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Watch for the September newsletter which will have information on the planning of the Harvest Dinner, tentatively scheduled for September 18

June 2022

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Watch for the September newsletter for information about the Harvest Dinner tentatively scheduled for September 18.

Programs for 2022—2023

The Program committee completed this season with Yarrow's presentation on Food Preservation. Big thanks to Yarrow for his informative talk, held in person (finally!) at the Aspen Hotel, which included root cellar construction and fermentation.

We are open to suggestions from the membership as to presenters or topics you may wish to hear about in the future. You can email Jan - janpeyton73@gmail.com or Sally - sallyjcoleman@gmail.com to give us your suggestions. We welcome any and all ideas you may have.

**This is the last newsletter until September.
Have a wonderful summer!**



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Election of Officers

It's that time of year again to elect officers for the Homer Garden Club Board. If you would like to be on the Board, let one of the officers know and you will be put on ballot. The current officers are listed on page one, left side, along with their contact information. Remember: This is your club and you have a right to help guide it.

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Homer Garden Club Treasurer Report May 2022

Income

| | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Gardener's Weekend Tickets | \$570.00 |
| Plant Sale | \$2,690.25 |
| Aprons/Tshirt sales | \$80.00 |
| Newsletter Ad revenue | \$240.00 |
| Book Sales | \$143.88 |
| Membership | \$140.00 |

Total Income **\$3,864.13**

Expenses

| | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Speaker Honorarium | \$100.00 |
| Program Venue | \$155.00 |
| Gardener's Weekend | \$376.65 |
| Plant Sale | \$216.53 |
| Donations (Peony Festival) | \$300.00 |
| Baycrest Garden | \$219.00 |
| Storage Unit Rent | \$395.00 |
| Copying/Postage | \$47.80 |
| Banking | \$19.98 |

Total Expenses **\$1,829.96**

| | | |
|---|----|---------------------|
| Checking Beginning Balance 05/01/2022 | \$ | 7,259.19 |
| Income | \$ | 3,864.13 |
| Expenses | \$ | 1,829.96 |
| Interest | \$ | <u>0.33</u> |
| Ending Balance 05/31/2022 | \$ | 9,293.69 |
| Money Market Beginning Balance 05/01/2022 | \$ | 15,076.77 |
| Interest | \$ | <u>1.28</u> |
| Money Market Ending Balance 05/31/2022 | \$ | 15,078.05 |
| Total Ending Balance 05/31/2022 | | \$ 24,371.74 |

HOMER GARDEN CLUB PLANT SALE

The Homer Garden Club Plant Sale was a rousing success thanks to all the volunteers and leadership of Chairperson Julie Parizek. Thanks also go out to Cookie's Country Greenhouse and Baycrest Gardens for their generous donations, as well as the local gardeners who contributed plants from their own gardens.

As noted in the above Treasurer's Report, sales totaled \$2690.25, plus the sale of books, aprons and t-shirts.

Gardener's Weekend is Back!

GARDENS FOR THE SOUL: spaces of healing and inspiration

On **July 17th**, the Garden Tour will feature six beautiful Homer area gardens. The gardens will be open from 11:00 AM until 5:00 PM. The cost is \$15 for viewing the gardens. Tickets can be purchased at the **Homer Bookstore**. No credit cards will be accepted, just cash or checks please.

There is a great deal of diversity in the gardens this year. One is a large innovative commercial garden, another garden full of native plants and some pay re-

membrance to a family member. Another garden at higher elevation combines art and gardening. Each garden reflects the personality of the owners and will give the visitor many ideas for their gardens. Creekside visits are common on this tour and flowers abound.

We are so pleased to offer a walking tour for four of the featured gardens. The trail is about 1.3 miles one way and the map with parking spots delineated is included with the ticket purchase. These four gardens are in the downtown Homer area. If you do not wish to walk, parking is available at all of these locations.

Questions call Francie at 907-299-5050 or Susan 907-299-6126. For ticket issues call Louise at 907-299-6360.



Summer Garden Share

On **July 10th**, two members of the Homer Garden Club will be opening their gardens to members only from 2:00 - 5:00 PM. These two gardens are just beautiful large flower and vegetable gardens at one parking location. The tickets are **free** to members of Homer Garden Club, limited to 100 tickets. If you want a ticket to the Summer Garden Share, email 2013gardenclub@gmail.com and Louise will inform you how to get your ticket.

Volunteers Needed!

The Gardener's Weekend Committee still needs garden hostesses for the garden tour on July 17th. The hostess would commit to a 3 hour time period hosting at one of the gardens. The hostess is also invited to the Afterparty with a guest at 6PM that evening to thank them for their help. Contact Francie (907 299 5050) or Susan (907 299 6126) to volunteer.



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- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
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Plant This, Not That

by Deborah Kornblut and Sabrina

It's never too early to start thinking about what to plant in your garden, yard, or apartment balcony. You might have a specific plant in mind, whether it's something to harvest later in the season or a vibrant flower to bring a splash of color into your outdoor space. Maybe you're willing to buy a seed mix and just see what happens.

But have you considered if what you're planting helps or hurts your neighborhood wildlife? Is it an invasive species? An invasive plant is one that is likely to outcompete the plants growing around it, escape beyond its designated space, and may cause damage in terms of the environment, economy, or even human health. Once an invasive plant is introduced, it's increasingly difficult to remove. Gardening is a common path for invasive plants to be introduced to Alaska.

On the other hand, you can choose a plant that has evolved with Alaska's other flora and fauna. Choosing to grow a native plant benefits the insects that have lived with these flowers for generations, feeding on their pollen and nectar. Native plants also feed animals and provide shelter and nesting for birds and insects.

Here are five plants to avoid and the beautiful alternatives that you can plant instead:

1) You say chokecherry, I say serviceberry

Chokecherry trees are also commonly referred to as European bird cherry and Mayday trees. These trees are currently found in Anchorage, Homer, Hope, and

PLANT THIS



Serviceberry
(*Amelanchier alnifolia*
or *A. florida*)



NOT THAT



Chokecherry
(*Prunus padus* or
Prunus virginiana)



Talkeetna. In fact, we are talking about two related, but different, species: *Prunus padus* and *Prunus virginiana*. Both trees grow quickly, shade out surrounding vegetation and reduce the quality of food available for moose. In bloom, chokecherries have aromatic white flowers that eventually turn into small black fruit. These berries may be edible to humans but can be toxic to moose and have even led to moose deaths.

You say chokecherry, I say serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia* or *A. florida*). Although not technically a tree like chokecherry, this shrub can grow up to 12 feet tall with delicate white flowers. In the fall it grows abundant sweet berries, and the leaves turn vibrant colors. Plant this in your garden and you provide the service of feeding the neighborhood birds. Enjoy watching yellow warblers, bohemian waxwings, and other songbirds flock to your garden for food. You can also eat these berries,

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Cookie's Country Greenhouse

2340 East End Road, Homer, AK 99603
907-399-8915 (Cookie) or 907-399-0128 (Ron)

We carry vegetable starts and seed potatoes. We have lots of beautiful new flowers, including pansies, lobelia, marigolds and hanging baskets, as well as ProMix, Fishy Peat compost, landscape bark and red wiggler worms.



We accept credit cards and gift certificates.

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

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which can be dried, jammed, or turned into pies.

2) Out with orange hawkweed, in with arnicas



Like other plants on this list, orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) was brought to Alaska as an ornamental plant.

The stems of orange hawkweed are mostly leafless, but its bright orange flowers grow in clusters of 5–30 which may make you think that this plant will bring a welcome splash of color to your garden. Unfortunately, orange hawkweed creates very dense mats that release a chemical, preventing other plants from growing and decreasing food availability for other animals like pollinators or grazing animals.

Mowing orange hawkweed only promotes its growth. Orange hawkweed has a much more Alaska-friendly

cousin. Arnica! Arnica is a flowering plant in the daisy family (Asteraceae), just like orange hawkweed. This means they share the same distinct sunflower-shaped bloom. In Alaska there are many types of arnicas (*Arnica* spp.). They vary based on the region they grow, from meadows to the alpine. Yet they all produce rich yellow blooms which may light up your garden from June to August.

3) Trade white sweetclover for goatsbeard



You've probably seen white sweetclover (*Melilotus albus*) growing along roadsides and other places with human activity. At first glance, this may seem like a useful plant to keep around because it adds nutrients to the soil, and its aromatic white flowers are attractive to pollinators.

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However, a single white sweetclover can produce up to 350,000 seeds which can remain viable for up to 81 years. Its abundant seed production allows white sweetclover to spread rapidly and persist despite removal efforts. White sweetclover changes soil chemistry which affects what else can grow in the area. This invasive plant also grows up to 6 feet tall, shading out surrounding plants. These traits make white sweetclover a powerful competitor for the resources native plants depend on.

Thus, we suggest the dashing goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*), a tall plant with floofy, cream-colored flowers that bloom in July. These blooms attract many pollinators such as butterflies, bees, and flower flies. Goatsbeard transplants well into moist, rich soils and will come back year after year without the side effects of white sweetclover.

4) Goodbye bird vetch, hello alpine sweetvetch



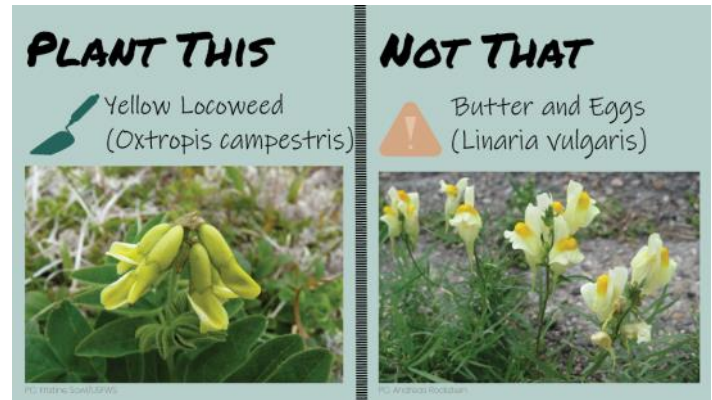
Next on our “don’t plant” list is bird vetch (*Vicia cracca*). Known for its bluish-purple flowers, we often find bird vetch growing in grassy areas alongside trails, roadways, and sometimes intentionally propagated in somebody’s yard. But watch out, bird vetch has a history of escaping into the wild, spreading quickly, and taking over! Unlike other climbing plants in Alaska, bird vetch has distinct stems and tendrils that enable it to climb any upright object, whether that be a fence, a tree such as an alder or willow, or your house. Like white sweetclover, bird vetch flowers will compete with native plants for pollinators and change soil conditions.

There is an equally attractive native alternative to bird vetch that comes without the consequences. Goodbye bird vetch, hello alpine sweetvetch (*Hedysarum alpinum*). Alpine sweetvetch and bird vetch are both in the pea family, so they share the same beautifully shaped flowers.

Alpine sweetvetch supports many Alaskan animals:

from the birds that nest in its greenery to the bears and sheep who dig up and eat its starchy roots. Alpine sweetvetch is also collected and eaten by Yup’ik, Iñupiaq and Dena’ina Athabaskan peoples. The many names of alpine sweetvetch include Marralag or Masru (Yup’ik), Masu (Iñupiaq), and K’t’ila (Dena’ina).

5) Swap butter and eggs for yellow locoweed



While the name might sound tasty, butter and eggs (*Linaria vulgaris*) is a very harmful plant to keep around. Sometimes known as toadflax or wild snapdragons, butter and eggs is uniquely identifiable in Alaska because it has a yellow flower with an orange throat. This aggressive plant finds a spot for itself wherever the land is disturbed, but then easily moves over into neighboring undisturbed areas. Once introduced, butter and eggs will compete for moisture in the soil and spread to create very dense colonies.

Swap butter and eggs for yellow locoweed (*Oxtropis campestris*) in this year’s garden recipe. Yellow locoweed, or yellow oxytrope, grows low to the ground with grayish green, hairy leaves. When it blooms in late May and June, it produces small yellow pea-shaped flowers which attract many different types of bees.

Though we’re running with this food metaphor, neither of these species should be eaten. Yellow locoweed is named for the known toxin it contains and can cause grazing cattle to walk with an uneven gait.

Conclusion

When selecting plants for your garden be aware that many plants that look beautiful can cause a lot of damage. Check your “wildflower seed mixes” and make sure they are wild to Alaska. Choose native plants that are local to your area and your garden and yard will benefit the living things around you. You can be a steward for the lands we all depend on by keeping in mind the phrase “Don’t plant a problem.” Get to

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know what you are planting and learn more with these additional resources:

- Garden with pollinators in mind! Use these pollinator garden recipe cards.
- Don't plant a problem! Look for it here first. •
- If you find an invasive species, please report it to 1-877-INVASIV

This article, edited slightly for length from the original article published on Medium, was compiled by Deborah Kornblut, Regional Invasive Species Outreach Coordinator, and Sabrina Farmer, Ecological Services Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



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