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Happy
Thanksgiving!

The next Homer Garden Club meeting will be November 22, 2:00 pm, at the Bidarka Inn, downstairs.

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Homer Garden Club Newsletter



November
2015



November 22 Meeting to Feature Kyra Wagner's Presentation on Bees

Kyra Wagner offers our November 22 meeting a presentation about our favorite pollinators: bees. She will go over some common bee lore, other pollinators, and the basics of owning a hive. With so much fascinating detail to delve into, get ready to be mystified and inspired. Though honeybees are not native to Alaska, a hive can be started, and there is support from a surprisingly large group of folks already raising them in our area.

Kyra originally studied bees as her Peace Corps assignment in South America. The words of her trainer still ring true:

"Bees are simple creatures that always follow the rules. To successfully raise bees you only need to know their rules. The trick lies in the fact that there are millions of rules." - Juan Kava (John Bee)

Using almost 20 years of experience with bees from the tropics to Alaska, Kyra will entice you to join her appreciation with this wonderful representation of community, productivity, and mystery.





Treasurer's Report

by Peggy Pittman, Treasurer

OCTOBER, 2015

Income

Membership	\$ 430.00	
Return of Harvest Dinner room deposit check	75.00	
Total Income		<u>\$ 505.00</u>

Expenses

Meeting		
Venue	150.00	
Hospitality	26.07	
	\$ 176.07	
Baycrest Garden	506.49	
Administrative		
Stamps	9.80	
	9.80	
Total Expenses		<u>\$ 692.36</u>

Beginning Balance 10/1/15	\$ 9,558.21
Income	505.00
Expenses	<u>(682.56)</u>
Ending Balance 10/31/15	<u>\$ 9,380.65</u>

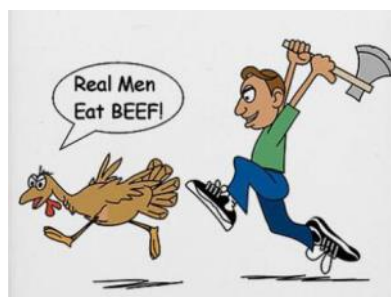


"For once we're going to have a happy family get-together. I'm, stuffing the turkey with Prozac."

© WAZZ ANDERSON



"It's a little overdone, so you have your choice of dark meat, or very dark meat."



"You're in charge of Homeland Security . . . do something ."



How Eve Seduced Adam

by Jessica Shepherd

We gardeners use the tools we have at our disposal when courting the object of our desire. I have left gifts of freshly pulled carrots on the doorstep of a neighbor I was interested in, and nonchalantly offered up the most perfect tomato of the year when he stood at my garden gate. Upon reflection, the tale of courtship and produce go way back, and began something like this...

How Eve Seduced Adam.

It was autumn, of course. The time of riotous colors in the garden. Eve, who was a consummate gardener, had planted in the green flush of early spring, and bent to her weeding in the heat of the summer, her lean thighs tan from the sun, her bare back glistening where a mist of sweat lay along her spine. As she worked she became aware of someone new in the neighborhood. He cleared land and burned brush, and all summer she watched him go about his business of building a new house.

Eve tended and pinched and watered, and watched Adam furtively, her head down, so that she saw him through her lashes. She bent to her chores, her body swaying with the tasks at hand, and her skin cooled by the wind that shook the leaves and lifted her hair away from her face. She ached at night from the work that a large garden required, and from some unnamed desire.

As fall approached, the colors in the garden heightened. The Famosa Cabbage was big and frilly and blue-green. The long thick Bolero Carrots that she washed in the rain barrel were the orange of the late summer sun as it sank into the sea. The Bull's Blood Beets stained her fingertips a deep crimson when she cut into them. And the tomatoes grew in a satisfying

tangle of reds, russets, golds and yellows with names like Black Cherry, Sun Gold, Cherokee Purple, and Brandywine. As she put up the harvest, she watched Adam as he stretched after fitting a log into place, his sinewed muscles taunt and his blue-black hair grown long. She thought she caught him watching her, but he turned away too fast for her to be sure. She left a handful of silvery green Sugar Snap Peas by the well where he went to drink, and smiled to herself when, later, they were gone.

As Adam hefted the roof beams up to his shoulder, scrapped and bruised from the work, and then up to the header beam of the house, Eve cut the first Canary Yellow Cantaloupe from the garden and approached Adam tentatively. Did he have a knife, she queried, to cut into the sweet, white-fleshed melon? He did, and slid it through the rind of the melon, exposing its tender insides and the seeds it contained. She offered him a wedge, but he turned shy, and shook his head no.

Eve grew determined as she ate the melon, its juices dripping down her chin. She cast around for something else that might prove tempting. The corn was just now ripe, and she thrust ears of Silver Queen at him. He accepted hesitantly, but set them aside to drive home the fasteners that would hold the roof joists in place. The day cooled into night, and Eve gathered her harvest basket, overflowing with its crisp green Gherkin Cucumbers, Rosa Bianca Eggplants, and Yellow Crookneck Squash and went home to cook dinner, alone.

In the light of the fire that night she watched a wreathing, snakelike flame, and she breathed slowly and deeply, letting her mind quiet. And there, in that stillness, an image came to her.

The next morning her bare feet left perfect imprints in the first frost of the year as she set out to the orchard. She strode past the pear trees, loaded with fine offerings of Green Anjou and freckled Forelle, and passed up the plum trees, though they were loaded with the fruits of the firm red Satsuma, the dark yellow Mirabelle, and the Greengage. She turned away from the young fig trees, and even the tempting orbs of the red-fleshed French Peach. It was not until she reached the apple trees that she stopped and reached up. Her hand closed around a perfect Pippin, but she paused. and turned toward the red-green of a Northern Spy, and hesitated again. And then she saw the Grimes golden. Its crisp, yellow flesh would be tender, and its taste would be aromatic and distinctive. She grasped it, twisted, and the apple came free in her hand.

Back at the well she washed the fruit in the icy water and when she looked up from her task, Adam stood before her, the toes of his own bare feet curled in response to the cold morning, and the goose flesh standing up on his arms and his chest. She smiled at him and he smiled back, looking directly into her eyes. She held out the fruit to him and he took it and, without hesitation, he bit into it. His eyes widened in surprise, and then a look of understanding lit his face. And it was good.





October Minutes

by Brenda Adams, Recording Secretary

HGC Member Minutes
October 25th, 2015

President Francie Roberts opened the meeting at 2:10 pm. She asked first time attendees to stand and introduce themselves. There were more than 10 folks!

Francie led a brief discussion of what was still blooming and growing in members' gardens. She noted that the Recording Secretary's report was published in the newsletter.

Treasurer, Peggy Pitman, reported \$9,386.72 in the treasury.

Recording Secretary, Brenda Adams introduced the fiscal year 2016 officers and had each stand so new members would know who each is.

As Gardeners' Weekend Co-Chair, she also announced the 2016 event will be held on Saturday, July 30th and Sunday, July 31st next year, a week earlier than has been the case. The committee moved the date forward in hopes of avoiding a date conflict with Salmonstock. She also announced that Tracy DiSabato-Aust will present two talks on Saturday, July 30th, at the college. Topics will be "The Well-Designed Mixed Border" and "The Art of Pruning Perennials," a topic on which we've never had a presentation!

Jan Payton, Chair of the Baycrest Garden Committee in 2015, gave a brief report stating there are concerns the city is not watering enough and that Beth would like us to add more mulch to better hold the moisture the garden does receive.

Hospitality Secretary, Jeanette Lawson, reported on the Harvest

dinner, saying she thought it was fabulous.

Co-Vice President Tony Burgess announced Kyra Wagner will present next month on bee keeping.

Francie asked Tony to introduce our panel of presenters on high tunnels. He said Devony Lehner, from Soil and Water Conservation, will address financing high tunnels and other qualified season-extending structures. Donna Rae Faulkner and Don McNamara will talk about growing vegetables in a high tunnel. He cited them for their extensive expertise on growing all things edible. Jeriah Knox, who builds and sells octagonal greenhouses, will discuss those and how he constructs them. Rachael Lord of Alaska Stems, another very experienced high-tunnel grower, was on the panel to focus on growing flowers in high tunnels.

Devony Lehner took the floor and started by explaining who funds the high tunnel program, why and how to participate. She detailed an interesting story that goes back over 100 years to the farmers and ranchers of the Great Plains who had plowed up the native grasslands. All seemed well until the severe droughts of the late 1930's, called the dust bowls, resulted in extreme losses of topsoil. Congress established the Soil Conservation Service. It became the National Resource Conservation Service, part of Department of Agriculture. In 1996 EQUIP formed. That's the agency that funds high-tunnels. Seasonal high tunnels are viewed as a conservation practice. Each state chooses which practices will be funded locally. Homer Soil & Water Conservation is the responsible local agency. The Kenai Peninsula has the highest per capita high tunnel population in the coun-

try. To participate in an NRCS program, a reimbursement program, you must be an agricultural producer and apply. Beginning farmers and ranchers can also apply for a 50% advance. There are already ninety applications for 2016, so the program is full this year. The reimbursement rate is \$6.89 per square foot regardless of type of structure. Maximum reimbursement is \$16,500. You must grow in the ground in an enclosed polyethylene, carbonate, or plastic structure.

Juriah Knox is a builder, specializing in carpentry. He builds and sells gazebo-based units ranging from 13 to 19 to 26 feet in diameter. For those who want to do it themselves, he pointed the audience to a polygon calculator to define the unit. He suggested you stain the wood before you put it together because mold and mildew grows where wood touches wood. Oil-based stains sink into the wood better. Ten-sided units can be split in half to create an elongated unit.

Rachael Lord told us that during 2010 all Stems products, diversified cut flowers, were grown outside in gardens; they started using high tunnels in 2011. They have one high tunnel and two more going up, plus 6000 sq. ft. of outside growing space. The quality of flowers is so much better under plastic. Their first tunnel is a Farmtek and is five years old. To maintain it, they must do a lot of snow removal. The new ones are Rimol brand which, Rachel said, has more structure and is fancier with a thermostatically controlled environment. They rely on horizontal trellising which is critical in a high tunnel because things grow taller. Some plants do better outside as it gets too hot in the high tunnel. Examples include stock,

cerinthe, and ornamental kale. Rachel also noted that there are microclimates within a high tunnel just as there are outside. Rachel's contact information is:

www.akhightunnels.org
www.alaskastems.com
stemscutflowers@gmail.com.

Donna Rae Faulkner and Don McNamara, who own Oceanside Farms, are modified CSA growers.

That is, they do direct shares among subscribers rather than selling through the Farmers' Market. Donna Rae noted the local library has great videos. They are also certified growers of seed potatoes for Alaska, the only ones on the Kenai Peninsula. Don told us they orient their tunnels on a north-south axis with a 5-8% slope to the south. This effectively changes their growing environment to 300 miles south of their actual location. Oceanside Farms grow a vast range of food crops us-

ing many of Elliot Coleman's techniques and methods. Donna Rae showed photos of some of Don's creatively designed, moveable cold frames.

There were many questions – too many to report!

The meeting was adjourned at 3:41 pm.



How to Care for Holiday Plants

Home Depot Garden Club

Poinsettias and other flowering plants brighten the season, much like the twinkling lights and ornaments on Christmas trees. Eventually, the decorations have to come down, but you can enjoy living plants long after the holidays. All you have to do is give them a little loving care. If you don't have room to keep these holiday beauties, consider passing them along to a shut-in or friend.

POINSETTIAS

Probably more than any other holiday plant, poinsettias symbolize the season. Today, we have more color choices than ever, with blooms of red, pink, creamy white, salmon, and apricot. Some varieties are speckled or marbled.

To keep your poinsettia happy, give it bright, indirect light indoors, away from drafts. The plants prefer 65 to 70 degree temperatures during the day and a 10-degree drop at night. Water when the soil starts to feel dry, but don't let the plants stand in excess water. Feed every two weeks with a 10-10-10 [fertilizer](#) while your poinsettia is actively growing.

To coax your plant to re-bloom, keep it in complete darkness for 14 hours a day, starting around the

first of October. Most people simply enjoy the blooms, which last a long time, and then compost the plants and replace them next year.

CYCLAMENS

Cyclamens come in pink, red, and white, and some have attractive leaves with silver marbling. Water when the soil feels dry, but avoid splashing the crowns. Cyclamens need bright, indirect light and cool temperatures. Avoid putting them near drafts. Provide high humidity by keeping them on a tray filled with pebbles and a little water; again, don't let the plants touch the water. After the flowers fade, the plant will go dormant. Stop watering then, and resume when new leaves appear in fall. Apply a low-nitrogen fertilizer every other week while your cyclamen is actively growing.



CHRISTMAS CACTUS

These colorful holiday plants are actually succulents. Keep the soil moist, but not soggy, while they're in bloom. If the stems start to look flabby, you're probably over-watering. Christmas cacti like warm

temperatures, bright light (but not direct sun), and well-drained soil. When the blooms are finished, keep the plants in a cool room, around 50 degrees F, and reduce watering to a minimum. When new buds appear, resume watering and fertilizing, and move the plants back into a warm spot. If the buds drop, your cactus may have been exposed to a draft or sudden temperature change, or you may have let it get too dry.

AMARYLLIS

What could be easier than opening a box with a pre-planted bulb, adding water, and waiting for flowers



to appear?

You can buy an amaryllis that's boxed and ready to bloom, or start your own from a bulb. Give the plants a sunny window and keep them evenly moist once growth starts. The flowers will last longer if the plant is kept in a cool room.

REMEMBER: Dues are now due October 1st. Members are encouraged to have the newsletter sent to them via e-mail as it is much less expensive for the club and you will then receive it in fabulous color.

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 ____ 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

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