**Minutes of Homer Garden Club Meeting - May 16th, 2021**

Gathered via Zoom at 2 pm. Submitted by: Ruth Dickerson

**REPORTS**

**Sally** presided over the meeting in the absence of Kathy with technical help from Barb.

**Gardeners Weekend.** There will be a modified event this year. 2 mini neighborhood ’gardens in progress’ tours. One in the Elderberry vicinity and one in Kachemak City area. Dates are July 8th and 22nd. Thursday evenings from 3 – 6. $10 Tickets (covers both of the events) will be for members only, available at the Plant Sale and through Louise by sending a check to Box 2883. A limit of 75 people.

**Speakers.**  Today Don McNamara of Oceanside Farms will speak on Drip Irrigation and Saskia will teach how to treat soil for holding and conserving water. Recordings of the presentations will be available through the Homer Garden Club website.

This is our last meeting for the season. Hopefully in the fall we can be back to meeting at the Aspen, once again mingling with our fellow gardeners.

**Baycrest Garden.** Despite postings and mailings, Brenda reported a very disappointing show-up for Saturdays clean up. The 2 or 3 volunteers were only able to get a very small area done. This has not been an issue in the past when as many as 25 people have been there to help. Brenda reminded club members that there had been a commitment ( show of hands) at one point, of willingness to take responsibility for managing this show piece. So, she rightfully expected a team of workers. There was some discussion about when to reschedule. Some friendly coercion from Brenda and some enthusiastic support from Sally resulted in a commitment from a dozen ladies to turn up after the plant sale on Saturday 22nd. Brenda offered to provide Pizza at 12.30. Party time!

**Newsletter.** There will be one more issue for the early summer.

**Plant Sale.** May 22nd in the Chamber of commerce parking lot. Barb is doing a great job of tending to details.

PLEASE BRING PLANTS!!! (LABELED)

Help is needed with set up starting at 8.30 am. Brenda and Gloria will be pricing.

Barb was ecstatic when Paula offered the use of her truck for transporting equipment from the storage shed.

We are sharing the space with the Pratt Museum. They are cleaning out their gardens and hoping to raise some funds from the sale of plants to help cover costs of gathering new specimens.

Ronnie will manage the non-plant sales table and Louse will handle memberships and tour tickets.

Board members and a couple of extras will work as Cashiers.

Louise requested that folks please be available for clean up after the sale.

**Harvest Dinner.** Definitely interest in having it happen. Perhaps not at HUMC because of their Covid requirements. Other venues may be explored.

**Saskia Esslinger**

Saskia is a certified permaculture designer, teacher, and regenerative entrepreneur who believes that growing food is a key element in a sustainable lifestyle. She defines permaculture as working with nature and making better use of our resources to nurture the soil the body and the soul.

Saskia’s informative powerpoint provided us with some key practices to enable the soil to hold more water so we can conserve our supply and spend less time with the hoses and watering cans.

!. Lots of Organic Matter. This will absorb the water and release it slowly whereas poor topsoil will often repel water. Lasagna beds, Sheet mulching and Hugelkulture are all great examples of incorporating organic matter beyond regular compost.

2. Deep Mulching. Dried grass, straw and leaves are options for creating a deep mulch into which vegetables etc can be planted

3. Location. Try to put your water hungry plants (Celery, lettuce, peas, brassicas) closer to your water source for convenience

4. Dense Planting. Most plants thrive in community with an intermingling of root structures. Dense panting can result in beneficial shading and advantage can be taken of varying maturity dates.

5. Contouring. A more labor intensive but very effective way to limit run off and capture more water that can then seep to plant roots. Requires the digging out of swales following the contour lines of the land.

Further valuable insights from Saskia are available by visiting her website: teachgardening.com

**Don and Donna Rae McNamara**

Don and Donna Rae operate Oceanside Farms at Mile 5 East End Rd where they continue to learn from ‘the school of hard knocks’ and Don celebrates his second childhood as he plays in the big dirt boxes with his toys (some valuable high-tech scientific ones). Oceanside Farms produces a plethora of healthy food for sale using sustainable and organic methods with lots of composting and ten high tunnels. They willingly and enthusiastically share their knowledge with others. Be sure to view some of their Youtubes. Links are posted on the OceanSideFarms website.

The main subject for today was drip irrigation.

* Don recommends water testing for E.coli bacteria. Collected rainwater is his favorite source
* Dripworks is a great system with local suppliers and helpful support videos
* Don prefers the 8” T Tape with 45 degree outlets
* A backflow preventer help avoid problems with flow
* A Tensionmeter can help keep plants (and people?) in their happy zone. A ‘cool thing’ that measures the soil moisture and how hard it is for plants to get the water they need from the soil
* They take composting seriously – following tried and true practices of Korean Natural Farming as taught by Dr Drake of Hawaii. This includes making Compost Tea (a paint strainer bag in a 5 gallon bucket)
* Other ‘toys’ – Microbiometer which measures the percentage of bacteria to fungal growth.

BioReactor. I think you might have to go visit the farm to understand that one

Unfortunately there were some ‘Zoom’ format technical problems that prevented the prepared video clips from appearing on the screen – BUT Donna Rae assures us they will be available on their youtube Channel,