



# Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

## April 2021 Newsletter

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### Messages from the Presidents

I'm getting antsy. It was light out around 6:00am and it is now 9:30pm and it is not fully dark yet. If only the snow would go away!! There is a 9 foot berm on either side of the driveway that is hindering my visions of spring, but the driveway is nearly clear (hence the 9 foot berms), so I am getting optimistic. I have seen catkins on pussy willows, and I swear the buds on my forsythia are starting to swell a tiny bit, and I do not even care that it may all be in my imagination. I am so ready! I know you are too! **Paul**

Somewhere out there it is spring, though not in my yard yet. Most of my garden beds are still covered in at least 2 feet of snow. I can also see some grassy patches on the southside of my house which is a welcome sight. As I write this, the temperature is a pleasant, and most welcome 52 degrees! More trips are being made to the greenhouse to clean and get it set up to load plants out of the house in the next week or two since room is at a premium inside the house now. Do I crave this chaos... probably so since, I do this to myself every year? No doubt the same is true with many Alaskan gardeners right now. I'm thinking we might be on the right track for "break up" to really get started. Fingers crossed that this is the case, and I did not just jinx myself for writing this thought. **Kathy**



## What's Growing On

The **Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show has been moved to May 22**. The mall will be observing whatever mandates come from the city at that time, including wearing of masks. so we will inform you of what that entails as they let us know. Kathy is accepting volunteer names to work shifts (**9-11:30am, 11:30am-2pm, and 2-4:30pm**) **during the show**, so please email her at [akliska@aol.com](mailto:akliska@aol.com) to tell her of your availability.

We plan to give away already-potted marigolds to children, and to have Verna's books, some very cool masks with our forget-me-nots and ladybugs on them which Sally Byrne-Flores, Ruth Bauman, and Barbara Baker have had a hand in working on, any extra marigolds for sale.



The April meeting was a fascinating presentation by member Donna Dewhurst on "**Southcentral Alaska Gardening and Wildlife**". Donna is also a wildlife photographer, and all her slides were filled with her wonderful photographs. Donna gave tips on how to welcome and how to repel wild creatures from our landscapes. Especially interesting to many were tips on attracting pollinators—down to types of flowers and colors for specific species—in fact, her presentation triggered a decision on the subject of our next **pop-up workshop** on making **Watering Station dishes** for pollinators to be held toward the end of April. Stay tuned for more information about the workshop.



## Announcements

**May promises to be a busy month with 3 WGCA Community Service Projects!**

We are scheduled to hold our annual clean-up of the **Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail at the Alaska Botanical Gardens on May 13<sup>th</sup> from 10am-12pm**. Masks will be required and the garden plans to comply with whatever mandates are then in place from the municipality, although being outdoors will be less stringent. We will keep you posted as we hear more from ABG.



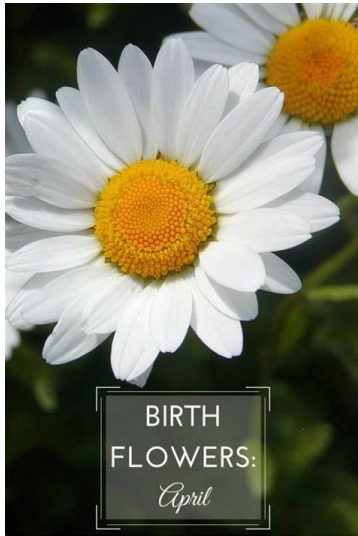
**The Midtown Spring Garden Show is May 22<sup>nd</sup>.**



The re-scheduling of the Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show to May 22<sup>nd</sup>, conflicts with our planned time to clean up the native plant garden at the **Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center**, so keep your ears opened for a new date for this service project.



## Special wildflowers that bloomed this month



“Happy Birthday” to WGCA members that celebrate birthdays in April!  
**Barbara Carrick, Deb Cologgi, and Helen Craig.**

April’s birth flowers are the daisy and the sweet pea. The daisy symbolizes purity, true love and innocence. There are five common types of daisies with petals ranging in color from white to pink, around a bold yellow center. In Old English, people called daisies the “day’s eye,” since the petals closed around the yellow center at night and reopened during the day. Daisies are great flowers to show your undying love.



Sweet peas symbolize blissful pleasure. Sweet peas are known for their sweet fragrance and are a great way to make your home smell like spring!

## Club Business

The Micro Tomato sale fundraiser went very well: As of this printing, all the micro-tomatoes have been picked up, and all hanging Tumbling Tom & Sweet Valentine tomato baskets to be picked up in May have **SOLD OUT!** Kudos and many thanks go to Treasurer Cindy Walker for her planting of and care for these wonderful tomato plants being available to members. Much appreciation to our members for supporting this project!

We have received orders for 17 hanging flower baskets so far. These are designed by Co-president Kathy Liska and were a great success last year. We plan on planting up to 40 of them this year. Two color schemes of similar variety will be offered. The 12” baskets are planted with unique, not run of the mill, ‘Proven Winner’ plants that are drought tolerant and will do well in partial to full sun. A flyer with complete information will be sent out soon!



### **April 2021 Treasurer’s Report**

#### **Denali Federal Credit Union - Old Acct**

Business Savings APYO .10%	1991.77
Business Checking	54.03
CD-2.25% matured 3-12-2021	0.00

#### **Denali Federal Credit Union - New Acct**

Business Savings APYO .10%	5.00
Business Checking	5,295.00

**Balances 3/31/21** \$7345.80

**Morgan Stanley Balances 3/31/21** \$55,511.28

**Total Assets 3/31/21** \$62,857.08

## Wildflower of the Month

*Antennaria microphylla*

Common Names: pink pussytoes, littleleaf pussytoes, rosy pussytoes, small pussytoes, dwarf everlasting

Family: Asteraceae (Aster) / Compositae (Composite)

*Antennaria microphylla* is a stoloniferous perennial forb. It is widespread across northern and western North America, from Alaska and the three Canadian Arctic territories east to Ontario and south to Minnesota, California, New Mexico, Colorado, and Nebraska.

Pink pussytoes can be found growing in plains, hills, dry meadow, and open wood habitats. It is a small herb with male and female flowers on separate plants.



Small, narrow, gray-green leaves form a low mat 1.5 to 12 inches tall depending on species. Leaves are basal and alternate. Basal leaves are 1/4 to 2/3 inch long and up to 1/4 inch wide, toothless, narrowly spoon-shaped, rounded to pointed at the tip (may be more angular than rounded), broadest near the tip and gradually tapering at the base. Leaves have a single prominent vein, seen on both the front and back of the leaf. Both the upper and lower surface are silvery green from dense matted hairs and may become

hairless with age but usually not. Basal leaves tend to persist to the next season before shriveling up and disintegrating.

Stem leaves are lance-linear, up to 1 inch long and less than 1/4 inch wide, toothless, stalkless, and woolly hairy. Stem leaf tips are pointed and lack a short, papery appendage known as a "flag". Stems are erect, green to reddish, covered in long, white, matted hairs, with purple or white glandular hairs on the upper stem. Horizontal, above ground stems (stolons), usually 0.4 to 2 inches emerge from basal leaf clumps (rosettes), spreading in all directions, rooting at the nodes and forming colonies. Male populations are usually separate from females though nearby but are sometimes absent.

The inflorescence shoots up in early summer from a single stem are generally 1.6 to 12 inches in a congested to open cyme with 2 to 13 heads of tiny pink or white with rose colored tipped flowers that resemble kitten toes, thus the common name of pussy toes. Blooms late May-July.

The fruit is an achene 0.03 to 0.05 inch long. Achene is a type of simple dry fruit produced by many species of flowering plants. In many species, what is called the "seed" is an achene, a fruit containing the seed (such as in strawberries). Fruit is produced even when male plants are absent. Seeds are light and mostly wind dispersed.

Submitted by Kathy Liska





There are many pussytoe species in Alaska separated by minor characteristics. *Antennaria microphylla* is a highly variable species and many segregates have been named, although none appear to warrant taxonomic recognition.

Littleleaf pussytoes is often confused with *Antennaria rosea* Greene ssp. *pulvinata*, and alpine pussytoes (*A. alpina*) because of frequent hybridization.

Rosy pussytoes, as well as several other species of pussy-toes, make an excellent choice for a native wildflower groundcover. They form wonderful, evergreen mats covering the ground throughout the four seasons. Almost chokes out weeds. A very worthy plant for between pavers, along paths and in rock gardens. Very tolerant of drought once established.

## **Next Meeting**

Our next scheduled regular monthly meeting will be **September 9<sup>th</sup>**, when Mycologist **Christin Swearigen** will present on the '**Fungus Among Us – Alaska Mushrooms**'. Christin is the Conservation Coordinator for the Interior Alaska Land Trust. Be prepared to be amazed at how much life those little organisms contribute to life in our habitat and find out specific information about different species.



## **Members Corner**

Do you have something you want to share in the Newsletter?  
Submit your photos, articles, recipes, or ideas to Kathy at [akliska@com](mailto:akliska@com)

## **May Events Calendar**

May 9 – Mother's Day

May 13 – ABG Clean-up / 10am-Noon

May 20 – AWCC Clean-up / 11am-2pm

May 22 – Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show / 8:30am-4pm

May 31 – Memorial Day



### **Committee Chairs Still Needed!**

We are in need of committee chairs for the following committees: Programs, Yearbook, Publicity, Social Media, and Club Historian. The chair does not have to be the Lone Ranger—a pair of you could work on these committees together! Please help—there are too many duties for just the board members to handle these items. We might be forced to shut down some of these programs.



## Around the Garden ...

Donna Dewhurst has shared this follow up of interesting information from her April 8th Program 'Southcentral Alaska Gardening & Wildlife'.

### Garden Pollinators & General Attractants

- Mosquitoes & flies – Chocolate lilies, Lady's Slippers
- Moths and butterflies – Most flowers
- Bumblebees – Most flowers
- Honeybees– Blue, purple, white flowers  
(Red/Green Colorblind)
- Hummingbirds – Red tubular flowers
- Hornets & Wasps-(*not pollinators but do eat aphids*)

### Designing a Pollinator Garden

- Choose species with different flower colors and shapes.  
Avoid double cultivators.
- Maximize the morning sun exposure
- Clump flowering species in groups of 3-8 individuals
- Increase structural diversity
- Connect to existing natural habitat
- Provide water
- No pesticides, insecticides or herbicides !!!

