Alaska Native Plant Society

P.O. Box 8-737 Anchorage, Alaska 99508

1984

FEBRUARY MEETING---8 PM at the Pub in the Sports Center Complex of the ACC-UAA Campus----------FEB 6th, the FIRST MONDAY!!!!!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING---7 PM, one hour prior to General Meeting.

MEETING INFO

Our speaker will be one of our Society members, Cathy Wright, from the Plant Materials Center in Palmer. Cathy will give a talk on Germination of Alpine and Arctic Plants.

The Betulaceae (Birch) family will be discussed this month, with Beverly Bridger leading the discussion. The birches and alders are monoecious trees or shrubs. Leaves are alternate, toothed, simple, broad, and pinnately veined. The flowers are in catkins--scaly spikes bearing apetalous unisexual flowers. Male catkins hang down from the end of the twig so that breezes scatter the pollen. Male flowers have 4 or no sepals, no petals, and 2 to 20 stamens. Female flowers are in short catkins on the sides of twigs. They lack a perianth. The gynoecium is 2 fused carpels with the ovary inferior or naked (no macroscopic evidence of position). The fruit is a nut or a samara, which is a dry indehiscent winged fruit.

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BY-LAWS CHANGES

The proposed changes to the Constitution and By-Laws have been finalized, and will be read at the meeting.

PLANT QUIZ-M. Barker

I am a perennial plant common to both arctic and alpine tundra. I grow from a thick, twisted, fleshy rhizome (a rhizome is an underground stem) which has thick roots. My stem grows from an expanded "bulb-like" base and I reach a height from 2 to 18 inches---depending upon how hospitable my habitat is. I usually produce two basal leaves, each has a long petiole. My leaf blades are a shiny dark green above and rough hairy beneath. They are long, narrow and leathery.

My tiny flowers are pink to rose in color and form themselves into dense pink spikes or plumes (clue!). My fruit are 3-angled achenes.

If it weren't for my super showy flowers I could hide. I am sought after for both my leaves and rhiomes. My leaves can be cooked as spinach green and supply vitamins A and C. My rhizomes can be eaten raw like nuts and are a tasty, rich source of calories.

Who am I? (Drawing and answer elsewhere in this newsletter).

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FIELD TRIPS

The schedule is now being finalized! If you can lead a field trip, PLEASE let us know right away!

1983-84 OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS ARE:

President----------Verna Pratt----------
Vice-President----------John Wenger----------
Secretary----------Cheryl McCaffrey----------
Treasurer----------Larry Haller----------
General Programs----------Beverly Bridger----------
Educational Programs----------Debbie Clark----------
Field Trips----------Frank Bogardus----------
Newsletter----------Frank Pratt----------

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USFWS NEWS ITEM

Information handed out at our Feb 1983 meeting by Mike Amarol of US Fish & Wildlife Service suggests that the "Threatened and Endangered Plants of Alaska" be reviewed and revised. A list of their recommendations was distributed and it is pleasing to note that Papaver alboroseum, our lovely tiny pale pink poppy that can be seen in Portage Valley is now considered to be more abundant than was originally thought, and is no longer considered threatened or endangered. Perhaps we all could help keep it that way by buying and spreading a pack of these poppy seeds. These Alaska wildflower seeds are available, seem to germinate very well, and are a nice addition to anyone's garden or along a roadside. These plants seem to prefer dry, gravelly, well-drained areas and re-seed themselves once established. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO MAY NOT BE AWARE OF IT; THE PORTAGE VALLEY IS PART OF THE CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST AND IS A PROTECTED VIEWING AREA, AS IS TURNAGAIN PASS.

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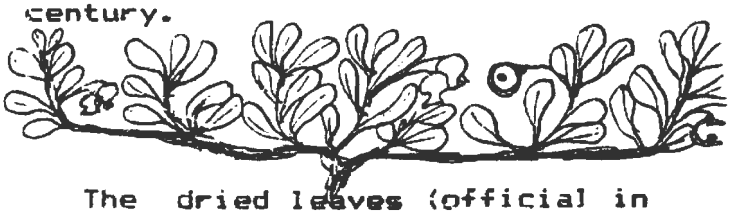
PLANT QUIZ DRAWING

LOTIONS, NOTIONS AND POTIONS-by Old Doc

This month we'll consider a small plant with a rather long name. Kinnikinnick or mealberry (Arctostaphylos Uva-ursi) is a spreading evergreen plant growing to only 3 or 4 inches. It is usually found in gravelly or sandy soil. It is very difficult to transplant. Native to Europe as well as North America, its medicinal usage dates to the 13th century.



The dried leaves (official in the National Formulary under the name *uva-ursi*) are gathered in autumn, only the green ones being picked. While considerable of the drug has been imported from Spain, much has been gathered for the market in California, the Northern States and Canada.

The dried leaves, usually in the form of an infusion or fluidextract, have been used as a diuretic and mild disinfectant to the urinary tract. The constituents are the glucoside *arbutin (ericolin)*, a crystalline resinous substance called ursone; *tannic acid*, gallic acid, calcium oxalate, etc. Thomas Meehan, the great 19th century American botanist says that another way of taking uva-ursi medicinally is to soak the dried, powdered leaves in brandy, taking a little of this in a cup of hot water. But he doesn't give quantities. Pity!

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QUIZ ANSWER

Polygonum bistorta---Bistort, Pink Plumes

During last seasons's field trip to Nome, member, Jim Fox, commented that he had read information regarding to the possibility of a strong soil-plant relationship, concerning the genus Pedicularis; in the Scrophulariaceae (Figwort) Family. As the information came from the library of, member, Aline Strutz, we contacted her and the excerps that follow that are in double quotes might prove very interesting to some of you. Thank you, Aline!

" " In "Wild Flowers of the Pacific Northwest - from Alaska to Northern Canada" - by Lewis J. Clark: " "

" " The rather unhappy name of this genus, from the Latin pediculus, a louse, is frequently interpreted to mean that the plants were once used to discourage lice; but the truth, as pointed out by that very literate authority, David McClintock, is that cattle eating louseworts were supposed to be more readily infested. Betony is a very old name, derived from one of the early Iberian tribes of Spain, the Vettones, or as Dioscorides', first century A. D. De materia medica spells the name, Vetonica or Betonica. Betony was once believed to be endowed with virtues to cure almost any ill. Even today in primitive southern Italy peasants eulogize with the expression, "His virtues are as the Betony's" and there the plant is cultivated in cemeteries as a charm against malign influences.

Nearly all species of Pedicularis are semi-parasitic on the roots of other plants, so even the more attractive ones are poor prospects for transplantation to the garden. The genus Pedicularis (of over 400 species) shows affinities with the genus Castilleja or Paintbrushes, both in tendency towards parasitism, and also in the floral structure. In both Pedicularis and Castilleja the upper lip forms a hooded galea, that encloses the anthers of the 2 pairs of unequal stamens. " "

From "The English Rock Garden" by Reginald Farrer:

Although the Louse-worts make a special show of beauty in the Alpine pastures, with their brilliant coloured parrot's beak flowers, and their ferny fine tufts of foliage, yet there is a look about them of softness and unwholesomeness that prepares one for the news that they are almost all parasites, and impossible to grow unless by seed sown in tussoks taken from the mountains, on the chance of their pet host being present. Also their ephemeral air of effectiveness makes them seem rather like vicious fungoid emanations that will soon collapse into rottenness and disappear in half an hour; so that one is doubly consoled for their impossibility. There is, however, one honorable exception at least. For P. Barrelieri has the courage to grow almost wholly on it's own root (more solid than most others). " "

In "Rock Gardening" by H. Lincoln Foster:

The wood betonies, or louseworts, have a peculiar fascination in the varicolored, heavy, ferny leaves and stiff spikes of 2-lipped blossoms among colored bracts. The colors in some species are brilliant and in others curiously muted and odd. Alluring as some of the species are, they pose a problem of culture because of apparent parasitic dependence. A few may be lured to grow in the garden in rocky semishade or in the alpine lawn. Since they transplant from the wild reluctantly, the best chance of success is to grow them from seed. " "

" " From the "Wise Garden Encyclopedia:

Commonly known as Wood-betony or Lousewort. Perennial and annual herbs suitable for the rock garden or wild garden. Care should be taken to give them plenty of their native woods soil, for some of the species are dependent on mycorrhizal association. They are increased by seed or division. " "

If any of you have more on this subject, we would appreciate hearing from you.


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