

Currant Affairs

June 22, 2021 Edition

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

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

WORKSHOPS, WEBINARS, CONFERENCES, & SPECIAL EVENTS

June 23

The Spenard Community Garden's Weekly Work Party on Wednesdays from 4-7 PM. If you want to learn more about the project, garden, or help welcome visitors – stop on by! 1303 West 33rd Ave, Anchorage. [More info here.](#)

June 23

Conserving AK's Pollinators will be held at 7pm at the Campbell Creek Science Center's Midsummer Night's Science Series. Celebrate Alaska's bees, flies, and butterflies during National Pollinator Week! Join **Casey Burns, BLM Alaska wildlife lead**, to find out the critical roles insect pollinators play in healthy ecosystems, the threats pollinators face, and strategies scientists are using to monitor and protect pollinators. You'll also learn ways you can help pollinators right in your own backyard! Registration is required. Please register 24 hours in advance. [Register here.](#)

June 24

Picnic in the Garden will be held at the Alaska Botanical Garden. This year's picnics will be catered by South Restaurant in eco-friendly, stainless steel bento boxes. Purchase tickets for at [June 24th Tickets](#). For more information, go to <https://www.alaskabg.org/>.

June 24

June 24 is **Opening Day at Grow North Farm**. The farmstand will be open from then on – Monday – Friday from 4-7pm. WIC Accepted and SNAP accepted at half-off during all operating hours. Thursdays we will have hot food to-go from a wide variety of local vendors.

June 24

The Cooperative Extension is hosting **16 Steps to Alaskan Gardening** from 12 – 1 PM. "Believe it or not, Alaska is one of the easiest places to garden. However, to be successful, you have to unlearn practices you might have learned outside the state. This presentation will present the 16 essential techniques to be a great gardener in the 49th state." [Join the Zoom meeting here.](#)

June 25

Volunteer work party at Boyers Orchard from 3-7 PM. "We'll spread mulch & manure, thin fruits, remove weeds, clean and haul trash. All welcome" [More info here.](#)

June 29

The Food Safety and Sanitation Program is hosting the final **Cottage Food Series: Open Listening Session** at 10 am – a forum for food businesses, including processors who hold a permit, home-based operations, farmers market managers, and others interested in the cottage food exemptions in the Alaska Food Code to share their thoughts. DEC will then consider these comments in determining whether and what types of amendments should be made to the current exemptions. This event is a collaboration with the Alaska Food Policy Council, the Alaska Farmers Market Association, and the Alaska Farm Bureau. [Join via Zoom here](#). Meeting ID: 862 3989 3683 / Passcode: 218201 / Join by phone: (253) 215-8782 [More info here](#).

July 1

The Cooperative Extension's incredible Jody Anderson will be leading an hourlong session on **Soil Texture and Testing** from 12-1 PM. You can join in from the [Matanuska Experimental Farm's Facebook Page](#).

July 8

The Cooperative Extension is hosting **Bug Boxes with Joey Slowik** from 12 – 1 PM. "Ever wondered about ways to increase natural predators and pollinators in your garden? Have you considered a bug house? In this live stream event, we will be building a basic form, and discussing all the possibilities to provide a safe bug refuge in your garden. We'll cover the materials you need as well as the technical prowess to get it done, and start getting help in your garden from our six and eight legged friends." You can watch the event here

Cooperative Extension & Experimental Farm's Food Preservation Series ([list of events](#)):

- July 15 Food Preservation Basics
- July 22 Jellies, Jams, Preserves, Marmalades, and Conserves
- July 29 Canning Fish in Jars and Smoking Fish
- Aug 5 Dehydrating Fruits and Vegetables (including Herbs)
- Aug 12 Canning Fruits
- Aug 19 Canning Tomatoes
- Aug 26 Pickles and Sauerkraut
- Sept 2 Canning Vegetables and Legumes
- Sept 9 Canning Meat and Poultry in Jars
- Sept 16 Making Jerky

July 24

Yarducopia is hosting a **Garden Bike Tour** to highlight some of the amazing things growing in Anchorage's many backyards. [Check out the event page](#) – reach out with ideas of gardens to visit (garden@akaction.org) & more details to come.

July 27

Attend **Chicken University** with the staff of the Cooperative Ext. And Matanuska Experimental Farm for one hour on Tuesday. [Read more and register for the Zoom class here.](#) And as always, you can check out the [full list of this amazing organizations events here.](#)

August 10

The Anchorage Museum's **Urban Harvest: Creative Uses for an Abundance of Kale** from 5:30 – 7:00 PM. [Read more about the event and sign up here.](#)

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

WIC Benefits Increasing (June-September) -Alaska families enrolled in WIC can eat more fruits and vegetables thanks to the American Rescue Plan Act, also called the federal COVID-19 stimulus package. Benefits will be increasing for each mother and child enrolled in WIC between June through September to buy fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables at over 160 participating stores across the state. [WIC prescreening tool](#) & [Sign up.](#)

The Alaska Farmers Market Association's [Market Directory](#) is a simple and easy way to see what farmers markets you live by, where they are, hours, and their acceptable forms of payment. Check this site out!

The Spenard Community Garden hosts weekly garden gatherings on Wednesdays from 4-7. Live in the neighborhood? Pop on by. [You can learn more about the garden here.](#)

The Cooperative Extension Service's Heidi Rader will be teaching the next **Online Master Gardener Class** from August 23 to December 3. Registration is open. [More details here.](#)

Plant Sales – Many nurseries offer discounts after the solstice. Call to check. Buy a bargain perennial and plant in the fall.

Garden Tours – Many garden clubs are hosting tours this summer. If you're a member, be on the lookout for summer schedules. Exciting!

The **Alaska Master Gardeners** will be offering another **Advanced Master Gardeners course** taught by Brenda Adams this fall. Details TBA. [Sign up here for more information.](#)

Anchor Gardens' [calendar](#) shows their list of members-only events. You can sign up and join this network of wonderful and supportive gardeners right in your neighborhood.

Want to become an Agronaut?! The **Space Farming Institute** is offering spring and summer classes for students and families on **hydroponic gardening** (and other topics). [Read on.](#)

[AnchorageFood.org](#) provides a list of **Food Pantries** in Anchorage, their hours, addresses, etc

Looking for a place to grow your own food? To learn how to garden? Or support with a gardening project in Anchorage? Yarducopia might be able to help. [You can read more and sign up on our website.](#) Or reach out to garden@akaction.org

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

USDA community compost and food waste reduction projects. You can find the solicitation at <https://www.grants.gov> by searching for notices posted by the Department of Agriculture or for [Funding Opportunity Number USDA-NRCS-NHQ-CCFWR-21-NOFO0001112.](#)

Graduate Students can apply for up to \$10,000 block grants to support AK Grown specialty crops from DNR. [More info here](#)

Alaska Village Initiatives' agAlaska program has a [variety of funding opportunities](#) to support agriculture across the state supporting beginning farmers, conservation efforts, and high tunnels.

OPEN POSITIONS & INTERNSHIPS

Landscaping and Gardening Jobs – Anecdotaly, I've been hearing experienced gardeners-for-hire are in demand in and around Anchorage. Reach out if you'd like to learn more about these opportunities (907)-717-4392

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Boyers Orchard in Anchorage is requesting donations to help cover utilities costs while the Anchorage Municipality searches for funding opportunities to purchase the property. You can donate here.

****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.](#)

Anchor Gardens is recruiting **neighborhood garden coaches.** Coaches serve as community mentors for those interested in learning about growing food in their own neighborhoods and assist in linking people to resources. Reach out to anchorgardensanc@gmail.com.

To **RECEIVE** Currant Affairs, suggest items to **ADD, CHANGE EMAIL ADDRESS** or **UNSUBSCRIBE**, contact Nick Riordan at riordank@gmail.com.