



Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

August 2021 Newsletter

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Messages from the Presidents

The wind is blowing strongly as I write this, and I have to say—it is downright cold! It has been a fun-filled and jam-packed summer, but as Fair approaches, and the leaves are turning colors, I suspect it is time to clear out the potting shed (garage), before She-Who-Must-Be-Obedied puts her foot down (probably on MY foot, too). The summer seemed to fly by, almost in a blur. I got a few projects accomplished, and there are also most of the projects from last year rolling over again. As I learned from my great friend and neighbor, Alice, the Earth will not stop spinning if I do not get those weeds pulled, or that garden built, or the pots organized. I am content that I got done what I did, had fun while doing (or not doing) it, and I already have some goals built in for next season. One thing gardening and working with plants has taught me is that there is beauty in nearly everything, and cause to celebrate at all turns of the seasons. I do not want to be miserable, so watching things grow and flower and settling in to start to rest is all an inspiration. I am thankful.

Paul

The August rains seem to be arriving on time which for me means hearing from others that “it must be Fair time”. That it is, and I am a beyond busy on a daily basis getting my ducks all in a row organizing for the biggest & best horticulture display in the state... and one of the final hurrahs of summer. I’ve been working at this job now for 26 years and have *almost* decided that this will be my final year. It’s time for me to once again re-evaluate where I am in life and what is most important to me as I have entered into yet another new decade and time to figure out where the next chapter will be taking me. With a new season coming soon, I look forward to watching the mountains begin to change color and ease into fall at a slower pace!

Kathy

I think I have too many plants... said no gardener ever!!!

What's Growing Now

Current events coming up this month are mainly about the **Alaska State Fair** at Palmer. The Fair has added an extra weekend this year and will open on **Friday, August 20th**. The hours have also changed to **11AM-10PM** daily, except on Tuesdays & Wednesdays both weeks which the Fair will be closed to the public. The barn displays will be open starting on August 26th until September 6th (Labor Day). Our own out-going co-president Kathy Liska is the Crops Supervisor, encompassing the vegetable and flower exhibits at the Fair. She loves when we come together to help deliver the exhibits in the barn!

Special wildflowers that bloomed this month



Shirley Ryan

The birth flower for August gladiolus. The flower was named after the gladiators because of the sword-like shaped blooms. Gladiolus is associated with strength and courage because of their shape. They are also associated with sincerity and forthrightness. The gladiolus is also used to symbolize love at first sight.

Announcements

On 29 July, club members and people from other clubs that participated in building and maintaining the native plant garden at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center (AWCC) were treated to a tour of the facility lead by none other than the site Director, Trish Baker. The tour started at the native garden, and we moved through the facility to the interesting and charming anecdotes and memories shared by Trish. We ended with a bring-a-bag lunch by the bear enclosure. It was such fun to share the tour with Wildflower, Valley Garden Club, Anchorage Garden Club, Master Gardeners, Rock Garden and Bonsai club members. It is so rewarding to be collaborating with members of other clubs!



On August 3rd, the Alaska Botanical gardens officially dedicated the Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail. This was a long awaited ceremony, put off by the Covid pandemic, but at long last, it is a reality. Friends and admirers gathered to participate in her memory. A number of compliments were heard about the lovely plaque donated by our club in honor of our famous member.





On August 16th, we had a pop-up workshop at the home of members Annie and Dennis Ronsse. The Ronsses are renowned for their incredible flowers and vegetables, and Annie generously allowed participants to pick flowers from the gardens and to arrange them in vases they brought. Paul was on hand to do a demonstration, and then give advice in the principles of flower arranging for any people who asked questions. Participants had a great deal of fun and produced some really lovely arrangements.

Thank you Annie and Dennis for hosting this fun event for us!!!



Upcoming Meetings

September 9th will be the first monthly meeting of the Fall season! Mycologist Christen Swearingen will conduct a meeting via **Zoom** from her home in the Fairbanks area. Her presentation is entitled: **“Fungus Among Us – Alaska Mushrooms.”** Christen will give us a beginner’s overview on recognizing the more common edible and poisonous mushrooms, their habitats, collecting times and, and uses for culinary and ecological purposes.



We anticipate meeting again in person starting on **October 14th**, with our presentation at the Anchorage Lutheran Church on **“Growing Dahlias the Alaskan Way”** by **Marya Morrow and Garnet Morrow Jr.** The Morrrows have been wowing Fair goers for many years and have developed some of their own varieties of Dahlias.

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. Show us what you did!!

Club Business

The Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska considered the question of whether or not to continue affiliation with the National and State Garden Clubs. We had an open forum for the required 30 days in which members could voice their opinions and reasoning and then we conducted an electronic vote from 6-8 August. An overwhelming majority voted to not renew our membership on the state and national level. The board is in the process of acquiring insurance and building a website to replace those existing features which were available through our affiliation with the national and state clubs. We will keep you posted on the progress with the vendors we have selected.

August 2021 Treasurer's Report

Denali Federal Credit Union	
Business Savings APYO .10%	\$6997.55
Business Checking	\$5589.78
Balances 7/33/21	\$12,587.33
Morgan Stanley Balances 7/31/21	\$59,019.65
Total Assets 7/31/21	\$71,606.98

Reminder!!

Kathy and Paul are stepping down as co-presidents for the coming year. The position of **Treasurer will also be vacant**. If we are not able to fill these positions and any other of the board positions necessary, the club may have to be disbanded. We certainly would hate to see such a drastic outcome, but people must step forward to fill these vacant positions. The current co-presidents will be on the Board for one year in an advisory capacity, so the new folks are not being thrown to the wolves. Please consider filling these positions!

Committee Chairs Still Needed!

We are in need of committee chairs for the following committees: Publicity, Social Media, Conventions, Historian, Yearbook, Grants, Programs. 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 only the board members to handle these items. We will be forced to shut down some of these committees until they are filled.**

Wildflower of the Month

Paul Marmora

Rhinanthus minor

Common names: yellow rattle, little yellow rattle, hayrattle or cockscomb, rattlebox.

Rhinanthus minor is a hemiparasitic annual herbaceous plant found in open grasslands, fields, and meadows in Western Asia, northern North America, and Europe. In Alaska, it is native to the Aleutians, Southeast, Southcentral, and southern Western coastal areas. It grows between 10 and 20 inches tall, often branched, with opposite, serrated leaves. Bloom time in Alaska is July and August. The flowers are yellow, extending from the calyx and grow on the terminal end of a raceme. The “rattle” part of the name refers to the calyx itself that forms a little box in which the dried seeds rattle after maturing. As an annual, it is fast-growing, with seeds germinating in early spring and flowering in the later summer.



The genus *Rhinanthus* is a large one, with between 30 and 40 species found around the world, 28 of which are found in Europe. The genus is hemiparasitic, referring to the fact that the plant does photosynthesize (where it gets its carbon), but derives water and minerals from its host plant, with modified roots called haustoria that attach to the host plant's root system and penetrate the conductive system. *Rhinanthus* attach to the xylem (the transport system to bring water and minerals from the roots to the plant tissues, and what makes up the woody body of a plant) of the host, while other parasitic plants may attach to the phloem and xylem (holoparasites, which do not photosynthesize).

Rattlebox is sometimes used to help check the growth of vigorous grasses in wildflower meadows. Some claim that the hemiparasitic properties will curtail grasses by as much as 60%, allowing other species of wildflowers time and space to grow and thrive where they would normally be choked out by the stronger grasses.



Members Corner - Around the Garden

Shared by Janet Hartmann



Look at the size of that Dahlia!



A Robins visit is always nice.



Columbine & Dornicum

Shared by Alis Schmitt



Asiatic Lily



Gerbera Daisies & Voilas



Gazania Daisy



'Starry Night' Petunia

More photos from our fun 'Flower Bouquet Workshop'

