



# Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

Newsletter ~ January 2024

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## Message from the Presidents

Happy New Year to everyone! The seed catalogs are arriving in our mailboxes, making us “ooh” and “ahh” over potential beauties for our yards. It is so easy to get distracted by the colorful pages and exciting to see what is new! We have started taking inventory of seeds we have left from last season, putting in our orders, and eagerly waiting for 2024 to begin planning. We made notes in November when Kathy put together photos from our 2023 gardens and cannot wait to add some new varieties to our garden.

Mother Nature continues to blanket us with snow and we do not know about you but truthfully we would like to divorce our snow removal equipment. Winter is not finished with us yet... or maybe even begun. But we have passed the shortest day of the year and are adding daylight – even if it’s only a few seconds every day– and for that we are most thankful!

**Kellie & Christie**



## What's Growing Now

Our January 11<sup>th</sup> meeting took place at the Central Lutheran Church and on Zoom with a presentation by Horticulturist Rachel Shedd of the Alaska Botanical Garden. Rachel shared on “Taking Care of your Body in the Garden”— knowledge that becomes more poignant year after year as we tend our corners of paradise. Adhering to Rachel’s suggestions will help us continue to comfortably enjoy our gardens for more years to come.



## Special wildflowers that bloomed this month

Sally Byrne-Flores, Gina Docherty, Christie Holshouser, Merry Johnson, Carol Lovejoy, and Beth Terry



The birth flowers for January are the snowdrop and the carnation.

Snowdrops are beloved because they are normally the first flowers to appear from the frozen soil—indicating that our long wait for winter to be over is about to come to pass. Although once associated with compassion and mourning, they have evolved to represent hope and optimism, getting us through the long winter with their pure white brilliance.

The genus name for carnations is *Dianthus*, coming from the Greek words *Dios* (God) and *Anthus* (flower), dubbing them the flowers of the gods.. Carnations are welcome in almost any culture and situation due the myriad of colors in which they are available. In general, carnations are associated with love and remembrance, while each color has an individual meaning as well (red for deep love, white for purity and innocence, and pink for gratitude). In history, both carnations and snowdrops were used medicinally and as well as for flavoring.



*Happy Birthday!*

## **Club Business**

### **2023 Annual Report**

Another jam-packed year for the Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska! We have been carrying on with Hybrid in-person and Zoom meetings.

The year started with a presentation by local artist Mardie Robb at our **January** meeting. Mardie gamely took on the challenge of her first PowerPoint presentation and her first Zoom presentation, showing us the incredible artwork she has accomplished with her gourd carving and painting. She shared her pet project of saving some of the wild horses in the American deserts and encouraged us to give gourd art a shot.

In **February**, club member Dr Marilyn Barker presented on Native Orchids in Alaska. Marilyn is a biologist and presented not only lovely photographs of many of our native orchid species, but also shared botanical information and quirky details about many of them.

**March** brought us a presentation by our beloved former CES horticultural agent Julie Riley. Julie has been getting into insect species in Alaska and has garnered many intricate and seemingly odd details about their lives in the Great Land. Julie presented by zoom. We also had two workshops on forcing spring bulbs using tulips donated by Fred Meyers in Eagle River. Both were well attended.

As the weather started to warm, at our **April** meeting, member Deb Blaylock shared her triumphs, challenges, and experiences with growing garlic in Alaska. It takes quite a bit of setup, observation, and maintenance, but Deb is the queen of Alaska grown garlic, with many state ribbons to show for it.

Also in April, we took part in our Service Project at the Midtown Mall Spring Garden show with our booth helping children to plant a marigold in a cup to spark their interest in growing things. The table was also filled with a few garden-related sale items, which were received quite well.

In **May**, our two other Service Projects took place: the annual club Clean-Up of the Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail at the Alaska Botanical Garden and the clean-up of the native plant garden at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center. Both events included members of other clubs, which aligns with our goal of collaboration with other clubs.

**June** brought our annual plant sale with remarkable success again. It was held at the old DMV on Benson again and the location is prime for people to stop. Many thanks are due to the Hinchey family for their generosity in allowing us to have our sale there again.

In **July**, we went a bit farther afield for our garden tours. We met at the Blue Star Marker garden in Eagle River and toured one of the forgotten gardens there. Members of the Greater Eagle River Garden Club maintain both. We also toured the Lighthouse Garden at the home of the Brusehabers, an ongoing labor of love for the past 50 years, and then the Eagle River

Christian School gardens that were recipients of the WGCA grant this year. We ended the day at the home of Stan and Kellie Staples for a potluck lunch where we were also treated to Stan's barbecuing skills and were able to wander freely around the lovely gardens there. Also in July, Dennis and Annie Ronsse opened their gardens to us once again and allowed each of us to make 2 bouquets from their bounty. We had two workshops that were packed to the gills!

**August** brought us the flurry of activity that is the Alaska State Fair. In addition to picking and grooming entries for the displays, many members joined in volunteering with accepting entries, clerking and judging the entries for both weeks. The Fair ended on 04SEP and

Our club meetings resumed in **September** with a delightful presentation by Claire Kaufman of Boreal Bioscapes on Dividing and Propagating perennials here in Alaska. Many thanks to Claire for stepping in last minute and taking over the subject when our original speaker was unable to attend.

At our **October** meeting, Paul Marmora demonstrated how to grow succulents in glass, and a number of members took part in making some succulent gardens in their own glass containers.

In **November**, Kathy Liska assembled a wonderful presentation that was to have been presented at our club Thanksgiving potluck and food drive, but, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row, the weather did not cooperate and we had to rely solely on Zoom to share the time together. It was nice to be able to see pictures of gardens and flowers while being subjected to snow bombardment.

The November vote for amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules passed unanimously, with the main change being that of moving the one-year term of office to a two-year term. Club members also unanimously approved the Board of Director election: Christie Holshouser and Kellie Staples remain co-presidents. Barbara Baker is vice president, Cindy Walker is treasurer, Mary Britton is Secretary, Sally Byrne-Flores and Paul Marmora are members-at-large for the 2024/2025 term.

**December** was chock full of activities for the club. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, about a dozen members and family gathered to make wreaths or centerpieces at Dimond Greenhouses' annual workshop for our club, On the 9<sup>th</sup> nine folks gathered at the Alaska Wholesale Flower Market to participate in a holiday gnome workshop, using holiday greens. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, we met in person for our holiday potluck, despite some odd weather rumblings. It was wonderful to spend the time together amongst our gardening family!

A busy year indeed, and here we are ready for another turn around the calendar!



## December 2023 Treasurer Reports

<b>Denali Federal Credit Union</b>	
Business Savings	\$7,580.17
Business Checking	\$5,804.44
CD- 9 month (matures 7/30/24) 6%	\$5,050.54
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$18,435.15</b>
<b>Morgan Stanley Balance</b>	<b>\$47,565.83</b>
<b>Total Funds 12/31/23</b>	<b>\$66,000.98</b>



## Upcoming Meetings, Projects, & Workshops

**February 8, 2024 - 'English Gardens Slideshow' Presented by Debbie Hinchey**  
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. at Central Lutheran Church and on Zoom

Join us when we join Debbie as she takes us behind her camera on a month long journey through a number of iconic English gardens, renowned the world over, in just one hour, culminating in the 2023 Chelsea Flower show.

## Announcements

The 2024 Yearbooks have been set out to all paid up members. Please find information about our club and its activities and a calendar of planned meetings and workshops for the year 2024. Most of you should have received them by now, if they do not come soon, please let us know, and we can follow up.

