

Alaska Native Plant Society

P.O. BOX 141613, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99514

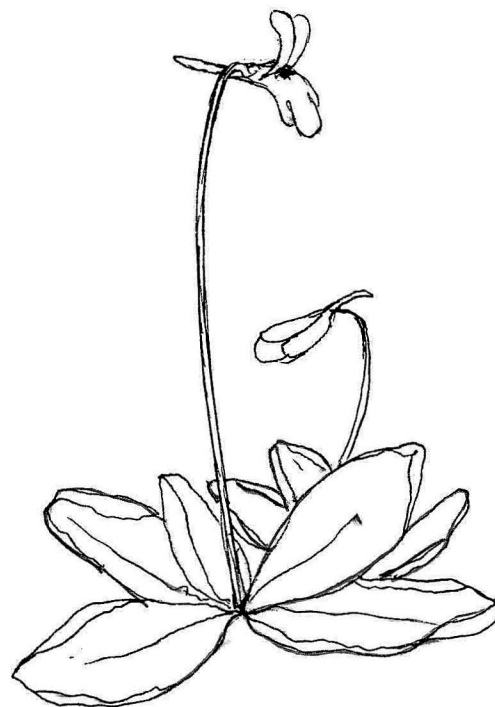
MEETING NEWS

The April meeting of the Anchorage Chapter will be on Monday, April 7th at 8PM in Room 108, Wendler Junior High School, corner of Lake Otis and Northern Lights.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING—7:15PM immediately preceeding the general meeting.

SPEAKER—Elle VandeVisse from ANROE (Alaska Natural Resources and Outdoor Education) will speak on how ANROE and the Alaska Native Plant Society can work together to further interest in education of the public in nature appreciation, especially native plants.

PLANT FAMILY DISCUSSION—ANPS Member John Wenger will speak on the Phyllodoce and Cassiope genera of the Ericaceae or Heath family. The members of these genera are commonly called Heather, although they are not true Heather. All are low shrubs having small needle-like evergreen leaves. Most are common in Southeastern, Southcentral and coastal Alaska, but a few are also found in interior Alaska. The corolla has 5 united petals forming urn or bell shaped flowers. Cassiope has 5 stamens and Phyllodoce has 10. Both have 1 pistil with 5 united carpels. The fruit is a capsule. Most are found in alpine areas, generally on the North side, but can be seen on the tundra and at fairly low elevations along the coast.



BOOK

"DIRECTORY OF PLANT NAMES"—This is a guide to names of flowering vascular plants with both common and Latin names. It is written by Allen Coombs, 210pp., hardbound, price \$9.95. Order from ISBS/Timber Press, P.O. Box 1632-Suite AB, Beaverton, OR 97075. Add \$2.25 postage to the above price.

CLASSES

Rogers Park Community School—\$8.00 "Common Alaskan Wildflowers"—Verna Pratt. This class is aimed at beginners and newcomers or those who just need more exposure to our Alaskan Wildflowers. Four 3-hour sessions (7-10PM, Tues. eve., April 29th, May 6th, 13th, and 20th) with 2 field trips (Mon. May 19th from 7-9PM at a local bog, and Sat. May 17th from 9AM to 1PM in the McHugh Creek area).

1985-86 STATE OFFICERS ARE:

President—Verna Pratt—

Vice-President—Marilyn Barker—

Secretary—Charlu Choate—

Treasurer—Larry Haller—

Newsletter—Frank Pratt—

MYSTERY PLANT

This small insectivorous plant is found in wet boggy areas throughout most of Alaska. Its small bluish-violet flowers are borne singly on a 3" leafless stem. The light yellowish-green leaves form a rosette close to the ground and are curled upwards. In the fall, it can still be located by its unmistakably spherical capsule.

OREGON NEWS

For the 2nd year, the Oregon Nature Conservancy is offering courses at Sycan Marsh Preserve. From May to July 1986, ten-day field courses embracing ornithology, botany, and regional land use will again be offered at Katharine Ordway Sycan Marsh, a 25,000-acre Conservancy preserve along the interface of Oregon's Cascade Range and the Great Basin. Excursions will take in alkaline lakes and fault-block mountains, sage deserts, Crater Lake National Park, and mountain forests and marshes.

Transportation, meals, tents, and a cabin are provided for nine participants at the beautiful spring-side campsite. Cost is \$850 per ten-day session. For further information, contact: Sycan Program, The Nature Conservancy, 1234 N.W. 25th Ave., Portland, OR 97210. Phone: (503) 228-9561.

BIRD CLASS

Wasilla Community School (376-7813) \$40 plus \$5 registration fee. John Wenger will teach you the Birds of The Matanuska/Susitna Valley. Eight Sundays 7AM-12 Noon. April 20 & 27, May 4, 11, 18, 25, June 1, 8. Be assured that there will also be some plant study along the way.

DISPLAY AND SALE

The Society will have an educational display and sale of our wildflower prints at the Sears Mall on Saturday, April 12 and Sunday, April 13. We will have a sign-up sheet at the April 7th meeting for those who can help set up the display on Friday evening or help man the display on the weekend. We welcome any donations of native plant materials for our display—try forcing some branches, etc. This was a greatly appreciated part of our display last year.

Hopefully, our Dogwood prints will be ready. The printers are not having an easy time satisfying us this year. The prints have been sent back again, to be redone.

MORE TREES !!!

More about our Alaskan trees.—This month—Salix or Willow family.

WILLOWS (Salix Sp.) Alaska has many species of willows, some of which cross breed, making identification difficult, if not futile. Some grow to tree size, while others are dwarf alpine species. Willow is the favorite browse of moose, and the buds and seeds are also eaten by birds and hares. Willows are insect pollinated, and their early blossoms provide a very important nectar and pollen source for emerging bumblebee queens.

Native Americans used willows supple branches for basket weaving, and made use of the salicylic acid in the twigs as we use aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid). Most Alaskan willows are of too small a size to be valuable as a timber source.

QUAKING ASPEN (Populus tremuloides) Trembling poplar is the favorite food of beavers, even though its inner bark is bitter (at least to human taste buds) and pioneers used it as a quinine substitute. Its buds and seeds are food for birds and snowshoe hares. It gets its name "quaking aspen" or "trembling poplar" because its flattened leaf petioles cause the leaves to shake in the slightest wind. The Onondaga Indians called it Nut-Ki-e, "noisy leaf". Because quaking aspen grows so fast, often after an area has burned, its wood is weak and is used for fences, railings, crates, excelsior, wood chips and pulp for paper.

BALSAM POPLAR (Populus balsamifera) The sticky buds and the seeds are food for squirrels, hares, and birds; and porcupines eat the bark. The cottony catkins containing the seeds are also used by some birds who take the "cotton" and use it to line their nests. Poplars are fast growing trees, and consequently do not produce high quality wood for human uses; however, this pioneer species is used for pulp, excelsior, and for making fruit baskets. BLACK COTTONWOOD (Populus trichocarpa) has similar uses. It is indistinguishable from Balsam Poplar in winter, being told apart by its three-sided seed pods. It's planted for shade.

Submitted by Lynn Catlin

QUIZ ANSWER

Pinguicula vulgaris ssp. vulgaris, a member of the Lentibulariaceae or Bladderwort family.

QUOTE TO NOTE

"What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered." Ralph Waldo Emerson in Fortune of the Republic, quoted in the Newsletter, Volume 4, Number 4, of the Wyoming Native Plant Society.

TRIVIA

One of the nation's largest manufacturers of electric fences has changed the color of its fence insulators from red to black following numerous reports of birds being electrocuted after mistaking the insulators for flowers. Most electrocutions involved hummingbirds, but orioles were also attracted by the red insulators.—from National Wildlife, Feb./Mar. 1985.

If the spores of one large puff-ball were laid in a line side by side, the line would reach around the earth four or five times.—from Fungi: The Rotten World About Us, Feb. 10, Public Broadcasting System Television.
