

Borealis

the newsletter of the



March 1996

P.O. Box 141613, Anchorage, AK 99514

Anchorage Chapter ☆ March Meeting ☆

Monday, First Congregational Church
March 4 2610 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
7:30 p.m. (Please use back entrance)

Survey of Category 2 Plants in the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve and vicinity

by Carolyn Parker

Four Category 2 plant species, as well as other taxa of floristic interest, are found in the Yukon-Charley Rivers NP vicinity, an area that has justifiably attracted considerable botanical interest in the last few years. Penny Knuckles, who led an ANPS visit to Eagle and Calico Bluffs a few years ago, initiated a proposal through the Park Service and National Biological Survey that resulted in funding for this survey. As a result, populations of each of the four taxa were found and described in a recently written report, and some really beautiful, interesting country was visited, and shared with great company, during four weeks of enjoyable field work.

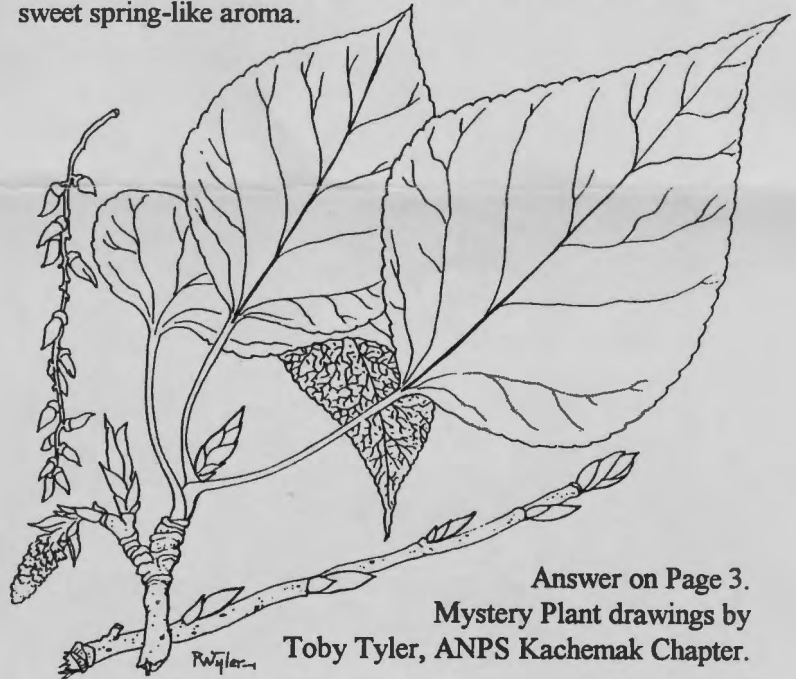
Plant Family - Diane Toebe will discuss three more fern families: mountain parsley, deer and ostrich ferns.

Mini-Botany - Marilyn Barker will define some terms used to describe leaf shapes.

Seed Swap - seed swap seeds will be available.

Mystery Plant by Trevor Ricketts

This woody plant is a giant among our Alaskan flora. It has toothed, ovate leaves and many small flowers arranged in catkins. Seed capsules have 3 compartments, but beware of hybrids with a close relative that may have some three-parted and some two-parted seed capsules in the same catkin! At this time of year, look for its large, sticky buds. If you bring them indoors they will open up and fill your house with their sweet spring-like aroma.



Answer on Page 3.
Mystery Plant drawings by
Toby Tyler, ANPS Kachemak Chapter.

Welcome Dinner for Carolyn Parker

If Carolyn Parker was an ecosystem, she would be a salt-marsh (one of the most productive ecosystems there are!!) It is always a great treat to have Carolyn speak to us about her fieldwork, as she is a bastion of knowledge concerning native flora. We will meet at 6:00 p.m. at the La Mex restaurant at 2550 Spenard Road to welcome (and FEED) our speaker! In order to reserve a appropriately-sized table, please call Ginny Moran by March 2 to let her know you plan to attend ().

Field Trips Chair

Many thanks to Kathy Burke for volunteering as this year's field trip chair. Kathy has lots of great ideas, and has already started work on an exciting list of trips for the summer.

Now it's your turn. She'll need lots of help from members, in identifying places to visit and recruiting volunteers to lead trips. If you know of an unusual or exciting place that would appeal to other native plant enthusiasts, please think about leading the trip or let Kathy know of your suggestion. Try to think of one trip you could lead this summer, fill out the form in last month's newsletter and get it to Kathy ().

Travel in Luxury with the Llama Buddies

Pam Barnes, a wilderness guide with Llama Buddies, is offering ANPS members two special outings this summer. These are fully catered trips: Llama Buddies will supply gourmet food, tents and camping gear, chairs, in fact everything including the picnic basket. Let the llamas do the hard work of hauling the gear. All you'll have to carry is your personal clothing. Llama Buddies offers a 10% discount for groups of six or more, and has a maximum of eight people for each trip.

Gold Mint Trail near Hatcher Pass: July 6 & 7. This easy trail, with less than 500 feet total elevation gain, follows Mint Glacier Valley. The trip would take two full days and cost \$245/ person.

Lost Lake Trail: August 2-4 or 2-5. This beautiful trail on the Kenai Peninsula involves more elevation gain, and could be done as either a three or four day excursion (Llama Buddies prefers to do it in four). Cost is \$435/person for a three day trip, or \$565/person for a four day trip.

Llama Buddies are currently holding these dates open for ANPS members. However, we do need to commit to a trip soon, so that the dates can be released for other groups if we can't use them. **Verna is looking for input by March 5.** If you are interested, give Verna a call at

Program Chair

After two years of service, Ginny Moran has decided it's time to call it quits as Program Chair. Thanks, Ginny. You've done a great job of lining up speakers for our monthly meetings.

We are looking for someone to step forward and fill Ginny's very large shoes. Speakers for the March, April and May programs have already been arranged, so the new chair will have plenty of time to develop ideas and approach potential speakers for when meetings resume after the summer break. If you would like to volunteer for this position, call Julia Ricketts at

Historian

Over the years, ANPS members have undertaken numerous projects, traveled to many corners of the state, and been featured in magazine and newspaper articles. We would like to document some of the club's past activities by starting a club scrap book. If you think you might be interested in the role of chapter historian, call Julia Ricketts at

**DIG-IT!! Volunteers Needed!
by Ginny Moran**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has entered into a Challenge Cost Share project with the King Career Center to salvage native plants from sites before they are developed. Plants "rescued" will be stored at the King Career Center greenhouse and used for projects around the city including a native plant demonstration garden at Wendler Junior High. Volunteers are needed to help "rescue" plants, tend them and possibly propagate them. A very successful county-run program in King County, Washington is the model being used by the Service.

Volunteer to save native plants this summer!! It will require some elbow grease and back-bending, but it will be for a great cause!! If you're interested in volunteering to help with this effort, call or email organizer Virginia (Ginny) Moran at the USFWS office in Anchorage (or Ginny_Moran@mail.fws.gov). We can "dig-it" together!!

**Polypodiophyta:
Cryptogrammeae
(Mountain Parsley Ferns),
Blechnaceae (Deer Ferns) and
Matteuccia struthiopteris (Ostrich Fern)**

The two families and one species of fern we are considering this month are the only leptosporangiate ferns (see last month's newsletter for a definition) in Alaska with separate fertile and sterile fronds. The Ostrich Fern is an atypical member of the Athyriaceae (Lady Fern Family), in that it possesses both types (other members of the Athyriaceae will be discussed in May). The presence of two frond types makes these ferns relatively easy to identify.

All have pinnately divided fronds, but in the Cryptogrammeae fronds are 2-4 pinnate, while those of Ostrich and Deer Ferns are once-pinnate. Pinnae of the Ostrich Fern are pinnately divided, but those of Deer Fern are entire.

The Cryptogrammeae (Mountain Parsley Family) are represented by two species in Alaska, one with two sub-species. They are smallish plants, up to 8 inches high, and usually found in rock crevices and on rocky slopes. The two sub-species of *C. crispa* are found throughout the southern part of Alaska, but var. *acrostichoides* more closely follows the coastline. Both are tufted plants arising from short, ascending rhizomes cloaked with scales and old leaf stalk bases. The sterile fronds possess thick, leathery blades, and finely divided pinnae, somewhat resembling parsley leaves. However, those of var. *acrostichoides* are less finely dissected than var. *sitchensis*. Sori are borne on the longer and more erect fertile fronds, and are covered by the reflexed margins of the pinnae.

Cryptogramma Stelleri is a rare plant, scattered through mostly interior portions of the state, and confined to crevices in calcareous rocks in shaded localities with dripping water. Fronds are scattered along a horizontal rhizome, with fertile fronds longer than sterile ones. Pinnae are few and thin. Fertile fronds have a long stipe and almost entire, linear-oblong pinnae.

The Blechnaceae (Deer Fern Family) has only one representative in Alaska: *Blechnum spicant* (Deer Fern). It is a medium-sized, evergreen fern, up to 21/2

feet tall. Its numerous sterile fronds, up to 30 inches long and with up to 70 lateral pairs of pinnae, form a distinct rosette that tends to lie flat on the ground. In spring, new sterile fronds are added to the center of the thickening rosette. In summer, deciduous, fertile fronds are produced at the center of the plant. These tend to be longer, more erect and with gracefully drooping tips. Their pinnae are more narrow and sometimes almost rolled into tubes around the developing sori. Sori occur in two continuous rows along the margins of the pinnae, and each row is covered and protected by a conspicuous indusium attached only along the outer margin of the pinnae. The plant occurs throughout coastal sections of Alaska from Kodiak Island eastwards, and from high montane forests to sea level. The evergreen fronds provide an important winter forage for deer.

Ostrich Fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) is a large fern, growing to more than 3 feet tall, usually found near creeks in wet, low-elevation woods. Although common in the Mat-Su Valley, it is restricted to small isolated areas in Alaska. The entire plant is vase-like and symmetrical in form, narrow at the base and tip, but wider in the middle. The persistent fertile fronds are shorter and age to a dark brown. Fiddle heads of this species are considered choice for their excellent taste and lack of scaly brown chaff typical of other fern species.

Mystery Plant Answer:



***Populus trichocarpa*
Black Cottonwood
Salicaceae (Willow Family)**

A Letter from "Down Under"

By Kristl Walek

As one of your recent "non-native" newsletter-only members from Ontario, Canada, I would like to express my appreciation to the editors and writers for their admirable work in producing this publication. Although I cannot hike with you or attend meetings, the information and insights I have gained through *Borealis* have been well worth the price of membership. As a member of most of the worldwide Rock Garden or Genera-specific Societies, I have found the groups devoted to Native Species the most exciting and valuable as they seek to enlighten and conserve that "which is closest at hand."

I am the owner of **Gardens North**, Canada's only specialty seedhouse devoted to hardy perennials. I am always seeking to expand my listings and seek out species native to the colder regions of the world. This season Dick Baldwin (Seeds Alaska) supplied me with a small AK collection, which I am hoping to expand in future years. My customer base is worldwide, from Northern Japan to Sweden and, of course, with a large contingent in Alaska. Although the 96 catalog lists about 750 species, both exotic and native, I can fairly say (with one month of peak season behind me) that Alaskan species have been some of my most popular seeds this year, outselling most of the exotics. The clear leader is *Epilobium latifolium*. A grower of "considerable reputation" in Iceland has recently ordered every AK species I sell, even though many are also native to his country. No AK customer has, as of yet, ordered any. This will change, in time. I have already seen attitudes changing with many of our (Eastern-Canadian) natives, which are now appearing in the most unlikely gardens and being widely used in Municipal Landscaping schemes. I am supplying most of the seed for these projects in the Ottawa area (our nation's capital).

Last year I was fortunate in being able to plant out many native Alaskan plants grown from seed sent by Verna Pratt and the Georgeson Botanical Garden in Fairbanks. I also grew some of the ornamental grasses developed by the PDC in Palmerston, in which I have a particular interest. I am most anxious to see what they turn into this (flowering) year and will report back to you on how "your own" like our lower elevations. Our 8 acre site (Zone 4) which we moved to 3 years ago, in addition to supporting our seed growing activities, is being developed into a test-area for Northern gardening. About 1-2 acres of display gardens are finished, supporting a wide array of growing conditions from wet, pond areas to woodland, open shade, sand, scree and rock gardens, herbaceous borders, ornamental grass, bog areas, peaty beds for *Primula* and other acid loving creatures,

berms with daylilies, and large areas for species *Clematis* and *Iris* (many native). This year we are hoping to create areas that will allow us to grow the magnificent Westerners/Rocky Mountain species, such as *Penstemon*, *Lewisia*, and others with more ease. The *Dryas octopetala* and *drummondii* will go here as well. I am growing very cold-hardy Siberian species of *Rhododendron* from seed, and am anxious to get them established. The gardens are young, but most plants are seed grown and unpampered and have thrived notwithstanding little snow cover, high winds, and an unrelenting drought last summer that lasted for 5 months. I grow about 1500-2000 new perennial species from seed each year. My husband and I do all the work ourselves with only occasional "crisis" help. We have two young children, aged 8 and 11. We are exhausted but continue to be enthusiastic. Plants bring life.

In closing, I have two special requests that I am hoping your membership might be able to help with. I am looking for the seed of *Primula egaliksensis* on behalf of an Icelandic gardening friend who is hoping to re-establish it in his garden in memory of his grandfather who maintained a large colony that has since disappeared. It is now (sadly) rare (or perhaps non-existent) in the wild in Iceland. He has been searching for seed for years and has asked for my help, and I now ask for yours, as it grows in AK. I am most happy to buy, trade or accept it gratefully.

Secondly, I am planning to launch a gardening journal similar "in feel" to the North American Rock Garden Journal but devoted to "Gardening in the North." I am looking for representation from all "Northern Gardeners" worldwide. I would love an Alaskan perspective — your challenges and glories. Something to enlighten and encourage and dispel once and for all the myths of "ice gardens." A love story about natives would be wonderful. A serious (botanical) presentation is preferred, humor encouraged, superficial "gardening magazine" type approaches best avoided. Writing skill helpful but not necessary. Enthusiasm preferred. If interested, I will send you a more specific "Gardening Journal Information" sheet.

Thank you for allowing me this personal space for my requests, comments and observations. I am hoping to meet many of you in 1997, if my plans for a Yukon/Alaska trip pan out.

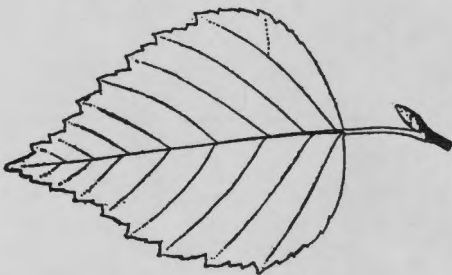
Kristl Walek, Gardens North, 5984 Third Line Road North, N. Gower, Ontario KOA 2T0 Canada.
Tel/Fax ()

Betula papyrifera
(Paper Birch)

The common name of "birch" can be derived from words in many languages, most of which mean either "a tree whose bark is used for writing upon" or simply "bark." Birch bark is flexible, waterproof, and rot resistant. Legible scrolls dating back to the sixteenth century have been found, and even after the invention of commercial paper, birch bark scrolls remained the preferred material for important records such as family histories. The word "bark" can mean either "tree-rind" or a "vessel." Birch bark has had a long-standing use in making canoes and water containers. The tree is sometimes called "canoe birch."

The Indian word *bharg* may offer an alternate derivation of the name "birch." It means shining and may refer to the bright, white color of birch trunks. Another derivation may be from the Latin *batuere*, meaning "to strike." Roman soldiers once carried an ax encased in a birch rod bundle to symbolize the state's power to flog the unruly with their birch branches, or end their lives with an ax.

Historically, bitumen was distilled from birch bark (birch bark tar was used to glue together broken clay pots in Roman Britain), hence the generic name *Betula* meaning "pitch." The species name *Papyrifera* means "paper-bearing."



As of July, 1995, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) enacted a new policy that changed the name of candidate Category 2 species to "Species of Concern." Category 2 included taxa for which current knowledge suggests that proposals for listing (as threatened or endangered) are appropriate, although data to fully support the proposals are not yet available. A Category 1 species is one for which the Service has enough information to warrant listing. Up until this change, every two years a list of all categories of candidate species was published in the Federal Register. This list was called the Notice of Review. With the new policy, there will be no published list of former candidate Category 2 species, now called "Species of Concern." Only Category 1 species will be listed.

The latest changes to the Species of Concern (former candidate Category 2) plant species list for Alaska are below:

Plant Species of Concern list for Alaska as of January, 1996:

- Artemisia globularia lutea*
- Aster yukonensis*
- Botrychium ascendens*
- Carex lenticularis dolia*
- Cryptantha shackletteana*
- Douglasia beringensis*
- Draba murrayi*
- Eriogonum flavum aquilinum*
- Mertensia drummondii*
- Podistera yukonensis*
- Smelowskia pyriformis*
- Taraxacum carneocoloratum*

For those of you who are perceptive and follow these bureaucratic changes, you may have noticed that *Artemisia aleutica* dropped-off the list (due to its being secure and within a refuge), *Artemisia glomerata subglabra* was submerged into *A. globularia* by none other than our own industrious Rob Lipkin (okay, Rob, now we know: you're a lumper, not a splitter...), *Draba yukonensis* was removed because the voucher specimen for Alaska was misidentified, and *Calamagrostis crassiglumis* has been submerged into a more common species (*C. stricta*). New species added were: *Botrychium ascendens* (see related article on next page) and *Douglasia beringensis* (a new discovery by Dr. Sylvia "Tass" Kelso, former student of Dr. David Murray and now a professor at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs. Look for an article about *D. beringensis* in a future issue.)

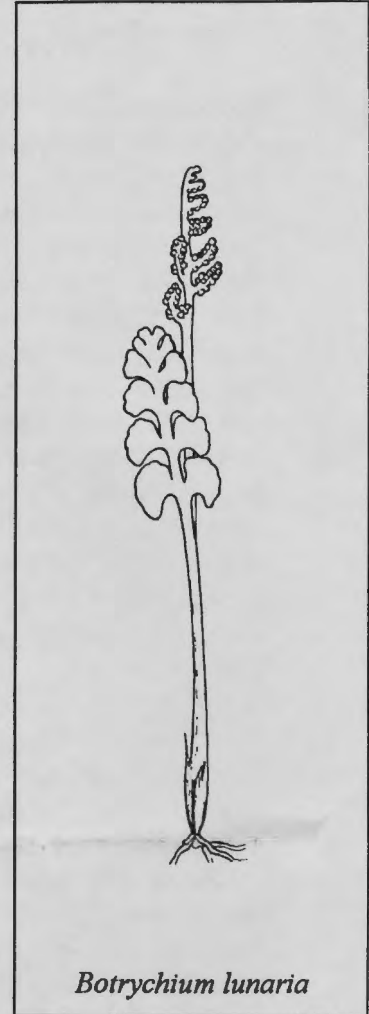
ANYONE can gather and collect information on these species or other Species of Concern for the Service!! In fact, we encourage this!! If you would like to do a volunteer project gathering information about a particular species, contact Virginia Moran at the USFWS ().

A New Species of Concern for Alaska
by Ginny Moran

Botrychium ascendens, one of the moonwort ferns, is the newest addition to the Species of Concern list for Alaska. Collected by U.S. Forest Service Botanist Mary Stensvold, and discovered in a stack of specimens sent to Dr. Warren H. Wagner of the Department of Biology at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, it has joined the list of other Species of Concern for which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) needs more information. We need ALOT more information about this species, namely, where else does it occur?!!

What distinguishes this species? *Botrychium ascendens* is most likely to be confused with *B. lunaria*. I called Dr. Wagner and spoke to him about distinguishing these two species (and it was an honor to speak to one of the world's fern experts!!). Here is a synopsis of what he said and sent to me:

<i>Botrychium ascendens</i>	<i>Botrychium lunaria</i>
shiny yellow-green pinnae; pinnae more narrow-cuneate	larger plant; dull blue-green; pinnae turned at over 180 degrees and fan-shaped.
more herbaceous	more fleshy
<u>sporangia borne on the basal pinnae</u>	<u>sporangia terminal; never borne on basal pinnae</u>
chromosomes = 90 pairs	chromosomes = 45 pairs
(hybrids between these two are sterile)	
margins are denticulate	margins nearly or entirely smooth



He also was kind enough to send me slides which I will show sometime in the next few months so we can review these differences. Thanks Dr. Wagner!!!

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL

The Alaska Native Plant Society was organized in 1982 by an enthusiastic group of amateur and professional botanists. It is a non-profit educational organization with the aim of uniting all persons interested in the flora of Alaska. Membership is open to any interested individual or organization. If you wish to join us, please indicate the category of membership you desire, then clip and mail this application with the appropriate remittance to: Alaska Native Plant Society, Membership Dept., P.O. Box 141613, Anchorage, AK 99514.

Select the membership category you desire:

Full Time Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$5	Name: _____
Senior (over 65)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10	Address: _____
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Membership is on a calendar year basis.

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"Field Guide to Alaskan Wildflowers", "Wildflowers along the Alaska Highway",

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Written by Verna E. Pratt / Illustrated by Allene Franklin

This 8-1/2 x 11" childrens' story book is about living in a log house in the wilderness of Alaska. Emphasis is on a small child's observation of nature and the plants around her throughout the four seasons—a contrast to city living. The inside covers have 35 color photographs of plants mentioned in the book. The book has 39 pages of Allene Franklin's beautiful watercolor paintings accompanying the text.

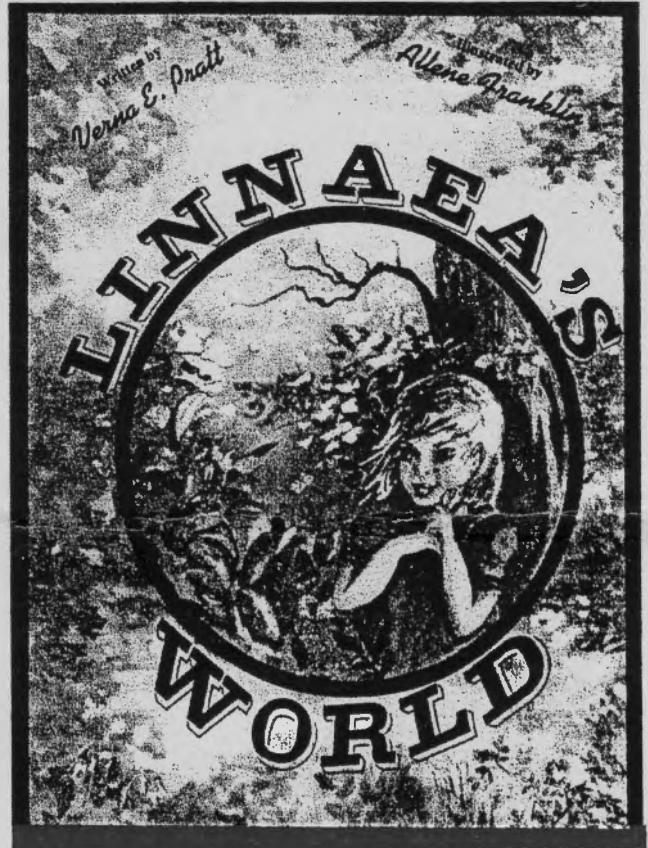
Release date: June 1, 1996

Retail Price---soft-cover--- \$11.95 plus shipping.

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For the special **pre-publication** offer of signed book(s), order not later than **May 1st** for the special price of \$9.00 per book (soft-cover) and \$15.00 per book (hard-cover).

Unless otherwise arranged, pickup will be at Tundra Arts & Gifts, 425 D St., Anchorage, AK (across from Phyllis's Cafe & Salmon Bake). Additional fee for shipping.



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Postage for soft-cover is \$1.25 for 1st book and \$0.50 per additional book (book rate). Postage/handling \$ _____

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Mail this order blank to: Alaskakrafts, Inc., P. O. Box 210087, Anchorage, AK 99521-0087.

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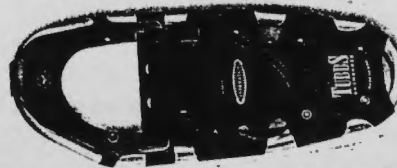
Borealis

Editors Julia Ricketts
Trevor Ricketts
Circulation Martha Hatch

The newsletter of the ANPS is published monthly except for June, July, August and September. Material for the April issue should be mailed to: Julia and Trevor Ricketts, Anchorage, AK 99516 to arrive by March 15.

Winter Plant Identification Field Trip by Snowshoe Sunday, March 31 at 1 p.m.

Marilyn Barker is looking for an excuse to try out her new snowshoes! Join Marilyn and Julia at Glen Alps at 1 p.m. on Sunday, March 31, for an alpine winter plant hunt. We'll head up the Powerline Pass trail, and see what we find. Ptarmigan should be starting to display and change plumage at this time, so bring your binoculars. For the latest snow conditions call Julia Ricketts () on Sunday morning, or call either Julia or Marilyn () for more information.



Herb Conference

The Good Earth Garden School is holding a herb conference on Wednesday, August 28. If you are interested in reserving a place, or would like more information on cost, hours, location, etc., call Ellen Vande Visse at

**Alaska Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 141613
Anchorage, AK 99514**



Ostrich Fern

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