

# Borealis

the newsletter of the



PO Box 141613, Anchorage, Alaska

NOVEMBER 1998

## JOIN US AT OUR JAN. MEETING

**Monday, January 4, at the  
Campbell Creek Center  
off 68<sup>th</sup> and Lake Otis**

### "Great Kobuk Sand Dunes"

Rare plants, sand worms, and other mysteries

**Speaker: Carolyn Parker**

Research Assistant  
University of Alaska Museum Herbarium

The Great Kobuk Sand Dunes is actually a small active remnant of a very large sand sheet that filled the central Kobuk River valley during the most recent full glacial periods. The setting abounds with biological contradictions. The very curious assemblages of plants found there includes 3 of Alaska's rare plants as well as plants better known from beaches, streamsides, subarctic steppes, and the highest alpine peaks. Small climatic changes could have a great impact on this very unique landscape. It is a fascinating and addicting place to spend some time.

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### Mini Botany Presentation

Verna Pratt will continue this year's study of the Scrophulariaceae family with the genus *Veronica*.

## The Veronicas: "Speedwells"

Janice Schofield<sup>1</sup> says that the name "Veronica" honors the saint who wiped Christ's face on the way to the crucifixion. She was left with Christ's "true image (*vera iconica*) on her handkerchief.

There are numerous *Veronica* species in Alaska. Many are what Hulten<sup>2</sup> terms "introduced weeds". There are 5 notable and easily recognized species in Alaska. *Veronica serpyllifolia*, *V. Wormskjoldii*, and *V. Stelleri* all have flowers in terminal racemes. *V. americana* and *V. grandiflora* have flowers in axillary racemes. (See accompanying illustrations.)

In general, veronicas spread by rhizomes. Their 4-petalled flowers are mostly rotate (occasionally the lower petal is broader than the rest). Unlike other members of this family they only have two stamens. Their leaves are opposite on the stems.

*Veronica serpyllifolia* is a 3-5 inch creeping plant of damp areas in coastal Southcentral, Southeast, and the Aleutian chain. It has small, rounded, glabrous leaves and small pale blue to white flowers. *Veronica Wormskjoldii* and *Veronica Stelleri* are plants of alpine meadows and alpine slopes. They are 5-8 inches tall and have longer and hairy leaves. *V. Wormskjoldii* is probably the most recognized and widespread species. It can be found from eastern Interior, Southeast, Southcentral and all the way along the Aleutian chain. The small medium violet blue flowers are clustered at the top of an unbranched stem with narrow mostly entire leaves. *V. Stelleri* is a slightly taller plant of the Aleutian chain, Kodiak and the Kenai Peninsula. Its flowers are blue, slightly larger and it has broad toothed leaves. *V. americana* is a sprawling plant of Interior, Southeast, Southcentral and the Aleutian chain. It is generally found in very wet places and along streams. The small blue to lilac flowers are on short racemes arising from the axil of the leaves.

(Continued on Page 2)

**Veronicas:** (Continued from Page 1)

*V. grandiflora* is probably the most impressive of all. This plant with hairy ovate leaves grows in large mats, and is endemic to the western half of the Aleutian chain. Few of us have seen it in the wild but it is well known as a desirable garden flower. The deep blue flowers are about 1/2 " across and cover the mat in early June.

Janice Schofield also reports that "the Japanese and Europeans consider veronica a delicacy and compare it to watercress is flavor. As with dandelions, the greens grow more pronounced if flavor with maturity. Steam greens as a potherb ro add them to stir-fries; they are high in vitamin C." <sup>2</sup>

1. Schofield, Janice, *Discovering Wild Plants: Alaska, Western Canada, The Northwest*, Alaska Northwest Books, 1989.
2. Hulten, Eric, *Flora of Alaska and Neighboring Territories*, Stanford University Press, 1968.
3. Schofield, Janice; *Alaska's Wild Plants: A Guide To Alaska's Edible Harvest*: Alaska Northwest Books, 1993.

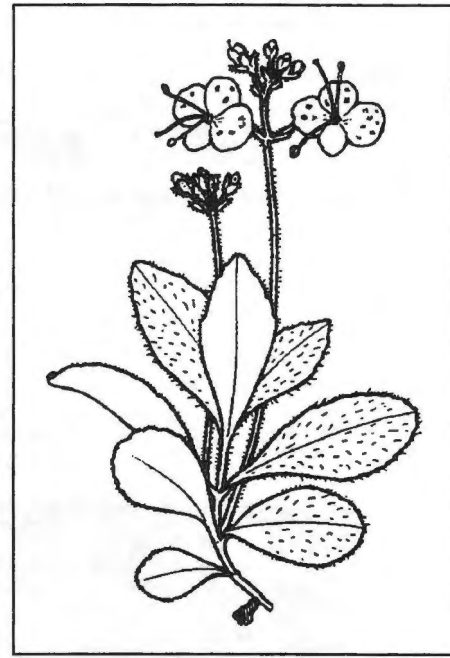
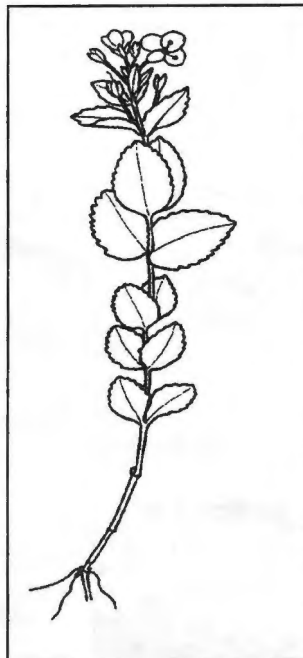


Figure 1. *Veronica stelleri*      Figure 2. *Veronica grandiflora*

**ALASKA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY**  
**State Officers**

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**Newsletter ("Borealis")**

Editor      Ginny Moore  
Circulation      Martha Hatch

*Borealis* is published monthly October through May. Articles may be sent to Ginny Moore, Anchorage, AK 99516. Phone or FAX: or E-mail: mooretg@alaska.net

**A Garden Writing Workshop**

The Alaska Rock Garden Society is sponsoring a garden writing workshop on Saturday, January 9, 1999, from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Alaska Cooperative Extension classroom in the Carleton Trust Building at Lake Otis and Northern Lights in Anchorage. This workshop is designed to inspire, encourage, and help gardeners and garden club members who do write or who would like to write about gardening. The workshop will address newsletter editing and writing for magazines, newsletters, newspapers, and books.

The featured speaker is nationally known garden writer Rob Proctor from Denver. A recent article of his appeared in Horticulture magazine, Sept./Oct. 1998, entitled Tulips with a Bright Future. His garden and gardening techniques were featured in an article published in the December, 1997, issue of Horticulture. He will speak at 1 p.m. for an hour or so about his experiences as a garden writer, after which there will be time for questions from the audience.

At 3 p.m., a panel moderated by Allen Deitz and comprised of local garden writers with diverse experiences and expertise will present viewpoints, and discussion with the audience will ensue. Panelists include Jeff Lowenfels, garden writer for the Anchorage Daily News, Lenore Hedla, author of the *Alaska Gardener's Handbook*, and Verna Pratt, photographer and author of several well-known wildflower books. The workshop will conclude at 5 p.m. after this panel discussion.

Cost for the workshop is \$40. Register with Amie Nevaldine, Anchorage 99508, by e-mail at [anevaldine@corecom.net](mailto:anevaldine@corecom.net), or by phoning

## 1999 Seed List Additions

The following seeds, except *Angelica gigas*, were contributed by ANPS member  
Greg Williams, from Wolcott, VT.

Number	Botanical Name	Common Name	Notes
27	<i>Alchemilla alpina</i>	Mountain Lady's Mantle	Zone 3, 3-8", umbels of tiny yellow flowers. Smaller leaves and more compact plant than th Alchemilla commonly grown here.
28	<i>Angelica gigas</i>		4 to 5 ft., nice white umbels
29	<i>Aquilega rothrockii</i>		Low rock garden plant, Blue, Hardy
30	<i>Campanula thyrsoides</i>		Spikes of cream to lt. Yellow flowers.
31	<i>Clematis columbiana</i>		Blue to purple, native to Rockies and British Columbia. Hardy.
32	<i>Clematis ochruleuca</i>		Yellow, from Nepal, should be hardy.
33	<i>Digitalis ferruginea</i>	Rusty Foxglove	3-4 ft., biennial, zone 4
34	<i>Eryngium bourgati</i>	Sea Holly	6-18", blue Thistle-like flower spikes with silv bracts. Makes nice dried flower.
35	<i>Gentiana asclepia dea</i>	Willow Gentian	Blue, 12-18"
36	<i>Gentiana asclepiadea</i>	"Trotters Form"	Sorry, no info on this one.
37	<i>Gentiana wutaiensis</i>		Blue, 8", from China.
38	<i>Hydrangia korumz (?)</i>		Sorry, no info on this one.
39	<i>Leontopodium palibinianum</i>	Edelweiss	12-16", from N. Asia
40	<i>Lilium formesanum</i>		White, fragrant, 4-5 ft., Trumpet-shaped flower May need winter protection.
41	<i>Penstemon digatilis</i>		White to pinkish flowers with purplish stems, zone 2.

# Annual Seed Sale

Every year the Alaska native Plant Society sells native plant seeds that have been collected by members during the year. You can purchase seeds at the regular monthly meeting or you can mail order them. The price is \$ .50/package.

Latin Name	Common Name	Notes
<b>Alaskan Natives</b>		
<i>Anemone multifida</i>	Cut-leaf Anemone	Bright pink; 12-15 inches
<i>Antennaria monocephala</i>	Cat's Paw	Matt forming; for rock gardens
<i>Aster sibiricus</i>	Siberian Aster	8-12 inches; lavender
<i>Astragalus nutzotinensis</i>	Nootka Milk Vetch	Low sprawling; pink flowers; likes gravel; fairly difficult
<i>Dodecatheon pulchellum</i> ss. Alaskanum	Shooting Star	8 inches; magenta
<i>Draba kamtschatica</i>		4 inches; white
<i>Erigeron peregrinus</i>	Coastal Fleabane	10-14 inches; light pink
<i>Fritillaria camschatcensis</i>	Chocolate Lily	14-18 inches; brown
<i>Geranium erianthum</i>	Wild Geranium	18-30 inches; lavender
<i>Iris setosa</i>	Wild Iris	12-24 inches; purple
<i>Lupinus nootkatensis</i>	Nootka Lupine	18-30 inches; blue-violet
<i>Papaver lapponicum</i>	Lapland Poppy	6-8 inches; lemon yellow
<i>Polemonium acutiflorum</i>	Tall Jacob's Ladder	10-36 inches; violet-blue; easy
<i>Polemonium polcherrimum</i>	Low Jacob's Ladder	10-12 inches; violet-blue; reseeds easily
<i>Potentilla villosa</i>	Villous cinquefoil	6-8 inches; yellow
<i>Senecio lugans</i>	Black-tipped Groundsel	12-24 inches; yellow
<i>Tellima grandiflora</i>	Fringe cups	12-18 inches, greenish white; aromatic
<b>Non-Natives</b>		
<i>Anemone sylvestris</i>		20 inches, white
<i>Aster tongollensis</i>		12 inches, violet, easy, similar to <i>Aster alpinus</i>
<i>Erigeron</i> sp.		5-6 inches; pale pink to white small flowers
<i>Saxifraga aizoides</i>	Probably var. <i>notata</i>	8-10 inches; cream floowers, leaves w/silver margins
<i>Silene</i> sp.	Shoefly	10-15 inches; pink annual, reseeds easily, nice late bloomer

If seeds are to be mailed, include an additional \$ .50 for 1-5 packages or \$1.00 for 6 or more. All seeds are perennials or annuals that easily reseed, and all have been stratified. Use the address on the back of the newsletter.

## Answer to Mystery Plant:

*Smelowskia borealis*

Brassicaceae/Mustard Family

**???? Mystery Plant ???? By Verna Pratt**

This plant was a real mystery to some of us when we first found it on a scree slope in Denali National Park. We narrowed it down to two families, by the leaves. Don't ask me how! Still, even thumbing through Hulten it was a mystery as the drawings showed a mature plant in flower and we were looking at plants that had not flowered yet. What a difference. For a few years subsequent trips to see it in bloom were futile, so it remained a mystery. The beautiful tight, hairy rosette becomes a sprawly quite unattractive (but very interesting) plant when it blooms. For some time I felt it must die after blooming but this proved false last summer when I found a plant in bloom with a previous year's seed stalk still attached. It grows mostly in scree or rock slides in the Alaska Range and Brooks Range, and has a very long root to help it hold its position long enough to produce seeds. The tiny 4-petaled lavender flowers bloom from the bottom of the stem upwards (like fireweed) and have unique seed pods that become twisted with age.

**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 goal 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, fill in the form below and mail it with the appropriate remittance to:

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

STATUS  New  RENEWAL

**CATEGORY**

- |                          |                   |      |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Full-time Student | \$ 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Senior Citizen    | \$10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Individual        | \$12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Family            | \$18 |
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Telephone: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_

Membership is on a calendar year basis.



**Alaska Native Plant Society  
PO Box 141613  
Anchorage, AK 99514**

**REMINDER: IT IS RENEWAL TIME!!!**

**Use the form above and send in your renewal today!**