



Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

Newsletter ~ April 2024

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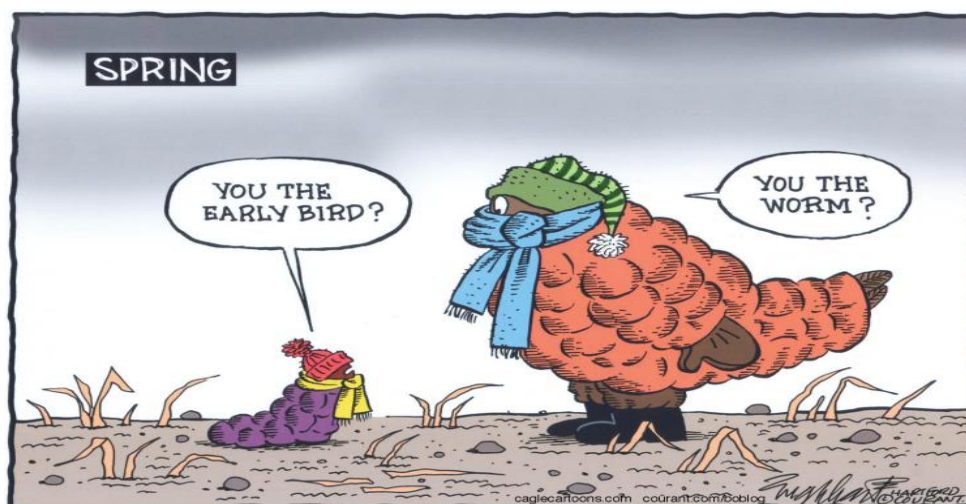
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Message from the Presidents

As we write this the wind is once again shaking the house, bending the trees, and causing us to wonder if the power will stay on all night! For the last hour we've been watching woodpeckers feed on the suet basket. The basket's twirling, swirling, and swinging in this high wind, yet they seem not to notice. Many of us are planting and transplanting even though the snow outside is still several feet deep in our garden areas. Like the woodpeckers, we seem to not notice that fact as our tables & shelves are loaded with growing seedlings! Temps are reaching 40 and the extra daylight is very welcome! Thawing has begun! Even knowing that means some serious yard cleanup is ahead for us, we say "bring it on!"

April is a busy month for us Wildflowers. April 11th, with Jaime Rodriguez's presentation, "Rock Garden Construction," is our last meeting in person until September. On April 18th, Rachel Shedd will show us how to keep our tools sharpened. And on April 27th, Wildflower's first service project of the year – the Children's Marigold Giveaway will be at Midtown Mall. The excitement of the children planting a flower is equal to the adults catching up and talking gardening with fellow gardeners and friends. If you have signed up to help, thank you! If you haven't, there is still time. It'll be a fun event with gardening information, plants, and crafts for sale. Come join us!

Christie & Kellie



What's Growing Now

At our April 11th meeting, club member Jaime Rodriguez, of Alpine Garden Nursery in Palmer, presented '**Rock Garden History and Construction**'. Jaime is a past and current president of the Alaska Rock Garden Society, and has many years of experience building and maintaining rock gardens. He specializes in alpine plants and their cultivation. Jaime's delight and enthusiasm for his topic is quite catching. He gave insightful hints for success, and made the building of a rock garden seem much more achievable. Jaime covered rules and pitfalls to be aware of and showed just how simple a rock garden can be. He is a wonderful resource for all of us.



Jaime provided this list of resources and books on rock gardens and alpine gardening:

Online Resources

- [Rock Garden Ideas for Small Spaces \(thespruce.com\)](https://thespruce.com)
- davesgarden.com/guides/articles/view/774/
- [Stone Wall Design and Specifications – The Stone Trust](#)

Books

- Rock Garden Design and Construction: North American Rock Garden Society
Author: Jane McGary
- The Crevice Garden – Authors: Kenton Seth & Paul Spriggs

For more information on gathering rocks on the road right of way, contact the AK Dept of Transportation Maintenance & Operations at the following numbers:

- Anchorage – 907-338-1466
- MatSu – 907-745-2159
- Kenai Peninsula – 907-262-2199

For active projects call the Construction Information Office at 907-269-6323 and ask for the phone number of the Project Construction Manager for the specific project.

Ornaments – U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree

Member Sally Byrne-Flores brought this article to our attention with the thought that this opportunity to participate in a group project or individually could be fun and unique project!



The Alaska Region of the Forest Service, the Tongass and Chugach National Forests, are honored to have been selected to provide the 2024 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree. This tree will not only represent Alaska's National Forests but also the great state of Alaska. We need your help in making over 10,000 handmade ornaments to decorate the US Capitol Christmas Tree and up to 48 companion trees. Click the link below to learn more!

<https://www.uscapitolchristmastree.com/make-an-ornament/>

Special wildflowers that bloomed this month

Debbie Cameron, Barbara Carrick, Lou Ann Clark, Helen Craig, Donna Dewhurst, Rebecca Gramm, Karen Jenkins, Alice Samuelson, Kelly Thorngren



The two birth flowers of April are **Daisies and Sweet Peas**. Each one is unique in its own way and has special meanings attached to it. Daisies have two types, the oxeye, *Leucanthemum vulgare*, and the English, or true, daisy, *Bellis perennis*.

They are commonly associated with a sense of innocence and purity. The daisy is also thought of as being the friendship flower, as well as a flower of secrecy. This flower is wonderful to share with a friend.

Sweet peas are also the official birth flower for April. In the language of flowers, the sweet pea (*Lathyrus odoratus*) holds the symbolic meaning of blissful pleasure. Its upright, clumping flower clusters symbolize good wishes, friendship, kindness, and goodbyes. Many believe these blooms leave a positive sentiment and a thoughtful way to say thank you as they further symbolize gratitude. Sweet peas are renowned for their lovely fragrance, which has made them a favorite in perfumery and scented garden designs as well as bringing joy wherever they go, encouraging the rest of us to relax and have some fun!



The Pink Moon – Tuesday, April 23



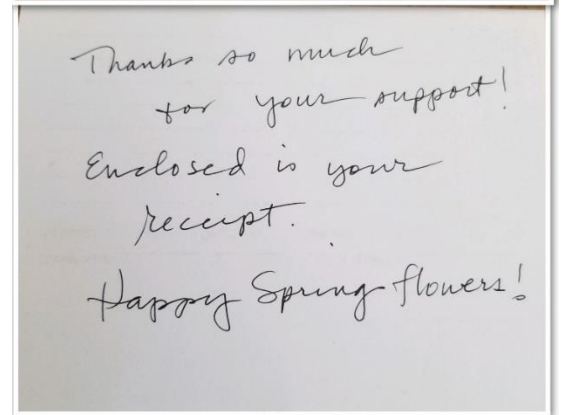
The Full Moon of April is called the Pink Moon.

It is called the Pink Moon because it is named after a pink wildflower (*Phlox subulata*) that blooms in April. Although the Moon won't turn pink, it is still worth looking at, especially as the evenings get warmer in the Northern Hemisphere. This moon is a hopeful sign of spring, indicating the return of life and the resurgence of nature after winter's dormancy.

Depending on where you live, spring may be in full season, or newly formed buds are just beginning to take shape. Determined tulips and daffodils push their way forward, destined to show off a bright, brilliant display of colors. The air simmers with anticipation and possibilities!

Club Business

Acknowledgements of appreciation from the Alaska State Fair 'Plaza Garden' donation and 2024 Grant recipient Chugiak Elementary School.



March 2024 Treasurer Reports

Denali Federal Credit Union

Business Savings	\$7,582.05
Business Checking	\$2,393.05
CD-9 month (matures 7/30/24) 6%	\$5,124.25
Balance	\$15,099.35

Morgan Stanley Balance **\$49,704.61**

Total Funds 3/31/24 **\$64,813.96**

"Gardening adds years to your life and life to your years!"

Upcoming Meetings, Projects, & Workshops

April 27 – Children’s Marigold Giveaway at the Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show from 9am-5pm. Our first Community Service Project in 2024. We will need a handful of growers, about a dozen volunteers for setting up, planting with the kids, helping with sales, answering questions about the Wildflower Club, and to help take down at the end of the day to make this event a success.

For WGCA members interested in selling plants or garden related crafts, please contact Barbara Baker, Chairperson for this event at barb.baker1951@gmail.com or 907-274-6385 to sign up as a vendor and to let her know items you would like to offer for sale.

Use the following SignUp Genius Link to volunteer to give a helping hand at this event.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C45AFAF2EA6F9C70-48032833-childrens>

UPDATE! May 16 – May 9th was the scheduled date for the initial post-winter clean-up of the **Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail at the Alaska Botanical Garden**. Because the trail is still covered in snow we are switching to **May 16th from 10am-Noon**. This is the first one of the Wildflower Trail clean-up events with repeated visitation by volunteers throughout the gardening season. Volunteers at ABG must attend the safety briefing before doing any work in the garden. There are three opportunities to attend the briefing. **To attend one, you need to use SignUp Genius to register through the links below:**

Monday, May 13th evening or Tuesday May 14th daytime

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/orientation2024#/>

Thursday, May 16th just before the clean-up session-Specifically for WGCA

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/abg2024wildflowercleanup>

May 18 – The planned date for the post winter clean-up of the native plant garden at the **Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center from 11am-1pm**. The weather there is often tenuous, so the alternate date is June 8th (the week after the plant sale). The wind is very strong at the garden site, so please dress in windproof (and rainproof) gear. Volunteers can contact Paul Marmora to sign up for the session.

June 1 – Our popular Wildflower Plant Sale! We will again be able to hold it at the old DMV on the corner of Benson and Spenard, thanks to the generosity of the Hinchey family.

An excellent opportunity to share your excess plants, see other gardening friends, learn lots of information, and acquire new treasures, it is always a day of great enjoyment. We will feature our craft corner again for garden related crafts, so start painting, sculpting and knitting to help fill the tent. Look for an email detailing how to sign up to participate. As always there will be a potluck for all volunteers. Contact Paul Marmora for more information.

Announcements

Wildflower member and Master Gardener Susan Miller has taken on coordination of the Pioneer Home gardens. She is seeking volunteers to work the gardens--both initial clean up in May and maintenance throughout the summer. A worthy project to beautify the grounds of long time Alaska residents. For more information contact Susan at 907-277-6082 or smiller.ret@gmail.com

Know It and Grow It – Native Plants & Pollinators!

Creating a native plant garden, or adding them to your flowerbed goes a long way to providing bees and butterflies the pollen and nectar they need.

Allowing native plants to grow and thrive on your property is an excellent way to attract pollinators. Native plants have already established themselves as the ideal source of pollen and nectar for our area. This makes them the perfect plants for your yard and garden.

Cultivating a flower bed specifically for bees and butterflies is another terrific option for attracting pollinators to the garden. Bees prefer bell or trumpet shaped flowers like lilies, while butterflies prefer daisy-like flowers with a flat surface where they can land easily.

Incorporating flowers known to attract pollinators into your landscape will keep the garden alive with color and movement.

Follow these tips for attracting the beneficial insects to your flowerbeds.

- Plant flowers that bloom at different times, so some flowers are always in bloom.
- Plant flowers in clusters to attract more bees and butterflies.
- Plant flowers in different shapes and colors to attract a variety of pollinators.

One of the best ways to invite pollinators to your veggie garden is with a border or row of blooming flowers. While you can plant nearly any flower near the garden some will serve double duty. Flowers like marigolds and nasturtiums will attract bees and other pollinators while repelling harmful insects at the same time.

Many prefer to plant flowers at the ends of rows or create an attractive border around the entire garden. Consider adding a fence behind the garden and plant free-flowing flowers like cosmos, sunflowers, or zinnias to brighten the area too!

Providing bees and other flying insects with a place to hide and breed is yet another great way to keep pollinators in your yard. While you can buy or make bee and butterfly houses, another option to consider is readily available in your yard already. Natural logs, twigs and mossy rocks will provide shelter and nesting areas for these insects. Leaving small brush piles or old logs around the property will go a long way towards providing the shelter pollinators need.

Finally, an important feature to add is a water source. You can entice more bees and butterflies to visit your garden by adding a water dish or puddling station.

