



Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

Newsletter ~ March 2025

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Message from the Presidents

No snow. Zero. It's the first of March and the ground is bare except in spots. According to the US National Weather Service in Anchorage the average date of no measurable snow on the ground is mid-April.

The question we hear the most from fellow gardeners is "What will this freeze/thaw/freeze/thaw do to our perennials"? That's a great question and one that cannot be answered until spring. It's anyone's guess! Mulch was laid this past fall to protect our perennials, however, wind blew the leaves far, far away. And what little snow we were able to shovel onto them sadly disappeared.

No snow makes gardeners antsy. Along with the worry of what will survive is the feeling that we can get outside and clean up and be ahead for planting season. Trim those raspberry canes you didn't get to last fall, but otherwise stay out of the garden.

Mother Nature has a way of playing tricks and if history repeats itself, spring break always brings snow. How much we don't know but hopefully enough to cover and insulate when the predicted cold spells hit.

Instead of working outside, take a trip to any of the greenhouses. Most of them opened on March 1st and each week they will be adding more to their selections. Planning our gardens is half the fun of gardening and it's always exciting to see what's new for 2025.

The great news is that spring is coming. We can see it every day when we look outside at the added sunlight and the red tint of the trees. We're all ready. Let's hope Mother Nature is kind to us and brings it early!

Christie & Kellie



In the Loop

At our March 13 Monthly Meeting we gathered together to do some hands-on garden crafts. It was nice to spend a few hours with each other visiting, chatting, and sharing friendship & fellowship. Kathy Liska introduced us to making **Pressed Flowers Greeting Cards**, taught to her years ago by Verna Pratt, and used flowers preserved by Verna herself. Kathy also showed us how to make simple **Teacup Bird Feeders** to hang from a branch or set on a stake in the garden. These will be a sweet treat addition for our feathered friends! Rachel Giannulls supplied birdseed donations by her daughter, the retail manager at AK Mill & Feed, who offered this after hearing about this craft we were doing. Sally Byrne-Flores was generous with her donation of beads so we could assemble **Fairy Wands**, which dress up houseplants or outside containers with colorful bling! Many thanks to each of the participating members who made this workshop so much fun. As it is customary, our tastebuds were delighted in a delicious potluck, and our hearts were happy in the company we were in.



Special wildflowers that bloomed this month

Ruth Bauman, Ken Blaylock, Rachel Giannulis, Gail Heineman, Maurine Loopstra, and Susan Miller



The March flowers are the **Daffodil and Jonquil**. A genus of the amaryllis family, *Amaryllidaceae*. They also go by their Latin name, *Narcissus*, which is the plant's genus. Interestingly, "daffodil" doesn't refer to a singular species; many flowers in the *Narcissus* genus go by the name. jonquils, for example, are included within *Narcissus* and are sometimes called rush daffodils. So, a good thing to remember: all jonquils are daffodils, but not all daffodils are jonquils!

Daffodils are best known for a single bloom on each stem, but others in the daffodil family, like the jonquil, will produce multiple blooms per stem. The traditional daffodil is either yellow, white, or a combination of the two, with six petals and a trumpet- or bell-shaped crown that is frilled at its edge.

As a spring flower and one of the first to bloom, these cheerful blooms of bright yellow and white colors signify rebirth, hope, positivity, and resilience as they are strong little survivors who have weathered the winter storms.



Announcements

Maurine Loopstra is celebrating her 102nd birthday this month! Her cheerful presence in our club, spanning many decades, has always been an inspiration to us. Congratulations and best wishes to our dear friend Maurine. She is a true perennial, and a perennial favorite at that!



Now You Know – Shamrock Houseplants

The potted shamrock plant (*Oxalis regnellii*), a member of the wood sorrel family, is a small specimen, often reaching no more than 6 inches tall. The clover-shaped leaves are available in a range of shades, including green, red or purple. Their delicate white flowers bloom off and on during fall, winter, and spring.

Shamrock plants grow from tiny bulbs that may be planted in fall or early spring. Most often, shamrock plants are purchased when foliage is growing and sometimes when in flower. People often buy them to celebrate spring holidays or to add a touch of good luck to their indoor spaces.

Many cultivars of oxalis exist, but exotic varieties provide the best indoor performance. However, don't dig a wild wood sorrel from outdoors and expect it to grow as a houseplant.

Oxalis thrives in bright, indirect light, preferably in a location that is cool at night (60°F) and warm during the day (70°F). The foliage has the unique ability to close its leaves during levels of low light, whether at night or on cloudy days. This behavior serves as a defense mechanism against excessive light. If you notice this, consider relocating the plant to a shadier spot or provide protection from intense sunlight.

Ensure it's planted in well-drained potting mix within a container that has proper drainage. While this plant prefers to be somewhat "pot bound," it's important to avoid overwatering and ensure the soil remains consistently moist, but not wet. Water two to three times a month, allowing soil to dry out between waterings.

Fertilize after watering with a balanced houseplant food. Balanced fertilizer information is represented in identical numbers, such as 10-10-10. Plants can be fertilized with a diluted solution once during the growing season and after flowering. There is no need to apply fertilizer in the winter months or when the plant is dormant.

Unlike most houseplants, the potted shamrock plant goes dormant in summer. When leaves die back, the potted shamrock plant needs a time of darkness to rest. Caring for shamrock plants during the period of dormancy includes limited watering and withholding of fertilizer.

The dormant period lasts anywhere from a few weeks to three months, depending on the cultivar and the conditions. New shoots appear when dormancy is broken. At this time, move shamrock houseplants to a sunny window or other area of bright light. Resume caring for shamrock plants to be rewarded with an abundance of the attractive foliage and blooms.

Now that you've learned what is a shamrock plant and how to care for a growing Oxalis houseplant, include one in your indoor collection for winter blooms and maybe good luck!

Article shared from Gardening Know How at www.gardeningknowhow.com



Club Business

At the end of 2025, a new **Board of Directors** will need to be elected. If you would be willing to share the responsibility of continuing our fun and interesting club, please let any of our current Board members know. We are willing to mentor you for this year and your first year in office. Please help share the oversight of the club by volunteering to carry the legacy and longevity of 52 years moving on. Discuss the duties and responsibilities with current Board members and/or look in the Wildflower Yearbook to see details of the jobs.

February 2025 Treasurer Reports

Nuvison Federal Credit Union

Business Savings	\$7,588.95
Business Checking	\$5,000.03
CD - 12 month (matures 7/30/25) 3.34%	\$5,329.29
Balance 2/28/25	\$17,918.27

Morgan Stanley Balance 2/28/25 **\$53,822.55**

Total Funds 2/28/25 **\$71,740.82**



Upcoming Meetings, Projects, & Workshops

April 10 – “Anchorage Gardens from Concept to Reality” Presenter: Claire Kaufman 10-11:30am at Central Lutheran Church. Claire is a favorite speaker, as she enjoys gardening so much, and has a humble and humorous approach to speaking about it. Claire will take us from design to execution in the development of various gardens around Anchorage.

April 19 – Children’s Marigold Giveaway. Volunteers are needed throughout the day to make this fun event a success for all. 9am to 4pm at the Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show. Come help brighten children’s days by assisting them in planting their very own marigold. We will offer some plants and limited craft items for sale as well as assisting children in planting their very own marigold, If you have items you would like to offer for sale, please let us know at akwildflowers@gmail.com to reserve some of the limited table space. The volunteer Signup Genius will be coming to you through Wildflower email in the near future.

May 15 – Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail Spring Clean Up at Alaska Botanical Garden
More information is coming soon.

May 17 – Native Plant Garden Spring Clean at Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center
More information is coming soon.

May 31 – WGCA Plant Sale! More information is coming soon.

Member's Corner

Kathy Liska and Alis Schmitt shared these beautiful photos of their Amaryllis blooms.



A waxed amaryllis is a dormant bulb that is coated in a decorative protective wax and commonly sold as a gift around Christmas time. They're completely self-sustaining and contain everything that the plant needs to grow and bloom. The bulbs come fully hydrated, so you don't have to add any water, which is why they're sometimes called "waterless amaryllis". The big draw is that they will produce gorgeous flowers with almost no effort. Depending on the type, they'll usually get between 2-3 stalks, each of which has up to 4 blossoms!

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

"For each petal on the shamrock, this brings a wish your way: Good health, good luck, and happiness for today and every day."
– Irish Blessing

