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The next Homer Garden Club meeting will be held at 2:00 pm February 17 at the Bidarka Inn, downstairs.

Newsletter

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February 17 Meeting will Feature Dr. Casey Matney on Soil Amendments and Compost for the Garden

Providing organic matter and nutrients to the garden is a science and an art. In this presentation, Dr. Matney with the UAF Cooperative Extension Service will discuss the fundamentals of assessing soil conditions, determining plant nutrient needs, and best approaches for using compost in the garden.

Casey is an Assistant Professor and Agriculture/Horticulture Extension Agent within the School of Natural Resources and Extension at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. His program responsibilities range from soils to horticulture, and to livestock and range. He provides agriculture/horticulture expertise and training to rural Alaska villages as well as the more metropolitan areas of the state. He is a primary investigator and collaborator on a number of research



and outreach projects in Alaska. Some of the projects Casey is associated with include: soil health, integrated pest management, produce safety, and farming in remote villages.



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!



Treasurer's Report - January 2019

by Louise Ashmun,
Treasurer

Income		
Membership	55.00	
Book Sales	940.00	
	Total Income	<u>\$ 995.00</u>

Expenses		
Jan meeting venue	150.00	
Jan meeting speaker	102.00	
GW speaker expense	775.70	
Book printing and shipping	838.33	
	Total Expenses	<u>\$ 1,866.03</u>

Checking Beginning Balance 01/01/2019	\$	3,248.82
Income		995.00
Expenses		1,866.03
Interest		<u>0.10</u>
Ending Balance 01/31/2019	\$	2,377.89
Money Market Beginning Balance 01/01/2019	\$	15,003.04
Interest		<u>2.48</u>
Ending Balance 01/31/2019	\$	15,005.52
Total Ending Balance 01/31/2019		\$ 17,383.41



Alaska Agriculture in the Classroom Indoor Gardening Workshop

Course Dates: Friday, February 22nd 5:30pm-8:30pm and Saturday, February 23rd 9am-5pm and a follow up 3 hour workshop, date to be determined by students.

Course Description: This course introduces teachers to the Alaska Ag in the Classroom's Alaska Indoor Gardening Curriculum. It focuses on interdisciplinary methods including STEM to teach simple, inexpensive, but effective techniques for indoor gardening in classrooms. This course includes visits to local indoor farms and agriculture based businesses to provide hands-on opportunities with the Alaska Agriculture community. The course offers supplemental, differentiated, challenging curriculum and instruction for regular education, resource and gifted students.

Location: Kenai Peninsula College, Katchemak Bay Campus in Homer

Cost: \$190, 1 credit available

Instructors: Casey Matney, Kyra Wagner and Melissa Sikes

Course Title: Practical Indoor Gardening Techniques for Alaska Classrooms

Register with UAF online at uonline.alaska.edu or call 907-474-7021



It's Time to Plan Your Spring Garden

by Jane Lear,

www.takepart.com — 1/14/15

The cheery holiday decorations are packed away, our new diets already seem overly ambitious and austere, and our toes are numbingly cold inside our winter boots. But there is a saving grace, and it takes the form of the seed catalogs stuffing the mailbox. Daydream about warmer days ahead with the best in class. These seed catalogs offer rare, regional, heirloom, and organic seeds—and are so gorgeously transporting to flip through, you can almost smell the loam on their pages.

Dreaming over a slew of seed catalogs is the way many of us make it through the winter. The great thing about mail-ordering seeds is that by the time you get them, you've usually forgotten what you've asked for—it's like Christmas all over again! On the downside, however, it's all too easy to overreach and order absolutely everything that catches your fancy. Some people get carried away by the photographs, but I'm a sucker for the cultivar names. Take the flat-podded beans sold by Johnny's Selected Seeds: Dragon's Tongue is hard to resist, but what about Northeaster or Marvel of Venice? Having a garden plan at the ready keeps ambition in check and financial damage to a minimum. (Full disclosure: I'm going with Northeaster, which promises to be early maturing and "extra vigorous in the seedling stage with strong vine growth." Oh, OK, *and* Dragon's Tongue too—"tender and sweet and good in salads or cooked.")

You also might want to think about shoehorning a few flowers into corners here and there. Nasturtiums, for example, are beautiful (and edible) in salads, and many old-fashioned ornamental varieties attract pollinators

and other beneficial insects to the garden.

Seeds or Seedlings?

When you've decided which vegetables you want to plant, you'll need to figure out when to get started, and that depends on whether you want to germinate seed indoors, sow seed



directly in the ground, or start from seedlings purchased at a nursery. According to HGTV, there are two things that will help you make that decision.

- **The length of your growing season** "Some plants need several months to mature. If you live in an area that doesn't really warm up until May or June, you won't have a long enough growing season to grow slow-maturing plants like tomatoes if you sow the seeds directly."

- **How well the vegetable transplants** "Some veggies, like peppers and broccoli, can be easily moved from inside your house to the ground—but others, like carrots, peas, and lettuce do not withstand transplanting well, so seeds are generally directly sowed into the ground."

and need a longer growing season than is found in your area, HGTV suggests you either start your seeds indoors or purchase seedlings to plant.

- **The most economical option is starting from seed.** "Seed catalogs offer a dizzying array of options. However, starting from seed requires an investment of time and supplies," and you'll need to get started soon. I'd like to add to this that you also need a dedicated space indoors, one with plenty of sun or a fluorescent light fixture.

- **Purchasing seedlings from a nursery is an easier option.** "You'll be able to pick and choose healthy plants and then put them in the ground soon after. But buying plants is more expensive, and you'll have fewer options than if you started your own seeds." Also, you can procrastinate longer before deciding on what to grow.

- **Some plants don't start from seed at all but are grown from roots.** Bare-root vegetables include asparagus and rhubarb.



If the vegetables you're interested in cultivating transplant well



The January meeting of the Homer Garden Club was called to order on January 20 at 2:00 PM by President Kathy Dube'. She reminded members about the upcoming lunar eclipse this evening. The next general meeting will be held on February 20 at the Bidarka Inn. No visitors or new members were present. Peggy Pitman announced she had old copies of *Horticulture* magazine to share with members. She suggested if you took some, to return them in the future for others to read.

Secretary's report: Roni Overway was absent and Francie Roberts took minutes in her absence.

Treasurer's report: Louise Ashmun reported a current treasury balance of \$16,550.83.

Gardener's Weekend: This years speaker will be Fergus Garrett, head gardener of Great Dixter in Sussex, England. He talk will be on the topic of succession planting and the event will cost \$10. Fergus will be visiting Homer for 5 days. The cost for the garden tour this year will be \$15 dollars for tour of 5 gardens. The gardens visited will be: Sharon Froeschle, Teena Garay, Rachel Lord, Susan Woodward and Lia Evans-Cloud. There will be no Bear Creek Winery reception due to lack of people to run several important parts of the reception. It takes volunteers to run the weekend and the committee is looking for help.

Speaker's Committee: Renee Patton reported that the speaker for February, Casey Matney, will speak about soils and soil amendments. A bonsai expert and bee-keeper are some of the upcoming speakers.

Baycrest Garden: The committee passed the volunteer calendar and encouraged gardener's to sign up

for the weekly maintenance. Social Secretary: No one has stepped up to be Social Secretary. Jeanne MacArthur, Kate MacNulty, and Barbara Kennedy took care of treats for this month.

Books: Kathy reported the gardening book, *Kachemak Cultivating, from Seaside to Summit*, is done and available for sale. The beautiful cover is by member Jan Peyton. The paperback book costs \$25 and will be available through the club or through the Book Store or the Wagon Wheel. Kathy thanked the many members who contributed to the book. Aprons are also available.

School Gardens: Kyra Wagner has received an Ag in the Classroom grant to help expand school gardens. Kyra is the district manager for the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District. (kyra@homerswcd.org) She is looking for volunteer gardeners to advise a classroom teacher about gardening next fall.

Renee Patton introduced Brenda Adams, the owner of Gardens by Design. Brenda is a local landscaper and garden expert, having published two books on gardening. The presentation today was about the Baycrest Garden, which was designed and maintained by the Homer Garden Club. The garden is located at the top of the Baycrest hill in the state pullout area. There are several garden beds there and the bed just south of the Chamber building is the Homer Garden Club bed.

In 2013-14 Beth Cumming urged the Garden Club Board to renovate the existing garden, as it had become quite overgrown. Club members agreed if money was spent to renovate the garden, that the membership would maintain the garden. Beth Cumming, Tracy Asselin,

Carole Demers, Brigette Suter and Kyra Wagner were appointed to the committee. After *Gardens By Design* planned the garden, this committee was responsible for the Herculean task of implementing the plan.

All the existing soil was removed, a big task, and new soil was brought in. Over 50 bags of compost were incorporated into the garden. Small stepping stones were installed throughout the garden to prevent compaction. Plants need oxygen and compacted soil holds very little.

Twenty members planted the garden in July of 2015. When transplanting potted plants, eliminate the top inch of soil so no insect eggs are transplanted and the bottom inch of soil for no slugs are moved into the garden. The garden is in a sunny location and the garden designed focused on maroon colors. The garden is an organic garden with no herbicides or pesticides used.

Brenda then presented photos of the garden through the seasons. In early May, the club holds a work party to remove spent foliage, weed and amend the soil with steer manure. If the ground is too frozen, the mulch does not go on until it is thawed. Over 600 bulbs are planted in the garden, so early bloomers are crocus, chionodoxa and daffodils.

Early bloomers are Shooting Stars (*Dodecatheon*). This is an Alaskan native that blooms early. Another early bloomer is the cultivar Pasque Flower (*Pulsatilla vulgaris* 'Violet Bells'). Cultivars do not self sow. Beside having a beautiful flower, the Pasque Flower has a beautiful fuzzy seed head. Grape hyacinth (*Muscaria*) has dark blue grape like blooms. Early on the

(Continued on page 5)

Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii* 'Orange Rocket') and the Ornamental Rhubarb (*Rheum palmatum* var. *tanguticum*) provide color in the garden.

In June, the Sem False Spirea (*Sorbaria sorbifolia* 'Sem') contrasts beautifully with the Pulsatilla. This time of year it is apricot and later in the season it becomes chartreuse. This variety has less suckers than other spirea. Daffodils continue to bloom in June. Select daffodils for all three seasons to extend blooming for almost six weeks. A late blooming variety in the garden is called 'Pleasant Eye'. Wooley Thyme (*Thymus pseudolanuginosus*) makes a great ground cover with its fuzzy foliage and lavender flower. Colorful Shooting Stars (*Dodecatheon* 'Little Leo') bloom a long time. Native Iris (*Iris setosa*) grows naturally in wet areas but does well in this sunny garden. Himalayan Blue Poppies (*Meconopsis betonicifolia*) are also successful in the sun in this climate. There are five varieties of primula in the garden, including the waxy leaf primula *ariculata* that blooms early. *Primula juliae* 'Dorothy' is covered in blossoms. The garden contains a little cottage garden with light yellow Globeflower (*Trollius cultorum* 'New Moon'), orange Avens (*Geum* 'Totally Tangerine') and Catmint (*Nepeta x faassenii* 'Walker's Low').

Spireal (*Spiraea nipponica* 'Snowmound') has white blooms and moose generally leave this shrub alone. Lilac (*Syringea vulgaris* 'Sensation') has white edging on each petal and is another shrub generally ignored by moose.

In the middle of summer, white and pink Lewisia (*Lewisia cotyledon*) abound. The candelabra Primula *alpicola* is in full bloom. Speedwell (*Veronica spicata* 'Royal Candles') begins to bloom from the bottom up. This plant is inclined to powdery mildew, so keep it well hydrated and spaced apart. Columbine (Yellow *Aquilegia* 'Goldfinch') contains long lasting soft yellow flowers. Another Columbine (*Aquilegia vulgaris* 'Blue Barlow') is the spurless variety with a double bonnet.

Two varieties of Siberian Iris are in the garden: *Iris sibirica* 'Silver Edge' and 'Caesar's Brother'. The tall iris must be divided every four years or so. Sea Holly (*Eryngium planum* 'Blue Glitter') provides texture and color to the garden this time of year. Hardy Geranium (*Geranium x magnificum*) is an outstanding plant that fills its space so well that it periodically needs splitting.

Hosta's (*Hosta* 'Regal Splendor') come up late but this is the time of the year these vase shaped plants come to the fore. The Mock Orange (*Philadelphus lewisii* 'Blizzard') have a wonderful fragrance. The moose generally

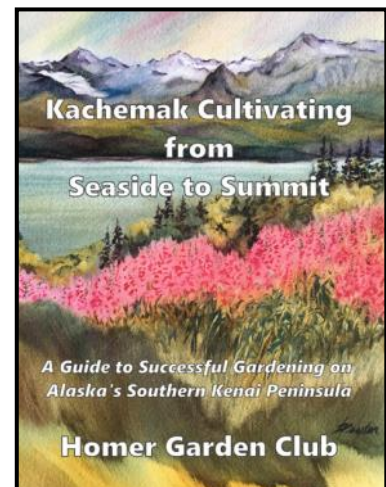
ignore these plants. The Rugosa Rose (*Rosa Rugosa* 'Lac Majeau') blooms most of the summer along with the Masterwort (*Astrantia major* 'Hadspen Blood'). The clumping Feather Reed Grass (*Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Overdam') has grown to four feet tall.

By late summer the 3-4 foot tall Monkshood (*Aconitum x cammarum* 'Bicolor') is blooming. The red Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* 'Paprika') contrasts with Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*). Culver's Root (*Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Apollo') is in full bloom with bees buzzing all around. The lily (*Lillium* LA Hybrid 'Royal Sunset') stands out in the garden.

As fall arrives, the Gentians (*Gentiana cruciata* 'Blue Cross') are in full bloom. They like shade and moisture. The Globe Thistle (*Echinops ritro* 'Vetch's Blue') has deep blue foliage and white stems. Shrubs have color and bulbs are planted before the season is over. Brenda explained proper dead-heading and weeding techniques. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Francie Roberts, Acting Recording Secretary

Homer Garden Club's local gardening book "Kachemak Cultivating from Seaside to Summit" is now available to purchase at the Bookstore or HGC meetings.



March 8 - 9, 2019

The Alaska Food Policy Council and the Alaska Farmers Market Association are partnering for the 4th semi-annual Alaska Food Festival & Conference!

Session topics will cover Alaska's vast and diverse food system. This year's Keynotes are Ben Feldman, Policy Director & Interim Executive Director, Farmers Market Coalition and Courtney Long, Program Coordinator, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach/ Local Foods Program. Sessions will include presentations on farmers market issues, food security, policy, production, harvesting, business, education, community, tradition, sovereignty, fermenting, subsistence, growing, and more. Chef demonstrations, hands-on activities, vendor booths, and a Friday night social to round out the event. We hope to see you at Land's End this March!

Website: <https://www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org/2019-conference/>



ALASKA FOOD FESTIVAL & CONFERENCE

Homer, Alaska **2019**

Hands On Workshops • Keynote Speakers • Social Events
Presentations & Discussions with local and visiting experts

Lands End Resort • Homer, Alaska

*Food Security, Policy, Production, Harvesting, Business,
Education, Community, Tradition, Sovereignty, Opportunity,
Gathering, Fermenting, Fishing, Hunting, Growing, Designing,
Processing, Promoting, Saving & Sharing*

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