



Homer Garden Club

Newsletter

November 2012

November 25 Meeting to Feature Mel Langdon Speaking on Rain Gardens

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The November meeting will be held November 25, 2:00 pm, at the Bidarka Inn, downstairs.

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Mel Langdon came to rain gardens as a professional engineer specializing in drainage and storm water. She rolled out changes in the Municipality of Anchorage's Drainage Design Criteria, which included developing crite-

cally located to receive runoff from paved surfaces and rooftops. They were 'invented' by drainage (storm water) engineers as a way of imitating the natural infiltration systems that buildings and pavement removed.



Rain Garden

This talk will explain the essential elements of rain gardens, how to build one, and how homeowners can use these innovative vegetative approaches in their own landscapes.



Mel Langdon

ria for vegetative storm water management in public places. Finding that the natural systems approach was not part of her formal engineering background, she expanded her knowledge by completing the Alaska Master Gardener program and taking a rain garden design class through the horticulture department at Chemeketa Community College (in Salem, Oregon). She now has over 15 years' experience in Alaska.

Rain gardens are not for growing rain, but they are growing in popularity! The term 'rain gardens' has been around since 1990, coined to describe planted depressions specifi-



A BAYCREST OVERLOOK MAKEOVER

Approaching Homer on the Sterling Highway the traveler is presented with a magnificent vista at the Baycrest Overlook. This pullout/rest stop is maintained by the Department of Transportation. For the past several years, Homer Garden Club has been a partner in providing horticultural services at the site. Baycrest Overlook has five garden cutout areas surrounded by a concrete apron. The Homer Garden Club is responsible for one of these areas. Volunteers from the club participate in

caring for the approximately fifty by thirty foot kidney bean shaped garden. It contains a number of perennials, shrubs, and even a spruce tree.



Recently a group of "Baycrest Stakeholders" has assembled to consider possible upgrades to the Baycrest Overlook site. Representatives from several organizations including the Research Reserve, Chamber of Commerce, Parks and Recreation, and others have come together to review options to enhance this site. It's a work in progress, so look for further recommendations at Baycrest. Meanwhile, if you want to participate in the garden club's activity at this site, look for the sign-up sheet at the next club meeting.

Sowing Seeds for the Future

by Jessica Ryan

It's mid-November. The garden beds have been cleared, spread with aged compost, and covered in plastic to await the warmth of spring. While all the physical work of gardening is done for the year, the work of planning for next year has just begun.

I often tell visitors from the lower 48 that we Alaskans have split personalities. Our manic summer selves are up at seven every weekend morning with ambitious to-do lists - hang windows in the new greenhouse, weed the garden, drive down to the Homer Spit for an afternoon of salmon fishing to fill the freezer, can or smoke this fish, cut and stack a mountain of firewood, and somehow find time to get across the Bay a couple of times to kayak, hike, and camp. Fitting all this in around a 9 to 5 job is only possible because it never gets dark! In the winter, our introspec-

tive natures emerge. There's time for potlucks and community plays, and the knitting projects and musical instruments come out of dormancy. And best of all, the new seed catalogs begin to arrive with their color photos of glistening tomatoes and rainbow-hued rows of lettuce, carrots and cabbages.

Gardeners are optimistic by nature - we are sure that next year's garden will be the best ever, with bigger artichokes, earlier broccoli, and more beans than the year before! This optimism is key. We don't give up after a failed attempt to grow squash during a cooler than average summer, or because the slugs made off with our lettuce. We try again the next year, and the next, armed with friendly advice on how to build low tunnels to help warm those squash plants, or how to apply copper strips around the raised beds to thwart the

slugs. We prevail, gaining new skills each year, learning from long-time gardeners in the region, and coming up with some clever ideas of our own.

If you're new to vegetable gardening, or if you have room to expand an existing garden, this is the time of year to pull out the graph paper and begin to jot down a plan. We've all read about the droughts and crop failures across much of the United States, and as climate change accelerates in the years to come, crop losses are likely to be more commonplace. We gardeners can be part of the local solution, raising more of our own food, sharing surplus zucchinis and growing tips over the garden gate, and teaching our own kids how to sow seeds for today, and for a more secure future.

Treasurer's Reports

by Peggy Craig

September 2012

Income		Expenses	
Membership	475.00	Administration	498.97
Total Income	\$475.00	Gardeners' Weekend	358.51
		Harvest Dinner	312.22
		Dr. Robert Bors	301.75
		Newsletter	136.38
		Program Hospitality	205.64
		Total Expenses	\$1,813.47
Beginning balance 8/1/12			
Income	475.00		
Expenses	-1,813.47		
Ending balance 9/31/12	<u>\$13,635.47</u>		

October 2012

Income		Expenses	
Membership	420.00	Meeting:	
Harvest Dinner Deposit Re-	75.00	Venue	100.00
Total Income	\$420.00	Program	249.00
		Total Expenses	\$349.00
Beginning balance 10/1/12			
Income	49500		
Expenses	-349.00		
Ending balance 10/31/12	<u>\$13,781.68</u>		

Year End Report - Fiscal year October 1, 2011—September 30, 2012

Income		Expenses	
Membership	1,680.00	Meeting venue	900.00
Meeting venue refund	75.00	Program	1,133.40
Plant sale	2,792.50	Hospitality	255.25
Cash box	300.00	Administration	776.26
Donation	10.00	Newsletter	300.27
Gardener's Weekend	5,896.00	Plant Sale	929.09
Cash box	270.00	Gardeners' Weekend	1,242.74
Books	420.00	Lecture	4,188.49
Total Income	\$11,443.50	Cash box	270.00
		Harvest Dinner	312.22
		Doctor Bors	301.75
		Total Expenses	\$10,609.57
Beginning Balance 10/1/2011			
Income	11,443.50		
Expenses	-10,609.57		
Ending Balance 9/30/2012	<u>\$13,635.68</u>		

LOST AND FOUND

Someone left a wool cardigan at the last meeting. It's a purplish zipper-front "Ibis" wool cardigan/jacket, size large. The owner can call Neil or Kyra Wagner at 235-6953.

October's early snowfall and cold weather was, well, not a warning for what would come today. Winter, as snow turned into our November rain and more rain. Regardless, after my busy scurrying around the gardens like a marmot for the past couple weeks, now I just smile. I'm ready for a break.

On a slightly above freezing afternoon a couple weeks ago, I took apart our frozen grid of 11 garden hoses. They start uphill at the pond (I had to chop the screened intake out of the ice), then head downhill to the various greenhouses, gardens, orchards and high tunnels. Gravity saves me a lot of work! This spring when the water stopped coming out of the original pump set up for watering, I was at a loss. The intake was plugged with leaves, deep in the pond in a culvert. Siphoning the water downhill turned out to work just as well as pumping it. By the time it reaches my high tunnel at the bottom of the grade, it will blast 20 feet from a hose, more than enough to pressure the drip line irrigation. I like that we don't always need pumps or technology; we have nature on our side. Newton's apple dropped for the same reason the pond water flows down to our apple orchards.

With winter starting to drift down, we pulled the tops off our high tun-

nels and said "good winter" to them. It took about an hour to pull down and fold both covers. With 20 X 24 and 20 X 36 sized high tunnels, it's easy to do. Next April in that warm hopeful spring light, (remember it?) we'll pull them on and start over again. I harvested the last tub of spinach, lettuce and arugula from mine before pulling the cover. We are still making salads from it.



Harvesting carrots this fall after the ground started to freeze, I found my new broad fork worked well loosening the frozen soil. I bought it from Thomas Hart, the blacksmith next door to Calypso Farms in Ester near Fairbanks. After spending a couple of warm July days working with interns at Calypso farms, (<http://www.calypsosfarm.org>) and using his broad fork (much improved over Johnnies) I went over and bought one. The challenge was that I was traveling by motorcycle. Thomas said mine was the first fork hauled away on a motorcycle!



As

usual, during the last few weeks our carrots bulked up and our "skimpy" crop emerged with nice size carrots. The beets were another story. I should have thinned more I suppose, but they were decidedly under achievers as were our kohlrabi. Our Petroski turnips did very well in size and taste. The seeds were saved and given to us from our English master gardening guru friend Midge. She lives on an island off northwest Kodiak. Gardening brings great food and interesting friends to your table.

I've read that when you garden, you work like a slave and eat like a king. I think it's true. We love sitting down to meals and observing they are 99% of our own growing and harvesting. Every time I walk into our root cellar I feel a mixture of pride and satisfaction. Like the wood cut, split and stacked up outside, our vegetables wait in the dark cold until we are ready for them. Now even in the fall rain we can relax a bit, enjoy the winter months and dream of future plantings...



Items of Interest

******Social Chair Notes* Thanks much to Jeanne McArthur for the delicious Brownies she brought to the October meeting! I had jury duty in Anchorage for the 2 *long* weeks prior to the meeting and failed to contact the others who had volunteered to bring refreshments. Hopefully I won't have that problem again! If you can bring something for a future meeting, please sign up or you can call or email me directly. Remember it doesn't need to be an elaborate dish...just a plate of cookies, quick bread, dip & chips, etc. Hope you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

*******The Natural Resource Conservation & Development Board (NRCDB)** is collecting information and feedback regarding the Agricultural Research Station in Palmer, Alaska. The station was closed in 2011.

An example of their research that got cancelled mid-stream was testing the breakdown rates of 5 different pesticides, including aminopyralid (Milestone), as well as their effects at different concentrations on crops, including potatoes, carrots and kale.

If you would like to assist the board in advising the AK Department of Natural Resources Commissioner on this issue, please follow the link below and complete a short survey. Your responses are completely anonymous unless you choose to identify yourself. Your assistance is much appreciated! <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HTLDPXF>

This survey will be available through November 30, 2012. Please feel free to forward this survey invitation to anyone you think may have information or views to share on this issue.



Homer Garden Club Budget 2012-13

Income

Membership	\$1,800.00	
Plant Sale	2,800.00	
Gardener's Weekend	5,900.00	
Books	500.00	
Total Income		\$11,000.00

Expenses

Meetings	2,200.00	
Venue	700.00	
Program	1,200.00	
Hospitality	300.00	
Administration	800.00	
Newsletter	350.00	
Plant Sale	900.00	
Gardener's Weekend	1,600.00	
Gardener's Weekend Lecture	4,500.00	
Baycrest Garden	200.00	
Historian	100.00	
Harvest Dinner	500.00	
Website	2,000.00	
Total Expenses		13,150.00

REMEMBER: Dues are now due October 1st. Members are encouraged to have the newsletter sent to them via e-mail as it is much less expensive for the club and you will then receive it in fabulous color.

THE HOMER GARDEN CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

May we send your Newsletter via E-Mail? Yes ____ No ____

Are you interested in vegetable gardening ____ ? flower gardening ____ ?

How would you like to participate in the Garden Club?

(please check any activities you may be interested in)

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

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

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