



Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

February 2021 Newsletter

P.O. Box 240563
Anchorage, Alaska
99524

FB: Wildflower Garden Club
akwildflowers@gmail.com
www.wildflowergardenclub.org

Messages from the Presidents

February is traditionally the toughest month of the winter for me. I am heartily sick of the cold and am starting to itch to get into the soil again. Thank goodness the daylight is perceptively returning—that always gets my hopes up and staves off some of the impatience. My friends around the globe are posting photos of daffodils and buds and even some early flowers. I send them pictures of ice fog and my frozen rain chain. I am very much looking forward to working in the garden spaces opened up by the removal of the beetle infested trees in my front yard. As much of a shock and heartbreak the removal brought, it did open up new space for flower beds. I have a goal and hope!! I hope you are all anticipating spring and getting new projects under way as I am. Who cares if it was below zero Fahrenheit a few days ago? Take a deep breath—spring really is around the corner!

Paul

February to me is the border, albeit a long border, between winter and spring. The winds of March will soon be here, and the blowing snow. April showers will arrive, likely to be snow showers. Finally May will roll in and we will witness the trees bud up & the early flowers. Do not get me wrong, I enjoy our winter season and its beauty, (though not as much when it is below zero), but my eyes are color starved at this point. Yes, I am on the countdown, eagerly awaiting the next change of seasons and the new hope it always brings me with fresh new growth in the gardens.

Kathy

**"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle
... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud
straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream."**

- Barbara Winkler



What's Growing Now?

Hopefully, people have started their Marigold seeds—under lights of course—for the **WGCA Children's Marigold Giveaway Service Project**. The Spring Garden Show at the Midtown Mall is scheduled, (fingers crossed), for Saturday April 3rd. Marigold giveaway chair Kathy sent out an information sheet to assist you in getting your seeds started (with marigolds in mind, of course), but the information pertains to most plants you want to start. It is a very helpful document. The 'Petite Mix' works best for small hands that will be planting.



Our first workshops of the year on February 9th were a success. Aside from the joy of seeing everyone, we had fun assembling a simple and quick heart-shaped ornament for our feathered friends. The instructions were simple to follow and the sturdy ornaments came together quickly and without fuss. About 10 people participated in one or the other of the two sessions, and a number of people bought extra kits to give as Valentine's Day gifts.

Cooperative Extension agents Art Nash and DeShana York presented on February 11th about AgrAbility—a focus on making farming and gardening more accessible as we grow older or cope with disabilities. This has become an area of interest around the country and there are a lot of resources becoming available. We have received a list of web sites, tools and publications that might be of help for more in-depth research, which we are sharing at the end of this newsletter. The presentation gave a feeling of hope and upcoming accomplishment in answer to the mounting of the frustrations as our bodies change. DeShana and Art are the forefront for this program in Alaska, and it was a privilege to have them address us.



Special Wildflowers that bloomed this month

“Happy Birthday” to WGCA members that celebrate birthdays in February!

Barbara Baker, Martie Black, Billye Goff, Annita Magee and Kat Karabelnikoff.

FLOWER OF THE MONTH



February's birth flower is the violet and primrose. While many relate red roses with February thanks to Valentine's Day on the 14th, the violet is actually the February birth flower. This purple-hued bloom is a symbol of modesty, faithfulness, and virtue. In the Victorian age, a gift of violets was a declaration to always be true, and it still serves as a wonderful reminder of loyalty, thoughtfulness, and dependability.

Another flower often cited as February's birth flower is the primrose, a pale yellow perennial with European origins. They are edible flowers that can add a pop of color to your favorite treat (or birthday cupcake)! Primroses symbolize young love, so they are a great gift for a significant other.

Club Business

At long last, we have received word from the IRS that they have accepted our application to be a 501(c)3 charitable organization. This has been a long process, and was long overdue, but we finally have the designation we are supposed to have. This allows us to receive grants designated for a 501(c)3 organization and makes any donations to our club tax deductible. Kudos to Treasurer Cindy Walker for her unceasing pursuit of the recognition from the IRS and to Co-President Kathy Liska for all the work she put into the process.

Co-Presidents Kathy Liska and Paul Marmora held an online Zoom meeting with Treasurer Cindy Walker to complete the required 2020 Annual Financial Review. All financial accounts were balanced to the penny. Many thanks to Cindy Walker for her accurate stewardship.

Business license announcement

The state of Alaska requires a business license for every corporation registered in the state. A number of local gardens clubs were recently apprised of this requirement. Thanks to member Deb Blaylock for conveying that information to Treasurer Cindy. As always, Cindy got immediately on it and we are now possessors of a business license for a garden club under the Services designation.



January 2021 Treasurer's Report

Denali Federal Credit Union

Business Savings	2291.59
Business Checking	583.45
CD-2.25% (3-31-2021)	4088.44

Balances 1/31/2021 \$6963.48

Morgan Stanley 1/31/2021 \$54,293.64

Total Assets 1/31/21 \$61,257.12

Announcements

Our next club meeting will again be conducted via Zoom. On **March 11, 2021 at 10am**, Debbie Hinchey will present on "Summer Bulbs." Spring is the time to purchase those summer stunners, and Debbie will share tips on planting, dividing, and retaining those splashes of color. A life-long Alaskan, Debbie is a Horticulturist and has many years of successful gardening experience both commercially and as a hobbyist. We are fortunate indeed that she is willing to share her acquired wisdom with us!



Wildflower of the Month

Submitted by Kathy Liska

Viola renifolia

Kidney-leaved or kidney-shaped Violet, White Violet, Wood Violet

Family: Violet/Violaceae

Viola renifolia is a North American native species with a range extending from Newfoundland and Labrador, Alaska to northern Washington, east to the Rocky Mountains, northern Great Plains, Great Lakes region, and northeastern North America. Its habitat includes peatlands, shrub thickets, stream banks, swamp forests, bogs, and fens of spruce and coniferous forests.

The Kidney-leaved violet is a low, clump growing perennial about 4 inches tall. The leaves and flower stalks lack a central stem (acaulescent). The flower peduncles and the leaf petioles grow directly from the short rootstocks. This plant typically does not spread by runners or stolons since they are rarely produced, but if present, it will produce cleistogamous flowers - flowers that do not open and hinder them from exposing the reproductive parts and force self-fertilization. Light groundcover can be achieved over time by its self-seeding.



Leaves are all basal, mostly kidney shaped, hence the common name. The leaf blade is broader than long, 3/4" to 2" wide, kidney-shaped (reniform) to nearly round (orbicular), and edges have shallow, rounded teeth. Leaves hairy on both surfaces, particularly on young leaves, often becoming smooth (glabrate) with age, or with fine hairs only along the veins. Leaves can become more heart-shaped after the flowering period, enlarging up to 3½" inches long and wide. Kidney-leaved violet can be tricky to distinguish from other white-flowered violets, but the most distinctive characteristic is the leaves. The flowers are 1/4" to 1/2" wide and solitary at the end of a leafless stalk that can be either hairy or smooth and is usually shorter than the leaf stalks. The 5 petals are white, beardless, and veined with purplish-brown lines on the lower 3 petals, fewer on the lateral petals. Margins entire, and upper petals usually reflexed at

maturity. The spur at the back of the flower is rather short and rounded. The fruit is a green capsule. Violets have capsules that split into three valves, which are usually thick in perennial species, and thin in annual species. Flowers bloom late May-July.

Viola species exhibit great characteristic variations. Leaf and stem sizes usually increase a lot between early spring and late summer. Stem, leaf, and flower sizes vary with environmental factors, such as aspect, light, soil moisture, and other soil properties.

Members Corner - Kathy Liska's Hoya Collection

Hoya carnosa



Hoya burtoniae



Hoya australis



Hoya publicalyx 'Red Buttons'



Hoya curtisii (Mini)



**Hoya carnosa x serpens
'Mathilde splash' (Mini)**



Hoya krohniana (Mini)



**Do you have something
you would like to share
in the Newsletter?**

Submit your photos or ideas to Kathy at akliska@com

How to Get Hoya Plants to Bloom

From gardenlovers.com

Hoyas (*Hoya* spp.), also known as wax plants, are low-maintenance vining plants that produce thick, waxy leaves and, in most cultivars, clusters of plump flowers. A few cultivars do not produce flowers, but the more common hoyas, such as *Hoya carnosa*, *Hoya krohniana* ‘Eskimo’, and *Hoya multiflora*, are all blooming varieties.

The flower clusters are dome-shaped, similar to the top of an umbrella; in fact, this type of flower cluster is called an umbel (no “r”).

Hoyas are long-lived perennials that come from the tropics, but they can grow in milder conditions easily. Caring for hoyas is generally simple, but if you want the plant to bloom, give it the environment it craves – and avoid some common plant-care tasks that many other plants might demand.

Don’t Deadhead Them

When an umbel fades and the flowers wilt, do not deadhead the hoya to make the plant look better. This is because of a quirk that you do not see on many conventional garden plants: The hoya reblooms from exactly the same spur in the same spot. The next umbel will emerge from that same end of the stem, in other words. If you deadhead the flower, which typically involves snapping off part of the stem, you will not get another bloom from that spot and will have to wait for other spurs grow over time. If you do not like the look of the wilted flowers, you can lightly brush the petals away.

No other tactics will make the plant bloom if you have pinched away all its spurs. If you find that this was your mistake and the reason you are not getting hoya flowers, care for the plant as usual and wait for it to grow more spurs as time goes by.

Hoyas Need Appropriate Light

The light that your hoya gets is one of the top contributors to the plant’s ability to bloom. While too much bright light can scorch the plant (as bright light can do to most other plants), light that is too low will prevent blooming. If your hoya refuses to bloom, the light level should be one of the first things you look at.

Hoyas do not necessarily need full sun all the time; they can live healthy and happy lives in full-sun, partial-sun, and dappled-shade conditions. However, they do need exposure to bright light to produce enough food through photosynthesis to support blooming. If you can give them at least full morning sun for several hours, that will help; afternoon sun with some dappled shade is good, too.

Keep the Plant Rootbound

Hoyas are epiphytes, similar to orchids. They like having their roots in somewhat compressed circumstances because that mimics what the plant experiences in the wild, so let the plant be a bit rootbound. Occasionally, over the years, you may find that it does need repotting, but much of the time changing out the soil and planting medium while using the same container is enough. Being rootbound can be stressful, but that stress could be enough in the hoya’s case to get it to bloom more.

Water and Soil Drainage

Hoyas need soil that drains well, and you do not want to give the plant too much water. A combination of materials like peat and orchid bark chips can work very well; perlite, other bark types, and additional chunky planting mixes can work in combination, too. Never let a hoya sit in water; when you water deeply, you want to see the excess water drain out and away from the roots. Otherwise, the plant will drown.

Watering too much, even with great drainage, can be stressful for the plant in a bad way. Be sure you wait until the top 1 to 2 inches of soil are dry, and in winter, let the plant get a little drier as sometimes this can help with future blooming. However, do not let the plant's leaves shrivel up – if you see that, the plant needs water. Do keep the plant well-misted and place it in a more humid part of your home if possible.

Age Could Be a Factor

Immature hoyas will not bloom, but the plant's growth to maturity varies. You can find varieties that bloom when they reach a couple of years old and others that will not bloom until they reach a good seven years old. If all other conditions are optimal and you have never seen an umbel on the plant since getting it, it could be you just have a younger hoya that needs time to mature.



♥ Happy Valentines Day ♥

From DeShana York and Art Nash

Here are some of the links and references below that we chatted about today. Let me know if you need anything. We are always happy to help!

Workshop References:

WSU Gardening for Life booklet: <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2079/2015/12/GFL-booklet-complete.pdf>

AgrAbility Assistive Technology Database: <http://www.agrability.org/toolbox/>

Mantis Compost-Twin: Youtube video: <https://youtu.be/5pPr0ZhfHTU>

Assistive Technology of Alaska (AgrAbility non-profit partner): <https://www.atlaak.org/>

Link to sign up for AgrAbility listserv newsletter:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdEUclzYerqWS3U1jr70FNup7MwcXvj0vVDeiJfBnR4bDVL6w/viewform>

Latest AgrAbility newsletter: https://myemail.constantcontact.com/AKAgrAbility-Winter-Newsletter.html?soid=1117618064032&aid=72Fr_0uwjEA

AgrAbility Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/AlaskaAgrAbility>

AgrAbility Website (This is going to be revamped soon, but giving you the link anyway): <https://www.uaf.edu/ces/agriculture/agrability/index.php>

Our contact information:

DeShana York, Director
786-6330
ddyork@alaska.edu

Art Nash, Energy Specialist
474-6366
alnashjr@alaska.edu

