

Borealis

the newsletter of the



PO Box 141613, Anchorage, Alaska

March 2002

Join us at our next meetings!

**Monday, March 4 , 7:30 p.m.
at the Campbell Creek Center
off 68th and Lake Otis**

**"Vegetation Indicators
For Monitoring Forest Health"**

Speaker: **Beth Schulz**
US Forest Service

**Plant Family Study
Pink (Caryophyllaceae) Family**

Presenters

March: Len Grau

April: Beth Koltrum

APRIL MEETING

Monday, April 1 , 7:30 p.m.

**"Amazing Plants of the
Bering Glacier Region"**

Speaker: **Marilyn Barker**
University of Alaska

What Flower is That??

Haven't you always wanted to be a native plant tour guide? Here's your chance! You need not be an expert, just willing to help, and maybe even learn.

In June, the Alaska Rock Garden Society will be hosting the National Rock Garden Society's annual meeting here in Anchorage. Highlights of the event will include guided field trips into our alpine tundra to show off Alaska's natural rock gardens. ARGs is badly in need of help from ANPS – and that's where you come in.

We will try to team a very knowledgeable person with anyone who feels less confident. The object is to keep group size to less than 10 people. Areas that will be used include Wallace Mountain (moderate to difficult hiking), Arctic Valley (moderate to difficult), Bird Ridge (moderate to difficult), Glen Alps (easy and moderate), and a Valley Garden Tour by bus (easy!).

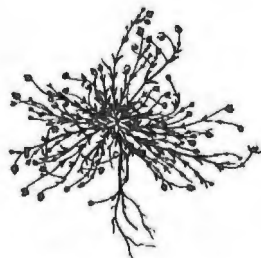
And we'll even train you, if that will help! There will be winter training sessions at the Cooperative Extension Service office at 2221 E. Northern Lights: Tuesday, April 2: 7 PM – Bird Ridge and Wednesday, April 3 (All alpine areas). Choose your location and hiking ability. Training in the field will begin in late May – times will be announced. Volunteer guides will receive lunches and may come to evening lectures and plant sales during the conference.



Caryophyllaceae
(Pink) Family

Presenter: Len Grau

The plants of the Caryophyllaceae/Pink Family that will be our focus in March include the *Sagina* and *Spergularia* genera. Both have short very narrow leaves and are very low growing.

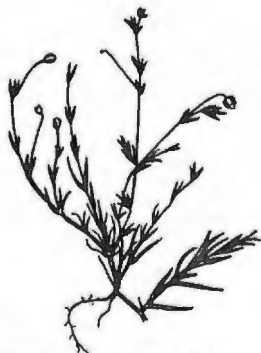
*Sagina intermedia*

From "Flora of Alaska & Neighboring Territories" by Eric Hulten, 1974

There are four native species of the *Sagina* genus. Three of them have a tight basal rosette. They are *Sagina saginoides*, *S. intermedia* and *S. crassicaulis*. The narrow leaves give the center of the plant an unmistakable star-like appearance. The fine, delicate branches project from under the rosette and lie flat on the ground. Distinguishing between the three species is difficult without flowers; the flowers are very small and often inconspicuous, however. The common garden plant called "Irish moss" is a relative of these plants.

Sagina occidentalis is a small delicate upright plant without the star-like center.

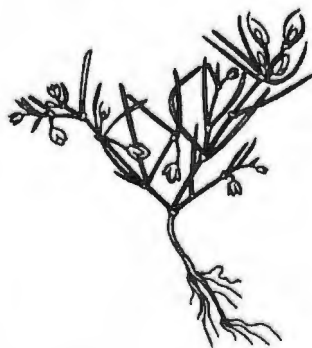
The *Spergularia* genus has one native species, *Spergularia canadensis*. This plant is found in brackish soil in coastal areas of South-central and Southeast Alaska. The small plant has fleshy leaves. It can be decumbent or upright and has tiny white to pinkish petals.

*Sagina occidentalis*

From "Flora of Alaska & Neighboring Territories" by Eric Hulten, 1974

*Sagina crassicaulis*

From "Flora of Alaska & Neighboring Territories" by Eric Hulten, 1974

*Spergularia canadensis*

From "Flora of Alaska & Neighboring Territories" by Eric Hulten 1974

Some Latin Terminology

Latin botanical terms may be useful in helping us identify some of the plants highlighted in March and April.

crassi = thick, fleshy

caulis = stem

So, *Sagina crassicaulis* has stems that are somewhat fleshy, and

Silene acaulis is relatively without a stem.

Some terms are more historic or geographic than descriptive:

occidentalis = from the west, or often "the Americas".

Hulten notes that *Sagina occidentalis* is described "from Oregon to San Francisco";

canadensis = Canadian and *Spergularia canadensis* was described from the mouth of the St. Lawrence River.

Some terms may not be so helpful:

repens = creeping, ground-hugging

How did *Silene repens* end up with that name? If you know, let us know.

Silene and Melandrium

Caryophyllaceae
(Pink) Family

Presenter: Beth Koltrum

The genus *Silene* includes three distinct species native to Alaska, plus a few subspecies.

Silene acaulis, moss campion, is the one recognized by most people. There are two subspecies in Alaska. The cushion-like mounds of tiny grass-like leaves are found on many slopes throughout Alaska. Their aromatic small pink flowers encourage many people to climb up just one more ridge.

Silene repens is a branched, upright species (8-12 inches tall), that can be found on open slopes in Eastern and Central Alaska. The 5 white petals are inserted into an obvious purplish tubular calyx.

Silene menziesii has two subspecies. Ssp. *Williamzii* is probably the most common. It is sprawly, much branched, and grows in dry gravelly low elevation areas in Interior and Eastern Alaska. The numerous small petals are inserted in a sticky inflated calyx.

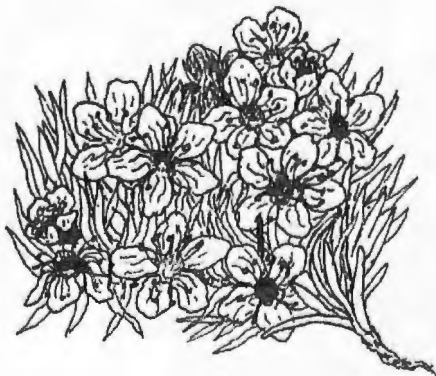
The *Melandrium* genus has six native species. *M. taylorae* and *M. taimyrense* are tall species that grow in Eastern and Northern Alaska. They have rather small white to pinkish flowers and generally do not attract much attention.

The other four species are low growing (4-6 inches tall) and all have small, hairy, linear to lanceolate leaves. They are found on grassy slopes and tundra throughout most of Alaska. The swollen, bulb-like calyx has stripes of sticky purplish hairs. The small white to lavender petals barely protrude from the narrow calyx opening.



Melandrium apetalum

Drawing by Cara Wardlaw-Bailey



Silene acaulis

Drawing by Cara Wardlaw-Bailey

Summer 2002 Field Trips

Dreaming of your favorite wildflower meadow? Each summer ANPS members lead field trips to their favorite plant spots. Trips can range in length from a few hours to multiple days. Expert plant knowledge is not required and the best field trips often include time collaborating with other members in an effort to identify a new plant! There is still time to organize a day hike or multiple day trip. If you are interested in leading a hike please fill out the field trip worksheet that is included in this newsletter. Fax completed forms by APRIL 1, 2002 to _____, or more preferably, email your info to sheepmtl@alaska.net

2002 Field trip descriptions will be distributed as part of the May newsletter.



MYSTERY PLANT



This plant can be found in sub-alpine meadows of Southeast and Coastal South-central Alaska. Stems may be up to 24 inches and branched or single-flowered. Lower leaves are 3-4 inches long, broad and pointed. The leaf surface is glabrous, edges usually entire (some teeth may be present). Involucral bracts are leaf-like.

The leaves are close together and the uppermost somewhat clasp the stem. The flowers are showy and violet to purple.

Calling all Native Plant Societies, Botanical Gardens, Arboreta and others working to conserve the flora of the U.S.

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) and the Center for Biological Diversity invite you to join us in a new project - the **Native Plant Conservation Campaign**.

The goal of the Campaign is to assemble a national network of native plant societies, botanical gardens, and other plant conservation organizations that will support each other's work, exchange information and work together to create a strong national voice in support of native plants.

We will advocate for

- improved staffing and funding for Federal botany programs on National Parks, National Forests, BLM lands, and within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- improved staffing and funding for prevention and control programs for invasive exotic organisms
- increased use of local native plants in restoration
- increased funding for plant science research and education
- changes in Federal law better to conserve imperiled plants

A full project description is available at <http://www.cnps.org/NPCC/npsc.pdf>

For more information about the Native Plant Conservation Campaign contact Emily Roberson at EMILYR@CNPS.ORG or go to <http://www.cnps.org/npsc.htm>

The mission of the NPCC is to promote appreciation and conservation of native plant species and communities through education, law, policy, land use and management.

FROM WHAT WE GATHER.....

- * Harper's Magazine is working on a book entitled "How To Get Your Lawn Off Grass" -in other words, using native plants instead of grass. If anyone knows of people doing this, Verna is interested in seeing and photographing them. She is also interested in photographing yards using solely native plants or mixed with horticulture species. Contact Verna @ Ph: ; FAX: ; E-mail: Verna@alaskakrafts.com.
- * Soaking lupine seeds for 4-24 hours softens the hard coating and they sprout very fast.
- * Check out the new Rock Garden at the Botanical Garden this spring. There are many native species, including: *Silene acaulis*, *Androsace chamaejasme*, *Ranunculus cooleyae*, and *Saxifraga oppositifolia*. Many seeds that were scattered in place have lots of young seedlings that should bloom this year. They include *Erigeron eriophthalmus*, *Claytonia scamanniana*, *Draba mivalis*, *Draba stenopetala*. *Castilleja elegans*, *Gentiana propingua*, *Papaver alaskana*, *Papaver alboroseum*, *Papaver lapponicum* bloomed nicely last season from sown seeds. At present there are about 40 native species growing there.
- * An excellent reference in existence for finding plant names and interesting information about every plant on the planet is "The Plant-Book" by D. J. Mabberley. It is published by Cambridge University Press, 1987. ISBN 0 521 34060 8. It is a compact dictionary-style reference. You can look up any plant product and find out what plant it comes from. Most common names, not only English, are also listed. For every genus it tells you the family. For every family the identification characteristics and also notable members of the family and other interesting facts.
- * It is often confusing and frustrating to encounter name changes in new publications – and even when reviewing native plants in preparation for next summer's field trips. Long established and well-known names disappear only to be replaced by new unfamiliar ones. There is a good reason for such change. A plant may originally have been incorrectly identified, or latest scientific methods have determined that what appeared to be two separate species are actually one. If plant names change, most reference books will include numerous synonyms in order to minimize the problems of identifying or purchasing plants. Someone is supposedly keeping track of these changes and also determining what to name plants. The official rule book is the "International Code of Botanical Nomenclature", which gets updated periodically at an international conference of botanists, the most recent in Tokyo in 1994.

In modern botanical nomenclature the name of a plant family is formed from the name of a genus in the family plus the suffix "aceae". This system is called "*uniform nomenclature*." It replaced an older system of family names that used a descriptive term. But some of the older family names were so fiercely defended by the people who preferred them that these names were "conserved." So for these eight families it is permitted to use either the old name or the new name. This cruel circumstance causes great confusion among non-botanists. Here are the eight families:

<u>Conserved Name</u>	<u>Uniform Name</u>	<u>English Name</u>
Palmae	Areaceae	Palm
Graminae	Poaceae	Grass
Umbelliferae	Apiaceae	Carrot, Parsley
Compositae	Asteraceae	Sunflower
Cruciferae	Brassicaceae	Cabbage, Mustard
Leguminosae	Fabaceae	Pea, Bean
Guttiferae	Hypericaceae	St.-John's-Wort
Labiatae	Lamiaceae	Mint

ALASKA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

SPRING & SUMMER 2002: FIELD TRIP PLANNING WORKSHEET

Field Trip to: _____

Leader(s): _____ **Telephone:** _____

Date: _____ **Day of Week:** _____ **Time Allotted:** _____

Meeting Time: _____ **Meeting Place:** _____

Driving Distance/Car Pooling, etc. _____

Reservations by: _____

Level of Difficulty: _____ **Minimum Age:** _____

Description of trip: _____

Special instructions/Items to Bring: _____

Please hand in completed forms to Anjanette Steer, Field Trip Chair, at Anchorage Chapter meetings, or Fax completed forms by APRIL 1, 2002 to _____, or more preferably, email your info to sheepmtl@alaska.net. Field trip schedules will be sent out to members in the first week of May.

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 goal 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, fill in the form below and mail it with the appropriate remittance to:

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

STATUS New RENEWAL
CATEGORY

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Full-time Student | \$ 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Senior Citizen | \$10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Individual | \$12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Family | \$18 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Organization | \$30 |

Name _____

Address _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Membership is on a calendar year basis.

Volunteer! We Count On You!

April is National Garden Month.

The annual garden show at the Sears Mall is Sat. April 13th. We will have a display and will be looking for help gathering plant material and manning the booth. Please sign up at the meetings or call Verna at

MYSTERY PLANT ANSWER

Aster subspicatus, Leafy Aster
Asteraceae/Aster family

ADVANCE WARNING!

The 2002 Alaska Rare Plant Forum will hold its annual meeting in Fairbanks in April 11-12, in the Kobuk Conference Room of the BLM-Northern Field Office on Airport Road.

We are sending this announcement early so you can plan ahead to attend! In January we will formally solicit presentations. Please pass this notice on to anyone interested whom we may have missed. As always, the meetings are free, and open to the public.

If you have any questions please contact:

Mary Stensvold, Chairperson
kruzov@yahoo.com

ALASKA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY State and Anchorage Chapter Officers

President	Frank Pratt
Vice President	Leonard Grau
Secretary	Beth Koltun
Treasurer	Sue Jensen

Anchorage Chapter Program Coordinators

Main Program	Susan Klein
Plant Family	Verna Pratt
Mini-Botany	Marilyn Barker
Field Trips	Anjanette Steer

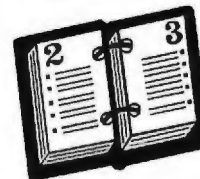
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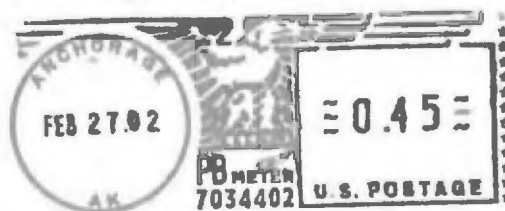


UPCOMING PLANTS & NATURE EVENTS



- March 2, 1:00 PM Anchorage Rock Garden Society: Anchorage Museum
Dr. Finn Haugli from Tromso Norway "*My Alpine Garden at 70° North – Wonders of Natural Beauty from Arctic Shorlines to High Mountains*". Tromso has the northernmost botanical garden in the world. Donations welcome; intermission with refreshments.
- March 4, 7:30 PM **Alaska Native Plant Society** Monthly Meeting *Campbell Creek Science Center*
Beth Schulz: "Vegetation Indicators For Monitoring Forest Health".
- March 28, 7:30 PM Herb Study Group: Call Julie Riley for more information
Location: Cooperative Extension Service conference room
2221 E. Northern Lights (Northern Lights and Lake Otis Parkway behind Medical Park)
- April 1, 7:30 PM **Alaska Native Plant Society** Monthly Meeting *Campbell Creek Science Center*
Marilyn Barker : "Amazing Plants of the Bering Glacier Region."
- April 2 and 3: 7PM **Tour Guide Training:** Bird Ridge plants on Tuesday, all alpine areas on Wed.
Location: Cooperative Extension Service conference room: 2221 E. Northern Lights
- April 13 National Garden Month Annual Show: Sears Mall; Volunteer to help

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



CHECK YOUR LABEL: DON'T FORGET TO RENEW!