Homer Garden Club General Meeting April 8, 2018

 Minutes

The special, abbreviated meeting was called to order before a large audience at 3:00 PM at the Homer United Methodist Church by club president, Francie Roberts. Francie welcomed visitors.

Additional announcements:

 The new club aprons were to be available after the meeting priced at $25 for members and $30 for non-members.

 The plant sale will be held on May 19 and plant divisions will be needed.

 Gardeners' Weekend will be held on July 28 and 29 and the speaker will be Brent Heath of Brent and Becky's Bulbs. There are still volunteers needed in the kitchen at the winery and for cleanup afterwards.

 Signup sheets would be at the back of the room after the meeting for the Plant sale, Gardeners' Weekend, Harvest Dinner, Baycrest Garden, meeting refreshments

 The next meeting will be on 5/27 at the Bidarka at 2:00 PM and will feature speaker Dr. Jodie Anderson speaking on Composting and Soils. She's described as informative, funny and entertaining.

Vice President, Kathy Dube' then introduced special guest speaker Kit Strange from the "Royal Botanic Gardens- Kew" in London, England. Kew Gardens are in the southeast region of England where temperatures range from very cold to very warm. It's also considered a maritime, temperate area. Kit's subject was the various forms of propagation that work well in such a climate and that are utilized to safeguard the genetic purity of their plants, her topic, "How to be a Better Propagator".

 **Seed Propagation**

Seed Collection: Kit recommends collecting seed when it is ripe, a condition which can only be caught by constant vigilance, keeping an eye on the plants and recognizing when they are ready. She cautioned against potential seed thieves such as birds.

Seed Cleaning: Here, Kit uses a sieve/tray. After roughing up or lightly pounding the seeds, she blows away the chaff or husks, then makes a paper envelope in which to pour the seeds left behind. Labels should be affixed immediately. Seeds with a short shelf life include Fritillarias, tulip and other flakey seeds; they should be planted right away in order to get in their cold stratification, necessary for their viability in the spring.

Treatment: Scarifying hard seeds often helps them to germinate more quickly. With hard seeds sandpaper can be used, just enough to slightly abrade the surface. With large seeds they can be soaked in water for 24 hours with a drop of dish soap added. Initially, the water should be hot. The soap will break the surface tension. Seed still floating after that period will not germinate.

Timing: Some seeds need immediate sowing, some require chilling outdoors in pots, some need fluctuations in temperatures, examples of which are narcissus and hellebores.

Germination: Pots can be placed outside if the plants are hardy but a frost-free environment is needed for seedlings so they should be kept in a greenhouse or under some sort of cover, e. i cold frame. A 6" pot will avoid the need to transplant tiny seedlings, however, Kit strongly suggested that tiny seedlings being transplanted be handled by the leaves rather than the stems. Handling by the stems can crush them and thus not allow nutrients or water to get to the leaves.

 **Clonal Propagation**- asexual propagation- from one plant

 **Cuttings**

Cuttings are taken in order to get new, identical plants, and to maintain their good characteristics.

Plants appropriate for taking cuttings include primula allionii, any shrubby, Mediterranean plants, gray leaved plants, cushion plants.

Leaf Cuttings are appropriate for African Violets where you can plant the leaf in clean sand.

 **Division**

Division can be used on ferns, peonies, other plants that have multiple root systems.

Division 1: Ferns - Divide by cutting through the root ball. Then, when repotting the divisions, they should be turned to face outward - rotate the rootball. This method can be used with creeping and branching rooted plants.

Division 2. Split ferns when dormant or propagate through spores. Spores should be planted in sterile soil (microwaved)

Cutting mix: pure sand (glacial sand) or perlite will work - can use this for campanula

The meeting adjourned at about 4:30.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roni Overway

Secretary