

Alaska Native Plant Society

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

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MARCH MEETING--Monday, March 4 at 8PM at the PUB in the Sports Complex on the UAA/ACC Campus.

BOARD MEETING--7:15PM immediately preceeding the General Meeting listed above. Board members please note the time and mark your calendar.

MEETING PROGRAM

SPEAKER: Martha Hatch will present a program on "Vegetation and flora of the Semidi Islands, which are Southwest of Kodiak Island."

PLANT FAMILY--Discussion will be on the *Linaceae* (Flax family). Plants in this family are slender and frail looking with small narrow leaves. The flowers have rounded petals and are blue or yellow. (Alaska has a single member with blue flowers). The flowers have 5 sepals, 5 petals, 5 stamens, 1 pistil, a superior ovary that is 5-carpelled, 5 styles, and a 10-loculed seed capsule.

MYSTERY PLANT--The mystery plant for this month has never been found in the Anchorage or Fairbanks areas. It is basically a coastal plant found mostly on cliffs along the sea and in arctic alpine regions. It has, however, been found in a few inland alpine areas. At first glance, its compact tufts could be confused with a grass or sedge. Its linear leaves are grayish-green. Its pink globular flower heads are supported high above the leaves by a 3-6" stem.



WILDFLOWER SEEDS--Cathy Wright has packaged our Wildflower Seeds and we will have our annual seed sale at the March meeting. Any members outside of the Anchorage area wanting some of these seeds should notify us so that the seeds may be mailed.

- President-----Verna Pratt-----
- Vice-President-----Marilyn Barker-----
- Secretary-----Charlu Choate-----
- Treasurer-----Larry Haller-----
- Newsletter-----Frank Pratt-----
- Anchorage Chapter Representative---Frank Bogardus-----
- Fairbanks Chapter Representative---

1985 FIELD TRIPS

A tentative schedule has been planned. The following dates have been selected. Dates for the Russian Jack Survey Trip, Peterson Bay and Tangle Lake trips are FIRM.

Sat. Apr. 27--1PM--RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK.

Emerging early Spring plants at the springs and a walk on a designated path. We will do a very casual survey for the benefit of the Anchorage School District. We will return at different times during the Summer to check blooming times.

Mon. May 13--6:30PM--SEWARD HIGHWAY--early blooming plants.

Sun. May 19--ALL DAY--PORTAGE PASS (from Whittier)

Mon. May 20--1PM--RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK (survey)

Mon. May 27-(Memorial Day)--1PM--NANCY LAKE

Sat. Jun. 1--9:15AM--OLD PALMER HIGHWAY TRIANGLE

Mon. Jun. 3--1PM--RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK (survey)

Sat. Jun.15--9:15AM--BONNIE LAKE ROAD--hunt for site of Pink Dandelions

Jun.22-23--ROUND TANGLE LAKE AREA (25 miles West of Paxson on Denali Highway)--This is our Annual Statewide meeting time--an effort to join the Anchorage group with the Fairbanks group. It can be extended to the 24th if desired, but we found from last year's annual trip that most preferred 2 days. These dates are set and will not change. There is ample camping area for tents, trucks, trailers, etc. We would like an idea about how many are coming so that we can reserve enough spaces together.

Thur.,Fri.,Sat. July 4-6--PETERSON BAY (across from Homer)--exact hours of travel to and from Homer are not firm. We will take a boat tour from Homer in the late afternoon of Thur. 4th and return to Homer late on Sat. 6th. The fee for the boat is \$10.00 per person, and it will take us past some popular Bird Rocks as an added attraction. We will stay in their tents (already set up on wood floors) which accomodate 10 persons each for \$10 per person per night (4th & 5th). Cooking stove is available and sheltered cooking area is provided, and provisions for drying wet clothing. You will need your own sleeping bag and food. More info on this trip later to those who plan to attend. We MUST have your reservations by MARCH 20th. This is the only trip involving a fee, and the \$30 surely is extremely reasonable.

Sat. July 13--9AM--HATCHER PASS--all day trip to alpine lakes.

Mon. July 15--1PM--RUSSIAN JACK SPRINGS PARK (survey)

Sat. Aug.10--9:15AM--ALYESKA--all day trip through mossy woodlands near waterfalls.

Sat. Aug.24--9:15AM--BLUEBERRY HILL, EAGLE RIVER--all day trip

*** We would appreciate ideas and suggestions from the membership concerning possible field trips. ***

LOTIONS, NOTIONS AND POTIONS--by Old Doc

This month we'll consider the common aquatic plant *Acorus calamus*, Calamus or Sweet Flag. It is one of the few healing herbs whose continuous use can be traced to ancient times; there are 4 references to it in the New Testament. It was an item of commerce in the Near East some 4000 years ago. We find references to its use by the American Indians, who seemed to consider it good for almost anything.

The plant grows by ponds, lakes, marshes, and most quiet waters. It is a hardy, aromatic perennial with much branched rhizome, sword shaped leaves, and small flowers on inflorescence 4-8cm. long. It can be identified by its aromatic scent. It may smell like mint, lemon or violet, but whatever the odor, calamus has its own long-lasting fragrance. Its constituents are a bitter, aromatic, volatile oil; and the bitter principle, acorin.

Calamus has been used as a carminative, vermifuge, spasmolytic, and diaphoretic. It stimulates the salivary and gastric glands, and has a slight sedative effect on the central nervous system.

It has probably been used most commonly for overall weakness of the digestive system. It has a reputation as a sure way to stop "stomach rumbling".

Because of its aromatic qualities, it is valuable in the manufacture of sachets. Dried foliage was once sold to churches for scattering over the floors to provide "a saintly odor", or, more likely, to cover up the smells of unwashed bodies.

As a flavoring, a bit of the root can be used in place of cinnamon or ginger; and the roots can be candied to make a pleasant confection.

CAUTION: Oil of acorus has reputed carcinogenic properties. (but what doesn't nowadays).

MYSTERY PLANT ANSWER--*Armeria maritima subs. arctica*
(Thrift). Note: this plant was found in the Red Mountain area near Seldovia by members of the ANPS during the 1984 field trip. This distribution is not indicated in Hulten.

LASKA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
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