

# Homer Garden Club

## Newsletter

May 2021

The next HGC meeting is a Zoom meeting on **May 16** at 2:00..

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### May 16 Zoom meeting will feature Don McNamara from Oceanside Farms and Saskia Esslinger

Don McNamara (a.k.a. Iceman) is the co-owner of Oceanside Farms along with his sweet wife, Donna Rae Faulkner. Oceanside Farms is located 5.2 miles out East End Road where they have a roadside Farmstand. They raise a wide variety of vegetables, fruits, berries, and some charming chickens (some egg layers and some pasture raised broilers), ducks and Thanksgiving turkeys! They grow all their produce and 9 varieties of Alaska Certified Seed Potatoes without the use of synthetically based chemicals, pesticides, fungicides, or fertilizers. It's all about soil biology to them! They are market gardeners and use 10 high tunnels also in outdoor beds. They have over 100 fruit trees, wine grapes, delicious spring asparagus. Lots of rhubarb and a custom

grinder juicer that works on apples too! Don is a master composter and incorporates biochar and (Korean) Natural Farming recipes in the mix. They have backgrounds in both construction and education and have been working with KALI (the Kodiak Archipelago



(Continued on page 2)

**DIRECTIONS** for accessing the May 16 zoom meeting are on page 3

## Monthly Treasurer Report for April 2021

### Income

Membership	\$105.00	
Ad Revenue in Newsletter	\$120.00	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b><u>\$225.00</u></b>

### Expenses

Storage Unit annual rent	\$395.00	
Web page domain license	\$24.85	
Software annual license	\$72.09	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b><u>\$491.94</u></b>

Checking Beginning Balance 04/01/2021	\$	<b>3,652.90</b>
Income	\$	<b>225.00</b>
Expenses	\$	<b>491.94</b>
Interest	\$	<b>0.15</b>
Ending Balance 04/30/2021	\$	<b>3,386.11</b>
Money Market Beginning Balance 04/01/2021	\$	<b>15,060.45</b>
Interest	\$	<b>1.24</b>
Money Market Ending Balance 04/30/2021	\$	<b>15,061.69</b>
<b>Total Ending Balance 04/30/2021</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b><u>18,447.80</u></b>

*(May Meeting  
Continued from page 1)*

Leadership Institute) and residents of villages on Kodiak Island since 2015 to create community market farms with high tunnels and hydroponics for nutrition and sustainability in six tribal villages and are excited about their new Alutiiq Grown logo. The progress that the small farms have made in a few short years is FANTASTIC!

Today's topic will be irrigation. Water is the most important nutrient for your plants - before fertilizer. Water safety! What type of watering system you use is a decision you will need to make based on the crops you grow, the water supply available to you, the soils and slopes in your field. It will depend on how much you are willing to invest initially, how much labor you have

available, and how much time you want to spend managing the system. We will discuss drip irrigation systems, where to get parts and how much you may need, how to install them, and how to use venturi siphons for fertigation.

\*\*\*\*

Saskia Esslinger is growing a garden revolution by teaching people how to nurture their soil, bodies, and soul in the garden.

She teaches gardening and permaculture to students around the world through her business, Teach Gardening. She is a certified permaculture designer and teacher, and has been teaching gardening for 20 years. She holds a B.S. in Environmental Science and a M.S. in Regenerative Entrepreneurship.

A lifelong gardener born in Alaska, she has worked on organic farms in upstate New York, developed a children's gardening program in Austin, Texas, and volunteered with Permaculture projects around the world.

Saskia is a full-time single homeschooling mama to two adventurous boys who help her grow, forage, and process a significant portion of their own food in Homer. She once went an entire year eating only Alaskan food, much of which she grew herself.

Are you interested in finding out how you can water your garden less? In permaculture we strive to make our gardens more robust and independent by working with nature. This workshop will cover how we can make best use of the water that does get to our gardens so that it is available to our plants.

# MAY 16 ZOOM MEETING

by Kathy Dube

## May Garden Club Meeting will be via Zoom!

Please join us for the May Garden Club Meeting via Zoom. It's easy and these have been very successful the past few months. Click on the link below – we will also send out an e-mail with the link the week before the meeting. The meeting is open to all and we are planning to record the session and make the recording available to members in case you miss it.

Join our scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Homer Garden Club Meeting

Time: May 16, 2021 02:00 PM Alaska

Join Zoom Meeting by clicking on: <https://zoom.us/j/98855805129?pwd=bXZCb1RRdG9aRExVMmhHNHBsSmhvZz09>

Or go to Zoom.com and enter the following information:

Meeting ID: 988 5580 5129

Passcode: 269770

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## Gardeners' (Non) Weekend News

by Francie Roberts

As many members know, the traditional Gardener's Weekend event has been postponed.

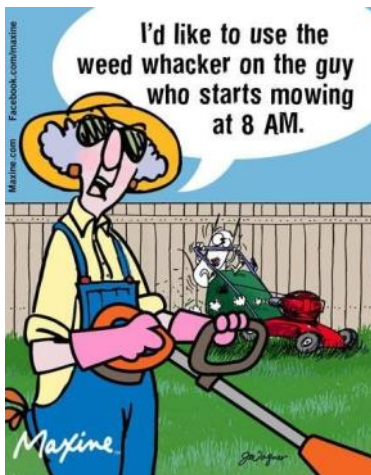
Several garden owners were not keen to have large crowds in their yards this summer.

In lieu of Gardener's Weekend, a new event has been scheduled we're calling, **Community Gardens—Sharing Ideas**. This will be a smaller event open to Homer Garden Club members only. The dates are **Thursday July 8th and**

**22nd, from 3 PM to 6 PM.**

Garden owners have graciously opened their yards to share their "works in progress". Each gardener has specific items they want to share with you in their yard. The first event will be three city gardens in the Mountain View—Elderberry neighborhood. The second event will be three gardens in the Kachemak City area. Maps will be emailed to ticket holders or they can be arranged to be picked up.

Members can purchase tickets that will cost \$10 and cover both Community Gardens visitation days. Tickets can be purchased at the upcoming Plant Sale. They can also be purchased by sending a \$10 check to Homer Garden Club (PO Box 2833, Homer, AK 99603) with "Community Gardens" in the memo line. Questions? Contact Louise Ashmun by email ([leashmun@gmail.com](mailto:leashmun@gmail.com)) or phone ([907 299 6360](tel:907-299-6360)).



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## Homer Garden Club Annual Plant Sale is back! Saturday, May 22, 2021 Viewing at 10 am, Sale begins at 11 sharp!

The annual HGC plant sale will be a combined sale with the Pratt Museum as individual fundraisers for both the Pratt and HGC.

Both sales are open to the public and everyone is invited. Location: Homer Chamber of Commerce's parking lot, 201 Sterling Hwy next to Fat Olives.

### Homer Garden Club Plant Sale

Once again, our Spring Plant Sale includes a wide variety of perennials and annuals donated from our members' gardens. Herbs, rhubarb, berry bushes, ground cover, tomatoes, flowers and more. They are grouped by category, making it easy to choose plants proven perfect for your Homer garden.



### Pratt Museum Plant Sale



We will offer a profusion of wildflowers, including forget-me-nots and Iceland poppies, as well as homestead favorites such as Swedish black currants and local Homestead strawberries. We will also have some beloved Sitka Roses for sale.

You can find us adjacent to the Homer Garden Club Plant Sale, in the Homer Chamber of Commerce parking lot on May 22, with sales starting at 11am.



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## It Begins With A Seed Catalog

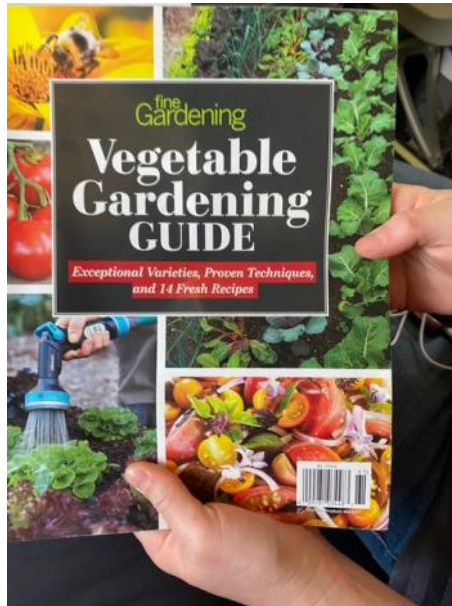
by Jessica Shepherd

Pursuing a passion for vegetable gardening, even on a small scale, comes with entry into an exclusive club – one where age, skin tone, and gender are inconsequential to one's membership. Once you enter into that fellowship, friendships come easily.

In mid-April, I was on an Alaska Airlines flight from Portland to Tucson for a family visit. Given the pandemic, I'd hoped for a row of seats to myself, or at least an empty middle seat between me and the person on the aisle. No such luck. The plane was completely full, and I, masked up, tried to make myself small next to the window. As is my way, I screwed earplugs into my ears and cracked open a book with no plan of engaging in conversation with my seat partners.

Soon after takeoff, the young woman in the middle seat pulled out a thick, colorful magazine and began reading intently, turning each page with a gentle reverence. I couldn't help but notice the colorful illustra-

tions of tidy garden beds resplendent with tempting varieties of basil, gorgeous tomato plants, and wooly herbs. I wanted to wrest the magazine from her and read it for myself.



“Are you a gardener?” I asked her over the roar of the plane's engine,

pulling the earplugs from my ears. “Yes. Are you?” she asked, holding her place in the magazine with a slim finger and turning to me.

And so began a conversation that made the time in the air fly by (no pun intended). It turns out she and her husband had recently purchased a house with land near Portland and already, so early in the season, they had built up beds, planted crops of spinach, lettuce, and radishes, and were looking ahead to sun-hungry crops. I wanted to know everything about her garden and found myself envious at the length of their growing season, (my garden in Homer was still under three feet of snow).

It quickly became apparent that this wasn't some flight of fancy for my new friend. She'd been bitten hard by the gardening bug. “I feel like this is something I want to do for the rest of my life.” She told me earnestly. “We're hoping to make a

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Cookie's Country Greenhouse

2340 East End Road, Homer, AK 99603 — 235-8915, 399-8915 or 399-0128 (Ron)

We carry vegetable starts, seed tapes and seed potatoes. We have lots of beautiful new flowers, including good old reliable pansies, lobelia and marigolds, as well as ProMix, lime, Fishy Peat compost, landscape bark, etc., and red wiggler worms.



We accept credit cards and gift certificates.

If you want to come in and browse just maintain your 6-ft. distance—please.

**Monday through Saturday,  
from 9:00 to 6:00**

*(It Begins with a Seed Catalog  
Continued from page 6)*

business out of this.” I could see dreams of fruit trees and long tidy rows of vegetables destined for the farmer’s market in her far-off expression.

I shared some of my gardening history with her – the challenges of growing atop permafrost in Fairbanks and the maritime winds in Homer. I encouraged her to start small but dream big, and described the many successful market gardens here in Alaska. We talked about compost and soil amendments and our favorite seed cata-

logs (Baker Creek Heirloom for her, High Mowing for me). By the time the plane landed, it was clear we were kindred souls.

While I never got her name, we wished each other well and happy gardening. As I pulled my roller bag through the airport, I reflected happily on a generation of young people eager to get dirt under their nails and draw their very substance from their back yard. In these times of social distancing and economic uncertainty, I took comfort in knowing that something as basic and essential as a passion for gardening could make a difference.

I encourage my fellow gardeners, as I have in years past, to share your knowledge and passion with your kids and grandkids. Short of that, hire the kid next door to help you turn over a square of lawn before planting potatoes and sprinkling carrot seeds. Studies show that the younger kids are when introduced to gardening, the more likely they are to make it part of their adult lives. Chances are that you, like me, poked your first seeds into the soil under the guidance of a parent or grandparent. What a lovely legacy to pass on.

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### GARDENING STORIES

Gardening is the greatest natural relief for my anxiety and depression. I am happiest when I am up to my elbows in dirt, rearranging one of my gardens, pulling up rocks and landscaping, or even weeding. Nothing makes me happier than the clearance plants at Lowe's. All of my gardens are practically made up of only half-dead plants I got for a few bucks. All they needed was a little love and attention to bloom...kinda like people!

—[kristyleehochenbergerw](#)

It gives you a sense of wonder. To grow plants is to give life. It keeps you busy with a purpose, shows you how to care, be gentle. and wait. It reminds you to be one with the earth, to give back what you take. It is an amazing feeling of accomplishment. Seeing sunflowers grow to be six to eight feet tall and notice how bees do their work is AWESOME!

—[marquezamayrani93](#)



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For more information email [kenaipeninsula.invasives@gmail.com](mailto:kenaipeninsula.invasives@gmail.com) or call (907)235-8177 ext.5



**Homer Soil & Water**  
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Richard Webb, Bugwood.org

Tom DeGomez, Bugwood.org

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