



Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

Newsletter ~ December 2025

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Message from the Presidents

Winter solstice is almost upon us, seed catalogs are arriving in the mail, and the annual December mess of ice, rain, and slush is in full swing. 2025 is coming to an end and we ask the same question every year: where did the time go? Seems that Summer Solstice makes time fly while winter solstice slows everything down. When will we be able to start planting outside?

Many thanks to our outgoing officers, Kellie Staples, Sally Byrne-Flores and Paul Marmorra for your years of dedication to WGCA. Your expertise and commitment, both behind the scenes and at each meeting, often unnoticed, are greatly appreciated. Congratulations and welcome to our incoming board members Judy Pendleton and Alis Schmitt, who bring new talent and fresh perspectives.

The holiday season is upon us. We invite you to take a minute from the hustle and bustle to stop and enjoy those around you. It's such a joy to hear and see the excitement of Christmas from the eyes of children. It brings a smile to hear their sweet voices singing along to the carols and to hear their excitement over simple things like lights strung across a yard. We love cooking with young children but especially this time of year when there's cookies to be made, rolled out and decorated. Oh the mess! But oh the memories we're creating! We hope this season finds your days bright and filled with laughter and memorable moments during this upcoming holiday season. We look forward to spending time again with you next year.

Christie & Kellie



What's Growing Now

This annual club tradition is a time of fun and fellowship, with the warmth of the holiday spirit abounding. The club attendance pre-registration was low, so we invited members of the Anchorage Garden Club to join us if they wished. On 04DEC, we gathered at Dimond Greenhouses for our session with the ever-entertaining Darry Leiser and his son Matt, who is continuing the family tradition. The weather reminded us again that we are not in charge, and the icy conditions prevented the participation of a few folks from farther afield, but those who were able to brave the very icy streets proudly went home with either centerpieces or wreaths.



Our traditional holiday get-together took place on 11DEC at Central Lutheran Church. It is always fun to be together, and celebrating with food and the fast-paced gift exchange for those who participated kept spirits up and hilarity abounding. Some folks decorated tables with some very lovely decorations and it was so nice to be together and chat with friends old and new. A very fun fellowship indeed. And the food....!!!

More holiday photos towards the end.

Wildflowers who bloomed this month

Mardie Lower, Dennis Ronsse and Stan Staples

The December birth flowers are Holly and Paperwhite Narcissus.



Celtic and Druidic tradition held holly to be a sacred plant with protective qualities, and believed that it warded off evil spirits and brought good luck to homes, especially during the winter solstice. Later, Christian beliefs held that the sharp edges of the leaves represented the crown of thorns that Jesus was given and that the berries represented the blood he shed as a sacrifice for humankind.

Holly symbolizes protection, love, and hope. It is associated with rebirth and renewal, making it a perfect flower for December, symbolizing the end of one year and the beginning of another.

According to Greek mythology, Narcissus was a beautiful young man who fell in love with his own reflection and, after withering away and dying of unrequited love, he turned into the beautiful and fragrant flower named after him.

The paperwhite narcissus symbolizes renewal, purity, and new beginnings. Being that they can be forced to flower in winter or very early spring, paperwhites are a popular holiday gift.

The paperwhite narcissus also has importance in various cultures and religions. It is a popular flower to use during Chanukkah, as it represents light, hope, and rebirth which are the holiday's themes. In some Christian traditions, paperwhites symbolize the birth of Christ.



Club Business

November Board of Directors Election Results

It is with pride that we present the 2026-2027 Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska Board of Directors. Thank you to these volunteers for their support in keeping the club vital!

Board of Directors

President: Christie Holshouser
Vice President: Barbara Baker
Secretary: Mary Britton
Treasurer: Cindy Walker
Member at Large: Judy Pendleton
Member at Large: Alis Schmitt



November 2025 Treasurer Reports

Nuvision Federal Credit Union

Business Savings	\$8,000.47
Business Checking	\$6,386.81
CD - 9 month (matures 5/1/26) 5.37%	\$5,091.56
Balance 11/30/25	\$19,478.84

Morgan Stanley Balance 11/30/25	\$58,519.85
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Total Funds 11/30/25	\$77,998.69
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Membership Renewal

Forms can be accessed from www.wildflowergardenclub.org under the membership tab. The annual membership cost is \$20 for an individual with an additional \$15 for each immediate family member (only one yearbook will be shared in a family membership). Annual dues help offset the expenses of club operations and affordable workshops.

To mail a renewal, print a copy of the form and send it in with a check.

You can also fill in the form online and pay electronically. **An additional cost of \$1 per member registration** will be applied to cover the processing fees of the credit card company.

Your continued support of the Wildflower Garden Club of AK is greatly appreciated!

Upcoming Meetings, Projects, & Workshops

→ **NEW ~ Meeting time change to 10:30am coming in January 2026!** ←

January 8 – 10:30am-12pm at Central Lutheran Church

“Slugs and Bugs” Presented by : Jozef Slowik

Cooperative Extension Services Integrated Pest Management Technician

February 12 – 10:30am-12pm at Central Lutheran Church* SAVE THE DATE!

Meet & greet brunch for members only with our special visiting guest speaker
Dr. Richard Benfield.

February 12 – 5:30pm-8:00pm at BP Energy Center* SAVE THE DATE!

“Around the World in 80 Gardens” presented by Dr. Richard Benfield

Join us for an enchanting evening as Dr. Richard Benfield, former Chair and Professor of Geography at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Connecticut, shares the highlights of his distinguished career in tourism, focusing on the world's most remarkable gardens. Dr. Benfield is a highly sought-after speaker for garden and nature clubs worldwide, and his presentations captivate both gardening enthusiasts and general audiences alike.

During this special session, Dr. Benfield will guide attendees on a virtual tour beginning in the lush gardens of the Pacific. The journey continues through South America and Europe, onward to Southeast Asia and Australia, showcasing unique gardens and floral kingdoms from around the globe. The presentation will include:

- A walk through the three acres of gardens at Singapore's airport
- The arid and captivating gardens of Australia
- The tropical splendor of the Seychelles, home of the 'love nut'
- The distinctive landscapes of the Canary Islands
- A grand finale in the picturesque English country gardens of Dr. Benfield's homeland
- Exploration of unique gardens across the United States and Canada

In total, Dr. Benfield will highlight 80 extraordinary gardens spanning six continents!

The Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska proudly sponsors this special event



Announcements

2026 WGCA Grant Application Deadline - January 31, 2026

Information and the grant application can be found using the following link to our website.

[**The Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska - Our Grants Program**](#)

Individuals, Schools and Non-Profit entities engaged in work in the above listed fields may apply for grant funding until the. Please share this information with others you know who might be interested in applying.

February 12, 2026 Program

On Wednesday, December 10, a group of folks got together to start to plan logistics for the visit from Dr. Richard Benfield, our out-of-town guest speaker for our February meeting. Dr. Benfield is a world renowned author and speaker with his program of Around the World in 80 Gardens. Our Garden Club is hosting Dr Benfield, who is coming to Alaska to address our gardening community. We are opening the presentation to the gardening community at large free of charge. We have a reservation at the BP Energy Center that can seat 60 at absolute maximum, and we are hooked up with Zoom for any others.

We will open a **SignUp Genius** to our club first in the next week or so. After a few weeks, the registration will be open to the general public, **so watch your Email to be sure to enable you to snag a spot at the in person presentation.**

More Holiday Party Photos ~ Fa La La La ...



La La La La! 

Member's Corner ... A couple of fun holiday poems+

A Gardener's Christmas Wish ~ Author Unknown ~

Beneath the frost, the soil sleeps tight,
Dreaming of blooms in the soft spring light.
The trowels are resting, the gloves put away,
Yet hope in the heart still grows each day.

Snowflakes drift where roses once swayed,
Nature's own quilt so gently laid.
The holly berries gleam, the pines stand tall,
A winter crown for the garden's hall.

By the fire's glow, with cocoa in hand,
We dream of seeds and the feel of warm land.
For Christmas brings gifts that gardeners know—
Patience, promise, and seeds to sow.

So here's to the soil, the sun, and the rain,
To the joy of planting again and again.
May your garden next year be merry and bright,
And your heart bloom with peace on this Christmas night.

Wildflower's Motto... Show, Share and Tell!

The purpose of the Member's Corner section is to inspire and encourage each other.
Submit items: horticulture articles, garden ideas, photos, recipes, etc. for our newsletter
by the last day of each month. Send to Kathy Liska at akliska@aol.com or Paul Marmora
at pmarmora@aol.com

When you're too lazy to build a snowman.



Hoe! Hoe! Hoe!

'Twas the week before Christmas, and all through the yard,
Not a gift was given, not even a card.
The tools were all hung, in the carport with care,
with hopes that St. Nicholas soon would repair.

The shovel with blade all rusty and cracked,
The pitchfork still shiny, but handle it lacked.
When out on my lawn, (it's brown and abused)
I could see poor old Santa, looking confused.

No list had been left for Santa to see,
No gardening gifts were under the tree.
But wait there's still time, it's not Christmas yet,
And gardening gifts are the quickest to get.

You can forget the silk tie, the fluffy new sweater,
Give something to make the garden grow better.
If she wants a gift shiny, then don't be a fool,
It's not a dumb diamond, but a sparkling new tool.

If fragrance is listed you can forget French perfume,
It's a pile of manure that'll make gardeners swoon.
Give night crawlers, not nightgowns, the type of hose that gives water.
(Anything for the kitchen is not worth the bother.)

Give a great gift that digs in the dirt,
It's better than any designer-brand shirt.
Now look quick at Santa, this guy's not so dumb,
Under his glove, he hides a green thumb.

His knees are so dirty, his back how it aches,
His boots stomp on slugs, (he gives them no breaks).
The guy only works winter, you can surely see why,
The rest of the year it's a gardening high.

Elves plant in the spring, pull weeds merrily all summer,
In fall they all harvest, but winter's a bummer.
And so Christmas gives Santa a part-time employment,
Till spring when the blooms are his real life enjoyment.

So ask the big guy for garden gifts this year,
Seeds, plants and tools, Santa holds them all dear.
You see malls may be crowded, vendors hawking their ware,
But visit a nursery, stress-free shopping is there.

Now Santa's flown off, to the nursery he goes,
And his voice fills the night with loud Hoe! Hoe! Hoe! Hoes!

~ By Marianne Binetti

Design by Marion Owen

May the spirit of the holidays fill your heart with joy and your home with love!



And best wishes for a healthy and bountiful

