

Currant Affairs

May 7, 2023 Edition

Compiled regularly by Nick Riordan on behalf of Yarcucopia (a program of Alaska Community Action on Toxics) and the Alaska Food Policy Council

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

WORKSHOPS, WEBINARS, & SPECIAL EVENTS

May 7

Pre-emptive Protection from Plant Diseases presented at Alaska Mill and Feed's classroom. Sign up at 907 276 6016 or <https://alaskamillandfeed.com/classes/>. Cost of \$5

****May 9**

Building Healthy Soils Across Alaska panel discussion hosted by RurAL CAP. Guests include Tom Zimmer, the Ecology Center Director at Calypso Farm in Fairbanks and Nick Riordan, organic gardening coordinator for Alaska Community Action on Toxics.

****May 10**

Midtown Garden Depot Tour and Tidy from 6-7 pm. This is the equivalent of 'office hours'. There'll be someone at the depot to answer questions, help decide what you might need, and load and unload vehicles. It's also a chance to give back by helping tidy and restock the depot piles. [Learn more about the depot on ACAT's website.](#)

****May 11**

Start Composting This Spring, offered by ACAT's Yarcucopia program, will provide a one-hour tutorial on two ways to start composting this spring. The class runs from 6-7 pm at 3740 Williams Street. Email garden@akaction.org to register.

May 12

Trowel and Error: Maintaining a Raised Bed Garden is the topic of the next Anchorage Parks and Rec garden class. Our horticulturalists will share lessons learned and tips for managing your bed so you still have time to enjoy our short summer. Participants will receive plant "plugs" to transplant into their own home gardens. Dress appropriately for an outdoor class.

May 13

Alaska Botanical Garden Spring Plant Sale begins! ABG has an exceptional assortment of plants suitable for Anchorage. Tour the garden and get inspired by what's currently in bloom!

****May 14**

Midtown Community Garden Sign Ups will be on Sunday May 14 from 10 – 1 pm. We'll be signing up gardeners for the summer season as well as refreshing garden beds, setting up the green house and more. Reach out to Nick at garden@akaction for more info.

****May 14**

Spenard Community Garden Clean Up & Meet Up will be on Sunday May 14 from 2 – 5 pm. Come lend a hand, learn more about the garden, what it offers to the neighborhood, and how you can get involved. Reach out to Nick at garden@akaction for more info.

May 15

Avian Flu in Alaska; An Update with Dr. Bob Gerlach at 6 pm. Avian Influenza is still present in Alaska and Migratory Birds are expected to increase the risk to poultry. Dr. Gerlach will be providing updates of the current outbreaks from across North and South America and what you can do to protect your poultry. This class will be held at the UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center in Room 208 of Kerttula Hall as well as via Zoom for those unable to attend in person. To Register <https://alaska.zoom.us/j/84607542771>

May 15

AMGA membership meeting is an **Introduction to Beekeeping** with Alexa Pullen. 7 pm

****May 15**

ABG's What's in Bloom Walking Tour from 6-7 pm. Make the most of our short growing season and learn to identify Alaskan plants and find out what's blooming in our collections with one of our monthly walks in the Garden. Each month will highlight the different flowering plants in the surrounding boreal forest as well as highlight plants in our collections chosen for their hardiness & differing bloom times. https://www.flipcause.com/secure/cause_pdetails/MTc5MjI4

****May 16**

Midtown Garden Depot Tour and Tidy from 11:30-1 pm. This is the equivalent of 'office hours'. There'll be someone at the depot to answer questions, help decide what you might need, and load and unload vehicles. It's also a chance to give back by helping tidy and restock the depot piles. [Learn more about the depot on ACAT's website.](#)

May 17

Landscaping with Native Plants presented by Patrick Ryan, ABG Education Specialist at 12 pm. There are good reasons to include native plants in your landscape. Briefly, native plants can provide a natural habitat for native insects and birds. They also prevent soil erosion and require little maintenance. Register in advance for this free class: <https://bit.ly/LandscapeNativePlants>

****May 17**

Potato Barrels is the topic of the next Urban Harvest class offered through the Anchorage Museum. [Learn more and register on their website.](#)

****May 17**

Backyard Chickens: a brief intro offered by Yarducochia (ACAT's gardening program). Meet at 3740 Williams Street, class runs from 6 – 7 pm, and bring your questions! Email garden@akaction.org to register.

May 18

Backyard Insect Ecology class offered by CES will cover insects in your yard and their role in the environment! Class is from 12pm – 1 pm on Zoom.

****May 18**

Start Composting This Spring, offered by ACAT's Yarducochia program, will provide a one-hour tutorial on two ways to start composting this spring. The class runs from 6-7 pm at 3740 Williams Street. Email garden@akaction.org to register.

****May 21**

Seedling Exchange hosted by the **Anchorage Permaculture Guild** and **Anchor Gardens**. This event is from 2 –5 pm in Spenard. Check out the organizer's websites for more information.

May 23

Pest Barriers and Trap Crops at 12 pm. Curious about ways to stop pests from invading your garden? \UAF IPM technician, Joey Slowik, will discuss methods of planning a garden with pests in mind. He'll talk about where those pests come from and go over some methods to slow their movement like barriers and trap crops. This class will focus on bug/slug content rather than plants. It will be held in room 208 of Kerttula Hall at the UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center as well as via Zoom for those unable to attend in person. Feel free to bring your lunch if joining us in person. ****In-Person & via Zoom. Must Register to attend**** To Register <https://alaska.zoom.us/j/89981712570>

****May 24**

APU Spring Creek Farm's annual seedling sale will take place on Wednesday, May 24 from noon-5:00 pm. Come get all the plants you need for a successful garden and help support Spring Creek Farm's programs! If you came to our sale last year, you know it got a bit busier than we expected. With that in mind, we are coming with twice the number of seedlings this year!

May 24

Urban Harvest: Foraging Forest Walk from 6-8pm. Walk into the urban forests of Anchorage with wild foods and edible plants in mind. Learn about the nutritional properties of spruce tips and other prevalent plants as you gather some for your home use on this guided walk. Discuss ethical harvest practices as you delve into what Anchorage area forests have to offer your home kitchen. This program is part of a summer series of wild harvest walks, in connection with the

exhibition *Good Medicine*. Comfortable walking shoes and layered dress recommended. Free. Registration recommended for communication. [Visit the website here.](#)

May 24

Landscaping for the Birds at 12 pm. Join Bird Treatment Learning Center volunteer and bird biologist Lisa Pajot and local landscape architect, M. Elise Huggins, as they present the birds most likely to visit your Southcentral Alaska yard and what you can do to protect, encourage and attract them. Lisa will review bird habitat requirements and what makes a great place that will attract and support our local bird population. Accompanied by fabulous bird photos and identification tips, they will then add a design dimension to the presentation, exploring ways to look at your landscape holistically, options to protect birds from predators along with images of successful landscapes. Register in advance for this free class: <https://bit.ly/LandscapingforBirds>

May 25

Anchorage Audubon will start giving away 10,000 white spruce seedlings in an attempt to offset the bird habitat and landscaping losses due to the Spruce Bark Beetle, in Anchorage, All the information about the Free Trees is now on a new website. [CLICK HERE](#) for all the details.

****May 31**

Backyard Chickens: a brief intro offered by Yarducopia (ACAT's gardening program). Meet at 3740 Williams Street, class runs from 6 – 7 pm, and bring your questions! Email garden@akaction.org to register.

June 1

Join **Anchorage Public Library** for our **Growing Together gardening program series Part 2**. In June we will be covering Garden Infrastructure including this month's craft of making your own mini trellises for the pea plants we started in May. To-go packets available at all APL locations for the duration of the month or as long as supplies last.

June 3

Anchorage Garden Club Plant Sale from 9 am – 4 pm. See Facebook page for details

June 3

Wildflower Garden Club Plant Sale from 9 am – 3 pm. Location TBA

June 3

Boyers Orchard Blossom Festival 12-4 pm (Tickets for sale starting April 1st). There'll be live music, local vendors, & trees and shrubs for sale. Get this in your calendar!

****June 4**

Seedling Exchange at the Midtown Garden Depot hosted by Anchor Gardens and Yarducopia. Save the date. More details to come.

****June 12**

ABG's What's in Bloom Walking Tour from 6-7 pm. Make the most of our short growing season and learn to identify Alaskan plants and find out what's blooming in our collections with one of our monthly walks in the Garden. Each month will highlight the different flowering plants in the surrounding boreal forest and highlight plants in our collections chosen for hardiness & differing bloom times https://www.flipcause.com/secure/cause_pdetails/MTc5MjM3

June 20

Research on Managing Weeds and Pests. Come to the UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm and visit the fields with Invasive Plants guru, Gino Graziano, as he shares the research he's working on regarding managing weeds and pests in Alaska. This class will be held outside, so please dress appropriately for the weather. ***This class is in person only - You Must Register to Attend*** Click on the link to register. <https://forms.gle/yhoVrZaqYTbPedp4A>

June 30

Grow North Farm's Markets begin soon, with the first market with food trucks starting Thursday, June 30!

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

PROGRAM and JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS and UPDATES

****May is Alaska Native Plant Month!** There is a whole slew of events and workshops planned to celebrate the first Alaska Native Plant Month. [Check out the calendar of events at the AKNPS website.](#)

Garden Tour season is upon us. Check out your favorite garden clubs' websites and newsletters to learn more about what amazing spaces and generous hosts we'll be treated to this summer. See you out there!

CSA sign ups and Farmers markets are opening soon. Keep your eye out. These fresh local foods is how I learned to love vegetables as a child. The quality is impressive. Enjoy the season!

Job opening at the Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District. They're recruiting for a position to lead development of a new Native Plants Program focused on addressing unmet needs for plant materials for revegetation, restoration, and potentially landscaping projects in Southcentral Alaska. The position posted on April 20 and the first review of applications will begin on May 3

Anchorage 2023 Youth Employment in Parks Summer Positions is now open. Anchorage Park Foundation is Hiring Contractors, Youth Crews, and Interns. Anchorage teens ages 16 to 19 years old can get paid to work outside, make lifelong friends, and learn how to improve our public parks and trails. [Apply for a position!](#)

****Healthy and Equitable communities grant** program for Alaska through the USDA.

Third annual Veg Fest to your calendar. Scheduled for Saturday, September 23 from 10 am – 4 pm at the Performing Arts Center

Tim's Plants, Produce and Worms will be **selling a variety of berry plants** from his place on Wednesday evenings and Saturday midday from April 26th through most of May. Times, location, varieties, and prices will be posted on Facebook in Marketplace, Alaska Farm and Food, Alaska Pioneer Fruit Growers, and Tim's Plants, Produce and Worms as well as on Craigslist in Farm and Garden. Sorry, no website.

Introduction to Ethnobotany University of Alaska class (EBOT F11 / ANTH F102 – 3 credits) offered in May and June with a July field trip. 'Ethnobotany 100 surveys concepts of botany and ethnobotany in the context of Alaska Native cultures, including: plant biology and taxonomy, scientific and ethnobotanical plant collection methods, traditional plant uses (working with Alaska Native Elders / oral history recordings), and how the resulting ethical awareness contributes to other fields of study.

Treats for your Chickens available at 3740 Williams Street on Monday's and Thursday's. These are vegetables and fruits collected from a nearby commercial kitchen and made available by ACAT's Yarducopia 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.

Friends of Boyers Orchard will be opening their 'Sponsor-A-Tree' for sign-ups soon. Check their website and pick out a tree you'd like to learn to take care of and harvest from this summer. I think sign ups open June 3.

Farmers Market Coalition is **hiring two remote positions** – [apply on their website](#)

ABG Learning CSA is open for registration - <https://www.alaskabg.org/guidedgardeningcsa>

Mountain View & Girdwood libraries have seed libraries available, and the Anchorage Loussac Library will have seed starting kits available starting May 1st.

Spring Creek Farm is hiring a part-time youth agriculture education coordinator for this summer! [Click here for more info.](#)

Catholic Social Services is hiring a **Summer Associate to help support their Refugee Enterprise & Agriculture Program**. [More information about this amazing program and the job can be found here.](#)

Alaska Food Policy Council published their **2022 Annual Report** and **Food Security Action Plan & Executive Summary**. Check these out!

Alaska Botanical Garden is hiring a handful of summer positions – [Check out the list here.](#)

Calypso Farm (near Fairbanks) is hiring a **Summer Farm Educator** for ages: 16 and up for May 30 to August 11 (with the possibility to extend). [Learn More & Apply!](#) Calypso will also be hosting a 'Beginning Farmer Training Program' this summer (June 12-14 / July 17-19 / August 7-9). Led by Indigenous farmers in partnership with the farmers at Calypso, this hands-on program will teach participants how to grow vegetables in a way that is transferable to village communities. Visit calypsofarm.org/indigenous-agriculture

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/>

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/>

Harvest of Hope Garden at the Lutheran Church of Hope is run by Don Bladow, producing thousands of pounds of fresh produce each summer distributed by the Lutheran Social Services Food Pantry. Learn more at Don's [blogspot for the garden.](#)

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 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

The Alaska Farmers Market Association launched a **Farmers Market Toolkit** for starting, enhancing, and supporting a farmers' market in your community. Well done AFMA!

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

A List of Anchorage Food Pantries can be found at AnchorageFood.org (Address, hours, etc.)

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

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

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

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

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/>

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](#)

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