

Borealis

the newsletter of the



P.O. Box 141613, Anchorage, Alaska 99514-1613

May 2002

Join us at our next meeting !

**Monday, May 6th, 7:30 PM
at the Campbell Creek Science Center
off 68th and Lake Otis**

“The plants of Alaska’s other dunes:

The Nogahabara Sand Dunes”

**Speaker: Rob Lipkin
Alaska Natural Heritage Program**

Plant Family Study

**Cerastium Genera
Pink (Caryophyllaceae) Family**

Presenter---Verna Pratt

THANKS

Thanks to all who helped on April 13th at the Garden Show in the Sears Mall. We had an educational display of woody plants, and sold a lot of seeds of Native Plants.

Seed Collecting

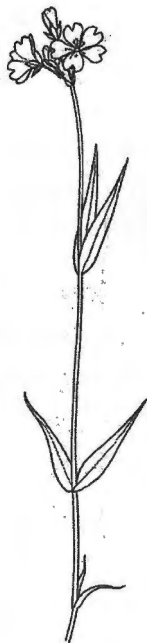
Each year we have a seed sale and it is very popular with people eager to grow native plants in their own gardens. Growing plants from seed is by far the best way to achieve this. Help us by collecting seeds of different species this summer. Here are some hints to help you:

- Collect carefully without harming the plants. (Never yank the seed pods).
- Never pick all the seeds (Leave some for the birds, and some to reseed).
- Collecting in paper bags or envelopes is the best way. Plastic causes static and seeds can mold. If you do collect in plastic containers, transfer the seeds to open glass or paper containers when you reach home.
- Label the seeds as you collect them.
- Don't mix different species.
- Seeds of most species should be tan or brown (Dry and mature).
- Poppies, members of the Mustard family and some others will mature and ripen if the pods are fully developed and you pick the stem with the pods. (This can help to further mature the seeds).
- Most seeds ripen 8 to 10 weeks after flowering.
- If you are not sure of the species, take notes and include parts of the plant for later identification.
- Don't pick seeds of weedy or aggressive plants.
- Don't collect Pedicularis or Orchid seeds as they are very difficult to germinate and grow.
- Seeds that “fly” out of their pods need to be picked just before maturity and placed in a closed paper bag or a container with a loose cover (Geraniums are an example).

This is a great way to enjoy plants in all seasons and learn more about them.

Caryophyllaceae
(Pink) Family

Presenter:

***Cerastium maximum***

The *Cerastium* genus has two distinct characteristics: hairy, sometimes sticky, leaves, and cleft (split halfway) petals that are quite thin.

The tallest specie is *Cerastium maximum* with a cluster of 1-inch white flowers at the top of the 18-24 inch stems. It can be found at tlow elevations in eastern Alaska and just north of the Brooks Range.

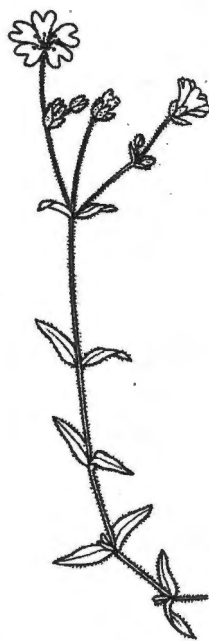
The seven remaining species are all less than 8 inches tall and also have white flowers. *C. arvense* and *C. beeringianum* are probably the most common species in Alaska. *C. arvense* has 5/8-3/4 inch flowers and is 6-8 inches tall, with narrow pointed leaves. It can be found on dry slopes from sea level to alpine areas in South Central Alaska. *C. beeringianum* has two subspecies. Ssp. *grandiflora* has slightly pointed leaves, is quite sprawly and has flowers 1/2 -5/8 inch in size. Ssp. *Beeringianum* frequently forms low mats, has smaller more rounded leaves and smaller flowers. Both can be found throughout Alaska.

C. jenisejense is an arctic species similar to *C. beeringianum* .

C. aleuticum is a low mountainous, less hairy plant found only on the Aleutian chain.

C. regelii is rare in Alaska, having been found in only two locations. There are a minimum of hairs on this specie. *C. Fischerianum* is a coastal species hybridizing with *C. Beeringianum*.

Complicating the issue are two introduced species, *Cerastium glomeratum*, an annual, and *Cerastium fontanum*, found both in the wild and in gardens.

***Cerastium Beeringianum******Cerastium jenisejense******Cerastium aleuticum***

May's MYSTERY Plant

By Verna Pratt

This month's mystery plant is a good example of plant exploration in Alaska. Many governmental agencies and amateur botanists are finding new locations for plants each year. The range maps in Hulten's flor of Alaska were formed many years ago. Some areas were never explored and many areas only sparsely.

When I first saw this plant, just below treeline in the Chugach Mountains, many people suggested I must have miss-identified it, as the closest area showing on its range maps was Kodiak Island.

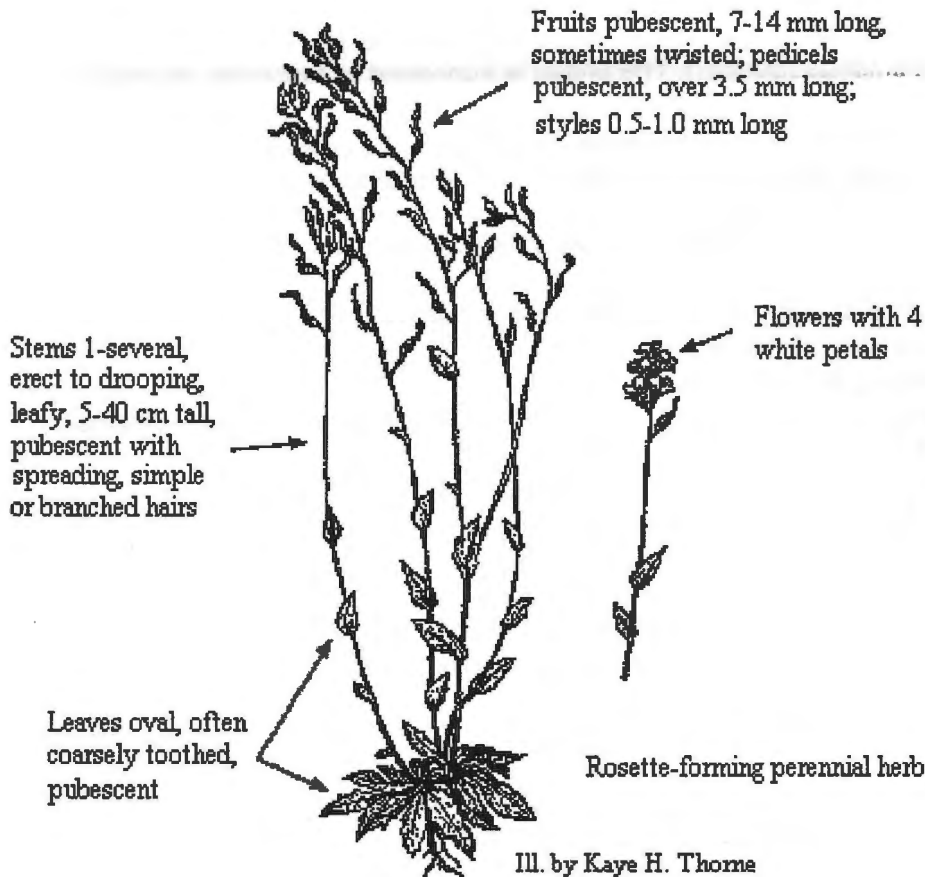
The Fort Richardson vascular plant species study which was printed in 1995 lists this and many other species that appear to be new to the area. So don't be afraid to get out and look. Take good notes and photograph, but remember NO COLLECTING in State and National parks.

This plant is 8-12 inches tall, with a cluster of oblong leaves at the base. There are two or more leaves on the stem and some may be coarsely toothed. All leaves have simple or branched hairs. Flowers are white with four petals, 4 sepals, and 6 stamens. Silicles are oblong to elliptical, twisted and covered with hairs.

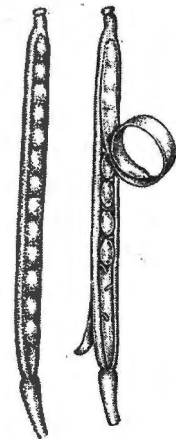
So, what is a silicle?

What? You don't know what silicles are? – why they are shorter, fatter **siliques**. And if you know *anything* about siliques, this will give you a hint as to the family of our mystery plant.

A silique is a special type of capsule or pod developed from an ovary of two united carpels, which dehisces, or splits, at maturity.



Silicle



Silique

EXPLORING PLANT NAMES

by Verna Pratt

While on wildflower treks this summer, try to imagine how plants got their names.

Most people realize that the genus *Linnaea* comes from Carolus Linnaeus, the Swedish Botanist.

Some other genera named in honor of people are:

Heuchera--- J. H. Heucher, an 18th century German Professor of Medicine and Botanist

Mertensia--- Francis Karl Mertens, 19th century Professor of Botany

Claytonia--- John Clayton, 18th century plant collector

Gentiana--- Gentius, King of Illyria, who first used plants as medicines

Heracleum--- Hercules, Greek Warrior, who discovered medicinal virtues of this plant

Loiseleuria--- Loiseleur Deslongchamps, a French botanist

Menziesia--- Archibald Menzies, surgeon, botanist

Saussurea--- N. T. deSaussure, Swiss philosopher

Shepherdia--- J. Shepherd, curator of Liverpool Botanical Gardens

Swertia--- E. Swert, a Dutch florist

Tofieldia--- Mr. Tofield, a friend of Hudson, who wrote about the genus

Valeriana--- Valerius, a Roman physician who first used the plant for medicine

Woodsia--- Joseph Woods, English architect and botanist

Some other genera are named for a Greek or Roman goddess, or an ancient name of unknown origin. Most are from Greek or Latin words; such as some that are listed below:

Aconitum--- Greek, akon (a dart), arrowheads were poisoned with the juice of this plant

Androsace--- Greek, andros (male) and sakos (buckler). The anther is supposed to resemble an ancient buckler.

Anemone--- Greek, anemos (wind) and mon (a habitation, as some prefer windy places)

Antennaria--- Latin, antenna (the hairs attached to seeds resemble antennae of insects)

Cardamine--- Greek, cardamon (name for Watercress)

Cerastium--- Greek, keras (a horn) seed capsule of some species look like a horn as they emerge from the calyx

Cornus--- Latin, cornus (a horn) Referring to the hard nature of the woody shrubs.

Corydalis--- Greek, korydalis (a crested lark), korys (a helmet)

Crassula--- Latin, crassus (thick) Referring to thick succulent leaves

Cypripedium--- Greek, kypris (one of the names for Venus) and podium (a little foot or slipper)---Originally Venus's Slipper and changed to Lady's Slipper

Delphinium--- Greek, delphin (dolphin) flower spur looks like a dolphin's head

Drosera--- Greek, droseros (dewy) Referring to dew-like glands on the leaves

Dryas--- Greek, druas (a dryad or wood nymph)

Empetrum--- Greek, en (in) and petros (a rock), plants of rocky places

Epilobium--- Greek, epi (upon) and lobos (a pod), referring to the flowers growing above the pod

Equisetum--- Latin, equus (horse) and seta (a bristle), referring to the barren growth looking like a horse's tail

Erigeron--- Greek, eri (early) and geron (old), blooming early. Either the seed pappus hairs or probably the hairy leaves in spring.

Fritillaria--- Latin, fritillus (dice-box), referring to the checkered petals of some species

Galium--- Greek, gala (milk). *Galium vernum* was once used to curdle milk

Geranium--- Greek, geranos (a crane). Seed pod resembles a cranesbill

Geum--- Greek, geuo (nice flavor). Roots of some species are aromatic

Habenaria--- Latin, habena (a strap). referring to long leaves. [former name for *Platanthera*]

Hieracium--- Greek, hierax (a hawk), it was believed that hawks ate it to improve eyesight
Impatiens--- Latin, impatiens (impatient), referring to the seed pod's explosive habit
Iris--- Greek, iris (rainbow), probably referring to the variety of colors
Ledum--- Greek, ledos (woolen cloth), referring to wooly hairs on underside of leaves
Linum--- Latin, linum (flax), referring to fibers used in cloth making
Lupinus--- Latin, lupus (wolf-destroyer), used to kill wolves

See more on this subject in further Newsletters. Have fun and enjoy your summer.

Here are a few references that will be helpful in your quest for knowledge in this area:

"A Gardener's Guide to Plant Names"—B. J. Healey

"Plant Names Simplified"—A. T. Johnson and H. A. Smith

"Dictionary of Plant Names"—Allen J. Coombes

"How Plants Get Their Names"—L. H. Bailey

"A Wildflower By Any other Name"—Kare B. Nilsson (This book tells about early botanists for whom many plants were named).

COIN SUCCESSION IN EUROPE: *Rubus chamaemorus* replaces *Polytrichum Commune*, by Marilyn Barker

On January 1st, 2002, ten European countries switched to common currency "The Euro". The exchange value hovers somewhere between the US and Canadian dollar. While the banknotes have basically the same appearance, each country had a chance to show something nationally significant on their metal coins. Cultural monuments and significant persons are what you would expect, but what about the botanical content?

Austria presents a floral series of three mountain plants to symbolize a duty to the environment: alpine primrose (*Primula farinose*) 5¢, edelweiss (*Leontopodium alpinum*) 2¢, and gentian (*Gentiana acaulis*) 1¢.

Throughout the 1990s, the Finnish botanists were able to show to a visitor a small 50-penny coin outlining on one side a haircap moss (*Polytrichum commune*). This was probably the first (and last?) time a bryophyte was illustrated on a coin. Sad day for bryologists. Now the Finnish *Polytrichum* coin is history, only a collector's item and not valid money any more. Perhaps this reflects the excessive drainage activities as a result of which paludified forests (with a ground cover of *Sphagnum* ssp. and haircap moss) have been transformed in many areas to drier forests.

One circumboreal bog plant, however, made it to the new euro series: cloudberry (*Rubus chamaemorus*). The species is illustrated on the Finnish 20-Euro coin. Perhaps this is a thought out choice, because the utilization of cloudberry in Scandinavia was described as early as 1737 (Linne, Carl von, 1737 Flora Laponica.) At present, one of the end products is cloudberry liqueur — Lakka — which can be found in liquor stores worldwide. Check out <http://www.euro.ecb.int/en>
Article shortened from Pekka Pakarinen in BEN

Summer Classes at UAA

Local Flora---Verna Pratt

Science Building, Room 248

Biology A075---Section #001---Course #32040

Thursday mornings, May 9th through May 30th
9:00 AM to 12:15 PM

Biology A075---Section #002---Course #32041

Thursday evenings, May 9th through May 30th
6:00 PM to 9:30 PM

Explore Summer Flora-Winner Creek from late May and throughout June---Dr. Marilyn Barker
Engineering Building, Room 109

Biology A124---Section #301---Course#50016

Wednesday evenings, May 29th through June 26th 6:00 PM to 10:00
and Saturday, June 22nd 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Alaska Outdoor and Experiential Education

Call Shareen Siegrist @ 786-4066

Alaska's Wild Mushrooms---Chris Riggio

Tuesdays and Thursdays, July 18th thru 30th, 6:00 to 8:30 PM
Saturday, July 27th, 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM
Sunday, July 28th, 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Discovering Wild Plants---Isolde Gibson

Monday, June 3rd, 6:00 to 8:00 PM
Wednesday, June 5th, 6:00 to 8:00 PM
Wednesday, June 12th, 6:00 to 8:00 PM
Saturday and Sunday, June 8th and 9th, 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Please check your address label on this Newsletter.

If the date is circled with red, your 2002 dues are not paid, this will be your last Newsletter, and you will not receive the 2002 Field Trip Schedule !

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.

Mark your Calendar Next Meeting for ANPS

**Monday, October 7th, 2002
6:30 PM @ Campbell Creek Science
Center
Potluck and slide or print
Show and Tell
about your summer**

MYSTERY PLANT ANSWER

Draba borealis Northern Draba
Brassicaceae/Mustard Family

ANPS FUNDING – Summer 2002

At its April meeting, the Board of the Alaska Native Plant Society voted to contribute funding to several ongoing projects that have been and continue to be of significant interest to ANPS:

\$1000 for field crew supplies for this summer's Bering Glacier botanical research trip

\$500 for inexpensive seasonally-placed educational signs for the Anchorage Botanical Garden.

Those members who attended the April ANPS meeting learned about some of the research and discoveries of the Bering Glacier project. The Anchorage Botanical Garden is a project for botanists, gardeners, horticulturists, and

ALASKA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY State and Anchorage Chapter Officers

President	Frank Pratt
Vice President	Leonard Grau
Secretary	Beth Koltun
Treasurer	Sue Jensen

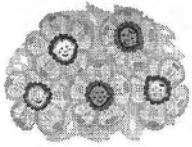
Anchorage Chapter Program Coordinators

Main Program	Susan Klein
Plant Family	Verna Pratt
Mini-Botany	Marilyn Barker
Field Trips	Anjanette Steer

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



UPCOMING PLANTS & NATURE EVENTS



Alaska Native Plant Society
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