

Newsletter

Contents

Article	Page
May Meeting	1
President's Report	2
Plant Sale	2
Neil's Notes	3
Treasurer's Report	4
People's Gardens	4
Gardeners' Weekend	5

The regular meeting will be held **May 27** at 2:00 p.m. at the Bidarka Inn, downstairs.

Board of Directors

Jack Regan, President—
235-3650,
regan009@alaska.com

Neil Wagner, Vice President—
235-6953 neil@sustainablehomer.org

Brenda Adams — 235-3763
brenda@GardensByBrenda.com

Peggy Craig — 235-0631
michaelandpeggy@acsalaska.net

Barbara Kennedy — 235-4347 bar-
bara_e_kennedy@msn.com

Kyra Wagner — 235-6953
kyra@sustainablehomer.org

Michael Linden — 235-6632
homerlinden@gmail.com

Jessica Ryan — 299-8811
alyce.ryan@gmail.com

Julie Parizek — 226-3276
jparizek@acsalaska.net

Paula Riley — 435-3983
pauril@yahoo.com

May 27, 2012 Meeting Will Feature Millie Lewis Discussing Edible Landscapes

Millie Lewis, a Homer native, will be our guest speaker this month. Our vice president Neil Wagner spoke to her briefly over the phone about her talk just before she started driving up the Alcan Highway to Homer.



Squash grown in earth box.

Millie grew up in Alaska and has been gardening all her life. She will be speaking at our May 27th meeting about making and taking care of edible landscapes. One problem with edible landscapes is that rabbits and moose (who apparently haven't read the story about the golden goose) are so hungry they tend to eat our edible landscapes. Millie was wondering how her landscape fared over the winter.

Millie likes fruit production but, while she has some fruit trees, she really likes the different berries we can grow here. One of her favorites is the June or Saskatoon berry. She also grows currants, strawberries and raspberries. Millie uses

earth boxes and has lots of experience growing with them in a greenhouse. She said most people who see or hear about them always want to try them. She noted one group planned on buying them until they found out the cost with shipping made them too expensive. Neil mentioned he is building his, so he will be bringing a homemade earth box to show how they are built and compare it with an original one she will bring. Her favorite tomato is Bush Goliath and Big Bertha is her favorite peppers. Earth boxes also work well with cucumbers, eggplant, melons and especially vegetables that need lots of water. Come see how they work and bring any questions you might have.

HELP WANTED



Homer Garden Club
Plant Sale - June 2nd

President's Report

by Jack Regan, President

A WINTER'S CHALLENGE

As the gardens emerge from a very snowy winter, extensive damage to our plants has become apparent. Gardeners ranging from accomplished experts to novices are reporting injuries to their trees and shrubs. Winter protection strategies normally effective were found to have failed. Moose and especially rabbits were aggressive in their destruction of even mature trees.

The Homer Garden Club continues to provide its members with informative programs during the year. This season it would be helpful to assemble a panel of speakers who have been successful against the damaging assault against our gardens.



Garden Club Plant Sale

by Barbara Kennedy & Michael Linden

Attention Members !!!!!

This year's Homer Garden Club Plant Sale will be held at a new location — the Homer Chamber of Commerce parking lot — on June 2nd at 11:00.

In collaboration with the Director of the Homer Chamber of Commerce, Monte Davis, the plant sale committee is considering including the following activities:

- an area where Paul Banks school children can sell the plants they've grown in their new greenhouse;
- food provided by local eateries;
- an area outside of the plant sale itself for a tree sale,
- a club "Garage Sale Corner" where members can sell unused or unneeded garden implements to other Homerites.

Proceeds of sales, other than those of the Paul Banks kids, would go to the club treasury.

We need your help in providing plants (bedding plants, vegetables, house plants or divided perennials from your yard). If you can bring in your potted plants the morning of the sale to the Chamber

starting at 8:00 am for placing and pricing, all members would benefit as proceeds from this sale help support bringing in speakers during the year. Please label what your plants are. If you need help digging or can't deliver yourself, volunteers from the Plant Sale Committee are standing by to assist. Call Michael Linden 235-6632 e-mail homerlinden@gmail.com or Barbara Kennedy 235-4347.

Also, about the "Garden Garage Sale Corner", bring garden supplies, tools, pots of all sizes or whatever else you might think would sell that you would like to donate or get rid of. If you like, bring items to the May 27th meeting and we will hold them until the sale. Otherwise the morning of the sale drop in after 8:00 with your donated plants, have some coffee and refreshments and share garden tips with others before the sale begins. Bring it on.....

Forgot to sign up for volunteering for the Plant Sale Committee? It's not too late. We'll need help in putting this together. Again, contact Michael Linden or Barbara Kennedy and we'll find something for you to do. Thanks for helping make this the best sale ever.....

This is the time of the year we all wait for! These long days of sunshine and getting everything planted. There never is enough time, so relax, be present, listen to the new birds singing in your yard and savor the great rites of spring and reconnecting with the earth.

Last month I was experimenting and planting with soil blocks, then rebuilding my tomato greenhouse and now it's building Earth Boxes (EB's) and planting them. Spring mania is in full bloom. By chance this month's speaker, Millie Lewis uses Earth Boxes and will also talk briefly about them. I will bring one to the meeting so you can see what they look like and how they are built.

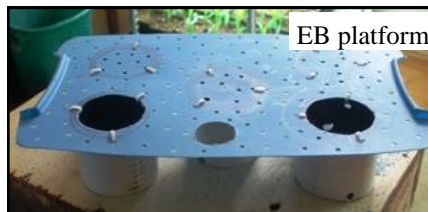
On a sunny warm April spring day I removed the old yellow fiberglass on the southern half of the greenhouse roof and replaced it with a double polycarbonate clear but insulating layer. I decided the northern half was losing more than gaining so I installed 2" R-tec foam under the old fiberglass roof. I also



covered the north wall with R-tec with a layer of plastic over it. The other walls had the old opaque fiberglass removed and clear sun tuff lexan glazing installed. I will now be able to prune tomatoes with a clear view of the bay!

The Earth Box (EB) idea had been on my list to try for some years. Watering tomatoes is a daily green-

house chore as my drip watering system never really worked out. That EBs have a reservoir of water underneath them for the plants to use as needed always sounded good. No watering for a week or more and no more mud splattering when watering by hose and causing fungus. The roots should be growing down in them instead of staying near the surface for water like they do in five gallon buckets. I bought 22 blue totes with the idea that they would make 11 EB's. Then I found this site which shows several EB options: <http://www.seattleoil.com/Flyers/Earthbox.pdf> and realized that I



could use the lids to make the base platforms and then make 22 EB's! Once I got organized with my building techniques, it took about 45 minutes to build each one, although I actually built half at a time through the several stages to completion. A drill press really saves time in drilling the bazillion holes in the lower platform. (In the spring, it's generally better to plant a little later than earlier to prevent your plants from getting root bound. Using soil blocks helps prevent this as they air prune and build the inner roots instead of circling the pot.) For those who asked, our soil blocks do not come apart when watered because they are compressed when made and become fairly leathery and solid. One drawback is you can't label the side of them but a small plastic label stake will work.

Last fall Joseph Belcastro dropped off several exotic sounding, tasting and looking tomatoes like Ox

Heart, Green Zebra, AL Kuffa, Purple Russian and his world's best tasting Patamo Romanese. I saved seeds from them all and they all germinated this spring. I also added Spring Girl, Roma and Bush



Goliath so I now have about 16 varieties of tomatoes. Most varieties have two of each to compare the results in the greenhouse EBs. A few will also be planted in my high tunnel in EBs and some in its raised beds for other tests. One greenhouse EB will have cantaloupe & watermelon, another peppers and cucumbers. Each EB has about 16 gallons of compost, peat, last year's tomato soil, and lime and fish bone meal. Each will have two tomato plants compared to 4 gallons per tomato in my usual 5 G buckets. I'll add some Epsom salt a couple times for magnesium. Each has an IRT (Infrared-Red Transmitting) plastic cover put on top and held in place with the outer lid on top. The IRT should help warm the soil, keep moisture in and hopefully keep any weeds from growing. I've been told plastic can cause mold so I'll check for that and remove if needed. I will try our green IRT plastic (<http://growingtaste.com/mulches.shtml>) on my high tunnel cukes, watermelon and different winter squash. Thinking about it, as weeding is a pain, I will try IRT on the corn and anything else that's transplanted after I lay the watering hose down.

Have a great gardening season, keep experimenting and remember to take good notes!

Treasurer's Report

by Peggy Craig, Treasurer

April 2012

Income

Membership	20.00	
Total Income		<u>\$20.00</u>

Expenses

Meeting:		
Venue	100.00	
Program	50.00	
Total Expenses		<u>\$150.00</u>

Beginning balance 3/1/12	\$11,584.95
Income	20.00
Expenses	<u>-150.00</u>
Ending balance 3/31/12	<u>\$11,454.95</u>

It's Baycrest Garden Time!

It's spring and time to spiff up the Baycrest Garden at the top of the Baycrest pull-out. On one of the two days we spent cleaning up and planting last year we had 14 volunteers and it made quick work of an otherwise time-consuming job. Please mark May 26th, 10:30 AM, a Saturday, on your calendars. Bring gardening tools and a gallon of water! Thank you!!



People's Garden Grants

by Kyra Wagner

The People's Garden Grant requests are in, and the following gardens have been approved for funding under this program.

Anchor Point Girl Scout Troop 515
Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
Fireweed Academy
Flex High School
Friends of Homer Library
Haven House
Homer Chamber of Commerce
Homer Farmers' Market
Homer High School
Homer Senior Citizens
Homer United Methodist Church
Kachemak Heritage Land Trust

Nanwalek Summer Youth Worker Program
Ninilchik Fairground
Ninilchik Traditional Council
Old Town Neighborhood Association
The R.E.C. Room
Seldovia Village Tribe
South Peninsula Hospital Long-Term Care
South Peninsula Behavioral Health Services
St. Augustine's Church
West Homer Elementary School

Congratulations to all the recipients. Now the real work begins! Remember, all these participants are going to be looking for volunteers to help, so try to lend a hand.

Gardeners' Weekend

by Roni Overway



"Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders."

- Henry David Thoreau

Expect wonders! What a great way to introduce the subject of Gardeners' Weekend! Over the last several years our August weekend devoted to all things gardening has become more and more popular and better and better attended. We have come to *expect wonders!*

August 4th and 5th, rain or shine (we always hold out for SHINE!), this year's event will be as inspiring and fun-filled as those of the past. The garden tours are *your perennial favorite* event of the weekend, so just to entice you a bit we'll drop a couple of hints: one of them might be the perfect location for a tea party! Another would be Peter Rabbit's idea of fine dining! And how does a garden that's won one of the bluest of blue ribbons sound? Gosh! That's only half of them!

This year's guest speaker has won serious accolades as well. **C. Colston Burrell** is a garden designer, award-winning author, photographer, naturalist and teacher...and he's also a birder; he'll fit right in with most Homerites! Although he now lives in Virginia, Cole spent 10 years gardening in Northern Minnesota, a climate which shares some distinct similarities to ours; the Minne-

sota USDA zone map indicates zones 3a through 5a moving from north to south. Garden design was his first claim to fame and one of his presentations will speak to **"The Art of Perennial Combinations"**. With sustainability having become a valued goal of most gardeners these days, he will also present **"The Sustainable Garden: Magic or Myth"**. Islands and Ocean's auditorium will be our venue and his talks will be presented at 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm on Saturday, August 4th.

After the garden tours from 11:00 am - 5:00 pm on Sunday the 5th of August, we will once again have the opportunity to visit the Bear Creek Winery for our after-tours party: wine tasting and or devours from 5:00 until 6:30 in celebration of the garden owners who welcomed us into their gardens.

Putting on a gardening event that truly has something for everyone takes an inordinate amount of work and would be impossible without the help of club members who always step forward to help out in one way or another. When the signup sheet comes around at the

next meeting, please take some time and consider what you might be able to do to assure us of another great success. We need **7** more garden hostesses, **1** more person to help at the lectures (selling tickets, etc.), **2 or 3** others to help copy and fold garden maps, distribute brochures and put up posters. We are also looking this year for a **couple** of people to provide veggie plates for the Bear Creek reception. If you're willing to bring other food items please let Lorna Olson know or call Roni or Brenda. If you have any questions about the obligations of helpers, be they hostesses or paper-folders, do give one of us a call:

Roni 226 3404/242 1966
Brenda 235 3763/299 4701
Lorna 235-5107

and then.....**Expect Wonders!!**



2011 Gardeners' Weekend

Ask your friends to join!

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

Homer Garden Club
P.O. Box 2833
Homer, AK 99603

