

Hello Gardeners,

Christmas is over; the New Year is rapidly approaching and with it a whole new wave of gardening preparation and fun. This last year our Southeast Alaskan Master Gardener Association saw some triumphs and some challenges, and the upcoming year has more in stock.

We were able to put on a successful garden tour, visiting many gardens in one of the wettest weekends on record, and with more attendees than we ever expected. We focused on gardens in progress, and the hosts were gracious as they let us into their intimate and yet unfinished creations.

Our spring plant sale at the Mothers Day sale was well attended and we made some money, but we realized that we could do much better as a fund raiser if we did some advance work focusing on the species for which there is an unlimited desire such as Raspberries, Telephone Hill Cherries, local Primroses, and February Daphnes and offering less of the ones that grow in such abundance that we have to thin them out annually.

We have lost the services of our treasurer Mary Jefferson as she resigned to attend to some other concerns, and our mostly novice board members Kristi Hooton and Leigh Bauer picked up the slack. If there is a person in our membership with skills and time to help them please let me know, and I will swoop you up.

**We have some upcoming potential events, including our biennial Southeast Alaskan Gardeners Conference in May, if we can get 10 volunteers to occupy critical committee positions such as Publicity, Logistics, Ticketing, Refreshments, Exhibits, Set Up and Maintenance, Speakers, and the overall Event Coordinator we can proceed with our plans, if it is left to the board members to do it we will have to delay for this season. We have a location; the University has agreed to let us have space for our conference, including meeting rooms and an auditorium during the period between class sessions, May 21 through 23<sup>rd</sup>. We plan to have the spring garden tours as part of that event, so we will have speakers, hands on sessions, and trade show events Friday and Saturday AM, then tours Sat PM and Sunday. That means as well that we will need volunteers to help plan and manage**

**the tour event, it will need at least 3 people to visit and preview the gardens, and a dozen support hosts to help the garden owners on the day of the tours. (We can wait until April to arrange these helpers)**

**If you are willing to help in this event respond to me or to one of the other board members and we will proceed.**

This January 20 we will have the first of our new monthly public programs open to all and designed to inspire and entertain as well as rejuvenate our organization. We are inviting all interested gardeners to a session focusing on new varieties of plants available that will do well in Southeast Alaska, We are all familiar with the 23 standard plants that are in most gardens, but the world of horticulture is huge and new varieties are the lifeblood of garden enthusiasts. This month is the time that all of the plant breeders and nurseries trot out their new offerings and with great hoopla present them to the world. We are going to use this platform to invite other organizations and interested people to participate with us, and if we have the 10 volunteers we hope for, we can announce the dates for our Conference, and ask the Primrose Society, the Juneau Garden Club, the Friends of the Arboretum, the Juneau Urban Forestry Partnership, the Southeast Alaska chapter of the Native Plant Society, and other groups to join us and make this spring event even more exciting.

Further events include the **Statewide Greenhouse and Nursery Conference, February 25 and 26**, it is usually held in Fairbanks or Wasilla, but Darren Snyder, our new extension agent, lobbied for a Southeast venue this year, and it will be held at the ANB Hall in Juneau, there will be some excellent speakers, including a nationally renowned plantsman who will be speaking on the nursery industries response to the problem of Invasive Species, reviews of his performance have been exceedingly positive, other speakers will be added as they agree to participate. To be further informed contact the Extension office at 796-6281.

We are going to take advantage of this opportunity and piggyback onto the end of this session with the second of our monthly public sessions, but have not chosen a topic as of yet. (Any input on subjects and speakers is welcome)

Our website rebuild is proceeding, Southeast Micro Consultants has been working on the new platform, we should see results very soon, and if there is something you think should be included in our website, please respond and suggest its' inclusion.

Please respond to this missive with cries and clamors to participate in our conference, and with shouts of excitement at the opportunity to help plan, promote and execute our flagship event, the Southeast Alaska Gardeners Conference, and mark and reserve the evening of January 20 as an opportunity to join together with other gardeners as we explore the world of new plant varieties available and suitable for Southeast Alaska.

If there is something you would like to discuss, or something you feel you can contribute to our organization, please feel free to contact me, either through this e-mail address, or via phone at 907-790-4916 during business hours, and I will be glad to talk it over with you.

Yours in the garden

David Lendrum

Co-President Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners Association