



Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

January 2021 Newsletter

P.O. Box 240563
Anchorage, Alaska
99524

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

Messages from the Presidents

We have a new start!! I think it is a most welcome one. Looking back on the last year, who would have ever thought the world would be brought to such an impasse in these modern times? It seems like some sort of remnant from the turn of the last century, but it shows the resilience of humanity. Humans survived then and they are going to survive this time as well. We will need to be sure to keep the good things that have emerged, like being closer to family and dear friends, to controlling our fears and to getting back to basics like gardening and crafts. Hopefully, we have learned more about what is precious and worthwhile and cleave to that in future. I look forward to what this year will bring, and the things we can (hopefully) accomplish as our society frees up again. You are the best!!

Paul

A new year with new hopes for a possible return to more normalcy in our lives is my optimism speaking, and I will continue to remain hopeful that 2021 will bring this to us. Last year was a rough one. Catching us all off guard to the ways we were going to need to change our ways in everything we do, not only in our personal lives, but also within the WGCA. There have been lots of new technology lessons to be learned, which I have realized is a good thing because it gives us all the ability to still get together (at least virtually) and continue to share in things we enjoy and our friendships. Just think, many of us have migrated from the record to the eight-track, then from tape to the CD, and even onward to MP3 and streaming. And don't forget, we have adapted from rotary and dial phones to smart phones. Continue to embrace the possibilities of new technology ... We can do this!

The monthly meetings for the club will continue to be held on Zoom for the time being, and honestly our get-togethers do give me something to look forward to. We have a good variety of programs scheduled, along with a handful of workshops planned throughout the year. I hope you will connect with us. One last promising note, the days are getting longer, and it is just about the time to get some seeds started! Take care and keep well.

Kathy



What's Growing Now?

You should have started to receive your yearbooks and the special gift inside. Thank you for hanging in with us for the past year. We are quite proud to be part of such an auspicious group.

Announcements

Our next club meeting will also be conducted via Zoom. On **February 11, 2021 at 10am**, a Cooperative Extension Services AgrAbility team of DeShana York and Art Nash will present to us on how to ease our gardening chores. By changing just a few steps, we can keep gardening happily and safely for much longer time.



February 1st is a good time to start Marigold seeds—under lights of course, if you want them to be in bloom 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 ... This is a bit earlier than in past years.

The 'Petite Mix' works best for small hands that will be planting. We will need a handful of growers to make this event happen. Contact Kathy at akliska@aol.com or 337-2196 for more info!

Special wildflowers that bloomed this month

"Happy Birthday" to WGCA members that celebrate birthdays in January!

Alice Bethka, Gina Docherty, Sally Byrne-Flores, Merry Johnson, and Chris Wood.

The Birth Flower of January: **Carnations**



It takes a distinctly strong bloom to blossom in the cold winter months. As the most popular birth flower for January, carnations are a bright spot in this gloomy month. They are one of the few flowers that can bloom in cool weather, as long as temperatures remain just above freezing.

Also known as the gillyflower, carnations symbolize admiration, love, and distinction. They are beautiful and simple blooms, which makes them charming both as a filler flower and as a colorful bouquet.



WGCA Annual Report: 2020

This year turned out to be a doozy!! It started well, but the advent of the Covid19 coronavirus made great changes and adaptations necessary and a lot of retraining and reconfiguration was required.

The Wildflower Garden Club was proud to receive the National Garden Clubs Plant America Grant of \$1000 to aid in the start-up of the native plant garden at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center (AWCC). We were also thankful to receive the Ames Tool Grant of \$250 in tools for use in that garden.

Before Covid stopped in-person social interaction, we were able to have three normal meetings at the Central Lutheran location.

January was a presentation by Jen Bersch about “**The Differences Between Hemp and Cannabis Products and Their Uses.**” It was an eye-opening glimpse into a very detailed world, with regulations differing at the State and Federal levels.

February’s presentation by Mingchu Zhang of the Fairbanks Cooperative Extension office was our first foray into distance-based instruction, or a “webinar.” Luckily, this helped us prepare for the upcoming electronic meetings necessitated by the Covid. Ming presented on “**What BioChar can do for Your Gardens and the Environment.**” Everyone was all fired up (Excuse the pun...) to start the process in their own yard. We did discuss workshops, but the distancing mandates got in the way.

Wildflower hosted two workshops in January and February on making Kokedama (moss balls) before distancing restrictions were in place. Twenty-seven people attended either the initial or an added workshop. They were very fun, and people enjoyed the plant they got to take home in its novel “container.”

Our last in-person meeting was in March, when Jessie Moan of the Anchorage Cooperative Extension taught us about “**Why You Should be Thankful for Insects.**” Due to her insightful explanations of what the insects are doing for us, the lives of many insects were spared this summer.



April was our first Zoom meeting for the group due to Covid. State Fair Head Gardener, Becky Myrvold was up for the challenge and converted her entire presentation to run electronically and did a masterful job of holding the interest of the entire audience. Becky took us through her entire year of Fair preparation in her presentation of “**What it takes to Beautify the Alaska State Fairgrounds.**”

Our April service project at the Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show was cancelled due to safety precautions, as was the State Fair in August/September—a blow to many who enjoy participating in both the **Children’s Marigold Giveaway** and in helping clerk or judge making entries at the Fair.

We conducted 3 fundraisers this summer with sale of micro-tomatoes and tomato baskets grown and donated by Cindy Walker and distributed by Barbara Baker. Kathy Liska put together 25 well-received hanging flower baskets.

Happily, we were able to participate in our service project of caring for the **Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail at the Alaska Botanical Gardens**. ABG set limits in number of volunteers, but we worked with them in small groups throughout the summer. Member Sally Byrne-Flores worked there weekly for most of the summer.

The installation of the **Native Plant Garden at Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center** took place slowly, section by section, with only a few volunteers at a time from various local garden clubs working in collaboration, to comply with the distancing mandates of the facility. Many donations of plants were received, were set in place, and have started to settle in. The plant tags and stakes have arrived, as well as the fencing stanchions, which will all be set up in the Spring after the snow melts.

Our annual plant sale had to be cancelled, due to the gathering restrictions and the troubles it would have caused. This was a great disappointment to many, but a few members banded together and sold plants throughout the summer in their driveways and made donations to the club from their sales.

Due to a scheduling conflict, our October meeting, which was to be a presentation on “**Building a Water Feature**,” by Martie and Blackie Black, was changed to an outdoor workshop presentation in June at the Black’s home. About a dozen people were able to attend.



In July, we had an outdoor workshop with the Anchorage Garden Club, making tufa troughs or concrete leaf molds at Carol Norquist’s home. The session was limited to 15 and we reached that number easily.

Our first meeting of the Fall, “**Alaska Raptor – Owls**” was presented by the Bird Learning and Treatment Center in September. It was their first-ever presentation over Zoom, so the reaction of the bird was up for question, but the presentation was a resounding success, and they plan to do more.

In October, Mike Baldwin stepped up to the plate with a presentation on “**Alaska’s Carnivores and More**.” The diversity and delicacy of these carnivorous plants is astounding. Who knew there was so much hungry vegetation in Alaska?

November brought a Member share slide show on Zoom, pieced together by Kathy Liska from photos members had sent in. It was a time of fun and warm remembrance. It was also a time of learning, as the presentation was crashed by a couple of yahoos—but it taught us more about the Zoom platform and meeting security.

Although the club decided not to sponsor the Wreath-making workshop as a club activity, Darryl made it available for members who wished to come on their own. Nine people attended the hands-on wreath-making session at Dimond Greenhouses in early December. Being such a huge facility, distancing was rather easy, and although everyone wore masks, the eyes showed they were having fun and smiling.

Finally, there was a Kissing Ball workshop on Zoom in mid-December. Twenty-two kits were picked up the day before, and we assembled the Kissing Balls together on Zoom.

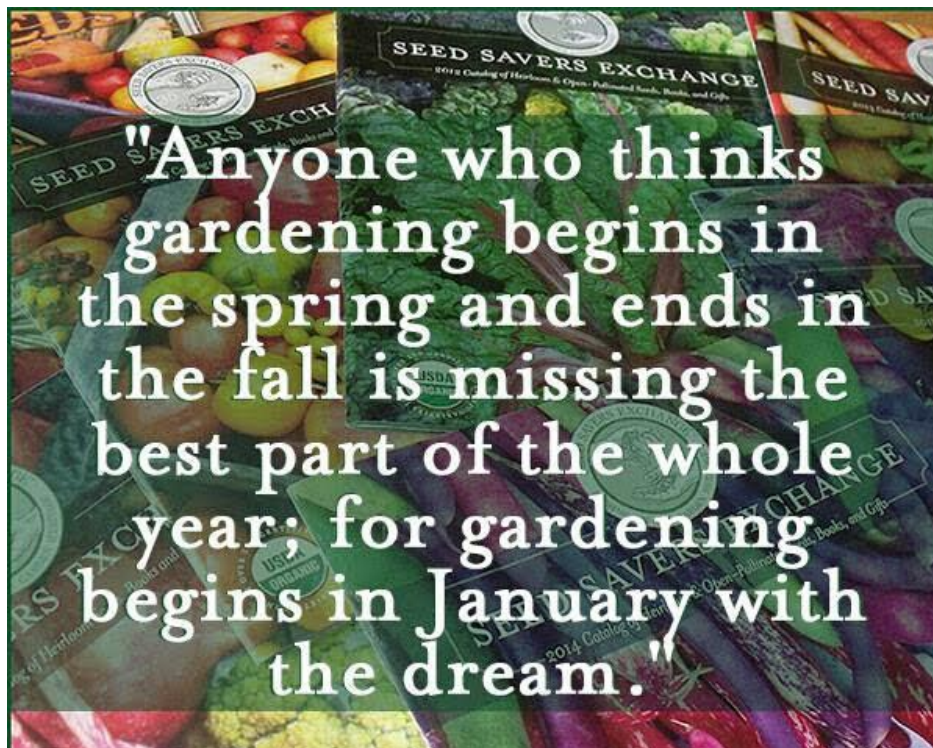
That session was open to members of local garden clubs and friends. Most of the folks requested to be notified of other workshops in the future.

Throughout the year, the club was unable to vote at meetings as usual, so we had to work out a process for electronic voting, keeping with the bylaws' guidelines, but moving ahead with club business. This was so successful, that Co-presidents Kathy and Paul were enlisted to run the vote for the State Garden Clubs' board at the state convention, which was held electronically as well.

The club decided to pursue becoming a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation and to this end, by electronic vote on June 10th, the club decided to change its name officially to the Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska and applied for and was granted the status of non-profit corporation by the State of Alaska. On Oct12th, the club, also by electronic vote, updated the Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules to make them compliant with the 501(c)3 IRS requirements. Application was made to the IRS for the non-profit status on Oct22nd, but there is a huge backlog at IRS due to Covid restrictions and working from home, so we are still awaiting the reply.

On Nov16th, the board elections were finalized by electronic vote and the new board now consists of returning Co-presidents Kathy Liska and Paul Marmora, returning Vice President Barbara Baker, returning Treasurer Cindy Walker, Secretary Barbara Carrick, and two Members at Large: Sally Byrne-Flores and Ruth Bauman. The new Board will be installed at the January 2021 meeting.

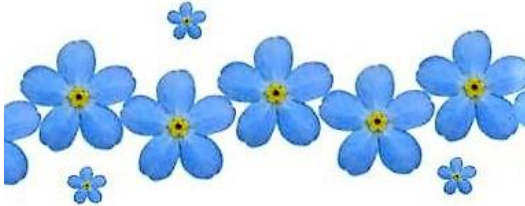
The Member-of-the-Year vote went to the entire 2020 Board of the Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska: Kathy Liska, Paul Marmora, Barbara Baker, Cindy Walker and Annita Magee in recognition of all the work they put in to address the Coronavirus issues and to keep the club viable and communications open.



Club Business

The 2021 Board of Directors for the Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska was installed by Co-President Kathy Liska at the club's JAN14th Zoom meeting. Kathy used a whimsical garden tool theme which likened the positions responsibilities for tools we rely on in the garden. It was light-hearted and fun, and yet showed the depth of the Board's responsibilities.

Co-Presidents: Kathy Liska & Paul Marmora, Vice President: Barbara Baker, Secretary: Barbara Carrick, Treasurer: Cindy Walker, Members at Large: Sally Byrne-Flores and Ruth Bauman.



As of January 2021, the Treasurer Reports summaries will be included monthly in the Newsletter.

If you would like a more detailed summary, please send a note to request one to: akwildflowers@gmail.com

December 2020 Treasurer's Report

Denali Federal Credit Union	
Business Savings APYO .10%	2291.49
Business Checking	1292.24
CD-2.25% 3-31-2021	4080.64
Balances 12/31/2020	\$7664.37
Morgan Stanley	
Balances 12/31/2020	\$54,835.48
Total Assets 12/31/20	\$62,499.85

As a Corporation in the State of Alaska, we are required to have an 'Annual Meeting' even as a non-profit organization. A part of an annual meeting is including an Annual Report of the organization's activities throughout the previous year. Therefore, our first meeting of the year (January) will serve as the Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska Annual Meeting. The Annual Report, Installation of Officers, presentation of the new year's budget, and final report of the previous year's finances will be communicated during the business meeting following the program.

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 just the board members to handle these items. We might be forced to shut down some of these programs.

Alaska Native Plant Society Project Grant Summary:

On another grant-related note, the 'Butterfly Garden' at the Campbell Creek Science Center has been completed by the Native Plant Society despite the Covid restrictions. The Native Plant Society received a grant from the WGCA a few years ago, which was extended through this year to allow completion of the project. We have received a very nice summary of the project (see below), and even received back a small amount of unused funds. The NPS has graciously arranged to have our name and logo included as a sponsor on the garden signage. Kudos to the Native Plant Society for completion of their project!

Summary of 3rd and final year (2020) of the grant from the Wildflower Garden Club to the Alaska Native Plant Society for upgrade to pollinator/butterfly garden at Campbell Creek Science Center, BLM, Anchorage, Alaska:

We are happy to say that despite the covid pandemic, we were able to complete the projects which were planned for the 2020 summer. We were able to do this with BLM kindly opening the gates for us approximately every two weeks throughout the summer despite Campbell Creek Science Center being closed and all their programs being cancelled. Without their support during this unprecedented year, we could not have been able to complete our work plan.

The projects that were completed during the summer of 2020 included:

- 1-removal of plants from some beds with sifting of soil
- 2-replanting of plants harvested and saved in beds during 2019 to the newly designed beds
- 3-planting of plants received in donation and from wild harvesting
- 4-purchasing of native plants from commercial sources and placement of these plants in beds
- 5-mulch was purchased and placed on paths
- 6-rocks donated from the Alaska Botanical Garden were transported from the botanical garden and placed as edging along the beds
- 7-placed a water feature for butterflies in one of the beds
- 8-worked with Campbell Creek Science Center personnel to design an educational sign regarding Alaska's native plants and their pollinators
- 9-solicited photographs of Alaskan plants and pollinators from Dr Derek Sykes, UAF and Dr Matt Carlson, UAA, and Alaska Native Plant Society members for a sign to educate the public about pollination.

Lark Labels in Wichita, KS. will make the sign and ship it to CCSC for placement in the garden in 2021. We have sent them a check for \$392.27 for the sign and postage. The final design has not been completed, but CCSC-BLM personnel are working on this. They have your club's logo which we hope will be included on the sign along with the logo of the ANPS.

Of the \$1,000 grant only \$12.47 remains. I enclose a check for that amount. I also enclose an accounting summary detailing how the money was spent. Expenses were for the purchase of plants, mulch, edging, fabric for under the mulch, and for the pollinator educational sign.

ANPS appreciates the extension of the grant from 2 years to the added 3rd year. I am sure we will keep adding plants but we feel the 3rd year was necessary to complete the project adequately. We cannot thank the Wildflower Garden Club enough for granting us the money for the garden. The garden was originally designed by Verna Pratt. I think she would be very happy with the upgrade that your grant allowed us to complete. It was a pleasure for ANPS to work with the Wildflower Garden Club. We hope that this collaborative association continues in the years to come.

Best to your organization in 2021,

Wildflower of the Month

Submitted by Paul Marmora

Utricularia intermedia

Common names: Bladderwort, flatleaf bladderwort, intermediate bladderwort, Mountain bladderwort

This carnivorous plant is a member of a large and fascinating family, all called bladderworts. They appear on every continent except Australia and a few Pacific Islands. Most of the species are terrestrial, but about 20% are said to be aquatic, like *U. intermedia*. All like a wet, marshy habitat. The aquatic species are free floating, relying on bladders for both buoyancy and feeding. In all the bladderworts, the majority of the plant exists below the surface on stolons (runners with large internodes), either terrestrial or aquatic. The only part of the plant that appears above the soil or water is the flower and stem, which is snapdragon or orchid-like and much sought after by collectors. *Utricularia* are said to have the most sophisticated bladder traps of all the carnivorous plants, especially the aquatic varieties. The aquatic species tend to have larger bladders, allowing them to capture and digest somewhat larger prey, such as water fleas, small fish fry, tiny tadpoles, mosquito larvae, nematodes, and aquatic worms. The larger prey is usually ingested in stages. The bladders are tripped by motion against tiny hairs at the mouth or door of the bladder, the door drops inward, water rushes in with the organism and the door closes rapidly, trapping the food until enzymes start breaking it down.



U. intermedia grows in shallow or slow moving water and marshes either rooted in soft mud or free-floating. The leaves are many branched and palmate, somewhat flattened. There are small bladders attached to specialized stems at the base that are difficult to see. These hyper-sensitive bladder traps are reported to close over their prey in microseconds. Underwater stems may produce turions (vegetative buds) that sink to the bottom and overwinter, producing new plants in the growing season. Some sources cite the plant as an annual, others as a perennial.

The flower is yellow, and reminiscent of a snapdragon with a long lower lip, a pouch in the center and a triangular upper lip. There is a spur under the lower lip. The flowers are small (less than half an inch) grow on slender stems in groups of 1-4 and appear in July and August.



A fascinating genus, there is a large body of information available about the over 214 species.

Members Corner

Don't you hate it when your gardening tools seem to wander off on their own? With this **DIY Self-Cleaning Garden Tool Holder**, you can keep your favorite go-to tools for working in the garden within easy reach and in one place. This DIY garden project checks all the right boxes, it won't take you long to create, and it won't break the budget, either. This project also works as a self-sharpening item, too!



A terra-cotta pot or galvanized tub filled with a mixture of sand and mineral or 3-IN-ONE Multipurpose oil makes a perfect home for your small gardening tools. The sand is abrasive, so the simple act of taking your tools out and putting them back in helps keep your tools sharp. The addition of oil to the sand keeps your tools well-lubricated, protecting them from rust and dirt build-up.

To make your own cleaning and sharpening garden tool holder, you will need:

- a mid-size terra-cotta pot
- spray paint (optional)
- pottery sealer (optional)
- a large bucket
- sand (play)
- mineral or 3-IN-ONE Multipurpose Oil



Start by painting your pot if you want to. A paint and primer combo such as Rust-Oleum works well. It takes two coats inside and out to cover the pot completely. Once the paint is dry to the touch, you can spray a layer of pottery sealer to protect your paint job from the elements.

Pour sand into the large bucket, along enough of the mineral or 3-IN-One Multipurpose oil to lightly dampen the sand. (***You want the sand to be slightly moist, not look like an oil mess.***) Use a trowel or other garden tool to stir the sand and the oil together until the oil is distributed evenly throughout.

When you're done using your tools in the garden, brush off any debris and stick the tools into the sand. The grains help keep the blades nice and sharp, while the oil prevents rust from forming.

It is also a quick and easy tune-up for hand tools like pruners and hori hori knives.

The sand bucket is a good trick for keeping track of small tools, as they tend to be misplaced a lot around our yards. By making a habit of putting the tools in the bucket every time, you will always know where to find them!

**Do you have something you want to share in the Newsletter?
Submit your photos, ideas, recipes, etc. to Kathy at akliska@com**