



Picking cherries in
fruit tree greenhouse

Homer Garden Club Newsletter

April 2012

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The regular meeting will be held **April 22** at 2:00 p.m. at the Bidarka Inn, downstairs.

Board of Directors

Jack Regan, President—
235-3650,
regan009@alaska.com

Neil Wagner, Vice President—
235-6953 neil@sustainablehomer.org

Brenda Adams — 235-3763
brenda@GardensByBrenda.com

Peggy Craig — 235-0631
michaelandpeggy@acsalaska.net

Barbara Kennedy — 235-4347 barbara_e_kennedy@msn.com

Kyra Wagner — 235-6953
kyra@sustainablehomer.org

Michael Linden — 235-6632
homerlinden@gmail.com

Jessica Ryan — 299-8811
alyce.ryan@gmail.com

Julie Parizek — 226-3276
jparizek@acsalaska.net

Paula Riley — 435-3983
pauril@yahoo.com

April 22, 2012 Meeting Will Feature Bobby Jackson on Vegetable Gardening

Bobby Jackson from Jackson Gardens south of Soldotna will be giving a Power Point presentation on indoor winter gardens for herbs and vegetables, outdoor fruit and vegetable and greenhouse vegetable gardening. She will also present some information on preserving what you produce and show a few perennial flower garden pictures.

Jackie said she really doesn't have any credentials, just that she likes to play in the dirt! She and her husband Harold have owned Jackson Gardens since before 1989.

They have a 100' by 28' fruit tree greenhouse. They sell perennial flowers, shrubs and berry starts that they dig and divide from their own plants. They

do not order anything in to sell. The business was started to share with others plants that would live in our area and to give their children and grandchildren an opportunity to learn to work and earn their own money.

Jackie is mostly interested in encouraging self sufficiency through gardening. She encourages self reliance even in their flower gardens by encouraging friendship gardens where people trade flowers with each other instead of spending money on plants every year. She said she grows perennial flowers in her flower beds to show people what beautiful yards they can have without spending money



Apples-Apricots- Kiwi-Nectarines
Peaches-Pears-Plums—
Wow What A Fruit Salad
All Out Of Our Fruit Tree Greenhouse

every year on annuals and hanging pots. It also saves a lot of work not having to plant every year. She feels if everyone would trade with each other, no one would have to spend much money to have beautiful yards and gardens. She would also like to trade plant starts with anyone who has perennials, roses or shrubs that she doesn't currently have and which have proven themselves to be hardy in this area. She is trying to keep a collection of

Fruit Tree Greenhouse



plants that will grow in our area so their genetics doesn't get lost.

Jackson Gardens is seven miles south of Soldotna at Milepost 103, Sterling Hwy. and 1/3 mile down John's Road on the right. It's a yellow house with a 100 ft. greenhouse. She gives tours of the gardens and greenhouses and also gives gardening classes. They are open Monday through Saturday, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, May 25 through June 16. After that just drop by to see if they're home, or call for an appointment—(907) 252-9459.



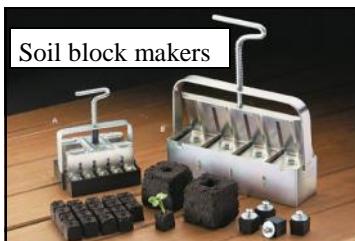
Greenhouse Vegetables
Celery Cucumbers Tomatoes

Making soil blocks takes a little getting used to. Kyra purchased a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch -20 cell unit and a 2 inch -4 cell unit from Johnnies last month. (Picture 1) It worked so slick for her that I

blocked out several trays for our brassica planting yesterday. It takes a ratio of 1 to 3 water to potting soil to get the right consistency for the dirt to stick together. You then push the "blocker" firmly into the dirt, pull it up full of dirt, and then press them out of the blocker onto your planting tray . They come with a nifty little divot on top where you drop your seeds and then spray and cover with a lid until germination.

When the plants in the tiny $\frac{3}{4}$ inch blocks get big enough that it is time to transplant them, you have the option of putting them into a 2 inch block. To do this, you can replace the divot maker in the 2 blocker with a bigger $\frac{3}{4}$ inch spacer. This means that when you press out the 2 inch block, a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch hole the size of your tiny block is pressed into the top of the 2 inch block. Now you can just plop your $\frac{3}{4}$ inch block into the two inch block and let it grow more. A pretty slick operation, the 2 inch blocks can also go into 4 inch blocks made with 2 inch spacers...

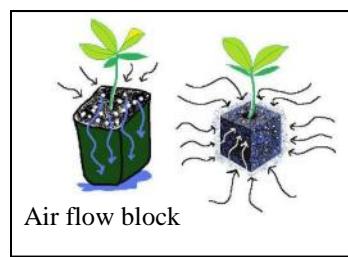
What is the advantage of using soil blocks? You end up with air pruned transplants. Here is what they say about that: *Air root pruning is the technique whereby roots are pruned back by air movement at the root tips in a suitable container. Once*



pruned the root tip is stimulated to produce branches providing many more secondary roots. (Picture 2) The development of many secondary roots increases nutrient absorption enabling the plant to grow more rapidly (Whitcomb, 2005). In the traditional system where air root pruning does not take place (our standard 4 & 6 packs) the roots do not branch as much. This may result in roots coiling around the periphery of the pots, which may cause problems when they are planted out especially when transplanting is delayed (Ewing, 2005). (picture 3) Not to mention that you don't need to clean all those plastic four packs.

Of course, without pots covering your transplants they now will need to be handled carefully when you plant them in the garden.

Elliot Coleman is a big proponent of soil blocks and uses a pallet knife to move them around. The brassicas should be OK with getting their roots bumped around a bit in the soil blocks. I also planted a few 4-packs of brassicas for comparison. My five types of corn, nine types of squash and cucumbers were all planted in 4-inch plastic pots. I don't think they'd like potting soil that saturated with water and they also have tender roots. We'll see.



We take the covers off our high tunnels in the fall, so a couple weeks ago I dug out my 20 X 36 foot high tunnel. It had a solid three+ feet of frozen snow and ice to chip out and toss between the rafters to get down to the foot high raised beds. I was inspired by the

sunny weather. Yes, it was a lot of work, a solid 10 hours of digging. I distracted myself by thinking of all the fun I'd have planting there. It was spring boot camp for getting in shape for digging garden beds. We pulled the high tunnel plastic on and wiggle wired it down in less than an hour. A couple days later the last of the snow and ice had melted out. I'm going to plant some spinach and salad green transplants (now planted in 3/4 inch soil blocks) under a layer of Remay along with seeding the same greens as an experiment. Tim Meyer's talks inspired many of us to start planting a lot earlier than usual. Those who kept their covers on over winter could easily be growing greens by now under plastic or Remay.



Our tomatoes are all up and doing fine. I'll try a few tomato grafts on root stock to see how well they produce. I have now collected all that is needed to rebuild my tomato greenhouse, other than the time. I found some slightly used two inch R-tec foam on Craig's List to insulate the north walls and also to close off the north roof. Some 8 mil double wall polycarbon panels will replace the old fiberglass roof on the south side and Sun Tuff lexan will replace the old fiberglass on the south and east sides for better sun penetration.

I'm always amazed at how well our root cellar provides us with garden produce across the seasons, and without any energy cost. We're still eating crisp cabbage and root vegetables. I like Tim Meyer's idea of building a large community root cellar next to the Farmers Market so they can sell produce later into the fall and winter. A full community root cellar would really help with our food security and be better than money in the bank...

President's Report

by Jack Regan, President

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

On a trip to Hawaii, I had the pleasure of visiting several delightful gardens. The Honolulu Museum of Arts sponsors a tour of the home and gardens of the late philanthropist Doris Duke. She built a palatial estate in the shadow of Diamond Head crater nearly eighty years ago called ShangriLa. Ms. Duke was an avid collector of Middle Eastern art and the home is said to contain the second largest collection of Persian Art in the west. Several gardens are present on the site and demonstrate elements of Islamic art complementing the features of the art inside the house. The gardens vary from formal to casual and personal but tend to feature elements of Islamic art including symmetry, calligraphy, arabesque, and the design filling

the entire space. It certainly is an awe inspiring experience to behold.

While standing in the outer courtyard, the tour guide pointed out the presence of a bird in the foliage searching for food. The bird was a Pacific Golden Plover. The guide mentioned the bird would soon be departing Hawaii on a nonstop flight to Alaska for

the summer. It was striking to think about the strong attractiveness of

Alaska to encourage this bird to make such a prolonged journey. I could identify with plover's urge to return to Alaska. A great gardening season is on the horizon including some excellent garden club programs. Bon Voyage, Golden Plover. Hope to see you at the Shore Bird Festival.



People' Garden Update

The People's Garden Project is in the process of awarding the final grants. Some of the garden recipients have already formally accepted while others are still trying to iron out details. One of the gardens that is moving along and even has a work schedule posted on the AHA Time Bank is the Chamber of Commerce. This garden has the Garden Club as a partner so you are sure to be hearing about this garden for years to come. Stay tuned for more updates on the others' gardens as well.

Cookie's Country Greenhouse

2340 East End Road, Homer, 235-8915 or 399-8915

Opening date — April 23



Featuring Proven Winners® plants
We also carry vegetable starts, organic seed and seed potatoes, as well as farm fresh eggs and red wiggler worms.

Open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 to 6:00

FRITZ CREEK GARDENS

HOME OF ALASKA HARDY® PERENNIALS



Sunday	12:00 to 5:00
Monday	10:00 to 6:00
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	10:00 to 6:00
Friday	10:00 to 7:00
Saturday	10:00 to 6:00

*Open
May
1st*

**Located at Mile 5 East End Road
Homer, Alaska
(907) 235-4969**

Treasurer's Report

by Peggy Craig, Treasurer

March 2012

Income	
Membership	10.00
Total Income	<u>\$10.00</u>

Expenses

Meeting:	
Venue	200.00
Program	253.80
Total Expenses	<u>\$453.80</u>

Beginning balance 3/1/12	\$12,028.75
Income	10.00
Expenses	<u>-453.80</u>
Ending balance 3/31/12	<u>\$11,584.95</u>



Kenai Peninsula Ag Forum April 21st

by Kyra Wagner

Want to put your green thumb to work? Want to improve agriculture on the Peninsula? Then get some tickets and head up to the Ninilchik Fairgrounds for the Kenai Peninsula Ag Forum from 9:00 am-5:00 pm on Saturday, April 21, 2012.

There will presentations, a panel of presenters over lunch (provided) and break out discussion times.

Some of the speakers include:

Jason Floyd, the new 4-H and Youth Development Agent

Rob Carter, Natural Resource Specialist from the Plant Materials Center

Lee Lunden, Animal Fleece Uses and Production

Rita Jo Shoultz, Peony – Getting Started & Benefits of

Working Cooperatively
Petra Illig, How to Get Started In the Rhodiola Rosea Industry
[Andrew Crow, Cooperatives specialist from the UA Center for Economic Development](#)

Other topics and discussions will include:

Borough Ag Policy
Cold Storage
Marketing
Mobile Slaughter Unit
Farm to School
Veggie Processing Facility
High Tunnel Program

You can get tickets for \$25 ahead or

\$35 at the door. You can get advance tickets at the USDA office on corner of Lake and Pioneer or at Fritz Creek Gardens. For more information call 235-6953.

This event is being hosted by the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District, the Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District & the Ninilchik Fairgrounds. Contact Amy Seitz at 252-5064 or Michelle Martin at 398-2432



Roses 7' tall by 12' wide — Jackson Gardens

THANKS

I want to send out a big “THANK YOU” to Bronwynn Kelley, Homer Farmer’s Market VISTA volunteer, for the excellent job she did in setting up and mailing out the March newsletter when I was out of town for a month.

Paula Riley, Newsletter Editor

Ground Control Landscape Services

New Location at: **1392 Ocean Drive, Homer, Alaska 99603**
(907) 235-1521



Your source for:

Hydroponic supplies, Drip irrigation supplies, Agribon row cover, Mulch film “solar mulch”, LED and fluorescent lights, Seeds of Change seeds, Seed starting supplies: trays, tray inserts, domes, heat mats, planters, and much more.

**We are open Tuesday through Saturday
from 11:00 to 6:00**

Garden Club & Time Banking

by Bronwynn Kely

As a gardener you may think there is never enough time during the summer to get everything planted, weeded, watered, harvested, etc., etc. This might just be the answer. The AHA Time Bank creates an accounting system where individuals and organizations can post requests for help and post services they can offer for Time Credits. This formalizes the barter system we're all familiar with and expands this network beyond those in our close circle of people we always ask for help.

AHA Time Bank = The Homer Time Bank: Alaskans Helping Alaskans
<http://aha.timebanks.org/>

What is a Time Bank?

A Time Bank is a way to formalize trading time. It is an online system where individuals and organizations can post requests for help and post services they can



provide others.

What is a Time Credit?

A Time Credit (TC) denotes one hour of service. In an exchange an individual or organization gives one time credit for one hour of help, or they receive one time credit for one hour of service they provide. **Everyone's time is valued equally.** This does not have to be a direct exchange, rather it should incorporate many people in the *time bank*, and the whole community will benefit.

Time exchanges specific to gardening exchanges:

1. First, you would sign-up for a AHA Time Bank account.
2. Then you can post requests for help. You would give TCs to those helping you. Examples include:
 - **Help building your high tunnel**
 - **General help in garden:** TCs given to anyone helping in your garden
 - **Specific skills needed:** A post for specific skills needed, such as expert advice on a certain plant or new gardening skill you want to try
 - **Garden-sitting:** If you go on vacation and want someone to check your high tunnel/watering/weeding while your away. Suggested 1-2 TCs for each day someone stops by.
 - **Equipment needed:** Need a specific tool for a few hours and want to borrow?

(Continued on page 7)

**BRIGHTEN your yard
GROW your garden**

WAGON WHEEL

1506 OCEAN DRIVE • HOMER, ALASKA 99603
PHONE 235-8777

Lots & lots of

**Bedding plants – flowers, tomatoes, vegetables, herbs – seeds,
garden supplies, fertilizers, soils, chicks,
and more!**

Monday -Friday 9:30-6:30, Saturday 9:30-6:00, Sunday 12:00-5:00

Maintain your garden with help from
JUST ASK RENTAL, featuring
mowers, weed eaters, tillers, thatchers,
landscape tools, and much more -
including heavy equipment.

Ulmer's
Drug & Hardware



Located at
the Lakeside Mall
at 3858 Lake Street
235-8594

Let ULMER'S help make
your garden a
showplace with our
great assortment of
yard ornaments and
planters.

Serving Homer
gardeners for over
30 years!

(Continued from page 6)

3. And reciprocate by posting offers. Time Credits would be given back to you for offering help in other ways. Examples include:

- **Providing X number of vegetables for 1 TC:** People within the community who generate TCs may be able to get a number of specified vegetables from your garden.
- **Posting skills or work you would be willing to help someone else with**
- **Posting Tools/Equipment that you would be willing to lend out**
- **Growing starts for other gardens.**
- **Hosting Educational Sessions:** People within the community could come to an informational gar-

dening session if you wanted to reach a larger audience. TCs would be received from each person attending.

Time Banking is not limited to only gardening. You may request help and offer help for as many different things as you can think of. Our mission is to create a strong community by matching unmet needs with untapped resources. We help people help each other.

* REMEMBER: We facilitate exchanges only and incur no liability. Use the same judgment and negotiating skills as if trading with a friend. There is never any correlation to dollar value.

For more information and help starting an account :
Homer Time Bank Trainings

**Mondays April 2nd, April 9th, and April 16th, April 30th
and
Thursdays April 26th and May 3rd**

All at the Kachemak Bay College 5:30 – 6:30pm

Ask your friends to join!

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 Pioneer Garden
 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

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

