



Wildflower Garden Club Newsletter

February 2019

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FB: Wildflower Garden Club

Messages from the Presidents

I am thankful for all the positive feedback on the newsletter. I am glad we have this method to give club news to the members not in attendance. We would be grateful for contributions to the **newsletter**, and for volunteers to present the **Wildflower of the Month** at our meetings. Researching is an excellent way to learn about a new species of our native plants, and our members will be very thankful to have information on our wonderful and hardy local plants. **Paul**

I am eager to take some steps forward with a few new ideas to bring to our club such as this monthly newsletter, the planning of some fun hands-on workshops, and adding a Garden Craft area to this year's Annual Plant Sale. Making slight changes to what has become the norm is never easy but sometimes needed to inspire us all. We encourage your feedback and suggestions as to what direction you would like to see the club take and are grateful for your support as these transitions take place. **Kathy**

Announcements

We have heard from member Gail Harbin that her Email has changed from what is listed in the 2019 yearbook. Her Email is now gaharbin2@gci.com

What's Growing Now?

Sandy Potvinsk, Horticulture Supervisor for the Municipality of Anchorage, gave a delightful and informative presentation. We struggle to put our own gardens in order—imagine the planning entailed on the scale of the entire city!! She was lively and engaging, with an incredible amount of detail about the growing, planning and delivery of the many thousands of plants that decorate our city. Sandy brought some of their dahlia tubers to use as door prizes that 6 members—both of our newest members too—were fortunate to receive as a door prize.

Member Barbara Baker was so moved that she wrote a letter to the Assembly telling them how important the floral department was to both the tourism industry and to the beautification, enjoyment and pride of the residents of the Municipality. This is an excellent idea and we should each repeat her example and remind our Assembly of the Horticultural importance of the program. The state is facing budget cuts as we are.

The February wildflower of the month is **Viola adunca – Dog Violet, Hookedspur Violet** and was presented by Kathy Liska. A common native perennial of the Violaceae family which typically grows to 4” in height, with round to oval 2” leaves. Flowers are pale to deep violet with a white patch and purple veins at the base of the lower three petals, which act as nectar guides for bees. The two side petals have white beards at the base and hooked spurs at the tips. Blooms in late May to early June. Seed capsules explode allowing the plants to spread. Inhabits varied environments including dry to moist meadows, coastal areas, open woods and grasslands from lowland to near timberline.



Two more gardeners joined at the February meeting, bringing the total membership to 60 people. Both are recent graduates of the Master Gardener class.

Treasurer Beverly Luedke-Chan reported the club finances have taken a loss with the recent market downturns. As a result, The Club has voted to suspend the grants for the year 2019; plant sale profits will determine if we have grants for 2020, as was designed by the founders of the club.

Flower Judge’s School will start in June, and the club will participate in the tuition reimbursement program voted into place in September of 2018 for the six people that expressed interest in pursuing their accreditation.

Shirley Luedke is asking for photos from the past year to put into the 2018 scrapbook. They can be sent to Beverly Luedke-Chan via email.

The **Programs** committee is being re-formed, as the current “committee” of one wants help. We are looking for three or four people to volunteer to work with Kathy Zins to help determine the 7 programs for the 2020 year. Member input is required to ensure the programs keep to their past excellence.

We are going to institute a **Craft** section into our plant sale this year. We would like gardening related items. Anything that relates to a gardening theme is what we are looking for. More details to come as they are developed. Member interest indicates it would be a welcome addition.

The club is looking at sponsoring a **\$25 award** for the **Grand Champion** of the **Perennials** at the **Alaska State Fair** each week. The club does sponsor the Zucchini contest, but does not do a sponsorship for any flowers.

Kathy Liska asked the members if there was any interest in sponsoring a **Blue Star Marker** to honor the military in our area. We will investigate further and let people know just what this entails. There is one in town already near where 5th and 6th avenues split near Merrill Field, and The Eagle River Garden Club is installing one in the spring.

We would love to have input from members for the newsletter. Please send small snippets, pictures, etc. for the **Member's Corner** and longer articles for the general body of the newsletter. Do not worry about proper English and punctuation: we have editors cheerfully standing by. You can send your contributions to pmarmora@aol.com.

A new **family membership** option and fee has been implemented for the Wildflower Garden Club. Membership is still \$15 for an individual, with an additional \$10 for immediate family members. Family members will share one yearbook.

Reminders

The marigold seeds need to be planted right now to be ready for the Midtown Mall Garden Show, held this year on 20APR. This is one of our club projects: to give away a small plant to children to generate interest in young gardeners. They will be our future club members.

The March meeting promises to be very interesting—the Wildlife Conservation Center will present about Wood Bison of Alaska, Its history and Restocking.

Please send in your polls to have your voice heard in deciding what fun stuff we can work together on. So far, we have received about 10.

Visit the Facebook page. Remember you can access it through the Wildflower Garden Club website by clicking the blue box with the F even if you are not a Facebook member.

Members Corner

Submitted by Elaine Estey

Bob and I have been fans of the beautiful *Rhodochiton astrosanguineum*, aka, AK State Fair plant, for quite some time. The plants have been difficult to find locally so several years ago Bob decided to grow seedlings himself in the garage under shop lights. He had been warned by local nurseries that it was tricky to grow. As it turned out – it was – but not impossible. We have found that starting plants early is key. You might have to start a second batch. Also, its blooms are not fully developed until late in the summer (that's why it's so popular around Fair time.). Select Seeds carries the seeds and we will again start our seedlings in February. It usually takes about 4-5 plants to fill a medium planter and the planters we have purchased in the past had almost twice that amount. If we are successful and have left-overs, they will be available at the WfGC annual plant sale.

