



Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

July/August 2020 Newsletter

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Messages from the Presidents

All things must pass, both good and bad. This has been a lovely summer, not cold and excessively rainy, nowhere near as hot as last year. I am now seeing some leaves turning red on currants. Berries are ripe, larches are starting to get pale and even the edge of the Glen highway is looking a little yellower. Oh yeah, and the fireweed topped about a few weeks ago. It has been extremely busy in my yard, I am glad for the recent rains, because it means I am having to spend less time watering every night. At this time of year, I am always glad for the fall, so I can rest a bit, although the “rest” part wears off in February and I want to garden again. That is the good coming to an end. I am looking for the bad part, Covid, to come to an end too. It will eventually, we can just hope it will be soon. But we will make it—we just have to hang on and keep sensible. I miss seeing everyone, but Zoom will have to suffice for now. I think we are getting pretty experienced with it by this time. Thank goodness it was available to carry us through.

Paul

I really enjoy the changes of the seasons and what all four have to bring with their arrival. Summer to Fall with the crisp morning air brings a bit of a more relaxed pace beginning to set in for me. I believe we are fortunate to live in a place that allows us to experience the seasonal changes, each with its own beauty. I find myself keeping an eye on the trees now, waiting in anticipation to see the transformation of color from the verdant green to the brilliant yellows, oranges, and reds as it moves down the mountains. Fall chores have become the focus, yet there is still plenty of planting, weeding, and deadheading to do in the yard. I figure another 6-8 weeks to get the list of garden chores done. I must admit that over the past 6 months in this pandemic, it has given me the opportunity to re-evaluate my priorities and come to terms that what doesn't get done, doesn't get done. It will still be there when I get to it. Seasons change and so do we. I am looking forward to our meetings starting up and seeing the 'Wildflowers' again. Though it will be through Zoom for the time being, it fills the purpose and is our only option for gathering. Please give it a try ... it is nice to see others even on screen.

Kathy



What's Growing Now?

The Alaska Garden Clubs state convention was conducted via Zoom this year, and the state elections for officers was held electronically, as was our club's last vote. Kathy and Paul were chosen to run the electronic voting and the tally of votes. The new state officers for the Alaska Garden Clubs for the 2021-2023 term are as follows:

President – Sharon Jordan Carlson – Greater Eagle River Garden Club
First Vice President – Laura Fenoseff – Greater Eagle River Garden Club
Second Vice President – Lee Skidmore – Ketchikan Garden Club
Secretary – Marion Pound – Greater Eagle River Garden Club
Treasurer – Becky Hassebroek – Fairbanks Garden Club

The Wildflowers submitted a variety of 2019 club publications to both the Pacific Region and Alaska State Conventions including the Membership Brochure designed and produced by Billye Goff and Karen Edmonson, and the beautiful Scrapbook assembled with great care by Shirley Luedke.

Alaska State Awards:

Scrapbook – 1st Place - Overall
Yearbook – 1st Place – Class 4 (45-69 members)

Pacific Region Awards:

Newsletter – 1st Place – Class ii (30-59 members)
Membership Brochure – 1st Place – Class ii (30-59 members)
Program Calendar Handout – 2nd Place – Class ii (30-59 members)
Yearbook – Honorable Mention – (45-69 members)



Announcements

We are going to start the club meetings in the fall on **Zoom**, as the Covid-19 restrictions are still in place. We are pleased to announce that our **September 10th program is being presented by Bird TLC and will feature Gandalf the Great Grey Owl.**

For anyone unfamiliar or uncomfortable with Zoom, we will run a couple of practice sessions to help ease the process for you. You do not have to have a Zoom account to access a meeting as long as you have the invitation to click on. Look for communication via email as to when these are being held.



October Monthly Meeting – Thursday 10/8 – ‘Carnivorous Plants’ – a flora carnivora with Mike Baldwin.

November Monthly Meeting – Member share ‘Pictures of Your Summer Gardens’.

Please email snapshots of your beautiful blooming flowers and bountiful vegetables, fruits and herbs, for this special reminiscing slideshow of our 2020 gardens to Kathy Liska at akliska@aol.com

The club members have done an outstanding job upkeeping the ABG Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail during these unusual times. We are most grateful.

Special thanks go to Sally Byrne-Flores for her dedicated work on the Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail on just about every Tuesday morning all summer long. Sally did a fabulous job at keeping the weeds at bay and the trail spiffy. A tip of the hat for her undertaking of this Service Project with such zeal. She even tried her hand at some Zen gardening techniques in the future pavilion areas which are full of sand at the end of her shifts!



At long last, we are able to announce that the Alaska Botanical Garden has mounted and is displaying the plaque the Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska and the Pratt family sponsored in honor of Verna Pratt. It is displayed proudly as you enter under the new arch at the beginning of the Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail. Just to the left side tilted welcomingly toward the visitors, is our bronze plaque, fitting in peacefully with the native landscape. Verna's broad smile, and the twinkle in her eye still greet us and tell us that we are most welcome to walk into her world and enjoy nature's beauty as she did.

This is emphasized by her words displayed to next to her image:

***“Alaska has its fields and streams,
Its mountains, snow and showers,
But the fondest of my memories,
Were formed amongst the flowers”***

Many thanks to all the Wildflower Garden Club members who supported the gift to the garden to honor our beloved friend.

The Pandemic prevents us from having a ceremony at this time but go take a look; the garden is open to visitors Thursdays to Mondays. You will be proud!



Club Business

We are now registered with the State of Alaska as a non-profit incorporation due to dedicated hard work by Treasurer Cindy Walker and President Kathy Liska. This has enabled us to receive our new tax ID number from the IRS and we are in the process of completing the steps for our Federal recognition as a 501(c)3 non-profit institution. It has been quite a long process and many thanks are due to these two women for spearheading the effort and working so hard to get it done.

The Board is starting our annual review of the club Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules. We will need to make some updates to them. The Board is currently working on amendments needed for the 501(c)(3), other wording, and committee updates which will be proposed to the membership soon via email and at the September 10th meeting.

The work at AWCC is nearing completion of the plant installation. We are in the process of ordering signs and building a signboard for display next to the garden. Many thanks are due to those who donated plants, weeded, and planted parts of the garden. It has been a pleasure working with members of other local gardening clubs on this project. Upcoming needs are to get ready for the election of next year's Executive Board. Please look to hear from the Nominating Committee or Board about serving the club in some capacity. We also need to focus on choosing Member of the Year, so please start keeping that in mind, too.



August Wildflower of the Month

Gentiana douglasiana
Swamp Gentian

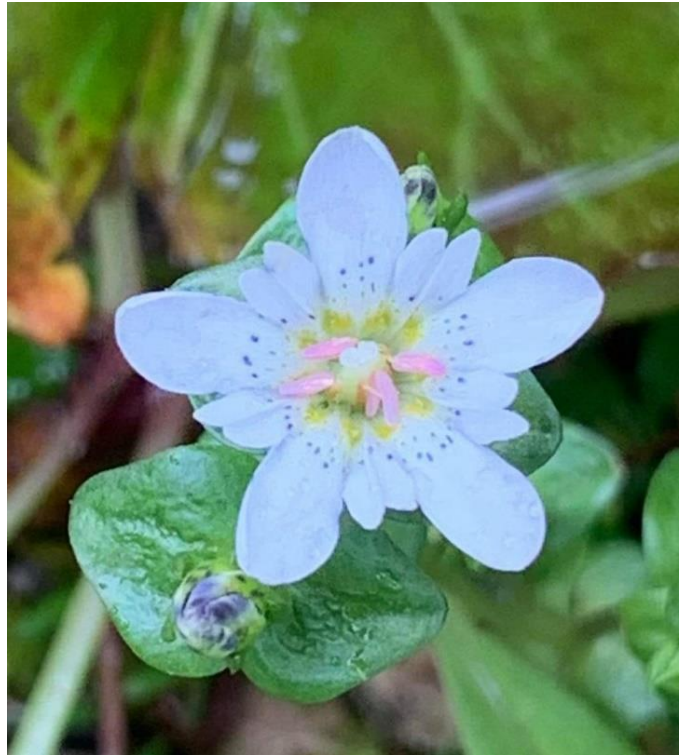
Family: Gentianaceae / Gentian

Gentiana douglasiana is an annual (though debated as a perennial or biennial by some experts) plant that grows up to 8" tall from a taproot. Swamp gentian, as the name suggests, grows in wet areas like bogs, fens, and wet meadows. It can be found in low and subalpine elevations along the southcentral & southeast coastline of Alaska, and south into the Cascade and Olympic Mountains of Washington. It will not grow in shady areas and prefers nitrogen-poor soils.

The few basal leaves are egg-shaped to elliptic, 1/8 to 2/3 inches long, and form a rosette. The stem leaves are similar, 1/8 to 1 inch long, opposite, fused at the base and slightly decurrent (the leaf base extends down along the stem). It has either a single or branched stem that is covered with a few oval leaves, each of which has smooth margins and arises from the plant's base and each flower's stem.

This species is easy to identify when in bloom. The distinctive flowers are white with small purple spots and streaks. The undersides of open flowers (and therefore flower buds) are purplish-blue.

The flowers are tubular (no separate petals). What look like petals are actually five large lobes separated by small lobes. The relatively small flowers, about 2/3 inch, appear singly or in clusters at the top of a stem.



This plant is attractive to bees, butterflies and/or birds. Flowers from July-September.

Gentiana douglasiana is a distinctive species within the genus.

It is the only annual gentian with white flowers.

These were found in Whittier in late July.

Photos credit:
Kelly Liska

Members Corner

Pale Pink Fireweed



Shared by Kelly Liska

Grass of Parnassus



Bog Candle / Hooded Ladies Tresses

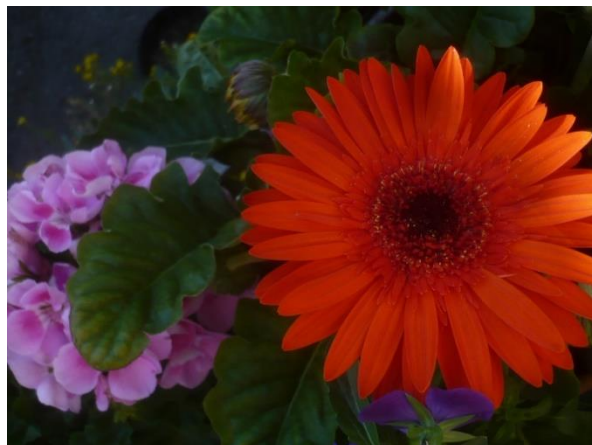


Sunflower
(Helianthus)

Foxglove
(Digitalis)



Morning Glory



Geranium
&
Gerbera Daisy

Shared by
Alis Schmitt

Shared by Paul Marmora

Lilium pumilum



Lilium unknownus



Lilium unknownus



Tree Lily (typically 4ft or more)



Shared by Kathy Liska

Primula Auricula



Canadensis hybrid unknownus



Lilium Fata Morgana



Lilium Razzle Dazzle



Share your photos of flowers, yard art,
water features, landscapes, or wildlife to
Kathy at akliska@aol.com

Anything garden or Alaska nature related
is welcome!