Borealis

the newsletter of the

Alaska Native Plant Society

PO Box 141613, Anchorage, Alaska February/March 2008

Join us at our Next Meetings!

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

(Campbell Creek Science Center)

Topic: "Wildflowers Near & Far - Up Close & Wonderful"

Speaker: Gary Rasmussen, ANPS member will provide a digital presentation of flowers from all over the state of Alaska

Plant Family: Diapensiaceae

Presenter: Tom Choate

Mini-Botany Presentation: Dianne Toebe

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Monday, May 5, 7:30 p.m.

(Campbell Creek Science Center)

Topic: "Plantlife of the Nunataks on the Kenai Peninsula"

Speaker: Amy Miller, National Park Service

Plant Family: Araliaceae:

Presenter: Beth Baker

Mini-Botany Presentation: Stan Vlahovich

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For latest information on ANPS events, check our website at:

http:// AkNPS.org

Join "Project BudBurst"

You are invited to become part of a citizen scientist project, collecting important climate change data on the timing of leafing and flowering in your location, through Project BudBurst! This national field campaign targets native tree and flower species across the country. With your help, they will be compiling valuable environmental and climate change information around the United States.

Check out the website at http://www.windows.ucar.edu/citizen_science/budburst

Becoming a member of the Project BudBurst project allows you to save your observation sites and plants that you are monitoring throughout the year and for coming years.

Last year's inaugural event drew thousands of people of all ages taking careful observations of the phenological events such as the first bud burst, first leafing, first flower, and seed or fruit dispersal of a diversity of tree and flower species, including weeds and ornamentals. The citizen science observations and records were entered into the BudBurst data base. As a result of the pilot field campaign, useful data was collected in a consistent way across the country so that scientists can use it to learn about the responses of individual plant species to climatic variation locally, regionally, and nationally, and to detect longer-term impacts of climate change by comparing with historical data.

Species that are being monitored that may be found in Alaska include:

Aspen, *Populus tremuloides*
Bigleaf lupine, Wyethis lupine, *Lupinus polyphyllus*
Chokecherry, *Prunus virginiana*
Common dandelion , *Taraxacum officinale*
Common snowberry, *Symphoricarpos albus*
Common yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*
Field mustard, turnip, *Brassica rapa*
Kinnikinnick, *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*
Paper birch, *Betula papyrifera*
Red osier dogwood, *Cornus sericea*
Rocky mountain maple, *Acer glabrum*
Shrubby cinquefoil, *Dasiphora floribunda*
White clover, *Trifolium repens*
Woods' rose, *Rosa woodsii*
Woods strawberry, *Fragaria virginiana*

Plant Family Study

APRIL

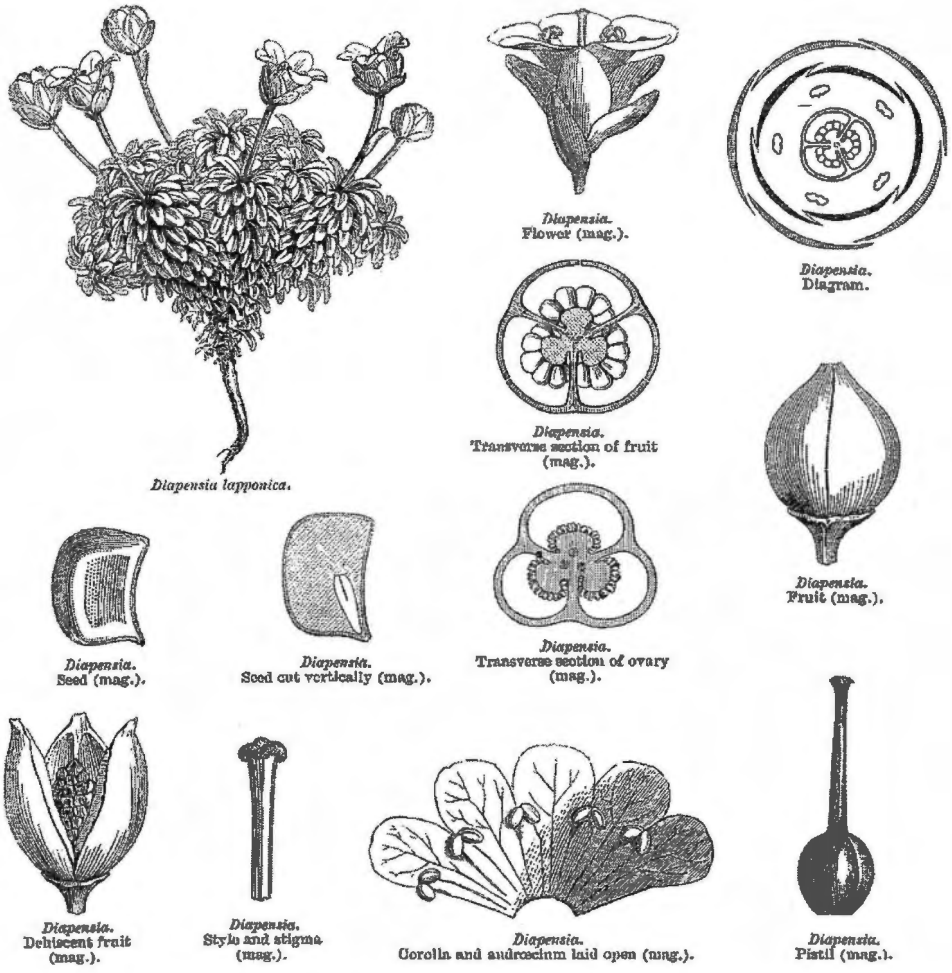
Diapensiaceae —The Diapensia Family

This small family of low, dwarf **shrubs** contains only one species. ***Diapensia lapponica*** is a circumboreal arctic-alpine species which grows on exposed rocky ridges that are scoured by winds and kept free from snow. It is a small cushion-forming evergreen shrub, 1-3 inches in height. It may be aged by counting growth-rings, and on this basis, many Canadian plants have been shown to live to over a century old.

There are two recognized subspecies (sometimes listed as separate species). *Diapensia lapponica* subsp. *lapponica* may be found in eastern North America, Greenland, Scotland, Scandinavia, and western Arctic Russia *Diapensia lapponica* subsp. *obovata*, the subspecies found in Alaska, is also found in eastern Arctic Russia, Korea, Japan, and the Yukon

Diapensia grows one to three inches tall. The white, waxy, bell-shaped corolla flowers have five round spreading lobes and five low stamens. Flowers grow singly from short stalks. Leather-like narrow leaves grow in tight basal rosettes and form a spongy thick evergreen mat that enables the plant to withstand severe wind and cold. Found at high altitude on barren ledges and sheltered beneath rocky ledges in the alpine areas Diapensia may often also be found in areas most exposed to the wind. The shrub is one of the earliest to bloom above tree-line- in late May through June.

Diapensia is an excellent example of how plants have adapted to alpine environments. By growing low to the ground, with waxy leaves that grow compactly, the plant is protected from dessication by the wind. The soil underneath *Diapensia* has been shown to be several degrees warmer than the surrounding air temperature. As a result, *Diapensia* is often found growing in the most extreme sites in the alpine zone – those windswept locations that usually do not have a cover of snow in the winter.



Source: Watson, L., and Dallwitz, M.J. 1992 onwards. The families of flowering plants: descriptions, illustrations, identification, and information retrieval. Version: 14th February 2008. http://delta-intkey.com

Araliaceae —The Ginseng Family

Araliaceae is a family of flowering plants, also known as the **Aralia family** (after its type genus *Aralia*) or **Ivy family**. The family includes 254 species of trees, shrubs, lianas and perennial herbaceous plants into 2 subfamilies. Species usually bear pinnately or palmately compound leaves, and usually have small flowers produced in large panicles.The family is closely related to Apiaceae and Pittosporaceae, and the boundaries between these families and other members of Apiales are still uncertain.

The only genus in this family that has been found in Alaska is *Oplopanax horridus*, Devil's Club. This plant is also called Echinopanax horridum, which literally means prickly porcupine ginseng. Southeast Alaska Natives believe that regular use prevents cancer.

Devils Club is found as far north as south-central Alaska and as far south as coastal California. It is a common deciduous understory shrub occurring in moist, but well drained, forested ecosystems from coastal Alaska southward to central Oregon and eastward to the southwestern Yukon, the Canadian Rockies, northwestern Alberta, Montana, and Idaho. There are also several disjunct populations near northern Lake Superior in Michigan and Ontario.

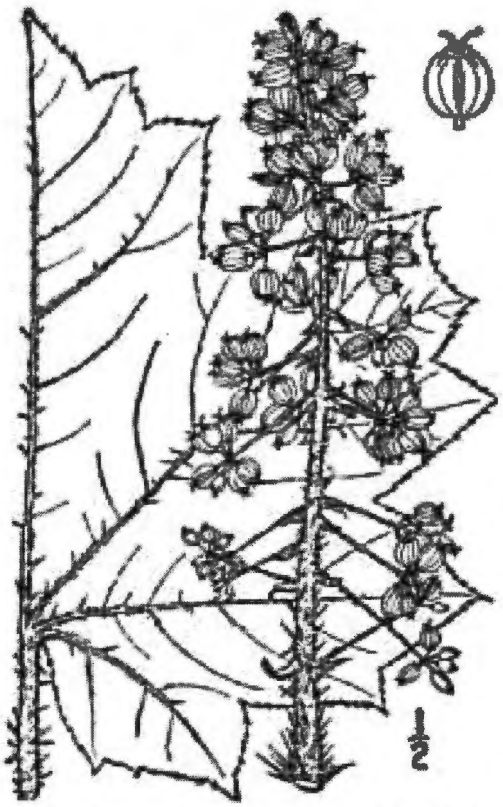
Devil's club is a dominant component of understories of various Pacific Northwest and western boreal forests where moist to wet soil conditions prevail. Devil's club is an indicator of numerous habitat types; some commonly occurring ones are western red cedar (Thuja plicata)/devil's club, western hemlock (Tsuga heterophylla)/devil's club, Sitka spruce (Picea sitchensis)-western hemlock/devil's club, subalpine fir (Abies lasiocarpa)/devil's club, and Pacific silver fir (A. amabilis)/devil's club. Understories of various forest/devil's club types are sometimes nearly pure, dense stands of devil's club. Other understoriesdominated by devil's club, however, are species rich, involving mixed shrub, shrub-fern, or shrub-forb associations.

The stems of this shrub are upright to decumbent and can reach heights exceeding 6 meters (~20 feet). The leaves are large (up to 35 cm across [~14 inches]) and maple-shaped. The stems, petioles, and leaf veins of devil's club are covered with a dense armor of yellowish needle-like spines up to 2 cm (~0.5 inches) long, which can cause severe skin irritation. The flowers are small and whitish, borne in terminal pyramidal clusters. Clusters of bright red berries form at the tops of the stems in mid to late summer. These berries are not edible by humans but bears do eat them. Bears don't seem bothered by the plants thick armor of spines

Devil's club forms large sprawling clones that expand laterally through the layering of decumbent stems..

Devil's club is probably the most important spiritual and medicinal plant to most indigenous peoples who live within its range. Different parts of this plant are used by over 38 linguistic groups for over 34 categories of physical ailment, as well as many spiritual applications.

USDA, NRCS. 2008. The PLANTS Database (http://plants.usda.gov, 19 March 2008). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.



***Oploplanax horridus*: Devil's Club**

Upcoming Botanical Events

Alaska Botanical Garden Annual Meeting Keynote: "My Weedless Garden" by Lee Reich , **7-9pm March 28th**; Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center, 121 W 7th Ave., Anchorage (Free parking in museum garage) www.alaskabg.org

Lee Reich, author of Growing Fruits in Your Backyard, Weedless Gardening, and Uncommon Fruits for Every Garden, will detail a four part system of sustainable garden practices that affect the web of life above and below the ground. (Keynote talk follows ABG Annual Meeting reports; coffee & cookies available). Attendance is free to the public.

Alaska Botanical Garden's Spring Conference: Saturday, March 29th, 8:30am-5:30pm
UAA/APU Consortium Library, 3rd Floor 3211 Providence Drive, Anchorage (Free parking Saturdays on UAA Campus) A full day of gardening seminars! Attend up to six sessions from a selection of twenty-one. Registration fee is $ 60 for members of the Alaska Botanical Garden or other Alaskan garden clubs, and $70 for non-members. www.alaskabg.org

Garden Week Celebration at the Sears Mall; Saturday, April 12: WE NEED HELP at our table. 9AM- 7 PM. Call Verna if you can help for 2-4 hours:

Master Gardeners' Conference: May 9-10 (Friday/Saturday) Sheraton Hotel, Anchorage.
www.alaskamastergardeners.org

Big Lake Garden Club Gardening Symposium: Saturday May 19, 9:30-5:30; $20 before April 15, $25 at the door. Lockhart (907) 892-8119

"Plant Hunters on the Roof of the World" Harry Jans, founding member of the Dutch Rock Garden Society; (www.jansalpines.com), sponsored by Alaska Rock Garden Society. Saturday, May 26, 7:30 PM, APU Garr Gottstein Building Lecture Hall (next to Grant Hall) $10

Olé Gardening Course: April 4-May 16, Friday afternoons 3:30 PM at Cooperative Extension Building 2221 E. Northern Lights, Rm 130 Emphasis on organic gardening.

Anchorage Botanical Garden Fair: June 21-22: ABG is located south of Tudor on Campbell Airstrip Road, 770-3692.

May 24 – September 14
Alaska Botanical Garden Nursery Open, Tuesdays – Saturdays from 11 am – 4 pm; Wednesdays open until 7 pm. ABG and American Horticultural Society members get 10% discount on plant sales. ABG is located south of Tudor on Campbell Airstrip Road, 770-3692.

Plant Sales:

Alaska Rock Garden Society: Anchorage: May 17 Sally Karabelnikoff, 7435 Old Harbor Road, Anchorage
Wasilla: May 24 10 am – 5 pm, Snowfire Garden, 3379 Inlet Vista Circle, off mile 5.2 Fairview Loop Road, Wasilla.

Valley Garden Club: May 21 - 9am–3 pm, Burchell High School/Wasilla, , golfdrum@gci.net.

Alaska Wildflower Garden Club: May 31; 9am-4pm; 7435 Old Harbor Rd. ; sallyk@gci.net

Anchorage Garden Club: June 7; 9am to 5pm; Location: 3734 W 35th Ave.

Alaska Botanical Garden, May 24, Saturday 10 am - 12 pm ABG members only; 12 – 4 pm, public welcome. Includes the Alaska Rose Society. ABG is located just south of Tudor on Campbell Airstrip Road, 770-3692, garden@alaskabg.org.

Successful Gardening With Native Plants

Many Alaskan gardeners have started to discover the benefits of gardening with natives. Native plants are by definition well-adapted to the climate, and they are generally low-maintenance. The key to successful gardening with natives is to remember that word "native". Alaska is a large and diverse state and an Alaska native plant that grows in Southeast may not survive in Southcentral or Interior Alaska – and vice versa.

By following these guidelines, you will be able to successfully grow natives in your garden and enjoy the beauty and ecological benefits of native plants.

1. **Use plants that are native to your ecoregion.** Ecoregions are areas that are relatively uniform in soils, vegetation, climate, geology, and wildlife. Plants within your ecoregion are most likely to grow well in your garden.

2. **Choose plants that grow well in the unique conditions in your garden.** The particular conditions of soil type, soil moisture, and amount of sunlight may vary in different parts of your garden. You will want to select the right plants to fit the various conditions that may be present in your garden.

3. **Select plants that originated from as close to your home as possible.** You will have a higher probability of successfully establishing the plants than if you were to use plants that originated from far away.

4. **Select healthy looking plants.** remember, once they are growing well in your garden, native plants may attract animals that depend on these plants for their own survival. Welcome these visitors! Attracting these animals to your garden is one of the many benefits of gardening with natives!

5. If you choose to not plant natives, **avoid using invasive non-native plants**. For lists of invasive, non-native plants, visit one of the web sites listed at the end of this document.

6. **For best results, plant in the spring or fall.** At other times of the year, plants will need greater amounts of attention (e.g., watering) in order to flourish.

Whether you "go native" all the way or mix natives with plants from other lands, you can expect pleasure from the beauty that natives can bring to your garden.

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CALLING FOR FIELD TRIPS

It's that time of year again - time to "Think Summer" - as in "Field Trips"!

It is time to start planning this summer's field trips so that all members can arrange their own summer plans accordingly, especially if trips require extra time or money, or a limit on how many can attend. Our outings are ALWAYS fun, no matter what size the group, or whatever the weather. There have been many memorable trips. Let's make this a memorable year.

On the next page you'll find the standard Field Trip Planning Worksheet and once again we're asking you to get all excited about taking a group of plant lovers to one of your favorite places to enjoy the summer bounty.

All members are encouraged to submit field trip proposals. Preliminary proposals for field trips should include the following: 1) your name and email address, 2) title of the field trip, 3) name(s) and contact information for all organizers, 4) a brief description of the field trip, 5) preferred day(s) of the field trip, 6) special needs, 7) enrollment limit and 8) tentative budget (e.g., travel and food items; estimated cost per participant). It would be great if we could have the whole slate of summer activities lined up by the end of April! **PLEASE RETURN THE FIELD TRIP FORM TO ANJANETTE STEER BY APRIL 15.** E-mail:anj@ak.net, Tel:
Slow Mail: HC 03 Box 8490, Palmer, Alaska 99645.

ALASKA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

2007 FIELD TRIP PLANNING WORKSHEET

Return this form to: Anjanette Steer by April 20.
E-mail: anj@ak.net, Tel: Mail: HC 03 Box 8490, Palmer, Alaska 99645

Leader: _____

Telephone: _____ FAX: _____ E-Mail: _____

Field Trip to: _____

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

Meeting Time: _____ Meeting Place: _____

Driving Distance/Car Pooling, etc. _____

_____

Reservations by (date): _____

Level of Difficulty _____ Minimum Age: _____

Description of Trip: _____

_____

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Special Instructions: _____

_____

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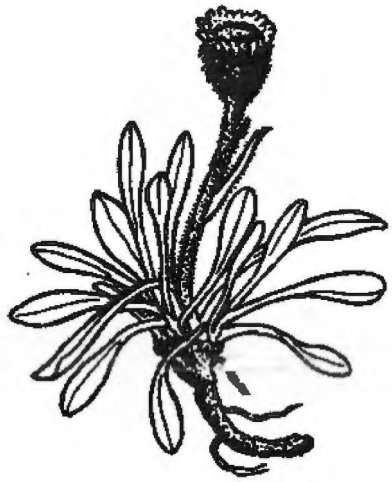
MYSTERY PLANT

This small plant prefers moist meadows and tundra in Southeast, South Central, Seward Peninsula and the Brooks Range. The single head of flowers is on an upright, short (1-2 inches) stem, covered with dark hairs. The involucral bracts are narrow and covered with significantly wooly, purplish-black hairs. The ligulate flowers are white, the pappus white to tawny and the achenes somewhat hairy. Like many plants, the flower stem elongates in seed. The leaves are spatulate and hairy.



Get Ready for the....

2009 Dues Hike

Due to financial reasons, it will be necessary for ANPS to raise their dues for 2009. The new rate will be $15.00 for regular membership; .$12.00 for seniors and students, $20.00 for family and $30.00 for an organization (no change). This is just an announcement of a coming change and DOES NOT AFFECT your dues for 2008.

WE NEED HELP!

Please help us fill these vital board positions:
TREASURER: Our secretary has moved to Fairbanks to further her education. Beryl has assumed the secretary's job and would like someone to take over the Treasurer's job to lessen her load. This is not a huge job as we are a small organization with minimal income.
PROGRAM COORDINATOR - beginning in the fall (7 meetings/yr). Suggestions, contacts and a lot of support will be provided by everyone, but a main coordinator is needed.

MYSTERY PLANT ANSWER

Erigeron humilis

Arctic Alpine Fleabane

Asteraceae: Aster/Daisy/ Composite Family

To guest speakers, plant family leaders, and mini-botany speakers, as well as those who do the behind-the-scenes coordinating.

YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN!

Want to participate more? Don't hesitate to "raise your hand" and make an offer - you won't be turned down! We need the support of everyone!

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, pleas 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

☐	**Full-time Student**	**$ 5**
☐	**Senior Citizen**	**$10**
☐	**Individual**	**$12**
☐	**Family**	**$18**
☐	**Organization**	**$30**

Name _____

Address _____

City: _____ State_____Zip_____

Telephone: (Home)_____(Work)_____E-Mail: _____

Membership is on a calendar year basis.

IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOU MEMBERSHIP - NOW!!

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

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