

July 2010



President's Patch

By Sheri Walker

I've always been pretty adventurous about trying new and exotic food. However, for some reason I've had an aversion to trying edible "weeds". This seems to be the year for adventure in that department though. I've been told that Lamb's Quarter (*Chenopodium album*) is quite tasty in salads but was too chicken to try it. Weeding my "intermingled" vegetable garden this spring was my inspiration and I tried it right then and there. To my surprise and delight it tasted really good. More of it ended up in the evening salad along with some chive flowers. The rest of the family enjoyed it too. So Lamb's Quarter is no longer an unwelcome bad weed in my garden. It has now become a free and prolific salad green of which only some ends up in the compost pile. Incidentally, it is related to garden spinach. I am now impelled to learn what other native plants normally considered weeds I might find delectable. You see, not only am I a slacker in the garden, I also tend to be a bit thrifty. I shall use as my guide, Janice J. Schofield's "Discovering Wild Plants" which I have borrowed from my mother-in-law.

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Chapter Meetings First Monday of the Month Next meeting

Monday, July 12, 2010, 7:00 pm

Location:

Tour of Alaska Sea-AG
Fish Fertilizer
Palmer, Alaska

Directions:

End of Marsh Road, Palmer.
North of Palmer on Glenn Hwy past
W. Arctic, turn left on Marsh and
proceed to end of road

A Season of Fragrance

By: Master Gardener, Curt Mueller

We spend long months in preparation and anticipation of the colors and bounty of our growing season. To be enjoyed as well are the many fragrances of this time. There is a sweet succession of aromas which we can enjoy in and around our gardens.

The tender roses given to us by the Kings, when they left Alaska, are started in our greenhouse in March, and the fragrance of even one flower is enough to permeate the air when they start to bloom in April before time to bring things out of the greenhouse. This is perhaps the start of the fragrant season, although the scent of growing plants themselves can be very pleasant.

Outdoors, when the balsam poplars are budding and the Mayday trees are in bloom, our noses tell us that indeed it is springtime. Soon come the apple and crabapple blossoms. Fine wine should be as fragrant.

The common white and purple lilacs come next. What a pleasure to walk through the yard and have this delight wafted to your nostrils. At the same time the wild roses compete for our attention, and the petunia baskets make their presence known as well. The smell of the good earth as we garden is another aroma to be enjoyed.

Next come the Scotch roses, to me the most fragrant of all. They fill the air with the fragrance of their white blossoms for only about ten days, but are then overlapped with the Hansas, the Harrison's yellow, and the Plena, all of longer duration. The Hansa rose will bloom well into September. It is worth while for its fragrance alone, not to mention its magenta flowers against its dark green foliage. Newly mown grass drying in the sun, fresh produce from the garden; these also add to our sensory enjoyment.

Sweet peas come into their own late in July, and they will bloom and spice the air, shrugging off light frosts until the first killing one shuts them down. Then we are left with the highbush cranberry, not pleasant to everyone, but definitely a harbinger of fall along with fallen wet leaves and the mature growth. Again we can partake of the aroma of the earth as we harvest our garden crops.

Our season of fragrance offers a never-ending succession of pleasant aromas. We must take time to smell the roses. Enjoy



Photo Submitted by Curt Mueller
Marge's OS Cross cabbage, as of June 26, 2010. It may be a bit early for it to be heading, as it could split before Fairtime. The fun is in growing it anyway.

Root Maggots

Which would you rather have in your garden...root maggots or moose? Personally, I'll take the moose! At least they are interesting to watch while feasting on your strawberries. Root maggots on the other hand don't even have the decency to show themselves.

Root maggots are the most serious annually occurring insect pest problem that prey on Alaskan vegetables. They attack all varieties of crucifers and have destroyed countless blue ribbon aspirations at the state fair.

Because the maggots leave surface scars and feeding tunnels, your affected veggies are not very appealing to eat and are sure not going to make you any money at the farmers market. The feeding damage also makes the plant susceptible to soft-rot bacteria and secondary infestation by springtails and thrips.

If you are an organic gardener, root maggots are evil enough to make you consider giving up your earth friendly ways and try a chemical pesticide approach. Unfortunately, in Alaska, the only chemical approved for root maggot control is Lorsban and it is a restricted use pesticide. A restricted use pesticide is one that requires you to have a special license to use.

With no chemical means of control, a combination of cultural and biological practices are all that's left. Root maggots thrive in organic matter, so organic gardening and soils high in organic matter can expect recurrent root maggot problems. The use of diatomaceous earth placed around the base of the seedlings will provide good control with no environmental hazards. Diatomaceous earth (a coarse sandlike particle) should be applied following each rain early in the season.

Crop rotation—Plant this year's root maggot host plants in ground that did not have host plants in the previous year. The greater the separation between this year's and last year's crucifer plantings the greater the effectiveness of this procedure. Crop rotation is often difficult in the home garden but even a modest rotation and

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

separation should be somewhat helpful.

Sanitation—This is a very important procedure that can be done easily by the home gardener. Do not abandon root maggot infested crops. They harbor countless numbers of larvae, which, if allowed to mature, will be the source of next year's infestation. If you have given up on a crop for any reason (root maggot infestation or weed competition, etc.), remove the crop and destroy it. As you harvest stem crucifers, remove the root system. This is especially important in earlier maturing varieties. Keep the garden and adjacent areas free of weedy mustards or other host plants.

Protective Covering—Floating row covers, such as remay, can prevent or drastically reduce infestation by root maggot populations when placed over transplants or seedlings.

Row covers are not effective if the area planted is already infested with root maggot populations. Care must be taken when using polyethylene tunnels to prevent high temperatures or condensation and resultant foliage disease. Flat waterproof discs (4-6 inch diameter) or cotton can be placed closely around the stem of transplants to act as a barrier to egg laying.

Biological Control—Beneficial nematodes (parasitic and entomopathogenic species *Heterorhabditidae* and *Steinernematidae*) have proven to be effective in reducing root maggots when introduced annually. Enhanced natural populations of Rove Beetles (*Aleochara* sp.) also provide biological control of root maggots. Studies remain inconclusive on use of specific fungi, such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), to control root maggots. Use of biological control organisms requires careful handling and application and avoidance of most pesticides.

This article was adapted from "Root Maggots in Alaskan Home Gardens" written by David Bleicher and revised by Bob Gorman

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:

July 12, AK Sea-Ag Fish Fertilizer, Palmer

August 2, TBA

August 26 – September 6, Alaska State Fair, Palmer

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, MTA Conference Room

December 6, 7:00 pm:

Christmas Party and Elections

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Original newsletters have surfaced and need to be archived. Please contact matsumastergardeners@gmail.com if you are interested in this project.

Nomination Committee still needed to lead recruitment process for vacating board positions. Please contact matsumastergardeners@gmail.com if you are interested in this committee.

The Crops Department at the State Fair is in need of volunteers for: entry clerks for the 5-9 PM shift on Wednesdays 8/25 and 9/1 and judges clerks on Thursdays 8 AM - Noon. Please contact Kathy Liska, Crops Superintendent at: 337-2196 or email at akliska@aol.com .

CLUB CONTACT INFO

President:	Sheri Walker	746-6772
VP	Wayne Bowman	745-3537
Secretary:	Michele Walker	306-1188
Treasurer:	Arlene Bowman	745-3537
Member at Large	Marge Mueller	745-6144

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

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