

ALASKA PIONEER FRUIT GROWERS NEWSLETTER

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President: Dan Elliot, HC31 Box 5196, Wasilla, AK 99654 ph 376-5196

Vice President: Kevin Irving, 2000 Douglas Drive, Wasilla, AK 99654

Treasurer: Debbie Hinchey, 1474 Virginia Court, Anchorage, AK 99501 ph 278-2814

Board Members at Large: Dwight Bradley, 22008 Voyles Blvd, Chugiak, AK 99567 ph 688-1268

Sally Karabelnikoff 7435 Old Harbor Ave, Anchorage, AK 99504 ph 333-8237

Editor: Tami Schlies, P.O. Box 672255, Chugiak, AK 99567 ph 688-5711 Email schlies@gci.net

Membership information and dues payments contact Debbie Hinchey

Orchard Tours:

It is time for our summer orchard tours to begin instead of our monthly meetings at Boyer Photography. Our first tour will be Thursday, May 17th at 7PM at Bushes Bunches Nursery in Palmer and then on to Northern Fruits Nursery afterwards. Bushes and Bunches is an established Nursery, while Northern Fruits is a new one, so it will be interesting to compare what is going on. *There will be no reminder cards for the May 17th tour.*

To get there, take the Glenn Highway from Anchorage to the second light in Palmer and turn right. Follow the Old Glenn south about a mile. Past the Matanuska Susitna Bridge, turn left onto Wolverine Road and

follow it about a half-mile in to Bushes and Bunches. After our tour there we will continue down Wolverine Road about a quarter mile to Northern Fruits to finish.

Dan has suggested carpooling so there is room for everyone to park, so please find a buddy or two and hook up.

Our June tour will be at Lawrence Clark's on June 7 at 7 PM. July 13-14, a Friday afternoon and a Saturday, will hopefully be a tour down south on the peninsula. We are still looking for suggestions or volunteers for the August meeting, and our annual apple tasting tentatively will be at Dwight Bradley's in Chugiak on September 20th. See you there!

Fencing at Low Expense

by SEYMOUR MILLS

For those needing a fence around your trees at minimal expense, I will share my solution. I use 5' high by 1" poultry mesh on heavyweight 6' steel posts spaced 12 feet apart. You can get 150' long rolls at many hardware stores. Before I attach the fencing I cut and peel 1 1/2" - 2" by 8' straight, green aspen poles and use #12 or #14 black wire (purchased by weight in a large coil from a steel supplier) to tie these

poles to the steel posts, top and bottom to create an 8' high post. I hang the

chicken wire on the outside and attach it with light tie wire (or 4' to 6' long 3/4" by 1 1/4" wood rippings with nails or screws,) flush with the bottom of the fence. Then cut and peel 2" - 3" by 13' aspen poles and use the heavy wire to attach to the post along the top of the fencing. Tie the fencing to this pole with the light wire. Then cut and peel 1 1/4" by 8' aspen poles for intermediate posts, which I slightly sharpen and stick in

the ground and wire to the 13' cross pole. The sharpened bottom keeps it temporarily upright. I bought a 600' spool of yellow poly line and attached four runs of this above the 13 foot pole to create an 8 foot high fence that is both rabbit and moose proof. I also wire a pole along the bottom of the fence and posts. There are quicker fences, but they are more expensive. If you

have kids, the pole peeling is good to keep idle hands busy and to make it a family project. The 13' horizontal pole will sag over time without the intermediate posts, and so will the 1/4" poly line. We had a young moose jump between the ropes once when they were too far apart. The yellow line is easy for the moose to see so they do not just walk through it.

Book Review:

by *JERRY KOERNER*

NAFEX member George Stilphen is offering a second printing of his book *The Apples of Maine*. Back in 1993, George updated the original *Apples of Maine* by Bradford that was originally published in 1911. George's first printing was only 500 copies, which sold fast and are almost impossible to find now. I saw one advertised on the Internet for \$125.00. He has had many requests for the book so he has decided to publish another 500 copies. He ran an add for the book in the Fall 2000 issue of *Pomona*. If you did not see the ad, the 400-page book is hardcover and the price is \$45.00 postpaid from:

George A. Stilphen
986 Bolster's Mills Road
Otisfield, Maine 04270-7038
(207) 743-9420

I had been looking for this book for years as Southeast Alaska shares a very similar maritime climate with the state of Maine. It would also be a great addition to anyone's reference library for descriptions of apples. If anyone is interested in early ripening apple varieties from the state of Maine, I would suggest getting the Fedco Trees catalog from:

FEDCO TREES
PO Box 520
Waterville, Maine 04903-0520

They offer one-year-old trees on standard rootstocks grown by long time NAFEX member John Bunker for \$14.00. They have many old time apple varieties that you won't find anywhere else.

Member to Member:

➤ Looking for a local source of blueberry plants that do well up here. Contact Val Glooschenko at 222-1790 or valg@gci.net.

➤ For sale- Carmine Jewel cherry trees and Honeoye strawberry plants. I have to trade scions of Whitney crab and Collette for other varieties of apple, apricot or plum scions. Contact Lisa Wasson at 283-3682.

Gladys Wood Elementary School Apple Tasting

Results October 4, 2000

by HUGH HARRIS

These are some additional results from an independent group with no vested interest in apples - Kindergartners! Three classes participated, each child voting for the best apple. This was also for the closing of "A For Apple" for the month of September. Norland again seems to have taken the day!

Apple variety	# of votes
Unnamed	2
Apricot	1
Heyer 20	4
Novosibirski	3
Sunrise	1
8th and M	4
#21 unnamed	3
#23 Norland	8
#26 unnamed	2
#40 Jersey Mac	4
#43 Westland	4
#49 Collete	2
15th Ave	4
#8 Oriole	4
Morden 35	4
Hugh's Mystery	2

Organic Fertilizer recipe

by TAMI SCHLIES

Instead of buying expensive, premixed fertilizer from specialty stores, try this recipe to make a complete organic fertilizer good for our Alaskan soils. This is easy, too, because the measurements are by volume, not weight - just use a scoop!

Mix 4 parts seed meal or alfalfa meal, for Nitrogen, which is needed for leaf growth. You can also use some fishmeal or blood meal, but be careful because it is fast acting and may burn plants. Try a 1 part blood meal and 3 part seed meal mix.

$\frac{1}{2}$ part bone meal for phosphorus, used in flower, fruit, and root growth. If you use a high nitrogen bone meal, you may want to cut back on your seed meal a little. 1 part soft rock phosphate may be used instead, which will release phosphorus more slowly over a longer period of time.

$\frac{1}{2}$ part kelp meal for potassium, used in stem structure and disease resistance. You could replace this with Greensand, which is slower acting and does not have the added benefit of micronutrients, but it is less expensive.

1 part dolomitic lime to offset the acidity of the seed meal if you tend to have acid soil. You could also use 2 parts wood ashes instead (not from treated lumber), if you have a lot of those, and in the process omit the kelp meal as well, since ashes are high in potassium. If you have alkaline soil, you might omit the lime.

Sprinkle liberally, work into the top couple of inches of soil for most vegetables and plants, and add more later in the season if they seem to be flagging. Remember to STOP fertilizing your fruit trees by June 1st so they shut down in time for winter!

Featured Fruit

Strawberry - *Fragaria*

Strawberry plants are composed of sets of three saw-toothed leaflets growing on slender, 8-20 inch tall stalks. The berries can be white, pink, or red and are fleshy and juicy. Strawberries are generally self fruitful.

There are three classifications of strawberries based on when they flower and produce fruit. June bearers start making flower buds in the fall, fruit the next summer, and then send off runners. Ever bearers fruit twice a season, setting their flower buds under both long and short days. Day neutrals make buds under all day lengths as soon as the foliage is mature, producing fruits, flowers, and runners all at the same time.

Strawberries prefer gentle, southerly slopes with protected from the wind and from spring frosts. They need soil with a good drainage and generally need at least one inch of soil a week for best production.

Strawberry Butter

1 pound sweet butter at room temperature (NOT margarine)

3/4 c. fresh strawberries, finely chopped

1/4 c. powdered sugar

With an electric mixer, whip the butter, then add remaining ingredients and whip until light and fluffy. Serve on fresh, warm rolls or pancakes. Store in the refrigerator. Makes 2¹/₂ cups.

APFG Newsletter
c/o Tami Schlies, Editor
PO Box 672255
Chugiak, AK 99567