



Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

Newsletter ~ April 2025

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Message from the Presidents

The brightly shining sun makes us think spring might be early this year!

Last year, we heard the first robin sing on April 26—our signal for the start of spring even if the “official” date is much earlier in March. In looking at our records, the birch leaves were the size of a squirrel’s ear on May 5. For sourdoughs, which heralds the end of frost. But since we got an inch of snow on May 9, some “wisdom” might be less than fully trustworthy...

Speaking of frosts, you must consider when the last frost will be before planting anything outside. Elsewise, it’s too cold for our dear plants to survive! (No one enjoys putting plants out and finding them dead the next morning because we forgot to bring them in.) Our garden journal has several dates for “first frost” in prior years, but for some reason no dates for last frost. Probably because Memorial Day weekend has long been our “plant outside” date. For all that, let’s hope the sunshine continues and summer comes early.

April was our last meeting until September. In the meantime, we will have lots of community projects and workshops over the summer. Dates are listed in our yearbook so be sure to mark them on your calendar and join us. Our first community project is the Children’s Marigold Giveaway on April 19th. To sign up, check your email for a link to Signup Genius. It’s a fun event with excited children planting marigolds and excited adults talking about gardening. And don’t forget that our plant sale has moved to May 31.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Christie & Kellie



Wildflowers that bloomed this month

Barbara Carrick, Lou Ann Clark, Helen Craig, Donna Dewhurst, Fran Flint
Rebecca Gramm, Karen Jenkins, Alice Samuelson, and Kelly Thorngren



The primary April birth flower is the daisy, and the secondary flower is the sweet pea. The daisy stands for innocence, purity, and true love, while the sweet pea is a way to say goodbye, send good wishes, or merely convey a thank you.

Stemming from Old English, the daisy comes from “day’s eye,” referencing the daily habits of the

English daisy, with its petals opening in the day and closing at night. Depending on the species, daisies can be one of your earliest spring bloomers or among the last to appear in the fall.

The daisy is actually made up of two flowers. The center eye—or disc floret—is a collection of tiny florets, while the ray floret (the petals) radiate from the center, resembling the Sun. Because a daisy is made up of two flowers that work in perfect harmony, they have long been a symbol of true love.

Native to Europe and Africa and eventually naturalized in North America, daisies belong to the aster family (Asteraceae). This is one of the largest plant families, which also includes sunflowers and, of course, asters.

Daisies can commonly be found growing in cultivated gardens, as well as lawns, meadows, and along roads. Some species are known to be weeds, so plant with care! The most common garden daisies are the Ox eye, Shasta, Gerbera, and English.

The sweet pea (*Lathyrus odoratus*) is part of the Fabaceae family and is related to beans and other legumes. While sweet pea has been used in some areas of the world for medicine and food, unlike its edible garden pea relatives, it is considered toxic to humans and animals.



Native to Italy and the Mediterranean region, sweet peas are beautiful and have a sweet fragrance—often likened to oranges, honey, and jasmine—that can brighten any room. They are found in a wide range of colors. Sweet peas are an annual that prefers full Sun and well-drained, rich, organic soil. Depending on the variety, they are climbers that grow from 6 to 10 feet tall. Make sure to give them good support using a trellis, arch, or fence.

HAPPY
birthday

In the Loop

On Thursday, April 10, for our monthly meeting, **Claire Kaufman, owner of Boreal Bioscapes**, gave a delightful presentation on three projects she has been involved in in the last few years. One was a project for a new house on previously untouched land, one was a change of landscape on an older home, and one was a redo for a neglected ancient garden on a historic building in downtown Anchorage.

Claire gave us the wishes of the homeowners, her thought processes on how she met the need and how she pulled it all into harmony with the surrounding landscapes.

It was truly inspiring, and her use of before and after pictures made it all very clear. Claire is a cheerful and down-to-earth speaker, and it was a real pleasure to see into her design process and the spectacular results!



Club Business

March 2025 Treasurer Reports

Nuvision Federal Credit Union

Business Savings	\$7,589.59
Business Checking	\$4,890.15
CD - 12 month (matures 7/30/25) 3.34%	\$5,344.88
Balance 3/31/25	\$17,824.62

Morgan Stanley Balance 3/31/25 **\$52,089.92**

Total Funds 3/31/25 **\$69,914.54**



Upcoming Meetings, Projects, & Workshops

**May 8 & 15 – Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail Spring Clean Up at ABG
10am-12pm at 4601 Campbel Airstrip Road**

We have two opportunities to spruce up the Verna's trail in May. It would be nice to get some clean up done for the Mother's Day event at ABG. It is required that all volunteers participate in a short orientation with Rachel Shedd to learn and/or refresh us about the procedures the garden uses for future signups and wayward wildlife known to wander to grounds. Bring your own favorite tools and gloves. Please use the specific link below provided by ABG for the Wildflowers. Thank you!
www.signupgenius.com/go/2025abgwildflower

**May 17 – Native Plant Garden Spring Clean at Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center
11am-1pm at Mile 79 Seward Highway in Portage from (Carpooling recommended)**
More information is coming soon to your email box.

May 31 – WGCA Plant Sale!

Every year, our plant sale is one of the looked-for events of the gardening season!!!

Our sale this year is scheduled for Saturday, May 31 at our favorite location; 1300 W. Benson, the former DMV building, located on the corner of Benson and Spenard, from 9am to 3pm.

We will be able to deliver our plants to the building on Friday, May 30 from 12pm to 7pm, and set up will start on Saturday at 7am. The end of the day clean-up is scheduled from 3-5pm. Sellers must pick up their leftover plants & flats by 5pm.

Plant sales will be divided with 75% to the sellers and 25% to the club, as usual.

This year, we will not have a craft corner, as interest has waned in the last couple of years. We are going to try a garden tool garage sale scenario. The percentages will be the same to sellers and the club, but we will also have a freebie section for things of lesser value, such as pots and well-used items. Any leftover tools will be the responsibility of the person who brought them—the pots we will take care of.

All sellers are expected to work at least part of the day. As always, there will be a potluck for the volunteers. Keep your eyes out for a SignUp Genius link coming soon.

All plants need to be in good condition, pest-free, and well-watered (as watering facilities are not available at the facility).

Normally, the prices should be lower than the retail stores, and values are set according to the size and rarity of the species offered. Remember, this is not a garage sale, so prices should be affordable, but not dirt cheap either.

All plants will need a yellow and a white tag. The yellow tag has the seller's initials and the price of the item, and the white tag has the name of the plant. If the price or owner's initials on the tags are unreadable, the price is determined by the tag wipers and/or the amount will go to the club. **You can get tags from the club: call or text Paul for details (907-360-3728) on how to get some.**

PLANT ... GROW ... BLOOM

Now You Know –

Why Get A Hori Hori Garden Knife and What Is Its Purpose?

We, gardeners, are always looking for the next best thing for our gardening tool collection. We want to find the perfect tool to make our work faster and easier.

The Hori Hori garden knife is an example of a great garden tool.

It is designed to be lightweight and small yet strong enough to cut through tough roots or thick plant stems. And while this knife can be used as an all-purpose cutting blade, it also doubles as a mini shovel when you need one. But that's not all! Let's discuss all that you can do with this great garden tool.



Cutting

The Hori Hori garden knife comes with a sharp and strong blade. One side of the blade is excellent for pruning soft-stem plants, cutting roots, and even cutting rope when securing plants. This tool can replace your regular garden knife.

Sawing

The other side of the blade has a sharp serrated edge. This serrated edge is perfect for sawing tougher stems, small branches, or large roots. It is great to cut back on any unwanted growth. This serrated edge is also great for cutting through plastic bottles when repurposing them.

Digging

The blade is designed to be used as a mini garden shovel. The blade is concave, making digging around plants, weeds, and rocks easy or simply digging holes wherever and whenever you need one.

Sowing

The blade can be used as a sowing tool. The Hori Hori garden knife has depth markings in inches or millimeters engraved on the blade to ensure that the planting and seeding are done at the correct depth.

Transplanting

The blade is designed to be used as a mini garden hoe. It can be used as a mini hoe for loosening soil before planting or transplanting.

Harvesting

This garden knife is ideal for harvesting all your garden produce: fruits, vegetables, and herbs.

Weeding

The blade is designed to be used as a mini weed puller. The blade is concave, which makes it easy to remove weeds. Some Hori Hori knives are designed with a fork at the tip, perfect for easier weed pulling.

Splitting

Quality Hori Hori garden knives are made of high-quality stainless steel, which is strong and durable. It allows the tool to be used as a wood-splitting tool. For example, if you have a small branch that needs to be split into two parts, you can use the Hori Hori garden knife to do so.

What to Look for When Buying a Hori Hori Knife

When buying a Hori Hori garden knife, you must consider several factors.

These are:

1. **Blade**
2. **Handle**
3. **Tang**
4. **Protective Sheath**
5. **Sharpener**

Blade

The most important feature that should be considered is the blade. Hori Hori Garden knife should have a dual-edged blade (serrated edge and sharp straight edge) to perform multipurpose garden tasks. The serrated edge is typically used for sawing. The sharp plain edge serves as a knife for cutting and slicing.

Hori Hori blade should be made from stainless steel. As garden tools are mostly exposed to dirt and water, stainless steel will remain corrosion free.

Hori Hori blade should also be concave. This allows for better digging and scooping of the garden soil. Also, as an extra, it is convenient to have the depth measurement engraved on the blade. It makes such a difference when sowing or planting.

Tip: *If the blade is not stainless steel, it will rust very quickly. Even if the blade is coated with rust-resistant protective paint (it looks great in the pictures), it will eventually scratch off, and when it does, it will rust!*

Handle

Hori Hori gardening knife is continuously used for light and heavy tasks, for short and long periods. The handle should be comfortable to hold and should fit naturally in hand. So, for this reason, an ergonomic handle with a good grip is essential. If the handle is not well-built, has a poor grip, and is not ergonomic, it will strain your palm and wrist. But it's not just about comfort. A sturdy handle is a must for any tool.

Hori Hori garden knives usually have either wooden or plastic handles. Wooden handles, especially those made of hardwood, give that original Hori Hori look, longevity, and strength. They look more appealing, and they feel good to the touch. While plastic is easier to mold into a nice, ergonomic handle that fits perfectly into the palm and is tough. Other garden knives have a 'Softgrip' silicone handle, which is ergonomic and has an excellent grip.

Spring is when you feel like whistling even with a shoe full of slush!

Tang

Tang is the blade's extension that fits securely into the knife's handle. When the tang extends to the end of the handle, it is called a full tang. If the blade is halfway into the handle, it is called partial tang (or half tang). There are pros and cons to both types of handles.

- **A full tang handle** is more durable and has better balance, making the knife heavier. Knives with this type of handle can be used in heavy-duty jobs.
- **A partial tang handle** is lighter and easier to carry around. It feels more comfortable in your hand, but it is less durable.

Protective Sheath

The importance of a protective sheath for Hori Hori garden knife is mainly overlooked. It is one of the essential accessories that protect your garden knife from scratches and nicks. The most common protective sheaths are made of leather, nylon, canvas, or plastic.

- **Leather sheaths** are traditional and classic. They are easy to clean, durable, comfortable, and water-resistant.
- **Nylon and canvas sheaths** are modern sheaths that are flexible, durable, and comfortable. These can easily withstand everyday use.
- **Plastic sheets** give the most protection to the knife. They are comfortable, durable, and effortless to clean.

Sharpener

A suitable sharpening device is vital for any tool. This is especially true with a garden knife. If the blade is not regularly sharpened, it can get dull. The best way to keep a sharp edge is to sharpen it every few months.

Any regular **sharpening tool** is suitable for the cutting side of the Hori Hori garden knife. So you don't need to overthink it. For the serrated edge side of the knife, a specific sharpener called a **sharpening rod** is required.

Having a garden on your property is great, but it can be hard to find the right tools for the job without spending too much money. This knife is designed to be small and lightweight, yet it is strong enough to handle even the most challenging jobs.

So, if you are looking for the next best thing for your gardening tool collection, the Hori Hori garden knife is a must!

Shared from www.justpuregardening.com

Every spring is the only spring...
A perpetual astonishment!

Early Spring Gardening Chores –



1. Don't be too eager! If your garden is like a soupy mud pie, let it dry out some more before you even think about stepping foot in it. Soggy soil is easily compacted. If you absolutely must get in there, use stepping-stones or put down boards to walk on.
2. Gently press frost-heaved plants back into the ground.
3. Delay clean up until overwintering beneficial insects wake up. Wait until you've had several days of 50 degree or higher temperatures to give them a chance of survival.
4. The first thing I do is pick up sticks. There are always loads of sticks and branches that have fallen over the winter. It is a good first step before raking and gives you a chance to assess how things have overwintered while you walk around gathering fallen branches.
5. Gently rake the early bloomers first so they can poke up out of the soil without having to lift leaves and debris too.
6. Clip off old, tattered leaves of perennials that bloom with the first breath of spring.
7. Give ornamental grasses their annual haircut before new growth begins. Leave 8-12 inches of old stubble standing above the crown to keep spring rains from flattening soft new growth and to preserve this year's growing tips.
8. Wait until after spring-blooming shrubs blossom to prune them. Instead, finish up pruning broken branches. See the Almanac's [When to Prune What Guide](#).
9. This is a good time to remove dead raspberries and rose canes.
10. Rake, rake, rake, especially where bulbs, daylilies, and peonies* are planted to avoid snapping off brittle new shoots. (**Peony tips are very brittle when they first emerge. Take care when cleaning up around them**)
11. Before the buds open up and leaves emerge, dig up and move or divide overgrown perennials. It will be less stressful for them.
12. Take time to remove any weeds as they pop up. They are much easier to deal with now.
13. If you haven't tested your soil in a while, now is a good time to take a sample and send it off to be tested. You will receive guidelines for the proper amendments to add
14. Ready to plant vegetables? Before planting, check the soil temperature. Peas need at least 45 degree soil to germinate. Or look to nature and wait until the forsythia blooms to plant them. Other vegetables that can be planted early include beets, carrots, radishes, spinach, lettuce, and chards.
15. Pot up begonia tubers and other summer flowering bulbs to give them a head start.

For more gardening chores, see the Almanac's "[Gardening Tips & Tasks by Month](#)"
Shared from the Old Farmer's Almanac at www.almanac.com