

Homer Garden Club

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The next HGC meeting will be **January 19** at 2:00 at the Aspen hotel

Newsletter

January 2025

Photo by Nina Faust

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kathy Dube, President—
425-241-1045
kdube197@gmail.com

Fran Durner, Vice President —
907-602-8925
durner1@gmail.com

Louise Ashmun—299-6360
leashmun@gmail.com

Elaine Burgess —907-299-2325
eburgess216@gmail.com

Francie Roberts —907-235-1068,
francie.roberts@gmail.com

Kendall Dellaesperanza—
907-399-0870,
kdella7@gmail.com

Michael Murray—907-435-7333
murmurart66@gmail.com

Paula Riley — 907-435-7055
pauril@yahoo.com

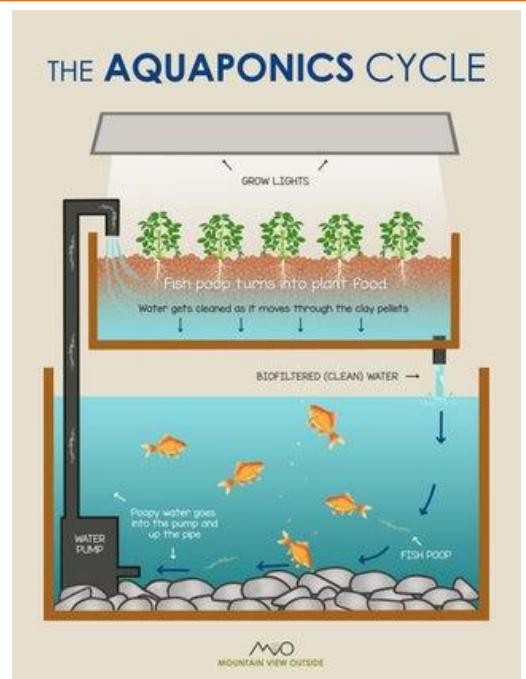
Tina Seaton—907-399-1353
tinaseaton@gmail.com

January 19 HGC Meeting Features Sonja Young on Aquaponics

Home Grown Aquaponics: How to grow greens year round.

Raise your hand if you'd like to grow your own fresh greens all year long. Who wouldn't! Sonja Martin Young, our January speaker, will tell us about her former venture, Alaska Aquaponics, and offer some tips and new ideas on how you can grow your own fresh greens in the midst of winter. Come join us on Sunday, January 19, at 2 pm at the Aspen Suites Hotel. Bring a friend; bring your questions!

Note: A representative from Homer Soil and Water Conservation District will give a short presentation on the upcoming "Know Your Lands" series and hand out posters prior to Sonja's talk



**Homer Garden Club
Treasurer's Report for November/December 2024**

Income

Membership	\$340.00
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Total Income	<u>\$340.00</u>
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Expenses

Speaker Honorarium (Nov)	\$200.00
Speaker expenses (Nov)	\$43.75
Aspen Hotel Venue (Nov)	\$200.00

Total Expenses	<u>\$443.75</u>
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Checking Beginning Balance 11/01/2024	\$ 7,741.71
Income	\$ 340.00
Expenses	\$ 443.75
CD dividend	\$ 106.13
Interest	<u>\$ 0.63</u>
Ending Balance 12/31/2024	\$ 7,744.72
Money Market Beginning Balance 11/01/2024	\$ 6,230.31
Interest	<u>\$ 2.08</u>
Money Market Ending Balance 12/31/2024	\$ 6,232.39
CD Beginning Balance 11/01/2024	\$ 15,000.00
12 month term (maturity 2/19/25)	\$ 10,000.00
Interest (transferred to checking)	\$ -
18 month term (maturity 3/30/2026)	\$ 5,000.00
interest (transferred to checking)	<u>\$ -</u>
CD Ending Balance 12/31/2024	\$ 15,000.00
Total Ending Balance 12/31/2024	\$ 28,977.11

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**** January 19 Garden Club refreshments will be provided by: Bobbi Coffey, Henri and Tom Balland and Joyce Clouse

**** If you have not yet paid your dues, this is the last newsletter you will receive. The membership form is on page 6 of this newsletter or you can pay Treasurer Louise Ashmun at the January 19 meeting.

Directions for January Zoom Meeting

by Kathy Dube', President

Happy 2025!

Welcome to 2025 everyone. Our most excellent Vice President has found us a speaker for our January meeting (Yay Fran!!). We will meet as usual at the Aspen Hotel, and will have Zoom for those who cannot attend in person (see link below). It sure seems like the weather can't figure out what to do this winter - coming on strong in November with frigid temperatures, then deciding to try for an early breakup in December, then 1.5 feet of snow at my house in a single day, then continuing to change its mind back and forth in January. I guess we will just have to roll with the punches and so will our gardens. Hopefully all our perennials and shrubs will make it through the indecision!

Zoom Meeting Link:

Topic: Homer Garden Club January Meeting

Time: Jan 19, 2025 02:00 PM Alaska

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85313530004?pwd=IU5bBtSbbR63UozFOnbZ1zi7LkaLH.1>

Exciting Opportunity: Help Organize the Garden Tour

by Francie Roberts

After four successful years, the current team overseeing the Garden Tour is stepping down, and we're looking for fresh energy to carry on this beloved tradition. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring together a small group of 4-5 people to plan and host this event, which has been a highlight for garden enthusiasts.



gardens have already committed to being featured in the tour this coming summer, giving you a head start. The tour can take many forms, from a formal event with 350 visitors to an intimate members-only pop-up gathering—there's flexibility to make it your own!

If you're interested in helping shape this annual event, please reach out to Kathy Dube, President of the Homer Garden Club. Let's work together to keep this cherished tradition blooming!

Don't worry—there's plenty of support! Detailed documents, instructions from previous committees, and guidance from experienced club members are readily available to make organizing simple and fun. Additionally, two



Homer Garden Club Meeting – 11/17/24 Minutes

Announcements – Kathy welcomed everyone and reminded us to renew memberships. Kathy also asked for a volunteer to help set up the tech/zoom equipment before each meeting. No one has volunteered as yet.

Secretary's Report – Nothing to report, minutes can be found on the website and in the monthly newsletter.

Treasurer's Report – Kendall reported that membership fees are still coming in. Half our money is in CD's with a monthly dividend of \$54 and a balance of \$28,972.02

Louise reported that 75 members have renewed, 76 members have not renewed yet. She will send a reminder in December to those who have not renewed.

Committee Reports

Speaker's Committee – Fran introduced Cary Restino, today's speaker.

Social Committee – Michael thanked the members that have brought snacks.

Newsletter – Articles and photos can be submitted for the monthly newsletter to Paula at pauril@yahoo.com

Plant Sale and Garden tour committees will be starting in January and we are looking for members who wish to help.

Scholarship and Giving Committees – are working on how to spend money in the community through master gardener class scholarships and beautification projects.

No meeting in December. Next meeting is January 19th.

Fran introduced Cary Restino, owner of Homer Hilltop Farm, and passed out handouts on seed starting (see attachment). Cary's 15-acre farm includes high tunnels, vegetables, and peonies. She sells through the Food Hub and at Save U More.

Cary said it is important to get an early start to the season when starting seeds. She sometimes has 20 or more trays going in the summer.

When deciding whether to start your own seeds you should consider:

Can you buy varieties you want locally?

Do you have the space and equipment to grow your own?

Do you have the time to grow your own?

Do you enjoy babysitting plants in the winter?

Supplies needed:

Lights – LED or grow lights. Cary said she doesn't see a big difference in full spectrum lights vs. LEDs. She uses Barrina LED lights from Amazon. Windowsill lighting is usually not enough!

Potting soil – Cary uses pro-mix or other starting mix and does not fertilize till after she transplants. Always wet the mix before planting the seeds.

Bottom Trays – Should have channels in them so that water drains away from the roots. You can use 4 or 6 packs or 72 or 128 cell trays. Water seedlings from the bottom but there should be no standing water after ½ hour.

Seed Cart – Natural light is not enough. Shelves should be level for even watering. Lights need to be adjustable for different heights as plants grow. Should fit 20" long trays.

Optional:

Hand Seeder – manual cell tray seeder drops 1 seed per cell – for production planting.

Keep trays covered to keep moisture in till seeds sprout.

Soil blockers – form blocks of soil to plant seeds without plastic packs or cells. Prevents starts from becoming root bound by air pruning. Soil should be moist enough that a couple drops of water will drop out when you squeeze it – like a damp sponge.

If plants are leaning that means they are not getting enough light! You can supplement light by using foil to reflect light on the darker side.

You want plants to be the perfect size when you are ready to plant them so a seed starting schedule is important.

Many flowers are slow growing and need an earlier start time such as snap dragons and lobelia

Most veggies need no more than 4-6 weeks to be ready to transplant.

Some veggies grow fast such as peas and bok choy, nasturtiums.

Check before you plant.

Johnny's and others have Start Date Calculator apps that can help you determine when to start your seeds.

Your local environment is very important to the consideration of when to start. Cary said you can get at least 1 more zone if planting in a high or low tunnel (under plastic). Brenda, who lives out East End Road

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*(November Minutes
Continued from page 4)*

past McNeil, says to subtract 1 zone because of the length and harshness of winter.

Cary says you should keep records from year to year to fine-tune your start dates, though weather can vary greatly from year-to-year with more or less snow pack, etc.

Fertilizer – Fertilize at 3 weeks to 1 month. She uses Neptune’s Harvest but noted that it is very stinky. She uses ‘fertigation’ – watering the bottoms of seedlings with 1/8 c. to 1 gallon water.

READ Seed packets! Some flowers require light to germinate so use Perlite. Some require cold stratification and can be put outside or in the refrigerator for a couple of weeks. Heat mats can be helpful if you are germinating seeds in a cool space. 60 to 70 degrees is best for most veggies.

Monitor soil dryness level

Cells on the edges dry first

Fans can help build strong stems

Fertigation

Potting up:

Before seedlings start to get root bound

Use potting soil with general use organic fertilizer

Tomato seedlings benefit from having some of the stem buried

Don’t leave any air pockets around the roots – water in

We had a discussion about the difference between 12 – 1300’ elevation vs. in town. The snowpack actually insulates the soil so planting time isn’t that much different. The Homer bench may actually be frozen down more than the higher elevations with heavy snow. You can throw coffee grounds or soils amendments on the garden to help the snow melt sooner.

The meeting ended at 3:30. There were 29 attendees.

Gatherings for Growers

by Monica Kopp, Homer Soil & Water Conservation District

This winter we are starting up monthly informal gatherings for growers of all shapes and sizes to get together, exchange ideas, chat and troubleshoot issues, and support each other in our growing journeys! On the third Tuesday of each month we’ll get together at the Kachemak Bay Campus or on Zoom (meetings are hybrid for our traveling and/or hermit growers) for a different focus or theme.

Tuesday, 1/21/2025 Livestock - What do you have/want and why?

Tuesday, 2/18/2025 Markets, Relationships, and our Local Food System

Tuesday, 3/18/2025 Strategies for Mental & Physical Wellbeing

Link to register for Zoom meetings: <https://alaska.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMtdO2prDwjE9J8H-m8dq3wU5bYUnuEHedR>

Know Your Land Talks

by Monica Kopp, Homer Soil & Water Conservation District

Homer Soil & Water is excited to announce our 2025 Know Your Land talks! Starting January 9, we’ll be hosting hybrid one-hour presentations every Thursday through mid-April. With topics ranging from our classic High Tunnels 101 with Kyra Wagner to Soil Health with Caley Gasch, we are bringing landowners, gardeners, and farmers together to learn and share about stewarding land and growing food with a focus on conserving soil- and water-related resources and accessing and utilizing programs and funding from the

Natural Resources Conservation Service.

This series is made possible by our gracious partners from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the UAF Institute of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Extension, and our local farmers. Funding comes from the NRCS and the National Association of Conservation Districts.

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While we are based on the Kenai Peninsula and talks are hosted in-person at Kachemak Bay Campus in Homer, we welcome a state-wide audience on Zoom and last year had participation from as far away as Nome, Newhalen, and Ketchikan.

This year, we are excited to be hosting a few Know Your Lands "on the road." At the Seldovia Conference

Center, there will be a 2/20 "watch party," and Caley Gasch will present in person in Seldovia on 3/20. The 2/27 Grower Spotlight will be live at the Ninilchik Community Center. All "on the road" talks will also have a watch party at Kachemak Bay Campus.

Below is the final lineup and presenters. All talks are on Thursdays and begin at 6:00pm. Register for the Zoom sessions at https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZEpcuiqpiMpGtdRmDT3V_Y_rYPjE3UPzAfU

1/9/2025	High Tunnels 101	Kyra Wagner	Homer SWCD
1/16/2025	Low Tunnels 101	Carey Restino	Homer Hilltop Farm
1/23/2025	Irrigation Water Management	Jesse Hunter	NRCS
1/30/2025	Grower Spotlight - Up Yonder Farm	Hannah Prescott	Up Yonder Farm
2/6/2025	USDA Programs 101: How to make them work for YOU	Braden Pitcher & Emily MacDonald	NRCS
2/13/2025	Cover Crops 101	Caley Gasch	UAF-IANRE
2/20/2025	Vegetable Varieties for Alaska	Glenna Gannon	UAF-IANRE
2/27/2025	From Ninilchik: Grower Spotlight - The Rustic Peony	Tiffany McCorrison	Rustic Peony
3/6/2025	The Great Mulch Study	Glenna Gannon	UAF-IANRE
3/13/2025	Soil Microbiology	Victoria Monsaint-Queeney or Dave Ianson	Homer SWCD/NRCS
3/20/2025	From Seldovia: Soil Health	Caley Gasch	UAF-IANRE
3/27/2025	Soil Testing 101	Monica Kopp & Victoria Monsaint-Queeney	Homer SWCD
4/3/2025	Herbicides 101	Abby Dekoekkoek	Homer SWCD
4/10/2025	Managing Your Forest: Tools and Topics To Think About	Braden Pitcher & Chris Tcimpidis	NRCS

THE HOMER GARDEN CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME _____ PHONE _____

Email Address _____

(Please print clearly to make sure you receive all club newsletters and messages)

Membership Type: Basic (\$10) Supporting (\$15) Business (\$25)

Suggestions for future meeting topics or speakers: _____

**Homer Garden Club Membership year is Oct 1st to Sept 30th
This membership will expire on September 30th**

Please make your check payable to "Homer Garden Club" and mail it along with this form to:
Homer Garden Club, PO Box 2833, Homer AK 99603