

# Alaska

Compiled by Dave Stout

During 2017 NPGS there shipped 14 orders with a total of 102 order items (18 from WRPIS) to 10 people in Alaska. Eleven orders were submitted over the GRIN-Global Website and others were through emails or other means. We received three responses to our email questionnaire from requestors. Their responses are listed below:

## (1) Steve Gerlek

The scion wood arrived in good shape last year and most of the grafts were successful on the hearty root stock we use in this climate. We have converted an old WW2 Quonset Hut into a greenhouse/tree nursery where they have overwintered in smart pots (see link below). We began a tall spindle last summer and this spring we will be expanding it, adding a 60 LF Belgian fence, and establishing our formal grid orchard.

<https://www.adn.com/slideshow/alaska-news/anchorage/2017/09/09/photos-government-hill-orchard-begins-to-take-shape/>

As we get the infrastructure in place we are excited about exploring the different varieties of Apple trees that can thrive here. In addition, there is a growing interest, especially amongst our Millennials, in developing a suite of varieties (sweet and tart) to make an iconic Anchorage cider. We are a volunteer run neighborhood organization and all of our learnings on urban apple varieties and planting methods suitable for our sub-arctic location will be fed directly back to the community through their engagement in the project.

There is considerable local interest in our Commons and Community Orchard and we receive occasional press coverage. Let me know if it would be helpful to make sure we mention your organization and support.

Thanks,  
Steve Gerlek  
Government Hill Commons, Inc.  
Vice President and Project Manager

## (2) Gary Masog

1. Did the material arrive in good condition? Did the material germinate and/or root well? Did the material grow well? Any observations you may have on general growth and development?

**Arrived in good condition. The Gooseberry scions did not root. I tried two methods as I have always had poor results rooting them.**

2. Was this material useful to you? If yes, how? If no, why not?

**Over the years some material was very usefully. Found two new sour cherries that appear to surpass what is we normally grow.**

3. What were the outcomes from any plant germplasm you received: Was it part of a research experiment? Did you make crosses? Are you developing any new plant offerings? What are your future plans with this material?

**Gooseberries from Grin has not worked and I moved on to buying named rooted varieties. Still working with sour cherry scion wood we be testing 30 varieties from**

**(3) Johanson Victor**

1. Did the material arrive in good condition? Did the material germinate and/or root well? Did the material grow well? Any observations you may have on general growth and development?

All material arrived in good condition. PI 643967 has rooted and grown out well. PI 517843 and 517841 rooted, but I was unsuccessful with 617835 and 617836. The rest of the order consists of scionwood, which is yet to be grafted.

2. Was this material useful to you? If yes, how? If no, why not?

Material is very useful to me. I am experimenting to determine which cultivars or species are suitable for interior Alaskan climatic conditions. Our extreme climate rules out most mainstream germplasm, and lack of demand renders the most useful material commercially unavailable. Were NPGS resources absent, my investigations would be significantly curtailed. Funding cuts to the local university have left this kind of activity to private citizens, and we need all the help we can get. I wish to propagate successful things and make them available to others here.

3. What were the outcomes from any plant germplasm you received: Was it part of a research experiment? Did you make crosses? Are you developing any new plant offerings? What are your future plans with this material?

I requested Heisa (PI 643967) after having received Anelma (PI 244797) a few years back. Anelma has arctic raspberry in its lineage and proved to be by far the most flavorful of the many raspberries I've tried up here, so I'm keen to evaluate Heisa, since its pedigree also includes arctic raspberry. I also received Wyoming (PI 657886), which has been the only purple raspberry that is hardy and productive up here, and I have successfully propagated it. I'm also trying to find out which gooseberries are hardiest. Since most cultivars have hardy nearly everywhere, information about their true limits is undetermined. I've also ordered some blueberry accessions (PI 618261 and 618067) which are half *Vaccinium uliginosum*, which is the indigenous blueberry here. I have tried various *V. corymbosum* cultivars which are apparently hardy, but the plants don't thrive and die out in a few years. The native plants, however, are vigorous and healthy. I speculate that it may be a mycorrhizal association that insures the natives do well, and that this association doesn't form on the commercial cultivars. To test this theory I intend to field graft the germplasm to established plants. Hopefully that will make a difference. In the future, I also expect to do some breeding, and access to parent material is vital.

