

# BOREALIS

published monthly  
October thru May  
by the

February 1990



P.O. BOX 141613, Anchorage, Alaska 99514

**MEETING NEWS**---The February meeting of the Anchorage Chapter will be held on Monday, February 5th, 1990, at 7:30PM at the Muldoon Library in the west end of the Carr's Muldoon Shopping Mall, corner of Muldoon Road and Northern Lights Blvd. The library will be closed, so enter by the rear door off the parking lot at the rear of the building.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**---The Board will meet at 6:45PM just prior to the regular meeting. The activities of the society cannot be carried on without regular Board Meetings. Attendance is a responsibility of office. Board members are:

President-----Lynn Catlin  
Past President-----John Wenger  
Vice-President-----Dorothy Emmons  
Secretary-----Carol Hoblitsel  
Treasurer-----Ram Srinivasan  
General Programs-----Cindy Williams  
Field Trips-----Dorothy Emmons  
Representative to State Board--Frank Bogardus  
Newsletter-----Frank Pratt

**PROGRAM**---ANPS member Carl Franke will present the program, "Tundra Landscapes in Alaska". Mr. Franke will be discussing the Seward Peninsula area, Cape Newenham, and the Bering Sea coast.

**PLANT FAMILY**---Information not available to editor at presstime.

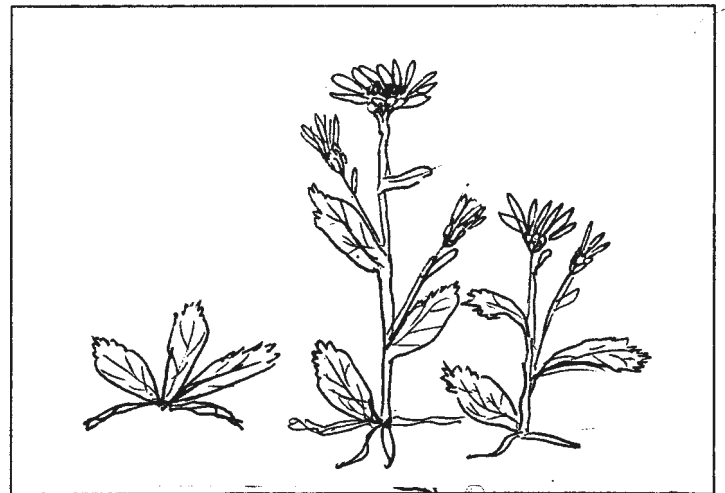
---

**EDITORS NOTE:** The newsletter deadline is the 15th of the month. The editor happened to be busy with other projects until the 25th this month, else many items would not have been included.

## MYSTERY PLANT

The plant contains usually several leafy stems, up to 30 cm (12 inches) tall, arising from a branching rhizome. The leaves are very variable, but they are generally lanceolate to oblanceolate, sessile or short-petioled, usually with serrate margins, glabrous above and hairy beneath. Basal leaves smaller than the middle ones usually withered by flowering time. Flowerheads, solitary or a few, have purple ray flowers, and the pappus is reddish brown or yellowish. A plant of gravelly river flats, dry meadows or open forests, it is common throughout our area.

Submitted by Gary Davies



Mystery Plant

---

## ANPS MEMBER HITS THE BIG LEAGUE

The following is extracted from a letter received from ANPS member, Jason Grant, formerly of Fairbanks:

".....I have recently moved out of Alaska to Maryland where I am pursuing my botanical interests as a scientist at an environmental consulting firm

while at the same time working at the Smithsonian Institution on Alaskan plant species as well as tropical American bromeliads.....Although I have moved from Alaska for the indefinite future, I am still devoted to the study of Alaskan wildflowers just as I was when I was working at the University of Alaska Herbarium under Dr. David Murray.

---

## HEARTS AND FLOWERS

Valentine's Day is February 14th. It's the busiest day of the year for florists. Saint Valentine didn't have much to do with this day of romance, his feast day just happened to fall on the day that 14th century ornithologists decided that birds began building their nests. Valentine's day hatched from courting birds carrying twigs and blossomed into love birds bearing flowers. In olden days, flowers said more than just "I love you". Flowers could foretell your romantic future.

Fragrant crushed Yarrow (*Achillea*) leaves tucked under your pillow at bedtime brought sweet dreams of your future mate. Yarrow worked its spousal sorcery in slumber only if these words were recited before going to sleep: "Good Morning, good morning, good Yarrow, and three good mornings to thee. Now pray tell me tomorrow, Who my true love is to be".

If a lover couldn't decide between two lovely ladies, a fuzzy Pussytoe leaf (*Antennaria*) helped him choose. He'd pick a leaf, naming opposite ends of the blade after the girls in question and rip the leaf apart, a kind of botanical wishbone. Which ever piece ended up with the longest hairs indicated his true sweetheart.

Even the lowly Dandelion (*Taraxacum*) can forecast love. When a man blew on the flower's fluffy seed head, the number of seeds that didn't float away revealed how many romances he'd have before marrying. Women weren't quite so lucky. For her, remaining seeds showed not how many lovers, but how many children she would have.

Service berry's (*Amelanchier*) name commemorates romance. Lovers anxiously awaited the arrival of travelling preachers each spring so they could be married. Weddings were performed about the time *Amelanchier's* blossoms decorated its branches, and the shrub came to be called service berry after spring wedding services.

Ojibwa men used Columbine (*Aquilegia*) to woo young maidens. It was said that if a man collected Columbine seeds, crushed them and rubbed them over his clothes, their light fragrance could enchant a woman. If he touched her hands, the faint perfume went straight to her heart. Perhaps there is a grain of truth to this bit of folklore. If you realized how tiny columbine seeds are and how many a man must collect to get even a hint of aroma, then his time spent in pursuit of seeds was a measure of his sincerity and devotion to his true love.

Whether or not your love smells sweet from the gentle bouquet of Columbine seeds, may cupid smile on you this month and send you a Happy Valentine's Day.

Submitted by Lynn Catlin, Pres., Anchorage Chapter

---

## REDOUBT PUTS PLANT SOCIETY ON THE MOVE

Erupting Redoubt Volcano affects life in ways we'd never imagine. Last meeting, as 35 of us were huddled outside in the cold, locked out of the Muldoon Library, I wondered where Dorothy Emmons could be with the key. We stood there joking about holding the program (on Barrow's flowers) outside for proper ambiance. Poor Dorothy, key in hand, was trapped by a black ash cloud from Redoubt on the Kenai Peninsula. A black curtain of ash had descended from the sky, cutting out all light and clogging the air filter of Dorothy's car. When the sky cleared, she was left with a dead car and had to push it to a friend's house. Moving the Plant Society meeting was much easier. We just picked up and sneaked into a room at the University. As Scott Christy remarked, "The Plant Society is on the move!" Let's hope that Dorothy has better luck this month! I guess she didn't realize all the hazards involved with being Vice-President!

Lynn Catlin, Pres., Anchorage Chapter

## ADDENDUM TO THE "MUSHROOMS FOR FOOD" TALK, Nov. 1989

The Green Giant Company has recently introduced a new mushroom to its list of canned produce available in the United States. The

"Straw" or "Paddy Straw" mushroom (*Volvariella volvacea*) should soon be available in grocery stores in a seven ounce jar with a suggested retail price of \$1.29. Formerly, this canned "Straw" mushroom was generally available only in Oriental restaurants or Oriental grocery and specialty shops as it was traditionally grown outdoors in Southeast Asian countries on beds of rice straw.

The fresh "Straw" mushroom, which are highly perishable, are still not available in the United States, but this may also be changing soon. British textile groups are now experimenting with growing edible mushrooms on discarded secondary cotton wastes collected from mills in the Manchester area. This results from observing the great success that Hong Kong mushroom houses have had in growing "Straw" mushrooms indoors of a mixture of cotton waste and small amounts of limestone and wheat or rice bran which is composted, pasteurized, and then inoculated with spawn. The material used in growing the spawn is an interesting mixture of cotton waste and used tea leaves collected from Hong Kong restaurants supplemented with limestone and rice bran.

Not only is the cotton waste cheaper and more readily available than rice straw in many parts of the world, but it also produces a higher and more stable yield of mushrooms. Hong Kong growers now rely on getting two crops of mushrooms every month all year long.

Surely mushroom growers in the United States will soon follow suite since the American Mushroom Institute's 1988 report shows Americans nearly doubled their mushroom consumption in just less than one year.

Submitted by Phyllis E. Kempton

## GET THIS! (If you can round up enough buyers)

ANPS has received information on a very interesting natural product from "Guanay Co." of Coleta, California. It is bagged "Sea Bird" (Cormorant) Guanay from the Chubut province of Argentina. A flyer showing the process of collecting, drying, sifting and bagging the finished product will be at the next meeting for anyone interested. Minimum order is 2200 lbs., so you will have to find lots of other interested people. A growing business, apparently.

(Ed. note: This is not a joke; but, 2200 lbs? That's a lot of guano, Bwana!)

---

## QUIZ ANSWER

*Aster sibiricus* L., Siberian Aster

---

## SEEDS

Peggy Pletcher has done a fine job sorting, packaging and organizing the seeds for our annual sale. The 1990 ANPS Seed List is attached to this newsletter. Seeds will be available at February meeting, and can also be ordered from ANPS at the address shown on the header.

---

## FIELD TRIPS

It is not too early to start thinking about summer field trips. Dorothy Emmons is the Field Trip Coordinator. Let's have some ideas!

Alaska Native Plant Society

Post Office Box 141613

Anchorage, Alaska 99514



# ALASKA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

## 1990 SEED LIST

(Price---50 cents/packet)

### VARIETIES NATIVE TO ALASKA

1. *Anemone multifida*  
8-12", nice for naturalizing an area, cream sepals (lavender to pink on underside), dry areas. Stratification recommended.
2. *Armeria maritima*  
4-8", good for rock gardens, pinkish head, gravelly well-drained areas. Stratify.
3. *Arnica frigida*  
6-10", large yellow daisy (showy plant), good garden plant, prefers dry areas.
4. *Arnica latifolia*  
12-18", medium yellow daisy, good for naturalizing a large area.
5. *Arnica Lessingii*  
5-8", large light yellow daisy, prefers well-drained soils, nice for rock gardens
6. *Dodecatheon sp.* (white, probably variety of pulchellum)  
Good garden plant. Must stratify, dampness required.
7. *Dryas Drummondii*  
4-7", low, mat-forming sub-shrub, nodding yellow flower heads, nice for gravelly areas. Stratification recommended.
8. *Erigeron eriocephalus*  
Up to 5", small plant, good in gravelly, well-drained areas, flowers lavender to white. Good for rock garden.
9. *Erigeron eriocephalus sp.* (probably eriocephalus/humilis cross)  
Same info as #8.
10. *Fritillaria camschatcensis*  
10-16", large brown bells, good garden variety. Requires wet stratification.
11. *Geum Rossii*  
8-12", medium yellow flowers, good garden variety.
12. *Loiseleuria procumbens*  
Mat forming, evergreen shrub, small pink flowers, slow growing. good in well-drained areas. Stratification recommended.
13. *Mitella pentandra*  
8-12", delicate plant of wet areas, small green flowers.
14. *Myosotis alpestris asiatica*  
The Alaska State Flower. Small blue flowers, good garden variety.
15. *Papaver alaskanum*  
6-10", large yellow flowers, good garden plant in dry areas.

16. *Papaver alboroseum*  
Small (up to 5") plant, small pink flowers. Good in dry areas, such as gravelly areas and/or rock gardens.
17. *Parnassia Kotzebuei*  
Small plant, small white flowers, prefers damp areas. Stratification recommended.
18. *Pedicularis sp.*  
5-7", found in damp area at Fielding Lake. Damp Stratification recommended.
19. *Polemonium pulcherrimum*  
8-12", lavender-blue flowers (3/4"), showy garden plant for dry areas.
21. *Rhinanthus minor borealis*  
12-18", small yellow flowers, showy seed pods. Good filler for naturalizing a large area.
20. *Taraxacum carneocoloratum*  
4-7", flesh colored flowers. The "pink" dandelion.
22. *Thalictrum sparsiflorum*  
Tall (2 to 2-1/2 feet), delicate plant with tiny white flowers. Good for meadow or moist woods.
23. *Tofieldia pusilla*  
Small (2-3") rock garden plant, small pinkish flower spike.
24. *Valeriana sitchensis*  
Tall (12-24") meadow plant, flat-topped white flower clusters. Good for naturalizing a large area.
25. *Gentiana sp.* (probably *glauca*)  
A small (3-5") plant with green to blue tubular flowers.
26. Wildflower Mix  
Good for moist areas.
27. Wildflower Mix  
Good for dry areas.

28. ---number not used

29. ---number not used

#### GARDEN VARIETIES (Non-Native)

30. *Aquilegia sp.*  
Small variety, yellow flowers.
31. *Clematis sp.*  
A climber, small variety, blue flowers.
32. *Lewisia cotyledon*  
6-10", whitish flowers with pink stripes, a lovely plant for well-drained areas.

### SOME FOOTNOTES ON STRATIFICATION

Some seeds require special treatment for good germination. This occurs naturally outdoors, but if you are starting your seeds indoors, or plan to scatter them outside in the spring, you will need to read further.

Our ANPS seeds have not been stratified. Some do not require it. Stratification is accomplished by treating seeds with a cold treatment for a period of about 45 days. Some prefer brief thawing periods so this is recommended for all that require stratification. Some also require dampness during this time.

### SOME METHODS OF STRATIFICATION

Method #1. Place packets of seeds in a box or plastic bag in a freezer. Remove to thaw about every 10 days, and return to freezer. Repeat this cycle for the full time period. Those seeds that require dampness should be sprinkled with water before returning to the freezer each time.

Method #2. Scatter outdoors if you can locate where you want them at this time.

Method #3. Plant in flats, put outside, and cover with snow. It is difficult to keep trays moist once the snow leaves. Some moisture is needed at this time, and, especially when young plants start growing.

Method #4. Place seeds in a plastic bag (so they don't get continually soaked) or in a somewhat protected area. Place them where they won't blow away. Seeds that require dampness should not be in a plastic bag. Bring them indoors about every 10 days to thaw, then return them outside for the duration of the required time. After this, you may plant them indoors and enjoy watching them grow, or plant outside as early as possible (drying winds sometimes make it difficult to keep them moist). Be sure to put seedlings next to a window for good natural light or place close under artificial light.