

January 2009

## Homer Garden Club Newsletter

Club President Brenda Adams to Speak at  
January 25 Meeting!

### 'Gardens by Design'

- The Homer Garden Club Meeting is January 25, 2:00 pm at Homer City Hall.
- The Board Meeting will be held January 17, 12:00 pm at Teena Garay's.

#### Inside this issue:

Designing with Foliage by Brenda Adams 2

Choosing and Starting Seed by Teena Garay 3

Treasurers Report Peggy Craig 4

2009 Volunteer List 5

THANK YOU !!!

Brenda Adams will present an idea packed program on garden design in Alaska. She'll explain how she uses combinations, foliage, texture and color to achieve impactful, satisfying gardens. Her presentation will include before and after images of many of her projects. Using these examples she'll also describe techniques to ease maintenance chores, resurrect a garden gone wild, enhance an existing garden and

create new gardens of different kinds and styles.

Brenda, founder of Gardens By Design, was awarded a National Landscape Design Award by the Perennial Plant Association in 2007. She is the first Alaskan honored with this award. Brenda has designed well over 100 unique gardens for her clients, from intimate kitchen gardens to the imposing 6,000 square foot entry garden at Stream Hill Park.

She is a Master Gardener and is authoring a book about gardening in Alaska. Brenda has served for six years as the president of the Homer Garden Club. She chaired, co-edited and was a writer for a major revision of our club's book, *Kachemak Cultivating from Seaside to Summit*. She and her design work have been featured in the Homer News, Homer Tribune, Anchorage Daily News and Alaska Home Magazine.

### Fire in Ice...thoughts from our friend Les Brake of Coyote Garden....

"I made all my ice up before we got into these brutal temperatures, and I'm done. At minus 20 and colder, *even plastic will split*, and I've lost some good toys by trying to make ice when it's too cold. I like the zero to minus 15 range for making

ice. It's too cold here to even light the candles, which really bums me out. That lighting on New Year's Eve at minus 26 was just not fun. *This is my 4th consecutive night of minus 30-32, and 8th in a row of 20-32 degrees below zero.*"



Photo by Les Brake

## Designing with Foliage

By Brenda Adams

Homer Garden Club President

Foliage may not be the reason for a garden, but from a design point of view, it is the most important element in creating a season long sensation. For one thing, foliage is *there* all season while each flower taries with us for but a brief period. For another, foliage dominates the overall space of the garden. Therefore, for best results, we need to give serious thought to the foliage of plants when creating a garden.

Foliage offers us an enormous range of texture, shape, size and color with which to work. There are two aspects to texture. The first that comes to mind is the finish of the leaves. Are they smooth or fuzzy, shiny or matte, prickly or soft, meaty or delicate, crinkled or flat? Additionally, texture refers to the overall impression of the foliage. It can be airy, frothy and frilly or bold and bodacious. It might be spiky, lax or upright. This aspect of foliage texture is influenced by the size and shape of the leaves. Small or deeply cut foliage seems frothy. Big or fleshy leaves are bold. Sword-like foliage is spiky.

Shape refers to the outline of a leaf. Some are simple and oval; others are compound, made up of many leaflets, or have deeply cut edges. Foliage can be round, arrow-shaped or have the complex outline of a maple or fern. The fan-shaped ginkgo was a childhood favorite of mine. Whatever shapes attract you in foliage can be used to make your garden more cohesive by repeating the shape to create a pattern or using a very bold look as a focal point.

Size is obvious. Some leaves are tiny while others are huge with much mid-sized foliage between the two. In general, plants that enjoy sunny locations have smaller leaves than those that prefer a shady spot. This has to do with evaporation and the plant's need to maintain it's hydration in its natural habitat. We are able to use many plants designated as shade plants in hotter or lower latitude gardens, in full sun in coastal Alaska. This gives us a design advantage because we have a greater range of leaf sizes available to us in our sunny gardens.

Foliage color is much more than green, though it's important to remember there are many, many shades of green to consider as well. Additionally, we can make use of gold, chartreuse, burgundy, purple, blue, gray, silver, orange, rust, black, red, and pink foliage. Then there are all the multi-colored or variegated options. There is nearly as broad a range of foliage color as there is of flower color.

While a garden comprised completely of plants with simple, oval, mid-sized, matte, green leaves would be bland and totally dependent on flowers for its impact, a garden with too much variety in its foliage can feel frenetic. It's the balance between these extremes that works.

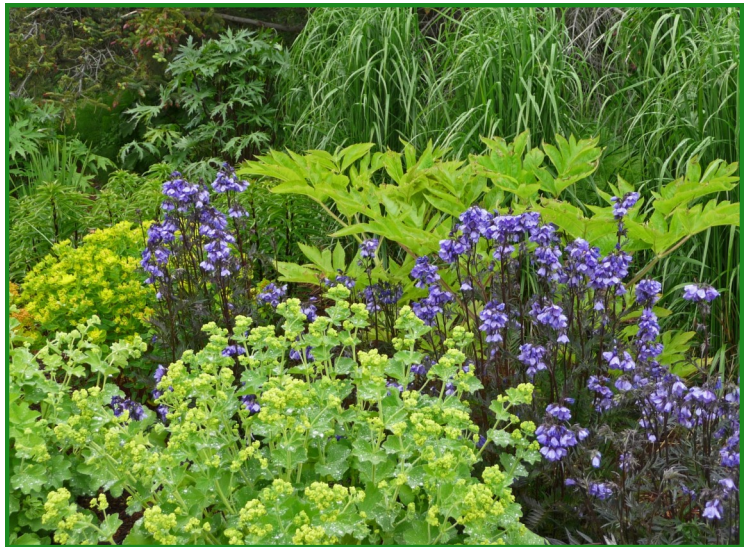


Photo by Brenda Adams

One approach to achieving balance is to use plants with similar shaped leaves in different sizes. The repetition of the shape offers continuity while the range of size adds variety. Another way is to select equally bold leaves in different shapes and textures or similar colors in a variety of textures and shapes. The technique is, use variety in one or two of the four characteristics of foliage and similarity in the others. This will make interesting combinations while offering enough compatibility in the plantings so they make sense together. And while contemplating color, remember the special impact of repeating a color in both blooms and foliage. This will add real zest to your design.

For an in depth discussion of foliage, may I suggest Nancy J. Ondra's *Foliage*. It's well organized, easy to read and packed with ideas and information.

## Choosing and Starting Seed

By Teena Garay

Homer Garden Club Vice President

Sometime back, Elaine Grabowski asked me how I choose which seed to start and I realized that was a very good question. I start around 50 to 100 different kinds of seed every year and it varies from perennials, rock plants, bulbs, shrubs, trees and some annuals. I generally start my seed in 4" pots with a sterile soilless mix I buy from Wagon Wheel called Terra Earth. I sterilize the pots and flats by soaking them in a sink or tub filled with a solution of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water and then I rinse them well in clean water. I fill the pot with the Terra Earth leaving room for a generous layer of rinsed chicken grit and water well. I then label the pot and sow my seed. You really need to know the germination and seed depth conditions because annuals and some perennials need at least 65 degrees to germinate and some need to be placed outside so they can go through a freeze cycle. I leave those out at least 6 to 8 weeks covered with snow if we have it. I generally do this in January or early February so I can start germinating in late March or early April. I like to start my seed upstairs where its stays at around 65 degrees and I cover the entire flat of 4" pots with a piece of visqueen. This raises the humidity and I get a better germination rate. I take it off when it's sunny as it can get too hot during the day. I also like to mist the pots daily with a spray bottle so the seeds don't dry out. It's tricky to keep them moist as they will damp off if wet and soggy.

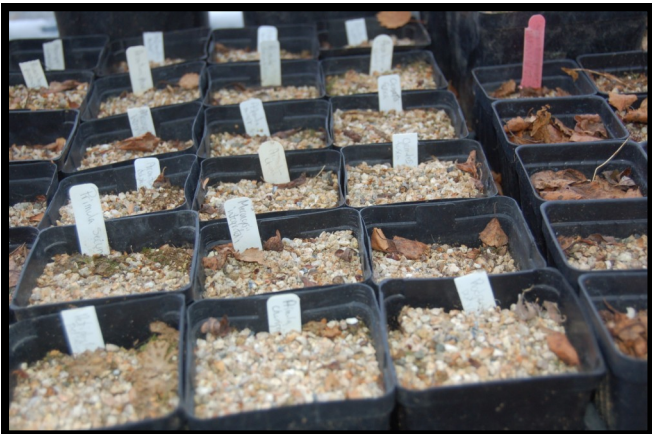


Photo by Teena Garay

Before I start perennials I make sure I have a place for them to go. If I know that I am building a new bed then I will start plants for it, but transplant them individually into 4" pots or into a holding bed. I always make sure that whatever I start is hardy here. Google is a great tool for this and I always check to see where it originated from or the hardiness zone and microclimate.

With trees and shrubs I make sure that they are transplanted into 4" pots by July and I generally keep them protected in a cold frame or my 40 degree greenhouse for the first 2 winters until they are big enough to plant out and then I mulch them after the ground is frozen. You do need patience for trees, shrubs and bulbs and I

only grow the ones I can't purchase or need in quantity.

I don't grow many annuals because you can buy them so cheaply. I do have a few favorites that I start every year from the seed. I always start a California poppy called *Escholzia caespitosa* 'Sundew'. This is a wonderful 4" pastel yellow poppy that is a knitter in the flower bed. This is a good one to fill in gaps between perennials and blooms all summer long. Another that I always start is a wild viola called *Viola corsica*. This is a great annual that rarely reseeds and is a nice purple that combines with just about every color. I also like the tall, white *Malva* 'Mont Blanc'. I collect the seeds from my annuals in late summer and so never need to buy them again. Another good one is the annual poppy *Papaver* 'Lauren's Grape'. You do need to keep this one isolated in the garden if you want that particular color for the next year because it will cross with other poppy colors nearby.

Some of my favorite seed sources are Gardens North, [garnorth@istar.ca](mailto:garnorth@istar.ca), the sowing instructions are on each packet; and the North American Rock Garden Society, [nargs.org](http://nargs.org), this is a seed exchange for perennials, rock plants, annuals and bulbs and there are no instructions or descriptions so you need to do some research. Two from the UK are Chilterns Seeds, [www.chilternseeds.co.uk](http://www.chilternseeds.co.uk), and Plant World Seeds, [www.plant-world-seeds.com](http://www.plant-world-seeds.com). Both have an excellent selection. The Alaska Rock Garden Society has a seed exchange and is a good source for hardy seed. There is a \$3.00 charge for shipping and handling and you must be a member.

### Treasurers Report

Peggy Craig  
Treasurer

#### November 2008

*Income*

Newsletter Ads	\$80.00
Membership	40.00
Book	<u>30.00</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>

*Expenses*

Meeting	62.81
Newsletter	<u>183.51</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(246.32)</b>

Beginning balance 11-01-08	<b>\$8,583.59</b>
Income	150.00
Expenses	<u>(246.32)</u>
Ending balance 11-30-08	<b>\$8,487.27</b>

#### December 2008

*Income*

Membership	\$50.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b><u>\$50.00</u></b>

**Total Expenses** \$0

Beginning balance 12-01-08	<b>\$8,487.27</b>
Income	50.00
Expense	<u>.00</u>
Ending balance 12-31-08	<b>\$8,537.27</b>

### HOMER GARDEN CLUB

#### OFFICERS

- President ~ Brenda Adams @ 235-3763
- Vice-President ~ Teena Garay @ 235-2150
- Secretary ~ Rachel Roe @ 235-9454
- Treasurer ~ Peggy Craig @ 235-0631
- Social Chair ~ Roni Overway @ 226-3404
- Historian ~ Patrick Church and Barbara Kennedy
- Publicity ~ Barbara Landi @ 235-1809
- Newsletter ~ Pam Voeller @ 235-8078  
and Kim Smith

### An Alaska Gardener's Winter Checklist

Excerpted from the Extension Service publication HGA-00431. Visit the Cooperative Extension Service website at [www.uaf.edu/ces](http://www.uaf.edu/ces) for the rest of the story.

- 1) Investigate new plant varieties in seed catalogs.
- 2) Go over the summer's experiences in your mind; record thoughts.
- 3) Build or plan projects for next season.
- 4) Improve and organize your food storage facilities.
- 5) Collect containers and protective covers for seedlings.
- 6) Try new recipes for stored produce.
- 7) Save wood ashes.
- 8) Cut brush and branches for peas, beans, and tall flowers.
- 9) Avoid applying salt to paths and roadways near plants.
- 10) Collect and use kitchen scraps.
- 11) Swap gardening stories and information. Study insects, birds, plants diseases, and gardening techniques.
- 12) Keep track of what you're buying in the store and see how you could replace it with homegrown produce.
- 13) Look into resources at the Extension Service and library.
- 14) Garden indoors in pots and tubs.
- 15) Observe. Take notes. Rest. Dream.



Contributed by Pam Voeller

## 2009 Volunteer List

### Program Committee: Chair Teena Garay

Josie Bills, Denice Clyne, Lin Hampson

### Plant Sale Committee: Pam Voeller, **STILL NEED CO-CHAIR!!**

Seraphine Bailey, Daisy Lee Bitter, Peggy Craig, Barbara Kennedy, Michael Linden, Paula Riley, Kim Smith,, Linda Willard

### Harvest Dinner Committee:

Roni Overway, Millie Lewis, Jack Regan

### Nominating Committee: **HELP!!!!**

### Baycrest Garden Committee: Co-Chairs Peggy Craig and Tracy Asselin

Tom Balland, Tracie Brown, Mary Lou Burton, Peggy Craig, Trina B. Fellows, Lorraine Haas, Millie Lewis, Roni Overway, Barb Way

### Pioneer Garden Committee: Chair Teena Garay

Co Chair: Kim Smith, Tracy Asselin, Mary Lou Burton, Peggy Craig, Ruth Dickerson, Lorraine Haas, Madrene Hoyt, Mary Lou Kelsey, Barbara Kennedy, Millie Lewis, Bette Seaman

### Refreshments Committee: Roni Overway

Tracy Asselin, Josie Bills, Beth Cumming, Ruth Dickerson, Judy Dickson, Carla Milburn, Kathy Pankratz, Linda Reinhart, Joyce Robinette, Brigitte Suter, Pam Voeller, Neil & Kyra Wagner, Linda Willard

### Newsletter Committee: Co-Chairs Kim Smith and Pam Voeller

Peggy Craig, Judy Dickson, Carla Milburn, Roni Overway, Peggy Pittman, Linda Reinhart

### Gardeners' Weekend Committee: Co-Chairs Saraphine Bailey, Barb Landi, Roni Overway

Brenda Adams, Terry Billotte, Barbara Kennedy, Millie Lewis

**Help is still needed here!! Help is needed to host at the gardens and to help at Bear Creek Winery.**

**Call 226-3404, 235-1402, or 235-1809 to Volunteer for Gardeners' Weekend or sign up to help for anything at our next meeting!!**

Don't forget to check your label for your membership expiration! I will email those receiving it electronically...

Please remember that the Club will be losing officers this year. This is your opportunity to step forward once again to help the Homer Garden Club and support its' activities. Consider volunteering to keep the Homer Garden Club rolling!

One of our newer members, Fran Durner, has created and maintains a gardening blog for the Anchorage Daily News. The link is

**BLOG:** [www.adn.com/talkdirt](http://www.adn.com/talkdirt)

Fran packs her blog with lots of timely and useful information as well as much that's just fun to read and see - lots of photos. She has been very good about posting announcements of Homer Garden Club events thus generating enthusiasm for our activities from points well beyond our local community.

I encourage you to visit her site regularly for the latest gardening news from around the state. While you're there, leave comments on the articles so Fran gets some feedback on her efforts.

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

