

# Homer Garden Club

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There will not be another HGC meeting until the Zoom meeting in January 2021

**November/December 2020**

# Newsletter

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## Next HGC Meeting will be in January as a Zoom Meeting with Leah Wagner

Leah Wagner is the founder and co-owner of Foundroot, a small farm and seed company in Haines, Alaska. Their mission is to develop resilient northern communities and a secure Alaskan food system by growing flower, herb, and vegetable seed varieties adapted to the Alaskan bioregion. Foundroot began as an online seed retailer solely focused on the Alaska market nine years ago and expanded into a full farm operation three seasons ago. They have sent over 40,000 packets



Leah Wagner, Nick Schlosstein

### Class Description: **Seeds 101**

In this class Leah will walk us through all things seeds. Learn about variety selection for northern gardens, best practices for growing directly from seed, beginner seed saving techniques, and why the seeds you purchase can make a lasting impact on our food security. Leah will explain the work Foundroot is doing to breed seeds for Alaska's climate and how you can get involved. We will have ample time for you to ask all your seed-related questions. This class is friendly for beginner and seasoned gardeners alike.

of seeds to over 70 communities statewide and throughout the lower 48.



# Treasurer Report

by Louise Ashmun, Treasurer

## Homer Garden Club Monthly Treasurer Report for October 2020

### Income

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

### Expenses

Speaker Honorarium	\$100.00	
Newsletter	\$61.30	
WIX Webpage	\$168.00	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b><u>\$329.30</u></b>

Checking Beginning Balance 10/01/2020	\$	4,113.30
Income	\$	10.00
Expenses	\$	329.30
Interest	\$	0.17
Ending Balance 10/31/2020	\$	<u>3,794.17</u>
Money Market Beginning Balance 10/01/2020	\$	15,051.03
Interest	\$	<u>1.92</u>
Money Market Ending Balance 10/31/2020	\$	15,052.95
		\$
Total Ending Balance 09/30/2020		<u>18,847.12</u>

# October Zoom Meeting Available Online

by Kathy Dube

### October Meeting Available to Watch Online!

In case you missed the excellent presentation by Ellen Vande Visse on Composting at our October meeting – or if you just want to watch it again – it is available to watch online at the following link:

**Topic:** Homer Garden Club Meeting  
**Date :** Oct 18, 2020

### Meeting Recording Link:

<https://zoom.us/rec/share/xT9I9TVnvC8Kixp-UZbOUaaCdQEa7UnvXaS0FqhxiZW2ZvESck4XIZr-waNwAxqx.VrB-YBS3OQf5BW29>

**Access Passcode:** PgV6wL&v





## Hunkering Down in Our Little Town

by Jessica Shepard, MFA

This fall, bracing for winter's isolation compounded by a pandemic, we relish autumn's lingering warmth and light – gravitating outside and down the road to visit neighbors who, without spoken agreement, form our COVID-safe sphere.

Already mornings are frosty and the dogs snuggle together on the couch as the woodstove slowly warms the house. Outside my kitchen window magpies swoop over the garden and descend on the compost pile where they feast on pumpkin seeds and apple peels. If this year's bears were not so hungry and bold after a poor berry crop and a dismal fishing run, I would hang birdfeeders to draw in chickadees and nuthatches. I pity the bears, facing winter with empty bellies, but I fear what desperation brings out in them.

At noon, as the sun emerges from low clouds and the temperature climbs above freezing, I shut off the computer, intent on savoring the best hours of the day. I don boots and a hooded jacket, grab a handful of dog treats, and step out into the tawny smell of moldering leaves, fresh cut firewood, and last night's rain. I gather gloves, pruners and a battery-powered Sawzall and head to the neighbor's house. A pond at the juncture of our lot lines glints with a stencil of ice and the birch trees stand stark against a blue sky. Their golden leaves crunch under foot.

My neighbor Kate has a robust lilac bush obscuring her view of the bay and I've offered to prune it back for her. The dogs run rampant on her expansive lawn as I set to work, and Kate comes out to visit. In a short-sleeved tee-shirt, she seems impervious to the cool weather. Our conversation is routine but we both

appear to need the interaction. I take my time pruning, stepping back to get a look at my work as I remove tall branches and leave the fullness of lower branches. Meanwhile, Kate pulls on gloves and hauls the cut limbs off to a small brush pile on the edge of her yard.

Later, back home, I set to work on our tatty flower beds, cropping tall iris, monks hood with their seed pods and coppered ferns. I can't bring myself to remove the still-flowering mallow, vibrant pink amid dying vegetation. The landscape grows more somber by the hour as a sharp breeze strips leaves from the alders. Conversely, we gain a better view of Kachemak Bay and the Kenai Mountains beyond. We can see the Ice bergs on Grewingk Glacier Lake. They crowd the shore like milky blue tombstones in a watery graveyard.



Neighbors Dave and Melisse, out for their daily walk, come ambling up the road. They lost their old dog Quito a few weeks back and her absence feels like a curly-tailed specter between them. My husband Hal and I leave our tasks and hurry to catch up with them, glad for a chance to visit. They fill us in on a recent (dogless) road trip to Talkeet-

na and we bemoan our own lack of travel plans. I wonder, but not aloud, how we'll ride the tidal wave of melancholy brought on by winter's darkness and a prolonged quarantine. Will we still celebrate holidays with these friends as we have in years past?

Over the summer and well into the fall we regularly connected with friends and neighbors on hikes and beach walks or over potlucks and drinks on the deck while observing COVID protocols. But now, cold and darkness eat away at the edges of the day. Most mornings I feel weighed down by gloom until gold light streaks the sky. At dinnertime I wither as the sky fades to gray.

I remind myself how fortunate we are. Working from home, we have health care coverage, enough food in the cupboard to see us through short supply disruptions, and we're not in danger of eviction. While we miss family and friends in the lower 48 and beyond, Homer is a fine place to hunker down.

For now, as the sun warms our hair and light lingers among the trees, we'll make the most of these fall days, arms wrapped around ourselves for warmth and comfort. Glad for an unmasked face, a bit of gossip, an unrestrained laugh.



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

## OFFICER REPORTS

**President** Kathy welcomed participants and invited non-members to join the club. Mention of dues waiver and future Jan 17<sup>th</sup> meeting (details below)

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

**Treasurer** Currently in the account - \$19,164.33. The 2019/2020 fiscal year accounts are ready for auditing by Julie. We 'raised' very little in funds this year due to no fundraising events being held and no requirement for paying club dues but we are financially sound and will hopefully have some modified fundraisers next year

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS.** The current slate of officers having expressed their willingness to continue, and with no new nominations or volunteers, the following were presented for approval by the members

*President* Kathy Dube  
*Vice Pres Co-Chairs*  
Sally Coleman & Jan Peyton  
*Treasurer* Louise Ashmun  
*Recording Secretary*  
Ruth Dickerson  
*Historian* Elaine Burgess  
*Past President* Francie Roberts  
*Social* Michael Murray  
*Publicity Chair* Julie Parizek\*  
*Newsletter* Paula Riley  
*Database* Barbara Kennedy

\*Julie willing to continue until/unless a substitute is found  
Motion to approve: Kathy Ulmer  
Seconded: Brenda Adams & Barb Kennedy. A unanimous 'aye' vote.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Data Base** 69 current memberships have been rolled over (without annual dues) to next year. We have 352 followers on Facebook. Suggested a post be made encouraging

folks to join the club (and pay dues).

**Gardener's Weekend** Hoping to have an event next summer. Gardeners who were willing to host this year are open to being on the tour – some quite disappointed to not have the opportunity this year.

**Baycrest Gardens** Brenda reported a 'good summer' with gratitude to a few faithful volunteers. The camera is safely stored with Francie, the beds are ready for winter with some tall grasses still standing proud. Agreed that they 'looked terrific' this summer!

**Social Committee** An easy job. Hope you enjoyed your own cup of tea during the meeting.

**Newsletter** Please email Paula with articles you would like to include. She keeps doing a marvelous job.

**Publicity** Julie would like to add new pictures to the website. Please submit/share your photos.

**Speakers** The speakers for Jan 17<sup>th</sup> will be Nick Schlosstein & Leah Wagoner of 'Foundroot' in Haines. They are a farm and seed company and will share knowledge and experience on seed saving and use.

## GUEST SPEAKER – ELLEN VANDE VISSE on COMPOSTING

The presentation was recorded by Kathy Dube and there will be a link on the website for listening. Also Ellen shares an amazing amount of information through her highly recommended Good Earth Garden School on her website [ellenvandevisse.com](http://ellenvandevisse.com)

### Introduced by Jan

Ellen is known as the Compost Queen. She plays with things decaying & rotten. She brews concoctions in her cauldron then pours the magic upon her plants. Which also earns her the title of 'Dirty Nerdy'. The best way to communicate with

Ellen is to lay yourself down upon the earth and message her through the mycorrhizal web. (had to look up that spelling!)

### My garnered tidbits

Anyone can do it – whether you want to be scientific or 'neglectful'.

The goal is to keep the nematodes, actinomycetes and other little critters happy and breeding. One cannot see these little marvels, you just have to believe in them and be grateful for them. Please keep them moist, don't let them shrivel up and die. You want them to munch, munch, munch.

Basic magic formula is 2 parts brown to one part green. Browns include the leaves you will rake up and save NOW. Fresh live-stock manure, use that urine. Add some molasses to help heat it up or stir in pulverized Halloween candy!  
Ellen adds weeds with seeds if she is 'hot composting' – they will not live to reproduce.  
Throw in the rhubarb leaves but NOT the store-bought floral bouquets.

Perforated pipe can help the pile to breathe and lessen the need to turn.

Ellen also shared helpful information on cover cropping and offered to do a future session with us on Carbon Farming. Please listen to the recording for lots more details.

Ellen loves to share her wealth of knowledge. Access to her website is free and all are invited to sign up for her News Bulletin.

**Because of the upcoming holidays, there will not be a newsletter in December.**

Preparing sprouts at home has now become a weekly thing for me. I absolutely adore sprouted foods and all of their many benefits. But, I have to be honest when I tell you the sprouts they sell at the store creep me out, a bit. Knowing just how short their shelf life is, it makes it hard for me to believe they are fresh and that their exposure to harmful bacteria has been limited. I would much prefer to make my own at home, where I know how fresh they are and exactly how they were handled. I started doing this late last year and I have become obsessed.

Sprouting is a way of creating “living plants”, loaded with nutrients and vitamins such as Vitamin C, B, E and carotene. Some believe sprouted foods contain up to 15 times as many nutrients as their unsprouted counterparts. Sprouting also helps the absorption of minerals due to their ability to be better digested. Some people refer to sprouted foods as “pre-digested”, for this reason.

Sprouting takes time, but it’s much more of a waiting game, it doesn’t require a ton of work. Sprouted foods simply requires you to have patience and to be paying attention, tracking their sprouting time and making sure to tend to them, when needed. That’s about it.

## WHY SPROUT?

Many nuts, seeds, legumes and grains contain natural chemicals that protect them while growing, both from sprouting prematurely and also from predators. These protectors also act as enzyme inhibitors to us, meaning we get much less of the crucial nutrients from these foods than we should be. Plus, this “armor”, of sorts, makes digesting them much more difficult. Soaking these foods releases these chemicals, helping you to absorb your food’s essential minerals and nutrients. Additionally, by soaking the nuts with the removal of these nutritional inhibitors and toxic substances,

the flavor and taste is much more ideal and appealing.

So, we are back to the soaking idea again. Soaking is not only necessary for sprouting to occur, but we are also unlocking the full nutritional potential of these foods. After soaking, when that natural protective armor has been removed, the sprouting process can then occur. So basically, if soaking is the first step of increasing the nutritional benefits of these foods, then sprouting is the incredible finishing move to creating the perfect nutritional superfood out of something that would otherwise leave us feeling bloated and tired, due to the strain they would typically put on our digestion.

Sprouted foods, also known as “activated foods” are incredibly nutrient dense foods, they encourage production of healthy bacteria that aids in our digestion and in turn, boosts our immunity. Sprouts are great on salads, on top of soups or stews, in stir fries, inside of wraps or sandwiches, in smoothies – really they are great in any dish that you want to add a nutritional boost to.

## WHAT CAN YOU SPROUT?

Most seeds, legumes, grains and some nuts will sprout, but be aware some will not. Because many nuts you find in the stores have been pasteurized or treated with heat in some way, they aren’t technically raw and although soaking can activate and allow us access to their nutrients, sprouting likely won’t happen. Oftentimes, when I am simply looking for traditional sprouts, I will buy premixed ready to sprout blends of organic seeds and legumes exclusively meant for sprouting. It gives me a nice wide variety and I know that, since everything in the blend is meant for sprouting, it will do just that.



Once sprouted, you can also cook grains and legumes, as you normally would. Sprouted quinoa cooked in place of regular quinoa, is one of my favorite things as are sprouted lentils. Once sprouted, grains and legumes not only cook quicker than their dried counterparts, but they are, as you now know, much easier to digest and taste much better, as well.

## CONTAMINATION

Much like fermented or cultured foods, sprouted foods are susceptible to contamination from bacterial growth. If you take great care in keeping a clean environment, tools and hands, and you should be more than OK. I have never had an issue. In fact, I feel much better about consuming my own sprouts, where I am careful, rather than sprouts that sat on the shelf of the grocery store for who knows how long, traveling through god-knows what to get there. Always store your finished sprouts in the fridge, in a covered glass container and consume within a few days.

Some professionals recommend cooking your sprouts. I have never found this to be necessary.

**HOW-TO SPROUT:**  
SOAK



## SOAKING & SPROUTING CHART

### SEEDS, BEANS & GRAINS

FOOD	SOAKING TIME	SPROUTING TIME
ADZUKI BEANS	8 HOURS	3-5 DAYS
ALFALFA	8 HOURS	2-5 DAYS
ALMONDS*	8-12 HOURS	1-3 DAYS
AMARANTH	8 HOURS	1-3 DAYS
BLACK BEANS	8-12 HOURS	3 DAYS
BUCKWHEAT	6 HOURS	1-2 DAYS
CHICKPEAS	12 HOURS	1-3 DAYS
FENUGREEK	8 HOURS	3-5 DAYS
LENTILS	8 HOURS	2-3 DAYS
MILLET	6 HOURS	1-2 DAYS
MUNG BEANS	8-12 HOURS	3-5 DAYS
MUSTARD SEEDS	8 HOURS	2-3 DAYS
OAT GROATS	6 HOURS	2-3 DAYS
PUMPKIN SEEDS	8 HOURS	1-3 DAYS
QUINOA	5 HOURS	1-3 DAYS
RADISH SEEDS	8-12 HOURS	3-4 DAYS
SESAME SEEDS	8 HOURS	1-3 DAYS
SUNFLOWER SEEDS	6 HOURS	1-2 DAYS
RICE	9 HOURS	3-5 DAYS

\* Most nuts will not sprout, almonds will, if they are truly raw (not pasteurized or treated with heat)

**To Soak:** Place the food in a glass bowl or jar and fill with filtered or purified water, making sure to cover completely. Cover the jar or bowl and leave in a cool spot or the refrigerator for the above listed soak time. Drain, discard the soaking water and rinse with fresh water.

**You are now ready to sprout!**

Please see the step-by-step tutorial on how to sprout.



BROUGHT TO YOU BY: TASTY-YUMMIES.COM

### SOAK

Soak your seeds (beans and/or grains) in a wide mouth mason jar with fitted with either a spouting lid, a sprouting screen or a piece of cheesecloth big enough to cover the opening, held on with the jar's metal ring or a rubber band. Cover the goods you are sprouting with at least 2 to 3 times as much filtered water. When making sprouts for salads, I usually go with 1-2 tablespoons of a seed legume blend and approximately 2-3 cups water. Allow to soak for the appropriate time (see chart) on the countertop. The blend, that I have been using, calls for soaking 8 hours, so I get it

set up to soak overnight and do the remaining steps the next day.

### DRAIN

To drain, pour out the water through the cheesecloth or the sprouting lid, run fresh water through the lid and over the food, shake to rinse thoroughly. Drain again and repeat one more time. After draining the water out, make sure the lid is fitted on securely and tip the jar upside down into a bowl, so any excess water drains out. I place my draining jar under a dark towel on the countertop, basically you just want it out of direct sunlight and at room temperature.

Continue this rinsing and draining process every 8 hours or so, or at least twice a day, until the food is done sprouting.

Most foods will start sprouting on day 1 and will be fully sprouted in 1 to 4 days. The sprouts are ready when you can see little tails, 1/8-inch to 2-inches in length. For grains and legumes, they are about the same length as the original food, pre-sprouting. Once the sprouts are ready, I give them a final rinse and place the jar in a sun lit area for about an hour or so, to green them up a bit and make sure they are fully dry. Damp sprouts will spoil. Once dry, add the regular metal lid back to the jar and store in the fridge.

### STORAGE

When sprouting grains, once they are ready – refrigerate them. sprouts will keep 2 to 3 days. Enjoy on salads, on top of soups or stews, in stir fries, inside of wraps or sandwiches, in smoothies – really they are great in any dish that you want to add a nutritional boost to. You can also dehydrate the sprouted grains to grind into a homemade sprouted flour.

This is something I haven't tried yet, but I cannot wait to

**NOTES:** As an alternative to the jar with the sprouting lid or cheesecloth, for larger batches of sprouts many people use nut milk bags for sprouting. The process and the steps work the exact same way, but I personally find trying to come up with a way to hang the bag so the excess moisture will drain out, to be more of a pain that it's worth, so I always opt for the jar.

### EQUIPMENT

Wide mouth quart sized jar  
Sprouting lid or Sprouting Screen

Alternative to the jar and lid method: nut milk bag

### RESOURCES FOR SPROUTING SEEDS

High Mowing Seeds has an incredible selection of organic seed/legume blends for sprouting. A 4 ounce package makes you 8 batches of sprouts. A little goes a long way.

Cultures for Health has a nice selection of sprout mixes.

There is also a wide selection available on Amazon; Handy Pantry is just one of many brands selling organic sprouting seeds.

You can also find great options at your local organic grocer, oftentimes in bulk. If you are buying in bulk and are highly sensitive to gluten, please be wary of cross contamination. This is always a concern with bulk bins.

\*\* I am not affiliated with High Mowing, Cultures for Health or Handy Pantry, in any way, these are simply products and brands I have used or am aware of and I can recommend. All thoughts are my own.\*\*