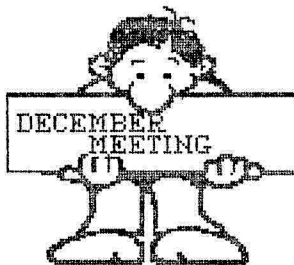


# Alaska Native Plant Society

P.O. BOX 141613, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99514

## ANCHORAGE CHAPTER



The December meeting will be on Mon. 2nd in Room 103, Wendler Junior High School, corner of Lake Otis & Northern Lts. at 8 PM.

Board meeting at 7:15 PM prior to regular meeting.

**SPEAKER:** Leslie Kerr will present "Design Aspects of Landscaping with Native Plants"

**DISCUSSION:** The plant family to be discussed is the Sorbus genus (Mountain Ash) of the Rosacea (Rose) Family. While out hiking this time of year, this is probably one of the most obvious members of the plant families with its large flat clusters of orange berries so loved by the Bohemian Waxwings. Its many-toothed compound leaflets are scattered on the ground, and its thick stubby stems and next seasons buds are very prominent. The berries may be cooked and eaten, but are bitter unless frozen and thawed many times first.

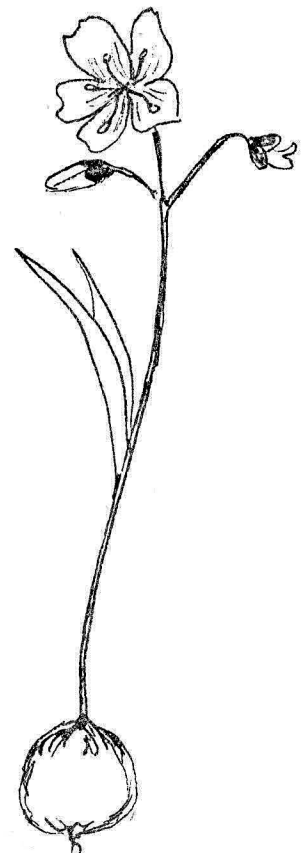
## CONTEST:

At presstime, the wildflower entries in this years contest had been displayed at the Northway Mall in Anchorage. Auction bids were very light--- perhaps another method will need to be devised for next year. The constest rules have been changed slightly, anyone wishing a copy should write to the Society. The winning entry in this years contest is featured on a separate page of this newsletter.

Many thanks to Carolyn Parker for offering to distribute our prints in the Fairbanks area.

## MYSTERY PLANT:

This soft-stemmed plant, found growing in wet, exposed, stony slopes in central and extreme North Western Alaska, has very delicate long stems that go 4" to 6" below ground level where they connect to a round corm. Each stem usually has 2 long lance-shaped leaves that are opposite on its stem. The white flowers are showy, have 5 delicately veined rounded petals and 2 persistant sepals; and are borne in few flowered racemes. They have five stamens which are connected to the center of the base of each petal. The single style is three-cleft and develops into a 3-valved capsule.



## PLANT RESCUE:

This past August, a few members of the Society in Anchorage, ran to the rescue of the Wild Calla Lilies (*Calla palustris*) that Erma Faye of the Anchorage Garden Club was desperately trying to thin out of her back yard pond. The Municipality agreed to allow the plants entry into Westchester Lagoon, so the energetic crew wearing boots and wielding shovels and garbage sacks full of plants, tucked plants into protective corners of the Lagoon area hoping that at least a few would become anchored and escape the hungry ducks for the first year.

**ELECTIONS:** The results of the election held at the November meeting of the ANCHORAGE CHAPTER follow:  
**PRESIDENT**-----Lynn Catlin  
**VICE-PRESIDENT**---Doug Tryck  
**SECRETARY**-----Peggy Fletcher  
**TREASURER**-----Larry Haller  
**CHAPTER REP.**-----Frank Bogardus  
 The above will take office in January!

**SEEDS:** It was decided to utilize, rather than save for future years, our left-over seeds. Revegetation is the major objective and Sandra Cosentino, who is working on the Hatcher Pass Management Plan indicated a need for such when new pull-offs and parking areas are established on the Hatcher Pass Road. There are a few seeds, however, that would be out of place and unnatural there. One is *Armeria maritima*. It was decided to spread it along the Seward Highway near Beluga Point, where it has been seen by Marilyn Barker. It is being trampled out a bit and, perhaps, some careful reseeding in out of the way spots will help rejuvenate its growth. Glenn Oliver, a Science teacher at Meers Junior High School, will utilize a few packs of different seeds. His object is to have a group of Pact Students experiment with germination methods to determine what method works best.

**QUIZ ANSWER:** (*Claytonia tuberosa*).



The newsletter staff (all 2 of us) asks for your patience while we attempt to remove a few bugs from the new system. A new printer seems to be the problem. The old saying that apples can't be compared to oranges may work in reverse. In this case, an Apple doesn't seem to want to talk to an Apple properly!!!

**NOTES ON P.M.S.** (That's Purple Mountain Saxifrage, for you non-botany types)--by Marilyn Barker.

A small bright purple flower, the purple mountain saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia*), signals the arrival of Spring in Alaska. Purple mountain saxifrage is found throughout the state of Alaska, from the high alpine country to the arctic coastal plain. It is equally at home in the high alpine of Canada, Switzerland and Spain. Botanists tell us it originated in the Alps and later migrated to the arctic and became a truly circumpolar species. Only the earliest Spring hikers south of the arctic slope will be able to feast their eyes on this delightful plant. In the alpine country of Alaska, it reaches peak bloom in May--when most trails to the high country are buried under deep drifts of snow. By the time the trails are free of snow, the plant has exchanged its bright flowers for a pair of red seed pods.

The purple mountain saxifrage typically forms dense green mats less than 1 cm. tall. The leaves are tightly aligned in 4 neat rows set at 90 degrees from each other--hence the name *oppositifolia*. Each succulent leaf is fringed with stiff rigid hairs. Sometimes the foliage forms drooping chains which hang over the edges of rocky cliffs. As most hikers see only the foliage of this plant, they coined another common name--french knot moss. Still another name is *shlujege*--"my claw", given because each magenta petal begins as a narrow claw and ends with a broad tip.

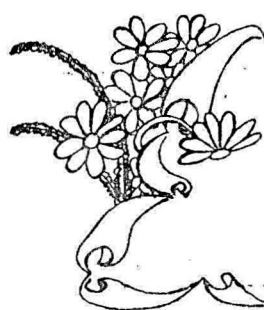
Perhaps its most unique feature is its ability to withstand wilting in extremely dry situations. It is one of few plants that survive in high arctic polar deserts of the Canadian Archipelago (where precipitation during growing season is less than 3/8 in). The ability for plants to withstand water stress is measured in bars. Zero bars means there is no water stress. Most plants wilt at -5 bars and die at -15 bars (i.e. sugar beets wilt at -3.5 bars, soy beans at -6.6 bars, and corn at -12.5 bars). The purple mountain saxifrage often lives in a habitat of -21 to -29 bars

and it can survive stress up to -55 bars, the same figures apply to the Saguaro cactus of the American Southwest desert! It is written that the purple mountain saxifrage is found on exposed ridges "where no other flowering plant exists".



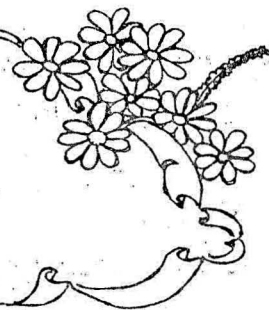
## LOTIONS, NOTIONS, AND POTIONS—by Old Doc

Old Doc is stepping aside this month in order to present an interesting article seen in the Sept issue of "Alaskan Well-being". Permission has been granted by the authors to publish the article in our newsletter to that all ANPS members can enjoy reading it.



# The Chugach Herbal Companion

By Hope Wing, N.D. and Jeffrey R. Richardson



## Herbs For Easing Soreness

Long before there were jacuzzis, synthetic drugs and sports medicine, there were sweat lodges, and cottonwood trees. And chamomile; and arnica.

Indeed, long before organized sports as we know them, herbalists had unlocked the secrets of some very special plants to succor sore muscles and joints, bruises and other maladies not uncommon to active people.

Cottonwood is the durable, full-foliaged deciduous tree common in a variety of Alaskan habitats. Growing sometimes to enormous heights, in its sapling state, cottonwood is a favorite browse for moose.

Chamomile, as discussed here, is a common, weedy but fragrant little plant that proliferates in lawns, driveways and heavily used pathways. Known to many Alaskans as "pineapple weed," it is botanically and medicinally related to the German and Roman chamomile which is typically utilized in commercial teas.

Arnica occurs in Alaska in several varieties. In the Anchorage area, look for *arnica latifolia* in the Chugach Range near timberline and in some coastal areas. Its small yellow blossom is highly reminiscent of a daisy.

If you are not familiar with the amber, aromatic winter buds of the cottonwood, you are in for a treat. Because of the cold, they will readily snap off for easy gathering; late winter, before thaw, is best. The cottonwood buds are packed with salicin, the constituent also found in willows, which addresses pain. Using any high quality oil, especially castor bean oil, which itself has anti-inflammatory constituents, the buds can be used to make an effective liniment.

Making a cottonwood liniment is simple: After bruising about ¼ cup of buds with a clean stick (they'll be real sticky), cover with oil, up to a cup, in a small pyrex casserole dish with a lid. Bake in your oven at 100° for at least 12 hours; up to 24 hours wouldn't hurt. Then, let the buds soak in the oil for two weeks. At the end of this period, strain the oil through cheese cloth and store out of direct sunlight. You now have a fragrant and powerful rub for sore muscles and painful joints.

You can also pour warm oil over carefully dried chamomile, enough to cover the herb in a covered glass jar, soak for two weeks

and strain. This facilitates the formation of chamazulene; an herbal constituent which promotes wound healing and is strongly anti-inflammatory. Enjoy a cup of chamomile tea while your partner applies the oil to sore spots or healing tissue!

The delicate and lovely arnica is a potent friend of athletes and other who lead active lives. Again, its healing constituents are dissolved in pure oil and applied with great success, particularly to bruises. It is also useful for muscle strains, sprains, dislocations and swellings. It is *not* to be used on open wounds.

Follow these steps to enjoy the benefits of arnica and oil: Gather flower heads on a dry day, making sure to leave lots of neighbors to reseed the area. Use paper bags, not plastic, when gathering to prevent deterioration from moisture. When at home, chop flower heads finely, put in a clean glass jar with a top, and cover with oil. Make sure flowers are totally submerged in oil or mold can occur. Let oil and flowers sit in a warm, sunny place for 10-14 days. Filter oil and press out flowers using muslin to remove solid particles. Refilter if necessary. Discard flowers and bottle filtered oil and store tightly covered in a cool, dark place.

Arnica can also be used in a "fomentation" for the same ailments. This involves wrapping cloth that has been dipped in a very strong, and warm, arnica tea, around sore areas.

Remember, fall is a good time to gather dandelion roots, which, when roasted and ground, make a very tasty and healthful beverage. Also, with the turn of seasons, keep an eye on the fireweed. When they have put out their seed cotton, the leaves will soon discolor. When they have turned to brown and dried on the stalks, some Native groups have traditionally gathered them to make a tea more soothing than even the legendary chamomile.

Remember, too, walk softly in the meadow, and be thankful for the bounty of the Earth...

*Editor's Note: Hope Wing, N.D., is a local naturopath with a special interest in herbs. Starting with this issue of Well-Being, She will be a regular contributor to the Chugach Herbal Companion.*

*Jeffrey R. Richardson is co-editor of WELL-BEING Magazine as well as a freelancer, technical writer, and naturalist with a special interest in local plants.*

The winning entry in our second annual A.N.P.S. Limited Edition Print Contest was Dogwood/Bunchberry (*Cornus Canadensis*) by Donna Standerwick of Juneau. It is in delicate shades of green with a brown stump. Very well done and effective; and looks very nice when displayed next to the Shooting Star (1984 winner).

You will be notified when the print is available. Each print will be numbered and signed by the artist. Advance orders may be made by paying \$10 (A.N.P.S. members) and specifying which number you desire.



*Donna Standerwick*  
1985