



Wildflower Garden Club April 2020 Newsletter

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Messages from the Presidents

Hello fellow Wildflower Garden Club members. I am proud of our club for being forward thinking and embracing the whole Zoom meeting phenomenon during these times of social distancing. Many thanks go to DeShana York, from our local Cooperative Extension Service office for offering to assist us in learning about and using this forum. The University system has been using the system for quite some time and it was invaluable to us to have such a knowledgeable person as a resource. We don't know how long this emergency situation will be in place, so this may be the way we get together for a while. Thanks for bearing with us as we revisit our meeting methods. I am glad we are able to stand through this together.

Paul

I hope this note finds everyone healthy and that you are staying as sane as possible during these strange times of uncertainty while learning a 'new normal' to daily life as we know it. One thing for certain is that spring is starting to come around. Pussy Willow catkins have been showing for a few weeks now, so I am going to keep positive thoughts and believe we have turned the corner into the next season ... my favorite one! I love to see the raised beds beginning to show the over wintered perennial pots, the garden beds starting to show new Iris shoots, and more birds chirping ... especially the Blue Jays. Before long we will be in the green again!

We were able to have our April Monthly Meeting after all with the help of DeShana York of the Anchorage CES office, who mentioned the possibility to Paul, and we jumped on it. Becky Myrvold from the State Fair was also willing to learn the Zoom program along with us and was happy she could share the passion of her job tending to the gardens and flowers she grows for the Fair. It was a collaborative effort to make it work, and we were well pleased with the turn out and the ability to bring this to our members and members of the Mat-Su Master Gardeners and the Valley Garden Club. Thank you to the Wildflowers who participated in this new method of keeping in touch with each other. We hope to do more like this in the future. Stay safe and watch out for each other. We will get through this as we always do ... together.

Kathy



Happy Easter

Wishing you and yours
a season filled with
peace, joy, and beautiful weather.

What's Growing Now?

The April meeting was a revolutionary departure for our club presentations. Within a few days, DeShana agreed to help with Zoom presentations and presenter Becky Myrvold was more than willing to take on the challenge. Her first PowerPoint and Zoom presentations were outstanding! We had a delightful program presented by Becky about what she does yearly to present such a spectacular and colorful banquet of blooms for fairgoers. Becky took us through the start of her planning year, a week after the Fair ends, through her design process, to the planting of thousands upon thousands of seeds and how they are cared for, potted, pruned and grown to perfection for their 12 day time in the spotlight. Becky emphasized the gardeners' belief that there is always hope at springtime.

Announcements

As social distancing mandates have continued, we have postponed the planned Tool-sharpening workshop. We are still hoping to run it in mid-May, but we will need to see what it looks like as time gets closer.

The same concern goes for the upcoming plant sale. Fingers crossed!!

We have a successful fundraising tomato sale, keeping with the social distancing parameters. All the tomatoes were pre-sold, and Barbara Baker and Cindy Walker worked out an excellent plan for people to exchange the money and the plants without anyone coming in contact with anyone. The plants will be picked up on Saturday, 11APR, the day that the Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show was to have taken place. Great job Ladies!

Reminder

The Treasurer's Report and Minutes are coming to you via email, so you can keep abreast of what is happening. As you know, the market has taken a hit, so our resources have become a little more limited—but we are still solvent.

Club Business

The soil purchase took place on Wednesday, 08APR, with 30 bales sold at wholesale to members of the club. Many thanks to member Robin Phillips for allowing us to use her warehouse at Alaska Wholesale Flower Market as a rendezvous point.

April Wildflower of the Month

Viola epipsila - (Dwarf Marsh Violet)

Synonyms

Viola epipsila repens (W Becker)

Viola epipsila Ledeb. ssp. *repens* (Turcz. ex Trautv. & C.A. Mey.)

Viola epipsiloides (Á.Löve & D.Löve)

Dwarf Marsh Violet is native in Alaska, Yukon, Northwest Territory, British Columbia, Finland, Poland, Siberia, Russian Far east, China, Japan and Korea.

Found in Coniferous forests among black spruce, paper birch, alder, bunchberry, mountain maple, and starflower in moist places - swamps, bogs, marshes, along streams, mossy wet banks, cool, wet places; at elevations from 30 - 6,000 feet.



Viola epipsila is an herbaceous perennial forb with a creeping rhizome. It can grow 2-6 inches tall. Fine, elongated, white rhizomes produce roots from internodes and nodes, the latter with obvious, old persistent brown stipules. From the growing tip of the creeping rhizome one or two leaves are produced.



Leaves are a basal rosette, stalked, stipulate, usually 2. Blade widely cordate (heart-shaped), short, hairy underside, at least one with clear tip. Stem an almost leafless scape, scaly bracts on upper half. Dwarf marsh violet usually only has two widely cordate leaves, of which one has quite a tapered tip. Marsh violet on the other hand has blunt-tipped leaves. The underside of dwarf marsh violet's leaves is sparsely haired, while marsh violets are hairless.

The flowers can be light blue–purplish in color, 0.6–0.8 in. wide; petals 5, lowest 0.6–0.8 in. long, spurred. Sepals 5. Stamens 5.

The Corolla is zygomorphic (irregular or bilateral symmetry). Flowers solitary and nodding. Seeds are beige and encased in a 3-valved capsule. Blooms from May-August.



Marsh violet (*Viola palustris*) and dwarf marsh violet cross easily with one another. The result of this, *V. x fennica*, produces seeds, although weakly, and otherwise behaves as an independent species, growing widely outside dwarf marsh violet's habitat. In cross-breeding again with one of its parent plants the resulting plant becomes 'purer' again, and the seed production improves a little. These different degrees of hybrid can confuse classification, which is not easy at the best of times.

Interesting finds ...

Viola epipsila ssp. *repens* spread from Siberia and the Far East across the Bering land bridge to North America during the last Ice Age. Its range has extended through the Aleutian Islands, Alaska, the Yukon Territory and central Canada, probably east to Hudson Bay and south into northern British Columbia, Michigan, Wisconsin and western Ontario. It is in great profusion throughout Alaska and is locally frequent in northern British Columbia.

Viola is a genus of flowering plants in the violet family *Violaceae*. It is the largest genus in the family, containing between 525 and 600 species. Most species are found in the temperate Northern Hemisphere.

Many species, varieties and cultivars are grown in gardens for their ornamental flowers. In horticulture the term Pansy is normally used for those multi-colored, large-flowered cultivars which are raised annually or biennially from seed and used extensively in bedding. The terms *Viola* and *Violet* are normally reserved for small-flowered annuals or perennials, including the wild species.

Courtesy of Kathy Liska

Members Corner

A gorgeous collection of Orchids shared by member Amelia Walsh ...

