Homer Garden Club General Meeting Minutes

March 25, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 P.M. by President Francie Roberts who began with the introduction of visitor, Barbara Haynes.

The next meeting will be held on April 8 at the Homer United Methodist Church at 3:00 PM. The special guest speaker will be Kit Strange of London's Kew Gardens.

Francie dispensed with reading of the minutes from the previous meeting as they are available on line. She also announced that we have advertising apace available in our newsletter and that if anyone was interested they could see Peggy Pittman, treasurer, after the meeting.

Peggy then reported that the balance in our account at this time is $15,147. 29.

Various committee reports followed:

Jeannette Lawson reported on Gardeners' Weekend which will be held on July 28 and 29. There is still a need for volunteers to fill positions including two hostesses, a group to clean up after the winery reception, several to help out in the kitchen. She is still looking for musicians to provide music for the event. Lori Jenkins recommended Michelle Hatton who plays the harp. A signup sheet will be available after the meeting.

Signup sheets for the Baycrest Garden cleanup, which will be held on Saturday, May 5th at 10:00 AM., are also available at the back of the room after the meeting.... the more helpers, the quicker the work will be done. Beginning on June 13 we need two volunteers each week to do the regular maintenance. Again, signup sheets are available.

Barbara Kennedy reported on plant sale progress. The sale will be held on May the 19th and volunteers need to arrive at 10:00 AM for set up with the sale beginning at 11:00 AM. This year we will have an area where gardeners can donate used garden equipment for sale with proceeds also going to the club. Refreshments and coffee will be available.

Kathy Dube' provided more information on Kit Strange's visit. The talk will be centered on propagation. Our next regular meeting will be held on May 27. It will feature a presentation by Dr. Jodie Anderson from Fairbanks who will be speaking about soils and composting.

Francie reported that the rack cards are in the process of being ordered so we should have them in time for the plant sale. She also reminded everyone that the aprons are in. They are $25 for club members and $30 for non-members. She also said that there is only one chapter outstanding in the revision of Kachemak Cultivating. Additionally, she reported that the group promoting Peonies on Pioneer is looking for supervising adults to help kids and others with maintaining the gardens. Those interested are asked to contact Francie.

Don McNamara reported that Oceanside Farms has certified seed potatoes available again. Varieties include Red Golds, Yellow Finn, Robinta, French Fingerlings and Granola. He also remarked that Save-U-More has some fruit trees available but they are not marked with zones and came from California.

KBBI has invited us to participate in their Coffee Table radio show on March 28th at 9:00 AM. Brenda Adams, Tony Burgess and Donna Rae Faulkner will be their guests.

V. P. Kathy then introduced the day's speaker, Lori Jenkins of Synergy Farms. Her presentation was on Succession Growing. She began by recommending that gardeners take photos in their gardens to help with keeping records of their crop rotation the purpose of which is to avoid depleting the soil of the nutrients their plants require.

Lori, who considers herself an environmental and art activist, and her husband, Wayne, moved to Alaska from N. W. Georgia in 2013 and since have developed and farmed several acres. Their farm includes outdoor gardens, a new water catchment system and now 4 high tunnels. They farm at an elevation of 450', at mile 9.5 of East End Road. She then discussed their gardening history since their move. They have a particular interest in growing both soft and hard necked garlic and supply other produce and edible flowers to 12 local restaurants. She recommends the book *The Market Garden* as a good source for those interested in growing for the market.

The Jenkins now hold various events in their gardens, the next one, a Garlic Festival is scheduled for July 15.

Lori emphasized the need to know your soil. They had to amend theirs with lime to bring the pH up from 4.9 to 6.2. She recommended Brookside labs for soil testing. As a self-proclaimed "garden zealot" she also pays attention to the soil web and includes vermiculture (worms) in her farming. She has added langbeinite (available at Wagon Wheel, Anchor Point Greenhouse or from Panama Reds) to increase the potassium, bone meal for phosphorus, and compost and blood meal for nitrogen. She explained how composting works and explained the action of worms, activators, and heat in the process. She also uses lawn clippings and alder leaves as well as chicken and horse manure.

Cover crops were also explained and she has done mulch and cover crop trials. Using succession sowing in her high tunnels, she is guided by almanac start dates. She recommends having a seeding calendar and a garden plan. Lori has utilized a spreadsheet in keeping track of her zones, number of beds, cultivars, seeding dates, amount of seed, harvest dates and her yield per bed. She recommends consistent and comprehensive record keeping.

Lori was asked how she heats her high tunnels and whether she has warm air leaks. She commented that heating is expensive and she does use a small space heater for an hour or a little more when needed, understanding that the fumes can be detrimental to the crops. Warm water jugs and thermal heat can also be utilized. She uses fans at night for air circulation.

Her farming practices begin with clearing debris, broadforking, shaping the beds, adding amendments, using a tilther, marking the rows, direct seeding or transplanting, watering in, covering the beds with agro fabrics, and, of course, recording her activity. She uses a medium weight row cover.

To deal with pests she has used agro fabric, cutworm traps and Sluggo. She uses mouse traps to catch voles.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roni Overway

Secretary