

# Homer Garden Club

## Newsletter



November 2011

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The November meeting will be held November 27 at 2:00 p.m. at the Bidarka Inn, downstairs.

### Board of Directors

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## November 2011 Meeting Will Feature Paul Maramora Teaching on Bonzai Techniques



Paul Maramora has been doing bonsai for about 15 years. He said "I started when I got to Alaska—not when I lived in New York or California --where I

could play with trees year round. Pretty silly, really. I started work as a florist in 1978 and got interested in bonsai soon after that.

"The people in the Anchorage area who were interested in bonsai formed the Cook Inlet Bonsai Study Group in 1998. We found that by bouncing ideas off each other, and comparing techniques and styling, we were all able to learn a great deal more about beautiful bonsai than we ever had individually. I am accustomed to talking in front of people, so I stepped into teaching about bonsai.

"I travel a great deal for work, so my poor wife, who thinks bonsai are nice, but not worth the trouble of the upkeep, has to see to the upkeep of mine a great deal of the time. We display our trees at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer, the

Tanana Valley Fair in Fairbanks, The Alaska Botanical Garden Fair in Anchorage, and various other events. I have taught bonsai workshops at the Tanana Valley Master Gardeners Convention, at the Alaska Botanical Gardens, at UAA, and other places. We are willing to travel to share the fun of bonsai.

"One of the most common comments we hear when meeting people is, "I used to have a bonsai, but it died". We respond that we have had hundreds of bonsai die over the years. When people comment on the dead bonsai in their past, we ask what kind of tree it was. Usually it was a tree that lives outdoors (perhaps not



in Alaska) that they kept in the house. A hot, dry house results in dried out, dead trees.

(continued on page 2)

## President's Report

by Jack Regan, President

The Homer Visitors' Center would like "to say it with flowers". Director Monte Davis has proposed a landscape development project to the Homer Garden Club Board. The result would be a more attractive appearance as visitors arrive in Homer. Homer has many beautiful gardens which are off the beaten path, but the visitors' center on the Sterling Highway is one of the first places visitors encounter when they come to Homer. A landscape design plan was previously developed for the center by designer Brenda Adams, but the plan was never implemented. Several garden club board members will be reviewing that garden

design plan.

Director Davis has offered an incentive to the garden club by providing space behind the visitors' center for a community demonstration garden for educational and aesthetic purposes. He is also offering the Visitors' Center site as a location for the garden club to hold its' annual spring plant

sale. He will present these ideas to the general membership of the garden club for discussion at the November 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.



## DUES REMINDER!!!

**Your Homer Garden Club membership dues were due October 1.  
If your dues are not received in December, this is  
the last newsletter you will receive.**

## BONZAI TECHNIQUES

*(continued from page 1)*

In the beginning there is a bit of a learning curve. The first nice bonsai I bought cost about \$300. After I killed it a few months later (by keeping that lovely spruce on the dining table), my wife (whom I call She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed) decreed that from now on I would only have bonsai that I had dug up. After a while, you learn how to take care of bonsai and things start to live and even prosper.

During the presentation in November, we will speak about trees that can live indoors and look at the various styles of trees. I will work on a Ficus Retusa from a previous

workshop while we show some pictures, and talk about what has made us successful. Jerry Rogers will be along helping me. I will talk about tools and wiring and how to best care for a tree in your house. Some temperate trees need a winter, but cannot take an entire Alaskan winter. This presentation usually takes two-three hours, so it will be compressed, but give a good overview. If anyone wishes to bring a tree that they have been working

on, they would be welcome at the end. I will try to have a hand-out to take home and as a place to take notes.



Hearing about the massive storm off our northwest coast this past week, I find myself thinking about Climate Change and its effect on us here in Homer. While worldwide agriculture is being buffeted and

your food. You can then work to be more independent from the system that you loathe. The ground is frozen now so with the spring thaw I'll bring some seeds over and hope to engage them.

called the [International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development](#) in 2008. The report distilled findings from 61 countries and was

packed full of creative ideas about how to feed the world, fight poverty and address climate change in a way that brings a livelihood to the farmers.

The authors concluded that "small farms are often among the most productive in terms of output per unit of land and energy." Evidence piled up that small-scale, diverse, sustainable farms (and even home gardens) had the most potential to solve the world's hunger problems while reversing modern agriculture's devastation of our ecosystems.

Organic agriculture is currently growing by leaps and bounds. It's



Winter dinner of salmon, salad and Hubbard squash

challenged (supposedly declining at 1 percent a year because of it) we still can do pretty well in Homer. We are luckily blessed with a great place to garden.

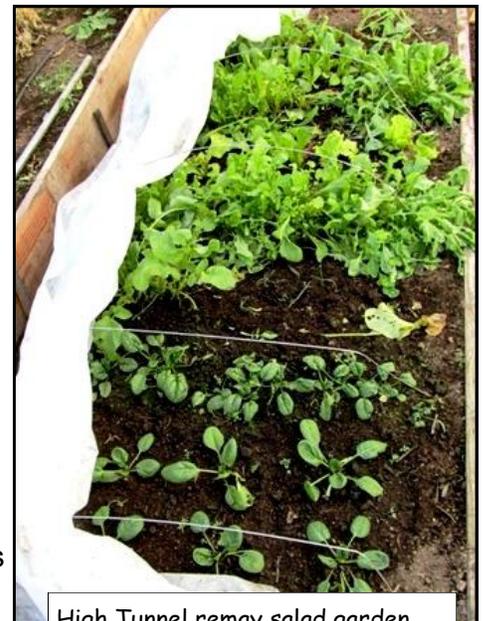
I think about, and agree with, the Occupy Movement. Corruption is rampant in that nasty 1 percent, and somehow they need to be held accountable and changed. But I wish part of that movement's en-

Really though, the Homer Garden Club should always focus on including more members and teaching new people how to get involved in gardening. If you have any ideas about this, let me know.  
With winter dropping by early last week, our vegetable season is rapidly coming to a close. We still are harvesting salad greens from our little salad green garden under remay cloth in my High Tunnel. I planted arugula, red and icicle white radish, a couple of salad lettuce mixes and spinach. Mixed into a salad with red cabbage, carrots and kohlrabi from the root cellar and ripened tomatoes brought in from our greenhouse, they are delicious. I planted the greens at the end of August and that timing was about right. The spinach seems to hold up the best to the freezing temps, but it was the slowest growing so I will plant that mid August for next year's late salads.

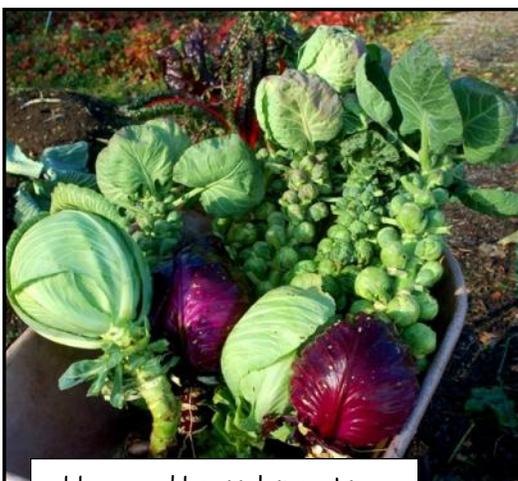
This January (because of our usual storm challenges then) we are again doing a local gardeners panel for our speakers. I'm looking for ideas on subjects and speakers. Please contact me with your ideas.

I condensed and pulled this from an article by Barbara Damrosch:

**It's a Cute Little Movement but Can It Feed the World?**  
The World Bank had a report



High Tunnel remay salad garden



cabbage and brussel sprouts with roots on for the root cellar

ergy could be grounded into the dirt. There and our local dirt. You can get positively excited about planting a garden and harvesting

been around for as long as agriculture's been around, which is to say 10,000 years. There wasn't any other kind of farming until people started using synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.

# People's Garden Grant

by Kyra Wagner

Collaboration pays off. In our town there is a group of different organizations who have been working together now for a few years trying to address issues of community health. Sure, there are organizations involved like the hospital, but community health is measured by more than physical health. That's why this collaborative effort has also included organizations like the Chamber of Commerce and the college.

Over a year ago, this network, known as MAPP (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships), identified some issue areas to focus on in the community. Since the first year of the MAPP process was collecting community data, they knew that for optimum health people need to be making their own healthy choices. As a work group began working on what that would mean, they kept coming back to the topic of food. If you grow your own food, you have outdoor activity and exercise. If you buy local food, you are improving the local economy. If you eat fresh food, you are improving your nutrition. It all makes for a healthier community.

As the year progressed, the work group learned a great deal. They learned how we have become disconnected from where our food comes from, how few people actually cook anymore, how kids no longer know how to identify vegetables, much less how to eat them. The Flex High School showed even-

plies money to a community in a large sum which is then locally broken down into micro grants of \$1000-\$5000 and distributed to local groups to build their People's Gardens. These gardens will need to be edible, recreational, or wildlife gardens used for some kind of educational purpose. This was a national grant, however, with hundreds of applicants and they only were giving out ten. But you never know until you try, right?

After a great deal of phone calls to possible recipients and collaborators, the grant was filled out and the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) took charge of hosting the grant. Out of 366 applications, Homer's application was third and received \$110,000!

The SWCD has its work cut out now to create the mechanism for distributing the micro grants throughout the community. Recipients will be expected to have "garden committees" to take on the work to help guarantee that the gardening doesn't falter. You can expect to see gardens popping up everywhere over the next couple of years so feel free to get engaged in the garden near you!



Upper row: Homer Soil & Water Conservation District Board Otto Kilcher, Pete Roberts, Tara Schmidt, Chris Rainwater, Paul Castellani; bottom row: Kyra Wagner, Devony Lehner

ryone what a big difference working in a school garden can make in the lives of students.

So when the opportunity to apply for the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) People's Garden Grant came up, it seemed like a perfect fit. This grant sup-

and a staggering number of bacteria and fungi, create soil that is not only fertile, but has a structure that makes it good at holding onto its fertility and just the right amount of moisture and air to make new plants grow.

## NEIL'S NOTES

(continued from page 3)

Our type of farming fed the world. Organics as described today may seem like a reaction against the chemical inputs that its proponents do without. I like a broader, more positive definition. It is a system

that takes all its cues from the biological systems that we can observe in nature, which go back to the development of life on this planet. The organic gardener observes that leaves fall from the trees and other plants, and are there joined by animal wastes and, with the help of worms, beetles

## October 2011

### Income

Membership	\$325.00	
Meeting		
Venue	75.00	
	<hr/>	
Total Income		<u>\$400.00</u>

### Expenses

Administration		
(Biennial Report)	\$40.00	
Meeting	100.00	
Newsletter	129.00	
	<hr/>	
Total Expenses		<u>\$269.00</u>

Beginning balance 10/1/11	\$12,801.75	
Income	400.00	
Expenses	-269.00	
	<hr/>	
Ending balance 9/30/11		<u>\$12,932.75</u>

### Secretary Position Filled

Thanks go to Jessica Ryan for volunteering to join the Homer Garden Club Board as our Recording Secretary. Jessica is certain to be a very real asset to our Board.

### Refreshments & Such....

I think most of you know the food that we enjoy at our meetings is brought by different volunteers each month, and the coffee is graciously donated by Ty Gates (Captain's Coffee). When you renewed your membership, we tried to get a feel for anyone who would be willing to help out, and I thought I might take this opportunity to ask again for your input.

What I've done this last year is to send out an e-mail the week before the meeting to five or six of our pool of willing cooks to see if they are planning to be at the meeting

and can bring in a "dish". Hopefully we will have a group large enough so that I will only need your assistance once a year!

If you would like to send me an e-mail with your contact information, I would gratefully add you to my volunteer list for upcoming goodies.

Hope to see you at the next meeting November 27<sup>th</sup>,

Julie Parizek  
Social Chairman  
226-3276  
[jparizek@acsalaska.net](mailto:jparizek@acsalaska.net)



**REMEMBER:** Dues are now due October 1<sup>st</sup>. Members are encouraged to have the newsletter sent to them via e-mail as it is much less expensive for the club and you will then receive it in fabulous color.

## 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

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