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Homer Garden Club

There will not be a Homer Garden Club meeting for the month of May.

May 2020

Newsletter

Board of Directors

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Regrettably, the Homer Garden Club will not meet in May in order to honor the social distancing guidelines.

We hope to meet again in September to enjoy our traditional Harvest Dinner. Members will be advised of future schedules.



Treasurer Report

by Louise Ashmun, Treasurer

Homer Garden Club Monthly Treasurer Report for April, 2020

Income

Total Income \$0.00

Expenses

Total Expenses \$0.00

Checking Beginning Balance 04/01/2020	\$ 4,000.96
Income	-
Expenses	-
Interest	<u>0.22</u>
Ending Balance 04/30/2020	\$ 4,001.18
Money Market Beginning Balance 04/01/2020	\$ 15,039.08
Interest	<u>1.85</u>
Money Market Ending Balance 04/30/2020	\$ 15,040.93
Total Ending Balance 04/30/2020	\$ 19,042.11



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Stronger Together

by Jessica Shepard, MFA

Last fall, acting on a premonition like a squirrel storing seeds before a hard winter, I froze, canned and dried an impressive cache of food. Subsequently, we've spent the winter and spring eating our way through hundreds of jars of succulent sauces, soups, jams and frozen pesto, bags of ready-to-bake pie fillings, blanched vegetables, and sundried tomatoes. With the high tunnel now producing lettuce, kale, and radishes, we've come full circle. In the process, we've reduced our food bill and the number of trips we take to the grocery store. The timing could not have been better.

My husband Hal and I are preppers. Not in the way of razor wire and an arsenal, but in terms of a big garden, chickens, a shed full of firewood, and soon, solar panels. This desire to prepare stems from a growing concern about the state of the world – namely mankind's inability to live without lethal conflicts or admit that our burgeoning population exceeds Earth's carrying capacity. Add to that a deadly pandemic with impending food shortages, and you have the makings of a global unbalancing.

Watching Covid 19 spread across the world, the way embers from a forest fire spark new flames, we hunker down, hoping the firestorm will jump over us and those we cherish. Yet we admittedly depend on that critical segment of our society who stock grocery store shelves, ring us up at the register, deliver take-out food to our cars, and clean, swab, respond, and generally maintain the underpinnings of our society. Only now do we, as a society, recognize the vital importance of these workers who are also the very people most likely to be infected and the least likely to recover, both physically and financially. It's as if the virus is a mirror, held up to show us the flaws in our society.

As we tentatively restart our economy and venture back out into the world, we have a choice. We can, if we put our collective minds to it, increase our overall social resilience. One measure of our success should be the degree to which we rectify the inequalities that the virus has revealed. If the virus has taught us anything, it's that we're only as strong as the most vulnerable among us.

Best of all, we don't have to depend solely on our federal government to help local businesses. As shops reopen, we can preferentially buy local. Amazon.com and Walmart do not need your money, but your favorite locally-owned book stores, restaurants, sporting goods stores, breweries, and farmer's market vendors do. We can restore our community one purchase at a time.

And, while empty grocery store shelves remind us how dependent we are on food shipped from out of state, here in Homer, we can increase our resilience by growing more food and making sure any extra gets into the hands of those who struggle to make ends meet. Prepping, after all, is best done as a community. Homer has more agricultural high tunnels per capita than anywhere else in the nation and, purportedly, the most active farmer's market in the state. This makes us a prime location for community-wide prepper resilience. We are not helpless in the face of choices made in Washington, we have the power of the pocketbook and the optimism of gardeners. Let's get to work!



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Plant an Extra Row for the Food Pantry

by Louise Ashmun

Many of us are preparing our vegetable garden beds for the upcoming growing season. I am encouraging all of us to plant some extra in our gardens this year with the intention of giving part of our bountiful harvests to our neighbors who need food assistance. With many more people experiencing loss of income, our local need is especially large this year. We can help provide high-quality fresh produce from our gardens to those in need.

To get the food you donate distributed while it is still fresh and delicious, you can donate your fresh produce (and any other donations you choose to make) to Homer's Food Pantry, a volunteer non-profit that provides food assistance to those in need. The community need for food assistance has been demonstrated by the increased numbers of folks accessing the Food Pantry in April. The Food Pantry operates out of the Homer United Community Methodist Church at 770 East End Road. There is a drop box by the solarium doors where you can leave dry goods, canned goods, and other

items that do not need refrigeration. Since the Food Pantry distributes food on Monday afternoons, the very best time to deliver recently-harvested vegetables is Monday morning between 8.30 and 11:00 am when volunteers are there preparing the boxes. If that time is not convenient, please consider a Saturday or Sunday drop-off and call the Food Pantry coordinator (Dennis at 235-1968) to let him know that you have left fresh vegetables that need to be refrigerated

in the drop box. Please avoid dropping perishables off on Tuesday through Friday unless you are confident they will remain usable during the following week.

When you add those extra plants, please note that carrots are probably the most appreciated vegetable at the Food Pantry as they can be eaten raw, store well, and do not need special recipes. Kale, on the other hand, is often available in abundance and less easy to use.

Please share your bounty and good fortune and plant an extra row for the Food Pantry.



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We carry vegetable starts, organic 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.



Because of COVID-19 we will be doing phone orders by credit card, so you can pick up your orders outside. If you want to come in and browse, that will be great too! Just maintain your 6-ft. distance—please.

**Open beginning April 15th,
Monday through Saturday,
from 9:00 to 6:00**

HGC Plant Sale Cancelled

by Barbara Kennedy

The Homer Garden Club regrets that we've had to cancel our annual one-hour bedlam fest this year - aka The Plant Sale! Too much to ask our cashiers and members to do now.

I've had requests from gardeners who want to donate and need a little help separating their plants. I've had people who want to donate but don't know where. I've had people who always wait for the Plant Sale to complete their gardens with tried-and-true plants from their neighbors.

So, we're encouraging all to Donate, Ask for Help, or Sell their garden plants here on our website. Just post and then let folks Instant Message you for details. Wear your masks and have fun!

Thank you all for your generosity!

To post something on Homer Garden Club page:

Type "Homer Garden Club" in the search bar at the top of your page.

If there are multiple choices, pick the one for Homer, AK

Click the box that says **Write something to...** and enter your information. You will want to ask people to Instant Message (IM) you so you can reply to someone privately. You can post where your garden location is but I don't recommend doing this until you know to whom you are talking.

Then you can choose from the options:



Photo/Video: You can select a photo or video to add to the post.



Feeling/

Activity: Adds a feeling or activity to the post.



Check in: Adds a location to the post.



Tag Friends: You can tag friends in the post.

Click **Post**.

Minutes of Homer Garden Club Meeting - April 19th, 2020

Gathered via Zoom due to restrictions on meetings because of the Covid-19 pandemic

OFFICER REPORTS

President Kathy welcomed participants and gave an informative summary of Zoom features

Secretary Previous Minutes posted on the Website and printed in the newsletter

Treasurer Currently in the account - \$19,438 We are in 'good shape'

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Gardener's Weekend 50/50 chance of it happening . We shall sit back and wait to see what is best to do. We still have some committed gardens and the possibility of a modified walking tour through some 'peaceful and healing landscapes'

Speakers No more planned for this Spring, Any suggestions for fall speakers are welcome

Social Committee Michael apologized for the lack of home deliveries – promising zero calories from this week's meeting refreshments. 3rd Sunday in September would be the date for the Harvest Dinner if we can. We may pursue some new creative formats .

Data Base 106 current members – 'going along just fine'

Baycrest Gardens Clean up will be May 9th. Kathy had spoken with Brenda Adams and outlined the plan for two 2 hr shifts. 10.30 –

12.30 and 12.30 – 2.30. Participants to bring masks, gloves and preferably their own tools. Please email or call Brenda to sign up (235-3763)

Newsletter Please email Paula with any articles you would like to include.

Plant Sale Barb is reluctantly resigned to having to call it off because of the mass gathering it involves. Her creative ideas include donors possibly advertising on the Facebook page what they have available and Individuals can go collect - with hopefully a donation to the Garden Club. Look in the next newsletter for an update on this. Do support our local businesses that specialize in providing us with healthy plants

SPEAKER NOTES

Yarrow : The Identification, Harvesting, Processing and Use of Edible and Medicinal Plants.

Yarrow is a Master at Wildcrafting and Gardening. He says 'Try to do the Impossible' - encouraging us to try and grow plants that we haven't seen here before. He loves to play with varieties to get the best flavor and something different. He celebrates the 'unexpecteds'.

Such a wealth of information for beginners and the experienced; How could I capture it? I recommend watching the recording on the Homer Garden Club website to get the details on the methods, the formulas, etc Thanks to Kathy it is available by clicking on

this link <https://www.dropbox.com/s/673xp2bpfptb31e/April%202020%20Homer%20Garden%20Club%20Speaker%20-%20Herbs%20and%20Medicinal%20Plants.mp4?dl=0>

I shall relate just a few points.

Some of the core herbs Yarrow pictured: calendula, chamomile, Rose, Rue, Verbena, Hyssop Harvest in early morning being gentle with cell walls and process promptly Value 'fresh' herbs; when your dried herbs loose their aroma, toss them. 100 yr old tinctures still contain active chemicals – they outlive us! Mint for tea is best infused overnight in COLD water Make your own herbal flavored oils, honeys, vinegars and syrups Make your own herbal medicines – tinctures, infusions, decoctions, salves and teas How about an herbal popsicle? Store herbs in glass jars – labeled with name, date and location Don't forget to dry some fireweed for your sheep!

Yarrow provided us with a list of recommended books (though he could probably write his own) . Entry level: Medicinal Plants of the Pacific West by Michael Moore (author not documentary maker) Yarrow's products are available at WODA BOTANICALS on Lake Street.



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Spring Gardening Checklist

Better Homes & Gardens, (BHG.com)

When you're first getting back out into your garden, start with these tasks to build a solid foundation for your spring landscape.

1. CHECK FOR SIGNS OF GROWTH

Did you remember to plant crocus last fall? They might already be poking their way out of the ground. And if you didn't, you can cut forsythia or magnolia branches before their buds open and force them indoors for some early spring color.

2. PREP THE BEDS

Remove winter mulch from around perennials or, if already well composted, work into the top layer of the soil. Clear away dead leaves or any other debris from winter storms from the soil surface so you're ready to plant.

3. PRUNE

Now is the time to trim fruit trees if you didn't prune in winter. Prune before buds begin

to break into bloom or you'll stress the tree and get a tiny crop (or possibly none). It's also a good time to prune summer-blooming trees and shrubs, like potentilla and butterfly bush, just before they push out new growth.

4. DIVIDE PERENNIALS

A good time to divide many perennials is just before their spring growth has begun. Dividing perennials is a budget-friendly way to fill your garden with more plants or share them with friends. It's also good for keeping your existing perennials healthy; sometimes, if your



plants grow in a large clump, the middle can thin out after a few years, leaving a bare spot. Dividing the clump will encourage fresh, new growth.

5. PERFORM BASIC MAINTENANCE OF HARDSCAPING

Check stonework for frost heaves, particularly in paths and edging. Check the general condition of your deck or patio and make any needed repairs. Clean off outdoor furniture so it's ready when you are for relaxing after a busy day in the garden.

6. PLANT VEGGIES

Hardy, cool-season vegetables, like potatoes, artichokes, peas, and some lettuces, germinate best in cool soil, so plant them in early spring once the soil has thawed. They should be ready to harvest by early summer.

*****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!

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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

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

