



# Homer Garden Club

## May 24th Homer Garden Club Meeting to Feature Teena Garay

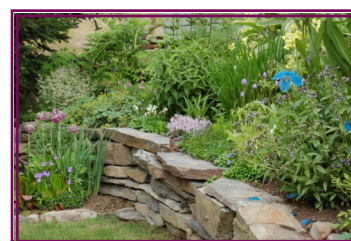
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Please join us Sunday, May 24th, 2:00 PM at Best Western Bidarka Inn for the Homer Garden Club's final program until fall. Teena Garay will be giving power point presentations on "The Survivors of the 2000 Seed Expedition to Yunnan, China", and "Unusual Hardy Plants, Spring through Fall, for the Homer Area."

Teena has been growing from seed and searching for hardy shrubs, trees and plants for 32 years. Finding the right microclimate and placing them in the best combinations are her passions. She was fortunate to join a group of Alaska Rock Garden members to South Western China on a search for hardy seed in 2000. Her

previous garden in Homer was featured in both Sunset and Horticulture Magazines.



*Teena's Woodland Border*  
Photo by Teena Garay

- Pot up your extra starts for the Plant Sale June 6!
- Call Pam or Barb to volunteer for the Sale!
- Plant ONLY certified and inspected seed potatoes, watch for Blight.
- AND ENJOY THIS BEAUTIFUL SPRING!!

## Annual Plant Sale June 6

The Homer Garden Club Plant Sale is Saturday, June 6, 11am-12:30pm in the parking lot of Homer City Hall.

Our committee of volunteers is well prepared for the sale but there is something we need from **everyone** in the garden club – **your extra plants!** As you clean out your garden (or survey your house plants) and find plants that need to be divided or thinned, pot up a few for the plant sale. We can all contribute to this event – even a single plant is helpful

and it may be exactly what some other gardener is hoping to find at the sale.

We've found that trees, shrubs, berry plants, and plants in bloom sell first as do plants that are nicely presented. Please label your plants. Rita Jo Shoultz and Cookie Benton have both offered pots for the plant sale – they can be picked up at Fritz Creek Gardens or at Cookie's Greenhouse during business hours.

**One more note:** Daisy Lee

Bitter has offered to let us dig plants from her garden for the sale. We will be digging, filling the resultant holes, potting, and labeling from 4pm to 6:30pm Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. If you're interested in helping out, please call Pam or Barb for directions. This is a great opportunity to get to know some successful hardy perennials *and* a successful hardy gardener!

Pam Voeller, 299-2721  
pamv@horizonsatellite.com  
Barb Kennedy, 235-4347  
barbara.homer@gmail.com

## *Tis' the Season*

Brenda Adams President

Isn't it wonderful? Spring *is* here. (We'll just forget that rather white looking rain we had on May 6<sup>th</sup>!) So let's go off to the nurseries and buy plants. Oh what fun! As often happens, we'll be drawn to the ones in bloom. Who can resist those lovely flowers? Then we get home and face a bit of reality. Where shall we put them? We find a place and tuck them into the garden. Done!

**"Some thought and a plan will result in a more satisfying garden in the end."**

This version of gardeners' spring fever and the emotions that go with it remind me of a time, long, long ago, when I was promoted to my first real manager's position. I was so enthusiastic; I just wanted to *do* something. Move the copier, hire the first pretty face, you name it. Fortunately for me, a wiser and much more experienced manager above me, sat me down and slowed me down. Think, he said. Plan, he counseled. Hire wisely and your job will be easy. Hire weaker candidates and you will have to manage them all the time. How lucky I was to get such good advice.

Gardens are like that. Some thought and a plan will result in a more satisfying garden in the end. Prepare your soil so

it's weed free and nutrient rich. This might not be a visibly satisfying part of gardening, but it's the key to long term success. Buying the "right" plants will make your life easier. The right plants will do just what you want them to do on their own, without a lot of intervention. You won't have to spend the rest of your time managing them.

Unfortunately, few of us have the benefit of that wise counselor at the right time – before we plunge into the process. As a result, we often find ourselves with difficult, unsatisfying gardens. The weeds are hard to keep under control. Most plants in the garden bloom early in the season; the second half of summer produces little color. Lots of "babies" pop up in all the wrong places. We don't get that wow feeling when we look at our garden.

If you find yourself in this situation, what is the best remedy? I'm sure there are lots of ways to approach this, but here's my counsel. Get some quarter-inch square graph paper and draw your garden bed on it to scale. If there are trees or mature shrubs in the garden, draw them in where they are. Study photos you have of the garden. Make a list of the plants you have that you really like or have special meaning to you. Group them together by when they bloom so you can see if you need more late season or mid

-season bloomers. Donate the plants you no longer want to the Homer Garden Club Plant Sale on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Free yourself of the notion the perennials and small shrubs have to stay where they currently are. This will be too limiting to your redesign efforts.

Make another list of plants you'd like to have. If you don't have such a list, visit your favorite perennial nursery and look at what they have available. Read the tags to learn about each plant's habits, when they bloom, the exposure they prefer. Look for key words of caution, like spreads, fills in rapidly, re-seeds freely. These are the hard to manage plants. Find the easy care plants instead. Make a list of the ones you like, again by bloom time. Note special attributes – deeply colored foliage, vertical form, interesting flower shape or size and so on.

Now go home and study your two lists. Which of the plants would compliment each other? Group them together in combinations that you like. Now depending on the size of your garden, plan to include multiples of each variety in the combination – at least three, more if your garden is quite large. You'll get much better impact if you do this.

Draw these groups onto your scale garden using the expected mature size of the plants. Now you can count the number of each new va-

riety you need to fill the plan. Make a list and go back to the nursery, this time to buy. You can keep these plants in their pots in a protected area while you rework the bed.

If your garden soil is in good shape, you can redo the garden on a nice, cool, overcast day. Dig the existing plants. Plunge them into a wheel barrow filled with water and set them aside in a tarp in the shade, surrounding the root balls so they don't dry out. Amend the soil. Lay out the plants according to your plan and begin to plant. Plant the ones you dug up first.

If your soil needs a lot of work, arrange a work crew to help you dig out the weeds and grass that may be in your existing bed. Get it all out! If the garden abuts lawn, put in some edging to keep the grass out in the future. Stake the edging so it doesn't frost heave on you. Consider adding some quality topsoil and amend it well. In this case, after you dig up your existing plants and plunge them into water, remove *all* the weeds from the root ball. Pot them with some soilless potting mix to hold until the bed has been prepared. Then proceed as described above.

Finally, top dress your garden with small gravel or shredded bark mulch. Water the garden deeply. Pour yourself your favorite libation, sit down and enjoy your new creation.

# Tempting Plant Sale Plants!

*Look what treats Teena is digging up~*

- Chinese rhubarb - *Rheum palmatum* var. *tanguticum*
- Chinese primroses - *Primula secundiflora* and *Primula sikkimensis*
- Tibetan Primrose - *Primula florindae*, fragrant yellow, orange, apricot
- Viola corsica* - short lived perennial violet
- Meconopsis quintiplinerva* - harebell poppy



*Rheum palmatum* var. *tanguticum*  
Photo by Teena Garay

*What are you bringing? We can use your donations for this important fundraiser!*



*Meconopsis quintiplinerva*  
Photo by Teena Garay

Barb Kennedy is donating.....!!!!  
Stock - Dwarf ten week - mixed colors  
SnapDragon - dwarf magic carpet  
Bachelor button - Polka Dot  
Nasturtium - cherry rose

## **FRITZ CREEK GARDENS** **HOME OF ALASKA HARDY® PERENNIALS**



*Wintered-over outside perennials  
Are out of the ice and ready now!  
You know these guys are Alaska Hardy®*

**OPEN 10AM TO 6PM TUESDAY TO SATURDAY  
SUNDAYS NOON TO 5PM**

Located at mile 8.5 East Road, Homer, Alaska  
E-mail [ritajo@alaskahardy.com](mailto:ritajo@alaskahardy.com) (907) 235-4969 [www.alaskahardy.com](http://www.alaskahardy.com)

## Treasurers Report April 2009

Peggy Craig Treasurer

### Income

Membership	\$145.00
Newsletter Ads	290.00
Books	<u>60.00</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$495.00</b>

### Expenses

Gardeners Day Lecture	\$1,022.90
Meeting	95.77
Rosters	25.59
Administration	4.95
Tracy DiSabato-Aust	<u>500.00</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,649.21</b>

<b>Beginning Balance 4-01-09</b>	<b>\$7,560.62</b>
Income	495.00
Expenses	<u>(1,649.21)</u>
<b>Ending Balance 4-30-09</b>	<b>\$6,406.41</b>

## Get Rid of This One ~

From Blaine Spellman, SWCD

Common tansy is a non-native herb that has escaped garden plots and now represents a serious threat to the Peninsula's wildlife habitats. Tansy is aggressively spreading from numerous infestations in Homer, Seldovia, and Soldotna. This invasive weed has the potential to be toxic to both wildlife and humans. Due to its potential to escape residential properties, Homer Soil and Water Conservation District advocates the removal of common tansy from lawns and gardens in the Kenai Peninsula.

Mechanical control of common tansy (i.e. hand-pulling or mowing) during the growing season will prevent this invasive from spreading. However, mechanical control will need to take place for several years before tansy will be eradicated. Please note, gloves should be worn when hand-pulling this invasive weed. Mechanical control in combination with herbicide, such as glyphosate, is an effective control option for tansy. If applying herbicide, contact Homer SWCD or the Cooperative Extension Service for herbicide type, timing, and dose recommendations. For any questions regarding common tansy or other invasive weeds, contact Homer SWCD at 235-8177 ext. 111.



**Common Tansy**  
*Tanacetum vulgare*

**BRIGHTEN** your yard

**GROW** your garden

**WAGON WHEEL**

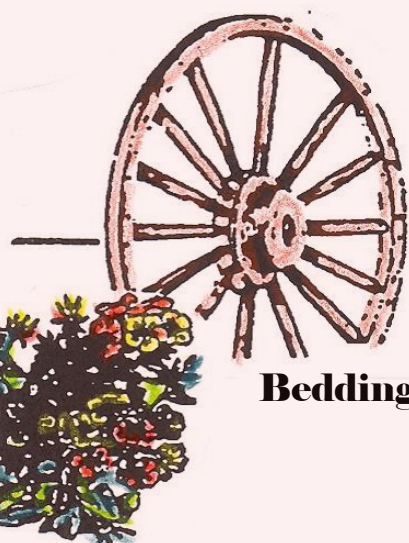
1506 OCEAN DRIVE ■ HOMER, ALASKA 99603

PHONE 235-8777

**Bedding plants** – flowers, tomatoes, vegetables, herbs – **seeds, garden supplies, fertilizers, soils, and more!**

**Monday -Friday 9:30-6:30**

**Saturday 9:30-6:00, Sunday 12:00-5:00**



## Late Blight and the Home Gardener

Contributed by Janice Chumley

As spring returns to the Kenai Peninsula our gardening thoughts turn to what we are going to plant for this upcoming season. While many gardeners are happy with colorful flower gardens there are those of us that insist no garden is complete without vegetables. As a happy vegetable gardener I would like to help us all avoid introducing a devastating disease into our gardens. In Alaska we have been fortunate in being relatively disease free but we now need to be aware of Late Blight or *Phytophthora infestans* in our potato patch. This disease has been found in potato fields throughout the world (think Irish potato famine) but was first identified in Alaska in 1953 in Wrangell. The first report in the Matanuska Valley was in 1995, again in 1998 and in multiple locations in 2005. This fungus-like pathogen can be found on many members of the nightshade family including potatoes, tomatoes, peppers and eggplants. In 2005 it was identified on tomatoes from two separate home locations. Due to the ability of this disease to be rapidly transferred from plant to plant and field to field by wind or water we need to review some information about Late Blight before the planting and growing season starts for 2009.

- 1. Avoid introduction.** This can be accomplished by either growing your own tomato plants from seeds or purchasing tomato transplants that were grown from seed in state. Imported tomato transplants grown in areas where blight is a problem could transfer the disease here to either tomatoes or potatoes. Ask where the transplants come from and don't purchase imports that have not been state inspected. On seed potatoes **DO NOT PLANT POTATOES THAT WERE GROWN AND SOLD FOR EATING.** If you bought them in the grocery store or from a local farmers market or wherever, these potatoes are supposed to be eaten and not planted. Eat and enjoy them. It doesn't matter where they were grown or that you have done this in the past or that they are full of sprouts. Late Blight can over winter on live plant tissue; this includes the tubers we eat. Plant ONLY certified and inspected seed potatoes. Purchase seed from a reliable local source such as nurseries, greenhouses and garden centers, not from out of state mail-order catalogs. If you had disease problems in your garden last year do not plant saved seed, or if your potatoes showed signs of rot while in storage. Importing potatoes from outside the state is not only risky for introducing disease it is also against our laws. This information can be found at the Division of Agriculture website along with a list of certified seed producers: [http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_is.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_is.htm)  
The easiest way to avoid introducing Late Blight is to not unwittingly plant it.
- 2. Increase Plant Space.** Plant your garden to include more space between plants to increase air circulation. Late Blight thrives in the cool, wet conditions often found when potatoes have grown up and form a dense canopy. Water early in the day to increase evaporation on the leaf and if possible, use drip irrigation. In the greenhouse the same applies for tomatoes. Allow more space for the full-grown plants for air circulation and water at the ground level, not overhead. If you have the room allow 14 inches minimum between plants and 2 feet between rows.
- 3. Destroy Volunteer Plants.** Because *Phytophthora infestans* requires live tissue to grow and reproduce you can stop its spread by getting rid of any volunteer potato plants that appear in your garden from last year's crop. These need to be removed and either burned (use safe burn practices) or double bagged and taken to the landfill. Volunteer and diseased plants should NOT be composted.
- 4. Become familiar with Late Blight.** There are many good resources available to us. Some excellent web sources are listed at the end of this article. The UAF Cooperative Extension Service has a **FREE** publication "**Late Blight Disease of Potato and Tomato in Alaska.**" You can find this publication online at: <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/pubs/> or at your nearest Cooperative Extension office. Here on the Kenai Peninsula it is located at: UAF – CES 43961 K-Beach Rd. Suite A. Soldotna 99669. 907-262-5824 or 1-800-478-5824 for out of the central peninsula. If you think you have Late Blight on your tomato or potato plants you can arrange to have a site visit or call the office for information on how to safely ship a sample. Late Blight lesions are not restricted to leaf veins, spores develop on the underside of the leaves and stems turn brown quickly and have a distinctive "bad" odor. Tubers show symptoms with brownish-black discoloration under the skin, while tomato fruits turn brown, then smelly mush. Because this fungal like disease spreads rapidly it is important not to wait. The earlier it is removed the less time there is for spread by wind or water.
- 5. Finally, what to do if you find it.** Hopefully we all follow the above steps and it does not appear on the Kenai Peninsula in either the home garden or in a larger commercial field. If we work together and educate ourselves we can help avoid its arrival or speed its removal. But if it does appear and is identified as *Phytophthora infestans* then there are controls that can be used. The first is to remove and destroy all the infected plants. They can be double bagged and taken to the landfill or burned. It is important to not spread the spores during plant removal, use caution when bagging diseased plants. There is a list of fungicides available that effectively prevent Late Blight and some are acceptable for organic growing, however they are time consuming, costly and not effective once the plants are infected. Please contact your local Cooperative Extension Service regarding fungicides and schedules of application. On the Central Peninsula the number is 262-5824, on the southern peninsula or in Seward 1-800-478-5824.

This is a list of good web resources on Late Blight.

Alaska Cooperative Extension Home Page: <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/pubs/>

North Dakota State University: <http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/instruct/gudmesta/lateblight/>

Michigan Potato Diseases: <http://www.potatodiseases.org/index.html>

Alaska Plant Material Center: [http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_pmc.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_pmc.htm)



Let's keep our eyes open and Late Blight off the Kenai Peninsula this coming season, Happy Gardening!

## 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

