

March 2009

Homer Garden Club



# Homer Garden Club

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## Tree Care: Presented by Curtis Stigall

Curtis Stigall, ISA certified arborist and owner of An Arboristic View LLC., will present a discussion and power point presentation on tree pruning and tree health care for homeowners. On Sunday, March 22, at 2:00 PM at the Best Western Bidarka, he will cover the planting of trees, pruning, long term care, wa-

tering and the protection of your trees in the urban environment. Mr. Stigall serves on the Alaska Division of Forestry Urban Forestry Committee Seat A. He graduated from UAA with degree in Forestry in 1993 and has fifteen years experience and training in arboriculture and Urban Forestry. Environment.

Obtain comprehensive tree care instruction at our next Garden Club Meeting at the Best Western-Bidarka on Sunday, March 22, at 2:00 PM.

## Plant Sale ~ Saturday, June 6, 2009

With the lengthening days, we all know in our bones that spring is on its way, no matter that thermometers dip toward zero and skis still stand ready at the door. And with spring comes the annual Homer Garden Club plant sale, our main yearly fund-raiser.

Nearly all the plants we sell come from our members and the sale is well at-

tended – people love what we offer from our gardens and greenhouses!

As you begin planning your garden and starting seed, please consider preparing a six-pack or two for the plant sale. Donate a pot of any perennial you divide this year. Do your raspberry rows need

thinning? Raspberries bushes sell like hotcakes! What do you have that might be in flower by June 6? Blooming plants are irresistible so early in the season.

Whether you can provide one plant or twenty, **your donation will make the sale a success!**~ Barb & Pam

For more information, or to volunteer for our **June Plant Sale**, contact: Barbara Kennedy at 235-4347, or Pam Voeller at 299-2721. Thanks!!

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You may not think of vines as mysterious unless you've been surrounded by them at twilight in a tropical rain forest. Then they're downright spooky. But did you ever think about how they work? How do they find something to hang onto and how, when they get big and heavy, do they resist gravity. The mechanisms they employ are actually quite interesting.

Vines employ essentially four different techniques. Some have a mass of little rootlets that cling like Velcro. The best known of this type are the English ivies that cover the walls of eastern colleges. Other vines twine around their supporting structure. Clematis works this way. A third group uses hooks that slide up the host but not down in the same way a fishing hook slides easily one direction, but not the other. Many of the rain forest plants that are so vigorous fall into this category. And the fourth general group is those that have specialized appendages for grasping like sweet peas. The Alaska State Fair vine, *Rhodachiton* uses a variation of this technique by twining its leaves around a support structure.

After returning from the Galapagos, Charles Darwin was quite ill and spent much time in bed observing vine growth from his window. The results of his observations for those of you who want all the details can be found in "The Movements and Habits of Climbing Plants". For those of you, who have a more general interest, let me share just a few tidbits. Twining vines are genetically programmed to twine either clockwise or counter-clockwise. Most twine counter-clockwise *regardless* of hemisphere. Some find a support structure by turning away from the sunlight, seeking shade, somehow knowing there will be a tree there! The tendrils of grasping vines are often triggered to grasp by a sense of touch. And that question about gravity - according to an article in the Washington Post, a group of mathematical physicists studying twining vines have learned they increase their grip in response to the downward pull of gravity just like the finger gripper toys of our youth.

Okay, so about now you've got to be asking, "What's the point, Brenda?" Well, I just found all this fascinating. Practically speaking, it's also helpful to know the mechanism a vine uses to grasp if you plan to offer it a support structure. Little tendrils need a narrow gage structure; twining vines need a more substantial one.

"...vines can be used to enhance a vertical structure in a garden – a fence, arbor or obelisk, even a dog kennel."

From a garden design point of view, vines can be used to enhance a vertical structure in a garden – a fence, arbor or obelisk, even a dog kennel. They will add color and foliage to the structure, softening it and tying it to the rest of the garden quite literally! They can also be very effective at dressing up a shrub. Many of our flowering shrubs bloom early in the season. After that they can be a bit dull until fall when their foliage may add some arresting color to your landscape. Many clematis bloom during the mid-season period when our shrubs could use a boost. Training clematis into a shrub is a fun technique to add color to the shrub during its green period. Be careful in your pairing when you do this however. A vigorous *Clematis tangutica* will overwhelm most shrubs. Stick with the more delicate of the *Clematis* varieties.

Another way to use flowering vines in your garden is to let them scramble around on the ground, mingling with other plants in surprising combinations. If you prefer a very tidy look in your gardens or if you need to be in control of all the combinations, this may not be for you. But if you like a natural look and are willing to let nature surprise you with its ideas on combinations, give it a try.

We can successfully grow quite a variety of vines in our area. These include hardy kiwi (*Actinidia arguta*) which offers delicious though tiny fruits and attractive, sometimes variegated foliage, American bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*) with its colorful seed heads in fall, and many varieties and cultivars of *Clematis*. *Clematis* is the queen of the flowering vines. Blooms can be white, cream, yellow, pink, red, deep purple or even soft blue. Different flower shapes and sizes and a variety of bloom times make them a versatile design tool. Hops (*Humulus lupulus*) is a vigorous vine in green or gold. Summers are too cool in the Homer area for these to flower so you won't be able to use your vines to make beer, but they have very attractive, textured foliage. The small but numerous blossoms of Sweet pea (*Lathyrus latifolius*), and Honeysuckle (*Lonicera*) vines will provide luscious fragrance to your garden. So this year, if you don't have any vines in your garden, try some. They're fun.



## Income

Membership	\$360.00
Books	<u>405.00</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$765.00</b>

## Expenses

Computer etc.	1,540.88
Meeting	128.42
Newsletter	<u>173.36</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(1,842.66)</b>

<b>Beginning Balance 2-1-09</b>	<b>\$8,642.32</b>
Income	765.00
Expenses	<u>(1,842.66)</u>
<b>Ending Balance 2-28-09</b>	<b>\$7,564.66</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 @ 235-6703

# Gardening Classes Galore!!

### Pruning Trees & Shrubs

Cass Turnbull  
**Monday, March 23, 2009 6:30-9:30 pm**

UAF Cooperative Extension Service  
 Suite 130  
 2221 E. Northern Lights Boulevard,  
 Anchorage

Cass Turnbull, founder of Plant Amnesty in Seattle, is coming to Anchorage. Cass will discuss the basics of pruning ornamental trees and shrubs and creative solutions to the overgrown or over-planted garden. She will explain the concept of the pruning budget and how to prune based on a plant's natural growth habit.

For information, contact the Alaska Division of Forestry Community Forestry Program at [stephen.nickel@alaska.gov](mailto:stephen.nickel@alaska.gov) or 269-8466. To reserve a seat, please contact the Cooperative Extension Service at 786-6319 or [fdew@uaf.edu](mailto:fdew@uaf.edu) as space is limited. The presentation will be certified for ISA continuing education credits. A \$5 donation will be collected at the door

### Spring Tree Classes

Alaska Division of Forestry/community Forestry Program/International Society of Arboriculture/Pacific Northwest Chapter

#### The Biology of Trees

**Wednesday, March 18, 2009/ 8:30 am - 3:45 pm**

Do you design or manage landscapes with Trees? Plant, prune, or just admire them? If yes, this is the class for you. Decisions we make about trees are more successful when based on an understanding of the anatomy and biology of trees and how they function as complex systems.

#### Introduction to Tree Appraisal

**Friday, March 20, 2009/ 8:30 am—11:45 am**

Learn the basics of tree appraisal using the Council of Tree & Landscape Appraisers process and formulas, often called the ISA appraisal process. Methods for determining the value of plants will be discussed in lecture and the field.

Direct registration questions to PNW-ISA at 503/874-8263, 800/335-4391, [info@pnwisa.org](mailto:info@pnwisa.org). For other questions contact the Alaska Community Forestry Program at 907/269-8466 or [stephen.nickel@alaska.gov](mailto:stephen.nickel@alaska.gov).

For more information or a registration form online, visit Alaska Community Forestry Program <http://forestry.alaska.gov/community>

### Fifth Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference And Organic Growers School

A two day workshop for the home gardener to the commercial grower, featuring grower presentations, panelists and more!

**March 17-18, 2009/Fairbanks Princess Riverside Lodge/Fairbanks, Alaska**

Contact UAF Cooperative Extension Service-Tanana District  
 Phone: 907-474-1530  
 Email: [ffmah@uaf.edu](mailto:ffmah@uaf.edu)

Photo by  
 Teena  
 Gary  
 Rosa  
 rugosa-  
 Belle  
 Poite-  
 vine



## Gardeners Alert - Iris Yellow Spot Virus

from Janice Chumley  
UAF-Cooperative Extension Service

Since 2004 Iris Yellow Spot Virus has spread through a number of western states that we Alaskan gardeners rely on for our onion starts. IYSV tospovirus affects onions, garlic, leeks, iris, and several weeds. This devastating disease is vectored by the onion thrip (*Thrips tabaci*) which are known to occur in Alaska. Plants infected with Iris Yellow Spot Virus will have yellow to straw colored lesions and may appear stippled. Lesions may be more or less round with or without a necrotic center or may be diamond shaped. Lesion will appear



While Iris Yellow Spot Virus has never been found in Alaska to date, it has tremendous potential to establish here. Most of us that purchase onion starts have suppliers in the southwest or the northwest, the source for the recent spread of IYSV throughout the United States.

Make sure you keep your garden area perimeter weed free, water your plants regularly as thrips prefer warm and dry, and inspect them often. When in doubt you can always bring a specimen into you local Cooperative Extension Office for identification and more information.

Good pictures and web related information can be found from Colorado State University, Extension Tri River area.

[www.coopext.colostate.edu/TRA/PLANTS](http://www.coopext.colostate.edu/TRA/PLANTS) or: Cornell University <http://vege-tableonline.ppath.cornell.edu/NewsArticles/Onion>

"Lesions will appear on both the seed stalk and the leaves. Late in the season, infected plants will fall over."

on both the seed stalk and the leaves. Late in the season, infected plants will

fall over.

The virus is transmitted only by the onion thrip, and is transmitted by both larvae and adults, but only larvae can acquire the virus from infected plants, once a thrip has acquired the virus, it can transmit the virus for the remainder of its life. The disease has the potential to spread rapidly and could cause crop failure if not main-

tained. The virus is NOT seed-borne and does not appear to be found in the bulbs (or set) and does not survive in the soil, but for those gardeners who purchase onion starts, close inspection is necessary to stop the spread of this disease by the thrips. If you purchase onion starts talk to the supplier and ask if they have Iris Yellow Spot in their fields and have had to treat them. If they do, look for another supplier of the great green seedlings that does not have the virus. Starting the conversation is the best way to avoid introducing this disease into Alaska.

Once the plants are infected there is no cure, they should be removed and destroyed. Do not compost the infected plants, either burn or bag and remove from site.

**FOR ALL YOUR GARDENING  
NEEDS, THINK OF THE**

**WAGON WHEEL**

1506 OCEAN DRIVE   ■   HOMER, ALASKA 99603  
PHONE 235-8777

**Big Beautiful Begonia Bulbs**  
(Well, tubers really) These extra special bulbs were raised for commercial growers and now *you* can get them here!



## From our members:

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**At our last meeting, Linda Reinhart brought her yummy pickled beets...many of you asked her for her recipe...**

### BEET PICKLES

Linda Reinhart

Wash beets. Leave about 3" of top on so they don't bleed so badly. Boil in enough water to cover until barely done. (Maybe 20-30 minutes - time depends on size). Cool in water until they can be handled, skin off outer peel. If beets are large, cut into

chunks of an inch or so. Make enough of the following syrup to cover beets in saucepan:

**2 cups sugar**

**2 cups water, (or strained juice the beets were boiled in)**

**2 cups white vinegar**

**3 to 4 tbsp. pickling spice in cheesecloth bag.**

Bring to a boil and add cut-up beets. Boil for about 5 minutes to heat up beets. Pack beets in jar and pour over them the boiling

syrup.

Seal jars. Let set a month before using. Can also be kept, at least for weeks, in the refrigerator without sealing.



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## Club News:

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We have completed the purchase of a new laptop, Power Point software and projector. We are equipped!

The Homer Garden Club, Gardeners Weekend is scheduled for July 31 - August 2. Our speaker will be Don Engbretson, presenting two topics, "Top 10 Gardening Blunders" and "Really Cool Plants for Northern Gardens", on Saturday August 1<sup>st</sup>. Check out his Website at [www.renegadegardener.com](http://www.renegadegardener.com).

Thank you to Linda Reinhart and Catherine Ulmer for signing up to help on the Nominating Committee. And thanks to Neil Wagner for signing up to run for office. Please remember, members, we have positions to fill with the loss of our President and Vice President this year! **Consider giving of your time and energy to keep the club growing! Volunteer to run for office or be on our nominating committee!**

We now have 70 members signed up to receive their newsletters electronically! That is terrific! Our thanks!

*When you're done playing outside in the cold, come to  
Captain's Coffee & warm up!*

**Lattes, mochas, chai, hot chocolate, steamers  
FRESH ROASTED COFFEE BEANS!  
Espresso machines, coffee grinders, & other accessories.**

*Monday-Saturday 6:30am-6pm \* Sunday 7am-5pm*

295 East Pioneer Avenue \* 235-4970



## THE HOMER GARDEN CLUB – MEMBERSHIP FORM

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Please make check payable to "Homer Garden Club" and mail, along with form, 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

P.O. Box 2833

Homer, Alaska 99603