Homer Garden Club Meeting Minutes

 November 18, 2018

The November meeting of the Homer Garden Club was called to order at 2:00 PM by President Kathy Dube’. The well-attended meeting was held in the upper meeting room of the Bidarka. The next general meeting will be held on January 20 as there is no December meeting.

Visitors, Carolyn Raikis, Ole Anderson and Jinkie Handy were introduced. No special announcements by the membership were made.

Secretary’s report: Roni Overway thanked Sharon Wilson for taking minutes for her in October during Roni’s absence.

Treasurer’s report: Louise Ashmun reported a current treasury balance of $18,022.16.

Jan Peyton, who, with Renee Patten, are co-vice presidents, announced that the January speaker will be Brenda Adams. Her topic will be the Baycrest Garden from its inception until the present.

There were no other committee reports. A report on Gardeners’ Weekend 2019 and sign up sheets for volunteers will be available at the January meeting.

Barb Kennedy, data base manager, reminded people that their annual dues were due the first of October. About ½ of the membership have paid. She will be sending out reminders. She also advised at gardening aprons were available at the front of the room.

Kathy reported on the progress of the gardening book, *Kachemak Cultivating, from Seaside to Summit*. The book is almost complete and she’s hoping that by the end of the day it would be ready for the publisher. It is hoped that it will be in the bookstore and available to members in time for Christmas.

Kathy then introduced Beau Burgess, the day’s guest speaker, whose topic was pond building. Beau is CEO of two companies, Blood Sweat and Food Farms ([www.bloodsweatfood.com](http://www.bloodsweatfood.com)) as well as Southern Exposure, LLC ([www.southernexposurellc.com](http://www.southernexposurellc.com)).

Pond building is just one of the services offered by Southern Exposure which was founded in 2006. Also included are topsoil, compost, mulch, woodchips, gravel and rock.

Beau began by explaining that there can be both inside and outside ponds. Inside the “pond” might take the form of an aquaponics growing environment while outside ponds can serve many purposes including fire suppression, irrigation, and aesthetics. It is possible to begin by designing a pond that will fulfil the former purposes and then address latter. One of the questions that needs to be answered is how much water is needed and then whether the pond will need a liner or not. Another is how the water will get to the pond. A *large* pond is defined as over .5 acres and is best for a 3 acre or larger site.  *Medium* would be about 1000 sq. for a .5 acr lot. Then, a *small* pond would be under 1000 sq. feet for lots smaller than ½ acre. The size of the property and, thus, the size of the pond, should be adequate for its intended use. Is that aquaculture, animal habitat for animals and birds, irrigation, fire suppression (large), aquaponics, high tunnel use, thermal ballasting, storm runoff retention (medium) or irrigation, storm runoff retention, indoor aquaponics, or a central landscape feature (small)? It might also serve as part of a stream system.

Soils and geology play a part in helping to determine if the pond can be created by digging or damming. Most ponds at lower elevations will hit the water table at 4 to 5 feet, and with Homer’s clayey soils should not require a liner. Water quality should be tested as arsenic and iron are found in Homer water that hasn’t been filtered. City water should have chlorine filtered out as well. Water testing can be done through NRCS with kits they provide but are then mailed off for testing.

Other considerations would include what the effect the pond might have on down-slope properties. Permitting might be required and, if in doubt, people should check with the borough or the state. No more than 25% of stream water should be diverted and no streams with salmon should be disturbed. Fish and Game should be consulted.

Pond resources include: USDA handbook 590 on planning, design and construction and the USDA Soils tool on line.

If a liner is employed there are cautions. A 45-mil food-safe EPDM material over felt or typar is optimal and is available at Alaska Mill and Feed. Water running off a metal roof into a catchment system of some sort would be safe for animals and plant life, but not off shingles although a sand filter can be built. Fire suppression kits are available for use in large ponds. They include a gas driven pump (electricity may be out in a large fire), a hose 2” in diameter and a nozzle.

Another subject covered by Beau was proper aeration of the pond since water should move and not become stagnant. A fountain which sends water into the air provides a better form of aeration that a bubbler.

Beau’s presentation was extremely detailed, and the necessary considerations are numerous. He strongly recommends that those considering building a pond of any size and for any use should consult a professional.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roni Overway, Recording Secretary