

Borealis

the newsletter of the



P.O. Box 141613 Anchorage, Alaska 99514

April 1993

Anchorage Chapter News

The April meeting of the ANPS Anchorage Chapter will be held Monday, April 5th at 7:30PM in the First Congregational Church at 2610 E. Northern Lights Blvd. Please use the entrance at the rear of the church.

Mr. David Murray will discuss his work with the Panarctic Flora Project and the joint US-Russian expedition to the Seward Peninsula last summer. For members who cannot attend the meeting Monday evening, Mr. Murray will be presenting the same program at The University of Alaska Anchorage at 11:30 to 12:45 earlier that same day in Engineering room 342.

ANPS Treasurer's Report

As of the end of 1992, there were 107 paid members belonging to the ANPS. The treasurer, Yaso Gurusingam-Thiru, prepared a balance sheet showing the year-to-date cash balance of the Society which is included at the back of this month's newsletter.

Plant Family - Saxifraginaceae

The April selection of plants in the Saxifrage family grows mostly in damp areas and have toothed wedged-shaped

leaves in a clump at the base of the plants. This group includes the common Red-Stemmed Saxifrage, *Saxifraga lyallii*, that grows along mountain streams and the Coast saxifrage, *S. ferruginea*, that grows in very wet rocky coastal areas. Others are; *S. davurica*, *S. unalaschensis*, *S. foliosa*, *S. adscendens*, *S. caespitosa*, *S. nivalis*, and *S. reflexa*. Most have small white flowers often with purplish sepals and stems. *S. hieracifolia* has similar but larger leaves, a stout stem and greenish to purplish flowers. Leather leaf saxifrage, *Leptarrhena pyrifolia*, has leathery leaves, small whitish flowers and is very red in seed.

Mystery Plant

A very robust and weedy plant of SouthCentral Alaska. Its rank growth and annoying physical characteristics belie the fact that this is one of our choicest edibles! Surely you too have encountered this botanical sniper awaiting the unwary!



Panarctic Biota Project

A workshop in Moscow for the purpose of determining the feasibility of long-term joint US and Russian research on biodiversity in the Arctic, with travel funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation to the University of Alaska Museum, was held in February of 1991. During that workshop, both sides agreed to accomplish an assessment of biodiversity in the Arctic, utilizing electronic databases for data management, to standardize conventions, protocols and procedures for sampling and monitoring at selected sites in the Arctic. The Project is directed by an Executive Committee made

up of people from a number of agencies and universities in both countries, but the real work is accomplished by working groups which have been established for vascular plants, bryophytes, and lichens, marine algae, mammals, birds, fish and terrestrial invertebrates.

The second workshop was held in February 1992 in St. Petersburg. We refined plans for database management, developed concrete work plans and division of labor for the working groups and began to wrestle with the problem of ownership, protection and control of electronic databases.

The botanists have called their components the Panarctic Biota Project the Panarctic Flora. The botanists have agreed that the foundation of the Panarctic Flora will be a computerized database from which the hard copy floras would ensue. There will be two managerial and editorial centers: the University of Alaska Museum and the Komarov Botanical Institute. We identified the people and institutions in Russia likely to participate in the project, the major herbaria where arctic material is housed, and the gaps in collections and in talent for systematic coverage for arctic plants. Database specialists for both sides have assessed resources and capabilities. The proposed work was seen by everyone to be desirable, feasible, and actually beneficial.

In the year since the second workshop and e-mail connection has been established, which makes communication between Fairbanks and St. Petersburg vastly easier. The US side has purchased computers, accessories, and software for the Komarov Botanical Institute. Alan Batten with Barbara Murray of the UA Museum are completing refinements of the

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Borealis is published monthly except for June, July, and August. For information on how to join the Alaska Native Plant Society or to send questions, comments and articles, please contact:

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database and data fields and the data dictionary are being closely coordinated with Volodya Razzhivin in St. Petersburg who is at this moment in at the Herbarium in Fairbanks.

Work will begin on the annotated checklist with the entry of all names from a list of standard references: Hultén, Porsild and Cody, and the Arctic Flora USSR. the checklist will include accepted names and bibliographic documentation, synonyms, and bibliographic documentation, geographic sectors of the Arctic on the basis of floristic and phytogeographic criteria, chromosome number based on counts for the Arctic cross referenced to voucher specimens and bibliographic citations, comments of rare taxa, and discussions of problems (when they occur) that prevent a consensus taxonomy. A list of indidate taxa has been developed toward the preparation of an Atlas of Beringian endemic Plants, which we hope will be our first major hard copy product.

-- David Murray

Rare Plant Meeting

A follow-up meeting to the Rare Plant Meeting held in November 1992 has been scheduled for April 21st and 22nd in the Yukon Room on the first floor of the Federal Building. The two-day meeting will continue from 8:30 to 4:00 each day.

Topics of discussion will include the possibility of updating the rare plant guide, identification of species for further study, possible creation of a permanent Rare Plant Working Group the adoption of an official or administrative list of rare plants and planning of future projects.

If you would like to attend the meeting, please contact Virginia Moran for availability of space. Her number is

Herb Conference

Reserve space now for **Celebrating Herbs: The Alaska Connection** on Saturday, August 28, 1993 in the Matanuska Valley. Conference highlights include native plant walks with Verna Pratt, natural healing with Connie Anawrok, culinary herbs with Cathy Sage, flower essences with Jane Bell and Steve Johnson, reawakening to herbs with Janice Schofield, herbal garden design with Wendy Anderson, profitable crafts with Kathy Harger and much more. Other herb experts will offer booths, displays and products.

Registration cost is \$50 and the deadline is July 15th. For additional information and registration, contact:

Good Earth Garden School
Ellen Vande Visse

Palmer Alaska 99645

"Requiem for a Lawnmower"

A new book dealing with the ecologically sound use of native plants has been published. One of the authors, Sally Wasowski, sent a letter to the ANPS asking for help to increase the circulation of the new book. The letter follows:

Dear fellow native plant enthusiasts:

Help!

My husband and I have just had our new book, *Requiem for a Lawnmower*, published. The book deals with a subject near and dear to all of us -- native plants and how to use them in an ecologically sound way.

We think it's a pretty good book -- informative, conversational, often even humorous. What's even nicer is that others think it's pretty good too. Garden writer Ken Druse said, "It's fantastic! I'm going to tell everyone I know about it." and *Wildflower* magazine said, "*Requiem* gives the back-to-nature gardening book a much-needed boost of literary experience and love of place that has been painfully absent." Some readers have actually said it could be one of the most important gardening books of the '90's.

All of which makes us very happy. But -- we still need your help! You see, each year thousands and thousands of books get published and competition for shelf space in bookstores is fierce! And since neither Andy nor I are household names, it's going to take some doing to get proper distribution.

So, we're hoping that you'll ask your local bookstore to carry *Requiem*. Naturally, that's good for us. But it's also good for you. Think of what a great recruiting tool this book can be and how it can help spread the "gospel" of native plants. *Requiem* can also be a money maker for your organization. Order it directly for the publisher at bookseller rates and sell it at meetings, seminars. etc. It retails for \$15.95, so your cost would be about half that, depending on quantity.

To order *Requiem for a Lawnmower*, contact Julie Serber at Taylor Publishing,

Many thanks,

Sally Wasowski

Mystery Plant Answer

Stinging Nettle *Urtica lyalli*

People's reaction to the minute barbs injected into the skin by these plants varies considerably. Often the smarting and welts are not felt until later. Still, the early spring shoots are well worth putting on latex gloves to gather and boil for greens. Urticaceae or the nettle family is another basically mono-genus. In the Interior of Alaska one is more likely to encounter the narrow-leaved *U. gracilis*.



ALASKA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
TREASURERS REPORT

	Month December 92	Year to Date
Beginning Cash Balance	\$4,489.80	\$4,791.60
RECEIPTS:		
Membership dues	300.00	1,290.00
Sale of prints	75.00	75.00
Sale of decal stickers		0.75
Sale of sew-on patches		
Sale of seeds		25.75
Contribution to scholarship fund		
Contribution, unrestricted		
Advertising		15.00
Miscellaneous	<i>Donations Homer</i>	110.00
		104.25
TOTAL RECEIPTS	375.00	1,620.75
DISBURSEMENTS:		
News letter, postage, printing	66.00	552.55
Business license	50.00	50.00
PO Box rental		49.00
Seed sale envelopes		
Administrative supplies, postage	24.40	24.40
Postage prepaid on sales items		
Monthly meetings, refreshments		
Refunds		
Miscellaneous	<i>Transfer to Anchorage chapter Homer</i>	100.00
		12.00
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	140.40	1,687.95
Closing Cash Balance	\$4,724.40	\$4,724.40

107 paid members as of 12/31/92 .

Y. Gurusingam

Yaso Gurusingam-Thiru, Treasurer

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