



Wildflower Garden Club Newsletter

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Messages from the Presidents

Hello, fellow Wildflowers! What a glorious spring! I am itching to get out and uncover the gardens, but I am hesitant about jumping the gun. I have been in Alaska too long to tempt weather too much. The sight of all those plants poking through the detritus from last gardening season is almost too much for me to bear though. I am trying to wait until I see some of the slightly less hardy species pop up. Good luck!! Before you know it, we will be getting ready for our plant sale in only six weeks. This week, we have the Midtown Mall Garden Show—the first garden show of the local season. Come see all the groups and all the happy people getting giddy in anticipation of warmer temperatures and times spent puttering around the garden. Come help the young gardeners get a start—perhaps their first plant—by helping them pot up a marigold. Hope we see you there. **Paul**

Welcome to Spring as we know it Wildflowers! This is my favorite season as I look forward to watching the trees and plants around us green up. I still haven't had the courage to uncover my gardens yet and think I'll wait a few more weeks just to be sure we don't have a surprise hard freeze. I still have frost in my neighborhood each morning with a low of 24 degrees, so my plants will enjoy a bit more time keeping snuggled in. A big weekend ahead with the Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show and our first club project of the year with the Children's Marigold Giveaway. Thank you to those who have already signed up to help. The more hands the better! **Kathy**

Announcements

We have heard from the Alaska Botanical Garden that the Verna Pratt Wildflower trail will be developed and planted this spring and early summer. They have asked us to go ahead with our normal clean-up assistance, scheduled for Thursday May 9th. If they have anything else, they will need assistance on, they will contact us.

That being said, the planned dedication and opening of the trail, including the unveiling of our Plaque is planned for some time in the latter half of the summer.

We received the go-ahead from both our Wildflower Garden Club members and from the Botanical Garden to pursue the purchase of a Kinetic Wind Spinner by Lyman Whitaker for installation in one of three garden areas at ABG. We are looking at the Double Helix design. We will keep you posted about any progress.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeoxnmqJl6k> and/or <https://youtu.be/eeoxnmqJl6k>

What's Growing Now?

Many thanks go to **Scott Christy** for stepping in at short notice to present to the club for the April meeting. He presented about building houses for birds and bats, taking into consideration their habitat, territorial needs and nesting preferences. Scott is an engaging speaker, well versed in his subject. He intersperses his information with engaging anecdotes and experiences he has had. It was a delightful presentation.

The Wildflower of the month, presented by Kathy Liska, is our native Shooting Star.



Dodecatheon pulchellum* ssp. *pauciflorum

AKA - Pretty or Few-Flowered Shooting Star

Family: Primulaceae (Primrose)

Pretty Shooting Star has showy flowers that occur in 3-5 flower clusters on an erect, leafless stem that grows from the plant's base and reaches 18" tall. The flowers have pink to magenta colored petals that sweep back from the white, yellow, and dark purple center point of the flower. Shooting Star leaves are 2-10 inches long, spatulate to spoon-shaped, and blunt with smooth margins.

Blooming Time: June

Height: 10-18 inches tall

Habitat: Open Woods, Meadows, Subalpine, Coastal areas, Bogs and Wetlands in Southeastern and Southcentral Alaska.



A similar species, *Dodecatheon frigidum* - aka Frigid Shooting Star, is found in Alpine Meadows and Tundra except in Southeastern and Southcentral coastal areas. This plant is shorter at about 8" tall, with spade-shaped leaves. Flowers bloom from mid-June to late-July and are darker and rarely have a yellow band.

Other ssp. includes *Alaskanum* - a shorter coastal area species, and *Jeffreyii* - found in the Southeastern and coastal areas, which also rarely has a yellow band or ring.

Club Business

Membership stands at 64 as of the April meeting, with one renewal and one new member signing up at the meeting.

The Trellis workshop requested by our members will take place sometime in July. We are looking to make the **kokedama** workshop in May or early June. We have a request in to one business for tool sharpening instruction for the summer. If that does not work out, we do have someone that will teach it in the early fall.



Remember that Saturday, April 20th is the time for our next Community Service project. We staff the **Marigold Give-away** at the **Midtown Mall**, to help inspire young gardeners and to introduce ourselves to the community. It is always a fun time to greet our gardening buddies, answer questions, and to inspire new gardeners and each other. Please get hold of **Kathy Liska** (907-337-2196 or akliska@aol.com) to see what staffing needs we still have, or plan to just drop by and enjoy the first gardening show of the year.

Our next get-together is the clean-up of **the Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail** at **ABG**. It is one of the community service duties we take on to beautify and give back to our city. On Thursday, May 9th, we will meet at the Botanical Garden from 10am-12pm to help spruce up the trail for all the Garden visitors. This only takes a couple of hours and then we go have lunch at a nearby restaurant to reward ourselves. Bring tools and gloves!

The annual Wildflower Garden Club **plant sale** is happening on Saturday, June 1st this year at the Karabelnikoff home **at 7435 Old Harbor Rd**, from 9am – 2pm. We will need to go in ahead of time to help clean up from the winter and again to set tables for the sale. Please keep your eyes peeled for information about dates. Start to dig up plants early and plan to share your bounty with other gardeners. A nice benefit is that you can help offset the cost of your plant habit this way!

The **Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center** has expressed interest in having a new wildflower garden overseen by our club. It will be good publicity for us and perhaps working on the plot will include a trip through the park. The Executive Board and our Wildflower Education Chair, **Marilyn Barker**, will be working with AWCC on developing details, plant selection and planting design. Members will be encouraged to donate special native wildflowers to the project.

Remember, **National Garden Clubs Inc.** is sponsoring the **Flower Judging School** and **Plant and Design symposiums** June 13-17. Attendees may take the entire presentation for certification as a Flower Show Judge, **OR** take the entire presentation for educational purposes, **OR** take any parts of the presentations they are interested in. This is a great opportunity for gardeners to hear experts expound on design principles and Iris and Lilacs hardy to our area. It has been quite a few years since the Judging School presentations have been made in Alaska— what a great offering for us! Sign-up information can be found at www.alaskagardenclubs.org.

HAPPY EASTER AND HAPPY GARDENING TO ALL