

# Homer Garden Club

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2008



## Neighbors Inform with Local Food Growing and Storage Tips

Sunday, November 23, the Homer Garden Club presents four area residents instructing and sharing information on their gardening tips for the lower Peninsula. Please join us 2:00 p.m. at City Hall, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, together with a local panel of gardening experts.

Millie Lewis, a longtime resident of Homer has been gardening for over forty years. She will be speaking about her success with gardening in Earth Boxes in her greenhouse, tips on getting her tomatoes and cucumbers to ripen and advantages of Earth Boxes compared to traditional dirt beds.



Neil Wagner, a gardener of 20 years in the Homer area will talk about storing food in a root cellar and greenhouse gardening.

Birgitte Sutter has been putting food up for winter for over 20 years in the Homer area. Come learn her tips and favorite vegetables to grow and harvest.

Carole Demers, whose family homesteaded in Fairbanks, has been gardening all her life. She will discuss putting food by for the winter, her favorite things to grow, as well as special tips for drying vegetables for winter use.

There will be a question and answer period after each speaker. This is a great opportunity to gather new ideas. Everyone should be able to take home good information and start planning for a great harvest in 2009.

What fun!

**Remember!!!**  
November 23 at  
2:00!!

### Join:

- MILLIE LEWIS
- NEIL WAGNER
- BIRGITTE SUTTER
- CAROLE DEMERS

### Inside this issue:

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## Guest Presentations Announced for 2009

**January**— Brenda Adams - Before and After Landscape Ideas

**February**— Paul Castellani – Growing Organic Vegetables, Varieties, Methods, How to Have Successive Harvests All Summer Long

**March**— Curtis Stigall - How to Prune Trees

**April**— Janice Chumley - Invasive and Harmful Pests, How To Identify and How To Deal With Them

**May**— Teena Garay - My Favorite Trees, Shrubs, and Perennials For the Homer Area

# Homer Garden Club

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## Designing with Color

By Brenda Adams  
President



“DIFFERENT  
COLORS EVOKE  
DIFFERENT  
EMOTIONS AND  
FEELINGS IN EACH  
OF US AND WE  
DON'T ALL  
RESPOND IN THE  
SAME WAY TO  
THE SAME  
COLOR.”

Although internationally acclaimed garden designer, Piet Oudolf claims to disregard color almost entirely when designing his spectacular landscapes, instead concentrating on the form and structure of the plants, for most of us, color remains one of the most important considerations when planning our gardens. True, the color in the blossoms of a given perennial can be ephemeral, staying with us a mere few weeks, while the foliage, shape and structure of a plant are there throughout the season. Nonetheless, careful planning for a succession of blooms can carry a particular color scheme throughout the season or allow you to change the color palette completely between spring and late summer.

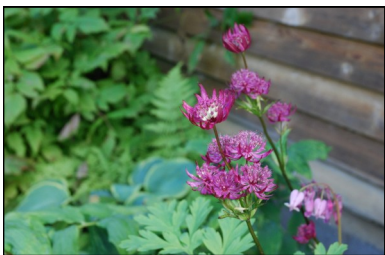
So where do you begin? Alternatively, how do you begin? One way is to decide why you are creating a garden to begin with. What do you want to get out of it? Are you setting your mind to this endeavor to improve the curb appeal of your home or to delight yourself? Do you want a vibrant, joyful place in which to entertain many friends or a quiet, restful retreat for your family's pleasure? Do you enjoy order and tidiness or are you attracted to a more chaotic look? Are you more traditional in your tastes or do you like to break all the rules? The answers to these questions will influence your choice of colors.

Different colors evoke different emotions and feelings in each of us and we don't all respond in the same way to the same color. (That's one reason we don't all have the same favorite color – thank goodness!) That said, red is a color of passion and excitement. Orange is vital and challenging. Green is safe and soothing. Yellow is cheerful. Pink, blue and purple are quiet, cool and romantic.

In a garden, however, colors don't stand alone. How they appear to us is deeply influenced by their neighbors. For example, purple, my favorite color, is very regal and sophisticated when combined with blue. With red, purple becomes rich and sassy. With its color wheel complement, yellow, purple is electric. Combined with lavender and lilac, purple is soothing and restful. So, you see, you can use your favorite color to create compositions of varying moods.

Now to go back to one of Mr. Oudolf's point, don't forget the foliage. Much of it is various shades of green, but we are blessed with many more choices. Grey and silver, yellow and gold, chocolate, burgundy, rust and chartreuse, even orange can be included in your color scheme through the clever use of foliage. In fact, repeating the flower colors in your foliage selections will help to create a feeling of cohesiveness in your garden.

If you wish to explore this topic in depth, may I recommend, P. Allen Smith's *Colors for the Garden, Creating Compelling Color Themes*. He has many helpful hints on getting started.



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## The Pioneer Garden

By Teena Garay  
Vice President

This is the second summer for the newly redone Pioneer Garden. It had become hard to maintain with lots of aggressive perennials and weeds. The challenge was to redesign it with low maintenance, drought tolerant plants that would hold their own all summer long with little care. It was interesting to note that the garden has definite microclimates, even in such a small area. The bed is around 150' long and between 3' and 4 ½' wide. The front of the corner of Pioneer and Svedlund gets a lot of wind and dust and the Svedlund side is where the snow seems to melt. It is pretty soggy there in the spring when things are vulnerable to the cold and wet. The most sheltered area is the east end on Pioneer.

After a careful evaluation of all the plants, the winners in the wet cold area have been the Iris pseudocorus and the Jacobs Ladder called Bressingham Purple. A big surprise was the showy *Phlox paniculata Nora Leigh* in the windy, dusty center. It was the one that I was a bit worried about but the variegated foliage was such an asset that I decided to chance it. This summer it really took off and even bloomed. The silver ornamental Blue Oat Grass was another star that had good foliage and was a nice contrast. The ornamental Catnip, *Nepeta Walkers Low* was a bit more aggressive than I thought and will need to be divided as well as the *Geranium Nimbus*. They are nice blues with a long blooming period so I'll keep them. Look for them in the plant sale. The spiky purple *Salvia East Friesland* and *Salvia Caradonna* are really beautiful and slowly have increased in width. The herbaceous Potentillas like *Potentilla Monarch*, *William Rollinson* and *Jean Jabber* were lovely as well as the apricot colored yarrow *Achillea Terra Cotta* and red colored *Paprika*.

The one disappointment was the Peonies. I picked three Peonies with smaller, single blossoms that wouldn't need staking and thought they would be a nice balance for the bulk of the colored yarrows. They were small to begin with and have gotten lost in the mix. I'm hoping that they will come into their own this coming summer and start to look more like a shrub. It didn't help that the biggest one got stepped on and smashed down, but at least it didn't die. A public garden is always a challenge for traffic, garbage and flower picking.

The garden was weeded in early April, only because it was nice out and the snow was melted. We cut everything down and laid it back over the plant crowns and bare earth. It really was too early but we couldn't resist and I wanted the bulbs to come up without being crowded with old foliage. We removed it in early May. The garden was only watered 3 times this summer and we weeded once a month. A big thanks to Tracy Asselin, Kim Smith, Tracie Brown and Sarah LaQue for helping me out.



Photo by Teena Garay

“The herbaceous Potentillas like *Potentilla Monarch*, *William Rollinson* and *Jean Jabber* were lovely as well as the apricot colored yarrow *Achillea Terra Cotta* and red colored *Paprika*.”



*Achillea Terra Cotta*  
Photo by Teena Garay

# Homer Garden Club

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## PICKLING PAPERWHITES

*From an article by William B. Miller, Professor of Horticulture, Director of the Flowerbulb Research Program, Cornell University.*

A common problem with paperwhites... is that they often grow too tall and flop over. Recent research conducted by the Flowerbulb Research Program at Cornell University has found a simple and effective way to reduce stem and leaf growth of paperwhites. The "secret" is using dilute solutions of alcohol. Properly used, the result is paperwhites that are 1/3 to 1/2 shorter, with equal sized flowers that last as long as normal.

**What to do** - We suggest planting your paperwhite bulbs in stones, gravel, marbles, glass beads, etc. as usual. Add water as you normally would, then wait about 1 week until roots are growing, and the shoot is green and growing about 1-2" above the top of the bulb. At this point, pour off the water and replace it with a solution of 4 to 6% alcohol, made from just about any "hard" liquor. You can do the calculations to figure the dilution, but, as an example, to get a 5% solution from a 40% distilled spirit (e.g., gin, vodka, whiskey, rum, tequila), you add 1 part of the booze to 7 parts of water. This is an 8-fold dilution yielding 5% alcohol. Then, simply use this solution, instead of water, for further irrigation (watering) of your bulbs. It's as simple as that. The result will be a plant that is 1/3 shorter, but with flowers just as large, fragrant, and long-lasting as usual. But, the plant will be nicely proportioned and won't need support stakes, wires, or other gizmos to keep it upright. You will see results within just a few days.

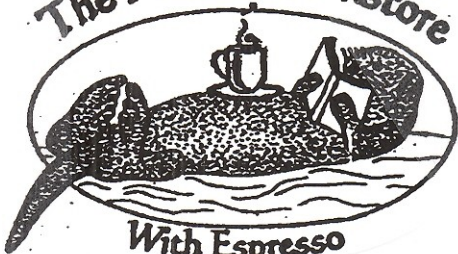
**A few other thoughts** - Do not use beer or wine, as the sugars in them will cause major problems with the plants. As with humans, paperwhites can also suffer alcohol overdoses! We suggest 4- 6% alcohol as a normal and safe range. If plants are given much more than 10% alcohol, growth problems will start, and 25% alcohol is dramatically toxic. So, moderation is the key!

- Basically, the higher the alcohol concentration (within reason), the shorter the plants. So it is not critical whether you use 4, 5, or 6% alcohol. Just stay well below 10%, where growth problems become noticeable.
- If you do not have alcohol for consumption in your household, rubbing alcohol (isopropyl alcohol) works just as well. Since this is usually 70% alcohol when purchased, a dilution of 1 part rubbing alcohol to 10 or 11 parts water is appropriate.
- Why does this happen? We are currently working on this, but we feel it is simply "water stress", where the alcohol makes it more difficult for the plant to absorb water. The plant suffers a slight lack of water, enough to reduce leaf and stem growth, but not enough to affect flower size or flower longevity.

The love of gardening is a seed that once sown, never dies.  
~Gertrude Jekyll

Even through the hardest Alaskan winter, nurture your garden dreams  
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Monday - Saturday  
10am - 6pm



**The Homer Bookstore**  
With Espresso

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Homer, AK  
907-235-7496

## Homer Garden Club

The Homer Garden Club held its Regular Meeting October 26, 2008 at the Homer City Hall. The minutes were read by Rachael Roe and accepted by the membership and Treasurer Peggy Craig reported a balance of about \$8500.00 (she did not have the checkbook). Brenda Adams introduced the General Survey on the HGC and encouraged those present to fill it out .After discussion Brenda asked for a show of hands to see how many people supported the idea of purchasing a Power Point projector and hardware. The vast majority of those present were in favor.

Reporting on Old Business it was noted that the 2008 Gardener's Weekend was a great success but we will move the schedule to a week later next year to avoid conflict with Concert on the Lawn.

President Brenda Adams noted the volunteer sign-up sheets and encouraged members to sign up for necessary volunteer activities. Toby Tyler presented an article from Science News magazine that featured greenhouse skyscrapers that would provide enough food to feed a city. Teena went over the scheduled presenters for the year.

It was announced that Paul Stamets, fungi expert, will be a featured speaker in April at the Alaska Garden Club April 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. Kyra Wagoner is trying to convince him to do a presentation here as well. Josie Bills brought dahlia tubers for those present as she will be out of town and Rita Jo brought back issues of gardening magazines for anyone who want them. Sue Shover gave rave reviews of a recent visit to the newly redone CA Academy of Sciences rainforest demonstration.

Teena introduced Jaime Rodriguez owner of Alpine Garden Nursery and member of AK Rock Garden Society and North American Rock Garden Society, who gave a great presentation on Rock Gardening.



Gentian Trifolia

Photo by Teena Garay

### Treasurer's Report

October 2008

#### Income

Membership \$145.00

**Total Income** \$145.00

#### Expenses

Meeting \$316.40

**Total Expenses** (316.40)

**Beginning balance** 10-01-08 **\$8,754.99**

Income \$145.00

Expense (316.40)

**Ending balance** 10-31-08 **\$8,583.59**

## Homer Garden Club

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### Happy Holidays to all Homer Garden Club Members— And many thanks for your support throughout 2008!!

Brenda Adams  
Connie Alderfer  
Sue Alexander  
Tonda Allred  
Tracy Asselin, Baycrest Garden  
Marie Bader  
Seraphine Bailey  
Tom Balland  
Jeanne Barnhart  
Christine Barratt  
Michael Bavers  
Karen Berger, Homer Brew  
Terry Billotte  
Josie Bills  
Daisy Lee Bitter  
Cindy Bolognani, Lucky Star Gardens  
Les Brake  
Elizabeth Brennand  
Tracie Brown  
Linda Browning  
Rosie Burgess  
Kathy Burgess  
Marylou Burton  
Peggy Chapple  
Jamice Chumley  
Patrick Church  
Cookie's Country Greenhouse  
Peggy Craig  
Beth Cumming  
Samantha Cunningham  
Joanne Cutler  
Carol Dee  
Cindy Dehron  
Allen Deitz Jr.  
Carole Demers  
Ruth Dickerson  
Alyson Dickson  
Judy Dickson  
Fran Durner  
Sandy Early  
Jolee Ellis  
Judith Erikson  
Edna Farsdahl

Trina Fellows  
Rosemary Fitzpatrick  
Shirley Forquer  
Diane Foster  
Fritz Creek Gardens  
Teena Garay  
Gardens By Design  
Leslie Garrison  
Allison Gaylord  
Vicky Gordon  
Elaine Grabowski  
Pat Gross  
Loraine Haas  
Tamara Hagerty  
Frances Haines  
Frederica Hall  
Gentian Harrison  
Pat Hartley  
Marilyn Hendren  
Barbara Hill  
Sarah Eastin, Homer SWCD  
Becky Horton  
Joan Hoyt  
Madrene Hoyt  
Tom Jahns, UAF, CEA  
Elizabeth A. Johnson  
Walter and Judith Johnson  
Patricia Joyner  
Mary Lou Kelsey  
Patricia A. Kennedy  
Barbara Kennedy  
Susan Kent  
Rosemary Kimball  
Janet Klein  
Susan Kyllonen  
Barbara Landi  
Patricia Leary  
Jane Lefevre  
Mary Lentfer  
Millie Lewis  
Darlene Lind  
Michael Linden  
Kathy Little  
Louise Manley

Jeanne McArthur  
Pam McGinley  
Kate McNulty  
Melanie Meeker  
Joan Mello  
Sue Mihora-Scholl  
Carla Milburn  
Opal and Dick Miller  
Susan Miller  
Loraine Murphy  
Janie Myers  
Deborah Nakada  
Marion Nelson, The Milepost  
Lisa Nolan  
Kathy Noller  
Oscar and Karen Nyvall  
Shelley O'Guinn  
Mary Oldham  
Lorna Olson  
Jack and Deborah Oudiz  
Roni Overway  
Peggy Pittman  
Marga Raskin  
Ingeborg Rathke  
John Regan  
Deborah Rhoades  
Cheryl Riley  
Paula Riley  
Marjorie Ringer  
Kathy Roberts  
Joyce Robinette  
Kathy Robinson  
Jane Roop  
Marali Sargeant-Smith  
Susan Saxton  
Lois and Norman Schneyer  
Helen Schoepke  
Dave and Beth Schroer  
Susan Schulmeister  
Tina Seaton  
Dots Sherwood  
Betty Siegel  
Margaret Simon  
Kim Smith

Michelle Smith  
Linda Soistman  
Carla Stanley  
Linda and Rodney Stone  
Birgitte Suter  
Carol Swartz  
David Taylor  
Catherine Ulmer  
Jim VanOss  
Teddi Velsko  
Caroline Venuti  
Pam Voeller  
Kyra and Neil Wagner  
Jeanne Walker  
Coowie Walker  
Kathy Wartinbee  
Linda Willard  
Joyce Williams  
Susan Woodward



# Homer Garden Club

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## Member Reminders:

- Members are invited to submit articles or information for the Newsletter. Please submit any items by the 8th of January.
- Please check your membership expiration on your mailing label and renew your Homer Garden Club Membership.
- An individual email will be sent to those receiving their newsletter via email with your membership expiration date.
- Please sign up for volunteer help. Volunteer commitments keep the Club strong.



## Suggestions from Members:

Elaine Grabowski recommends the following gardening websites for the enjoyment of HGC members: “The first is [www.awaytogarden.com](http://www.awaytogarden.com) which I stumbled upon watching the Martha Stewart show. The lady who created the gardening blog site was a guest on the show and was interesting and funny. Her blog/web site was beautiful, informative, and fun to read, with beautiful photos. The other website is [www.northhillgarden.com](http://www.northhillgarden.com) which I discovered while talking with Cindy Bolognani (Lucky Star Gardens on Diamond Ridge). North Hill Garden is this fabulous place in Cindy's Vermont hometown. As it turns out, Cindy's sister created the website for the owners and the photos are absolutely gorgeous, charming, and lovely on the eyes. Even if you don't read a word on the website, the photos are a joy to look at (especially on a dreary day). But do read the written word, too, as the website is informative and interesting.”



An interesting thought sent from Pam Voeller:

### FARMER IN CHIEF

The following brief excerpt is from an open letter to the “Farmer in Chief” published October 9, 2008 in the New York Times, written by Michael Pollan:

“Dear Mr. President-Elect...

...when we eat from the industrial-food system, we are eating oil and spewing greenhouse gases. This state of affairs appears all the more absurd when you recall that every calorie we eat is ultimately the product of photosynthesis — a process based on making food energy from sunshine. There is hope and possibility in that simple fact.”

The entire letter can be viewed at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/12/magazine/12policy-t.html?ref=magazine>

THE HOMER GARDEN CLUB – MEMBERSHIP FORM

New or Renewal    Month/Year \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_BASIC \$10    \_\_\_SUPPORTING \$15    \_\_\_BUSINESS \$25

**Please make check payable to “Homer Garden Club” and mail to: Homer Garden Club, PO Box 2833, Homer, AK 99603**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Resource info:** May we put this information into our *Resource Book* for distribution to members?    \_\_\_OK    \_\_\_Not OK

May we include your Email address in our *Resource Book*?    \_\_\_OK    \_\_\_Not OK

**May we send your Newsletter via Email?**    \_\_\_Yes    \_\_\_No

Gardening skill level (Make a guess):    \_\_\_Master    \_\_\_Advanced    \_\_\_Intermediate    \_\_\_Beginner

# Years Gardening \_\_\_\_\_ # Years Gardening in Homer \_\_\_\_\_ Elevation of your Homer Garden \_\_\_\_\_

Gardening Conditions \_\_\_\_\_

Gardening Specialties \_\_\_\_\_

Gardening Goals \_\_\_\_\_

**How would you like to participate in the Garden Club?**

\_\_\_ Refreshments    \_\_\_ Spring Plant Sale    \_\_\_ Newsletter    \_\_\_ Autumn Harvest Dinner

\_\_\_ Telephone    \_\_\_ Pioneer Avenue Garden    \_\_\_ Baycrest Garden    \_\_\_ Program Committee

\_\_\_ Nominating Committee    \_\_\_ Officer/Board of Directors    Other \_\_\_\_\_

Homer Garden Club

PO Box 2833

Homer, AK 99603

