

Borealis

the newsletter of the



April 1995

P.O. Box 141613, Anchorage, AK 99514

Anchorage Chapter ☆ April Meeting ☆

Monday, April 3 at 7:30 p.m.

The Key to Plant Identification with Garry Davies

This month's meeting will be held at the Science Building of the University of Alaska - Anchorage, Room 248. See map on page 2 for directions.

Get ready for the field season with a repeat of last year's popular keying program. We will explore the world of keys and practice keying out plants using taxonomic texts. No mystery, just plain fun! *Garry Davies*, from the UAA Biology Department, will lead this hands-on program.

Plant Family - Julia Ricketts will continue our series on the Figwort Family. For the next two months, plants in the genus *Pedicularis* will be featured. See pages 3 and 4.

Mini-Botany - The Advance of Spring: Alaska Time Series Greenness Data, presented by Carl Markon, Senior Scientist, USGS/EROS. See page 2.

A board meeting will be held half an hour beforehand, starting at 7 p.m.

Kachemak Bay Chapter ☆ April Meeting ☆

Wednesday, April 5 at 7:30 p.m.

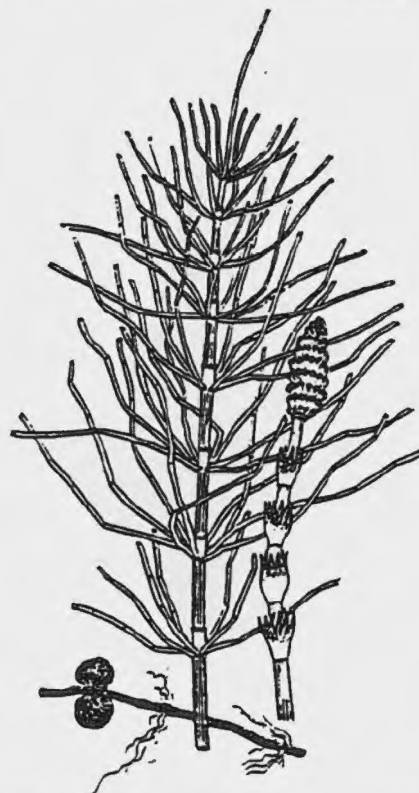
Disturbance in Kenai Peninsula Forests
with Mike Gracz, President of the Kachemak Bay chapter.

The meeting will be held at the Pratt Museum

Mystery Plant

Our mystery plant is one of the first plants to shoot up in spring, and comes from a very ancient family. It forms an extremely common ground cover in moist places all over the northern hemisphere. Spore-bearing stems, each with a cone-like head, appear first but soon wither. They are followed by segmented stems bearing whorls of jointed branches that persist through the summer. The common name describes the appearance of these taller stems. This plant is rich in silica, and has long been used for a variety of medicinal purposes, especially for ailments of the skin.

Answer on Page 3.

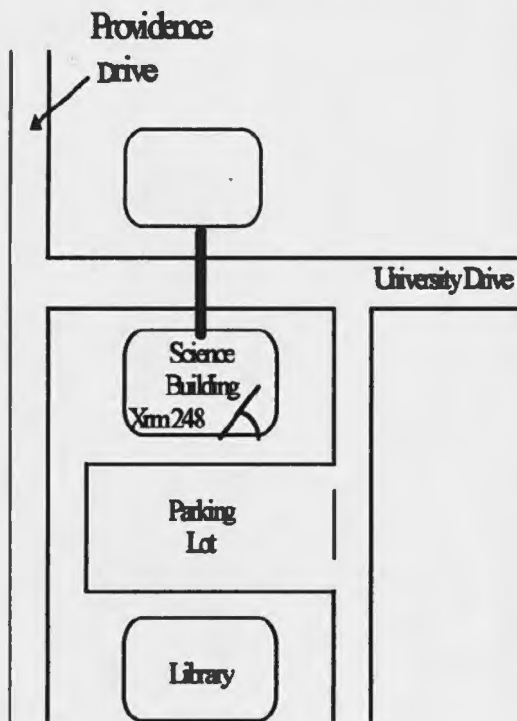


Mystery Plant drawings by Toby Tyler, ANPS Kachemak Chapter.

Mini-Botany Feature
The Advance of Spring:
Alaska Time Series Greenness Data
 by
 Carl Markon

A series of Advanced Very High Resolution Radiometer satellite data (similar to the weather pictures you see on TV) is processed to produce greenness maps of Alaska. The data consists of composited mosaics - images pieced together from different acquisitions for cloud free coverage. The data is used to produce Normalized Difference Vegetation Indices (NDVI) which are a ratio of reflected red and infrared light from the plants on the ground. The resulting maps show, in two week periods, the 'green up' of areas in the state, starting in April, and then follows the senescence of vegetation in the fall.

Map to Location of April Meeting



**Spring Garden Show
 at the Sears Mall**

Saturday and Sunday
April 22 and 23
Saturday, 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Sunday, noon - 6 p.m.

Sears Mall at Northern Lights and
 New Seward Highway

We need your help!!

Once again, the Alaska Native Plant Society is planning to have a publicity table at the Garden Show. This is a good opportunity to let people know who we are and maybe attract some new members. Our table(s) will feature various displays, and we will also be selling some of the prints and other items that are available at membership meetings. To make this event run smoothly, we need lots of volunteers to step forward and take a two hour slot at manning the tables. **Please call Jean Poor at [redacted] to volunteer.**

**Spring 1995 Meeting of the
 Alaska Rare Plant Working Group**
 April 5 - 7

April 5 & 6, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
April 7, 8 a.m. - noon
Denali Room, Federal Building
 located at the corner of 8th Ave. & A St.
 in downtown Anchorage
 Program Chair : Rob Lipkin

Agenda items will include slide presentations of the 1994 field season, the new FWS Plant Notice of Review, the needs and priorities for remaining Category 2 candidates and suggestions for additions to the list, a State list of rare plants, a presentation on modeling arctic steppe distribution using terrain variables, local inventories, and plans for the 1995 season. The meetings are free and open to everyone. For more information, or an agenda, call Rob Lipkin at [redacted]

The Figwort Family continued: *Pedicularis*

For the next two months we will continue our look at the Figwort Family by featuring plants in the large genus *Pedicularis* (Lousewort). Species generally have four stamens, yellow or pink/purple flowers, a bilabiate (2-lipped) corolla with the upper lip forming a hood (galea), and stem leaves, when present, that are alternate or occasionally whorled. The leaves are pinnately divided and toothed; in many species they form a basal rosette.



Elephant's
Head

Hulten lists 16 species in this genus (some with 2 or more subspecies), although several of these are known only from Siberia or Canada. This month we will focus on those with pink or purple flowers; next month yellow-flowered species will be featured.

Pedicularis kanei (Woolly Lousewort or Bumblebee Plant) is probably the best known of the pink species (see next page for a description). *P. Langsdorffii* (Arctic Lousewort) somewhat resembles it, but differences include: not being woolly in bud;

sparingly hairy leaves with a broad, central rib; light pink to lavender flowers; and the presence of slender teeth at the tip of the galea. It blooms a little later, from June to mid-July. There are two sub-species: *P. Langsdorffii* subsp. *Langsdorffii* is found in extreme western Alaska, while subsp. *arctica* occurs throughout most of the state with the exception of the Yukon drainage, the Aleutians and south-coastal and southeastern Alaska.

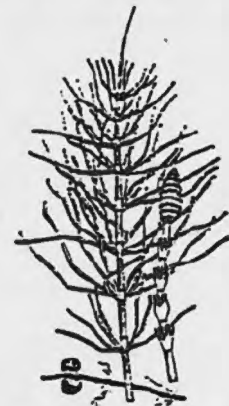
Fern-leaf Lousewort or Sudetan Lousewort (*P. sudetica*) and Small-flowered Lousewort (*P. parviflora*) also possess teeth at the tip of their galea. The former grows to 16 inches on rocky slopes, tundra and in wet meadows. Its glabrous leaves form a loose basal rosette; usually few stem

leaves are present. The flowers are rose to wine-colored and bloom from mid-July to mid-August. Four sub-species cover most of the state, except for South-coastal and Southeastern Alaska and parts of the Aleutian Islands. Small-flowered Lousewort is an annual or short-lived perennial found in wet meadows, swamps and muskeg at low to middle elevations. Its stems are solitary and branching, and most of its leaves occur on the stems. The inflorescence is fairly long and bears many leafy bracts. Flowers lower on the stem are often remote and in leaf axils, while those towards the tips of branches may be clustered. The corolla is purple or bi-colored. There are two subspecies that together cover western and southern Alaska. *P. macrodonta* is another closely related species found in pockets in southern Alaska.

Whorled-leaf Lousewort (*P. verticillata*) is unusual among the pink/purple species in that its stem leaves are in whorls. The pink flowers, blooming in July and August, also appear in whorls. It occurs in meadows throughout Alaska, with the exception of the Aleutian Islands.

Two beaked (galea extended into a narrow tip) species are found in Alaska and the Yukon. Both have descriptive names. The galea of Bird's Beak Lousewort (*P. ornithorhyncha*), found in Southeastern Alaska, is extended to form a straight beak. That of Elephant's Head (*P. groenlandica*) has a long, upward-curved beak. It is found in S.E. Yukon Territory.

Mystery Plant Answer:



Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*)
Equisetaceae

The Woolly Lousewort

by Julia Ricketts

Natural History:

Woolly Lousewort

(*Pedicularis Kanet*) is a common plant of dry stony tundra and rocky alpine slopes throughout most of Alaska. In bud this plant is extremely woolly; the entire plant, with the exception of the lower leaves, is covered with dense white or gray hairs. Both basal and stem leaves are present, although the latter are reduced in size. Leaves are finely pinnate with toothed leaflets, and often appear purple in spring. Its 1-3 thick stems produce large spikes of very showy, rose-pink flowers that bloom from late May through June. Like many plants in this family, its flowers are bilabiate (2-lipped), with the 2 upper petals fused to form a galea (hoodlike upper lip) and the 3 lower petals fused to form the bottom lip.

Native Uses:

- The long, orange-yellow tap root resembles a carrot, and is eaten raw or cooked by Inupiat Eskimos.
- Natives around Cape Prince of Wales and Shishmaref gather the flowers in June and ferment them with water before eating.
- Although they have no recorded uses for this plant, the Inland Dena'ina call it "Ch'anjidi yelqet'i, meaning "that which bees eat."

Many plants bear descriptive names that paint an instant picture for the reader: prickly rose, yellow-spotted saxifrage or blue bells of Scotland. The first time I heard the name "woolly lousewort" it stuck in my mind, but the image it conjured was of something neither plant nor animal; something that Stephen King might write a book about, a furry being crawling with skin-creeping blood-suckers. Unprepared for the picture in my plant book, I found myself staring at a bright pink beauty. The name is colorful, but unfortunate; it dates from a time when shepherds believed that lice living in the dense woolly hairs of the plant could infect sheep that ate the blooms. ("Wort" simply means "plant"; thus "Louse Plant.") The myth is totally unfounded, but the name has stuck.

My introduction to a living woolly lousewort came one May as part of a class in local flora. We arrived at Glen Alps late one cool, blustery evening. It was my first spring in Alaska, and I relished the thought of finding plants that, so far, had only been pictures in books or slides in class. Near the overlook deck we found plant nirvana. Numerous bright patches of color splashed on the rocky tundra; most were only an inch or so high. We scrambled from one clump to the next, eager for each new treasure. Exclamations of delight followed the huddled groups. "What's this?" "I've got a new one here." Verna, our instructor, patiently repeated their names, over and over: alpine azalea, Lapland diaspensia, mountain avens, purple oxytrope, potentillas, anemones and more. Nearby on the viewing deck, other groups paused momentarily to glance at the major features of the landscape: Anchorage, Sleeping Lady, a moose in the meadow below. Disinterested in plants, the plane of their gaze passed over us as we crawled from discovery to discovery.

It was a comparative giant that really grabbed my attention that evening. Three showy clusters of rose-purple flowers stood inches above the surrounding crowberry. I grabbed my camera and waited for a lull in the wind; with my belly pressed against the tundra, a purple haze bobbed in and out of focus through my view finder, like the volley of new names I was struggling to fix in my mind. I put the camera down, relaxed and stared into a multitude of deep pink throats. A bee landed heavily on one protruding lip, and almost disappeared inside.



Nearby a ball of silvery-white hair nestled against the tundra. I wondered if some insect had built a shelter, a snug home to while away the long, cold nights of winter. Moving closer I saw leafy green protrusions growing from the woolly mass, and glimpsed just a hint of pink through the fuzz. Wow, here was a woolly lousewort living up to its name; inside this miniature greenhouse a new bud slowly unfurled, waiting for the moment it would stand with the elements on this tundra stage. The insulation is, apparently, so efficient that heat generated by respiration can melt surrounding snow. The wind bit my ears; I longed to shrink and crawl into its tiny woolly heart.

What's in a Name?

Myrica gale (Sweet Gale)

Sweet Gale is a fragrant shrub of low elevation wetlands. The plant spreads by suckers (a shoot originating from underground) and large stands can be seen from the boardwalk at Potter Marsh. Its gray-green oblong leaves have many bright yellow wax glands and emit a pleasant spicy odor when crushed. Like many members of the Myricaceae, its wax-coated fruits contain myrtle or myrica wax and can be used to scent homemade candles. *Myrica* is derived from a Greek word meaning "to perfume." Bayberry and Wax Myrtle are other well-known members of this family.

In spring, male and female catkins appear on separate plants before the new leaves. *Gale* may be derived from a Greek word for "leather helmet," as the male catkins appear in stacked leathery-looking layers somewhat resembling helmets.

Dlin'a lu, a descriptive name given to the plant by the Dena'ina Indians, can be translated as "mouse's hand" and refers to the shape of the leaves. They are longer than broad with several coarse teeth along the margins of the upper third of the leaf.



Recipe of the Month

Cranberry Dessert Pizza

This recipe won a prize for Geraldine Griffith in the Massachusetts Cranberry Festival "Make it Better with Cranberries" contest in 1981. Simple to make, delightful to look at, and delicious to taste, it was the unanimous choice of the judges. It was submitted to *Borealis* by Jean Poor.

Cookie Base:

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 cups flour
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- cinnamon and sugar (optional)



Preheat oven to 350 F. In a food processor thoroughly blend the first seven ingredients. Spread cookie base over 2 greased, 12 inch pizza pans. Sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar if desired, and bake for 12 minutes.

Filling:



- 4 cups cranberries
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch

Bring ingredients to a boil. Boil gently and stir until all berries pop and sauce thickens; spread over cooled cookie base.

Topping:

- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup oatmeal
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 4 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts
- 1/2 cup brown sugar



In a food processor on pulse, or by hand, blend these six ingredients together until crumbly; sprinkle over filling, and bake an additional 12 minutes at 350 F. Cool before glazing (if desired) with a blend of 2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar, 2 teaspoons water, and 1/4 teaspoon almond extract. Serves 12.

April Field Trips

Hillside Park
Sunday, April 9
4 p.m.

Marilyn Barker will lead this winter identification ski trip. Meet at the Abbott Rd. X-country ski parking area. We plan to ski the Foothills Trail, so moderate skiing ability is required. If it's above 30F, the trip will be cancelled. Call **Marilyn** at () for more details.

McHugh Creek
Saturday, April 15
1 p.m. (for approx. 2 -3 hours)

Join **Verna** for this early season field trip. Winter identification and early emerging plants will be the focus. Meet at 1 p.m. at the N.E. corner of the Sears Mall parking lot (at Northern Lights and New Seward Highway), or at 1:20 p.m. at McHugh Creek (Mile 111.8 on the Seward Highway). This will be an easy trip, although the trail may be slippery depending on the weather. Bring appropriate foot wear and clothing. For more information contact **Verna** at

Celebrating Wildflowers Organizational Meeting March 30

The objective of the Celebrating Wildflowers campaign is to devote a week to educating the "general public" about the native plants of our area. All events will be free and a schedule will be published in local newspapers. Various agencies and organizations have been asked to participate. If you would like to give a talk, lead a hike or walk, or otherwise help out, we could certainly use your help.

The organizational meeting will be at 2:30 p.m. on March 30, 1995 in Room G-62 at the FWS Anchorage Field Office, 605 W. 4th Avenue. If you need more information, or are interested in participating but cannot attend this meeting, please call **Ginny Moran**, Celebrating Wildflowers coordinator, at

Beginnings of ANPS Summer '95 Field Trip Schedule

There may be plenty of snow outside, but the field trip season isn't far away. Here are the dates so far:

May 14	Wishbone Hill
May 17	Evening Spring Wildflower Walk on Turnagain Arm Trail
May 24	Evening Spring Wildflower Walk at Glen Alps
May 29	Nancy Lake
June 24 - July 2	The Native Plant Society of Texas meets the Alaska Native Plant Society. Get ready for an action-packed week of field trips.
July 15-16	Yukon Island, Kachemak Bay. Estimated cost \$40 (includes boat fare and overnight camping fee)
July 21-23	Devils Pass backpack
August 19	Arctic Valley to Hiland Road

A detailed field trip schedule will be mailed out to members by the beginning of May.

We'd like to add a lot more trips to the list. If you'd like to lead a plant hike or have a great idea for a botanical trip, call **Julia Ricketts** at

by **April 14**. Let's make this a great field trip season.

Wildlife Tracking at Potter Marsh March 31

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Conservation and Education Program has arranged for naturalist and wildlife biologist, **John Wenger**, to present a four hour wildlife tracking program at Potter Marsh on Friday, March 31. The program will emphasize keen natural observation and investigative techniques, especially learning how to interpret tracks in the snow and other signs of wildlife. Space is limited. To register and for more information, please call **Liz Williams** at **ADF&G**,

ALASKAKRAFTS, INC.

proudly announces the publication
of

"ALASKA'S WILD BERRIES"

by


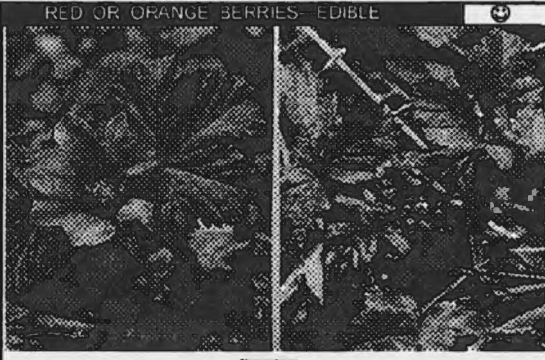
Verna E. Pratt — Frank G. Pratt
publishers of

"Field Guide to Alaskan Wildflowers", "Wildflowers along the Alaska Highway",
and "Wildflowers of Denali National Park"

This new guidebook of the wild berries of Alaska is keyed by color with the amateur botanist and traveler in mind. It has 128 pages filled with plant descriptions, illustrations, and 113 color photographs. There is a section on plant family characteristics, a glossary, a bibliography and a pictorial glossary. This publication is the result of many years experience in identifying, picking and using the wild berries of Alaska.

This easy-to-use pocket guide is the perfect addition to your backpack or glove box. It will enable you to quickly and safely identify all of the wild berries that grow in your area of Alaska from Ketchikan to Barrow.

Typical
plant
description
block →

<p>MALCOBERRY WINEBERRY <i>Rubus arcticus</i></p> <p><i>Rubus / Rose</i></p>  <p>Habitat: Stream banks, fields, lake margins, tundra and alpine slopes. Parent Plant: — perennial, up to 5' (22cm) stem creeping rootstock. Leaves: Denticulate on long stems, 3-toothed leaflets (like Strawberry), coarse veins. Flowers: June — pink, 1 to 1-1/4" (2.5 to 3cm), 5 to 6 narrow petals rounded at ends, dark center. Fruit: August — fuzzy, aggregate fruit, red, soft, juicy, sharp, rounded, not found in abundance in most areas. Uses: Raw, cooked — jelly, jam, pie. Only (red) is sometimes hard to remove, but does not alter the taste if eaten as left on (Flavorless flower). Comments: 3 sub-species occur in Alaska with minor differences of petal width and leaf shape. The leaves of <i>R. arcticus</i> are not divided to the base. (See small map).</p> <p>48</p>	<p>Color key bar ↓</p> <p>Edibility indicator ↓</p> <p>RED OR ORANGE BERRIES — EDIBLE</p>  <p>49</p>
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Release date: June 1995

Retail Price \$9.95 plus shipping.

For the special pre-publication offer of signed book(s) for the special price of \$8.00 per book order not later than May 15th . Unless otherwise arranged, pickup will be at Tundra Arts & Crafts, 427 W. 5th Avenue, Anchorage, AK, 276-0190, (across from Penney's). Additional fee for shipping.

----- tear here -----

ORDER FORM

Name _____ Tel.# _____

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My order is _____ copies of *Alaska's Wild Berries* at \$8.00 for a total price of: \$ _____

[Extra Special One-time Offer—*Wildflowers of Denali National Park*—Regular Price \$14.95—only \$11.00 and only if purchased at same time as *Alaska's Wild Berries*]

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Mail this order blank to: Alaskakrafts, Inc., P. O. Box 210087, Anchorage, AK 99521-0087

☞ 1995 Dues are Due ☞
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP
APPLICATION / RENEWAL

The Alaska Native Plant Society was organized in 1982 by an enthusiastic group of amateur and professional botanists. It is a non-profit educational organization with the aim of uniting all persons interested in the flora of Alaska. Membership is open to any interested individual or organization. If you wish to join us, please indicate the category of membership you desire, then clip and mail this application with the appropriate remittance to: Alaska Native Plant Society, P.O. Box 141613, Anchorage, AK 99514.

Full Time Student [] \$5
Individual [] \$10
Family [] \$15
Organization [] \$25

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (Home) _____
(Work) _____

Membership is on a calendar year basis.

ANPS State Officers

President Sally Karabelnikoff
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Anchorage Chapter Program Coordinators

Ginny Moran Main Program
Verna Pratt Plant Family
Marilyn Barker Mini-Botany
Julia Ricketts Field Trips

Borealis

Editors Julia Ricketts
Trevor Ricketts
Circulation Martha Hatch

The newsletter of the Alaska Native Plant Society is published monthly except for June, July, August and September. Contributions for the May issue should be mailed to: Julia and Trevor Ricketts, Anchorage, AK 99516 to arrive by April 14.

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



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