

Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

Newsletter ~ July/August 2022



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Messages from the Presidents

Got to love this place! First, we broke records for the driest June in 30+ years—announcing that Phoenix registered more rain in June than Anchorage did. Then three quarters of the way through July, they were saying it is the wettest July in recorded history! I am super relieved that I don't have to water 2+ hours per day (although there was a Zen-like aspect to it as well), but honestly, a little sunshine would not be amiss either! August is proving rather damp and the flowers are being beaten down. Sigh. The weeds are not taking a break from growing during the rainfall, but I really do not feel like kneeling in the mud to deal with them. I suppose this might qualify as a first-world problem, lol. The red currants are already needing to be picked, and the black currants are not far behind. Early bounty, but they won't conflict with the Fair this year, so that will be nice. As someone said, at least it wasn't snowing!

Paul

Is it really August already? That happened way to fast in my opinion, but then again, this is what happens when we live in Alaska. It doesn't matter how many years we've been here; every season and each month has its surprises. This was a summer to remember in my books with the abundant warm sunny days of June, followed by an unusually wet July... a full swing of the weather pendulum. Now the reality of an upcoming season change is on my mind and my garden chore lists are growing more than the plants are at this point. With August comes my usual what feels like chasing tail as I prepare for the Fair. One of my favorite end of summer gatherings... the largest get-together of garden enthusiasts and their harvested bounties of vegetables and flowers. Come on out to Palmer with your family and friends to see what others have spent time cultivating and "Experience the Wonder" of gardening in our state!

Kathy



What's Growing Now

Summer Garden Tours – July

The garden tours this year were attended by about a dozen people that braved the rainy weather to see inspirational gardens.



The first tour was a walk through at Harvest of Hope Memorial Gardens with Master Gardener Don Bladow. In 2016, Don put together an urban farm on about an acre at the grounds of Hope Lutheran Church with an eye toward providing food for the less fortunate. They cleared forested land and have been building their harvest steadily with in-ground and raised-bed gardens.. Last year, they were able to donate 5000lbs of produce! A greenhouse is planned for tomatoes—the footings are already in place. A new asparagus bed will add to production next year and a few neighbors have placed hives in the gardens so that adds a new aspect to the urban farm, as well as helping with the pollination. A few of the challenges Don's group faces are voles destroying the apple trees they planted and help from inexperienced young volunteers planting onions and leeks too deep so odd patches are springing up, BUT the red cabbages this year are absolutely glorious!!

Member Madge Oswald generously stepped in last minute to allow us to visit her gardens on the hillside for the second tour of the day. Madge and John have worked tirelessly to make an oasis in their part of the world. A nice advantage was standing by the full windows upstairs and being able to view most of the gardens without getting any wetter. We were also able to enjoy the Oswald's' hospitality for our bring-a-bag lunch amid all the lovely houseplants and collected artworks.



Bouquet Workshop Cancellation

Due to some unfortunate unforeseen circumstances that cropped up, we were unable to host the bouquet workshop. We had to cancel last minute. Apologies to those who had registered to attend.

State Fair Tickets – Special Drawing

As a thank you for our club donation towards the hanging flower baskets, the **Alaska State Fair** has given us 2 packets of **4 Admission tickets including 1 parking pass**. We thought it would be nice to allow the club to participate in using the gift, so we have decided to have a drawing to give the tickets to 2 members. **Interested members may email the club at akwildflowers@gmail.com between midnight August 11 and 5 pm August 14th to enter the drawing. Best of Luck!!!**

Special wildflowers that bloomed in July

Paul Chan, Julie Ginder, Tobi Harvey, Robin Hill, Heather Jordon*, Kayla Little*, Shirley Luedke, Beverly Luedke-Chan, Celia Rozen*, and Alis Schmitt (*Welcome to our new members)

The July birth flowers are the Larkspur and Water Lily.



Larkspurs are annual species of the genus delphinium, and the names are used interchangeably. They come in a wide range of vibrant colors including indigo, purple and pink. The larkspur symbolizes **positivity and love**. In general, it signifies an open heart, ardent attachment to someone and the celebration of positivity. As with many flowers, the symbolism changes with the color of the bloom.

Water lilies are a unique lotus-like flower. They symbolize **purity or rebirth**. You can find water lilies floating atop the water from May to early September. Each flower only lasts about four days until it settles under the water, which makes these flowers even more unique and beautiful.



A heart-felt happy belated birthday to all the July Wildflowers!

Special wildflowers that bloomed in August

Shirley Ryan



The August birth flowers are Gladiolus and Poppy.

Gladiolus flowers hold different meanings. Aside from **remembrance and infatuation**, gladiolus, in general, means strength and **integrity** because of the flower's association with gladiators.

Red gladiolus flowers represent **romance, love, and affection**, much like other famed red flowers. Pink gladiolus flowers are often associated with romance as well but to a less passionate extent. Yellow Gladiolus, on the other hand, means **friendship, joy, and positivity**.

Gladiolus in purple hues are representations of **royalty, beauty, and fortune**, which make these flowers ideal as gifts for friends, colleagues, and family members you admire.

These beautiful poppy flowers symbolize **remembrance**. Since poppies are available in many colors, they hold varying symbols and meanings. The red ones, for example, are also a symbol of **happiness**, while yellow poppies mean **prosperity**. White poppy flowers, as with other white blooms, symbolize **consolation and sympathy**. There are also purple poppies, which represent **enchantment**.



Club Business

2022 Grant Award Updates

WGCA Grant Chair, Barbara Baker, accepted the invitation to attend the Greater Eagle River Garden Club meeting and view the gardens at the **Eagle River Nature Center**. You may remember that our club granted the center \$500 to help renovate one of their gardens into a rock garden. **(Photos)** They did a lovely job with almost all help coming from volunteers and some of the plants donated by members of the garden community. They have labeled many of the plants, and later this year will be installing a plaque indicating our donation. The center is currently working on engaging garden clubs and organizations to “Adopt a Bed”. All aspects of the center are managed and maintained by volunteers and donations.



Susitna Elementary School

The WGCA board met and opted for the week of September 12 for a good date to shoot for in planting, if all approvals have, by then, been received from school authorities. Members will be present to offer consultation on planting that week. We have asked for contributions of local native woodland plants that are nontoxic and not invasive. These may include iris, geranium, Alaskan speedwell, Columbine, Jacob's ladder, Shooting stars, Dogwood, Ferns, and Currants (red and black).

Photo: Outdoor Classroom benches project



July 2022 Treasurer Reports

Denali Federal Credit Union	
Business Savings APYO .10%	\$7,502.02
Business Checking	\$4,644.77
CD - 6 month	\$2,503.69
CD - 12 month	\$5,014.83
Balance 7/30/22	\$19,665.31
Morgan Stanley Balance 7/30/22	\$44,669.12
Total Assets 7/30/22	\$64,334.43



Upcoming Meetings, Projects, & Workshops

Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail – Wednesdays – 10am to Noon

Ongoing maintenance throughout the summer, such as weeding, watering, and pruning takes place each Wednesday. Come enjoy a few hours of peacefulness on this wonderful trail with fellow members and other volunteers. Use the ABG Signup Genius link below to schedule a day with us.

[Horticulture Volunteers: Horticulture Volunteer Opportunities \(signupgenius.com\)](https://www.signupgenius.com)

September 8th at 10AM – Join us on Zoom for the return of our Monthly Meetings “**Mulching with Mother Nature**” presented by **Debbie Hinchey**. Debbie has experimented with many types of mulching materials and methods, utilizing seasonal timing, and has developed incredibly rich and productive soil in her garden beds. Debbie is ready and willing to share her expertise with us in what promises to be a delightful and informative presentation.

Announcements

Alaska Master Gardeners Anchorage is offering a **Late Season Plant Sale - Saturday, August 13 from 10AM-3PM** in the parking lot shared by Alaska Botanical Garden and Benny Benson School at 4515 Campbell Airstrip Road. Many types of plants including hardy perennials and unique houseplants will be available for purchase.

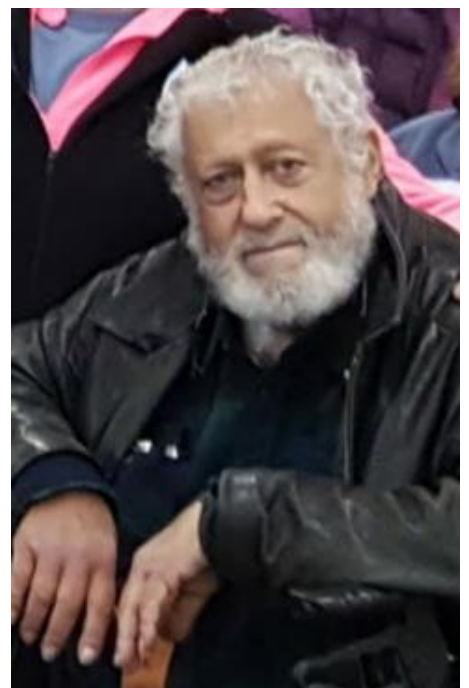
Do you have a Wildflower member you would like to suggest for our **2022 Member of the Year?** An email will be sent soon to ask for your input for this annual WGCA acknowledgement.

Our **Nomination Committee** needs to be formed in September. Please consider volunteering to help put together the slate of Officers for the 2023 year. Contact Paul or Kathy to join the committee.

Please share photos of your summer gardens, adventures & wildlife to Kathy Liska at akliska@aol.com so she can begin working on the slideshow presentation for our November 10th meeting.

In Memory – Leonard Grau

It is with sadness we announce that longtime club member Len Grau passed away on July 27, 2022. Len became a member of the Wildflower Garden Club in 1999, assumed the responsibilities as the Club Treasurer from 2001-2015, and was voted Member of the Year in 2014. He could be reliably found at the club's yearly plant sale at the checkout counter, was an active participant at regular meetings, and enjoyed sharing knowledge and experiences with fellow gardeners. Len was tolerant and easy-going and it was a privilege to know and work with him all these years.



Member's Corner

Photos shared by Cindy Calzada



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