

# Homer Garden Club

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2008



- Lets get inspired! Plan for Spring!!
- What better way then to hear Jaime Rodriguez, President of the Alaska Rock Garden Society educate us on Rock Garden Construction?
- Join Mr. Rodriguez at City Hall on Sunday, October 26th, at 2 pm . .

Jaime Rodriguez is currently President of the Alaska Rock Garden Society, and owner of The Alpine Garden Nursery, a small specialty perennial nursery in the Matanuska Valley between Palmer and Wasilla. He helped organize and was a team member on the ARGS 2000 Seed Collection Expedition to China, and wrote the chapter on Rock Gardening in the North for the North American Rock Garden Society book *Rock Garden Construction* published by Timber Press in 2003.

## Thanks to our new and renewing Members!

- BRIEFLY HIGHLIGHT YOUR POINT OF INTEREST HERE.
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## Warning—An Invasive to Know....Reed Canary Grass

Contributed by Jennifer McCard and Pam Voeller

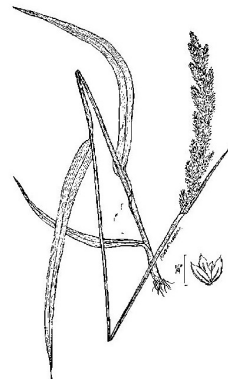
Reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) is an invasive species that was intentionally planted on the Kenai Peninsula to control erosion. Unfortunately, the grass grows so well, even in the middle of rivers and streams, that it can cause the channel to narrow or dam up completely. When this occurs in salmon streams, loss of fish habitat can occur, along with the creation of barriers to spawning and migration.

Since the Kenai Watershed Forum (KWF) is eradicating reed canary grass located near salmon streams, spraying herbicide is not our first choice for getting rid of the grass. Instead, black tarps will cover the grass to block out sunlight for several summers. In cases where the grass is growing in the channel of the river, the plant will be repeatedly mowed down below the water level in an effort to drown it.

While the grass is not yet waving a white flag, KWF made significant progress this summer at three locations near the Central Peninsula. Still, there are over 250 known infestations of reed canary grass on the Kenai Peninsula, but most of them are less than an acre, making this an ideal time for control measures.

Reed canary grass strongly resembles, and often grows among, our native bluejoint (*Calamagrostis canadensis*). In the spring and summer it can be difficult to distinguish the two although reed canary grass could be described as having a slightly bamboo-like appearance – at least in contrast to the bluejoint. This time of year it's easy to pick out: while blue joint has begun to lie over, reed canary grass is still upright. A cultivar of reed canary grass, commonly called "ribbon grass", is variegated and can be found in local gardens.

~PV



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# Homer Garden Club

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## The More the Merrier

by Brenda Adams

Over the past year, fifteen new members joined the Homer Garden Club. It's exciting to see our membership continue to grow. We now have 182 members. That's exceptional for such a small community especially in the frozen north!

Along with a warm welcome to our new members, I'd also like to extend an invitation to each of you to participate actively by chairing or joining a committee and/or running for office as a Board member. Being active is the best way to meet other members and in turn learn from them. It's also an important way our club remains healthy and viable. I've found that new members see the club with fresh eyes and are more likely to question "the way we always do things". New ideas and suggestions are always welcome and often very helpful. There are absolutely no seniority requirements or restrictions to any of our activities or positions. So, please, join in and volunteer to help.

In September, at the Harvest Dinner, the members in attendance enjoyed wonderful food, a welcome slide show of beautiful bulbs and shared experiences of the most unusual summer in our gardens. They also unanimously approved the slate of officers presented for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. You'll recognize the names as all but one were members of the Board this past year as well. The Board members elected are a terrific group of folks. Over the past year, we've also benefited from the efforts of many committee members and committee chairs. Please join me in thanking the folks who helped make everything happen this past year and show your appreciation to those who will lead this year.

Vice President Teena Garay has held this post solo since 2003 and co-chaired for two years before that. Teena also did the redesign for the garden on Pioneer by the carwash and co-chaired with Kim Smith getting it planted and maintained. Teena advises that this is her last year as VP as she and Pete would like to do more traveling together. Thank you Teena for being such a great partner in leading the club. Thanks also for bringing us such varied, interesting and educational programs and speakers.

Peggy Craig will preside as our Treasurer for the third year. Peggy also co-chaired with Tracy Asselin the care of the Baycrest Garden and served on the Plant Sale Committee. Rachel Roe begins her third year as Recording Secretary. She also worked on the Plant Sale and the Pioneer Garden. Rachel may leave Homer before our year ends, so those of you who like to write, start thinking about stepping in when Rachel moves.

Kim Smith is our new Board member and has taken over the very important function of Newsletter Chair. Kim is working on a new look for the newsletter and wants to incorporate more color images. She welcomes articles, digital photos and other input from all members. The regular deadline for submittals is the eighth of each month. Send contributions for the newsletter to Kim at [krsmith@gci.net](mailto:krsmith@gci.net).

Elaine Grabowski has retired as Co-chair of the newsletter after eight years. Thank you Elaine for your many years of dedicated service. Pam Voeller has been the other half of the newsletter team for three years and will continue again this year as assistant to Kim. Pam also Co-chaired the Plant Sale Committee with another active member of our club, Barbara Kennedy. Barb also helped with the Harvest Dinner, the Pioneer Garden and the Gardeners' Weekend and is Patrick Church's back up for the Historian position.

Patrick Church begins his fifth year as Historian for the club. In this role, Patrick takes photos at club events and keeps scrapbooks of these images and all pertinent written documents of our activities. Patrick has expressed a desire to step down after this year, so this will provide another opportunity for one of you to step up.

Roni Overway was elected to serve her third year as Social Secretary. Roni was also the Co-Chair, along with Lorna Olsen, of the big event of the summer, Gardeners' Weekend. The success of this event is testament to both Roni and Lorna's efforts along with an excellent working committee. Roni also worked on the Harvest Dinner, Baycrest and Pioneer Gardens as well as several other special projects.

Barb Landi will hold the Publicity post for the third year running including doing publicity for Gardeners' Weekend. Barb also helped on the Harvest Dinner and Gardeners' Weekend.

Finally, Shirley Forquer, our past President has been a member of the Board for eight years, two as President and six as the Past-President. As a founding member of the club, Shirley adds an important element of continuity to our discussions and decisions.

More than forty other folks pitched in on one or more committees, opened their gardens, brought treats for our meetings or wrote articles for the newsletter. Thank you all for your time and efforts to make our club the best it can be.

There is much to do and many ways everyone can join in this year. Newer members can bring fresh ideas and energy. We will also benefit from the efforts and wisdom of our many long-term members and encourage them to stay as active as possible. I believe it is very important for the overall health and energy of any organization to have a broad base of volunteers. I also think it is vital that leadership roles change from time to time as well. New leadership brings different ideas to the fore, adds new creativity and stimulates thinking.

I thank you all once again, for voting for me for President. The past five years in this role have been exciting and fulfilling. I have had the opportunity to get to know many of you so much better than I would have had I remained a member just sitting in the audience enjoying the programs. I've also learned an enormous amount from all of you and had the opportunity to lead the club through several projects I felt important. The most significant project was a rewrite and republication of our book, now named *Kachemak Cultivating from Seaside to Summit*. I know one of you has good ideas and new projects in mind for our organization, so this will be my sixth and final year to accept the honor of being your President. I'm telling you this now so you all will have plenty of time to plan and prepare for new leadership. I will work hard with the Board to make this a great year and look forward to assuming the role of Past-President where I will actively assist whichever one of you wishes to assume the leadership of our club. You all have a full year to plan ahead, so start planning and get ready to lead us forward.

Taking Care of Fall

by Teena Garay

I love this time of year, even knowing winter is right around the corner. The foliage of trees, shrubs, perennials and ornamental grasses are at their best. I clean up each of my beds now by cutting down all the dead flower stalks to the basal growth. If any leaf is unsightly or spilling onto the pathway, rocks or plants nearby, I cut them off. I like the foliage to look good now and they are the focus, with the occasional flower for decoration. The healthy leaves are left to protect the bare ground over winter. I don't like any exposed earth in my flower beds over the winter. I've lost more plants from March freeze and thaws than the cold. I've even used annuals like sweet pea foliage to protect bare ground. Any green foliage works as long as the seed heads are gone. If you lift up a leaf after a good frost, you'll see that the ground isn't frozen or frosted. Dianthus, or carnations, all get a serious pruning and I cut off all the leggy stems and seeds. I also clean up the Primrose clan, especially the Tibetan primrose as they are prolific seeders, as well as the meadow rues. Hosta can get ratty now and I cut them back. These will get mulched later with spruce boughs. Geraniums also get a good pruning and off come all the leggy flower growth. I have some grassy Iris that smother their neighbors, so I trim them in half. I like to leave most of the ornamental grasses, although Calamagrostis Karl Forester can get beaten down by the wind or snow, so I tidy them up. I cut down the Peonies

that look beat up. I have one that I moved here from my old house and it is suffering from Botrytis wilt. I keep cutting off each stem that shows signs of it and I cut the whole thing back yesterday. I still have Peonies that have nice foliage, so I'm leaving these until it's really over as they turn a nice burgundy.

I've been busy planting trees and shrubs the last 4 weeks. This is the perfect time for me because I can see them for their foliage and fall color. I will mulch these in early November so they don't heave. I often use the ADN newspapers as the ink isn't toxic and I pile them on 16 pages deep. They are best applied wet and I cover them with grass clippings mixed with mown leaves. This keeps the paper weighted down and the weeds out next summer. I do leave a good 4'-6" of bare earth around the base so it won't get smothered. If I've planted a shrub or tree that weeps or is leggy, I make a teepee out of 4 bamboo stakes and lash them together. It keeps the snow load from breaking the center stem or branches. If it's special and I don't want to take any chances, I wrap spruce boughs inside to protect the tree or shrubs and sort of prop them between branches and cover the grounds. I have safely protected Clematis by draping burlap over them and then I use wooden cloth pins to clip the edges shut. I've never had a moose get to my Clematis using this method. I reuse both year after year and have bought the burlap at Wagon

Wheel before and the pins at Ulmers. I agree with Rosemary that spruce boughs are the best mulch for winter protection and you need to put them on right after the ground is frozen for good. I need to get a pile of those going. I've use straw as a mulch when I have run out of spruce boughs or energy. Last fall, I loosely covered a new bed that is quite large and never lost a thing. I did take most of it off in May, but left the small stuff for a summer mulch for moisture. I reuse the straw too, and put it in garbage bags or use some for my compost. I'm mowing the birch and alder leaves now. They are great in the compost or left in bags for compost or spring mulch next year.

I should be planting the few bulbs I purchased this year, but hope to get to it tomorrow. I've planted them into frozen ground before and if you plant deep enough they always seem to make it. It is much easier and safer however, if the ground is still soft.

I also like to have piles now. I have a new pile started for compost and a pile almost done. I have a washed course sand pile, a mowed leaf and grass pile and a horse manure pile. I just unloaded a load of top soil and its tilled and piled up. It's nice to have a jump on spring although it doesn't always happen. It could snow tomorrow and be over for good. I might even be happy about it. I might even start planning for next year

I DON'T LIKE ANY EXPOSED EARTH IN MY FLOWER BEDS OVER THE WINTER. I'VE LOST MORE PLANTS FROM MARCH FREEZE AND THAWS THAN THE COLD.





# Homer Garden Club

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## Homer Garden Club Survey

Your Board of Directors would appreciate hearing your thoughts on how we can improve the Homer Garden Club. By charter, the club's purpose is "to educate and exchange between members, other organizations, and individuals information about gardening and related activities". That statement gives us a wide range of opportunities. We would like some guidance from the membership as to what activities would be most beneficial to and enjoyable for you.

1. How often do you attend meetings?

Always \_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the most important factor/reason you do or do not attend a given meeting?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What changes in our meeting format would make them more enjoyable for you?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What topics are of most interest to you? Check all that apply.

Food Crops \_\_\_\_\_ Organic Gardening \_\_\_\_\_ Perennials \_\_\_\_\_ Annuals \_\_\_\_\_

Trees and Shrubs \_\_\_\_\_ Garden Design \_\_\_\_\_ Pest Management \_\_\_\_\_

Soil Related Issues \_\_\_\_\_ Bulbs \_\_\_\_\_ Pruning \_\_\_\_\_ Green House Growing \_\_\_\_\_

Other (List as many ideas as you have.) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Are there particular speakers that you'd like to hear? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Besides meetings, in what other Homer Garden Club activities do you participate?

Plant Sale \_\_\_\_\_ Garden Tours \_\_\_\_\_ Special Speakers \_\_\_\_\_ Community Projects \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you have a copy of our book? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you find it useful? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What other activities would you like to see the HGC pursue? \_\_\_\_\_

8. As of September, 2008, our treasury has about \$9,000. What are your ideas on how this money might best be used to further the goals of the club and increase its value to you?

\_\_\_\_\_

Thanks for your input.  
Homer Garden Club Board of Directors

\_\_\_\_\_ Your Name (Optional)

Please respond via mail at HGC, PO Box 2833, Homer Alaska, by email to [brenda@muddytruck.com](mailto:brenda@muddytruck.com) or bring the filled out questionnaire to our Meeting, October 26th.

Your opinion matters!! And your input is important!

Please respond to last months survey too!!

**Treasurers Report**

**Income:**

Membership \$190.00

**Total Income: \$190.00**

**Expenses:**

Meeting \$241.34

Chamber

Membership 26.00

Pioneer Garden 143.78

Plant Sale 36.00

Administration 7.58

**Total Expenses: (454.70)**

<b>Beginning Balance 09-01-08</b>	\$9,019.59
Income	190.00
Expenses	(454.70)
<b>Ending Balance 09-30-08</b>	<b>\$8,754.89</b>



There is no season when such pleasant and sunny spots may be lighted on, and produce so pleasant an effect on the feelings, as now in October."  
Nathaniel Hawthorne

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

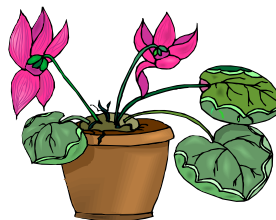
Membership Renewal ~ Check out the date that appears in the upper right hand corner of the mailing label on your newsletter. That is the date you need to renew your membership with the Homer Garden Club. We don't want to lose you as a valuable member! Mail in payment with the membership form found on the back of your newsletter, or pay at the next HGC meeting. Thanks so much. (I am still working on this process...stay tuned!)

It's time to move your gardening indoors.

ULMER'S has what you need – pots & planters, soil, fertilizer, gardening tools, and baskets.



Located at the Lakeside Mall at  
3858 Lake Street  
235-8594



Serving Homer gardeners for over 26 years!

**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?**  OK     Not OK

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 \_\_\_\_\_