous strain that is undetectable to the untrained eye. The quick release of that stored energy by cutting with a chain saw can result in unpredictable and dangerous results. Bent trees and branches larger than six inches in diameter should probably be removed by someone with more experience than the weekend woodcutter.

Look up and look down. Be on the alert for hanging branches that look like they're ready to fall. Stay away from any downed utility lines. Low-voltage telephone or cable lines and even fence wires can become electrically charged when there are fallen or broken electrical lines nearby.

### Assess the damage

Before writing off a damaged tree as a "goner," ask yourself the following questions:

Other than the storm damage, is the tree basically healthy and vigorous? If the tree is basically healthy, is not creating a hazard, and did not suffer major structural damage, it will generally recover if first aid measures are applied.

Are major limbs broken? The larger a broken limb is, the harder it will be for the tree to recover from the damage. If a majority of the main branches are gone, the tree may have little chance of surviving.

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## Garden Links

**Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley:**

<http://interiormastergardeners.org/>

**Alaska Master Gardeners Association,  
Anchorage Chapter:**

<http://alaskamastergardeners.org/>

**Alaska Botanical Garden:**

<http://www.alaskabg.org/>

**Master Gardeners of the Tanana Valley Monthly  
Newsletter:**

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/newsletters/mastergardeners/2008/0812tananamgu.pdf>

**Alaska Peony Growers Association:**

<http://alaskapeonies.org/index.html>

**Alaska State Federation of Garden Clubs:**

<http://www.gardencentral.org/asfgc/homepage/>

**UAF, CES Palmer Website:**

<http://mat-suces.weebly.com>

**UAF Cooperative Extension Service Publications:**

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/pubs/>

**Alaska Plant Materials Center:**

[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_pmc.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_pmc.htm)

**Master Gardener Research Link:**

<http://search.extension.org>

**Matsu Master Gardener Site:**

[www.matsumastergardeners.org](http://www.matsumastergardeners.org)

## Announcements

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2010:

**January 4, 7:00 pm:** AK Hardy Roses, Carol Symonds, Ewetopia Farms, MTA conference room

**January 14, 7:00 pm:** MG Conference planning meeting, CES conference room

**February 1, 7:00 pm:** Photographic Tour of Bolivia's Landscapes and Vegetation, Michael and Phyllis Kircher, MTA conference room

**March 1, 7:00 pm:** MG Conference final preparation, MTA conference room

**March 5-6:** Statewide Master Gardener Conference, Back to Our Roots, Grandview Inn, Wasilla

**April 5, 7:00 pm:** Soaps and Ointments from Native Plants, Hazel Koppenberg, MTA conference room

**May 3, 7:00 pm:** TBA

**June 5, 9am-3pm:** Plant Sale, Palmer Pavilion

**June 7, 7:00 pm:** Library Planter, Palmer Library

**July 12:** TBA

**August 2** TBA

**September 13, 7:00 pm:** Native Trees and Shrubs for the Landscape, Patricia Joyner, MTA conference room

**October** TBA

**November 1, 7:00 pm:** Fungi for Gardeners, AKA Mushrooms, Diane Plening

**December 6, 7:00 pm:** Christmas Party and Elections

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Computer savvy person to set up database for MG Conference registration. Please contact Sheri at [wesnsher@mtaonline.net](mailto:wesnsher@mtaonline.net) ASAP.

### COLONY CHRISTMAS FLOAT CREW



## CLUB CONTACT INFO

**President: Sheri Walker**      746-6772  
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If you have gardening news, photos or information you'd like to share in the newsletter, please contact: Deb Blaylock, Email: [kdblalock@ak.net](mailto:kdblalock@ak.net)

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Has the leader (the main upward-trending branch on most trees) been lost? In species where a leader is important to upward growth or desirable appearance, it may have to be a judgment call. The tree may live without its leader, but at best would be a stunted or deformed version of the original.

Is at least 50 percent of the tree's crown (branches) still intact? This is a good rule of thumb on tree survivability. A tree with less than half of its branches remaining may not be able to produce enough foliage to nourish the tree through the coming growing season.

How big are the wounds where branches have been broken or bark has been damaged? The larger the wound is in relation to the size of the limb, the less likely it is to heal, leaving the tree vulnerable to disease and pests. A 2- to 3-inch wound on a 12-inch diameter limb will seal over with new bark within a couple of years.

Are there remaining branches that can form a new branch structure? The remaining limbs will grow more vigorously as the tree tries to replace its missing foliage. Look to see if branches are in place that can eventually fill out the tree's appearance.

Is the tree of a desirable species for its location? If the tree is in the wrong location (such as a potentially tall tree beneath a power line), or an undesirable species for the property (messy fruit, etc.), it may be best to remove it if it has serious damage.

*Adapted from original material by H.E. Stelzer of the University of Missouri Extension.*

### MASTER GARDNER 2009 FLOAT

