



Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

September 2021 Newsletter

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Messages from the Presidents

Fall is in full swing again. I am exhausted after working the Bonsai booth at the Fair daily, and now from putting away for their winter rest all the perennials I had in my driveway, and cleaning out the garage for our cars during winter. I look forward to the rest—although I will get mighty antsy again in January.

As I reflect on the last three years as co-president, I am proud of what we have done and the strides we have taken, bringing the club up to date, keeping things going during Covid, making workshops to keep our interest up. It has been a wonderful time of learning, of sharing, and of getting to know so many of you so much better. It has been such an honor serving with Kathy—her discipline and foresight are awe-inspiring, and our brainstorming sessions were often epic (accompanied by shouts of laughter every few minutes).

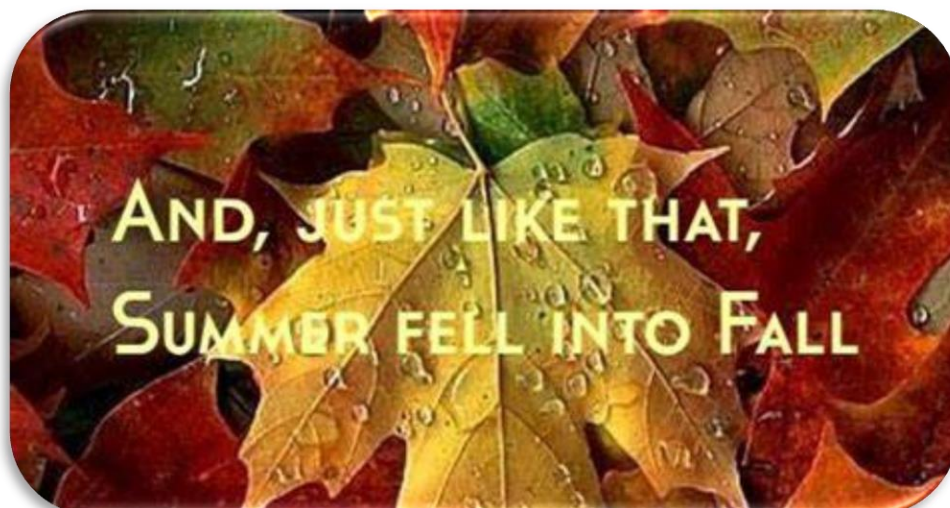
Just like fall for the garden, it is time for a bit of a rest—I am looking forward to it but will miss the activity all the same. This club is wonderful!

Paul

I am one that delights in the change of each new season as they come and go. I am a believer that for everything there is a reason and season... and change is always on the horizon.

I continue to ponder about this as I watch the fall colors move down the mountains, which shows another dusting of 'termination' dust, as I spend time in the yard on these cooler, crisp days tackling the fall chores, and as I come to terms that it is time to pass the torch on to others to carry on in the best interest of the WGCA. I am ready for the rest and slower pace that the next few coming season will bring. The ride isn't over yet!

Kathy



What's Growing Now

The Alaska State Fair at Palmer has come and gone for another year. The Crops and Flower displays were another great success for our volunteers and area gardeners, under the watchful eye of our own out-going Co-President, Kathy Liska, who has been in the Crops department for 27 years, as Crops Superintendent for 18, and as Horticulture Manager for 4. An incredible amount of planning and effort goes into the presentation every year, including coordination of about 100 volunteers for each entry day, comprising clerks, recorders, and judges. **Well Done!**

WGCA Special Sponsored Award Winners of 2021

Kathy Zins



Fran Durner



Many Juniors Zucchini

Our September meeting with Mycologist Christin Swearingen was an absolute joy. Christin's enthusiasm and knowledge of her subject made it a delight to be a part of. We were encouraged to join in with iNaturalist to categorize the fungi we come across in our meanderings and we learned about the **infallible Four** edible mushrooms we see around here: Boletes, Morels, Puffballs & Chicken of the Woods. It was also wonderful to see so many faces again after the long summer growing season.



Special wildflowers that bloomed this month

Melodie Bear, Bob Estey, Jamye Rue, and Kellie Staples



The birth flowers for September are the Aster and the Morning Glory. The aster flower was named after the Greek word for "Star" because of its shape. Asters are beautiful, dainty blooms that come in many colors, but mainly pink, white, red, lilac, and purple. Also known as "Starworts" or "frost flowers," they are a symbol of all-powerful love, affection, and wisdom.

Club Business

The Nominating Committee for the 2022 Board of Directors has been formed and is diligently polling members to fill positions on the board. The position(s) still needing to be filled is the president (or co-president) position.

The position of president is much easier shared with two people. The outgoing president(s) Paul and Kathy are committed to remain on the board for the year following their stepping down according to our by-laws. This is to ensure the new board and president(s) have advice and experience to assist them in assuming their duties. There are now handbooks of written instructions, calendars, and advice for the new board to learn from. No one has to go it alone!

According to law, a 501(c)3 corporation MUST have 4 positions filled: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. It cannot exist if these positions remain vacant.

Although it would take some time planning to disband and redistribute assets, the ultimate result is closure of the organization.

With the withdrawal of the Wildflower Garden Club from the State and National Garden Clubs, we have had to realign our vendors for insurance and Web site design. The procedures are in motion and are just awaiting finalization. We have procured a storage unit and will commence with moving hard goods out of members' garages into the central location in the next week.

August 2021 Treasurer's Report

Denali Federal Credit Union	
Business Savings APYO .10%	\$6997.85
Business Checking	\$5563.28
Balances 8/31/21	\$12,561.13
Morgan Stanley Balances 8/31/21	\$59,759.43
Total Assets 8/31/21	\$72,320.56



Announcements

Our website has been removed from the Alaska Garden Clubs link since we have not renewed our membership. If we need to be contacted, you can use our **Facebook** page: **Wildflower Garden Club**, or via **email: akwildflowers@gmail.com**. Our website is under design now with Spoon Frog Graphics and should be active within 4-8 weeks. It promises to be dynamic and exciting, and we look forward to sharing it with you when it is active.

Another consideration is the **Membership Drive**, which starts on OCT 1. Since the web site is no longer active, we will not have the option to sign up online, as we did last year. We will bring paper copies to the meetings in October and November, and you can fill them out there, and pay by cash or check for the \$20 membership charge, or by credit card with an additional \$1 charge for cc handling fees. If you are not attending the in-person meeting, you can email Billye at **billyegoff@yahoo.com** and she can email you a form to print. Remember, to be included in the yearbook, you will need to be enrolled by DEC 1.

Committee Chairs Still Needed!

We are in need of committee chairs for the following committees: Publicity, Social Media, , Historian, Programs. A pair of you could work on these committees together! **Please help—there are too many duties for only the board members to handle these items. We will be forced to shut down some of these committees until they are filled.**

Upcoming Meetings

October 14th will be the next monthly meeting. **Marya Morrow and Garnet Morrow Jr.** will present on **“Growing Dahlias the Alaskan Way: We Don’t Give a Darn How They Do it Outside”** The Morrrows have been wowing Fair goers for many years and have developed some of their own varieties of Dahlias. This should be a very informative meeting.



At this time, we plan to hold the meeting at Central Lutheran Church. The church is recommending masks at the functions at their location, but we will let you know what the position is when we get closer to the date, as the increase in Covid cases has things remaining fluid. We also plan to continue to broadcast the meetings on Zoom, to be able to reach more people.

Remember to gather your summer pictures to send to Kathy at akliska@aol.com for the **November 11th “Share Pictures of Your Summer Gardens and Alaska Adventures”** slideshow. Our Motto: “Show, Share & Tell”.

Wildflower of the Month

Kathy Liska

Sorbus sitchensis

Sitka Mountain Ash, Western Mountain Ash, Pacific Mountain Ash

Family: Rose/Rosaceae

A grayish-reddish barked shrub with many erect to spreading stems from a common base is native to northwestern North America, from Southeastern, coastal Southcentral, and the Cook Inlet areas of Alaska, to the mountains of Washington, Oregon and northern California, and eastward to parts of Idaho and western Alberta and Montana. It is widespread in British Columbia.



Mountain Ash grows 3-12 feet in open forests, low alpine meadows, clearings, streambanks, and avalanche slopes. Trunk bark is smooth, thin, and the inner bark is fragrant. Winter buds and young growth are covered with rusty-red hairs and are not sticky. In its natural sun or light shade habitat, it is found in dry to moist, well-drained sandy loam, or nitrogen-poor soils. On rocky alpine sites at higher elevations western mountain-ash is often only 1 to 2 feet tall.



The leaves are alternate, pinnately compound, 6-10 inches long, with 7-11 dull to shiny bluish-green above and pale below leaflets which are stalkless, each 1-3 inches long, lanceolate, or long oval. Leaflets are rounded at the tip and coarsely toothed from $\frac{3}{4}$ of the margin to the tip – to nearly entire. In autumn they turn yellow, orange and red.

Inflorescence is a 2-4 inch round-topped cluster of small white flowers. Flowers are perfect (male and female parts) about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide, creamy-white petals, 4-5 styles, 20 stamen in 3 rows, 15-60 flowers per corymb (a flower cluster with lower stalks proportionally longer so that the flowers form a flat or slightly convex head), with a bit of an unpleasant, or unusual odor. Western mountain-ash blooms after the leaves are fully grown from June through July. Flowers are pollinated by insects.

Round berry-like fruit up to a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter, and looking similar to a small apple, are reddish orange, bitter, and have few seeds. The huge fruit clusters ripen from September to October. The berries hang after leaves fall in autumn.



Mountain Ash fruit remains on the plant until late winter, making it valuable as winter wildlife forage. The large, round, reddish-orange berries are a favorite food of the Bohemian Waxwings. It is important in the diet of many gamebirds such as grouse, songbirds, and small mammals. The foliage and twigs are browsed by moose and deer. Black bear and grizzly bear also eat the berries, leaves, and stems.

The otherwise similar *Sorbus scopulina* has yellow-green sharp-pointed leaflets that are sharply serrated over most of their length. *S. sitchensis* (Sitka mountain-ash) hybridizes with *S. scopulina** (Greene mountain-ash). **scopulina*: of the rocks or cliffs

The flat flower heads and berry clusters distinguish it easily from Elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*).

Members Corner – “Seeing Was Believing” at the Fair!



Photos by Kathy Liska

Members Corner – “Seeing Was Believing” at the Fair!



Photos by Kathy Liska