



President's Patch

By Sheri Walker

I think Spring is jesting with us. These warm sunny days are pretty enjoyable and its very tempting to be lured into thinking that Spring has arrived. However, the calendar reminds me that it is still the middle of February and there are no doubt several weeks of winter ahead of us yet. So far I have enough snow in the garden yet not to worry about the freeze/thaw problem. Hopefully it stays that way until Spring actually does come. The trees and shrubs on the other hand could be in trouble if this keeps up. The warm weather though has given me a little kick to remind me that if I am going to start seeds, I'd better get them ordered. The tulip bulbs I found in the bottom of my crisper could be potted up any old time now too for a bit of early spring color.

The calendar also indicates that our conference, "Back to Our Roots" is only a couple weeks away. I am very excited about it. We have a great line-up of speakers. The Grandview Inn will preparing wonderful buffet lunches and you should see the high quality door prizes Marge has collected. She gave me a sneak preview the other day. Wow. If you are hoping to attend, plan to register soon.

Thank you to those of you who have offered to help at the conference. There are still a few opportunities available if you'd like to participate. **Volunteer Needs for the Conference** are as follows:

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Chapter Meetings First Monday of the Month

Next meeting
Monday, March 1, 2010, 7:00 pm
Location:
MTA Conference Room
Palmer, Alaska

Agenda:

Plant sale
Purchase of projector
Assemble registration packets

- ◆ Registration: 4 or 5 people to sit at registration table and distribute registration materials
- ◆ Door Prizes: 2 or 3 people to assist with awarding of door prizes
- ◆ Meal Tickets: 3 or 4 people to collect meal tickets

Please send an email to matsumastergardeners@gmail.com indicating what area you would like to volunteer. Alternately, you can call me at 746-6772 or Wayne at 745-3537.

Sharing

By: Curt Mueller

It always seems a bit presumptuous to expound about subjects that experienced gardeners are probably already familiar with, but in Alaska's environment, in order to garden successfully, we often develop techniques that may not apply elsewhere. It has often come to mind how much accumulated and unique knowledge has been gained by Alaska gardeners. If we could gather this knowhow and share it, maybe the same procedures would not have to be relearned over and over by each new gardener.

Half the fun of gardening is to learn what works, and there's still plenty to learn out there, even if we could possess all the knowledge of others. As a thought, what if our club were to make a project of putting our successful ideas into a form that could be disseminated to others. Many of us have differing areas of interests and expertise. Such skill could benefit our fellow gardeners immensely. It would also provide fodder for more new techniques to be developed. There is not enough time in one lifetime to learn all that there is to be learned about gardening. We could combine the experiences of several lifetimes. Perhaps this is too ambitious an idea for our club, but it does have some merit.

It is part of the Master Gardener bargain to contribute to the community. To share knowledge and provide beauty and sustenance for ourselves and others is a very satisfying endeavor. By so doing we also improve our own outlook on life. It is definitely a winning experience for everyone.

Curt Mueller [still an idealist]

Building Brick Garden Walks

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

Bricks in sand make an attractive, durable and pleasant outdoor paving. They are easy to install — the easiest to handle of all paving materials. Individually, bricks are small and lightweight. A brick walk or patio can be installed piecemeal or as you get to it.



Bricks have other attractions: a non-glare surface, pleasant texture, mellow color and pleasing contrast. On the other hand, weeds and grass may grow up through the joints, freezing and thawing may cause heaving and bricks may need resetting. Bricks are absorbent and can hold stains. They also seem to suffer seasonal damage from snow shovels and snowblowers.

Choose hard-burned brick for paving. Soft bricks crack too easily. If available, slick-surfaced face brick or cleaned old brick may be used. A hard-burned brick will give a clear, high-pitched metallic sound when hit with a hammer. Soft bricks will give a dull thud like a block of wood. Get enough bricks to do the entire job. There is enough variation in bricks that those from another batch may not match the color or size of those previously purchased.

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The following materials will be needed to lay a closed-joint brick surface over an area of 100 square feet:

- 500 bricks
- 1 ton of 1/4-inch crushed rock
- 5 cubic feet of coarse sand (about 500 pounds)
- 2" x 4" or 2" x 6" redwood lumber
- 1" x 2" x 12" stakes
- Round point shovel
- Flat point spade
- Hammer (heavy)
- Level
- Iron tamp or heavy post
- Brick set
- Broom

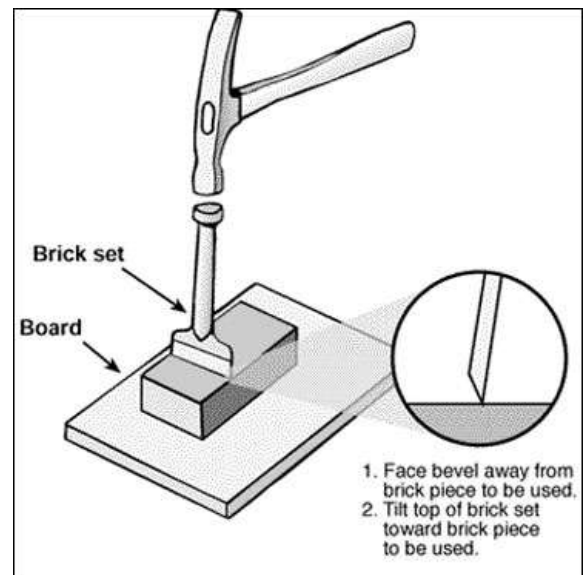
The lumber is used for edging and the amount necessary will depend on the shape used and also the closeness to structures where an edging may not be necessary. The stakes are used to brace the edging. Cedar, cypress or wood that has been treated with a preservative may be used instead of redwood lumber.

Steps for laying a patio or walk:

- Measure the size of the patio or walk desired and order all materials necessary to complete the job. Remember, walks should be at least 4 feet wide. Patios of about 500 square feet will provide enough space for most family functions.
- Grade the area to be paved. Dig out existing soil if necessary, or fill where appropriate. The paving of gravel, sand and brick will require a depth of about 6 inches. Use a 2- by 4-inch board of convenient length to level the grade after digging is complete. A level attached to the top of the board will help to guide the leveling operation. For patios, there should be a drop in grade away from the house of about 1 inch in 8 feet. Install the redwood lumber to edge the patio or walk. Use enough stakes to firmly hold it in place. Make sure edging is level.
- Lay a level, 3- to 4-inch layer of crushed

stone, and tamp firm.

- Spread a 1/2-inch layer of coarse sand over the stone.
- Level the sand carefully, using board and level. If edging has been carefully leveled, it will act as a good guide for leveling the other area. Do not step on the leveled sand.
- Set bricks on sand. Place them slightly higher than desired as they will settle. On patios, lay a strip of the desired pattern through the center, and work toward either side. Try to plan to end up with whole bricks whenever possible.
- Tamp bricks firmly as they are set with either an iron tamp, a heavy post or the wooden end of a heavy hammer.
- Lay all bricks that do not need cutting.
- Cut bricks to fit wherever needed. Most people find a brick-set the easiest brick cutting tool to use. Place the brick to be cut on a firm base. Hold the brick-set as shown below and give it one hard knock with a heavy hammer. Keep the brick-set sharp.



- Cover the paved surface with sand and sweep it into the cracks.

Based upon University of Missouri Extension bulletin *Building Brick Walks and Patios* by Denny Schrock.

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

Master Gardener Research Link:

<http://search.extension.org>

Matsu Master Gardener Site:

www.matsumastergardeners.org

Announcements

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2010:

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

LOST AND FOUND

MTA found a pair of women's black gloves in the meeting room after our last meeting. Whoever lost them can contact Shelly at MTA at 761-2511

2010 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you haven't done so already, please renew your membership with the Matsu Master Gardener's! Those that have not renewed will be removed from the mailing and email list for future newsletters and email updates! Membership renewal forms are available on the website at www.matsumastergardeners.org or contact Michele Walker, our membership coordinator.

COMMUNITY GARDENING

Warren Templin provided an interesting article titled, The Power of Community Gardening. You can view the article at the following link: <http://www.recmanagement.com/201002by01.php>

CONFERENCE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- ❖ Registration: 4 or 5 people to sit at registration table and distribute registration materials
- ❖ Door Prizes: 2 or 3 people to assist with awarding of door prizes
- ❖ Meal Tickets: 3 or 4 people to collect meal tickets

Call Sheri at 746-6772 or Wayne at 745-3537 or email matsumastergardeners@gmail.com to volunteer!!

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President: Sheri Walker 746-6772
VP Wayne Bowman 745-3537
Secretary: Michele Walker 306-1188
Treasurer: Arlene Bowman 745-3537

If you have gardening news, photos or information you'd like to share in the newsletter, please contact: Deb Blaylock, Email: kdblalock@ak.net

Website: www.matsumastergardeners.com
Email: matsumastergardeners@gmail.com