

Currant Affairs

January 8, 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 8

"Eastern Beringian grasslands: an endangered ecosystem" presented by Bruce Bennett at the next AK Native Plant Society meeting via Zoom from 7-9 pm.

****January 11**

High 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 11

Growing Apricots with Ilona Farr hosted by the Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers Association. Membership meetings are at 7 pm. Join the club to get the Zoom link.

January 11

Trash to Treasure webinar series hosted by Solid Waste Services. The series goals are to educate about and encourage circular economies in Anchorage and Alaska. Part 4 will be a presentation by Patrick Simpson from Grizzly Wood who will discuss his latest venture turning post-industrial and post-consumer plastic into recycled plastic lumber "Grizzly Wood". 7 pm via Zoom. You can read about the series and register at [the SWS website](#).

January 13

Alaska Food Coop Are you interested in starting a statewide multi-stakeholder cooperative focused on storage and distribution of local food? If so, please attend our next community conversation Saturday January 13, 2024 at 11:30 am. Visit their website for the zoom link and more info - <https://alaskafoodcoop.com/>

****January 16 – March 5**

Integrated Pest Management class series offered through AMGA and taught by Cooperative Extension agents. Spaces still available! In person at UAA and via Zoom. [More info here](#).

****January 16**

Food Forest Gardens: Join Saskia Esslinger to learn what a Food Forest is and how to start planning your own. This is the first of Rural Caps Grow Program lunch & learn of 2024. [Register here.](#)

January 24

Advanced Seed Starting class at 6 pm offered by Seeds and Soil Farm in Palmer at the Annex, 247 S Alaska Street. More info and registration on their website <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 25

Trash to Treasure webinar series hosted by Solid Waste Services. The series goals are to educate about and encourage circular economies in Anchorage and Alaska. Part 3 will be a presentation by Patrick from Alaska Plastic Recovery. 7 pm in person and via Zoom. More info to come.

****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 - <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 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 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 22-23

AK Farmers Market Association Summit and Annual Meeting will take place on Friday, March 22nd and Saturday, March 23rd 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 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

****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

****Preserving Alaska's Bounty:** Sarah Lewis of the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service will teach a series of online classes about home food preservation. The classes will be held from 1-4 p.m. on Sunday afternoons, Jan. 7, Jan. 14, Jan. 21, Jan. 28, and Feb. 4 using Zoom. For more information, or to register, please visit bit.ly/PAB2024.

****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>

IPM class offered through the AMGA (a part of the Cooperative Extension Service).

Space is limited. AMGA members who have renewed for 2024 will receive priority registration starting Dec.14. Remaining slots will open Dec.21. See class details. Note there is no AK master gardener course this winter or spring.

Organic gardening, the comprehensive courses taught at the Mat-Su College by Ellen VandeVisse beginning February 23 and ending April 14. Six classes total. More info here - <https://www.goodearthgardenschool.com/classes>

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.](#)

GROW-OFF (Orchards and Food Forests) Grant RFP to be released in January 2024. The Forest Service has awarded funds to RurAL CAP to sub-award grants of \$40,000-\$60,000 to eight to ten CEJST-designated "disadvantaged" Alaska communities, with the purpose of establishing and maintaining community orchards and food forests over a five-year project period. Stay tuned for more updates soon!

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 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.

ABG's Brighter Winter Nights began December 1st – More info on their website <https://www.alaskabg.org/upcoming-events-workshops>

2024 Farm to School Grants. The Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program is designed to increase the availability of local foods in schools and help connect students to the sources of their food through education, taste tests, school gardens, field trips, and local food sourcing for school meals. Grants can launch new farm to school programs or expand existing efforts. Application closes January 12th, 2024. Learn More about this funding opportunity at this link. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rRJubzTbw1C3-0lp74NcEQrLnOGNSJXH/view> AND <https://www.fns.usda.gov/grant/fy24-f2s>

Wildflower Garden Club is offering grants 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. Go to <https://wildflowergardenclub.org/grants.html> to learn more and apply.

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>

State Division of Agriculture opens Grant program to Assist farmers with High Livestock Feed Costs. Learn more about the grant program in the video below and at this [link!](#)

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

AgWest Farm Credit financial statement basics webinar series. AgWest does financial support services for farmers and fishermen in the western states, including Alaska.

Job opening: Plant ecologist at Alaska Center for Conservation Science – Are you a plant ecologist with a passion for working across Alaska’s diverse habitats and regions? <https://careers.alaska.edu/en-us/job/525667/plant-ecologist-research-professional>

Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program. USDA is accepting applications for planning projects and community food projects. Applications from organizations that address food insecurity in rural, tribal, and underserved communities are encouraged. <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/funding-opportunities/community-food-projects-competitive-grants-program>

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/>

Herb Study Group - 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. These meetings will be held virtually using Zoom and are free and open to the public. Please email anchorageherbstudygroup@gmail.com for information on how to join

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/>

Yarcucopia (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 Yarcucopia at 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

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.

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