

Borealis

the newsletter of the



May 1993

P.O. Box 141613 Anchorage, Alaska 99514

Anchorage Chapter News

The May meeting of the ANPS Anchorage Chapter will be held Monday, May 3rd at 7:30PM in the First Congregational Church at 2610 E. Northern Lights Blvd. There will be a Board meeting before the regular meeting beginning at 6:45PM. Please use the entrance at the rear of the church.

Verna Pratt will present the evening program, Exploring the Flora of Denali National Park. A few years ago, Mrs. Pratt and her husband Frank decided to fill an obvious gap in flora literature and produce a wildflower book on Denali Park. While finalizing their book last summer, they made repeated trips to the Park, travelling from Cantwell to Kantishna many times. Exploration of the many roadsides, bogs, woods, meadows, tundra, thickets, river beds, ridges and scree slopes revealed many plant species not previously thought to be present.

Whether you hike the entrance trails, explore Mt. Healy, travel by bus or hike in the back country, Denali is sure to please the botanist in all of us.

Hopefully, copies of "Wildflowers of Denali National Park" will be available at the May meeting.

Copies of "A Child's Book of Wildflowers" will be available at the May

meeting. Cost is \$11.00 (regularly retail priced at \$15.95). If you would like to obtain a copy but cannot attend the meeting, contact Verna Pratt at

Plant Family - Saxifraginaceae

The members of the Saxifrage family to be discussed at this month's meeting of the ANPS include large-leaved plants and those with toothed leaflets. Forest Baldwin will present the program. *Boykinia richardsonii*, Bear Flower or Alaska Boykinia, has very large, coarse and toothed leaves and a tall spike of white flowers. It is a favorite food of the grizzly and is common in meadows of interior Alaska.

Heuchera glabra, Alpine heuchera, has slightly lobed and toothed maple-like basal leaves with a long raceme of tiny white flowers. This is a plant of shaded areas in the Southeast, the Aleutian chain and coastal southcentral Alaska.

Telima grandiflora, or Fringe Cups, is found in moist rocky woodlands and has hairy lobed and toothed leaves. The long graceful raceme of small green flowers is very aromatic. *Tolmia menziesii* is a similar plant of southeast Alaska with brown flowers. Another similar but smaller plant with a short raceme of green flowers and reflexed petals, *Mitella pentandra*, Bishop's Cap, is found along alpine streams.

Tiareella is a plant of moist woodland habitat. *T. unifoliata*, found in southeast Alaska, has lobed leaves. *T. trifoliata*, found in southeast and coastal southcentral Alaska, has three lobed and toothed leaves and a raceme of tiny white flowers.

Membership Re-Application

Please check your mailing label to see if your application with the Alaska Native Plant Society is about to lapse. If your name is highlighted, this will be the last newsletter you will receive until you pay your dues.

***BOREALIS* - The Newsletter of the
Alaska Native Plant Society**

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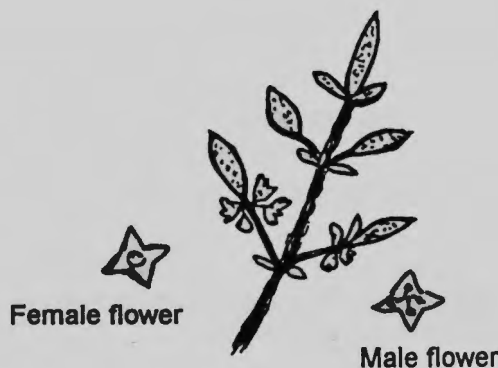
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Circulation - Martha Hatch

Borealis is published monthly except for June, July, and August. For information on how to join the Alaska Native Plant Society or to send questions, comments and articles, please contact:

Alaska Native Plant Society
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Mystery Plant

The May mystery plant is one of the earliest to bloom in Alaska and is easily recognizable even in winter. It is a dioecious shrub, having male and female reproductive parts on separate plants. Branches are opposite and grows 24 to 36 inches tall. Copper colored scales on the underside of the sepals and leaves make this shrub stand out even in winter.



ANPS Field Trip Schedule

Listed below are three field trips planned for May. The complete summer list of field trips will be available soon.

Wishbone Hill Sun May 16 9:00AM
All day -- moderate to strenuous

Explore an interesting area with large conglomerate boulders and fossil rocks while studying early woodland to alpine plants.

Meet 9:00AM at the SE corner of Sears parking lot on the corner of Benson and Old Seward. Regroup at the Palmer U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service building across from the fairgrounds.

Muldoon Park Thur May 27 7:00PM
3 hours -- easy

Take an easy stroll through the woods admiring white wood violet, *Viola rotundifolia*, and rattlesnake plantain, *Goodgera repens*.

Park on Patterson Road and meet at the NW corner of the park at the corner of Patterson and Northern Lights.

Johnson Trail Wed May 19 7:00PM
3 hours -- easy

Enjoy a leisurely walk along a good trail to see early woodland plants and plants on a rocky southern exposure. This will be in Chugach State Park, so no collecting will be permitted.

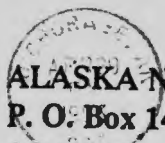
Meet at the trailhead just south of Potter Marsh at 7:00PM.

Mystery Plant Answer

Soap berry -- *Shepherdia canadensis*

The female flowers are small with no petals and four yellowish sepals. The male flowers have four yellow sepals and four stamens.

The female shrub produces red, oval-shaped, translucent berries with scales. They are bitter, but edible. Native Alaskans whip the berries to a froth and add sweetener to make a dessert topping.



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