

SEEDERS AND WEEDERS NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2023

Armstrong & District Garden Club

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EXECUTIVE

President - Carolyn Farris, 250-546-6083 ; cfarris@telus.net

Vice president - Vacant

Secretary - Tracee Andrews

Treasurer - Sue Wiebe

Membership Secretary - Chris Williams

Past President - Glenn Gytenbeek 250-546-9891; gcgardenedge@telus.net

Newsletter Editor - Vacant

Directors - Heather Freeman

Sunshine - Dianne Lockton and Heather Hayes

Door Prizes - Sue Rook

GENERAL MEETING

First Tuesday of month Sep to Jun in Oddfellows Hall, Armstrong except Jan

EXECUTIVE MEETING - 5:30 before General Meeting

Executive Report

Thank you to Glen and Mary who stepped in to run and record the meeting for March. I was enjoying a short vacation planned long before I took on the presidency and Tracee was dealing with illness. It was good to see members out and supporting the club. Thanks to Sue Rook, Glen, Shirley and Sue Weibe for manning the Garden Club booth at the Chamber of Commerce Volunteer Fair. Lots of interest in what we do so hope for some new members.

Carolyn

MEMBERSHIPS ARE NOW DUE. PLEASE BRING TO THE MARCH MEETING OR MAIL A CHECK TO CHRIS WILLIAMS AT #2-2435 OKANAGAN ST, ARMSTRONG, V0E 1B1.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE ANNUAL PLANT SALE ON MAY 13, 2023 ON THE IPE FAIRGROUNDS FROM 9 TO NOON.

Contact Sue Weibe or Glen if you are planning to donate plants or other items.

Put those old straw bales to use this spring and start your vegetable garden out right.

By Cari Klostermann,



*Learn How to Grow
Your Own*

Straw
Bale
Garden



Growing carrots in an old straw bale is something both you and you Quarter Horse can enjoy. AQHA photo.

The idea of having fresh vegetables on the table, grown from your very own garden, is intriguing to pretty much everyone. However, the idea of spending hours in the dirt, sweating bullets while you pull weeds and break your back tending to your garden is intriguing to very few.







Gardening doesn't have to be a chore. With a straw-bale garden, the amount of labor needed is significantly reduced, and the raised height makes it much easier on your back and joints. The best part about a straw-bale garden is it can be grown anywhere. If you live in an area that has poor soil quality, this is definitely the garden for you! Straw-bale gardening is a great alternative for people who:

- Have poor soil quality
- Are not interested in weeding and tilling soil
- Cannot bend over
- Have limited space for a garden

Straw-bale gardening is just like any other form of container gardening, but the straw bale itself serves as the container. In this form of gardening, there is no dirt involved. If you have an older bale that never made it into your horse's stall, you are ready to get to planting. But if you have a newer bale that has not been exposed to the elements, it will need to be conditioned.

Conditioning

When preparing straw bales for planting, conditioning takes about two weeks and should be done where you plan on growing your garden. Position the bale so that the

long, skinny side with folded straw is facing downward and the long, skinny side with cut straw is facing upward. This is due to the fact that straw is hollow and you want the water to seep into the straw.

When you first begin the process of conditioning your bale, it will become very hot, reaching temperatures up to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. It is very important to keep your bale wet throughout the process to prevent spontaneous combustion.

For the first three days, you want to completely drench your bale with water and make sure it stays nice and damp throughout the day.



Over the next six days, you will want to help speed up the decomposition process by adding nitrogen. The easiest way to do this is with store-bought liquid fertilizer. Simply add a capful, or whatever the directions recommend, to some water and pour it onto your bale every day for six days, still making sure your bale stays damp throughout the day.

On the 10th day, you will go back to just watering your bale on a daily basis. When your bale's internal temperature is the same as the air temperature, you are ready to begin planting.

Ready to Plant

When it comes to selecting what to plant in your bale, you are free to choose anything that you would plant in a normal garden. However, try to stay away from taller plants such as tomatoes and corn, because it can become top heavy and pull your bale apart. We recommend planting some carrots that both you and your horse will enjoy. Use the same spacing between plants that you would in the ground. Simply remove some of the straw to create a hole, place in your plant, add a little potting soil around it, and fill in the rest of the hole with the straw you removed.



Your bale will protect your plants from weeds and supply them with some nutrients, but it is important to fertilize and water on a regular basis. Never let your bale completely dry out or your plants will suffer.

One of the benefits to straw-bale gardening is that you can use however many bales you want and arrange them as you please. You can also build boxes for your straw bale to sit in so they have a little more height and are easy to move, plus it'll give a more refined look. For detailed instructions on how to build a base for your straw bale, check out [BonniePlants.com](https://www.bonnieplants.com).

You're all set to grow a beautiful straw bale vegetable garden that both you and your American Quarter Horse can appreciate. Happy gardening!

MINUTES

ARMSTRONG AND DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB MINUTES FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2023, 7:00 PM ODDFELLOW'S HALL, ARMSTRONG

14 members in attendance.

Speakers:

Shirley Fowler gave an update on Communities in Bloom plans and Rhea Smith provided an update what is happening with Community Gardens.

Shirley:

- The National Beautification Initiative began in Canada in 1995, with 29 communities participating.
- BC began a provincial Communities in Bloom (CIB) program in 2005, to measure community livability. 100 communities were involved.
- The scope expanded to enhance visual appearance and preserve heritage and cultural features. The current categories include: environment, heritage, plant and floral, forest management, community appearance and landscaping.
- Benefits included increased property values, lifestyle, appearance, community pride etc.

- Shirley attended the National Conference in 2005 and has been involved since (19 years!) In its 2nd year of involvement, Armstrong won a 5 Bloom Award and then won a National Award.
- The program was reinvigorated in 2019, driven by Shirley and many volunteers.
- In 2022, Armstrong received a 4 Bloom Award.
- The goal in 2023 is to win a 5 Bloom Award. This year's colour is purple.
- CIB thanked ADGC for their donation.
- CIB volunteers will help with this year's plant sale.
- The City has some funds to create a dry land garden in front of City Hall and hopes that CIB and ADGC would help with planting.

Rhea:

- Community Gardens started in 2009 with a grant from UBCM. 17 beds were created.
- There are now 32 beds at the Caboose, ABC Church has 22 beds and Glad Tidings will start gardens this year.
- The food exchange is operated at the Caboose on Mondays: 9 to 10:30 am dropoff and 10:30 to noon pickup. Leftovers are donated to the Legion's program.
- Rhea thanked ADGC for the donation which paid for new lumber for garden beds.
- Reah has volunteers for the plant sale as well.

Coffee/Tea – thanks to Brenda H. and Heather F. for the goodies.

Business Meeting:

1. Call to Order

Glenn was appointed chair for the meeting in the absence of the President.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda by Suzie and Mary.

3. Approval of February Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes as circulated by Sue R.

4. Correspondence – None received.

5. Treasurer's Report

Sue provided the report which indicated that the club was in a good financial state.

Motion to receive the Treasurer's report by Rhea and Chris.

6. Old Business

a. Appointment of Plant Sale Committee

The following members volunteered to be on the committee: Heather H. (pricing and set-up), Chris, Heather F., Sue W., Rhea, Mary (cashier), Sue R. (boxes), Gene (pick up soil), Shirley (plants)

Post meeting note: Glenn confirmed 2 pallet donation of Black Diamond and a location similar to last year's at the Market.

b. Banners for City - deferred to April meeting

c. Volunteer to organize Garden Tour(s)

Sue W. will preview the Bolean Garden in Falkland. Shirley will co-ordinate a tour to Purple Springs.

City Planters – Glenn will order purple and white flowers. Shirley will arrange fertilizer by the end of May and talk to the new Public Works manager. Suggestion to invite Brad Ackerman to a future ADGC meeting.

7. New Business

a. Volunteer Fair on March 14 at Senior's Centre. Sue R., Sue W., Shirley and Glenn will participate on behalf of ADGC. Glenn will bring photo albums and a table.

8. Adjournment and next meeting

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Next meeting Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at Oddfellow's Hall.

THANK YOUS

Appreciation and thank you to Shirley fowler and Rhea Smith for updating the club on Communities in Bloom and Community Gardens

Thank you to Heather Freeman and Brenda Hobbs for the goodies and tea/coffee at the meeting.

Member Discounts

Members of the Armstrong & District Garden Club receive discounts at a number of local garden centres:

- **Shepherd's Home Hardware Outdoor Living** in Armstrong: **15% Discount** on Regularly-Priced Garden Plants
- **Blue Mountain Nursery** in Armstrong: **10% Discount** on all products
- **Swan Lake Market & Garden** in Spallumcheen: **10% Discount** on all products
- **Nicholas Alexander Nursery** in Vernon: 10%-15% Discount on Regularly-Priced Garden Plants

Show your membership card at the till before the cashier rings up the total and kindly request your membership discount. Let us know if you have any difficulties getting the discount.