



Wildflower Garden Club May 2020 Newsletter

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Messages from the Presidents

Well, we are coming closer to regaining some of what has been held in abeyance for the last few months. The cancellation of the plant sale was a blow, certainly, and now the announcement that the State Fair is going to be cancelled is quite disappointing, but nothing is more important than the well-being of the people, not just in our club, but in our city and area. As odious as the stay-at-home and social distancing and wearing of masks has been, it has kept our state from suffering the devastation with which other areas have been ravaged. Also, lots of time in the garden is a trade off, and plants still being allowed to be sold in garage sale type settings is a small consolation. Thank goodness the club was able to get in some fund-raising this year to offset the unforeseen loss of the plant sale revenue. I cannot wait to see you all again and to rebuild the camaraderie we so enjoy!

Paul

Wake up in the morning to 34 degrees and by 1pm it is 71 in my yard! Strange weather in still stranger times as I continue to isolate in the backyard these days. I have really enjoyed getting to know my garden areas better this spring and the chance to work exclusively at my own house after many years working at other homes and commercial businesses. I have a lot of work cut out to do and a list that is even longer. I look forward to my daily commute of just walking out the front or back door. I hope you are all enjoying the extra time in your gardens and getting some of those projects you have thought about for years accomplished ... that is my goal! Though we do not have any in-person meetings going on during these next few months, service projects and hopefully some hands on fun workshops, or more Zoom meetings are the focus going on within the club. We have begun our annual clean-up and maintenance at ABG, the wheels are starting to turn at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, we have some business that is coming up for members to vote on in about a week, and a basket sale to get behind us. This month's newsletter is full of this information. Lastly, but not in any way the least, especially for me, it is with a sad heart that I must announce the 2020 Alaska State Fair has been cancelled due to the Corvid-19 pandemic. On a somewhat good note, we are working on a possible Plan B event which will have to suffice us until the 2021 Fair.

Kathy



What's Growing Now? - Service Projects

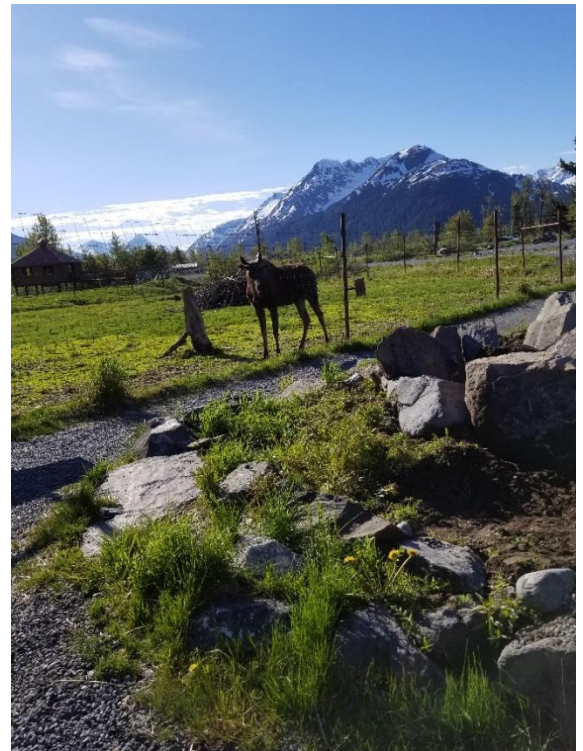
We have implemented the **Alaska Botanical Garden's** new guidelines for volunteers at the garden. Two people are allowed at one time in any area. We have had number of pairs volunteer and although the group is not working together to blast through the Verna Pratt Wildflower Garden Trail, it is nice to set a small goal and to work together to accomplish it in the quiet sounds of nature. In order to volunteer, contact Kathy L. or Paul with the times you would like to work and the names of the people working, and we will check with ABG and see if that slot is open and then let you know. Remember, this is an ongoing service project for the club, and we want to keep the trail looking its best throughout the summer!

Many thanks to the teamwork of Paul Marmora & Kathy Liska, Sally Byrne-Flores & her husband Joaquin, Mary Britton & her friend Judy Pendleton, Janet Hartmann & Jayme Rue, and Marilyn Barker & Linda Kelly. Your time on Verna's Trail is appreciated by the club, ABG, and all who visit the garden.



We are beginning our new service project at the Alaska Native Wildflower Garden at **Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center** in Portage. Many thanks to Matt Hertell, AWCC Maintenance & Projects Manager, who good-humoredly let us be "artistes" and moved the rocks to and fro with the backhoe at our direction to make a more natural look. Even the moose thought it was fascinating, he kept coming by to see what the racket was all about.

We are working details of how we can plant the gardens in a responsibly socially-distanced manner, but we should be ready to work there in the next few weeks, so stay tuned!



What's Growing Now? - Continued ...

We are also 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. After we have compiled the list, we will contact the donors of the plants we have selected. Of course, we anticipate many more plants to be offered



than we need, but we are thankful for all that are willing to offer some of their garden treasures.

Contact Paul Marmora at pmarmora@aol.com for more information regarding interest in volunteering on this project or if you have some wildflower plants you would like to donate.



Club Business

In pursuit of the 501(c)3 status for the club, we will have the vote for the proposed club name change on the period of the 6th - 10th of June. The proposal is to make the new club name **The Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska** which will allow us to apply for the 501(c)3 status under a new name, allow us to use the short form application and to pay a substantially lesser fee than if we tried to change the status of the existing club as it is. We will have to modify an area in the by-laws (**on page 40 in this year's yearbook, the first sentence under 3. Board Members**) to exactly match the wording in the constitution (**page 37, Articles IV and VI**) which will remove the words **"and one member at large"** and add the words **"of the preceding year."**

If the vote of the club approves the name and by-law changes, we will apply for the status of Unincorporated Association with the State of Alaska. Once that is approved, we can proceed with the application to the IRS and will receive a new tax ID number as a 501(c)3 entity.

Plant Sales



The lack of plant sales has created a real dearth for plant buyers. Many of the nurseries have run out of plants, soil is hard to come by, trellises are nearly impossible to find. This is probably because people have no place else to go, and little else to do but play in their yards, so gardening has once again become a popular pastime. 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.

Place an ad listing the plants you have available on any of the Facebook Marketplaces, list your sale in our club plant thread, put it on Craig's List—get the news out there. 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. They are so grateful for plants and advice—it is a delight to watch them light up as they look at your garden and take home a treasured piece after they have visited.

Announcements

The club hanging baskets for the fundraiser were planted by Kathy Liska and are coming along beautifully. **They will be ready for pick up beginning on Wednesday, June 3.** The plants are a mixture of butterfly attractors 'SuperCal Neon Rose' Petchoa, Bidens 'Bidy Gonzalez' and 'Techno Heat Dark Blue' Lobelia and are available for reservation for pick up.

Please contact Kathy Liska at 337-2196 or akliska@aol.com to arrange for baskets. They are available to club members first and then will be offered to the public. Cost is \$35



As was announced, The Wildflower Garden Club was the recipient of one of the Ames Tool Grants as a member of the National Garden Clubs. This will be used to help our work at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center in putting in a native garden, trail work at the Alaska Botanical Garden and other garden maintenance projects.



May Wildflower of the Month

Submitted by Kathy Liska



Cornus sericea ssp. *sericea*

Synonymous with and formerly known as *Cornus stolonifera*.

Red Twig Dogwood, Red Osier, American Dogwood

Family Cornaceae

Cornus sericea, syn. *C. stolonifera*, red osier or red-osier dogwood, is a species of flowering plant, native throughout northern and western North America from Alaska east to Newfoundland, south to Colorado, Mexico in the west, and Illinois and Virginia in the east.

There are about 100 dogwood species worldwide found primarily in temperate regions. Three Dogwood trees and a couple of shrub species are

found in the eastern or Midwestern United States. In our region, we also have the groundcover, Bunchberry, *Cornus canadensis*.

In the wild, Red Twig Dogwood is an upright, spreading, suckering shrub that typically grows in areas of damp soil such as swampy areas, wetland margins or along lakes and rivers. It is a medium to tall deciduous shrub, growing 6-9' tall with a slightly larger spread. This plant spreads readily by underground stolons to form dense thickets. The branches and twigs are dark red, although wild plants may lack this coloration in shaded areas. It has sometimes been considered a synonym of the Asian species *Cornus alba*.

The 2-5" long leaves are opposite, ovate to oblong shaped with an entire margin. Medium to dark green foliage above and glaucous (dull grayish-green) below, which acquires interesting shades of red to orange eventually fading to purple in the fall. Reddish stems turn bright red in winter and are particularly showy against a snowy backdrop.



Tiny, fragrant, white flowers appear in flat-topped clusters (cymes), to 2.5" diameter in June to early July with sparse, intermittent, additional flowering sometimes continuing into summer. Flowers give way to clusters of whitish (sometimes with a bluish tinge) globe shaped berries to 1/4". The fruit is quite attractive to birds and is generally considered to have as much if not more ornamental interest than the flowers. The berries are considered "wildlife value" only ... not so good for human consumption.

Cornus sericea is a popular ornamental shrub that is often planted for the red coloring of its twigs in the dormant season. Excellent massed or as a specimen.

Effective in shrub borders where plants can be combined with evergreens for interesting winter contrast. Can also be used as a property line screen.

Interesting Info ...

Red Twig Dogwood is frequently used for waterway bank erosion protection and restoration in the United States and Canada. Its root system provides excellent soil retention, it is hardy and provides an attractive shrub even when bare in winter, and its ability to be reproduced by cuttings makes it a low-cost solution for large-scale plantings.

For centuries, humans have also used the hard wood of dogwood for basketry, wicker, farm implements, and weaving shuttles. The word dogwood, in fact, is a corruption of the Scandinavian term "dag" meaning skewer (for the hardened sticks used to roast meat). Although the word has nothing to do with our canine companions, it still allows for the clever botanical joke, always worth repeating: How do you tell it is a dogwood? By its bark, of course



Members Corner

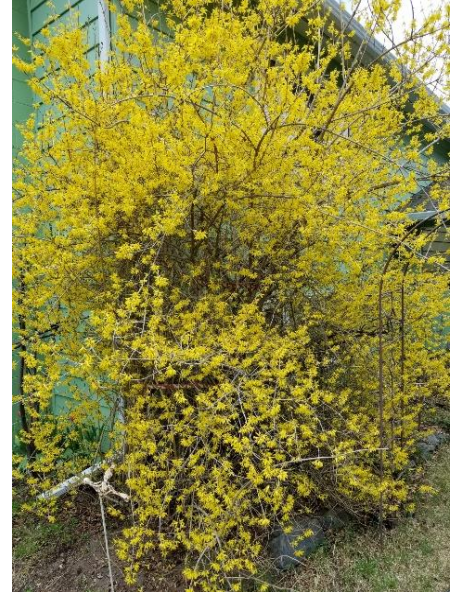
Cindy Walker - *Fritillaria meleagris*



Alis Schmitt - Primula



Paul Marmora - Forsythia



Alis Schmitt - Memorial Day Cactus



Alis Schmitt - Hellebore



Gina Docherty - Scill (Siberian Squill)



Paul Marmora - Crocus



Thank you our
members who
continue to share
pictures with us!