Borealis

the newsletter of the

Alaska Native Plant Society

December 1993

P.O. Box 141613 Anchorage, Alaska 99514

Anchorage Chapter News

The December ANPS Anchorage Chapter meeting will be held Monday, December 6th at 7:30PM in the First Congregational Church at 2610 E. Northern Lights Blvd. This is the large brown church building just east of Wendler Junior High School on the south side of Northern Lights. Please use the entrance on the rear side of the church.

Julie Riley of the U.S. Cooperative Extension Service will be the featured speaker. Her topic will be landscaping with native plants.

Anchorage Chapter Elections

Annual elections will be held at the December meeting. The Anchorage Chapter nominating committee has submitted the following nominees for office:

President	Jean Poore
Vice-President	Julia Ricketts
Treasurer	Jim Poore
Secretary	To Be Announced
Chapter Representative	Marilyn Barker

Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor. Please contact Sally Karabelnikoff at for more information.

Mystery Plant

The mystery plant for December will be no mystery for many readers. It is common throughout most of Alaska except for the Southeast, the Aleutian Chain and the Arctic Coastal Tundra. This shrub is found in bogs, woodlands and even on alpine slopes. It can be waist high in shady woodlands, but very low and compact at higher elevations. Tiny aromatic white flowers are arranged in nearly flat-topped clusters at the end of the branches. These fine delicate branches and the brown clusters of seed capsules make this an easy shrub to identify in winter.

Plant Family

Last month, a brief presentation was given on the *Tofieldia* genus which has tight racemes of tiny flowers. This month, Gary Davies will discuss two genera, *Zygadenus* and *Veratrum*. Both have loose racemes of greenish flowers and are poisonous.

Botanical Salmagundi

A table summarizing totals for native full species of U.S. and Canadian Vascular plants is included as an attachment to this newsletter. John Kartesz of the North Carolina Botanical Garden developed this list over a twenty year period. According to the table, North Dakota has the least number of full species with 1,140 species. Alaska has the next lowest number with 1,150. California leads the U.S. in greatest number of full species with 5,090.

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Vice President - Jean Poore
Secretary - Jean Tam
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President - Charles "Chuck" Adsit
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Editor - Lynne Balogh
Circulation - Martha Hatch

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

Alaska Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 141613 Anchorage, AK 99514

Seed Exchange

Please bring any seeds you have to the December meeting or mail them to ANPS in care of the post office box. A volunteer is still needed to chair the seed exchange project. If you are interested, please contact Verna Pratt at .

Name Origin

The genus name, *Aquilegia* (A-kwee-lee'-ji-a) is from the Latin word for eagle, referring to the spurred petals that suggest an eagle's claw. The species name, *canadensis* (kan-a-den'-sis) means "from Canada".

The name Columbine is from the Latin word colomba, meaning "dove". For some people the spurs look like dove heads in a circle.

A committee was formed at one time to make the Wild Columbine our national flower. The name is similar to the District of Columbia and included the Latin word for eagle, our national bird. However, the idea sparked little interest and the committee disbanded.

Flora of North America

The first two volumes of *Flora of North America* were published by Oxford University Press on September 27, 1993. It is the first comprehensive description of the plants growing naturally north of Mexico. Volume 1 contains a series of introductory essays, written by nearly two dozen botanical authorities, that provide a foundation for the Flora. The authors discuss climate, geology, history of

PRELIMINARY COUNTS FOR NATIVE VASCULAR PLANT SPECIES OF U. S. STATES AND CANADIAN PROVINCES

John T. Kartesz - North Carolina Botanical Garden, Chapel Hill, N. C.

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The table below summarizes the state and province totals for native full species of U. S. and Canadian vascular plants from the current review-draft version of my data set on geographical distributions of the taxa recognized in my *Synonymized Checklist* (Timber Press, due early 1993). This information, in development for over 20 years, comes primarily from floras, monographs, plant conservation reports, and many voucher specimens. Substantial revisions have been made in response to reviews by floristic and taxonomic specialists, including many Heritage Program botanists. These counts may differ to some extent with published totals in various floras, due to differences in taxonomic treatments, additions from recent research, and handling of questionable reports. Since these totals are approximate, they are here rounded to the nearest ten.

The count for each state or province considers full species only; infraspecific taxa and hybrids are excluded. The three districts of Canada's vast Northwest Territories are separately tabulated, and mainland Labrador is reported separately from insular Newfoundland. In these preliminary tabulations, species are considered native if they are native somewhere in the U. S. or Canada. The relatively rare instances of species that are native in part of the continent but present only as exotics in other areas are not addressed here. The five U. S. states with the highest numbers of native vascular plant species are: California (5,090), Texas (4,510), Arizona (3,250), Oregon (2,930), and Florida (2,870). The five states with the lowest numbers are: North Dakota (1,140), Hawaii (1,150), Alaska (1,250), Rhode Island (1,350), and Iowa (1,390). I thank the Nature Conservancy for assistance in preparing this summary for publication.

Estimated Native Vascular Plant Species by States and Provinces:

Alabama	2,420	Minnesota	1,720	Vermont	1,490
Alaska	1,250	Mississippi	2,030	Virginia	2,320
Arizona	3,250	Missouri	1,890	Washington	2,330
Arkansas	2,170	Montana	2,110	West Virginia	1,730
California	5,090	Nebraska	1,460	Wisconsin	1,620
Colorado	2,640	Nevada	2,680	Wyoming	2,080
Connecticut	1,670	New Hampshire	1,420		
Delaware	1,580	New Jersey	1,910	Alberta	1,600
Florida	2,870	New Mexico	2,810	British Columbia	2,170
Georgia	2,760	New York	2,190	Franklin (N.W.T.)	340
Hawaii	1,150	North Carolina	2,450	Keewatin (N.W.T)	460
Idaho	2,310	North Dakota	1,140	Labrador	610
Illinois	2,060	Ohio	1,920	Manitoba	1,290
Indiana	1,840	Oklahoma	2,280	Mackenzie (N.W.T.)	910
Iowa	1,390	Oregon	2,930	New Brunswick	970
Kansas	1,690	Pennsylvania	2,030	Newfoundland (insular)	820
Kentucky	2,020	Rhode Island	1,350	Nova Scotia	1,030
Louisiana	2,090	South Carolina	2,190	Ontario	1,930
Maine	1,490	South Dakota	1,400	Prince Edward Island	640
Maryland	2,040	Tennessee	2,110	Quebec	1,810
Massachusetts	1,650	Texas	4,510	Saskatchewan	1,180
Michigan	1,950	Utah	2,590	Yukon	1,000

vegetation, expeditions, research, overall classification and describes how to use the book. Volume 2 contains treatments of ferns and gymnosperms.

In all, fourteen volumes of the Flora will be published over a period of twelve years. The description of each species is written and reviewed by experts from the systematic botanical community worldwide, based on original observations of living and herbarium specimens by a critical review of the literature. Each volume will include identification keys, short descriptions, distributions, and other information of biological interest for a particular group of plants.

In addition to the published volumes, all the Flora's information will be stored in the Missouri Botanical Garden's computerized database, TROPICOS, to allow easy access, sorting, and comparison of a large amount of floristic information. A comprehensive bibliographic database is being developed at the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA.

Interested individuals can order copies of the first two volumes from Oxford University Press by calling 1-800-451-7556. the volumes are priced at $75 each.

Mystery Plant Answer

Alaska Spiraea -- *Spiraea beauverdiana*

The leaves of Alaska Spiraea are used as a tea by Siberian Eskimos.