



# Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

## Newsletter ~ July/August 2025

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### Message from the Presidents

Summer is in full swing! Once we reach the summer solstice the flowers bloom in abundance, the garden starts producing, and time speeds up. While fireweed is beautiful, we all know what those pink flowers signal! So, unsurprisingly, we're packing in as many adventures with family and friends as we can! Having just returned from Homer, we can confirm that everyone is out and about, catching lots of fish, "ooo-ing" and "ahh-ing" over the wildflowers, and having fun in the sun!

August brings another workshop (see information in this newsletter) and the Alaska State Fair in Palmer. Make sure you mark your calendars for September 11, when we meet again for a presentation on pruning! Until then, we hope you're enjoying the warm days of summer!

**Christie and Kellie**



### Announcements – In Memory



Carol Norquist was a pillar in the gardening community in Anchorage for many years. She passed away in July after a short, sudden illness.

Carol was deeply involved in many garden clubs in advisory or supervisory capacities. Always a friend to other gardeners, she helped many with her knowledge of by-laws, legal requirements, computer issues and schedules. Many clubs and organizations will be affected by her passing.

Aside from all her accomplishments, Carol was a good and long-time friend to many of us in the Wildflower Garden Club, and was always willing to help in any capacity she could.

As a vitally involved member of the Central Lutheran Church, there will be a celebration of Carol's life in early September at the church. No details have been settled on yet, but we will keep the club informed.

A life well lived and charitable, and a good example to all.





# In the Loop

## Summer Garden Tours

On July 10, our club had the pleasure of touring a few gardens together. It is always extremely interesting to see what people have done with the space available to them and to hear of their tribulations and successes.

The first garden was Paul Marmora's. Paul embraces the natural look (including many native plants [aka weeds]). Paul's theory is that the more abundant the flora in the garden, the less obvious are the weeds. He explained a bit about his rock garden, the evolution of the plantings from an 8 foot square to a flowing expanse, showed some very old plants (mock orange, Clematis tangutica, Rosa glauca, Douglas maple and Scarlet Hawthorne) and ended on his deck with the bonsai.

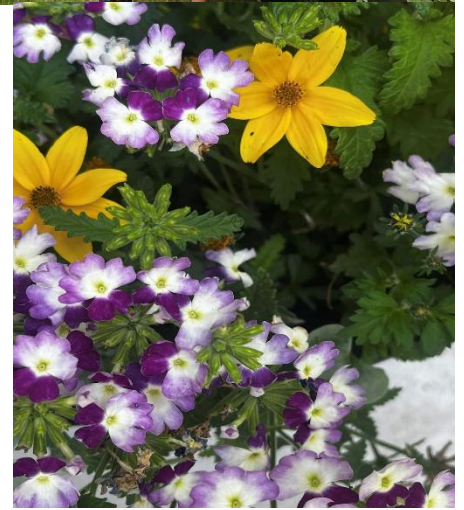


Our second stop was at the Downtown Soup Kitchen, where member John Horstkoetter has truly made a miraculous rooftop garden. It was a delight to hear John talk so enthusiastically about the challenges, evolution and successes of the garden. The way he has been able to maximize space usage is truly awe-inspiring. John also detailed the successes of the job training program brought about by having the vegetables grown on site and teaching people the best way to utilize them in cooking for a healthier and productive lifestyle. Many previous clients have gone on to successful careers in the restaurant business!





We ended the pleasant afternoon at the home of Stan and Kellie Staples, where Stan grilled for us and where we enjoyed a potluck lunch. Afterward, we toured the lovely gardens and heard the stories of how the house was brought to its current beauty by the hard work of the family.





## Garden Art Plate Workshop

On July 16 and 17, our club members had a workshop building flowers from plates, bowls, beads and other baubles under the guidance of Jean Krause of the Valley Art Alliance. Jean was very knowledgeable about the mechanics of the craft and was an absolute expert at encouraging participants to allow their creative juices free reign. Six people participated in the workshop, held in the spacious garage at the Staples' home in Eagle River. It was so much fun, choosing our designs and suggesting interesting combinations to other crafters. Day one was putting the sets together, and letting the glue dry for 24 hours, day two was used to mount the chosen backing for the final setting. Some folks opted to place their flowers on stakes of various kinds; some chose to hang them on walls. They all came out beautifully and each person left proudly with their creative designs.



Many thanks to our photographers who contributed these photos – Christie Holshouser, Kellie Staples, Cindy Calzada & Alis Schmitt, and members who attended these events!

See the beautiful, finished garden art plates on the next page!



## Gallery of Garden Art Plates created by our talented members!



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*“Every year, August whispers savor this.” – Unknown*

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## Wildflowers that bloomed these two months

**July** - Paul Chan, Julie Ginder, Tobi Harvey, Robin Hill, Shirley Luedke, Beverly Luedke-Chan, Alis Schmitt, Alice Sears, and Beth Verrelli

The July birth flowers are the larkspur and the water lily.

**Larkspurs** have long symbolized positivity, loving bonds, dedication, and sincerity. It can also be used to describe lightheartedness and youth. The plant is ideal for cottage and wildflower gardens and will attract pollinators like hummingbirds and butterflies.

The larkspur is a member of the buttercup family (Ranunculaceae) and is native to parts of the Mediterranean, Africa, and Europe. It grows wild in the United States and Europe and has become naturalized in gardens all over the world.



Larkspurs are believed to have gotten their name from their resemblance to the claw of the meadowlark. It has also been referred to as Lark's Claw, Knight's Spur, and Lark's Heel.

The common name "larkspur" may refer to flowers of the genus *Consolida*, which tend to be annuals, or to flowers of the genus *Delphinium*, which tend to be perennials. Fully grown, the larkspur can reach 1 to 3 feet tall. While they are beautiful given their height and beautiful purple-blue blooms, beware the larkspur is highly poisonous to humans and animals if ingested!

**Water lilies**, most notably the white variety, traditionally symbolize purity, innocence, and chastity. The water lilies signify joy and friendship; red means passion and romance; blue represents calm and wisdom; and yellow symbolizes energy and new beginnings.

They also served as an inspiration for one of the world's great painters, Claude Monet, who was quite captivated by the water lilies in his home garden. He spent years painting the flowers on his Giverny, France, property and created more than 200 paintings with water lilies as his subject.



Water lilies are perennials in the Nymphaeaceae family. They come in two varieties: hardy and tropical. Larger sized **Hardy water lilies** can be grown in water gardens and ponds, while smaller ones grow well in containers. They do best in water that is stationary and warmed by the sun. Moving water caused by fountains or waterfalls can affect their performance. **Tropical water lilies** are larger, more spectacular, and fragrant, such as the Amazon water lilies which grows lily pads up to 8 feet in diameter!

Water lilies are not only beautiful but also an important part of the ecosystem. The plants grow from rhizomes planted in muddy areas below the water surface, and their lily-pad foliage provides shade to reduce algae growth, is a food source for fish and wildlife, and filters the water in which they grow.

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

The August birth flowers are the gladiolus, and the poppy.

**Gladiolus** has long been a symbol of strength, victory, healing, and honor. It has also been associated with moral character, remembrance, and intelligence. It is a member of the Iris family (*Iridaceae*) and is native to Africa, the Mediterranean, and southern Europe, with more than 300 species that come in a range of vibrant colors. Also known as “sword lily,” the gladiolus got its name from the sword-like appearance of its leaves. “Gladiolus” comes from the Latin word *gladius*, meaning sword. Gladiators would wear the flowers around their necks in competitive games



The stalks appear in early summer, producing foliage that reaches between 2 to 5 feet tall, depending on the variety. The flowers are classified in five categories that indicate size, from large-flowered and miniature.

The gladiolus prefers full sun and rich, loamy, well-drained soil, although it will adapt to most soils. It also requires protection from strong winds, which can blow over its tall flower stalks.

The corms (root parts) of the gladiolus are tender and, in cold areas, should be dug up each fall and replanted the following spring. Bulbs must be planted after the last frost and once the soil has warmed. Each year, new corms form atop the old one. The old corm dies, while the bud develops on the new corm.

**Poppies** are a member of the Papaveraceae family, poppies grow worldwide, including the temperate climates of Eurasia, Africa, and North America. The most recognizable poppy species are the Iceland poppy (*Papaver nudicaule*), Oriental poppy (*Papaver orientale*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), and ever loved Himalayan Blue poppy (*Meconopsis betonicifolia*). The red poppy flower is one of the world’s most popular wildflowers.



All around the world, the meaning varies between countries but many cultures share at least one common meaning for the poppy flower. Lieutenant colonel John McCrae wrote the poem ‘In Flanders Fields’ which used poppy flowers as a symbol of remembrance for a friend that died in war. The symbolism of this meaningful flower doesn’t end there, though. It can also be seen as a symbol of imagination, messages delivered in mysterious dreams, beauty, success, luxury, extravagance.

According to Greek mythology, the poppy was associated with Demeter, the goddess of agriculture. It was believed if poppies grew in your field, a bountiful crop would follow.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

## Club Business

### **June 2025 Treasurer Reports**

#### **Nuvision Federal Credit Union**

Business Savings	\$7,591.47
Business Checking	\$8,222.30
CD - 12 month (matures 7/30/25) 3.34%	\$5,390.91
<b>Balance 6/30/25</b>	<b>\$21,204.68</b>

**Morgan Stanley Balance 6/30/25** **\$54,841.79**

**Total Funds 6/30/25** **\$76,046.47**

### **July 2025 Treasurer Reports**

#### **Nuvision Federal Credit Union**

Business Savings	\$7,997.79
Business Checking	\$8,142.39
CD - 9 month (matures 5/1/26) 5.37%	\$5,001.25
<b>Balance 7/31/25</b>	<b>\$21,141.43</b>

**Morgan Stanley Balance 7/31/25** **\$55,331.29**

**Total Funds 7/31/25** **\$76,472.72**



## Upcoming Meetings, Projects, & Workshops

### **August 14 – Beautiful Bouquets of Garden Bounty Workshop at the Ronsses'**

Once again, Annie and Dennis Ronsse have opened their home and gardens for club members to make two bouquets for a \$25 donation to the Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska. Keep your eyes peeled for a SignUp genius with details of the event and to enroll in the workshop. The Ronsses' have incredible gardens, with an amazing diversity of flowers for us to choose from. Paul will give a short demonstration and we will be able to make our two bouquets from flowers we have chosen. He will be available for advice if needed. This is a favorite workshop for many of us, as we can get creative with what we have growing in our own yards.

**August 15-September 1** – Alaska State Fair “Reach for the Stars”

**NOTICE** ... changes to this year's Crops & Flowers entry days!

**Entries accepted Tuesdays, August 19 & August 26 from Noon–9pm.**

Exhibitor Guides & the AK State Fair website links:

[Crops - 2025 - Alaska State Fair](#)

[Flowers - 2025 - Alaska State Fair](#)

[Alaska State Fair](#)





## September 11 - "Prune the Stump or Stump the Pruner" presented by Debbie Hinchey

Member Debbie Hinchey has been pruning since she was a sprout herself! In our first meeting of the season, she will demonstrate some general, tried-and-true pruning techniques for general information. We will also pass out 3X5 cards for members to write specific questions that Debbie will answer in the remaining time after her presentation. She has a wealth of knowledge on the subject and this promises to be a fun and interesting session.

If you have any questions, comments, concerns, or ideas for future programs or workshops, please contact Christie at [Holshouser.family@gmail.com](mailto:Holshouser.family@gmail.com)

## Member Share – From the garden of Alis Schmitt



Mixed Planter



Gerbera Daisy



Garden Rose



### Save the Date...

OUTSIDE THE ALASKA BOTANICAL GARDEN  
4515 CAMPBELL AIRSTRIP ROAD, ANCHORAGE, AK



## LATE SEASON PLANT SALE

HARDY PERENNIALS • UNIQUE HOUSEPLANTS • OUTDOOR ART • GARDENING ADVICE

**AUGUST 9, 2025**  
10 AM-3 PM



**There is always room  
for more plants!**