

Homer Garden Club Newsletter

October 2010



October Program Features Photographing Your Garden

by Marion Owen



Do you ever wish your garden pictures looked more like the ones in *Sunset* or *Better Homes and Gardens*?

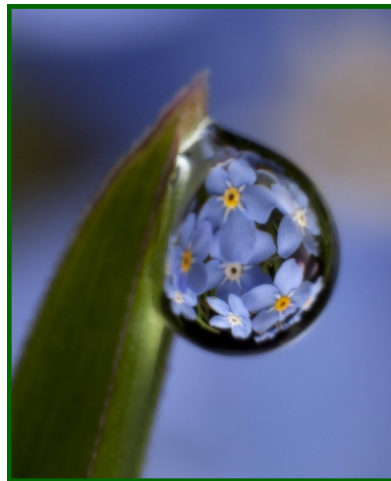
Presenter Marion Owen, an award-winning, well-published photographer and instructor since 1986, will demonstrate how to improve your picture-taking skills. She will also share how to make handy picture-taking accessories from household items. No matter what your skill level, or kind of camera you pack around, you can apply her photography tips to any subject or situation, whether they'll be used for websites, e-mails to friends, business brochures, Christmas cards or posting on the fridge.

Born and raised on Puget Sound in Washington State, Marion and her husband Marty (Kodiak's harbormaster) operate a B&B on the ocean and enjoy exploring Kodiak Island on their boat through their business, Galley Gourmet, Inc., offering small-boat gourmet dinner cruises and wildlife viewing trips. Marion loves to kayak, hike, bike, practice macro photography, weed, read, develop new recipes, make compost, and work out at the gym (though, mostly during the winter!)

Marion's garden is also where she

finds beautiful subjects to photograph. Since 1986, her award-winning images have been featured in *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Organic Gardening*, *Audubon*, *Time*, *Alaska*, *Patagonia* and many other venues. She likes to capture a different view in her photos, such as raindrops splashing off flowers, salmon swimming underwater, and close-ups of snowflakes.

An entertaining and stimulating speaker, Marion combines her motivational speaking, gardening and photography skills in presentations for businesses, associations and trade show seminars, including Seattle's



Northwest Flower and Garden Show, the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show, the International Master Gardener Conference, and state and regional garden club annual meetings. Audiences find her inspirational, fun, and thought-provoking.

A gifted teacher, Marion developed a popular series of photography and gardening courses through the University of Alaska. Students testify to her ability to apply life's lessons to any subject or situation.

The next meeting is
October 24, 2:00
P.M. at the Bidarka
Inn.

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REMINDER!!

Club dues for all
members are due on
October 1. If they are
not paid by January
1, 2011, you will no
longer receive the
newsletter.



Amur Maple

SENSORY MESSAGES FROM THE GARDEN

By Jack Regan, President

Gardening is an activity that often brings out the best in us. As we celebrate the transition from summer to fall, Homer Garden Club members recently came together to enjoy the fruits of the harvest at the annual harvest dinner. In addition to wonderful recipes prepared by the attendees, beautiful arrangements of cut flowers were displayed from the gardens of Teena Garay. She placed these arrangements in vases supplied by the Hospital Auxiliary and then, after the harvest dinner event, delivered them to the hospital to be enjoyed by the patients. As garden members socialized and participated in the feasting, harp music played by Julie Ann Smith floated softly through the fellowship hall of the Homer Methodist Church. Garden images collected from members displayed by Neil Wagner were projected on the wall to remind us of the recent gardening season. To help us reflect on garden memories, Homer poet, Magnus Frangipani read some of his poems. All these activities produced sensory messages from the garden to the attending member gardeners.

It is not time to say farewell, Summer

I know it is not time to say farewell, Summer,

But I will say it.

Your green hair along the mountains,

You plant seeds in the earth, watering, weeding

Beneath the sky, a strong bandanna of sunshine
around your forehead

That glitters on the water. And Winter will arrive,

With his perpetual night, and the bears will run away
into caves,

Lamenting, and sleepy. His cold hands will nudge me
closer to the wood stove when it is cold out,

To thoughts of you, of curling around you in our garden.

Summer, the hill buzzing with bees, robins and cats,
friends kneeling shoulders into flower stalks

And beans, I breathe in the lives of the trees when
you are around,

The perfumes of mint and pollen.

By Magnus Frangipani

Homer Garden Club Officers For 2010–2011

At the Harvest Dinner/Meeting, the following officers were elected:

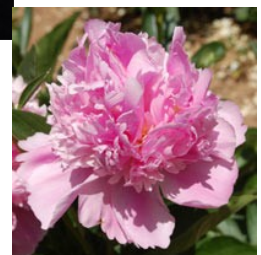
President	Jack Regan
Vice President	Neil Wagner
Treasurer	Peggy Craig
Recording Secretary	Roni Overway
Social Secretary	Julie Parizek
Newsletter Editor	Paula Riley
Database Manager	Barbara Kennedy
Historian	Michael Linden
Publicity	Barbara Landi

Peonies for the 2011 Plant Sale

By Barbara Kennedy



These three varieties have been planted at Daisy Lee Bitter's place awaiting their "coming out" party in the spring. Gardeners should make room now for these beauties!!



The Garden Club has purchased 78 peony plants to be sold at the spring Plant Sale.

Neil's Notes

By Neil Wagner, Vice President

Last week, near the end of our very dry fall season and just before the monsoon rains started, I went out on a sunny morning to harvest potatoes from our garden. It was a glorious fall day, one best spent outdoors. Those ubiquitous earthy fall scents of decay filled my senses as the cool northern breeze rattled the leaves in the birches. The last of the sand hill cranes were circling and heading south like the rest of the snow birds. It's full on harvest time in the garden. We all have developed our own rituals of fall harvest. I have my favorite tools, tubs and buckets and wear old green Helly Hansen fishing raingear. It's fun to reap our reward months after we first set the potatoes in the rills and wished them good luck and growth.

Thoreau wrote about getting warmed twice by wood, first in its cutting and then in its burning. I feel the same with potatoes. First there is the delight of pawing the ground like a grizzly to dig out the potatoes and later the delight of eating vari-



ous starchy meals over the seasons. I started digging what I thought was a row of blue potatoes according to my garden notes, but I must have planted an extra red one for good luck. That's when I met Abner. I pulled up the first plant vine, dug down into the dry ground, and hit a very large red potato. Wow, beautiful. This will be a good day I thought. The potato was immense. I admired it and reached in to find another, then another, and another. I looked up and the cranes had disappeared, the wind paused and the air smelled sweet. I went on to dig up 7 large potatoes and a number of smaller ones. They half filled a five gallon bucket. Abner came to mind. -Was this collection of spuds a sentient being? And telepathic, too? This was Abner: the happy mutation that would revolutionize the potato industry in Homer, maybe Alaska. It's funny where your mind wanders amidst the euphoria of harvesting. I really should get a potato agent and promote Abner. He produced an impressive 12.32 lbs. of spuds...

My Fall Season Salad Green Extension Project (FSSGEP) in the high tunnel is going well. The first set of six greens planted (9/6) are growing well and the mesclun mix is ready to harvest. The next set planted two weeks later (9/20) are growing noticeably smaller because of the cooler weather. I have wire hoops over them and will start covering both sets

with remay cloth when it starts to really cool down.

The raised bed idea makes a lot of sense for growing and to boost efficiency in a small (20' X 36') high tunnel. After considerable debate on the material for them (concrete: lots of work, cedar: 4 times more expensive than fir) I defaulted to lumberyard 2 x 12s of fir. Now instead of four beds with long sloping



sides I'll have 5 beds almost three feet wide by starting the beds against the high tunnel sides. The beds are leveled and should also work well with the drip irrigation. That's the theory. I'm now half way done and they look great. I'll get back to them when it starts raining again as my back needs a break. Meanwhile the sun is shining and the beets, rutabagas, parsnips, carrots & cabbage need harvesting...

Treasurer's Year End Report October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010

By Peggy Craig, Treasurer

Income

Membership	\$1,220.00
Books	1,855.00
Compost Bins	750.00
Newsletter Ads	250.00
Donation	7.50
Plant Sale Cash	180.00
Plant Sale	2,438.50
Merchandise	96.00
Insurance Refund	354.00
Gardener's Weekend	4,525.00
Lecture	<u>1,100.00</u>

Total Income **\$12,776.00**

Expenses

Meeting	\$2,633.44
Newsletter	308.91
Administration	178.40
Compost Bins	750.00
Books	2,344.53
Historian	15.29
Plant Sale	875.32
Gardener's Weekend	1,921.16
Lecture	2,218.00
Domain Registration	75.85
Insurance	354.00
Plant Sale Cash	180.00
Baycrest Garden	111.30
Homer Chamber of Commerce	<u>78.00</u>

Total Expenses **\$12,044.20**

Beginning year balance 10-01-09	\$12,722.27
Income	12,766.00
Expenses	<u>(12,044.20)</u>
Ending year balance 09-30-10	\$13,454.07

Comfrey - The Plant That Will Not Die

By Barbara Landi

A couple of years ago I slipped in the snow, fell and broke my arm. My daughter-in-law in Seattle told her parents about the mishap and they insisted on sending me some comfrey, explaining that it would help heal my broken bone. In a few days I received a medium sized box from them. But I was in such a mess, hurting and struggling to do simple things with just one arm. I set the box aside without even opening it, thinking the comfrey was in the form of dried leaves or powder. For about 3 weeks, maybe longer, who knows?

When I was feeling better, I opened the box and found about 6 little black logs. Only they weren't all black any more because they were covered with MOLD. Yuck, I thought, too bad. And I tossed them outside in the snow at the edge of one of my vegetable planting beds. Feeling remorseful, I decided to give them a decent burial. So I shoveled into the snow and covered them. (It was January, the ground was frozen.)

Fast forward to spring. When the snow was gone and the ground workable, I planted several kinds of beets in that area. As the beet seedlings came up, I began to pull the weeds. And there was a different one. When I pulled it, I saw it was attached to a little

black log. I probed around in the soil, and found all 6 logs, and they were ALL growing, not a trace of mold anywhere. I was so grateful that I had not in fact killed them with neglect, that I carefully removed them and planted them in another area. They didn't mind the shock and grew nicely over the summer. Although my broken arm was already healed, I looked up the uses for comfrey to learn what I *should* have



done with it. I should have made a poultice with the leaves for the broken bone area. Apparently comfrey should not be ingested directly even as a tea because it can cause liver damage.

Last year when Marion Owen came to speak to the Garden Club, she gave me a renewed appreciation in the value of comfrey as a compost booster and growth enhancer. It's a good thing because now I have about 10 times more of the stuff! For reasons too many to explain here, I had to move many plants last spring, including the comfrey. I planted

sugar snap and snow peas where the comfrey had been. The comfrey did fine in the new location, AND the old location too! The peas and comfrey seemed to thrive together which was OK, except it made pea picking a lot harder. I don't think you can move comfrey without leaving some behind. When you put your shovel down, you inevitably break a piece of comfrey root which gets left behind. I found little comfrey babies growing from the tiniest of root pieces. It's like the story Sorcerer's Apprentice; remember the cartoon with Mickey Mouse? He chops the broom to stop it from carrying water and then there are two water-carrying brooms. He chops them and all the pieces of brooms become new brooms.

If anyone in the club wants some comfrey....PLEASE...I will deliver!

Newsletter Articles

If you have an interesting original story you would like to see in the Garden Club Newsletter, just e-mail it to my address: pauril@yahoo.com. I will get it in the newsletter as soon as space permits.

Also, I am always on the lookout for neat flower and garden pictures, so just send them to me at the same address.

REMEMBER: Dues are now due October 1st. If you have not paid your dues by January 1, 2011, you will no longer receive the newsletter. Everyone is encouraged to have the newsletter sent to them via e-mail. You will then get it in color and it is also much less expensive for the club.

THE HOMER GARDEN CLUB—MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please make check payable to "Homer Garden Club" and mail, along with form, to:
Homer Garden Club, P.O. Box 2833, Homer, AK 99603.

Today's Date: _____

_____ BASIC \$10 _____ SUPPORTING \$15 _____ BUSINESS \$25

Name _____ Phone _____ E-mail _____

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 E-mail address in our *Resource Book*? ____OK ____Not OK

May we send your Newsletter via E-mail? ____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 ____Gardener's Weekend ____Other



HOMER GARDEN CLUB
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