FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Gardeners, commercial growers and the public are invited to the fifth annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference and Organic Growers School March 17-18 in Fairbanks.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service will host the conference at the Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge.

The featured speaker will be George DeVault, an organic farmer from Emmaus, Pa., who is the newly appointed president and executive director of the Seed Savers Exchange. The nonprofit organization is dedicated to agricultural biodiversity and the preservation of heirloom varieties of vegetables, fruits, flowers and herbs.

DeVault will talk about season extension, mainly through the use of high tunnels (unheated greenhouses), floating row covers and crop rotation. He also will address the importance of saving seeds and how to go about it.

Presenters from around Alaska also will share information on topics such as university research on fruit and berry production and fish waste; composting; soil fertility; weed suppression; year-round community-supported agriculture (CSAs); and egg and poultry production for local market. Panels will discuss composting and value-added agricultural products.

Several preconference activities are scheduled March 16. Participants may tour Chena Hot Springs Resort to see geothermal energy projects and year-round greenhouses, followed by a grant-writing workshop and tour of the Cold Climate Housing and Research Center in Fairbanks.

See a full conference schedule or download a registration form at www.uaf.edu/ces. The fee is $35 for one day or $60 for both. For more information, call the Tanana District Extension office at 474-2450.

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