



Wildflower Garden Club

June 2020 Newsletter

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Messages from the Presidents

My goodness people are eager to buy plants. I think they have been home so long with so little to do that their gardens are flourishing with the increased care. Be great if that trend continues when and if the pandemic passes. Apparently, this may be a little farther off than we were hoping. We will make do and keep growing, like good gardeners do. Thanks to all of you for your support of the club in these trying times. We are continuing to do the best we can with what we have available. I hope we will be able to get together again sooner rather than later, but we will keep communicating and planting and growing to keep the future as bright as possible. Gardeners do not give up—they plant more seeds!

Paul

It is hard to believe that July is just around the corner. Time flies when having fun in the garden! I have been working hard and somewhat making a dent (who am I kidding), in the ever growing list of projects I want to do now that I can stay put in my own surroundings. I genuinely love the sunny days outside and am ok with the interspersed rainy ones so I get some housework done ... if I must. You will find a lot of Member Shares this month with a great variety of blooming plants. Thank you to all who continue to send in your pictures. Keep in mind that our November meeting, whether in person (fingers crossed), or on Zoom, will be a 'Members Summer Garden Memories' photo share program, so send in your pictures! It will be nice to revisit our flowers during the winter. Lastly, even though the Alaska State Fair was cancelled this year a "Plan B" quickly went into action. It is planned to have what will be a 'Summer Harvest Festival' ... an agriculture event. More information will be available on the Fair website, alaskastatefair.org in the next week or two. Keep an eye out for this end of summer event. Take care, stay healthy and keep enjoying your gardens as much as I am!

Kathy



South Eagle River Falls (Barbara Falls)
Photo Credit: Kelly Liska

What's Growing Now?

The Alaska Botanical Garden continues to enjoy volunteers a few at a time. Many thanks go to the corps of Wildflowers who head to the garden to keep things tidy. An extra special thank you to Sally Byrne-Flores who tends to the trail almost every Tuesday morning and finishes her shift by practicing Zen Garden Sand Design in the temporary areas where the future Pavilions will be placed.

Plaque update - According to Will Criner of ABG, they plan to dig the post hole for the sign honoring Verna in the next few days and probably will install it in the following week or so. Unfortunately, the garden will not be able to hold a dedication ceremony at this time due to the continued and increasingly strict regulations regarding public gatherings.



The club and family gift of the Wind Spinner to honor Sally Karabelnikoff is being added to the ABG website and will then be added to the Lyman Whitaker (artist) and Leopold Gallery's (sellers) websites with reference to The Alaska Botanical garden having a sculpture on display.

Announcements

The sale of the hanging baskets was a great success as a fundraiser for the club. Kudos to Kathy Liska for the beautiful baskets. The tomato sales were a wonderful success as well, with thanks going to Cindy Walker for her donation of the tomatoes and the great skill and care with which she planted them, and Barbara Baker for her coordination in distribution. Coupled with the Kokedama workshops held earlier, the club has actually garnered more through these fundraisers than we normally do through the plant sale. Looking back with the accuracy of a 20/20 vision of the past, it was certainly fortuitous that the club chose to host these events in light of what ended up happening with the plant sale cancellation and all the Covid-19 restrictions.



On Saturday, June 20, Martie Black and her husband Blacky big heartedly hosted a workshop for our Club members on "How to Build a Water Feature" at their home. Nine members participated in this special opportunity to learn the basics, material ideas and sources to build their own babbling water creation to enjoy in their own home garden.



COMING UP -

Tuesday, July 7: Wildflower Walk and Talk at Arctic Valley with Amelia Walsh.

This summer's hike will be up the beautiful Arctic Valley to explore the little plants that live on the journey up the mountain as well as the ones that live at the top. This trip's level of difficulty is considered moderate, with uphill hiking.

Amelia would like a minimum of 10 people to pre-register for this hike to take place. If we have not had 10 people **sign up by Wednesday, July 1**, this activity will be cancelled. Please respond to the email that was sent to all members on June 25th, which has all the information about this hike and to sign up.



Club Business

The vote during the period of 6-10 June was quite successful in that over half the club members voted. The vote was unanimous. Thanks to all who participated in voting to change the club name to the Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska and to amend the by-laws to exactly match the Constitution. The next step to be taken is to register with the state of Alaska so we can proceed with the 501(c)3 application to the IRS. The Board is pursuing that now.



We are still looking for donations of native plants for the different micro-habitats we will be making in the garden there. We are looking for a list of plants for alpine, shade, full-sun, and partial sun. We will contract people who have offered specimens of native plants and are starting to gather them at Paul's house. Contact Paul at pmarmora@aol.com if you would like to donate something for the garden.

The soil at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center has been amended, and we are looking to place the final surface rocks in the next week or so. We will have a number of planting sessions to enable interested volunteers to help install the garden without making a mass public event. Paul will be contacting volunteers to set schedules.

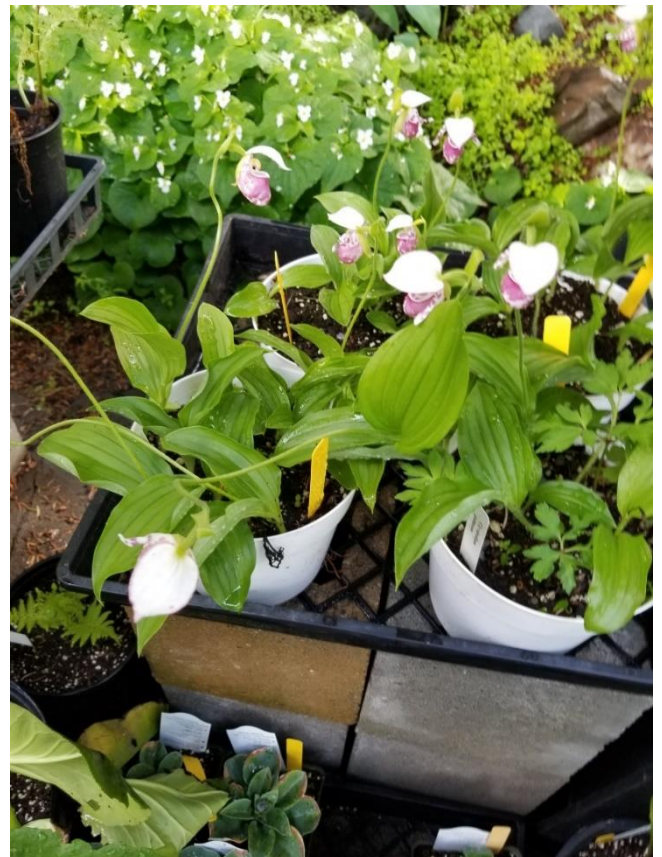
Thank you to Tim Pack of Cook Inlet Bonsai Study Group for his help moving boulders and shoveling gravel to amend soil at AWCC.

Those members who have conducted plant sales report that people are hungry for plants to work into their gardens. We encourage members with plants to set up a garage sale-type event and to advertise in either Facebook Marketplaces, Craigslist, or the newspaper. Be sure to list it in the club Plants-For-Sale thread in our email. This is a golden opportunity for those of us with plants to sell to share our treasures and to supply the market. If you feel you do not have enough plants for a sale of your own, perhaps you can join a few others in the club and make a larger sale.

You can supply your email or phone number and have people contact you for an appointment, you can require masks and gloves if you wish. People have been very respectful of how the seller wishes the purchases to be handled.

Customers are swarming to buy plants!!

Cypripedium guttatum offered for sale by Shirley Ryan.



June Wildflower of the Month - Moss Champion

Submitted by Kathy Liska

Silene acaulis - Moss campion, Cushion pink, Compass plant
Family: Caryophyllaceae / Pink

Moss campion, an evergreen perennial, is a low, ground-hugging, small mountain-dwelling wildflower that is common all over the high arctic and tundra in the higher mountains of Eurasia and North America, (south to the Alps, Carpathians, southern Siberia, Pyrenees, British Isles, Faroe Islands, Rocky Mountains). In the United States it inhabits Colorado, the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming, the Wallowa Mountains of Oregon, the Olympics, the northern Cascades of Washington, and Alaska. This genus, circumpolar in its distribution, is closely related to Carnations.



Growing in windswept, Alpine fellfield - a treeless rock-strewn area that is above the timberline or in the frigid zones and that is dominated by low plants or by grasses and sedges, the plants cushions produces its own warmer climate with higher temperatures inside when the sun shines.

The dense cushions are up to a foot or more in diameter. The plants are usually about 2" tall but may be as high as 6". The bright green leaves are narrow, arising from the base of the plant. The stems and leaves are very sticky which may discourage ants and beetles from climbing on the plant. The dead leaves from the previous season persist for years.

Silene acaulis usually has pink flowers, though very rarely they may be white. Solitary, star-shaped flowers are borne on short stalks that may be up to 1" long but are usually much shorter. The flowers are female, male or hermaphrodites*, between 1/4-1/2 inch wide. The flowers are held by a calyx which is firm and thick. The sepals are joined together into a tube that conceals the bases of the petals.



The 10 stamens and 3 styles extend well beyond the throat of the flower. Blooms usually appear from June to August.

It is also called the compass plant since the flowers appear first on the south side of the cushion.

* Hermaphrodite flowers are larger than the female ones. Female flowers produce better quality seeds than hermaphrodites, and male flowers produce better quality pollen than hermaphrodites. The cushions can change the gender of their flowers between years. Gender frequencies change with altitude, the frequency of female flowers increasing with higher elevation.

Members Corner



From: The Economist Espresso: Soapy spores: bubbles pollinate plants –
Article shared by member Elaine Estey -

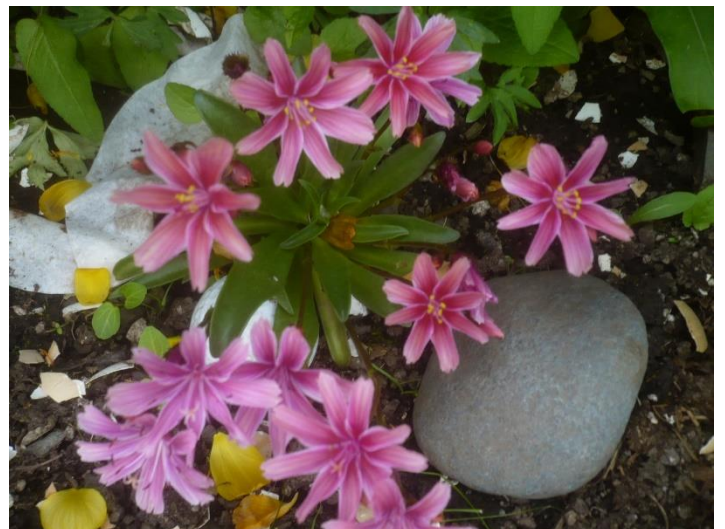
Soapy spores: bubbles pollinate plants

The world's food supply relies on pollination. Bees do most of the hard work. But wild bee populations are under threat. New mechanical methods are needed to replace their role. This week a paper from Japan published in *iScience*, a journal, reports on an ingenious new way to pollinate plants: by blowing bubbles. Bubbles of a special soapy solution were loaded with about 2,000 pollen grains and blown out over a pear orchard. The bubbles burst and healthy fruit soon appeared. The same team had previously used a miniature drone to pollinate flowers individually, but the robot damaged the flowers. A drone flying two meters above the plants and fitted with a bubble gun, however, could hit specific flower targets with 90% accuracy. Still, many bubbles went astray and missed their targets, especially in wind or rain. But with further fine tuning, bubbles could become an important tool in global agriculture.

Elaine and Bob Estey's False Solomon Seal and variegated Chocolate Lily

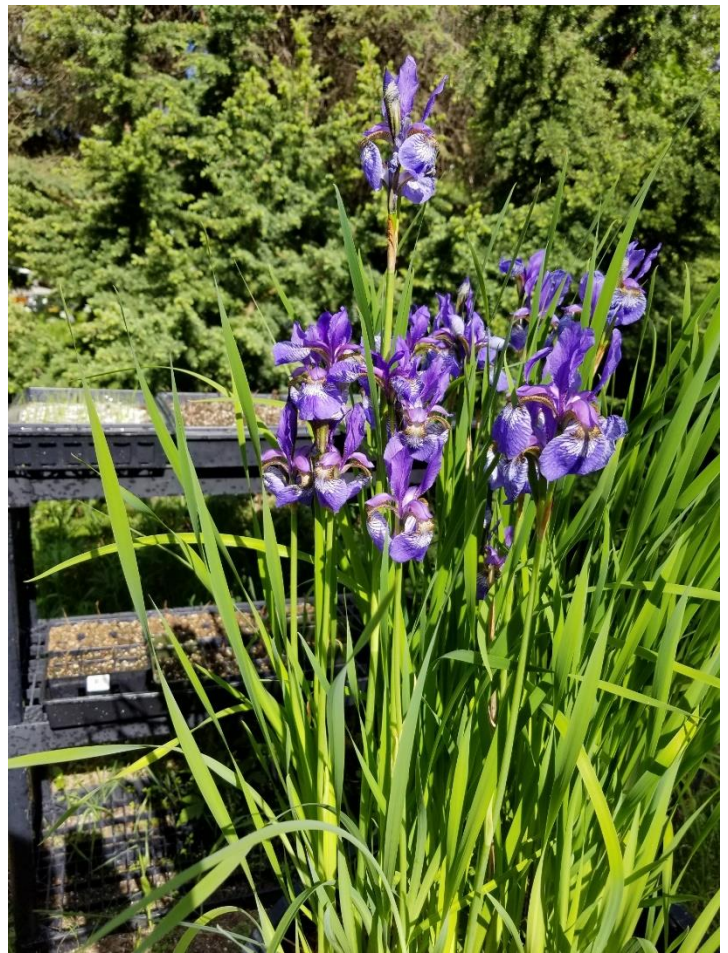


Alis Schmitt's Calendula and Lewisia



Members Corner

Paul Marmora's native Pulsatilla, Iris Sibirica, Iris Pseudacorus, and his neighbor's beautiful magenta Lilac



Members Corner

Kelly Liska's June hiking pictures ...

False Hellobore



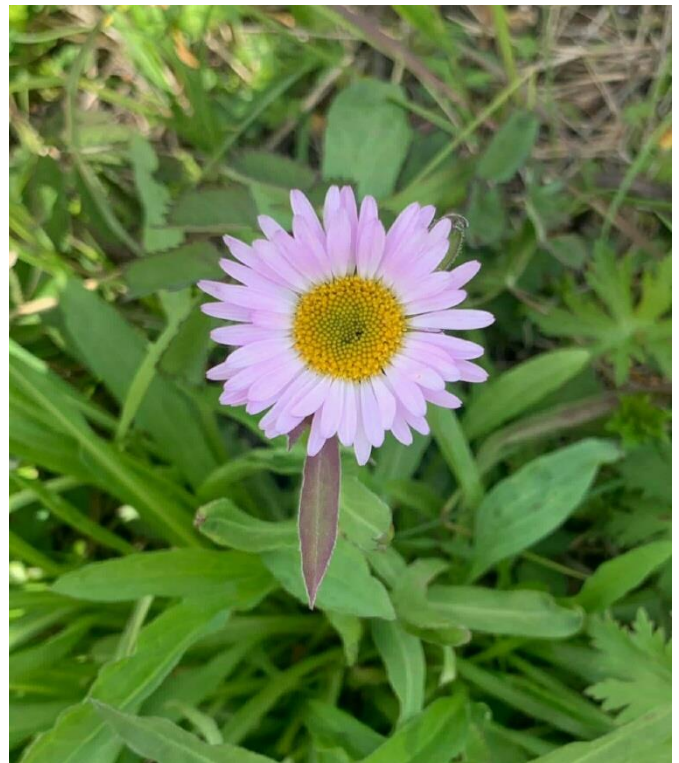
Pink Pyrola



Alaska Cotton Grass



Coastal Fleabane



Members Corner

Kelly Liska's June hikes continue ...

Moss Heather



Sibbadlia procumbens (Creeping Sibbadlia)



Eskimo Potato

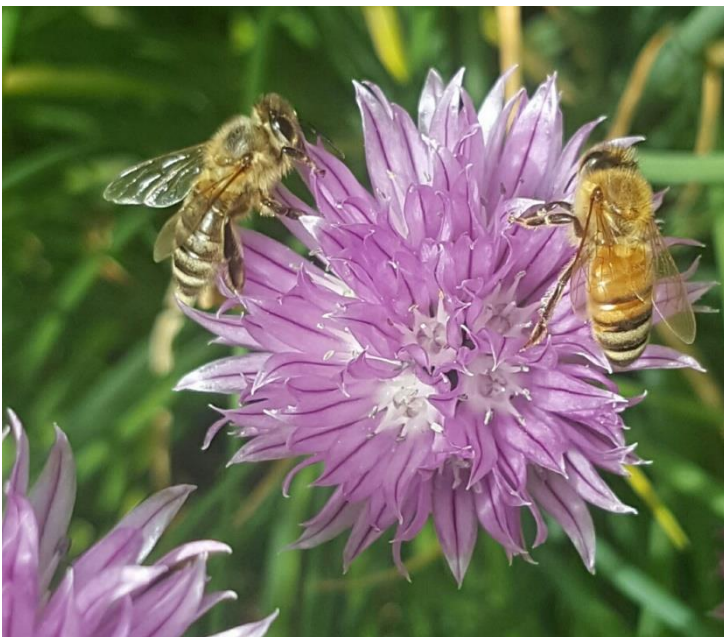


A New
Generation
of
Wildflowers!



Members Corner

Kathy Liska's Beautiful Jacob's Ladder, Fern Leaf Bleeding Heart, Chive & Bees, Clematis 'Sapphire Indigo'



Please share your summer garden pictures with us to include in the newsletter and for the November meeting!

Send your photos to Kathy L. at akliska@aol.com