Borealis

The Newsletter of the

Alaska Native Plant Society

PO Box 141613, Anchorage, Alaska — April - May 2022

Join us at our Next Meetings!

Monday, April 4, 7:00 PM

Main Topic: "Lake Clark National Park salt marsh monitoring"
Speaker: Michael Hannam

Mini-Botany
Apiaceae: *Angelica* – Elaine Hammes
Botany in the News: TBA

Monday, May 2, 7:00 PM

Main Topic: "Plant Photography"
Speaker: Glenn Brown

Mini-Botany
Botany in the News:
Apiaceae Family: *Cicuta*
Speaker: Elizabeth Bluemink

PLEASE NOTE: VIRTUAL MEETING

For the latest information about ANPS events and field trips, go to www.aknps.org/

Local Heroes – Natives in our Garden

So, it's spring. The snow is melting away. The hours of daylight have muchly improved. Buds are sprouting on trees and the first signs of green can be seen. You've been waiting all year for this moment when you can once again return to your favorite stress-reducing hobby: gardening. And how about combining that hobby with your other favorite subject – native plants?!

Why Native Plants?

- Naturally beautiful! Native plants will add beauty to your garden. Not convinced?
- Made for here! Native plants are adapted to local conditions. Planted in the right place native plants need less water and other care than our non-native lawns.
- Good for the Earth! Native plants support, butterflies, birds and pollinators AND healthy water!

And while it isn't yet time to be digging into the soil, this is a great planning time. Get your calendar out, plan the growing season calendar, start looking up plants, plug them in and research where to find native plants.

This month's newsletter has some articles that will help you with that research.

- Anchorage gardener and landscaper Bill Yeagle suggests some great native shrubs for urban gardens.
- Several new books highlight Pacific Northwest native heroes – for gardening or foraging.
- Read about some of the science for growing natives.
- Now that you know you want to grow natives, you may find that most regular nurseries do not carry them. No matter! The best selection and prices are often at spring native plant sales all around the area. A great place to begin is at the Alaska Botanical Garden where spring sales kickoff on May 14.

Who do you think we are? Treasurer Aaron Wells has put together a fascinating look at the geographical reach of Alaska Native Plant Society membership – in Alaska and beyond. Are you with us?

JOIN OUR VIRTUAL MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING – APRIL 4, 2022, 7 PM

To join the webinar and watch the presentation:

1. Click on the Meeting ID link below to open it in a web browser. The best web browser to use for this is Chrome, but Firefox or Safari will also work. Avoid Internet Explorer.

   Meeting ID: https://meet.google.com/vax-nosy-fzd
2. A Google Meet window should open in your browser and your camera will turn on. You'll see an image of yourself (from your computer's camera) and "What's your name?"
3. Enter your name on the line below "What's your name?" and then click the "Ask to join" button.
4. You will be granted access to the webinar. This may take a minute or two.
5. Hover over the image of yourself and click the "Mic" icon and camera icon to mute your computer mic and turn off your camera (so we all don't see you...unless you want to be seen :), respectively.

Audio:

1) If you use the above link you can listen and talk using headphones connected to your computer, or

2) Alternatively you can call the phone number below, and enter the pin and you can listen and talk through your phone while watching the live video.

Phone Number: (US) +1 352-720-0197 PIN: 711 490 807#

Earth Day - April 22, 2022

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Borealis
the newsletter of the
Alaska Native Plant Society

ALASKA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

State and Anchorage Chapter Officers

President	Elizabeth Bluemink
Vice President	Zoe Meade
Secretary	Ginger Hudson
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Field Trips	Beth Norris
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Technology	Aaron Wells and Timm Nawrocki

Newsletter ("*Borealis*")

Editor	Ginny Moore

Borealis is published bi-monthly, fall through spring. Articles may be sent to Ginny Moore, , Anchorage, AK 99516. Phone or FAX: , E-mail: elfinwood@gmail.com

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IT WORKS!

IN 2018-2019 ANPS EARNED ALMOST $400 FROM MEMBERS SHOPPING AT FREDDY'S! WON'T YOU JOIN US?

IT DOESN'T AFFECT YOUR OWN REWARDS POINTS.

Fred Meyer is donating $2.5 million per year to non-profits in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington, based on where their customers tell them to give. Here's how the program works:

- Sign up for the Community Rewards program by linking your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to (non-profit) at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards. You can search for us by our name or by our non-profit number **GC263**.
- Then, every time you shop and use your Rewards Card, you are helping (non-profit) earn a donation!
- **You still earn your Rewards Points, Fuel Points, and Rebates, just as you do today.**
- If you do not have a Rewards Card, they are available at the Customer Service desk of any Fred Meyer store.
- For more information, please visit

Alaska Native Plant Society Members – We're All Over the Map!

By Aaron Wells

Over the past 2 years the Alaska Native Plant Society membership has nearly doubled in size! Our organization has grown from a pre-2020 typical membership of approximately 80–90 members per year, to 158 members as of March 13, 2022.

Paralleling our membership growth has been a steady expansion of the geographic extent of our members. Historically our members have been primarily from the Anchorage area. However, in the last 2 years our members are increasingly from a diversity of regions across Alaska, including the Aleutian Islands, the North Slope, and southeast Alaska, among others; and the lower 48 (Figure 1, Table 2).

Of our total 158 members, 151 (95.6% of the total) are from Alaska and 7 (4.4%) are from the lower 48 states. The regions in Alaska with the 3 highest membership, Southcentral (69.6%), Interior (11.4%), and the Kenai Peninsula (7.6%), account for 88.6% of our total membership. When combined, the remaining regions of Alaska, the Aleutian Islands, the North Slope, Prince William Sound, and Southeast account for 7.0% of our total membership. The remaining 4.4% of members are from 6 states in the lower 48: California, District of Columbia, New York, Virginia, Vermont, and Washington. In Alaska, our members are from 29 cities, towns, or villages; and in the Lower 48 our members are from 7 cities or towns (Table 1). The five cities, towns, or villages with the highest membership are: Anchorage (55.7%), Fairbanks (5.7%), Palmer (3.8%), North Pole (2.5%), and Seward (2.5%).

An important factor that has increased engagement of our members from across this broad geographic region is the shift from in person to virtual member meetings. This shift occurred in early 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hosting our meetings virtually allows anyone from anywhere to participate in the member meetings.

We recognize that many of our members miss the in-person meetings, and we hope to resume them in the near future. We've also heard from some of our members who have enjoyed the virtual meetings, and who otherwise couldn't participate if we didn't host our meetings virtually. For these reasons, beginning in Fall 2022, we hope to move towards a hybrid in-person/virtual meeting format. Hybrid meetings will be hosted in person and virtually, and we hope that this format will provide the best of both worlds. Note that hosting in-person meetings will depend on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic this fall, and we will continue to follow the CDC guidelines for in-person meetings.

The diversity of regions in Alaska from which our members are from is truly remarkable, and illustrates that we truly are a statewide organization. Our members from the lower 48 demonstrate the importance of Alaska native plants beyond our state boundary. We value the diversity and passion of our members, and we are very excited to have members from across Alaska and beyond!

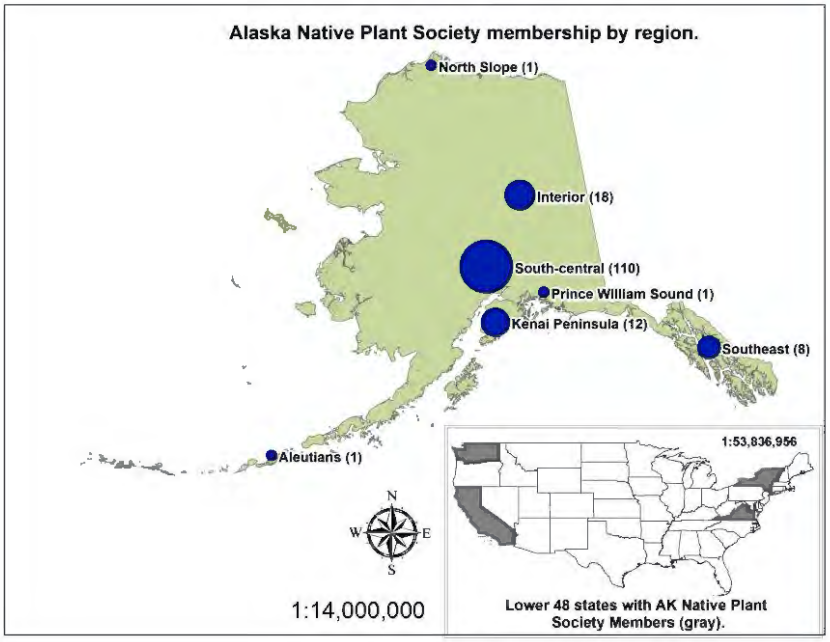


Table 1. Alaska Native Plant Society members by state and city, town, or village as of March 13, 2022.

State	City/Town/Village	Count	% of Total
Alaska	Anchorage	88	55.7%
	Auke Bay	1	0.6%
	Cantwell	1	0.6%
	Chugiak	3	1.9%
	Delta Junction	1	0.6%
	Denali Park	1	0.6%
	Eagle River	3	1.9%
	Ester	1	0.6%
	Fairbanks	9	5.7%
	Girdwood	3	1.9%
	Haines	1	0.6%
	Homer	2	1.3%
	Juneau	3	1.9%
	Kenai	2	1.3%
	Moose Pass	1	0.6%
	North Pole	4	2.5%
	Palmer	6	3.8%
	Seward	4	2.5%
	Sitka	2	1.3%
	Skagway	1	0.6%
	Soldotna	2	1.3%
	Sterling	1	0.6%
	Talkeetna	3	1.9%
	Two Rivers	1	0.6%
	Unalaska	1	0.6%
	Utqiagvik	1	0.6%
	Valdez	1	0.6%
	Wasilla	2	1.3%
	Willow	2	1.3%
California	Woodside	1	0.6%
District of Columbia	Washington DC	1	0.6%
New York	Bronx	1	0.6%
	New York City	1	0.6%
Virginia	Norfolk	1	0.6%
Vermont	Wolcott	1	0.6%
Washington	Winthrop	1	0.6%
GRANT TOTAL		158	100.0%

Table 2. Alaska Native Plant Society members by area and region or state as of March 13, 2022.

Area	Region or State	Count	% of Total
Alaska	Aleutians	1	0.6%
	Interior	18	11.4%
	Kenai Peninsula	12	7.6%
	North Slope	1	0.6%
	Prince William Sound	1	0.6%
	South-central	110	69.6%
	Southeast	8	5.1%
Alaska Subtotal		151	95.6%
Lower 48	California	1	0.6%
	District of Columbia	1	0.6%
	New York	2	1.3%
	Virginia	1	0.6%
	Vermont	1	0.6%
	Washington	1	0.6%
Lower 48 Subtotal		7	4.4%
TOTAL		158	100.0%

Compiled by Aaron Wells, Treasurer, Alaska Native Plant Society

Native Shrubs in Urban Settings

by Bill Yeagle

Native trees and shrubs in urban gardens require different care than domesticated plants. They do, however, provide unique opportunities in our gardens and some not so typical usage. The following are examples of native shrubs and berry bushes I have observed when used in developed areas.

About an acre of my property is undisturbed forest. There are a handful of straggly native ***mountain ash*** in the understory of the birch and spruce. Nearly impossible to propagate the seeds require extreme stratification cycles and patience for germination. But these small trees flourish, albeit slowly, when seedlings are transplanted out from the native understory, given sunshine, and provided drier soils with a small amount of well-aged compost and a top mulch.

Of the understory berry bushes I've tried to coax into the garden, two come to mind: the native ***highbush cranberry*** and ***black currant***. While the berries are abundant, the flavor is minimal and highly astringent. But as ornamentals, these two bushes are rock stars. Both offer early blooms for pollinators.

The highbush cranberry has a unique fall orange that is delightful as an airy understory ground cover. The challenge with this plant is the imported currant worm, a sawfly, which can decimate the foliage, so I try to keep them far away from gooseberries in residential plots.

Folks often advise using the native black currant in plantings. While the foliage is an attractive dark green, mottled orange, it is a hard sell when the berries are small, tasteless, and need copious amounts of sugar to balance the astringency. I envision this two-foot-high mounding bush along a forest pathway mingled with geranium mycorrhizae.

Both berry bushes get leggy and lodge with the weight of fruit when given a rich soil and improper pruning. As these shallow rooted bushes occur in the wild, the only amendment needed is autumn leaf fall.

Bioswales, and similar strategies for channeling & filtering water, can be used on cleared hillside properties to slow the flow of water downhill and reduce the amount of sediment flowing into ditches and waterways. These swales are dug to follow the contours of a plot and as near as possible to the source of the water entering the property.

A recent discussion on the use of bioswales and plants to incorporate into them revealed three native shrubs: ***elderberry***, ***devils club***, and ***willow***.

On the hillside, the biggest factor affecting the use of shrubs in bioswales is reducing moose browse until the shrubs are mature. In lieu of proper (and expensive) fencing the native elderberry and devils club can be used to lessen the effect of browsing. A moose will sample a row of shrubs, but if not palatable, it will, typically, shift its gaze at other areas to munch.

The local **elderberry** is a nice shrub to use at the ends of short swales and interspersed in longer rows. Once mature these plants can be cut to the ground in late winter biannually. The prolific long canes with large umbral flower clusters and berry cones are showy and moose prefer not to munch.

Tips

- Use a simple, unfortified, acidic soil for our native plants. Generally, these plants rarely require much in the way of nutrients, autumn fallen leaves are normal.
- If leaf mulch is not available, use a well-aged, thin layer of compost and mulch. I prefer to use larger sized bark mulch; it degrades slowly, is heavy, blocks weed seed germination, and is easily moved aside when amending.

The forlorn **devil's club** is an excellent protection plant for a bioswale; just not where there are kids or dogs. They like wet feet, so they would be perfect in bio swales as moose do not touch them. Like the elderberry, devils club prefer wet feet and are fast growing.

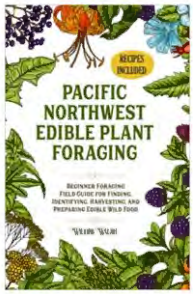
There are quite a few devils club on the undeveloped part of my property, and I hope to clear around them and create some sort of dark backdrop, as they are stunning in their brilliant yellow fall foliage that lights up shade.

I would not recommend native willows without some sort of moose protection; they are a moose magnet. I try to keep them out of the perimeter of my property; they lure moose to investigate further. Yellow jackets like them as well. Given suitable fencing, local willows grow very quickly and can be coppiced or pollarded to provide annual canes for wattle or weaving projects.

Propagated or transplanted from mature forest soils these plants often don't do well unless attention is given to light, water, wind, and particularly soil fertility. Growing situations mimicking their native habitats are the keys to success.

Bill Yeagle is a local gardener and landscaper.

FROM OUR BOOKSHELVES

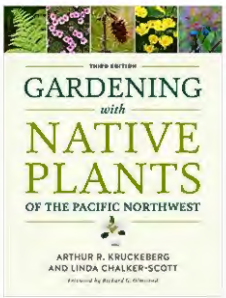


Pacific Northwest Edible Plant Foraging

By Willow Walsh
ISBN-13 : 979-8799200787

Alaska is the Real U.S. Pacific Northwest, but we do realize that we also have some ecological connections with our lower 48 siblings. Many botanical resources that are ostensibly created for more southern areas do cover some Alaskan species. In *Pacific Northwest Edible Plant Foraging*, you will discover:

- **37 edible plant profiles of the Pacific Northwest** -- identify, harvest, preserve, and consume nature's finest offerings
- A beginner-friendly guide to all things foraging, including all the benefits (hint: it will help you slash your grocery bills!)
- A complete plant identification guide -- discover the essential parts of a plant and how you can identify them
- **The universal edibility test -- an 8-step process for finding out whether a plant is consumable or not**
- Ethical and responsible foraging guidelines -- safety considerations, urban foraging, and nature conservation
- Exactly how to forage for edible plants -- a look at locations, tools, harvesting techniques, and more
- **Seasonal information on edible species... so that you can plan ahead (plus: a handy year-round foraging chart)**
- How to identify poisonous plants -- and how to treat the symptoms associated with them (for ultimate peace of mind when you're foraging)
- A companion mini-guide filled with colored images of plants and FORAGING JOURNAL PDF DOWNLOAD– scan the QR code at the back of your paperback to get premium access!



Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest

By Arthur Kruckeburg and Linda Chalker-Scott
University of Washington Press, 2019
ISBN-10 : 0295744154

The Pacific Northwest abounds with native plants that bring beauty to the home garden while offering food and shelter to birds, bees, butterflies, and other wildlife. Elegant trilliums thrive in woodland settings. Showy Lewisian stand out in the rock garden. Hazel and huckleberry number among the delights of early spring, while serviceberry and creek dogwood provide a riot of fall color.

Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest is an essential resource for learning how to best use this stunning array.

- Close to 1,000 choices of trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals, and grasses for diverse terrain and conditions, from Alaska and Canada to California, and east to the Rockies; 948 color photographs, with useful habitat icons
- Fully updated nomenclature, with an index of subjects and an index of plant names (common and scientific)
- New to this edition: chapters on garden ecology and garden science
- Appendix of Pacific Northwest botanical gardens and native plant societies
- Glossary of botanical, horticultural, and gardening terms.

With enthusiasm, easy wit, and expert knowledge, renowned botanist Art Kruckeberg and horticulturist Linda Chalker-Scott show Northwest gardeners, from novice to expert, how to imagine and realize their perfect sustainable landscape.

From What We Gather

The Anchorage Soil and Water Conservation District (ASWCD) has been REVIVED!

A small team of volunteers with fresh ideas is crafting the group's Mission and getting the organization up and running. The ASWCD has launched an **Invasive Species Program**, focusing on highly invasive plants. If you hike beyond the trailheads of Chugach State Park or Chugach National Forest and would like to help find and document locations of a few highly invasive plant species, join our pilot **Hiker-Spotter Project**; contact Anne Billman at if you are interested. **You do not need to be a plant expert!** The ASWCD website is anchorageswcd.org and we can be reached at anchorageswcd@gmail.com. Stay tuned as we get our feet on the ground, and email us if you want more information or would like to help.

Non-native plants reduce population growth of an insectivorous bird

Nonnative plants lack an evolutionary history with native fauna and support insect communities that are less abundant and diverse, and this may change food availability for vertebrate consumers. Most insectivorous birds are absent or declining in urban areas, yet no study has tested whether nonnative plants impact bird populations via food limitation. Researchers at the University of Delaware monitored reproduction and survival of Carolina chickadees within residential yards and found that when nonnative plants increased, both insect availability and chickadee population growth declined. They also found that populations could only be sustained if nonnative plants constituted <30% of plant biomass. Their results demonstrate that nonnative plants reduce habitat quality for insectivorous birds and restoration of human-dominated areas should prioritize native plants to support local food webs.

Mowing urban lawns less intensely increases biodiversity, saves money and reduces pests

The researchers at the British Ecological Society combined data across North America and Europe using a meta-analysis, a way of aggregating results from multiple studies to increase statistical strength. They found strong evidence that increased mowing intensity of urban lawns -- which included parks, roundabouts and road verges -- had negative ecological effects, particularly on invertebrate and plant diversity. Pest species, on the other hand, benefitted from intense lawn management.

"Even a modest reduction in lawn mowing frequency can bring a host of environmental benefits: increased pollinators, increased plant diversity and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, a longer, healthier lawn makes it more resistant to pests, weeds, and drought events." said Dr Chris Watson, lead author of the study.

Yarrow shines as a pollinator plant.

The Oregon State University Garden Ecology Lab has demonstrated that common yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*, is a very important pollinator plant. Yarrow is a ubiquitous North American native plant: its range extends from Alaska to Florida and every state and province in between! Though it commonly appears on pollinator planting lists, many people are not convinced that it's a great bee plant, because it is not typically buzzing with activity like we may see on Goldenrod or Douglas Aster. Instead of hosting an abundance of visitors, yarrow supports a high *diversity* of insect visitors.

- Yarrow provides both nectar and pollen to its insect visitors.
- Yarrow was found to be associated with two species of *Andrena* (*Andrena cerasifolii, A. candida*).
- *Andrena* is a genus of early summer mining bees!
- Other common visitors to yarrow include sweat bees, nomad bees, and butterflies!
- Yarrow inflorescences provide a great "landing pad" for pollinators- they can rest directly on the plant while they forage.

Achillea millefolium

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 or to renew, you can either use our convenient on-line method by going to https://aknps.org/membership, or 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	E-Mail Newsletter	Snail-Mail Newsletter	Both Mail Deliveries
☐ **Full-time Student**	**$12**	**$22**	**$22**
☐ **Senior Citizen**	**$12**	**$22**	**$22**
☐ **Individual**	**$15**	**$25**	**$25**
☐ **Family**	**$20**	**$30**	**$30**

Name: _____

Address:_____

City _____**State:** _____**Zip:**_____

Telephone: (Home)_____**(Cell)**_____**E-mail**_____

PLEASE RENEW OR JOIN TODAY!
ANPS Membership is on a calendar-year basis so…
RENEW NOW AND BE SURE TO RECEIVE SUMMER FIELD TRIP INFO.

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