

Homer Garden Club

Newsletter

April 2024

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The next HGC meeting will be **April 21** at the Aspen Hotel at 2:00 for both Zoom and in person.

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At April 21 Meeting Teena Garay Will Discuss Things She Has Learned Gardening in Homer

Teena Garay has been gardening passionately and obsessively for 33 years in Homer and 13 years prior on the Washington coast. She enjoys every aspect of gardening from collecting seed in the wild, searching out seed companies that offer seed for our zone 4/5, and growing perennials, shrubs and trees that she has started from seed or purchased from specialty and local nurseries. She is always thinking of how to combine everything in their proper microclimate, color, texture and bloom time. She grows a large vegetable garden for her second passion, which is cooking. She uses her own organic compost for fertilizer.

Teena's first garden at 880 feet was in Sunset magazine, Horticulture magazine, and on the cover of Sunset's garden design book. Her current garden at 632' feet has been on the Homer Garden Tour three times.

She will be speaking on the things she has learned gardening here in Homer.

She will cover zones, seed starting, composting, and things she grows in her vegetable garden and unheated greenhouse. She will also show slides of her favorite trees, shrubs and perennials in combinations and seasons.



Directions for April Zoom meeting are on page 3

Treasurer's Report

by Kendall Dellaesperanza, Treasurer

Homer Garden Club Treasurer's Report for March 2024

Income

Membership	\$50.00	
Merchandise sales	\$50.00	
Total Income		<u>\$100.00</u>

Expenses

Aspen Hotel Venue	\$200.00	
Speaker Honorarium	\$200.00	
Speaker expenses	\$403.58	
Garden tour medallions	\$176.43	
Total Expenses		<u>\$980.01</u>

Checking Beginning Balance 3/01/2024	\$	5,261.08
Income	\$	100.00
Expenses	\$	980.01
CD dividend	\$	37.03
Interest	\$	0.21
Ending Balance 3/31/2024	\$	4,418.31
Money Market Beginning Balance 3/01/2024	\$	6,118.42
Interest	\$	1.04
Money Market Ending Balance 3/31/2024	\$	6,119.46

CD Beginning Balance 3/01/2024 6 month term	\$	5,000.00
Interest [received at maturity (08/19/2024)]	\$	-
12 month term (maturity 2/19/25)	\$	10,000.00
Interest (transferred to checking)	\$	-
CD Ending Balance 3/31/2024	\$	15,000.00

Total Ending Balance 3/31/2024	\$	25,537.77
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BAYCREST GARDEN CLEANUP

Join us all at the HGC garden at the Baycrest Overlook, Saturday, May18th at 10AM. It's time to do the spring clean-up of the garden. **This is truly a fun event!** With many hands, it takes only about 1½ to 2 hours. This year we will be dividing some of the plants, so *bring your shovel*. Also *bring your favorite hand tools, and something to drink*. Feel free to bring a friend as well. **All are welcome**. Senior gardeners will be there to guide inexperienced folks.

We'll provide trash bags, some long handled tools, compost and top dressing. Those of you who need vegetation for your compost pile are welcome to take the spent foliage home.

Will April (Snow) Showers Bring May Flowers?

Despite Mother Nature having a good laugh at all of us with a surprise April 1 blizzard, we have some great gardening talks and opportunities coming up this Spring. Our monthly April and May meetings with great speakers, and the May Baycrest Cleanup and Plant Sale are always fun activities. Sign up to volunteer and have fun outside with us!

Once again our April meeting will be both in person at the Aspen Hotel (treats and socializing!) and on Zoom. Here's the info to join the Zoom meeting:

Topic: Homer Garden Club - April Meeting

Time: Apr 21, 2024 02:00 PM Alaska

Meeting link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84013829682?pwd=awu7B8vI7eRJB4uFMvuzfMyYV6tgaX.1>

Meeting ID: 840 1382 9682

Passcode: 795604

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March Meeting Minutes

by Tina Seaton

President Kathy Dube' brought the meeting to order at 2:07

Announcements – The Alaska Botanical Garden will hold a gardening conference March 23 -24 in Anchorage.

Additions to Agenda – No additions to the Agenda.

Secretary's Report – Tina announced that the minutes from the February meeting can be found in the email newsletter and on the website.

Treasurer's Report – Kendall re-

ported that the Club has a total of \$26, 379.50, including a \$15,000. CD that matured, resulting in a \$516. dividend. \$10,000. has been reinvested in a 12 mo. CD at 4.45%, \$5,000 has been reinvested in a 6 mo. CD with a monthly dividend at 4.1% interest. Louise reported on the income side and said we have 111 members. She said there will be a special tour for members this summer. Membership is still a bargain at \$10 per year! She

noted that we have t shirts, gardening aprons and the Garden Club book, Kachemak Cultivating from Seaside to Summit for sale at meetings.

Committee Reports

Speaker's Committee – Jan reported that Teena Garay will present on perennials at the April meeting and Brenda Adams will present on garden design at the May meeting. Jan has been doing the VP job for 5

(Continued on page 4)

(March Minutes
Continued from page 3)

-6 years and will be resigning after the May meeting. This is a board seat that can be filled by two people. Please speak to Kathy if you are interested.

Social Committee - There will be a potluck at the September meeting.

Garden Tour – The Garden Tour will be July 14th with 5 gardens to visit. Sign-up sheets will be passed around for volunteers to sign up for two hour shifts as hosts. Starting June 1st, tickets can be purchased through the mail (send your name, email, and phone number along with a check made out to Homer Garden Club for the number of tickets (\$15/each) being purchased to the Homer Garden Club, PO Box 2388, Homer, AK 99603). Tickets purchased through the mail will be available at "Will Call" on the day of the tour and on the Friday and Saturday preceding the tour.

Baycrest Garden Committee – Brenda noted that volunteers take care of the garden in the summer. It requires 2 people to sign up for each week to weed and deadhead. There will be a May cleanup for all members to help with: clean up dead plant material and put down compost.

It is a fun time to get together. This year plants need to be divided and potted up so they can be sold at the plant sale. The cleanup will be May 18th, one week ahead of the plant sale, May 25th.

Plant Sale – Sally announced that we have pots and can help anyone dig up plants for the plant sale. Contact Sally if you would like help or need pots. Plants will need to be brought between 8:30 – 9 am on May 25th. Mark the plant name and flower color if possible. Please save flat boxes from soda or beer and bring them to the sale.

Speaker

Kyra Wagner introduced Ellie VandeVisse who has run a market garden, school garden, CSAs and written a book titled "Ask Mother Nature". She teaches at Mat Su College and has been called the 'compost queen'.

Ellie started her presentation emphasizing the importance of giving plants the nutrients they need. Two important elements that are not native to Alaskan soils are Boron and Calcium. Boron is very important but necessary in only very tiny amounts. 1 tsp. per acre is the proper amount! Too much is toxic – 2-5 ppm and more. Too little is less than .8 ppm. A soil test will tell you what you need. Lab tests require

interpretation which Homer Soil & Water provides.

Boron is found in greensand, rock phosphate, kelp, Maxicrop, both liquid and granular fish fertilizer, and Borax - which is 11.3% - 14.5% boron.

Ellie said all disease is a result of mineral deficiency. With our cold Alaskan soils, both foliar feeding and drenching the root zone are the best way to get fertilizer to the roots.

Boron and calcium work together to prevent problems like blossom end rot, strengthen cell walls, etc.

Ellie described how to make Calcium liquid from vinegar and eggshells. This is fun to mix up with kids – the eggshells start dancing!

See attached Boron and Calcium fertilizer spray for recipe (*on HGC website*)

Drench the roots when transplanting and again in mid-season (drench and foliar spray).

For Apple trees – Use foliar spray before fruit development and drench the dripline in mid-July.

Soil samples can be taken to Homer Soil and Water. Their staff will make interpretations of lab results and suggest soil amendments.

The next meeting will be April 21
Attendees – 29

The meeting ended at 3:54



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Homer Garden Club Plant Sale 5/25/24

by Sally Coleman

Hello Gardeners!! We have a date set for our WONDERFUL, BOUNTIFUL and FUN **Plant Sale**...

At our last Homer Garden Club meeting we decided to set **our plant sale date for Saturday, May 25' 2024.**

We are feeling optimistic that this date for the sale will give our gardens time to thaw, dry a bit and green up. Our hope is that you will be dividing some plants that have gotten too big or maybe sharing some seedlings that you have too many of (remember, flowers and veggies are both popular!!). Additionally, the club will be doing our **Annual Baycrest Clean Up Event on May 18th** and our intention is to divide and remove some of the plants from this garden so we can sell these hardy and beautiful plants at our plant sale.

I have gotten quite a few pots, in a variety of shapes, style and sizes that can be used for anyone who needs pots for plants they are dividing. I will purchase a big bag of soil that we can use to pot any plants

you remove and want help with. I will also purchase simple plant tags that you can use to identify your plants. I am very willing to help with digging, dividing and potting of plants, so please call me if I can help you.

On the day of the sale we will **arrive at the Homer Chamber of Commerce between 8:30 to 9:00 am** for set up. Volunteers are needed to help set up tables, canopies, place and arrange plants for sale and establish the plant sale perimeter. Additional help will be needed for posting signs for the plant type, pricing plants and ringing up plants as they are sold. As always, **the sale will begin at 11:00** and will go quickly. Help taking down all tables, canopies and other miscellaneous jobs at the end of the event will be needed too. Please take a look at your schedules and see how you can help on this important day. We will have coffee, snacks and garden club merchandise

available for sale during the Plant Sale.

I can be reached at 805-746-4148 to answer questions or to set up times to help you in your garden!!

Thank you in advance for your contribution to this exciting fundraising event!

Sally Coleman, 805-746 -4148 and sallyjcoleman@gmail.com



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Invasives

by Tina Seaton

I attended a special talk on Invasive weeds last month at the Kachemak Bay Science Conference. Rosie Masui, from Kachemak Bay Research Reserve talked about the usual suspects such as Orange Hawkweed and Reed Canarygrass, but she emphasized that by the time the public becomes aware that a certain species is invasive, it is nearly too late, and eradication is unlikely. She said at that point there is runaway spread and runaway costs to deal with it.

She spent quite a bit of time talking about the European Bird Cherry (also called May Day Tree) that adorns many yards in the Homer area. They are quite lovely and bloom early, which everyone loves. But they are also invasive; poison to moose, causing cyanide gas in their stomach; and affect neighboring salmon streams by changing the insect population that provides food for the salmon. I had one spring up in my yard one year and had no idea what it was. It grew incredibly fast! The next season I was able to identify it and

learned that the only way to truly kill it is to cut it off and immediately spray an herbicide on the new cut, otherwise it will just sprout new branches.

Reed Canarygrass clogs streams and turns them into bogs. It seems to be taking over along East End Road in many places.

Rosie also talked about Elodia, an aquarium plant that has been spread by owners that dump out their tanks into streams.

Prevention is important in controlling all invasives. Cleaning footwear, boats and motors and dirt-moving machinery can go a long way to keep invasives from spreading. Alaska certified weed-free gravel is now available. It takes 2 years to be certified.

Jasmine Maurer, also from Kachemak Bay Research Reserve, talked about a Green crab invasion that was first discovered on Annette Island in

2022. These crabs burrow in the sand and sea bottom, voraciously destroying eel grass beds which house and feed so many species. These crabs are not necessarily green but have 5 spines on either side of the eyes. If you find one on the beach, or even if you find a molted shell, report to the hotline: 1-877-INVASIV. So far, these crabs have not been found in central Alaska, but everyone is keeping an eye out in case they appear!



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Summer Garden Tour

by Francie Roberts

There are five beautiful gardens featured in this year's garden tour, happening on July 21st. One garden is a magnificent view property with peonies, high tunnels and outdoor gardens. Another takes you on a walk on the wild side of the Homer bench to a Monet-like setting of flowers laid out with novel use of pallets, halibut poles and golf clubs. Up against the bluff, a shade garden amongst towering cottonwoods is the backdrop to showy peonies, vegetable boxes, fruit trees and a hothouse. A fourth garden is a masterful mix of flowers, vegetables, fruit trees, berries and high tunnel, all nurtured with devotion. Lastly, a meander amongst old growth spruce trees, fruit trees and berries reveals plots of wild, native flowers, vegetables and other blooms, adorned with found objects and pieces from the resident pottery studio.

Tickets for \$15 go on sale at the

May Homer Garden Club meeting. They will also be available at the Annual Plant Sale in May. The tickets may be purchased after June 1 at the Homer Bookstore (cash or check only).

The small garden tour, free and open to members only will be the afternoon of July 10th. So far the only garden available to visit is the local mushroom farm. If you would like to share your garden with a smaller group of people, contact one of the committee members.

The success of this event depends on volunteers. Please sign up at



Photo courtesy of Teena Garay

the April or May meeting to hostess or sell tickets. Volunteers and one guest are invited to the Afterparty Tuesday after the tour.

Contacts: Francie Roberts francie.roberts@gmail.com or Annie Oberlitner annobe@gmail.com

Nomads of Spring

by Jessica Shepherd (Shepherd in the Garden)

While the calendar promises spring, winter is still hard upon us. Four inches of snow fell overnight to grace the alders and freshen the eclipsed landscape. At first light, the nuthatch and chickadees come looking for food. I step into boots and trudge outside to spill sunflower seeds into the feeders and on the ground while they watch from a safe distance. Soon, the pine siskins swoop in, making the feeders sway under their slight weight even before I reach the door.

The theatre of birds is a welcome distraction when I feel trapped inside by arctic winds and icy roads. The feeders hang beyond my office windows, allowing me to note the rare visit from a hairy wood-

pecker or the swirl of birds spooked by the slow-moving shadow of an eagle.

While the food lasts, our yard will be awash in birds. Pine siskins top the list in terms of numbers, with upwards of a hundred of them eating or waiting their turn. The woods around our cabin ring with the "zeet-zeeet" of their calls. Despite their small size, a single siskin will lay claim to a feeder with wings spread and bill ready to drive away the less aggressive red poles, which are shy by compari-



son. Chickadees and nuthatch rely on stealth, darting in to snatch a seed before flitting off to eat in the nearby alders.

Recently, I caught glimpses of a red-bodied bird with black wings, cryptic amid the trees. The next day, a trio of them gathered under a spruce stand outside my kitchen

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*(Nomads of Spring
Continued from page 7)*

window, allowing me the chance to study them with binoculars. While they resembled pine grosbeaks, which we see throughout the year, they were much smaller. With a scissor-like action, they worked their longer top bill crosswise

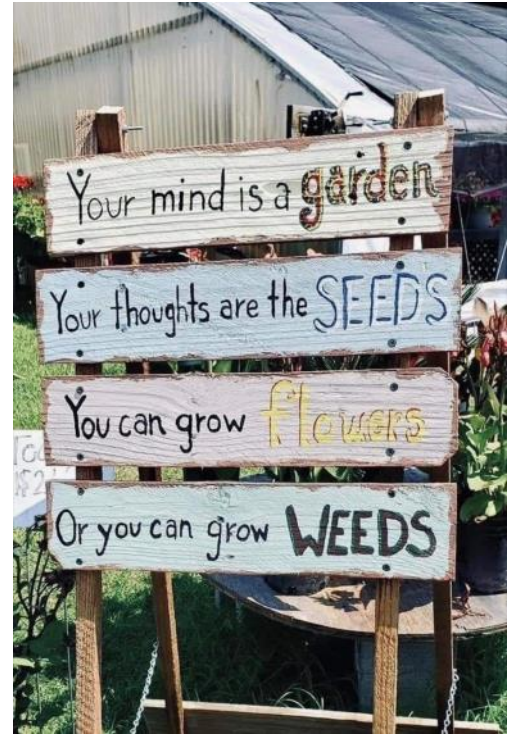


against the lower bill, deftly picking seeds from cones cluttering the forest floor. Their name, white-winged crossbill, undersells their appeal. The adult males are brilliant red, with a small white bar on their black wings. The immature

males are a vibrant orange, while the females maintain a muted yellow.

Curious about this population boom in both the siskins and crossbills, I queried Homer birder extraordinaire, George Matts. He emailed back, "These are nomadic species that overwinter where there is an abundance of seed. The big spruce cone crop we had last spring, which was triggered by the drought the previous spring, has served that purpose."

As the days grow longer, with sun enough to warm my face and the expectation of varied thrush and robins any day, there's no place I'd rather be than here. Maybe it is the nature of women and birds to respond to that pull for seasonal flight. Once our wanderlust is sated, we're content to return to the flock and ready our nests for the coming season.



Here are the April refreshment people: Louise Ashmun - Sally Coleman - Carrie Longpre

Homer Garden Club
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