

Homer Garden Club *Newsletter*



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The next HGC meeting will be **November 16** at 2:00 at the Aspen Hotel.

November 2025

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Nov 16 Meeting Will Feature Our Members Telling Stories of their Summer Gardens

This month our guest speaker will be YOU. Please bring tales of your summer and fall gardens, along with some pictures. If you have been able to put some pictures on line to be presented, good for you! Otherwise, bring your pictures with you. Maybe we can find a way to put them on the screen. If not,

show them around to the members from your phone or camera. Even without pictures, all attending and on Zoom would love to hear your stories of successes and commiserate with your disasters.

REMEMBER: We are still in need of a Vice President(s) to schedule our monthly speakers. This doesn't have to be just one person. Find a friend or two to help out and make it a fun venture.

There will not be a meeting in December nor a newsletter. We hope to see everyone on January 18 when Marian Owen from Kodiak is scheduled to speak.

October 2025 Treasurer's Report

by Kendall Dellaesperanza, Treasurer

Income	
memberships	\$285.00
Total Income	
	<u>\$285.00</u>
Expenses	
Aspen Hotel venue	209
HGC website annual fee	\$348.00
Honorarium	\$200.00
Total Expenses	
	<u>\$757.00</u>
Checking Beginning Balance 10/01/2025	\$ 6,503.61
Income	\$ 285.00
Expenses	\$ 757.00
CD dividend	\$ 16.90
Interest	\$ 0.27
Ending Balance 10/31/2025	\$ 6,048.78
Money Market Beginning Balance 10/01/2025	\$ 6,241.74
Interest	\$ 1.06
Money Market Ending Balance 10/31/2025	\$ 6,242.80
CD 18 month term (maturity 10/10/2026)	\$ 10,195.59
interest/dividend	\$ 35.24
CD 18 month term (maturity 3/30/2026)	\$ 5,000.00
interest/dividend (transferred to checking)	
CD Ending Balance 10/31/2025	\$ 15,230.83
Total Ending Balance 10/31/2025	
	\$ 27,522.41

Master Gardener Class

Registration is open for a new Alaska master gardener course, which will be taught over Zoom.

Casey Matney and Darren Snyder, agriculture and horticulture agents with the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service, will lead the course. It provides a broad horticultural background and includes Alaska-specific lessons on botany, soils, vegetable production using organic and conventional techniques, integrated pest management, greenhouses, lawns, houseplants, trees and shrubs, flowers and invasive plants.

Alaska master gardeners are credentialed by the UAF Cooperative Extension Service and are located in communities throughout the state. The prerequi-

sites for becoming a master gardener include familiarity with Alaska gardening conditions and a commitment to 40 hours of volunteer time.

Classes will be Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3-5 p.m. from Dec. 2 to Feb. 27, 2026, with a break for the holidays. Registrants will receive a recording of each class. Register at <https://bit.ly/OnlineMasterGarden>. The cost is \$250, which includes a copy of Alaska's Sustainable Gardening Handbook.

For more information, contact Casey Matney, camatney@alaska.edu, 907-262-3443, or visit the UAF [master gardener webpage](#).

Notes From the President

by Kathy Dube', President

Winding Down for Winter

I don't know about you, but it was the usual hectic summer and then frenzy to try to get the garden harvested and put to bed for winter, Spring bulbs planted, outside water tank drained before it freezes solid, snow tires on, and everything else in the yard stowed before it gets buried by snow. Maybe it's particularly hectic because I live at about 1,300 feet but the summer/winter transition always seems to happen so quickly – it's like trying to sprint at the end of a marathon for me. But I successfully got all the outside items on my list done before the ground froze this year! (I don't always make it) I'm looking forward to a calmer winter season where I feel I can relax a bit, sit by the wood stove and enjoy the warmth, read, and hibernate from such a frantic pace for a few months. And I'm also looking forward to seeing photos of our fellow Garden Club members' gardens at our November meeting. Hopefully you can join us in person, but if not here's the link for the Zoom meeting:

Topic: Homer Garden Club November Meeting

Time: Nov 16, 2025 02:00 PM Alaska

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89618469994?pwd=RGzx9fNI6jNv8a5ZhlwLok4OixxmIZ.1>

Meeting ID: 896 1846 9994

Passcode: 277134

+16694449171,,89618469994#,,,*277134#

HGC October Minutes

by Tina Seaton, Secretary

Homer Garden Club Membership Meeting October 2025 – Minutes – 10/19/25

President Kathy Dube' was out of state so Louise Ashmun filled in as acting President.

Attendance and Announcements – There were 29 attendees.

Additions to Agenda - none

Secretary's Report – Nothing to report.

Treasurer's Report – Kendall reported that the Aspen did not charge them because of uncertainty about the tax. We will pay for two months on the next month's bill. Louise reported that Sept. 30 was the end of the fiscal year. Members need to renew their membership if they haven't already.

Committee Reports

Garden Tour – no report, no committee at present.

Speaker's Committee - We need a VP who will coordinate with and introduce speakers for meetings. The November meeting will be garden club members' slides (up to 5) of their gardens from this past summer. They should be sent to Fran Durner by the end of October. Gardeners should be ready to talk about their photos for the presentation.

Baycrest Garden Committee – The garden is going to bed for the winter.

Social Committee - Michael reported that he has volunteers signed up to bring snacks through January and will pass out the sheet again to fill up the rest of the year. Michael contacts volunteers ahead of time to remind them.

Membership – Louise reported that some people still need to renew their membership. She also showed off the burgundy and forest green Garden Club aprons for sale, as well as the Garden Club book. All can be bought for \$25 each and the books are also for sale at the Homer Book Store and Wagon Wheel.

Publicity – Nothing to report

Plant Sale – Paula reported that "the plants are all dead" – so enjoy a break!

Scholarship – No action, but Francie said someone had contacted her about information on the Master Gardener program. There has been no application at this point.

Giving Committee – Nothing to report.

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Other – Jan Peyton thanked all the volunteers who keep the garden club going.

Ulmer's donated all their 2025 leftover seeds to the seed library.

Don MacNamara and Donna Rae Faulkner of Oceanside Farm gave a presentation on their small market farm and on the training and mentoring they have been providing for Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute (KALI) for the past 10 years. KALI is now sharing what they have learned with other native people in far flung Kodiak communities. Donna Rae said they have developed You Tube videos to teach farmers around Kodiak and they have also taught in-person classes. One community successfully built raised beds on an old runway. Donna Rae shared that a lot of their techniques are based on Korean natural farming practices, and the Homer library has 2 books if you wish to learn more.

Donna Rae said they have 10 high tunnels and 100 apple trees at Oceanside Farm.

They brought apples, cider, tomatoes and lemon cucumbers for sale at the meeting. They do not use pesticides, herbicides or synthetic fertilizers. They make compost, biochar, and use a Johson-Su bioreactor to build healthy soil. Don brought a barrel with a large circle cut out of the side, used to produce biochar. A fire is built in the barrel and when all is red-hot the barrel is filled with water. The remaining wood turns to biochar which is touted as a form of carbon sequestration and thought to be a good source of fertilizer.

A recipe for a natural fertilizer is to combine $\frac{3}{4}$ gallon of nettles and half that weight of brown sugar (or 3 parts nettles to 2 parts brown sugar), combined. Let it ferment for 1-3 weeks then drain the moisture off, mix 1 part liquid to 10 parts water and use as a high nitrogen fertilizer.

Jessica Shepherd announced the Empty Bowls fundraiser for the Food pantry on Nov. 7 from 11-2. \$50 for a hand-made bowl with soup, or \$15 for just soup and bread.

The meeting ended at 3:15.

Curious Nature

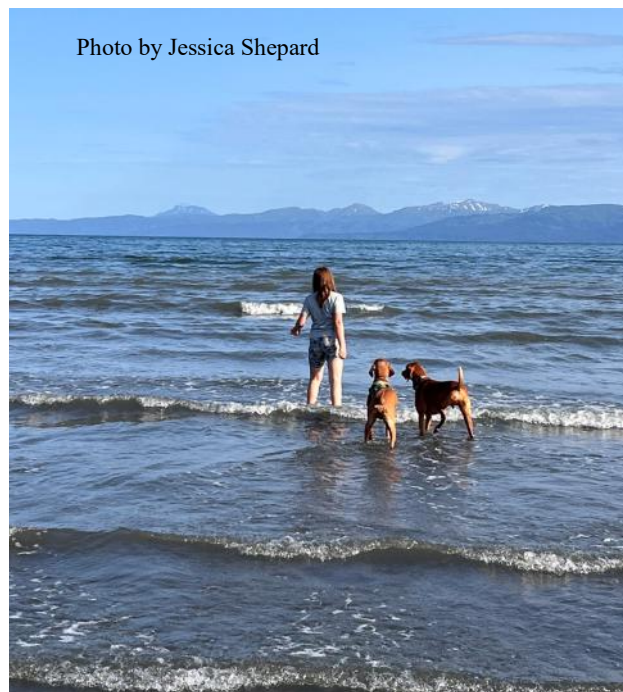
by Jessica Shepherd

Only if we understand, can we care. Only if we care, will we help. Only if we help shall all be saved.
~Jane Goodall

As a small child growing up in Boulder, Colorado, my world was no bigger than our front yard, anchored by a stately maple tree in one corner and an ancient, gnarled apricot in the other. An uneven flagstone walkway, lined with lilac bushes, ran up the middle to our covered porch. I have a dreamy recall of sitting with Grandma Alyce under the eaves of that porch on a rainy spring day. Wrapped in a scratchy, army-issued wool blanket dating back to Grandpa Tom's Marine Corps days, we listened to the rain shushing down and drank in the fragrance of lilac blossoms. Standing on that same porch on another day as birds visited the feeder Grandpa filled each morning, Grandma taught me the names of birds. "That little yellow one is an American Goldfinch." She pointed to a drawing in her well-thumbed copy of *Birds of North America*, "the males are the bright yellow ones." Through her, my eyes were opened to the profusion of nature around me.

In seventh grade, my science teacher, Miss Parma-

lee, an energetic redhead, took us on a field trip to the irrigation ditch that ran beside the school. With nets and



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jars, we clambered down and scooped up Caddisflies, and Mayfly larvae, marveled at the acrobatics of dragonflies, and squealed when leeches adhered to our bare legs. Later, when she showed us an early documentary of Jane Goodall's research with chimpanzees, the seeds of scientific inquiry Grandma Alyce had planted from the time I could walk took root. Goodall, a young, refined British woman, ran a field camp in the mountains of Tanzania, washed her hair in a stream, and lived among her subjects, undertaking the first comprehensive study into the foraging and social behaviors of wild chimps. Because of Grandma Alyce, Miss Parmalee, and Jane Goodall, who each embodied a feminine-scientist archetype, I could visualize myself pursuing a biology degree when that field was still largely dominated by men.

Now semi-retired after thirty-five years from a career that began with field research on Peregrine Falcons in Arizona and Alaska and concluded with educating others about the ecology around them, I strive to instill in my young granddaughter the same passion that drove me. More than ever, we need our children to fall in love with nature so they are moved to fight for it. We need a new generation of Jane Goodalls to help us see and value what we stand to lose. Humans have demonstrated their capacity to destroy the natural world in short order. Now we need to exercise our capacity to save it for the long run.

You can enjoy Jessica's articles on her blog
Shepard Alaska.

It's a Time for Giving Thanks

by Brenda Adams

This time of year is a very special one. It is when we celebrate our uniquely American holiday – Thanksgiving. It has always been my very favorite holiday of the year. Maybe it's because I love turkey. Perhaps it's because I enjoyed watching all the football games with my Dad. Or was it the great family gatherings? No, I think I love Thanksgiving most because it is filled with traditions – American traditions, family traditions, personal traditions. Yes, with apologies to Madonna, I am a very *traditional* girl.

I remember that my huge extended family would get together at Aunt Hazel's farm, a pre-revolutionary war building made of stone with two-foot-deep window sills. Those window openings were stuffed with potted plants, many of which were Christmas cactus. What a treat to see the lovely blooms in the foreground of a snowy scene outside. When I was really little, Aunt Hazel would let me climb up on a step stool so I could gaze at the flowers and for that memory I am very grateful.

We gathered around an enormous plank table lit by a huge, old, garish Tiffany hanging lamp. Everything but the turkey would be laid out on the table. We would all sit down in our places and then Uncle Cy would enter with the beautifully bronzed turkey on a giant platter. One year, when my uncle went into the kitchen to get the turkey, he found that their band of English Springer Spaniels had decided to enjoy the turkey for themselves. Not to be deterred, my uncle salvaged what was left, loaded it onto the platter and marched out in his traditional way, but with a rather lopsided smile. After a bit of trimming of the dog-munched parts, we dug in. It was Thanksgiving, we



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had to eat turkey. We gave thanks that the dogs had not eaten more of it!

The meal always included Aunt Hazel's special oyster stuffing. Ever since the farms across the bay started producing those fabulous Kachemack Bay oysters, I've made my stuffing with the family recipe, but using our local oysters. This is an incredible improvement over canned ones. Thanks to our brave oyster farmers who have worked so hard. We also had mashed potatoes, carrots and green beans. So in the family tradition, we have those now at our Thanksgiving dinner. Thanks to the market farmers of Homer who bring their wonderfully fresh produce to market each week and who have even been there in the cold of October.

The traditional table was graced with a bouquet of bountiful flowers. These are a bit harder to come by in November in Homer, but the memory of the riotous color of our gardens all summer is still cause enough for thanks. Alaskan summers provide such a unique

climate for growing so many varieties of plants. We are truly blessed.

After dinner we would have more pies than anyone could even contemplate eating – apple, pumpkin, cherry. Because Homer is now home to many orchards, we can enjoy this bounty as well. Thanks to those who have led the experiments in this area of local horticulture.

Conversation at the dinner table was constant and free flowing. The ties of family and tradition made everyone comfortable with making their point, no matter how diametrically opposed it was to the last one made. Humor and therefore, laughter filled the room. Love and support were always there. And so it is in Homer. What a wonderful town we share. Good people, close friends, supportive neighbors, helpful, sharing gardeners – all special gifts.

So this year, let's give thanks for our Homer blessings - great gardens, good friends to share them with and a blessed place to live. And may I add, thanks for a terrific garden club!

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

HGC is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization (EIN92-0133642)