

# Homer Garden Club

# Newsletter

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**The May meeting will be held May 26, 2:00 pm, at the Bidarka Inn, downstairs.**

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May 2013

## May 26 Meeting to Feature Rosemary Fitzpatrick Discussing Home Gardening

Rosemary Fitzpatrick has been composing the Homer News column, "Kachemak Gardener" for many years. She stated "The birth of the "Kachemak Gardener", came from necessity. I saw a need to guide new

information for you is your neighbor but, lacking those, here I am.

My talk will be geared to new gardeners and those who have loved and lost, so to speak ~ if you have tried to garden and failed. I want to give you encouragement, information, guidelines. Bring a note pad and pencil.

This presentation will be divided in categories: food, perennials, trees and shrubs, and maybe annuals if we have enough time. We will wrap it up with a question and answer session. See you there!"



gardeners in the vagaries of gardening at latitude 59 and 1/2 degrees north. When I moved to Homer from Wasilla in 1978, I had the great good fortune of having gardening neighbors who were ever so willing to answer my endless questions and get me going. I still believe the best source of



**The Homer Garden Club Plant Sale will be held June 1,  
11:00 am, at the Homer Chamber of Commerce!!**

## President's Report

by President Jack Regan

### HIMALAYAN BLUE POPPY

I have been captivated by the brilliant deep blue of meconopsis. This hardy perennial grows well in our environment and adds a touch of royalty to the landscape. Many of the plants you see in the garden come from the Blue Poppy Farm near Palmer. This quaint nursery is worth a journey and can be reached going north from Palmer

on Wolverine Road. Homer nurseries will be receiving plants from the Blue Poppy Farm and will make them available to local gardeners. The plants like a moist rich soil and prefer cool temperatures which are prevalent in the Homer area.



## Announcements

**Garden Club Plant Sale Will be Held June 1** at the Homer Chamber of Commerce. The Plant Sale will open at **11:00 am** and volunteers need to be there by **8:00-9:00 am** depending on your task. Coffee and goodies will be available.

**Special June Speaker** — Chris Chadwell of the United Kingdom will be giving a talk on “Paradise on Earth: The Flowers of Kashmir” on Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Islands and Ocean Center. Chris makes fall expeditions to the high mountains of Nepal, Tibet and Kashmir and collects seed from perennials, shrubs, trees and vines. He sells seed shares prior to collecting, so come see what he encounters and what you could be growing in your garden. Or just come enjoy the beautiful things he encounters. Check out his website at Chadwell Seeds [www.chadwellseeds.co.uk](http://www.chadwellseeds.co.uk)

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*And much more*

**We are open Tuesday through Saturday**  
**from 11:00 to 6:00**

## Neil's Notes

by Neil Wagner

"So what do you have planted so far this year?" It's May 8<sup>th</sup> and I'm sipping local mead at a public event. My mind wanders to the stories I've heard of snowbound homesteads this late cold spring, back to those with freezing high tunnels at night, corn 16 inches high in 4" pots and large blossoming tomatoes inside begging to be planted.

My life is too busy, probably like most, so I now take the easiest route. I plant my tomatoes in mid-March, then transplant them to the greenhouse in early May. They are under 10" tall and only two cherry tomatoes have blossomed. That's here on the Homer bench, with an insulated greenhouse and electric heat to prevent freezing. Up at higher elevations, plant later or have a good greenhouse heater.

This year under the guise of efficiency I'm only planting one tomato plant for each earth box. It's hard to

do, they look so small and with so much space around them. But by July I know they would be a wall of vines and leaves, so I'm giving them more sunshine and giving myself a break—half the work. I'm hoping for larger tomatoes and pro-



ductivity on each plant, as well as better use of my time. The rest of the tomatoes will be put into my high tunnel in a couple weeks. I don't have a way to heat that. Even when covering with remay, it only helps for a couple degrees.

This year I'm only planting fourteen varieties of tomatoes, -3 are new from friends.. -Purple Russian, -Goliath, -Fantastic, - Early Girl, -Cosmonaut Volkov, -Debaro, -Paula's Porter, -Hestine Roma, -BHN 968 (?). -Orange Nugget, -Black Cherry, -Megan's Red Cherry, -WA Cherry. Like people, tomatoes have personalities. It's fun to learn and then eat them over the summer.



The corn will get transplanted into a raised bed in the high tunnel around May 20<sup>th</sup>. I'm planting Sun Gold, Earlivee and Sugar Buns varieties again. They will get transplanted through IRT plastic to keep the weeds down. As long as the corn gets pollinated, it has been producing well in the past 3 years.



Enjoy your planting season! Remember to take good notes on what Rosemary says at this next Homer Garden Club meeting.



## Treasurer's Report

by Peggy Craig

April 2013

Income		Expenses	
Membership	85.00	Meeting	288.33
		Venue	250.00
		Program	38.33
	<b>Total Income</b>		<b>Total Expenses</b>
	<b>\$85.00</b>		<b>\$288.33</b>
Beginning balance 4/1/13	\$12,355.02		
Income	85.00		
Expenses	-288.33		
Ending balance 4/30/13	<b>\$12,151.69</b>		

I believe that it's our love of nature that compels us to become gardeners. We foster this infatuation with flower buds, blue sky, and songbirds when we prune the old canes out of the raspberry patch, poke peas into the newly warmed soil, and tweak that first sun-ripened tomato from the vine. We celebrate nature in hues of purple and blue and yellow pansies planted in a cedar window box, and we bow to the power of nature when hailstorms pockmark the red cabbage and drum down the lettuce.

This love of nature arises in us early. Do you remember stoking the back of a caterpillar when you were four or five? Or rubbing a dandelion on your chin to paint on a yellow beard? Do you remember when, as a teenager, you lay on your back in the sweet-smelling grass and watched the lazy progression of a butterfly as it moved from flower to flower? A love of gardening, likewise, begins when we are young. I would wager that most gardeners had early experiences in a garden. Experiences so pleasant and memorable that gardening and happiness are hand in glove to our way of thinking.

What I'm getting at is this – children don't gain a love of nature by sitting in front of a TV, or by twitching their thumbs back and forth over a computer game. I worry that today's kids are missing out on something that is crucial to the human-nature connection. If they don't know nature, if they don't have a personal relationship with wild places, even if it's only under the low limbs of the spruce tree in the back yard, they won't raise any objection to the gradual ebbing away of natural places and the subsidence of bird species, and honeybees, and caterpillars. And they won't learn to garden.

Children in today's world don't understand the magic behind the food they eat. They don't know, for example, that they're eating flower buds when they bite into a stock of broccoli; that some carrots come out of the ground shaped like funny little men with two legs, or that potatoes come in all colors and shapes and sizes, and that by re-



Jessica's granddaughter Winter in the garden planting one back into the soil the next spring, you get ten or twenty more in its place.

I watched a TED talk with Jamie Oliver recently called *Teach Kids about Food*\* and what I remember best about the presentation was his visit to a grade school class of first-graders. He held up a cauliflower and asked the kids what it was. After a long pause one child offered "broccoli?" as an answer. He held up a tomato and heard "potato" and a leafy purple beet was variously an "onion" or "celery". The kids knew the names of common vegetables, but had no idea what they looked like! I found this profoundly disturbing. How can we hope to inspire children to eat well when

they don't even recognize food in its most basic, healthy, and versatile form?

So that's where getting kids into the garden can help. Start when they're little. Hand them one bean at a time and show them how to poke them into the soil. Straight rows don't matter. Hand your six-year-olds the hose and let them water the carrots and peas. A little oversight is needed so they don't overdo it, but the smile on their face, and the square set of their shoulders is your sign that you've planted not just a garden, but a love of gardening.

Then, when it comes time to harvest those slim pea pods, and to eat the first carrots washed clean with the garden hose, your kids will know what they're eating, and they'll be eating it in its purest, healthiest form.

And as the years go by, when they're grown and planting gardens of their own, they'll have this relationship to the land that will sustain them, and in turn, they will work to sustain the land. It's a beautiful thing.

*"If we could see the miracle of a single flower clearly, our whole life would change."...Buddha*

\*<http://www.thekitchn.com/jamie-olivers-ted-talk-teach-k-108861>

*Perennials are the ones that grow like weeds, biennials are the ones that die this year instead of next, and hardy annuals are the ones that never come up at all.*  
Katherine Whitehorn

So, it's May 4th and I'm sitting here sipping morning tea and gazing out at a vast expanse of WHITE! May 4th!! Is there any possibility that Mother Nature is taking a year off? Forget spring! Forget summer!!



Just go straight from winter to winter??? It's one thing this time of year to take in the Kenai mountains across the bay, still dressed in arctic garb; that's normal....even natural. But please, not my front yard! My yard should be sporting her spring attire: the soft lime greens of budding plants and grasses, the promising burgundy of sprouting peonies. Am I whining? As the day progresses I have the opportunity to speak with gardeners from other elevations. Sharon Froeschle is at about the same

450' elevation I am...her email said, "It was unbelievable; and it just kept snowing!" Sharon is much more reserved than I am...my thoughts weren't quite so subtly polite! .. and then there was



Carol Demers...poor Carol! She's was just getting ready to spend some time shoveling *last year's snow*...not this years! Good grief!!

And then I realize that it's exactly three months until Gardeners' Weekend...May 4th to June 4th to July 4th to August 4th, the day of the tours. We're talking 90 days here...wow, this is scary! But then I remind myself, and my heart confirms for me, that Mother Nature can be a trickster, but she eventually comes through...maybe *this* year just a little LATE! And so it is....Gardeners' Weekend is just 3 months away. We'll all spend the next few months in frenetic activity as we dig and plant, harvest and admire. And at

the end of it all, we'll have the opportunity to visit some marvelous gardens, both floral and vegetable, that will have begun, no doubt, with *their* owners also having sat and sipped as they watched fat, fluffy snowflakes on May 4th.

I just have a few notes this month as the GW committee (Brenda, Lorna, Roni, Joan, Sharon, Saraphine, and Jessica) continues to work toward our 7th (wow 7th!) weekend dedicated to all things gardening, and some things pure fun.

As I write this, **we have five of our six gardens** on board (thanks to Manfred and Sharon Gaedeke, Don McNamara and Donna Rae Faulkner, Birgitta and Willy Suter, Lorna and Curt Olsen, Dorothy and Bill Fry (and their long time gardening doyenne, Fern Cossette).

But we are still looking for number six. Over the years, as we've made announcements during club meetings that we need members to come forward with garden sugges-

tions, I've notice that not many actually do. However, if we have an opportunity to speak with members one-on-one, they ALWAYS have great ideas. So look at this article as our one-on-one conversation with you! Please think about it, and let us know if you would like to nominate a garden or gardens that have attracted or enchanted you over the years. If you've loved them, everyone else will too! Please give one of us a call.

We want to thank those who have already signed up to help in various ways, but we do still need more volunteers. We'd like to have one more person to help Kate McNulty and Francie Roberts at Saturday's lecture. Although the committee has a budget for food for the Bear Creek function, we would also appreciate some locally made or harvested refreshments... perhaps you'd be willing to contribute in that way. We always need 12 hosts/hostesses for the gardens and we are REALLY happy if we have a few more to serve as back up, since, often times, "gardens happen"! In other words, sometimes life gets in the way, right at the last minute. As of now, we need at least four more.

The garden owners' luncheon requires someone to pick up the catered food, help set up at the luncheon host or hostess's home, and then return serving pieces to the caterer afterwards. We need two or three helpers in this department. The luncheon will be held on Wednesday, August 7th, and will require about three hours of your time.

Although the GW committee takes care of scheduling air time with local media outlets and further getting the word out through the print

(Continued on page 6)

**Gardeners' Weekend**

*(Continued from page 5)*

media , we also need people to assist with the photocopying and distribution of brochures and the posting of posters! We will even provide you with a list of sites so you will know where to put them.

And, there you have it.....Signup sheets will be available again at the Homer Garden Club's May meeting which will be held on Sunday, the 26th. The Summer Gardeners' Weekend has become a fund raiser for the club as well as a summer

activity to which we all look forward....so come on board and give us a hand. It might rain that day but surely, it won't SNOW!  
co-chairs:  
Roni Overway 226 3404 or 242 1966.....Brenda Adams 235 3763 or 299 4701

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