



Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

March 2021 Newsletter

P.O. Box 240563
Anchorage, Alaska
99524

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

Messages from the Presidents

March is the month in which Spring officially starts. As Alaskans, we generally laugh at such a silly notion, but in our hearts, we notice the increasing daylight and the slow climb of the daytime temperatures, and our blood starts pumping a little faster to match the returning sap into the veins of our perennials. Once the first birds of spring return (I am referring to the seagulls, of course), we start to look for willow catkins, buds on the forsythia, and looking for the tulips and daffodils to break ground. Such an exciting time of year—it makes the long winter fade from our memories (almost). This is the time to start planning for the gardens and projects. I certainly am getting ready!

Paul

Yes, March. Mother Nature let loose in my neighborhood last night leaving a 20 inch load of snow which will give me plenty of exercise for a few days. A typical Alaska late winter dump, though I always think maybe, just maybe, we will be awarded an early spring. Oh well, I have no lack of projects still on my winter to do list, plus I have Marigolds that are already blooming in the basement as well as a few other varieties of seeds sown because it is what we gardeners do at the near end of our drawn out winters. I truly enjoy this time of year when the grow lights are on, and new little plants are in need of my care and 'petting' ... if you know me. This is also a time when I am busily working on Alaska State Fair stuff which gives me fulfillment and gratification to be a part of. "Seeing is Believing" is this year's theme, which certainly takes on many different interpretations after what the year 2020 showed us. I am focusing on the present with an enthusiastic approach to welcome in the next season in with open arms, and flip-flops!

Kathy

We ♥ March
'cause
Spring is "almost" in the air!

What's Growing Now?

The Spring Garden Show at the Midtown Mall will NOT occur on April 3rd. They are planning on polling the normal exhibitors and will consider moving the show to mid-May if there is enough interest. We will keep you posted as we hear anything.



Our March meeting was presented by Debbie Hinchey, longtime Alaskan gardener, and professional horticulturist, about 'Summer Bulbs'. While the primary focus was on lilies, many other bulbs were touched on as well. It is amazing how many plants fit into the bulb category—delphinium was quite a surprise! As always, Debbie's open and cheerful demeanor encouraged listeners to ask questions and share experiences. It was a truly delightful program, and as a result, the listeners are even more excited to get started on bulbs. An additional bonus was the inclusion of the **Valley Garden Club** participants in the audience. Collaboration is the order of the day!

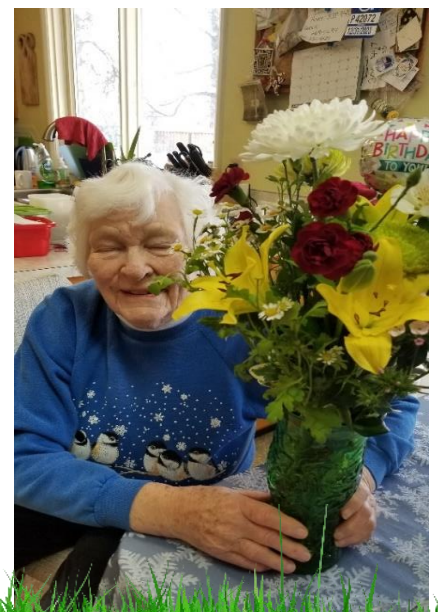
Next Meeting

We have heard from Central Lutheran Church that they will most likely not be opening the facility up for meetings until the fall season, which means that our **April 8th monthly meeting** will again be presented over Zoom. Our program, entitled "**Urban Wildlife: Both Sides of the Coin**", will be presented by club member **Donna Dewhurst**. Donna has worked with US Fish and Wildlife Services for her career and is now a freelance writer and photographer. She will share on building and maintaining our own urban oasis, with our wild neighbors, including both how to include and how to exclude them. Please join us at 10am on April 8th. This will be the last monthly meeting until fall. Club service projects, workshops, and our own gardens will keep us busy May – September.



A Noteworthy Event

Longtime Wildflower member Maurine Loopstra celebrated her 98th birthday on March 7th! Maurine continues to garden and plant seeds for springtime. What an inspiration to us all!



Special Wildflowers that bloomed this month

“Happy Birthday” to WGCA members that celebrate birthdays in March!
Ruth Bauman, Ken Blaylock, and Maurine Loopstra



March's birth flower is the daffodil. It is all too appropriate that cheerful yellow flowers represent the first month of spring. These little buds of sunshine symbolize unparalleled love and serve as a reminder that the sun is always shining when loved ones are in your life. Varieties of daffodils, also known as jonquil, vary in color, featuring white, orange, and pale yellow blooms.

Micro Tomatoes Available Again!



We are again able to make micro-tomatoes available to our club members, thanks to the generosity of member Cindy Walker. The varieties available will be Florida Petite, Micro Yellow, Orange Hat, Pinocchio Yellow, and Tiny Tim. Keep watching for details for purchase and pick-up—we will let you know as they develop.

We will also be making available the hanging 'Tumbling Tom' tomatoes in both red and yellow, 'Seascape Strawberries', and the flower baskets as we did last year. Stay tuned!

Club Business

March 2021 Treasurer's Report

Denali Federal Credit Union	
Business Savings APYO .10%	\$2291.68
Business Checking	532.66
CD-2.25% 3-31-2021	4095.50
Balances 2/28/2021	\$6919.84
Morgan Stanley	
Balances 2/28/2021	\$54,650.89
Total Assets 2/28/2021	\$61,570.73

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.

Wildflower of the Month

Fritillaria camschatcensis ...

Submitted by Kathy Liska

Commonly known as Chocolate lily, Kamchatka fritillary, Skunk lily, Outhouse lily, wild rice, northern rice root.

A native perennial which grows in moist tide flats, meadows, open forests, rocky beaches, and stream banks in the lowland to subalpine zones.

This lily ranges from Asia (Japan) to Alaska, Yukon Territory, British Columbia, and south to portions of western Washington and Oregon.



A member of the lily family (Liliaceae), Chocolate Lily grows 8-24 inches tall, and its leaves are arranged in whorls of five to nine down the stem.

Flowering from mid-June to mid-July, the flowers are dark greenish brown to brownish purple (chocolate colored), sometimes streaked or spotted with yellow. The flowers are pollinated by flies, which are attracted by the plant's foul smell. Seed pods are large, erect, and divided into 6 sections.

The rooting structure of the Chocolate lily is made up of small bulblets resembling rice. For this reason it was called Indian rice at one time.

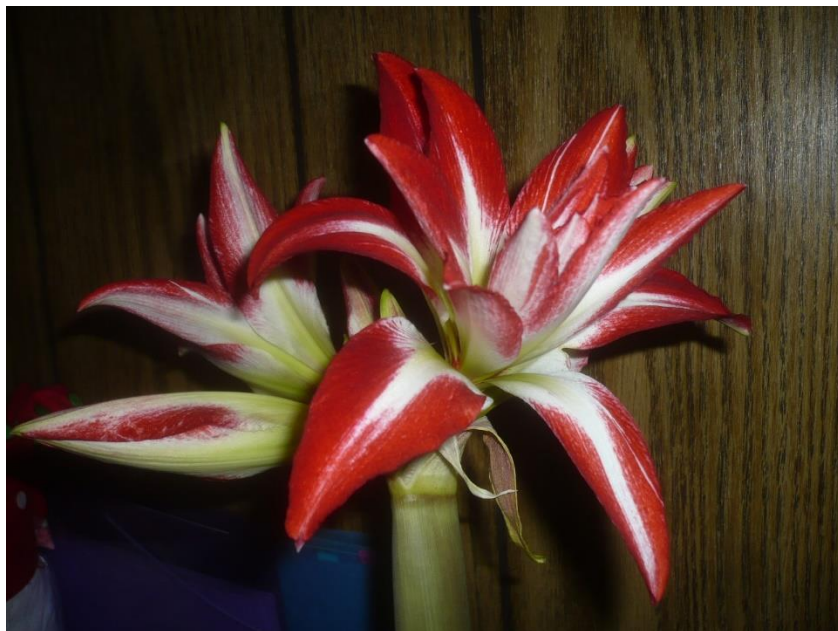
Despite the somewhat offensive odor, Chocolate lilies are very showy and look nice in the garden. Once established, Chocolate lilies tend to spread. This species is easily transplanted and grows from bulbs or seeds.



Members Corner ... Amaryllis!



Paul Marmora's eye catching floral arrangement



Alis Schmitt's beautiful bloomer



Cindy Walker's amazing Amaryllis grouping-
'Ruby Star' at left, and 'Papilio' above.

Around the Garden ... Clematis Groups Explained

Now that the garden centers all seem to have boxes and boxes of bare root plants available, it seemed like an opportune time to do this rap section. Clematis are popular climbers, and a must-have in the garden. They will happily scramble over a range of structures; and with a myriad of colors and flower shapes to choose from, it's no wonder they're a favorite amongst gardeners.

With a little extra care, particularly when it comes to pruning, clematis will reward you with a show-stopping display year after year. Choose the right varieties, and you could have clematis blooming for every season!

Group 1 clematis



These early-flowering clematis burst into bloom in winter and spring on the previous year's growth. This group does not need pruning, but you can remove old or damaged stems after they have finished flowering, if needs be. A vigorous grower with a mature height of 8 to 10 feet, it excels in extreme cold temperatures with a frigid Zone 2-9 hardiness. This is a good choice for light shade gardens.

(Macropetula 'Blue Bird')

Group 2 clematis



These large-flowered hybrids produce show-stopping blooms in spring and summer on the previous year's growth. Without pruning in February, you will likely have a poor display and a top-heavy plant. Trim away weak or damaged growth, and cut other stems to just above the strongest, highest buds. Prune again after the first flush of flowers to a pair of buds halfway down the stems, and they will flower again in late-summer.

(Nellie Moser)

Group 3 clematis



This late-flowering group produces flowers on the current season's growth, which makes pruning all the more important. To ensure a robust display of flowers in summer and autumn, cut it down to a couple of feet from the ground every February or March. Left to their own devices, plants will become tangled and unproductive.

(Jackmanii)

- Clematis are thirsty plants. Give them plenty of water once a week, rather than little and often.
- Never hard-prune clematis in Group 1 and 2. Doing this will result in a year of flowers lost.
- All clematis prefer their roots to be in the shade, and the top growth to be in the sun.

Clematis planting tip: When selecting the planting location for your Clematis, it is important to remember that they like their "face" in the sun (the green growth and viny portion), and their "feet" in the shade (their roots). Make sure to plant in a sunny location and provide shade to the roots by adding mulch or ground cover.

Beautiful, tough, and easy to care for, they are the perfect solution for gardens that struggle with perennials in sub-zero temperatures!

Queen of the climbers

CLEMATIS PRUNING GUIDE

Make sure that you are pruning your vine properly based on its blooming habit, because improper pruning can set your blooms show back a year or more!

Group I

● Keep



— OLD WOOD —

Group II

● Remove



— OLD AND NEW WOOD —

Group III

● Cut



— NEW WOOD —