

Nov.?
1986



P.O. Box 141613, Anchorage, Ak. 99514

MEETING NEWS

The December meeting of the Anchorage Chapter will be on Monday, December 1, 1986, at 8PM in the basement meeting room of the Grandview Gardens Library, 1325 Primrose (just south of DeBarr and 1 block west of Bragaw). Entrance is on the west side, facing Primrose.

BOARD MEETING---7:17PM immediately preceding the general meeting.

SPEAKER---Anchorage Chapter President, Lynn Catlin, will present: "Getting the Latin Beat". Don't let latin names scare you, learn to use them to your advantage. They can even help you understand common names.

PLANT FAMILY---discussion will be on the Phlox/POLEMONIACEAE family, represented in Alaska by 2 native genera, Phlox and Polemonium. The leaves of this family may be opposite or alternate, entire divided or pinnately compound. The flowers are 5-merous having 5 united sepals, 5 united petals, 5 epipetalous (connected to the petals) stamens, sometimes at various points in the rotate or somewhat tubular flower. The ovary is superior, having 1 style and 3 stigmas. The fruit is a loculicidal (splits down the sides) capsule having united carpels, 3 locules and the seeds are axillary. Polymoniums (Jacobs Ladder) are found throughout most of the State; and Phlox are an alpine plant of McKinley Park, northern Alaska, the Brooks Range and the Seward Peninsula.

1985-86 STATE OFFICERS ARE:

- President-----Verna Pratt-----
- Vice-President-----Marilyn Barker-----
- Secretary-----Charlu Choate-----
- Treasurer-----Larry Haller-----
- *****
- Newsletter-----Frank Pratt-----
- *****

1986 ANCHORAGE CHAPTER BOARD MEMBERS ARE:

- President-----Lynn Catlin-----
- Vice-President-----Doug Tryck-----
- Secretary-----Peggy Pletcher-----
- Treasurer-----Larry Haller-----
- Representative to State Board-----Frank Bogardus-----
- General Program Chairperson-----Debbie Brown-----
- Educational Programming-----Debbie Brown-----
- Field Trips-----Frank Bogardus-----
- *****

ELECTION RESULTS

Results of the Anchorage Chapter election held at the November meeting are as follows:

- President-----Lynn Catlin-----
- Vice-President-----John Wenger-----
- Secretary-----Peggy Pletcher-----
- Treasurer-----Larry Haller-----

The new officers take office in January. Committee chairpersons will be appointed.

MYSTERY PLANT

This plant is found throughout most of Alaska except southeastern and the Aleutian Chain. It grows 18" to 30" tall and has glabrous oblanceolate basal leaves with slightly toothed margins. Stem leaves are nearly linear. The flower heads are in a terminal cluster and consist of an involucre of black-tipped bracts and rather ragged looking yellow daisy-type flower heads (1" to 1-1/2" across). They are usually found in fields and meadows from sea level to about 2000 meters.



CONTEST

O.K., It is said that everybody loves a contest, so here's one for all ANPS members. It's the "Name the Newsletter Contest." The rules are quite simple: 1) entries are limited to ANPS members in good-standing,

2) one entry per member, 3) entries must be submitted in writing. Entries may be turned in at the December Meeting, or mailed to the address at the top of this newsletter to arrive NLT 26 Dec. Voting on the entries will be at the January 1987 meeting. An appropriate certificate will be awarded to the winner.

FAIRBANKS NEWS

"NEWS FROM THE HERBARIUM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA MUSEUM, FAIRBANKS

Dave Murray, Curator and ANPS member, wishes to thank the ANPS members who have sent in checklists and specimens. We are always on the lookout for more detailed information on the distribution of plants, and for such a vast area as Alaska it is going to take the collective knowledge from society members who become well acquainted with their local floras. We would appreciate a specimen as a permanent record for those discoveries of species beyond the range predicted by Hulten in his Manual (that is beyond the solid line he drew to signify the geographic limits on each of his distribution maps in that book).

As you are well aware, the University has received substantial budget cuts. We no longer have funds to hire student assistants for processing of specimens, but happily we have been able to attract volunteers from the Fairbanks community who have over the past year done all of the mounting, accessioning and filing. Without these people, we would be at a standstill; with them we processed over 6000 specimens, which brings our total holdings to about 118,000 specimens.

Readers of this newsletter will want to see the Division of State Museums (395 Whittier St., Juneau 99801) Technical Paper Number 1 CONCEPTS, in which Wendy Parker Swendell presented background on the Juneau Botanical Club Herbarium at the Alaska State Museum. Encouraged by J.P. Anderson, then a Juneau florist, several women, sparked by the late Maxcine Williams, began in the late 1940s to collect plants from all over the state. They in turn solicited collections from others located at far flung areas around Alaska. The Juneau Botanical Club donated the collection to the State Museum in 1977, as well as its library. They now have Maxcine William's collection of photographic slides; I have seen enough of her pictures to know they are very good. The specimens have just been carefully curated, and I rejoice that these materials will be conserved in perpetuity.

We are currently revising my 1980 booklet on threatened and endangered plants of Alaska. Enough new information had come in that it was time for an update, and we are grateful for the financial support from the federal agencies in this effort. A few copies of the first edition are still available if desired, just drop me a line." (Submitted by: Dr. David F. Murray, Curator, U of A Museum, 907 Yukon Dr., Fairbanks, AK 99775-1200)

MUSHROOM NEWS

"HOLD THE Laetiporus sulphureus

A mushroom considered by many to be of excellent culinary quality is earning a bad reputation for itself and for local produce markets and commercial mushroomers. Laetiporus sulphureus, the so-called "Chicken of the Woods" or "Sulphur Shelf" mushroom, has been indicated as the culprit in at least two recent poisonings reported to local health agencies. Described in several field guides as unsafe for consumption, especially raw, L. sulphureus has nevertheless been sold in such markets as Berkeley Bowl, Monterey Foods and the Real Food Market in San Francisco with no warning to shoppers about its possible toxicity.

MSSF members have reported severe stomach upset and diarrhea after eating the mushroom, both raw and cooked. Member Gregg Miller experienced severe stomach discomfort three out of four times he ate the mushroom. Whether it came from Eucalyptus or Oak made no difference. Heretofore, it has been believed that only mushrooms that grew on Eucalyptus caused problems. Gregg reported that he ate the mushroom in different stages of development and suffered with each. No matter how old or fresh it was, it made him ill.

The reports forwarded to public agencies include that of a 39-year old woman who ate a 3' by 4' piece of L. sulphureus she had sauteed in butter. Twenty minutes later she was ill. Her discomfort continued for several hours and included nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. She contacted the Poison Control Center in San Francisco who then contacted Paul Vergeer of MSSF's Toxicology Committee. Paul and Dr. Tom Duffy, also on MSSF's Toxicology Committee, are regularly contacted when a suspected mushroom poisoning is reported.

An August report made to the Food and Drug branch of the California Department of Health Services involved a woman who bought L. sulphureus at Monterey Foods in Berkeley. She experienced similar symptoms. Her husband had been nibbling on the mushroom as they shopped in the market and reported that he felt queasy about ten minutes after eating it. Like the woman in the other case described, she was not hospitalized.

At present, the toxicology of L. sulphureus is not well known. Whether the poisoning effect is related to the mushroom itself, the wood it grows on or a combination of both is unclear. Obviously, though, it remains best appreciated as a brilliant yellow and orange decoration rather than as a gourmet treat.

Pat George Mycological Society of San Francisco

from Mycena News, Volume 37:2, October 1986'

At the present time, in Alaska, this species is known to occur only on coniferous wood, either spruce or hemlock. If you, or anyone you know, regularly eats this mushroom, ANPS member Phyllis Kempton would like to have comments from you. It would be helpful to know where the mushroom was collected, what type of tree, how the mushroom was prepared, was the whole fruitbody eaten or just the leading edge, how many people ate the mushroom, was any discomfort felt after eating, how long after, etc. Also, if you enjoyed the mushroom and didn't experience any problems with it, that information would be appreciated, too. You can write to Phyllis at 1200 I St. #303, Anchorage, AK 99501.

RECIPE

JOHN WENGER'S PIE RECIPE for those who picked lowbush cranberries this fall. With practice, it can be made in 15 minutes.

Stirring constantly, boil (for about 5 minutes) 1 cup of berries and 1/4 cup sugar in high pan with a couple tablespoonfuls of water. Cool when done and start making graham cracker crust. Then mix plain yogurt and whip cream (real preferred) in equal amounts (enough to fill crust). Swirl cooled berries into mix. Pour into shell & freeze. Remove 1/2 hour before serving so all ice crystals have melted. Don't expect any leftovers.

QUIZ ANSWER

Senecio lugens

STATE PARK NOTES

Chugach State Park announces the following program presented by the Alaska Natural History Association:

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT---December 20, Saturday 8AM, Eagle River Visitor Center. Join other bird watchers and help the park keep tabs on winter bird residents. Beginners are welcome. Bring binoculars and dress warm.

1987 DUES

Dues for 1987 are due and payable. Students---\$5, Individual---\$10, and Family---\$15. Pay at December meeting or send to ANPS, PO Box 141613, Anchorage, AK 99504.

LOST FLOWER

One of our dearest members, Elizabeth (Liz) Robinson passed away after a heart attack early this month. She and Al joined the Society in the Summer of '82. Liz had enjoyed a successful career in the field of social work, and remained very active in that field as a volunteer after her retirement. We have a memorial fund (proceeds go to our Scholarship Fund) for anyone wishing to donate money to the Society in memory of Liz or any other person. If you supply us with an address, a notice of your gift will be sent to the relatives of the deceased and you will receive a receipt for a tax-deductible donation to a non-profit educational organization.

HOLIDAY PLANTS

Several plants are traditionally associated with the holiday season. In the lower 48, there is quite a variety of Christmas trees to choose from. But here in Alaska, if you cut one of your own, you are limited to white or black spruce. Hemlocks lose their needles too fast. Residents in the interior could choose to have an x-rated Christmas with a naked Tamarack!

Here are some botanical briefs on 3 popular holiday plants:

POINSETTIA is a member of the Spurge Family (Euphorbiaceae). This plant family has many members in Africa that resemble North American cacti. Euphorbs have a resinous latex that is poisonous. Economically important relatives of Poinsettia include sources of rubber, Castor oil and tapioca. The red 'petals' of poinsettia are actually bracts (leaves) that turn red in response to the relative amount of dark versus light hours.

HOLLY (*Ilex* sp.) English Holly (*I. aquifolium*) and American Holly (*I. opaca*), native to S.E. US, are sold around Christmas time. Hollies are dioecious (separate male and female plants). Of course, only the female plants produce berries. There are over 300 species of *Ilex* found on nearly every continent; however, none are native to Alaska.

MISTLETOE is a hemi-parasite. Its roots are not typical. They produce haustoria that attach to the host tree and obtain nutrients. Mistletoe does produce green leaves, so it can also make its own food. Dwarf Mistletoe (*Arceuthobium campylopodium*) is native to southeastern Alaska. It grows on western hemlock and has tiny scale-like leaves. Quite a bit to think about next time you kiss someone under the Mistletoe! (Submitted by Lynn Catlin).

LOTIONS, POTIONS AND NOTIONS

by Old Doc.

Since it's the holiday season, let's take a look at Mistletoe, even though it does not grow in Alaska. *Viscum album* is better known for the Christmas custom of kissing beneath its branches than for its therapeutic qualities. This amorous tradition is said to come from an ancient Norse legend which relates how Balder, the god of peace, was slain by the blind god Hoder with an arrow made of mistletoe. The other gods restored Balder to life, and, to avoid further trouble with mistletoe, gave it into the care of Freya, the goddess of love. Mistletoe is a parasitic plant living off apple trees, poplars, willows, limes and others, and rarely, the oak. Druids used it in their religious rites when they found it growing on an oak, which doubled its magical powers. They cut it with a golden sickle which symbolized the sun, and caught it in a cloth before it could touch the ground. It is now believed that the Druids used Mistletoe as a cure for sterility and epilepsy, and as an antidote to poisons. These ancient beliefs are justified by the pharmaceutical use of the plant at the present time. Its active principles only began to be appreciated in the 19th century. The leaves and young branches contain the glutinous substance viscin, gum and tannin, which have marked hypotensive and diuretic properties. The drug acts as a vasodilator and antispasmodic, and has been used in hypertension, arteriosclerosis, chronic nephritis and internal hemorrhage. Most English Mistletoe comes from the apple orchards of Herefordshire.

THANKS !!!

The newsletter editor and staff wish to express their appreciation to the following persons for their contributions to this month's issue:

Lynn Catlin
John Wenger
Phyllis Kempton
Dr. David Murray