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The April Homer Garden Club meeting will be held April 19 online via Zoom. See Page 7.

April 2020

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**April 19 HGC Meeting Will be Held Remotely, Via Zoom.
See page 7**

See Page 7 for the details of our Zoom meeting with this month's speaker, Yarrow Hinnant.

Yarrow Hinnant has been enchanted by plants since he was given a clump of iris and a bleeding heart by his grandmother when he was a child. He has been gardening and wildcrafting ever since, and became a serious student of the western herbalist tradition at the same time that he began studying anthropology and ethnobotany academically. In the 18 years since, he has lived and explored the desert southwest and the old growth forests of Cascadia, finally spending 5 seasons in the Alaskan interior before moving to Homer 3 years ago. Yarrow is an avid gardener, wildcrafter, mycophile

and herbalist and is the creator of Fog Yeti botanical extracts, a line of medicinal herbal and fungal products available at Woda Botanicals in Homer.



Treasurer Report

by Louise Ashmun, Treasurer

Homer Garden Club Monthly Treasurer Report for March, 2020

Income	
Book Sales	\$254.85
Total Income	<u>\$254.85</u>

Expenses	
Speakers honorariums	\$150.00
Meeting Venue Rental	\$150.00
Newsletter	\$6.79
Farmer's Market Donation	\$1,200.00
Storage Unit Annual Rent	\$395.00
Total Expenses	<u>\$1,901.79</u>

Checking Beginning Balance 03/01/2020	\$ 5,647.66
Income	254.85
Expenses	1,901.79
Interest	<u>0.24</u>
Ending Balance 03/31/2020	\$ 4,000.96

Money Market Beginning Balance 03/01/2020	\$ 15,037.16
Interest	<u>1.92</u>
Money Market Ending Balance 03/31/2020	\$ 15,039.08

Total Ending Balance 03/31/2020	\$ 19,040.04
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HOMER GARDEN CLUB PLANT SALE May 30, 2020 11:00 am Homer Chamber of Commerce lawn

Now is the time to plant a few more plant starts, along with your own, to share with the club. Also, when dividing up your plants as the soil warms, save some for the sale. Barbara Kennedy, 235-4347, will have various-sized pots available and hopes to also have some soil for this purpose. **PLEASE** identify your plants.

At this time, the Plant Sale is still scheduled. Some social distancing precautions may be in place.

Cookie's Country Greenhouse

2340 East End Road, Homer, AK 99603 — 235-8915 or 399-8915

We carry vegetable starts, organic seed tapes and seed potatoes. We have lots of beautiful new flowers, including good old reliable pansies, lobelia and marigolds, as well as ProMix, lime, Fishy Peat compost, landscape bark, etc., and red

wiggler worms.

Because of COVID-19 we will be doing phone orders by credit card, so you can pick up your orders outside. If you want to come in and browse, that will be great too! Just maintain your 6-ft. distance—please.

**Open beginning April 15th,
Monday through Saturday,
from 9:00 to 6:00**



HGC BAYCREST GARDEN MAINTENANCE DATE CHANGE

*******SPRING CLEAN-UP WILL NOW BE SATURDAY, MAY 9
BEGINNING AT 10:30 AM *******



Because Shorebird was cancelled, we've delayed the clean-up a week to the 9th. It'll be warmer!

With 20 or more folks it takes only one and one-half hours to clean, fertilize and mulch the garden. Please join us; it's a fun event. (If precautions are still on, we'll all stay 6 feet apart! We can – it's a big garden!)



Any questions: Call Brenda at 235-3763 or 299-4701.

Please also send Brenda a quick email saying you'll be there. brenda@gardensbybrenda.com.

Thanks so much for your continued support of this flourishing, well-maintained garden.

Homer Garden Club Minutes – March 15th, 2020

Attendance at this meeting was impacted by the COVID-19 threat

Announcements

Kathy announced that the meeting was being recorded and would be available online through the website for those choosing social distancing. Codes were shared for accessing the bathrooms – where there is ample toilet paper.

Plans for future events will continue; with the understanding that we may need to adapt, postpone, cancel as the virus situation evolves.

REPORTS

Secretary: Minutes of the February meeting are available on the website.

Treasurer: Louise reported \$19,534.82 in accounts. She encouraged our members to be aware of the financial repercussions of local non-profits needing to cancel fundraising events and suggested choosing to support them privately.

Gardeners Weekend: The tour is set for July 19th and the committee is forging ahead with plans

Speakers: Upcoming programs may require creative online options?

April: Neil Wagner. The care and maintenance of Fruit Trees
May: Yarrow. Growing and Using Herbs and Medicinal Plants

Baycrest Gardens: Noted that online is not so much a possibility for this one ...Sheet to sign up for cleanup day May 2nd (the big opportunity to learn a lot from the experienced gardeners) or the weekly weeding/dead heading available at the meeting. Members can also contact Brenda by email to sign up. brenda@gardensbybrenda.com
Reminders will be sent out.

Social Coordinator: Thanks for all the sign-ups. Today's delights had been sampled and Okayed!

Data Base: 105. That is the number of members.

Plant Sale: Slotted this year for May 30th after Memorial weekend. Details will be addressed at the next meeting. Soil and pots will be available.

Newsletter: Many comments on the beauty of the last letter. Articles always welcome by the 5th of the month.

OTHER BUSINESS

Central Peninsula Garden Club has a workshop planned for April 25th and hoping we may provide some

speakers to address general gardening topics. If anyone is interested please contact Kathy Dube and she will put you in touch with the organizers.

Brief Summaries of Speakers

SPEAKER: Brad Case on Knowing and Managing Your Soil

Brad is a soil specialist at Homer Soil and Water Conservation District

Brad extended an open invitation to visit the office in the Frontier Building on Pioneer for help, advice, soil tests and lots of information.

He demonstrated a resource available online at the USDA Soil Survey where one can find a Soil Map of your property with details on drainage etc. The office is always willing to help with interpretation of this information.

Soil Types and Textures – the combination of clay, silt, sand, peat and organic material.

Homer is mostly silty loam or silty clay loam.

The addition of organic matter

(Continued on page 5)



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(manure and compost) will help with water retention, soil structure and nutrient availability.

The addition of angular sand (not rounded beach sand) helps with aeration

Tillage. Good tillage loosens compacted soils; bad tillage breaks up microorganism in the specialized ecosystem and can cause further compaction. Shallow tillage recommended for seed beds.

Broad Forks, ideal for this, can be borrowed from Soil & Water. Avoid working very wet or dry soils.

Composting. Do it!

Noted that Blood, Sweat, Food Farms (4780 Star Lane) will take your compostable materials. Drop them off in the fish tote by the road. They have the equipment to process it and sell quality compost back to us gardeners. The hope/

dream is that the city would have the funds and means to set up a system in conjunction with the recycling center as is practiced in some other communities.

SPEAKER: Katherine Schake on Invasive Plants.

Katherine is the Invasive Plant Coordinator for the Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Weed Management Area and Natural Resource Specialist with Homer Soil and Water. Invasive plants threaten our moose and salmon habitat as they degrade the natural ecosystem and are destined to cause great economic loss if not controlled.

Her power point included photos of invasive species.

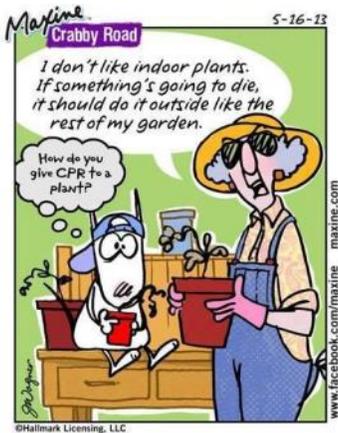
How do they get here? Planted because they are regarded as pretty or nutritious for animal feed.

Spread by wind, birds, animals, feet, tires

Response? Katherine's task is to

aim for early detection and rapid response which may include mechanical control, digging out or cutting down to remove the seed source and the use of Herbicides sprayed at the base of plants and trees. She recommends use of a 20% acidic acid to kill the 'unwants.'

A major concern? The European Bird Cherry also known as Chokecherry and Mayday Tree BECAUSE it competes with willows that are important for our Moose. This tree will likely soon be illegal to sell and there is a cost share program to encourage Alaskans to remove these and replace with alternatives: Service Berry, Crab Apple, Hawthorne, or Ussurian Pear
Katherine had a table of informative pamphlets which are also available from the Soil & Water office.



In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.

Margaret Atwood, author



GARDENS BY DESIGN
Part-Time Employment Opportunity
 907-235-1900
 brenda@gardensbybrenda.com

Those who have an interest in working in and learning about perennial gardens must be able to perform physical labor for a full 8-hour day and exhibit a high attention to detail. Excellence is always our goal.

Please apply directly to Brenda Adams.

We are hiring dependable team workers who want to help create and maintain beautiful perennial gardens on a part-time basis.



Don't Go

by Jessica Shepard

I'm supposed to be in Tucson. My five-year-old granddaughter, Dorothy, lives there with her mom, and right now, at 7:00 pm their time, the three of us should be sitting on a patio donning light sweaters over tank tops while the red sky silhouettes the saguaro on the horizon. It is spring break and she is eager to see her Grammy Jess. But no, I'm at home, scowling at my snowy yard. When I booked my flights, I couldn't have guessed a pandemic would disrupt our lives so completely. Flying through Seattle, where the coronavirus is flourishing, seems ill-advised, although I came close.

The way I see it, I only have five, maybe six more years to make lasting memories with Dorothy. After that she'll have slumber parties to go to and swimming lessons, and homework. She'll pal around with a giggly group of little girls, and my visits will be an intrusion rather than an event.



Even after the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic, I reasoned that a mask and hand soap would keep me safe. I imagined no lines at security and empty seats on the plane. While I was reading over the latest *New York Times* update, my husband Hal said, "If I asked you not to go, would you still go?" I felt an upwelling of love for him and answered without hesitation, "No, I would stay." Ten years ago, my husband lost his wife Terry to the last pandemic, H1N1. That night we recounted the facts as we knew them and discussed how I might limit my chances of infection. But when Mr. Trump ordered a stop to international air traffic I thought, what if flights from Seattle to Alaska are put on hold?

So instead of driving to Anchorage for my flight, I drove only as far as Soldotna and bought cold medicine and vitamin C and enough groceries to last us about six weeks. I eyed the other shoppers, wondering who might carry the virus, and noted the empty

shelves where toilet paper, rice and noodles used to be. I chatted with the checker who rang up my items. Had I heard that Disneyland and Disneyworld were closing? When she read out my total bill my jaw literally dropped. Pandemics are expensive.

Leaving the parking lot, I turned west, giving thanks for longer days, and made a detour to Trinity Greenhouses. Each spring I make a pilgrimage there to wander among the roses in bloom. Today I bought a few bags of soil mix and some onion sets, but mainly I breathed in the smell of green growing things and ran hungry eyes over all the trays of seedlings, seeking and finding a bright blossom here and there. It was too early for roses and I drove, still in a funk, back to Homer. My email pinged check-in reminders for my flight and, later, informed me that my flight was scheduled to leave on time.

Back home the weather conspired to tease me out of my funk. The line of icicles hanging off the roof dripped brightly and the steps were finally clear of snow and ice. On a

(Continued on page 7)



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Landscape Supplies

Garden Décor

*(Don't Go,
Continued from page 6)*

visit down to the high tunnel I wrestled the door open over a hump of snow. Inside the warm air smelled of moisture and dried leaves. A knife tip probed into the soil sank only an inch in some places, but in others, under the row covers, the soil was thawed three or four inches down. Hum. There's potential here.

I watered the Red Robin tomatoes, basil, and lettuce I have growing under lights in the house and added "transplanting" to my new to-do list. I watered a geranium cutting from a lovely Martha Washington I got several years ago on an earlier pilgrimage to the Trinity Greenhouses, and contemplated planting flats of pansy and marigold seedlings.

Instead of a planned birding trip with a Tucson girlfriend to Arizona's Madera Canyon, I took sunflower seeds out to the feeder for the chickadees, who flew into the spruce trees at my arrival, watching me keenly. Still, I pouted. My friend is one of the top birders in Tucson. I've known her since our Forest Service days back in the

late 80's and we were overdue for a visit.

On my way back to the house I saw green grass where the snow had pulled away from the steps, and heard, for the first time this year, the off-key whistle of a Varied Thrush. Had I left for Tucson I would have missed these early signs of spring. Inside, the house smelled of garlic and onions. Hal was at the stove making spaghetti sauce for dinner and listening to classical music. He gave me a one-armed hug, spatula in his other hand. "Want to make us a salad?"

Over the days ahead we will obsessively follow the news as the coronavirus spreads across the globe, red dots expanding and connecting like pockmarks. Like everyone else, we will shelter in place, hunkering down against the shockwave of infections, as shops close and streets empty. We will email friends and family to check on them, Facetime with my granddaughter, and speak on the phone to my father, who is in the last stages of cancer, clinging to the pleasure of recognition in his wavering voice. We will watch YouTube videos of Italians singing

from their balconies and first responders describing the chaos of their days. We will worry about our kids who are now all unemployed. On occasion we will slip to town for a takeout meal from our favorite restaurants, hoping against hope that they survive the fiscal fallout. And we will mourn for those who don't escape this culling – the elderly, the dedicated doctors and nurses, the over-crowded refuges.

And I will find solace in the garden. By heeding my husband's request to stay, despite missing my Tucson family fiercely, I will take advantage of longer, warmer days to jumpstart spring planting. I will poke seeds into soil blocks, use warming cables to compel the high tunnel into earlier production and start radish seeds and lettuce weeks before the snow departs the outdoor beds. I will be here to prune the apple trees before the sap starts flowing and sprinkle wood ash on snow-covered flower beds to speed the thaw. And I will pause and listen for the arrival of song birds. As before, during times of despair, the garden will lift me from this melancholy, and hope will begin her green ascent.

Zoom! We're going to meet in April—remotely

As we mentioned at our March meeting, we have been exploring ways to keep our meetings going since our gardens will still be growing! Our April speaker has agreed to experiment with us in a Zoom meeting format. Yarrow will be speaking and showing slides on a timely topic – herbs and healing plants. How does this work? We will send all members an e-mail about a week before the April 19th meeting with a secure link to the meeting. You will need a computer, tablet, or smartphone with an internet connection. A few minutes before the meeting time, click on the link in the e-mail and you should be connected to the meeting. This is a video conference, so you may want to cover your camera if you are uncomfortable with everyone seeing you, or you may be happy to see all your garden club friends! As at all meetings we will have a short business meeting/announcements first and then Yarrow's

presentation. We will probably hold all questions to the end of the presentation and then have people type in questions for Yarrow (there is a side chat box) because it becomes a little confusing if everyone starts talking at once.

We will also try to record the presentation so if people are not able to make it to the meeting, we will send a link with the video recording and you can watch it later. Hopefully we will be back to meeting in person soon, but for now we are all trying to adapt. Hang in there, I know this is a difficult time; I find the normalcy and hope for the future that getting outside, working in the soil and starting seedlings inside is helpful. Take care and be gentle with yourself.

*****Our Membership Year is October 1st to September 30th*****

THE HOMER GARDEN CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

Name _____ Phone # _____

You will receive the newsletter by E-Mail. This saves us printing and postage costs. Plus, the E-mailed version is in fabulous color!

E-Mail Address _____

How would you like to participate in the Garden Club *this Membership Year?*

(please check any activities in which you would like to help)

Meeting Refreshments Board of Directors Nominating Committee Newsletter
 Spring Plant Sale Harvest Dinner Baycrest Garden Gardeners' Weekend

Suggestions for future Topics or Speakers _____

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

*Homer Garden Club
P.O. Box 2833
Homer, Alaska 99603*

