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The next Homer Garden Club meeting will be held at 2:00 pm February 16th at the Aspen Suites Hotel Conference Room.

February 2020

Homer Garden Club



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The February 16 Meeting Will Feature Brenda Adams “Creating a Haven for Native Pollinators and Beneficial Insects”

Long time Homer Garden Club member and former president (2004-2010), Brenda C. Adams is an international-award winning garden designer and author of *There's a Moose in My Garden* and *Cool Plants for Cold Climates*, winner of a silver award from the Garden Writers Association. A Master Gardener, she also teaches garden design for the University of Alaska and the Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardeners' program.

Brenda has created over 240 unique gardens for residential and commercial clients. Her designs have received three prestigious awards in the Perennial Plant Association's annual international competition. Her 2012 award was the PPA's highest, the Honor Award. She is a frequent guest on radio and speaks throughout Alaska and around the country. And pollinators are regular and welcome guests in her gardens!

Creating a garden that attracts beneficial insects and supports pollinators – bees, butterflies, lady bugs, lacewings, or hummingbirds – is a rewarding adventure. Not only will these “helpers” make your garden healthier and more productive, they are lots of fun to

watch! Best of all, they keep the neighborhood pests in check.

All creatures need food, water, shelter and a place to raise their young. You'll learn the best ways to provide each of these with a focus on which hardy plants and colors are most attractive to pollinators and what makes them alluring.

Whether your interests include food crops, native plants, ornamentals, or all of these, and regardless of how small or large your garden might be, this presentation will offer helpful information for your success in attracting a range of pollinators and beneficial insects to your landscape.



Treasurer Report

by Louise Ashmun, Treasurer

Homer Garden Club Combined Treasurer Report for November and December 2019			
Income			
Membership	\$175.00		
Book Sales	\$71.94		
Newsletter	\$6.60		
	Total Income	\$253.54	
Expenses			
Monthly Speakers	\$250.00		
Donations made by HGC	\$500.00		
	Total Expenses	\$750.00	
Checking Beginning Balance 11/01/2019			\$ 6,395.20
Income			253.54
Expenses			750.00
Interest			0.47
Ending Balance 12/31/2019			\$ 5,899.21
Money Market Beginning Balance 11/01/2019			\$ 15,027.44
Interest			4.90
Ending Balance 12/31/2019			\$ 15,032.34
Total Ending Balance 12/31/2019			\$ 20,931.55
Submitted by Louise Ashmun, Treasurer			

Homer Garden Club Monthly Treasurer Report for January 2020			
Income			
Membership	\$95.00		
Book Sales	\$25.00		
	Total Income	\$120.00	
Expenses			
Speaker honorarium	\$100.00		
Meeting Venue Rental	\$150.00		
Newsletter Costs	\$17.73		
	Total Expenses	\$267.73	
Checking Beginning Balance 01/01/2020			\$ 5,899.21
Income			120.00
Expenses			267.73
Interest			0.23
Ending Balance 01/31/2020			\$ 5,751.71
Money Market Beginning Balance 01/01/2020			\$ 15,032.34
Interest			2.49
Ending Balance 01/31/2020			\$ 15,034.83
Total Ending Balance 01/31/2020			\$ 20,786.54
Submitted by Louise Ashmun, Treasurer			

Food Can't Cure Everything, But it Helps

by Jessica Shepherd, MFA

On the Monday before Christmas I volunteered at the Homer Food Pantry. Snapping on latex gloves, I sorted and arranged donated vegetables, handed out cartons of eggs and cubes of butter, and exchanged recipes for green bean casserole and sweet potato pie with fellow volunteers and food recipients. I was bemused at the popularity of Brussel sprouts over green beans (which would have been my choice), and took satisfaction in the noisy order as people filed in with empty baskets or boxes, and left with them full. The experience was exhilarating and I recognized, not for the first time, the pleasure to be gained in giving food.

Each summer we grow far more produce and fruit than my husband and I can eat and I joyfully give away fresh broccoli, kale and cabbage to anyone who walks through the garden gate. At the end

of the season I deliver extra potatoes and carrots to the food pantry and feel uplifted from doing so. And all winter long I feed the birds and delight in watching them from our kitchen window as I wash dishes or dice onions for soup. Apparently, I equate food with friendship and solace. And while food can't cure everything, I believe it helps.

When my best girlfriend broke her leg on Christmas Eve, I spent much of January in Anchorage tending to her. That mostly entailed making strong coffee with cream, handing her bowls of yogurt with granola, and ladling out homemade chicken cacciatore. She endured two surgeries (with excellent care at Providence Hospital) and, while it will be months before she can put any weight on the leg, the swelling and deep purple bruising have diminished. We don't know how much motion she'll

regain. That consideration is scary for both of us and we haven't spoken of it yet. Instead, I offered foot massages, painted her nails a rich raspberry color, and cooked up macaroni and cheese with bacon crumbled on top. Food for a quaking soul.

As soon as I returned home, dodging winter storms, I ran out to fill the bird feeder and scatter black sunflower seeds onto a depression in the snow. We have a small flock of vagrant Varied Thrush overwintering this year and the prolonged cold spell in January has made them especially vulnerable. According to the Cornell Bird Laboratory, they're found year-round from southern Alaska down through Oregon and Washington. Given this short migration, Varied Thrush are one of the first songbirds to arrive in the spring. At our house, they dependably stir

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

the air with their discordant songs on or just after the first of April.

Yet all through a queerly mild December, I spied them, like bright ornaments, within the canopy of the spruce trees, their orange breasts aglow in the long-angled light of an early afternoon. After such a mild fall-in-to-winter, this little family of birds must have mulled it over and decided against migrating. Migration is exhausting, as anyone who's moved multiple times knows. I queried local birder George Matz and he reported that 14 were found on the Christmas Bird Count, but they are unusual here in the winter.

I've read, as you may have, that songbird populations are in a deep decline across the globe. So, as the first snows fell and the temperature dropped, I felt a sense of growing concern for these sidetracked visitors. Each morning I refilled the feeder for the chickadees and nuthatches, and scattered extra on the ground for the five watchful thrushes. And, while I was away in Anchorage, I coaxed my husband and, after he drove up to join me, my neighbor Kate, into trudging up the hill from the house to feed them.

January's deep cold was reminiscent of bygone winters, and I reflected on that as I trundled my friend outside in her wheelchair on a -17-degree day. But in fact, at the beginning of the month, local headlines read "Anchorage breaks all-time December record-high temperatures." On December 9th the high was a record-shattering 51 degrees, and the low that night was 35 degrees. That's three degrees above the critical tipping point between freeze and thaw. Such above-freezing weather prompted optimistic birds, like my thrushes, to remain.

At first, after my return, there were no birds around the feeder and I feared that they had gone too long without food, or the temperatures had dipped too low. But, within the day, word got out and all five thrushes have returned, along with the tenacious chickadees and acrobatic nuthatch. They burst out of the spruce trees like mythical creatures, brilliant and bold in the low light.

I was back at the Homer Food Pantry (held in the United Methodist Church each Monday afternoon) in early February. At the end of a busy afternoon, I queried the coordinator, Dennis Weidler (the one paid person among the many volunteers who dedicate hours each week procuring and dispensing food) about the number of people who use this service to help stretch tiny paychecks or social security benefits. He estimated that between 140 and 180 families, or five to six hundred individuals, benefit from the foodbank each week. Additionally, you can add another two hundred people on the weeks when food is transported across Kachemak Bay to the communities there. Given Homer's population of 5,700 within the city boundaries, that means approximately one in ten people in the Homer area are food poor. This distresses me, yet I'm proud of Homer's "can-do attitude" when it comes to helping each other out.

Homer Food Pantry volunteers make stops around town all week, every week, to pick up flats of slightly blemished peppers, tomatoes, zucchini, and much more at Safeway and Save U More. While a grant pays for butter and milk, and an array of canned goods, many businesses and individuals in the community donate day-old bagels and bread, moose and fish and garden surplus to feed the people who walk through the doors – moms with dreadlocks, veterans in wheelchairs, retired folks, all thankful to reach for the commodities at hand.

If you, like me, feel compelled to give food as a small remedy, I encourage that impulse. Apply food liberally as needed. Feed the birds, plant an extra bed of carrots for the Food Pantry, or tend to a friend.

"For it is in giving that we receive." St. Francis of Assisi





Split Pea Soup With Spring Garden Vegetables Recipe

Posted on [March 26, 2011](#) by [thegreenlifefarm](#)

I like to make this hardy soup for lunch after working outside during these cold, early, spring, days. Only the hardiest plants like kale and leeks have survived in the garden over the winter and they taste strong and sweet.

250 ml (1 cup) split peas
750 ml (3 cups) water
30 ml (2 T) ground turmeric
300 ml (1 -1/4 cup) chopped leeks
50 ml (1/4 cup) oil
15 ml (1 T) ground cumin
15 ml (1 T) ground coriander
15 ml (1 T) ground allspice
4 clove spikes
500 ml (2 cups) chopped kale
salt to taste

Combine split peas, water & turmeric in a pot. Bring to a boil. Turn the heat down. Simmer for 20 minutes. Set aside. In a skillet heat oil until rippling. Add leeks and fry for 5 minutes. Add cumin, coriander, allspice and cloves and cook for 1 more minute. Pour leeks and spiced oil into the soup pot. Add water if necessary. Add the kale and cook 5 more minutes. If you have any leftovers so much the better!

In Memory of John (Jack) Regan

Jack Regan was born June 26, 1945 and passed away on November 27, 2019. He received his medical degree from the University of Minnesota and practiced medicine in Boston, Minneapolis and the U.S Army Medical Corps in Germany before moving to Anchorage in 2002. He retired in 2007 and moved to Homer with his wife Jane. His three daughters live in California, Florida and near Anchorage with their families

Jack served as President of the Homer Garden Club for several years, up until the spring of 2014. He was an avid gardener. He loved growing grapes in his high tunnel and making wine. Several times I was the fortunate recipient of the largest, most beautiful Peace roses I have ever seen, as well as other varieties, all grown in his greenhouse.

He will be missed by all his many friends, neighbors and loved ones. There will be a memorial walk to honor him at the Pratt Museum on May 23rd.



The meeting was called to order by President Kathy Dube, at 2:00PM. Kathy explained the meeting would be in a unique order today, the guest speaker, Linda Gorman, will precede our usual Club business updates. This is due to many members who requested to leave early to attend the Memorial service for Gary Thomas.

Kathy then introduced the day's speaker, Linda Gorman who will educate all on beekeeping. Linda, who owns Homer Girls Honey, explained how she began raising honeybees, the many species of bees, various aspects and dangers (at least to her husband) of collecting honey. Great slides highlighted her many examples. For those interested in beginning bee raising she provided a general estimate of \$300 for equipment (hoods, smokers, clothing) and then an additional \$300 for the bees. She has begun a Facebook group where folks can access local information and get answers about beekeeping - Homer Area Beekeeper Assoc. She also has her own Facebook page, Homer Girls Honey.

Kathy then called for an abbreviated meeting on Club business. The next general club meeting will be held on Feb 16 at 2pm at the same location.

Louise Ashmun, treasurer, reported that there is currently just shy of \$21K in the club's accounts. The Club has an excess of money (yahoo) and the Board of Directors need help to develop some scholarships for students wishing to pursue 'garden related careers. Please let one of us know your ideas. The Club will also support the Farmers Market again this year by providing the money for the guest chefs who demonstrate their cooking at 8

of the Markets this year.

Francie Roberts reported on our 14th annual Gardeners' Weekend that currently being planned. There have been 4 gardens confirmed for the tours, but the committee is still seeking another garden. She reported that, new this year, the Tour will have a theme: 'Gardens as restful places of healing'. The committee has also provided three gardens that are 'connectible' and can be accessed by walking from one to another, but parking will also be available.

Data base manager, Barbara Kennedy, reported that membership currently 89 and she has list of those members who has not yet renewed so people can check with her about their status and/or give dues to Louise, club Treasurer.

Linda Gorman then lead an informative Q&A after the business meeting for those beekeepers with questions.

Summary of presentation by Linda Gorman aka Honey Lady, Bee Queen

Linda has been hooked on bees since 2006 and is currently president of Homer Area Beekeeping Association that has a website and a facebook page, offers mentors and meets annually at the Methodist Church.

"Homer Girls Honey" can also be found on Facebook

Interesting Facts:

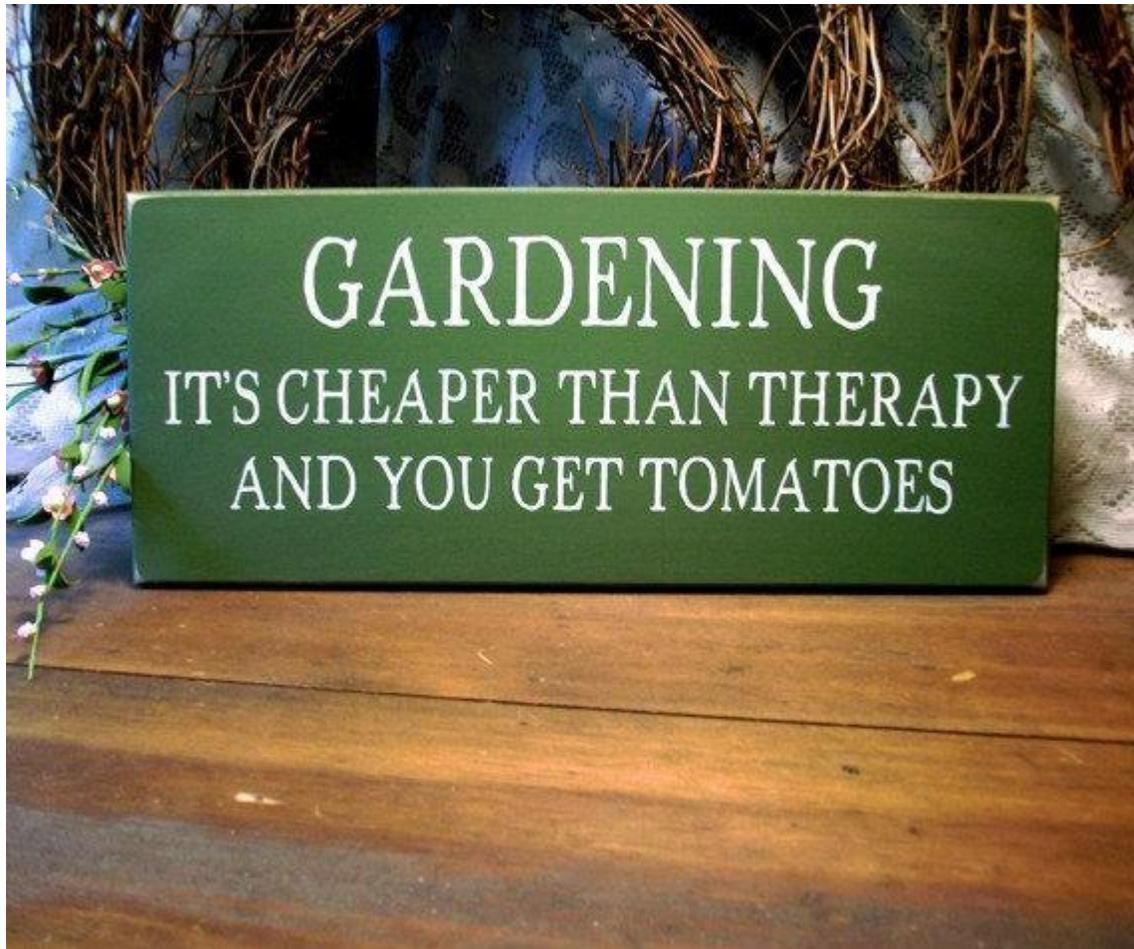
- There are over 4,000 species of bees
- They are threatened by floods, fires, mites, the Chinese Wasp (now present in WA State), Almond Orchards and Bears
- Also threatened by ROUND-

UP. Ban that stuff!

- 1/3 of our food is pollinated by bees
- The average bee lives only 6 – 8 weeks
- Honey bees have a brain the size of a sesame seed, but VERY dense, hence very intelligent
- They have 2 stomachs, 5 eyes and an impressive tongue for sucking, cutting and picking
- Last year there were close to 100 known bee keepers in Homer with an estimated 12 million bees
- The male drones are pretty much useless, but the busy female worker bee may produce 1 ½ teaspoons of honey in her lifetime
- Stoked Honey offers winter storage in a temperature and humidity controlled connexion
- The most popular species for Homer bee keepers
 - Carnolian – They fly over a 3 mile radius, handle the cold and wet, winter over well but tend to swarm
 - Buckfast – Fly in a 1 mile radius from 'home', very prolific producers but not as 'tough'

Linda showed us many slides and covered other topics such as purchasing of bees, feeding, life cycles, swarming & the harvesting of honey.

She welcomes queries and is most willing to share her wealth of knowledge and practical experience.



*****Our Membership Year is October 1st to September 30th*****

THE HOMER GARDEN CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

Name _____ Phone # _____

You will receive the newsletter by E-Mail. This saves us printing and postage costs.
Plus, the E-mailed version is in fabulous color!

E-Mail Address _____

How would you like to participate in the Garden Club *this Membership Year?*

(please check any activities in which you would like to help)

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

Suggestions for future Topics or Speakers _____

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

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