



Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

Newsletter ~ July & August 2024

P.O. Box 240563
Anchorage, AK
99524

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

Message from the Presidents

July found us taking family adventures, showing off our great state to a special childhood friend visiting Alaska for the first time, and working in our gardens.

Why does every summer seem to take forever to get here and then fly by so fast? How did August sneak up on us? We're choosing to not think about what the end of the season means. Instead, we're going to continue to have easy relaxing days. Maybe we should say crazy, chaotic and noisy days as some of them have definitely been! Either way we're going to stretch out the season as long as we can!

We both love visiting gardens. Big or small, each garden is unique and wonderful. We're thankful when fellow gardeners open their gardens for us to view, even if it's stressful! We view each garden like a painting - a masterful mix of flowers, art, vegetables, fruit trees and more. They inspire us to create in our own gardens what we have seen, to find that certain flower or to add some artwork amongst our beds. If you missed the WGCA annual garden tour at the Palmer Visitor Center and the State Fair Grounds, you'll want to make a trip out to Palmer and to the AK State Fair to see them yourselves. Lots of love and labor go into the gardens at both sites and we thank Jaime Rodriguez & Becky Myrvold for giving us a glimpse into their creations.

Kellie & Christie



Gardening Yoga

What's Growing Now

On July 11th, the club headed out to our garden tours in Palmer. We started at the Palmer Visitor Center. Member Jaime Rodriguez used to be the director of the program there years ago, so he was a delightful and informative tour guide. Seeing and hearing about the long term growth and development of the gardens was quite inspirational.

We went to the Palmer Fairgrounds and ate lunch in the heavy breeze—one person had part of her sandwich start to blow away!

After lunch, Head Gardener for the Fair, Becky Myrvold, took us on a wonderful tour through various gardens. She told us her experiences and experiments over the years. She is a wonderful guide with her humble and earnest manner and delighted approach to her gardening.



Special wildflowers that bloomed in July

Paul Chan, Julie Ginder, Tobi Harvey, Robin Hill, Shirley Luedke, Beverly Luedke-Chan
Sarah Page, Alis Schmitt and Alice Sears



The July Flowers are Larkspur and the Water Lily. Larkspur is cousin to the Delphinium and Monkshood. The Larkspur name refers to the similarity of the blossoms to the heel spur on the feet of lark birds. The plant is symbolic of love, happiness, positivity and romanticism. The four colors (white, purple, blue, and pink) have different individual meanings as well.

The first lasting bloom of the water lily is held sacred, and the plant is holy in Buddhism and Hinduism. The flowers of the water lily represent rebirth and enlightenment, as they last a few days and then sink to be replaced by another fabulous flower. It also symbolizes purity, tranquility, innocence and joy.



Special wildflowers that bloomed this month

Debbie Hinchey, Patricia Holloway, Rebecca Manley, Shirley Ryan, and Thais Thomas



August's birth flowers are the gladiolus and the poppy. As late summer bloomers, they collectively embody the qualities of strength, beauty and remembrance. The word gladiolus stems from the Latin word for sword, so the flower is also known as the sword flower. As such, it is symbolic of strength, integrity and perseverance.

The poppy comes in many different colors, each with their own representation and meaning, but generally, the poppy symbolizes imagination, wealth, success, remembrance, and consolation. For at least a century, poppies have been associated with remembering those who died in wartime.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Club Business

June 2024 Treasurer Reports

Denali Federal Credit Union	
Business Savings	\$7,583.93
Business Checking	\$7,043.47
CD-9 month (matures 7/30/24) 6%	\$5,199.02
Balance	\$19,826.42
Morgan Stanley Balance	\$50,678.81
Total Assets 6/30/24	\$70,505.23



July 2024 Treasurer Reports

Denali Federal Credit Union	
Business Savings	\$7,584.57
Business Checking	\$7,063.56
CD-9 month (matures 7/30/24) 6%	\$5,224.06
Balance	\$19,872.19
Morgan Stanley Balance	\$51,454.42
Total Assets 7/31/24	\$71,326.61

Announcements

Welcome to New Member - Lisa Willis



Members help is needed in the following Chairperson positions:

Media – Maintain the Wildflowers active presence on Facebook & Instagram.

Membership – Maintain a database list of current and new members contact information using the Excel program.

Yearbook – Working with the Board of Directors, organize, design, and publish the annual club directory working with Board of Directors.

Newsletter – Publish the newsletter by use of club email.

Publicity – Send announcements as needed to Membership & Google Group email lists.

Complete job descriptions can be found in the current Yearbook.

Upcoming Meetings, Projects, & Workshops

Flower Bouquet Workshop at the Ronsse's ~ Thursday, August 8

Annie & Dennis Ronsse are inviting club members to their gardens to pick flowers and create two garden fresh bouquets to take home and enjoy. Please bring 2 vases & scissors.

Paul Marmora will lead off with a simple floral demo and will be available to advise if people desire it.

This fun and creative workshop, with a great view, will take place on **Thursday, August 8 from 11am-1pm at 230 Pacific View Drive.**

Session(s) are limited to 12 people so be sure to sign up early!

If the first session slots are filled, please email akwildflowers@gmail.com to request a spot in a possible second session from 1:30-3:30pm if enough people are interested.

A donation of \$25 per session is requested with the proceeds going to the Wildflower Club.

Please review the available slots in the Sign-Up Genius link below and click on the button to sign up. Thank you!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C45AFAF2EA6F9C70-50457850-popup>



ABG Wildflower Trail Maintenance

[General Volunteer Notifications: 2024 Horticulture Volunteer Opportunities \(signupgenius.com\)](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C45AFAF2EA6F9C70-50457850-popup)

Alaska State Fair ~ "Enjoy the Ride" from August 16 thru September 2

NOTE: The Fair is closed to the public on Tuesdays and Wednesdays both weeks.



Crops & Flowers Entries August 21 & 28 from Noon - 9pm

Exhibitor Guide Links:

[Crops - 2024 - Alaska State Fair](#)

[Flowers - 2024 - Alaska State Fair](#)

Encourage youths ages 6-17 years to enter in the Giant Zucchini Contest sponsored by the Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska!

Monthly Meetings Return in September!

The produce you've been growing all summer can be prepared to last for a good part of the winter season—if prepared properly. At our first meeting after the summer activities, on **September 12th, at 10am at the Central Lutheran Church**, long-time member **Chris Wood** will demonstrate techniques to properly can food to bring your hard-earned and lovingly tended produce to the table during the off season. Chris will also share with us her tried and true recipe for her delicious zucchini relish.



In the Garden – How to Make a Birdcage Flower Planter

Empress of the Dirt – Creative & Frugal Home & Garden Ideas [Grow — Empress of Dirt](#)

Birdcage planters are a favorite with creative gardeners. These tips share ideas for setting up a new or upcycled birdcage as a planter for succulents or annuals.

Get a Birdcage

The first step is to find a birdcage, of course. This is my own hierarchy for sourcing used items:

Thrifty Shopping Tips

Ways to find cheap or free items for crafts, repurposing, & upcycling:

Check Your Own Stuff

Got stuff in storage? Shop your own home first.

Family & Friends

Let people know what you're needing. Make it clear whether you are willing to pay for items.

Online Ads & Groups

Don't just watch the ads but place your own stating what you're looking for.

- Facebook Marketplace, Craigslist, Community Groups
- Garden Club and Horticultural Society plant sales
- Yard Sales
- Thrift Shops & ReStores (used goods including building materials)

Buying Tips

- Be sure to **check the size** of the cage. Many of them look large in the photo but are actually quite small.
- Confirm that the birdcage is **well made** and can endure life outdoors.
- Make sure there is **a way to get the plants in**. Some decorative birdcages don't actually have an opening or door, making it difficult to add plants unless you have hands the size of a mouse.

Make your own

- Want to change the color or add rust protection? Use exterior, all-purpose spray paint.
- Cage wires too close together? Get a good pair of snippers (bolt cutters). It is amazing how easily they cut and remove sections of wire as desired.

Add Coir or Burlap Liner

There are several options depending on the look you want. No matter what you choose, you want to form some sort of planting area that holds soil about 3-5 inches deep.

- Use a coir liner and put container potting soil inside.
- Use a piece of good quality burlap and form a planting area. Once the soil is added, the burlap stays in place.
- Use chicken wire and moss.
- Use a container that fits the base of the birdcage.
- Use various flowerpots that fit within the cage.

Add Container Potting Mix

- For container plants, always use soilless container mix intended for the specific plants.
- **Succulents** and cacti do best with a **lighter container mix**.
- **Flowering annuals** prefer a regular container mix.

Want to combine them? Keep the plants in plastic pots with their preferred container mix and sit the pots in the cage. Conceal them with coir liner or burlap or show them off.

Add Plants

- Birdcage planters look fabulous with trailing plants spilling out of the cage.
- Choose your plants based on the light conditions where you will hang them (sun, part sun, shade).

Look for shallow-rooted trailing succulents or flowering annuals including:

- Alternantheras | *Alternanthera* spp.
- Bacopas | *Sutera* spp.
- Creeping Jenny | *Lysimachia nummularia**
- Fuchsia | *Fuchsia*
- Donkey tail or burro's tail | *Sedum morganianum*
(*Euphorbia myrsinites* or creeping spurge is the poisonous look-a-like).
- Geranium | *Geranium*
- Ivy
- Lobelia | *Campanulaceae*
- Nasturtium | *Tropaeolum* spp.
- Petunia | *Petunia*
- Sweet potato vine | *Ipomoea batatas*

Birdcage Planter Care

- Like any plant containers or hanging baskets, you need to keep on top of watering so they never dry out.
- Also, keep your plant tags for specific instructions on feeding (fertilizing) and deadheading (removing old blooms to encourage new ones).

