

Homer Garden Club *Newsletter*



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The next HGC meeting will be **September 21** at 2:00 at the Aspen Hotel. This will be the Autumn Appetizers meeting.

September 2025

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*The September 21 Homer
Garden Club meeting will be the
annual Autumn
Appetizers at 2:00 at the
Aspen Hotel. Bring your
gardening stories and an
appetizer for a fun afternoon.*

Homer Garden Club
Combined Treasurer Reports for June, July, and August 2025

Income

membership	\$10.00
book	\$9.50

Total Income **\$19.50**

Expenses

PO Box	\$218.00
newsletter	\$84.40
plant sale	\$95.44

Total Expenses **\$397.84**

Checking Beginning Balance 6/01/2025	\$ 6,979.29
Income	\$ 19.50
Expenses	\$ 397.84
CD dividend	\$ 50.16
Interest	\$ 0.86
Ending Balance 8/31/2025	\$ 6,651.97

Money Market Beginning Balance 6/01/2025	\$ 6,237.56
Interest	\$ 3.15
Money Market Ending Balance 8/31/2025	\$ 6,240.71

CD 18 month term (maturity 10/10/2026)	\$ 10,058.07
interest/dividend	\$ 103.53
CD 18 month term (maturity 3/30/2026)	\$ 5,000.00
interest/dividend (transferred to checking)	
CD Ending Balance 8/31/2025	\$ 15,161.60

Total Ending Balance 8/31/2025	\$ 28,054.28
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"The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul." —Alfred Austin

"No single sort of garden suits everyone. Shut your eyes and dream of the garden you'd most love then open your eyes and start planting. Loved gardens flourish, boring ones are hard work." —Jackie French

"There is nothing that is comparable to it, as satisfactory or as thrilling as gathering vegetables one has grown." —Alice B. Toklas

Notes From the President

by Kathy Dube', President

Welcome Back to Another Year of Garden Club!

Fall is in the air with rain, cooler temperatures, and shorter days. We are ready for another great year with the Homer Garden Club. I don't know about you, but this summer must have been the perfect mix of sun and rain for my garden (or maybe the addition of blood meal after the soil test suggested it needed nitrogen) because I am harvesting an overwhelming bounty of veggies and the flowers have been big and beautiful. I am even getting lots of summer squash at 1,300 feet elevation with my new low tunnels despite a late start.

We will kick off the year with our annual Autumn Appetizers potluck in September where we will also elect new officers for the year and everyone will have an opportunity to renew their membership. Please read the article by Brenda Adams about Planting a Very Special Seed and how we need **YOU** to volunteer to keep the club going strong. We **REALLY REALLY**

REALLY need one or more people who would like to fill the position of Vice President. The Vice President(s) organize the speakers for our monthly meetings, and without someone(s) to fill this role we will not have speakers. This is a commitment of a few hours/month for the 7 meetings to contact speakers, coordinate with them regarding any travel reimbursement, and introduce them at the meetings. It's a great opportunity for two people to share this role in case you travel during winter months. So please consider volunteering and maybe ask a friend if they would like to share the role, because it is vital to the continuation of the club. Just like adding sun, water (and evidently nitrogen), your help is needed for the health of the Homer Garden Club!

Note: no Zoom meeting for the Autumn Appetizers, but we will resume with Zoom meetings in October.



Advice from a sunflower. Be bright, sunny, and positive. Know your roots. Spread seeds of happiness. Rise, shine, and hold your head up high. Keep on growing. Even on the darkest days, stand tall and find the sunlight." —Unknown

Future Meetings and Vice President Vacancy

by Fran Durner

First the good news! The Upbeet Gardener, Marion Owen, a gardener extraordinaire from Kodiak, will be our January 18th speaker! I am so pleased to be able to pin her down. Marion is also a published author, a garden coach, writes a popular garden blog, and has numerous videos on Youtube. She promises that her presentation will be "bright"!

I am also extremely pleased to say that Josh Smith of Bear Mountain Forest Nursery will return in the spring. Josh's presentation in March of this year was a standing room only event, and he brought an outstanding array of native berry plants he raised from seed to share with us. He'll have a new talk and promises to have more plants ready for his next visit.

I'm working hard to fill in the speakers for the other months and hope to have more exciting announcements by the Autumn Appetizers meeting this month.

OK, the not so good news is that I am not going to continue as VP and program chair. I am hoping to travel a lot in the coming months and just won't be here.

Trying to line up speakers for our meetings can be a challenge, for sure, but it is also a real joy to meet and talk with interesting folks and invite them to share their knowledge with us - and, you get to be the one to pick and decide who to invite!

So, grab a friend and volunteer! The reality is, if no one (or two, or three) volunteers, there may be A. Big. Hole. in our meetings.

Thank you. It's been a pleasure!

Fran

Planting a Very Special Seed

by Brenda Adams

For a garden to be the best it can be it requires a lot more than daydreams. It takes planning, organization, thought, creativity, time, care and a liberal sprinkling of love. A garden benefits from your trying new things, new ideas, and new approaches. Rotating crops from one area to another assists in keeping soil and thus crops vital. And most of all, for your garden to be just the way you want it to be, it takes you, your toil, your sweat and your energy.

Organizations that depend solely on volunteers for their sustenance and success share many of the same requirements. The Homer Garden Club is just such an organization. The members of the Board are not financially compensated in any way; neither are committee chairs nor individual contributors. What makes our club work is the time, care, creativity and energy offered freely by individuals on behalf of the entire group. Like crops, the club benefits when we rotate the responsibilities and leadership of the organization. New people bring new ideas, new approaches, and new things to try. And, as in a garden, what we reap from our club has a lot to do with what we put into it.

So, the seed I'd like to plant today is the knowledge that for the Homer Garden Club to be the best it can be, it needs you. Become an active leader and influence the direction we take and the things we do. Become a volunteer and get to know more members better and learn more. It is a rewarding and nourishing experience – like picking one of those delicious, warm, ripe tomatoes you start from seed. There are many ways in which you can make our club better. All members are welcomed and encouraged to participate whether new to the club or gardening in this area or a senior member of our community of gardeners. You all have something to give – knowledge, ideas, time, creativity, leadership. For your convenience, we have included a sign-up sheet in this newsletter. Just fill in your name, phone number and e-mail address, and put a check mark next to the roles you are willing to play. Bring it to this month's meeting or mail it to the Homer Garden Club at PO Box 2833, Homer, AK 99603 with a check for your dues for the coming year.

Below are some of the opportunities available for being a volunteer; **note that opportunities in bold type are current, critical needs to keep the club running:**

Plant Sale: Each spring we hold a large, well-attended plant sale. Members contribute plants for sale which are snapped up by customers from the community and other garden club members. The co-

chairs of this event plan the sale – the date, location



and layout. They assign individual volunteers to the necessary tasks and remind all involved of the schedule and their responsibility. Volunteers help with set-up and clean-up as well as pricing and arranging to get tables, chairs and the cash boxes to the event.

Nominating Committee: This team is charged with selecting the slate of new officers for the ensuing year. The primary task is to seek one or more volunteers to run for each office.

Gardeners' Weekend Committee: This is an event that has been a wonderful opportunity for all of us as well as many people from around the state and beyond to visit some of the lovely gardens of Homer. For



many years it included a world-renowned speaker, a reception after the tours and a luncheon for the garden owners along with the tours. Covid interrupted this event for a couple of years and when it resumed it was simplified to just garden tours and a reception.

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This is definitely an opportunity for you to put your stamp on a major Homer event. There is a lot of documentation available on how it has been organized in the past. **Many people will pitch in to help, but it needs a fresh team to lead it and guide its make-up for 2026.**

Baycrest Garden Committee: This group does spring clean-up of the garden we created and maintain at the Baycrest Overlook. During clean-up we divide many of the mature plants for sale at our annual Plant Sale. We also maintain the garden throughout the summer, mainly by weeding and deadheading. The chair (or co-chairs) for this garden sets the date for the clean-up, reminds volunteers when to show up, and ensures that supplies are available to do the work. Through sign-up sheets at the meetings the Chair recruits volunteers to do weekly maintenance and reminds them when their week is approaching.

Newsletter Writers: Members are invited to contribute one or more articles for our newsletter during the year. Any member may, at any time, send an article to our newsletter editor, currently Paula Riley, for consideration for the newsletter.

Refreshments: Three to four volunteers bring some tasty treats to each meeting. Our Social Secretary will pass out a sign-up sheet at meetings. He or she will call you in advance to remind you of the meeting for which you volunteered.

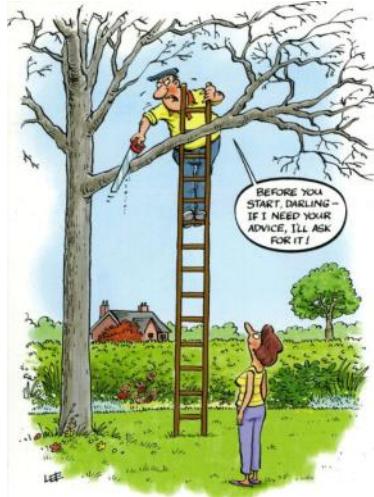
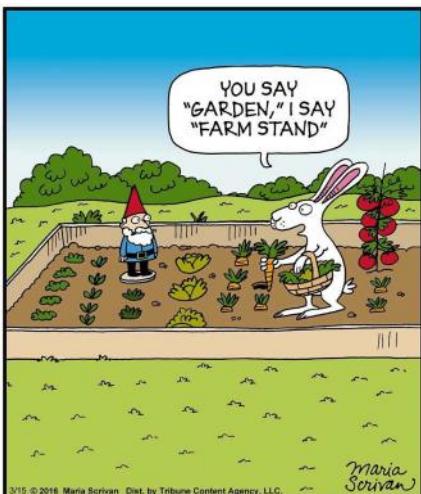
Board Member: We have a group of officers who serve for a term of one year from September to September. Officers may serve for longer than one year (and many have) if they are willing and the member-

ship re-elects them. Each position has specific duties outlined in our constitution and bylaws. As a group the Board is responsible for the overall direction of the Homer Garden Club, including such things as expenditure of club funds, deciding on new projects, and changes to the constitution or bylaws of the club. The Board also provides guidance and assistance to all committee chairs. The current officers are listed in the newsletter along with their contact information. Anyone may choose to run for any office. Many of our current officers have been in their roles for several years and would welcome someone stepping up to take their place. Outgoing officers and committee chairs will help you through your transition period. **This year our Vice President is stepping down so we will definitely need a volunteer to assume that role. It is a special one because the VP determines the speaker and program for each meeting. This is an opportunity for you to really impact the direction of the club.**

Recruit new members: This isn't an official position. It is something each and every one of us can do. Bring a friend to meetings. Encourage the young people in your life to join. New members also bring fresh ideas and new energy to our organization.

Please volunteer and help make our Garden Club, which was founded in 1983, continue to grow and flourish exceptionally well. As someone who has, in fact, volunteered, I can assure you that it is a very worthwhile and rewarding experience.

Brenda Adams
Past President (6 years), past Board member (13 years), member of the Gardeners' Weekend Committee (12 years) and current and longtime chair of the Baycrest Garden Committee.



Just a Friendly Reminder

by Louise Ashmun, Membership/Co-Treasurer

For most Homer Garden Club members, annual membership ends on September 30 and dues for the upcoming year are due. The exceptions are folks who have paid for multiple years at one time and are not due this year. For everyone else, this is a very friendly reminder that HGC dues are due for FY25-26. To avoid any lapse in your Homer Garden Club newsletter subscription, please plan to renew your membership by the end of October.

I will be prepared to accept payment (cash or check only) of dues at Autumn Appetizers, the HGC kick-off meeting on Sept 21st and at the following monthly meetings. If you will not be able to attend meetings,

Please copy and fill in the membership form available on Homer Garden Club webpage (www.homergardenclub.org) and mail your dues payment check to the Homer Garden Club. If you have any questions about your current membership status, email me at the Homer Garden Club (2013gardenclub@gmail.com) or text me at 907-299-6360—be sure to include your full name in your message. See you soon!

Note: The membership form is also available on page 8 of this newsletter.

How to Grow Spinach as a Winter Green

by Marion Owen—
marionowenalaska.com

When we turn the calendar page from August to September, it's easy to fall into thinking that gardening is all but over. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the fall, harvesting is part of the garden cycle; so is putting food up, lawn care, composting, and sowing.

Sowing?

Yessirreee. To everything there is a season. Like I said, September is harvest time. Time to put up jams, pickles, vinegars, and smoked salmon. Done right, fall is the critical time to prepare your garden for next spring.

Oh, and I'll talk about composting and how to amend your soil in future articles, but for today, I want to cover spinach and how to sow spinach seeds now for harvesting in late winter.

I've been growing and overwintering spinach for many years now and I know it works. The first time I tried it, I was amazed. I couldn't believe spinach, which seems so tender, would survive our fickle coastal winters. But it does.

"Spinach," says Maine market-grower and author Eliot Coleman, "is the perfect winter green."

Now you might be thinking, "But it's September, Marion. Isn't it time to think about putting the garden to bed?"

True, but it just so happens that the first two weeks of September is the best time to sow spinach for har-

vesting next spring.

Spinach is the best winter green for Kodiak, and all cool climates. It loves cool temperatures and continues to produce new leaves well into the fall, unlike, say, kale which essentially stops during the cold, low-light winter months.

Thing is, spinach tolerates winter weather if, and only if, the seeds are sown early enough for the plants to establish roots.

This is key.

Got that? Spinach seeds wait for no couch-potato gardener.



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Before I get to the “how” let’s cover the “what” as in, what are the plan best varieties. A couple notes: When selecting a variety, look for slow-bolting and resistance to downy mildew.

Basically, true spinach (*Spinacea oleracia*) varieties come in Savoy, Semi-savoy, and Flat-leaved types. Savoy spinach is very productive and handles cold better than most types of spinach. It has deeply crinkled leaves and a low-growth habit that makes cleaning leaves a bit of a chore, especially where grit splashes onto the leaves. **Favorite: Bloomsdale**

Semi-Savoy spinach varieties have a more upright habit that makes mud splash less likely, and the leaves aren’t as crinkly, so they’re easier to wash. They also tend to have better disease- and- bolt-resistance, so they’re usually the best choice when growing spinach at home. **Favorites: Tyee, Giant Winter**

Smooth-leaved spinach has smooth, flat leaves that are easier to clean, which makes it the primary choice for processed spinach. **Favorites: Olympia, Space**

How to grow winter spinach

1. Clear a patch of soil of summer weeds and plant debris
2. Scratch in some compost or well-rotted manure and kelp, if possible.
3. Sow spinach seeds according to package instructions
4. Water and cover as needed

It’s possible to grow spinach in greenhouses, hoop houses, and outdoor mini-hoops. Once winter threatens, you’ll want to cover the hoops with strong, reinforced plastic that is well-secured. I haven’t tried overwintering spinach in halibut tubs, but nothing ventured, nothing gained. Make sure the soil drains well.

Within a week or two, the seeds will germinate and the plants will continue to grow. Then, just as the plants reach three or four inches in height, the day length drops below 10 hours (around October 20), and growth slows to a crawl.

The plants will most likely die back and you’ll think something’s wrong, but it’s completely normal, since their source of energy for photosynthesis, the sun, is well, playing hide and seek, er seek.

Let the spinach die back without disturbing the plant. Just leave it alone.

Keep the soil barely moist during the winter months. This will mean lifting the cover to allow rain to soak the soil or hand-watering. If the soil dries out too much, the seedlings won’t have enough root structure to produce leaves in February and March. Leaves will be dwarfed and tough.

On the other hand, soil that’s too wet, invites mold and crown rot.

Remember, depending on how severe or serene our winter is, the plants will look green and vibrant or shrivel. Assuming you keep the soil from drying out, the plants are very much alive, provided you sow the seeds early enough.

Then, sometime around February 20, magic happens. The sun stops playing games and the day length for our latitude of 58 degrees crests over the 10-hour mark. Photosynthesis amps up in earnest and the spinach seedlings celebrate by resuming growth.



What does that mean for you?

You can potentially be harvesting in March and enjoying the earliest and probably the best spinach you’ve ever had.

THE HOMER GARDEN CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME _____ PHONE _____

Email Address _____

(Please print clearly to make sure you receive all club newsletters and messages)

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

Suggestions for future meeting topics or speakers: _____

Homer Garden Club Membership year is Oct 1st to Sept 30th

This membership will expire on September 30th

Please make your check payable to "Homer Garden Club" and mail it along with this form to:

Homer Garden Club, PO Box 2833, Homer AK 99603

HGC is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization (EIN92-0133642)

Homer Garden Club
P.O. Box 2833
Homer, Alaska 99603

