



Wildflower Garden Club

March 2020 Newsletter

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Messages from the Presidents

Odd times!! Feels like we have somehow time-traveled back to the Plague in the Middle Ages. This spring seems to be bringing more challenges than usual. The “social distancing” they are all talking about should not make too much hardship for those of us who are serious gardeners. We like to be “Hunkered Down” out among our plants anyway. And Lord knows, few of our friends volunteer to be working with us in our yards anyway. So, for some of us, this means business as usual. I wonder how it will affect the plant sales and garden shows this summer. With so many public functions being shut down, I guess I will not have the excuse of being too busy to get my yard in order. I will try to find some reason, I am sure, but not having enough time on my hands will not be a viable excuse this year.

So, I am guessing that we will have so many perfected gardens this summer that we will have too many gardens volunteered for our July tours. That will be a benefit took forward to.

Chin up fellow gardeners—we will weather this storm too.

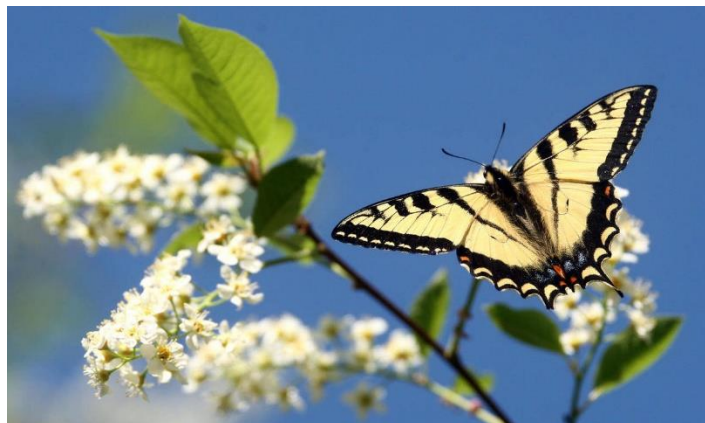
Paul

“Hunkering Down” – defined in the Cambridge English Dictionary as “to make yourself comfortable in a place or situation, or to prepare to stay in a place or position for a long time, usually in order to achieve something or for protection”. There are moments in life when the world we live in changes instantly, and in what seemed like the blink of an eye, life as we knew it has changed. Now we are tasked with figuring out a new normal in our daily habits including leaving the safety of our own homes. It’s not always easy to teach new tricks to us baby boomers as we can become set in our ways, but we are resilient, and we will adjust to whatever lies ahead.

My days have been filled with projects that for a long time I have made excuses to put aside. I now realize that it wasn’t that I didn’t have the time, I just didn’t want to do them. I’m happy to report that I have been pecking away, making progress, and it feels pretty good. The Marigolds I planted for the Spring Garden Show are full of buds and blooming. As usual I over seeded and am the caretaker for 350 or so! More seedlings are now on the grow rack and I’ve been working in the greenhouse getting ready to open it up for the new season ... plus the dining room only holds so much.

I will keep positive that playing in the garden is just around the corner, an old familiar place to spend many happy hours. Stay safe, stay well, and take care of each other.

Kathy



What's Growing Now?

The March meeting was a delightful presentation about beneficial insects by local CES "bug expert" Jessie Moan. We learned that beneficial insects can be parasites, predators and pollinators, so me fulfilling more than one role throughout their life span. We are so fortunate to have the local presence of such wonder agriculture experts and the Cooperative Extension Service as resources. In keeping with the insect theme, Tobi and Paul worked to present the luncheon with some very fun food presentations with insect inspired displays.

Announcements

Unfortunately, The Coronavirus pandemic has forced many changes for clubs, events, and groups. We have canceled our April meeting, which was to have been presented by Becky Myrvold of the Alaska State Fair giving us a behind the scenes look at what goes into the largest garden show in the state. We hope to ask for her to come share with us or to give us a tour at another date.

We have also decided not to participate in the Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show with our Children's Marigold Give-away as a result of the Stay-At-Home mandate from the municipality. We have tentatively planned to hold a **Midtown Area Curbside Pickup** of Tomato plants on Saturday, April 11 that Cindy Walker grew for the purpose of a club fundraiser at the Spring Garden Show for those who choose to pre-order. These plants are a specialty micro tomato that will grow well on a windowsill in your home. Please look at the flyer attached on the last page of this newsletter for more information.

We are still hopefully planning for our plant sale in early June, so hopefully, we will be able to shift some of the marigolds then. We will keep you posted.

No saying right now if we will be able to do our part at the Botanical garden on the Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail as usual. That, and the planned dedication of the trail to our beloved Verna will depend on the health of the city and the health mandates to keep us safe. We will let you know as we hear.

Reminder

Remember, the minutes of the previous meeting are being shared via email rather than reading through the entire process at the monthly meetings. If there are any concerns with the information sent out, members can bring them up for discussion and/or amendment before the minutes of the previous meeting are accepted.

We are looking into acquiring permanent nametags, like many other garden clubs have. So far, we have seen that most of these costs around \$10 per person. These are nice to be able to wear at any garden gathering and give us a professional look. We will talk more of this as we get more information.

Club Business

Our **Plant Sale** is scheduled to occur on **06JUN**, which is a slight departure from the Saturday after Memorial Day, which was our norm. Remember the Craft corner was a great success last year, and we encourage crafters to make any garden inspired crafts they excel at available for the sale.

We are planning on the club selling **hanging baskets** as a WfGC fundraiser. We will make available any leftover basket plants for individual purchase as well. Plan on details for a 5-person work party to build the baskets, proceeds of which will be completely for the club. We are working on making available baskets at cost for those participating in the assembly work party.

Soil!!

Paul is ordering bales of Promix at wholesale cost of \$44. This compares to around \$56/bale. The cost is dependent on the order of a full pallet of 30. When 30 bales are reached, he will order it and will need payment before it is picked up. Contact him at pmarmora@aol.com if you are interested. He will let you know when you are in a group of 30 bales. First come/first served.

March Wildflower of the Month



Devil's Club, *Oplopanax horridus*

Both the Latin nomenclature and the English one, give hints that this is a plant you don't want to mess with! Its family is the *Araliaceae*/Ginseng family.

In Alaska, it is found in the coastal zones of Alaska and favors moist and shady areas. It has a long history of uses with the indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest – from medicinal, folk-lore and spiritual applications to fishing. Devil's club shoots are also sought out by foodies as a spring-time delicacy. It can also be a beautiful plant in landscapes and would be a formidable barrier to

keeping unwanted visitors from your yard.

“The genus name, *Oplopanax*, is derived from *hoplon*, meaning weapon and *panakos* meaning panacea or “all-heal”—referring to the medicinal qualities of these shrubs and their relationship to the well-known Asian herb, Ginseng, *Panax ginseng*. *Oplopanax* is sometimes misspelled, *Ophlopanax*. Both the common name and specific epithet, *horridus*, refer to its spiny, wicked-looking appearance. Scientific synonyms include: *Echinopanax horridum* or *horridus*, *Fatsia horridum*, *Panax horridum*, and *Ricinophyllum horridum*.” (source: <http://nativeplantspnw.com/devils-club-oplopanax-horridus/>)

Large deciduous spiny shrub – 3 to 10 foot high. Leaves – few, alternate, with long thick petioles which are hairy and spiny, 6 to 12 inches in length. Blades are rounded, 6 to 14 inches or more in diameter, thin, palmately five to nine lobed. Lobes are sharp, pointed and irregular and sharply toothed. There can be spines along the veins. Spines are many with sharp and slender, yellowish spines. Buds form in early spring and are best gathered before the spines harden.

Flowers form in a raceme or panicle cluster. They are greenish white and fragrant. Bright red berries form which are rounded but slightly flattened and not edible.

Courtesy of Deb Blaylock



Members Corner

A few photos of Kathy Liska's Hoya collection. Clockwise from top left – *Hoya sp. carnosa*, *Hoya sp. aff. burtoniae*, *Hoya ssp. australis*, *Hoya pubicalyx* cv. "Red Buttons", *Hoya sp. curtisii*



You say Tomato ... I say Tomatoes!

Micro - \$3 each or two for \$5

Florida Petite - Biggest tomatoes among the micros. Plant grows to 6 to 8 inches and produce red and juicy fruits. Staking might be needed. Works well in ¾ gallon pots.

Jocholos - Fabulous orange cherry tomatoes on 4 to 8 inch plants that like to sprawl and stay low. Grow in clusters of 5-7 tomatoes. Intensely sweet and will likely produce 2 crops.

Micro Tom - Tomatoes with the plant growing to about 6 inches. Great for windowsills, patios. and hanging baskets.

Mohamed - Produces so many red juicy tomatoes, might require staking (chop sticks work great). Works well in ¾ to 1 gallon pots. Plants are about 7 inches tall.

Pinocchio - Sweet, juicy and mature at about 7 inches. Might send out a few suckers that are anxious to produce fruit. Yellow tomatoes.

Red Robin - Grows to about 8 inches in height. Red tomatoes. Great for hanging baskets and small pots.

Siam - Miniature hybrid developed in Denmark specifically for sunny indoor windowsill. Suitable for small pots. Semi-open habit with 1 inch red fruits, up to 40 per plant.

Vilma - 8 Inch plants produce nickel sized deep red cherry tomatoes that are rich and sweet, on 5-7 clusters that begin to ripen in about 65 days after transplant. 1/2 to 1 gallon containers work excellently for this wonderful little gem!

Dwarf - \$3 each or two for \$5

Fred's Tie Dye - Produce 5 to 6 oz purple tomatoes with gold and green stripes. Rich, intense flavor.

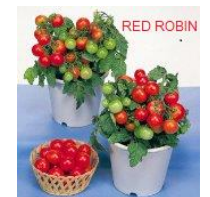
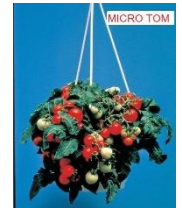
New Big Dwarf - Compact 2 foot tall plants with early yield of pink tomatoes typically 8 to 12 oz.

Tasmanian Chocolate - Plants are about 3½ foot tall with tomatoes that ripen to a deep mahogany color with a full balanced flavor.

Other - \$4 each

Sungold - Extremely sweet indeterminate orange colored cherry tomato.

Stupice - Pronounced 'stu-peach-ka". Plants are 4 foot tall and loaded with 2 ½ diameter red colored fruits in clusters. Produces well in northern climates for those without a greenhouse.



Please send orders to Cindy at cynthia.ann.walker@gmail.com to receive a response email with needed information on where the **Midtown Curbside Only** method of delivery will be.

We will have your order bagged and ready for a speedy pick up.

~ Scheduled date of pick up - Saturday, April 11 between 10am-2pm ~

To limit the need to handle cash, only exact cash in an envelope or check will be accepted.

These plants were originally grown for the Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show.

Proceeds from this sale will help fund the Wildflower Garden Club Grant Program and Community Projects.