

Borealis

the newsletter of the



P.O. Box 141613, Anchorage, Alaska 99514

NOVEMBER 1999

MEETING NEWS

Monday, November 1st, 7:30 PM at the
Campbell Creek Science Center
off 68th and Lake Otis
(See map on back)

Annie Nevaldine, a Master Gardener with a lovely garden filled with tall perennials and many species of Lilies, will present “**Hips, Lips, and Other Body Parts**”. Annie says that the study of plant and flower parts and organs can be as artistic as it is scientific. The magnifying optics of macro (close-up) photography enable us to see the body parts of flowers better than we do with our naked eyes. Learn a little more about plant and flower identification and enjoy their beauty a bit more knowledgeably.

HELP NEEDED !

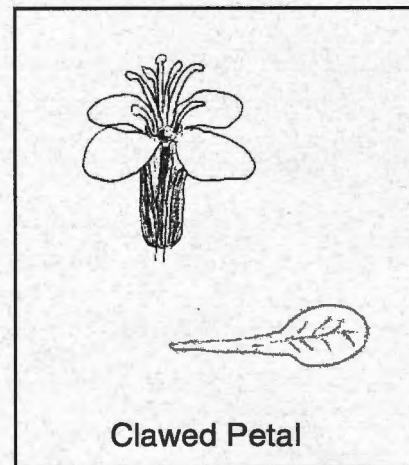
Articles are welcomed (and badly needed) for the newsletter. It doesn't take much time or effort to put together an article. It can be on any botany-related topic. Remember, this is your Newsletter. Remember the old computer saying, “Garbage in---garbage out”? Well, nothing in = nothing out! Please contribute even a short article. The staff can't do it all.

PLANT FAMILY

by Verna Pratt

The plant family to be studied this year is the Brassicaceae (formerly known as the Cruciferae family). The original name, Cruciferae, is derived from “cross” referring to the position of the 4 petals of the flowers forming a cross. In recent years, plant family names were standardized so that they all end in ACEAE. The family is also given the name of the largest genus world-wide or a genus noted for being of valuable use to mankind. In this case, the Brassica genus. Alaska has no native Brassica species. The Brassica genus is represented by many edible plants with which we are all familiar, such as, Cabbage, Kale, Broccoli, Cauliflower, Turnips, Mustards, etc. This leads us to the common name of this family, the Mustards. This name comes from the use of seeds of the Mustard family for making our familiar spicy condiment, Mustard. Many of our Alaska native species are also edible and have a similar tangy taste.

Plants can be either annual or perennial and leaves usually alternate or basal. The flowers consist of 4 separate sepals, 4 separate petals (often clawed), 6 stamens (4 long and 2 short), and



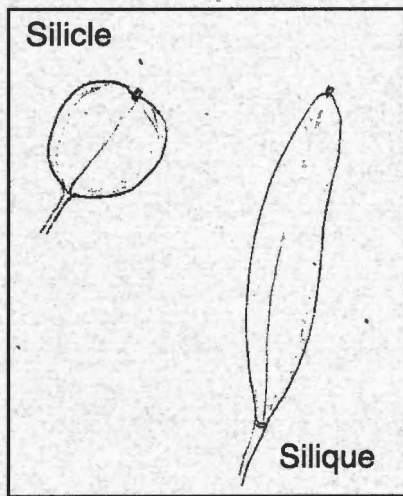
an ovary, usually divided into 2 united carpels. The fruit is distinctive --- a silicle or silique with seeds attached to its outer rim. A silicle is short and squatty, a silique usually 3 or more times longer than broad. Because the flower parts are close together, these plants can easily be self-pollinated by wind or insects.

Worldwide there are 376 genera and 3200 species. Most grow in cool climates of the Northern Hemisphere.

Although their flowers and seeds can easily bring you to the family, many people have a difficult time deciding which genus or species they are looking at.

Many are yellow and they look very much alike. Hence, the common expression D.Y.M. Remember it's the Mustard family.

This month, we will go over general characteristics of the family showing leaf and flower characteristics, and seed pod shapes.

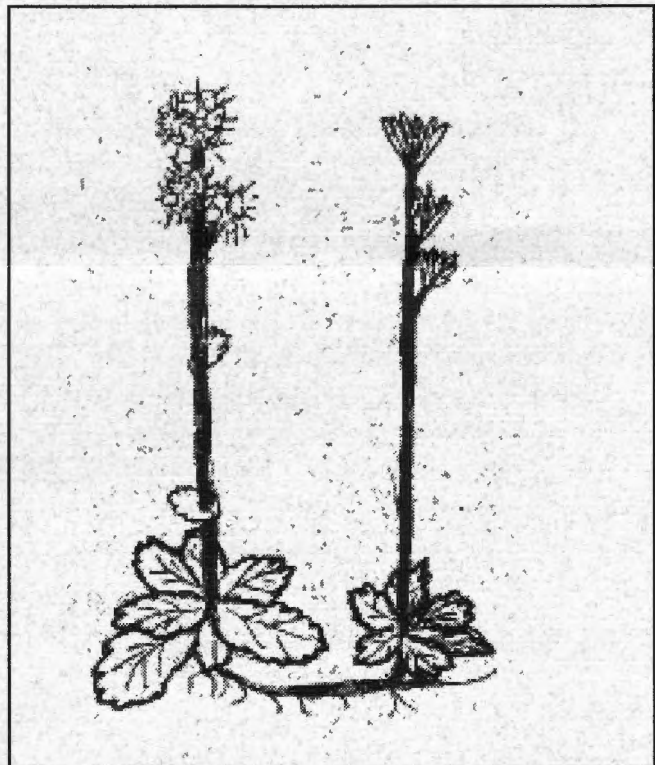


MYSTERY PLANT

This plant can be found in wet meadows and along creeks from the Aleutian Chain, Southcentral Alaska, Southeast Alaska and into Southern Yukon and Northern British Columbia.

It grows on a long, thick, horizontal root-stock. The serrated oblong to ovate leaves are thick and leathery giving the appearance of being ever-green. The leaves are dark green and shiny above and become reddish-brown in age and often persist for more than one year. The few stem leaves are reduced and clasp the stem.

The small 5-petaled, whitish flowers are in tight clusters near the top of the 5 to 8" stiff stem and are replaced by bright red divergent (spreading) seed capsules. More often noticed in seed than in flower.



HELP NEEDED

Plant Family presenters for the Brassicaceae family.

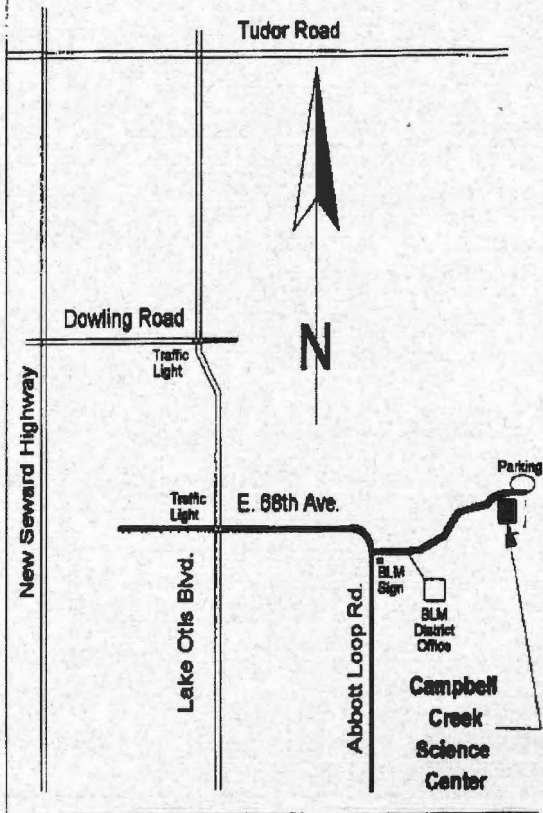
Mini-Botany presenters---Your choice of subject --- can be just a 2 to 5 minute talk.

Contact Verna @ _____ or Email her at <akkrafts@alaskakrafts.com>.

NEWSLETTER

☺The newsletter this month is brought to you by ANPS member Frank Pratt (You may remember him, he was editor from 1982 to 1992). Our regular editor, Ginny Moore, is out of town enjoying the very late fall color and visiting her daughter at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY.

**Map To The New Meeting Place
Campbell Creek Science Center**



**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

- Full-time Student \$ 5
- Senior Citizen \$10
- Individual \$12
- Family \$18
- Organization \$30

Name _____

Address _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Membership is on a calendar year basis.

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