



Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska

Newsletter ~ June 2026

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Message from the President

May usually finds us busy in our own gardens. However, record cold temperatures kept us and our plants inside! After what seemed like weeks... years... the daytime temperatures rose and our garden beds reached 50°F, allowing us to harden off our plants and put some things in the ground. So now we're busy getting everything cleaned up and planted. Thankfully, the sun is gracing us for a few days to help motivate us!

May was also a very busy month for WGCA. A big 'thank you!' to all the members who helped with our spring service projects (cleaning up the Alaska Botanical Garden and the Wildlife Conservation Center gardens) and to those who gave their time, shared knowledge, or sold plants from your gardens to make the WGCA Annual plant sale a success. You are the best!

We have lots of fun club activities planned for the summer. Be sure to check your emails for dates for our two workshops taking place. In June, we'll be making garden flower plates, a workshop that requires 2 days due to the glue needing to set up firmly. And in July, we'll be making concrete steppingstones. I can't wait to see them placed in my own garden areas!

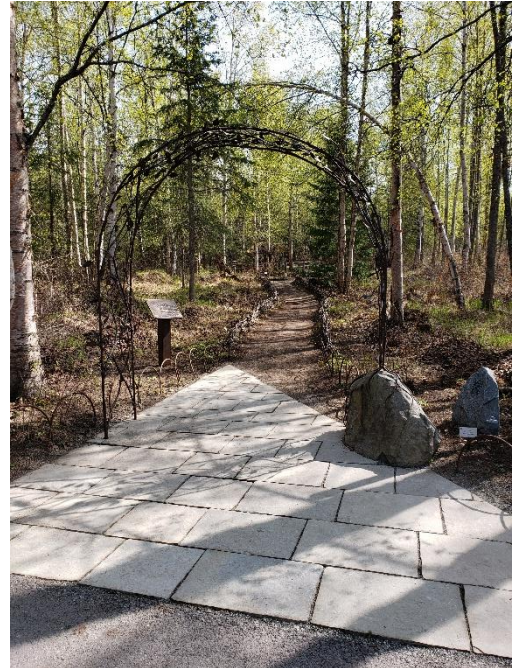
Our annual summer garden tours take place July 9th. We'll be visiting members Madge Oswald and Carroll Samuelson amazing gardens as well as the gardens at Chanshtnu Muldoon Park. In August we'll once again be making beautiful bouquets from member Annie Ronsees garden. Lots going on. I look forward to seeing you there!

Christie



In the Loop

May 7th several Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska members showed up for the annual spring tidying up of the **Verna Pratt Trail at the Alaska Botanical Garden**. The members were able to clean the bottom half of the trail by moving leaves and debris from around labeled plantings on the trail. The trail really looked nice for the upcoming Mother's Day Weekend. Spring was still in its infancy the first week of May; so we were early for horsetails and sprawling rose runners. **As the summer progresses we edit out non-native and non-desired species on Thursdays from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm with Rachel.** If you have time and the energy to gift to the nature trail it would be wonderful to see you there. The Botanical Garden asks that all volunteers wear outdoor gear suitable for sitting in the soil with closed toed shoes. Tools and gloves if needed supplied. It is a joy to watch the plants grow week by week as the summer progresses quickly to fall clean-up time. More information in Upcoming Projects section below.



May 11th, three hearty souls braved the winds and low temperatures to perform the initial clean-up at **Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center**. Two club members and one new Master Gardener from Kenai. Due to the late spring, few plants were as developed as when we are usually there, so it was hard to determine what made it through the winter and the voles. There was certainly evidence that the voles were having a heyday in the winter wonderland when everything else was asleep. There were so many tunnels throughout the garden mound that walking to weed was rather treacherous—often dropping 4-6 inches after the foot was planted on what appeared to be solid ground. Still, it was quite fun dodging the gusts of wind in nearly winter gear and kept us laughing. **Another trip down is needed to see what did in fact survive the winter and to replenish what didn't.**



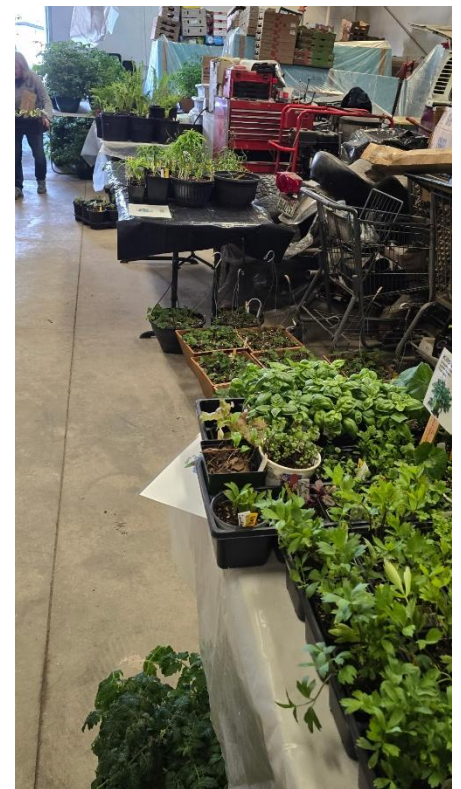
WGCA members Paul Marmora, Sally Byrne-Flores and Kenai Master Gardener Melissa Stute toughing it out in the wind and rain showers at AWCC in Portage.

On Saturday, May 30th, we had our Annual Plant Sale, again at the location of the old DMV at 1300 W. Benson due to the kindness of the Hinchey family. This year, we joined forces with the Anchorage Garden Club to combine both clubs' sales and it was a resounding success. The combined sales far surpassed any other sale in recent memory. This may be, in large part, due to the late spring and the gardeners' starvation for plants. Regardless of reasons, it was a great success.

Many thanks to all who participated to make the sale such a wonderful triumph. Plants were delivered on Friday from 1-7pm. Anchorage Garden Club had a table set up to facilitate their members in tagging and identifying plants, as this was a departure from their usual method.

There were so many plants at the drop-off that it was hard to walk in the garage. On Saturday at 7am, we got together to erect tents and tables with the help of a few young men and many members of the two clubs, the tables were absolutely loaded and there were so many plants underneath them that at places it was hard to approach the tables.

Once the floodgates opened at 9am and the customers poured in, plants started leaving rapidly. By 10:30, there were no more plants under the tables. Amazing sale, amazing cooperation of clubs, and many thanks go to all who participated!



*Friday's A-Z plant drop off. The amount of pots for sale just kept growing!!!
(Photo credits to Paul Marmora)*

*Some of Saturday's photos can be seen in the "Happy Hours for Wildflowers" section below.
(Photo credits to Kathleen Liska, not Kathy Liska. That's right, you now have two of us... and believe it or not we even share the same birthday!)*

Special Wildflowers that bloomed this month

Mary Britton, Eli Fleischer, and Gayle Mathiesen



The June birth flowers are the **Rose** and the **Honeysuckle**. They represent the warm, rich season and excite the romance budding in the air. Both blooms reach their peak during June.

The rose has meant romance and beauty for a very long time. They have been on cultivation for 5,000 years, and have meant different things and had different uses in different cultures worldwide. They are representative of love, beauty, and are used to communicate friendship, respect, admiration, and remembrance. Since the Victorian age, different colors have been assigned different meanings. A red rose means “I love you” and is a sign of romance; pink represents happiness and admiration; a white rose symbolizes innocence and purity; orange means desire and excitement; and yellow represents cheer and happiness, although some folklore considered it to mean jealousy. A red and white rose paired together has come to symbolize unity.

Roses are typically grouped into three categories – species, old garden, and modern:

- **Species roses** are those that evolved and adapted naturally over time.
- **Old garden roses** are varieties developed by breeding efforts before the 1860’s.
- **Modern roses** are descendants of both groups and varieties developed since the 1860’s.

Honeysuckle represents happiness, devotion, and the sweetness of lasting bonds.

The flowers’ fragrance is heaviest in evening when pollinators are gathering nectar. Many people remember the childhood pleasure of picking a honeysuckle blossom, biting off the very end and sipping the drop of sweet nectar from the flowers. This fond memory has both given the plant its name and strengthened the symbolism of hidden pleasures and quiet connections.

The honeysuckle’s growth habit of intertwining with and tenaciously clinging to post, fences, trees and other supports has made the plant representative of loyalty and enduring love. Europeans used to plant honeysuckle near their doorways to bring protection and good luck to the household. The plant’s flowers are attractive and fragrant, a combination that hummingbirds and butterflies can’t resist.

The honeysuckle thrives in full sun and well-draining soil but is tolerant of dry soils. When choosing a honeysuckle variety, consult invasive species lists to avoid planting species like the Japanese honeysuckle (*L. japonica*).



HAPPY
* birthday *

Club Business

May 2026 Treasurer Reports

Nuvision Federal Credit Union

Business Savings	\$8,004.46
Business Checking	\$2,367.75
CD-12 month (matures 5/1/27) 3.40%	\$5,220.39
Balance 5/31/26	\$15,592.60

Morgan Stanley Balance 5/31/26 **\$62,593.76**

Total Funds 5/31/26 **\$78,186.36**



Upcoming Meetings, Projects, & Workshops

Thursdays from 10am-12pm - Verna Pratt Wildflower Trail Maintenance at ABG

Those interested in helping on the trail must attend a volunteer orientation and update their paperwork if they haven't done so in the last 12 months. There is one more coming up in July.

Register at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/2026orientations#/>

June - Garden Art with Plates Workshop – Date & location to be announced soon.

Thursday, July 9th - Summer Garden Tours - 11am-2pm

We will visit the gardens of Madge Oswald, Carroll Samuelson, and Chanshtnu Muldoon Park. A potluck or brown bag lunch will be enjoyed at the final stop. More information coming soon.

July - Concrete Stepping Stones Workshop (tentative)

August - Flower Bouquets at the Ronsse Gardens (tentative). More information coming soon.



Happy Hours for Wildflowers at the Plant Sale!



Debbie Hinchey working the Native Plants.



Beverly Luedke-Chan & Tobi Harvey with Houseplants.



Alis Schmitt wiping tags at the 1st checkout station.



Shirley Ryan, gardener extraordinaire, on the right, always with a smile.



Paul Marmora, Plant Sale Chair, multitasking whenever necessary.



Christie Holshouser—our President and Kellie Staples sorting all those tags of plants that sold. A mind