

## **Currant Affairs**

### **January 20, 2024 Edition**

Compiled by Nick Riordan on behalf of Alaska Community Action on Toxics and the Alaska Food Policy Council

**\*\*Marks new and updated items in this issue**

### **WORKSHOPS, WEBINARS, & SPECIAL EVENTS**

#### **\*\*January 23**

**Backyard Chickens Class** taught by CES at Noon in person. Class will cover breed selection, incubation, nutrition, coop design, disease management, cold weather tips and even chicken psychology. Bring your lunch and join Steve Brown in Room 208 of Kerttula Hall at the UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center. Questions? (907) 745-3360 or [matsu.ces@alaska.edu](mailto:matsu.ces@alaska.edu). To Register click this link <https://bit.ly/3TN4Xi3>

#### **January 24**

**Advanced Seed Starting** class at 6 pm offered by Seeds and Soil Farm in Palmer at the Annex, 247 S Alaska Street. <https://seedsandsoilorganics.com/product/advanced-seed-starting/>

#### **January 25**

**Low Tunnels 101** is part of the 2024 Know Your Land series offered by the HSWCD, USDA NRCS, and Kachemak Bay Campus. In person in Homer and Zoom. Register online at <https://www.homerswcd.org/>

#### **January 30**

**Alaska Food Forest Inspiration with Josh Smith, the Frozen Plant Guy** is the second lunch and learn hosted by Rural Caps Grow Program. 12-1 pm, registration info can be found here <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076532388913>

#### **February 1**

**Local Grower Spotlight with Ryan Lee** is part of the 2024 Know Your Land series offered by the HSWCD, USDA NRCS, and Kachemak Bay Campus. In person in Homer and Zoom. Register online at <https://www.homerswcd.org/>

#### **February 5**

**"Willows"** presented by Cam Webb at the next ANPS meeting via Zoom from 7-9 pm.

#### **February 5 – 9**

**The Alaska Forum on the Environment**, attend at the Dena'ina Center and virtually. Register at <https://cvent.me/dEX4ko>.

## February 6

**Forming a Tribal Conservation District** is the third lunch and learn hosted by Rural Caps Grow Program. 12-1 pm, registration info should be available on the Grow Program's Facebook closer to the date - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076532388913>

## February 8

**Soil Health in Orchards with Tianna DuPont** hosted by the Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association. Membership meetings are at 7 pm. Join the club to get the Zoom link.

## February 13

**Processing Fish Waste into Fertilizer** is the fourth lunch and learn hosted by Rural Caps Grow Program. 12-1 pm, registration info should be available on the Grow Program's Facebook closer to the date: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076532388913>

## February 15

**Forest Stewardship for Common Landowner Goals** is part of the 2024 Know Your Land series offered by the HSWCD, USDA NRCS, and Kachemak Bay Campus. In person in Homer and Zoom. Register online at <https://www.homerswcd.org/>

## \*\*February 19

**Composting** is the topic of the February AMGA membership meeting. Jodie Anderson will be presenting via Zoom from 7-8 pm. Check out the club email or website to register.

## February 26-29

**Mariculture Conference** in Anchorage is an opportunity to meet with members of the mariculture industry, hear from mariculture experts, and connect with farmers, processors, researchers, community leaders and other professionals. [Registration is open](#)

## February 27

**Cold Storage & Root Cellars** is the next lunch and learn hosted by Rural Cap's Grow Program. 12-1 pm, registration info should be available on the Grow Program's Facebook closer to the date. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076532388913>

## February 29

**Crop Rotation for Successful Harvests** is part of the 2024 Know Your Land series offered by the HSWCD, USDA NRCS, and Kachemak Bay Campus. In person in Homer and Zoom. Register online at <https://www.homerswcd.org/>

## March 4

**"St. Isidore Farm: an Alaska Native Seed Company"** presented by Sarah Jansen at the next AK Native Plant Society meeting via Zoom from 7-9 pm.

## March 7

**Winter tree identification** - including identifying some invasive trees and shrub. Winter tree identification can be done on trees of all sizes by examining their dormant buds. We will show pictures and talk about the descriptions of the most common trees in Alaska, and a few of the invasive trees too. To Register: <https://alaska.zoom.us/j/83880205957>

**\*\*March 9**

**Peony Convention** coming up in Anchorage. \$30 -

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=884007023515783&set=a.572100318039790>

**March 12**

**Community Composting Solutions** is the next lunch and learn hosted by Rural Caps Grow Program. 12-1 pm, registration info should be available on the Grow Program's Facebook closer to the date. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076532388913>

**March 14**

**Local Grower Spotlight w/ Bill Bartee** is part of the 2024 Know Your Land series offered by the HSWCD, USDA NRCS, and Kachemak Bay Campus. In person in Homer and Zoom. Register online at <https://www.homerswcd.org/>

**March 14**

**Geneva Rootstock with Gennaro Fazio** hosted by the Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association. Membership meetings are at 7 pm. Join the club to get the Zoom link.

**\*\*March 18**

**New Soil Food Web** is the topic of the March AMGA membership meeting. Jeff Lowenfels will be presenting via Zoom. Check out the club email or website for registration and login info.

**\*\*March 19**

Starting in November AFMA will host a **Food Access Forum** once a month! We will meet 11AM - 12:00 PM via ZOOM. We encourage market managers, farmers, and others interested in food access to join in the conversation. Each month we will discuss a Food Access topic.

**March 22-23**

**AK Farmers Market Association Summit and Annual Meeting** will take place on Friday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> via Zoom. Save the date. More info coming soon <https://alaskafarmersmarkets.org/event/afma-summit-and-annual-meeting/>

**\*\*March 23-24**

**AK Botanical Garden's Spring Garden Conference** is accepting proposals from speakers and vendors. This year's conference will be downtown at the Dena'ina Center.

<https://www.alaskabg.org/spring-garden-conference-2024>

### **March 26**

**Funding your Tribal Food Project** is the next lunch and learn hosted by Rural Caps Grow Program. 12-1 pm, registration info should be available on the Grow Program's Facebook closer to the date. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076532388913>

### **March 28**

**Efficient Irrigation Systems w/ Experts from Dripworks** is part of the 2024 Know Your Land series offered by the HSWCD, USDA NRCS, and Kachemak Bay Campus. In person in Homer and Zoom. Register online at <https://www.homerswcd.org/>

### **April 9**

**Fruit Tree Pruning - Live Demo** is the eighth lunch and learn hosted by Rural Caps Grow Program. 12-1 pm, registration info can be found - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076532388913>

### **April 11**

**Garden Soils 101** is part of the 2024 Know Your Land series offered by the HSWCD, USDA NRCS, and Kachemak Bay Campus. In person in Homer and Zoom. Register online at <https://www.homerswcd.org/>

### **\*\*April 15**

**Soil Conservation and Nutrient Development** is the topic of the March AMGA membership meeting. Jessica Anderson will be presenting in person at the BP Center, starting around 6:30. Check out the club email or website for registration and login info.

### **\*\*April 16**

**Backyard Pollinators** class offered through CES in person and online. Join us to learn more about the pollinators in your backyard. We'll cover some of the lifestyles of bees as well as how to recognize some of our common bees and other pollinators in Alaska. We'll also cover some ways to attract pollinators and how to be good pollinator stewards in your own gardens. Please register in advance for this class using this link: <https://bit.ly/3RPo0XO>

### **\*\*March 19**

Starting in November 2023 AFMA started hosting a **Food Access Forum** once a month! We will meet 11AM - 12:00 PM via ZOOM. We encourage market managers, farmers, and others interested in food access to join in the conversation. Each month we will discuss a Food Access topic.

### **April 23**

**How to Plant a Tree** is the ninth and final lunch and learn hosted by Rural Cap's Grow Program. 12-1 pm, registration info can be found - <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076532388913>

**April 25**

**Minimize Feed Costs by Optimizing Your Pasture** is part of the 2024 Know Your Land series offered by the HSWCD, USDA NRCS, and Kachemak Bay Campus. In person in Homer and Zoom. Register online at <https://www.homerswcd.org/>

### **PROGRAM and JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS and UPDATES**

**\*\*Community Food Security Through Gardening Grant** offered through ACF is focused on the Mat-Su and is accepting applications to award 10 \$10,000 awards.

<https://alaskacf.org/funds/community-food-security-through-gardening-grant/>

**\*\*Orchards and Food Forests GROW-OFF Grant Program** is accepting applications. Read more here <https://ruralcap.org/connect/news/orchards-and-food-forests-grow-off-grant-program/>

**\*\*Tree Sale Opens Mon Jan 22, 2024.** Order Tree Seedlings. Jump on this quickly before they run out of stock. They are offering birch, larch, spruce, etc. Plant your windbreak & grow carbon-sequester-ers! [CLICK HERE](#) for info

**\*\*Comprehensive Organic Gardening Course** offered through Mat-Su College 6 Fridays during Feb-April. For more info email the instructor [HERE](#), and registration info found [HERE](#)

**\*\*Growing a Productive and Sustainable Garden** class taught by UAF's Heidi Rader this spring 2024. Read more about the class here <https://itgrowsinalaska.community.uaf.edu/learn/>

**\*\*Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District has a job opening for a Seasonal Invasive Plants Field Technician.** It is posted on our website (<https://www.kodiaksoilandwater.org/jobs>) and I have attached the pdf here as well. Please share with anyone you think may be interested!

**\*\*Anchorage Soil & Water Conservation District is hiring a Seasonal Technician** to support our Native Plants Program. The position will be based in Anchorage and will support native plant propagation, plant salvage, and seed collection. Please see the attached job description for more information, and feel free to share widely.

**\*\*Arbor Day grants** of \$200-500 available to government agencies and non-profit organizations to help celebrate Arbor Day in Alaska. Alaska's official Arbor Day falls on the third Monday of May each year. [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1x5n2UkfTPBwRpY\\_vgABwzv-ERrGHxt6/edit#heading=h.yhyeg7l5qas5](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1x5n2UkfTPBwRpY_vgABwzv-ERrGHxt6/edit#heading=h.yhyeg7l5qas5)

**\*\*Whole Kids 2024 Garden Grant Applications Open Soon.** Mark your calendar - the Garden Grant application window is opening on February 1! Are you a previous grant recipient? If you

received your funds in 2022 or earlier, you are eligible to apply for a one-time renewal grant. [Download the sample application](#) and [FAQs](#) to get started early.

**2023/2024 Micro Grants** to improve food security will be accepting applications in the new year - [https://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_grants/microgrants\\_for\\_food\\_security.htm](https://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_grants/microgrants_for_food_security.htm)

**Homer Soil and Water Conservation District** is hiring a Program Manager. As you can see in these newsletters they provide amazing content - <https://www.homerswcd.org/employment.htm>

**Class list for 2024** offered by Seeds of Soil online and in person out in Palmer. <https://seedsandsoilorganics.com/product-category/alaska-gardening-classes-growing-guides/>

**Job opportunity at UAF working on weed management issues in small grains and cover crops.** All with the goal of continuing to supply certified weed free straw for various uses in Alaska. [Check out the job listing on their website.](#)

**Growing a Productive, Sustainable Garden in Alaska** is the title of an upcoming 3 credit course (CRN 35237) offered this Spring. In this course, students will learn how to successfully grow vegetables, flowers, fruit, herbs and more in Alaska, including the Master Gardener content. The course covers botany, starting plants, soil, composting, season extension, greenhouses, house plants, entomology, pests, diagnostics, and landscaping. Learn More and Register!

**Pollinator Steward Certification** registration is open for their 2024 course! [Their website.](#)

**The Herb Study Group** meets the second Friday of each month from noon - 1 p.m. for lively discussion and hands-on activities that center around specific herbal topics. Meetings are held virtually using Zoom and in person and are free and open to the public. Please email [anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com](mailto:anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com) for information on upcoming winter topics and how to join

King Tech High School is in the planning stages for a **Sustainable Food and Renewable Energy Student Learning Center**. One of the goals of this space is to integrate a variety of existing (and some new) programs at King Tech. If you'd like to participate in discussions about how this project moves forward and share your thoughts on workforce needs in our city and state that King Tech could help meet, reach out to King Tech to learn more.

**Wildflower Garden Club grant deadline is January 31<sup>st</sup>.** Funding is open to individuals, schools, and Non-Profit entities engaged in botanical education like scholarly studies, scientific research projects, or work in the areas of Horticulture, Floriculture, Landscape Design, Forestry, Botany, Agronomy, and Plant Pathology. <https://wildflowergardenclub.org/grants.html>

**Job opportunity at Seeds of Change** – Shift Lead - Reach out to Sara Renard via email - srenard@akbh.org for a copy of a detailed job description and job preview.

**The Native American Agriculture Fund** is surveying to learn about issues of food insecurity and hunger in Tribal areas. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NAAF2023>

**Alaska Farmers Union** call for new members. This organization advocates for the needs of local growers. More members = a better sense of what those needs are. [Consider signing up here.](#)

**The 'Teaming With Microbes' podcast series** with Jeff Lowenfels and Jonathan White promotes organic gardening and addresses Alaska and Anchorage specific gardening and yardening issues. Available through the Anchorage Daily News

**Southcentral Alaska Beekeepers Association monthly meetings.** We're a friendly and diverse group of Alaskans with a common interest: Bees! SABA meets the fourth Monday of each month (except December) at the VFW Post 9785 10527 VFW Rd. Eagle River, AK from 6:30 - 8:30pm. Meeting reminders emailed out each month to members.

**AG Matters** on Palmer's Big Cabbage Radio has tons of new content. Check out past episodes here - <https://www.radiofreepalmer.org/category/ag-matters/>

**AFPC's Food Waste Working Group** is compiling a living archive of food waste activity across the state. Take their survey here - <https://www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org/foodwaste>

**Midtown Garden Depot is closed for the winter. We'll be back open in Spring, when we'll have lots of free garden supplies** for your next project. We also accept donations of materials anytime. Gate is always unlocked, come by at your convenience. 2930 Cheechako Street. Follow the link to the [Midtown](#) Garden Depot webpage. Coordinated by Alaska Community Action on Toxics.

**Treats for your Chickens** available at 3740 Williams Street on Mondays and Thursdays. These are vegetables and fruits collected from a nearby commercial kitchen and made available by ACAT's Yarcucopia program. Bring your own container, keep things tidy, and text or call Nick @ 907-717-4392 to get on the group text that lets you know when the bins are full and when they're empty. Leftovers go to our chickens and compost piles.

**Share Waste** is a [handy website](#) for seeing where to drop off food waste to be used by neighbors in personal compost piles, fed to flocks, and used at community gardens. This isn't a 'new' website, but it might be new to you! In my experience, the more people using Share Waste (giving and receiving), the better it will work - <https://sharewaste.com/>

**Yarducopia** (a program of Alaska Community Action on Toxics) is accepting signups for gardeners looking for growing space, landowners offering space, and volunteers offering time to help make it all happen. Reach out to Yarducopia at [garden@akaction.org](mailto:garden@akaction.org) or [their website](#).

**Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage** and the **Alaska School Garden Network** compile a list of public garden projects and volunteer opportunities – [you can view it here](#).

### **FINDING FOOD: FARMERS MARKETS, FOOD PANTRIES, & FOOD HUBS**

Anchorage soil and water conservation district created an **interactive map of farmers markets in Anchorage**. Check it out! [http://anchoragewcd.org/farmers\\_markets.html](http://anchoragewcd.org/farmers_markets.html)

**The Alaska Farmers Market Association** new **Farmers Market Toolkit** for starting, enhancing, and supporting a farmers' market in your community.

**The Alaska Farmers Market Association's** [Market Directory](#) helps you easily find farmers markets you live near, the address, hours, etc.

**Locally Grown Resource Guide** made by the Mat-Su Cooperative Extension – [Link to PDF](#).

**Arctic Harvest Deliveries** – [a great source of local foods!](#)

**Blue Market** carries lots of locally grown and fermented foods throughout the winter. You can find **Happy Mushrooms**, **Common Root** kimchi and curtido, greens from **Seeds of Change** & much more.

**City Farms** is an indoor hydroponics farm in Anchorage. Their veggies can be found at New Sagaya, Natural Pantry, Fred Meyer, and Walmart. <https://www.cityfarmsalaska.com/>

**Local Greens** sell hydroponically grown veggies year-round in Anchorage. [Get a weekly or every-other-week subscription](#), and pickup at Double Shovel Cidery at your convenience

**Far North Fungi** grows and sells fresh and dried mushrooms in Anchorage & teaches fungi cultivation.

**Anchorage Greens** sells direct to consumers through a weekly Green Bag subscription as well as folks who stop by for on-site ala carte purchases. <https://www.anchoragegreens.com/>

**Alaska Sprouts** sells sprouts and microgreens online for pickup in Anchorage - <https://www.alaskasprouts.com/> . Read more about their story in a [2017 issue of Edible Alaska](#)

**Thriving Greens** sells sprouts, salad greens, and home sprout kits. Check them out on instagram to find their next pop-up sale.



**Mat-Su Microgreens** provides weekly deliveries of fresh microgreens to your door. Also available at Friday Fling in Palmer - <https://www.matsumicrogreensak.com/>

**Local Food Pickups in Anchorage and Valley** - goat milk, duck/chicken eggs, and chicken, turkey, goat, and rabbit meat. Call or text (907)-885-7732 Or (907)-312-6779

**LunaChick Farm** sells sustainably raised animals, eggs, etc with drop-offs on the Kenai Peninsula, Anchorage, and Valley. Learn more about the operation [here](#) or [here](#) or this [entertaining radio interview from 2020](#).

**Whispering Bay Ranch** has **local eggs for sale** in Anchorage on Thursdays, Mat-Su on Mondays. Chicken and Duck. (907) 885-7732

**Support Alaska's American Indian Producers** - <https://www.indianagfoods.org/alaska-1> & check out Ag Alaska's list of AK farms - <https://agalaska.org/alaska-farms/>

**Alaska Food Hub** opened for its 7th season, with pick-ups in Homer, Soldotna, Ninilchik, and Seldovia, with more locations in the works.

To **RECEIVE** Currant Affairs, suggest items to **ADD, CHANGE EMAIL ADDRESS** or **UNSUBSCRIBE**, contact Nick Riordan at [garden@akaction.org](mailto:garden@akaction.org).

**What did I forget?? Send along ideas and updates!**