

BOREALIS

Summer 2025 Edition

WE'LL SEE YOU AT OUR FINAL MEETING OF THE SEASON!

*Our monthly educational meetings
on the first Monday of the month will
resume in October.*

Monday, May 5, 7 PM

Via Zoom Only

- Main Topic: **Honoring, Preserving and Protecting Traditional Native Knowledge and Use of our Plant Relatives**, presented by **Tia Holley**
- Plant Families: Monocots, **Liliaceae (Lily Family)**, presented by **Marianne Batchelder**
- Mini-Botany: Medicinal Plants, Willows, presented by **Beth Baker**

Virtual Meeting Link: [Join via Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 947 5146 9324

Passcode: 812931

NOTICE TO PRINT SUBSCRIBERS

Due to printing cost increases, *Borealis* print subscriptions now cost ~\$20/year per subscriber; we charge \$10/year.

The board will review our printing costs again in the fall but a price increase is expected to go in effect for print subscribers beginning Jan. 1, 2026, that is adequate to cover the actual cost of a print subscription.



2024 AKNPS Falls Creek Field Trip, photo by Lisa Demer

AKNPS Field Trip Guidelines

Alaska Native Plant Society volunteers lead a variety of field trips each year, from urban plant walks to alpine ascents. Most hikes have a size limit to ensure a good experience for all participants. We ask that all participants:

- RSVP in advance with the trip leader
- Provide a signed copy of our [field trip waiver](#) to the trip leader in person or by email
- Do not bring dogs without permission from the trip leaders granted at least a few days ahead of the trip

Always plan for Alaska weather: carry warm gear, snacks and water. PLEASE remember to contract trip leaders to let them know if you change your plans.

See page 6 for our field trip schedule!

President's Message

Celebrating Native Plant Month

By Sara Hogan

Summer always arrives in Alaska with a kind of urgency, with buds bursting open, trails drying out, daylight stretching long into the night.

Though the timing may shift year to year, the feeling is always the same: we've made it. The growing season is here!

This May, we celebrate **Alaska Native Plant Month** (bit.ly/AKnativeplantmonth), a statewide collaboration that has been a long time in the making.

From plant walks and native plant sales to webinars, school lessons, and the launch of educational materials, it has been encouraging to see how many people across Alaska care deeply about our native flora, and want to help others care, too.

These kinds of efforts matter. As native plants face increased pressure from development, climate change and invasive species, awareness isn't just nice to have, it's essential. Plant literacy leads to stewardship. And stewardship starts with paying attention.

If you organized an event, shared a resource or simply stopped to notice which species were blooming near you, thank you. That's where it starts.

There are still a lot of growing season ahead and plenty of chances to get out, connect with others and share what you know.

In the meantime, we will continue highlighting our two willow **Native Plants of the Year** (*Salix alaxensis* and *S. reticulata*), and you'll start to see more updates from us on field trips, speaker planning and how we'll carry this momentum forward into next May.

Until then, enjoy the long days and the plants that make this season what it is.

Did you know?

- Past AKNPS meeting recordings are available to members ([2025 recordings](https://aknps.org/2025-recordings); [2024 recordings](https://aknps.org/2024-recordings)).
- We have [field guides and plant checklists](#) for many locations throughout Alaska!



"A non-profit organization to promote the study and conservation of Alaska native plants."

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Anyone may contribute articles, book reviews, event/class fliers, photography and artwork for publication in *Borealis*. All materials should relate to the study and conservation of Alaska's native plants.

Editorial deadlines are the 15th of September, November, January, March and April. Recommended article length is 400-600 words. Written materials are subject to copy editing and space constraints. **Send submissions** to newsletter@aknps.org.

Campbell Creek Science Center Garden Work Parties

Meeting Location: The Campbell Creek Science Center, located in the Campbell Tract at 5600 Science Center Drive in Anchorage

Description: Join Alaska Native Plant Society volunteers in maintaining the Campbell Creek Science Center's wildflower gardens. Gardening equipment is provided. **Please RSVP** using our online signup sheet (<https://bit.ly/CCSC-Work-Parties>). This volunteer work is a mutually-beneficial arrangement enabling the Alaska Native Plant Society to use the center's indoor space for in-person educational meetings.

Questions? Send an email to ccsc_gardening@aknps.org

Dates/Time:

- Saturday, May 17, 9-12, (Leader: Melanie Hess)
- Tuesday, June 10, 4-6 (Leader: Beth Baker)
- Saturday, June 21, 9-12 (Leader: Ginger May)
- Wednesday, July 9, 5:30-7:30 (Leader: Elizabeth Bluemink)
- Saturday, July 19, 9-12 (Leader: Elizabeth Bluemink)
- Wed. August 6, 9-11:30 (Leader: Mel Langdon)
- Friday, August 22, 1-3 (Leader: Beth Baker)
- Wednesday, August 27, 9-11:30 (Leader: Mel Langdon)
- Saturday, September 27, 9-12 National Public Lands Day (Leader: Beth Baker, et al)



Tragopogon Removal along Turnagain Arm

Meeting Location: Potter Section House Parking Area (Seward Hwy just past Potter Marsh)

Description: Western salsify (*Tragopogon dubius*) is a persistent invasive weed along Turnagain Arm. Due to AKNPS efforts, it is nearly eradicated but more work is needed to finish the job. Bring dandelion digger type tools, gloves and garbage bags. No dogs or children allowed. Volunteers should not venture into any steep terrain unless they are experienced climbers and have discussed this in advance with the trip leader. RSVP for one or more work sessions using our Tragopogon volunteer signup sheet (<https://bit.ly/tragopogon>) and contact the trip leader in advance if you have questions.



Dates/Time:

- Tuesday, June 3, 6:30-8:30 pm, led by Dianne Toebe, diannetoebe@gmail.com or 907-365-9100
- Tuesday, June 10, 6:30-8:30 pm, led by James Sowerwine, james.sowerwine@gmail.com or 907-441-4667
- Tuesday, June 17, 6:30-8:30 pm, led by James Sowerwine, james.sowerwine@gmail.com or 907-441-4667
- Tuesday, June 24, 6:30-8:30 pm, led by Gino Graziano, gagraziano@alaska.edu
- Tuesday, July 1, 6:30-8:30 pm, led by Mel Langdon, mellenlangdon@gmail.com or 503-991-8282 and Nancy McWilliams, nancymcwilliams22@gmail.com

Alaska Native Plant Month

Alaskans celebrate Native Plant Month in May. We are grateful to AKNPS members and partners organizing virtual and in-person activities including webinars, guided hikes, workshops and plant sales!



Salix alaxensis, Felt-leaf willow, photo courtesy Anne Ruggles

ALASKA
NATIVE PLANT MONTH

May 2025

Visit aknps.org
for events &
educational materials.

With support from

Alaska Native Plant Society • Alaska Botanical Garden • Georgeson Botanical Garden • Jensen-Olson Arboretum • UAF Cooperative Extension Service • Anchorage Park Foundation • Homer Soil & Water Conservation District • Anchorage Soil & Water Conservation District • Salcha-Delta Soil & Water Conservation District • Knik Tribal Conservation District • Bird Treatment and Learning Center • Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska • Alaska Invasive Species Partnership • Pratt Museum • Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium • Homer Shorebird Festival • Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges • Alaska Master Gardeners of Anchorage • Alaska Community Forestry Council

Download and share our Alaska Native Plant Month flier! [PDF](#) or [PNG](#)

You can navigate directly to the Alaska Native Plant Month website from a blue button at the top of our homepage, click directly to bit.ly/AKnativeplantmonth or scan the QR code. You will find many educational materials and a calendar of **more than 15 events** around Alaska in May. This calendar is still growing!



Upcoming Workshops

Trees to Wood Workshop: How Trees Grow and Wood Properties

Date/Time: Tuesday, May 27 & Thursday, May 29, 6:30-8:30 pm (both sessions)

Cost: \$11/person

Location: Campbell Creek Science Center, 5600 Science Center Drive, Anchorage, AK

Register: <https://www.recreation.gov/>

Trees dominate our landscapes and inspire us with their grandeur. They grow to inspiring heights and live to great ages. Yet, they all start from a tiny seed. Do you ever wonder how they grow?

In this two-session workshop, we will explore the growth process and learn how the cambium layers make new wood and bark. Students will learn about growth rings, heartwood, and how conifers differ from broadleaf trees. Each tree species produces unique wood characteristics, and we will investigate some of the more common types, mainly oak and pine.

Understanding Potentilla: Three-Day Workshop with Dr. Barbara Ertter

Date/Time: July 11-13

Cost: \$150/person

Location: UAA + one day in the field

How to Register: Contact Marilyn Barker at mhwbarker@icloud.com

Puzzled by *Potentilla*? Baffled by all the name changes? Then this workshop is for you!

This three-day workshop will be taught by Dr. Barbara Ertter, lead author of *Potentilla* and related genera for the Flora of North America and emeritus curator of Western North American Flora, University Herbarium and Jepson Herbaria at UC Berkeley.

The workshop includes: a worldwide overview of all of Potentilleae; examination of freshly collected and herbarium representatives of Alaska native

Session 1 (May 27):

Introduction to the basics of secondary woody growth (how trees grow, cambium layers including the bark and wood)

Session 2 (May 29):

Characteristics of wood (hardness, grain, cuts, and uses).



Poplar growing near the Eagle River Nature Center, (c) Patrick Crooks via iNaturalist (CC BY-NC)

Bring a hand lens, if you have one, writing utensil, and a notebook.

This workshop is taught by AKNPS member Cindy Johnson, a retired biology professor and award-winning instructor, in partnership with the Campbell Creek Science Center.

NOTE: When you sign up for the first session on May 27, you are automatically signed up for the second session. If there is no "A" on a program date when attempting to select an event date, that means the event is sold out.

Potentilleae; and an outing to observe the complexity of local populations. We'll learn the rationale for segregate genera such as *Drymocallis*, *Dasiphora*, and *Comarum*, with a look at ongoing challenges.

We'll also take a close look at problematic groups in Alaska, notably sections *Niveae* and *Pennsylvanicae*.



Potentilla hyparctica, courtesy Marilyn Barker

IMPORTANT: Registration is first come, first served, and a waiting list will be maintained. Until April 30, registration is limited to active AKNPS members, after which registration is open to the general public. Contact Marilyn Barker at mhwbarker@icloud.com to reserve your spot and arrange payment. Payment by check is preferred.

No refunds for cancellations after July 1.

2025 Field Trip Schedule

May 14 Wed: Alaska Native Plant Month Walk - Rodak Loop

Meeting Time/Location: 6:30 PM at Eagle River Nature Center

Description: Beth Baker will lead a 3/4-1 mile hike around the Rodak Loop with a botany focus. Learn about boreal forests, Alaskan plant adaptations, how plants respond to slope and elevation, and what photosynthesis is. Registration is required through the Eagle River Nature Center: https://www.flipcause.com/secure/event_step2/MTgxODg2/304927.

May 14-21: Indianhouse Self-Guided Hike

Location: This trail begins at Mile 104.5 of the Seward Highway. There is a small unmarked pullout and small path, room for only 4-5 cars.

Description: Small, numbered markers will be placed along the trail beside plants. Organizers Phyllis Rogers and Tanya Odden will provide the plant list through our website and Facebook page by May 13.

May 15 Thur: Sutton Paleobotany Hike

Meeting Time/Location: 9 AM at Muldoon Fred Meyer (east side of the parking lot).

Leader: Curvin Metzler, 907-333-8766

Description: Hike one mile with some mud & scree to collect various plant fossils, such as leaves, cones and stems, from trees and shrubs, deciduous and coniferous, including horsetails. The road is rough and rutted, vehicles need adequate clearance and a skillful driver. The group will be limited to 7 persons, with priority for AKNPS members.

RSVP: If you'd like to attend or have questions, Curvin (907-333-8766) will be away from phone service fossil hunting till Wednesday evening but will respond to voice messages at that time.

May 17 Sat: Alaska Native Plant Month Walk - Dew Mound Trail

Meeting Time & Location: 10 AM at Eagle River Nature Center

Description: Beth Baker will lead a 6.8 mile hike around the Dew Mound Trail with a focus on botany. Learn about boreal forests, Alaskan plant adaptations, how plants respond to slope and elevation, and what photosynthesis is. Bring lunch! Registration required through the Eagle River Nature Center: https://www.flipcause.com/secure/event_step2/MTgxODg2/304928

May 18 Sun: Emerging Spring Plants at Windy Corner

Meeting Time/Location: 1 PM at roadside parking at Mile 106.6 of Seward Highway (12 miles south of Anchorage).

Leaders: Dennis & Annie Ronsse, dennis.ronsse@gmail.com

Description: Early snowmelt on Turnagain Arm makes it one of the first places to find plant growth near Anchorage. Join Dennis & Annie Ronsse for a 3-4 hour, 2-mile hike on the Turnagain Arm Trail, which is fairly level, but rocky in places.

RSVP Required: Contact Dennis Ronsse at dennis.ronsse@gmail.com to reserve a spot. Due to the narrow trail, this trip will be limited to 10 participants with priority given to AKNPS members.

Continued on next page

2025 Field Trip Schedule, cont.

May 21 Wed: Wednesday Willow Wander

Meeting Time/Location: 6-9 PM, location TBD near Fairbanks (no more than 40 min drive from downtown)

Leader: Cam Webb

Description: Learn new Interior Alaska willow taxa or refresh your memory. One of these field trips will be upland, the other lowland-wetland; check the Interior ANPS listserv for location details a week before the hike: <https://groups.io/g/InteriorANPS>. Bring a picnic dinner.

June 1 Sun: Potter Marsh Watershed Park

Meeting Time/Location: 1 PM, forested area above Potter Marsh

Description: The Great Land Trust has asked AKNPS to lead walks on their new property to explore the flora.

Get Info: Contact Dennis Ronsse at dennis.ronsse@gmail.com to learn more as details from the Great Land Trust become available about the trails and meeting location.

June 4 Wed: Wednesday Willow Wander

Meeting Time/Location: 6 PM near Fairbanks (no more than 40 min drive from downtown)

Leader: Cam Webb

Description: Learn new Interior Alaska willow taxa or refresh your memory. One of these field trips will be upland, the other lowland-wetland; check the InteriorANPS listserve for location details a week before the hike: <https://groups.io/g/InteriorANPS>. Bring a picnic dinner.

June 6-8, Fri-Sun: Dunes near Tok and Mount Fairplay

Trip Leader: Jeff Mason, jdotmason@gmail.com

Description: Explore an old dune complex just east of Tok, north of the Alaska Highway just across the Tanana bridge. The plan is to arrive Friday, set up camp, explore the dunes Friday evening and Saturday, then visit Mount Fairplay a few miles further up the Taylor Highway.

Get Info/RSVP: Contact Jeff Mason at jdotmason@gmail.com to learn more about plans for the weekend.

June 14 Sat: Flora & Pollinators of Arctic Valley & Mt. Gordon Lyon

Meeting Time/Location: 10 AM, Arctic Valley Ski Area (Parking \$5/day)

Leaders: Dennis Ronsse, dennis.ronsse@gmail.com and Brian McGurgan

Description: Expect 5-6 hours, 5 miles, with 1,763 feet ascent over Mt. Gordon Lyon in a loop route back to the parking lot. Local amateur expert lepidopterist Brian McGurgan will co-lead the trip. Open to the public, but priority given to AKNPS members. Limit 15 participants.

RSVP Required: Contact Dennis at dennis.ronsse@gmail.com to reserve a space and receive updates on possible changes due to weather.

Continued on next page

2025 Field Trip Schedule, cont.

June 21 Sun: Moksha Peak (6,250 ft)

Meeting Time/Location: 6 AM, Jim Lake parking off Maud Road (Palmer)

Leader: Dennis Ronsse, dennis.ronsse@gmail.com

Description: 8.5 miles, 6230 feet of ascent. Bring snacks, lunch, water, windbreaker, warmer jacket, hood, hat & gloves for a long day. Ten hours steep terrain, upper 1000 ft of scree & possibilities of afternoon thunderstorms. No ropes or technical experience required, but strenuous terrain & route finding issues. For trip reports and GPS tracks: <https://www.peakbagger.com/peak.aspx?pid=32498>; for botany: a *Potentilla* that some consider to be different from currently accepted species: <https://panarcticflora.org/taxon/641026>

RSVP Required: Please contact trip leader Dennis Ronsse at least a week in advance.

June 27-29, Fri-Sat-Sun Alaska Range Northern Foothills Weekend

Location: Base camp at Tatlanika Campground (www.tatlanika.com) at the Rex Bridge (Mile 276 Parks Highway)

Leader: Alan Batten, alanbatten@acsalaska.net, 907-378,6384

Description: Friday afternoon flora near the Nenana River. Saturday Antler Creek Trail going from forest to above tree line. Sunday Dragonfly Creek Trail. Updates to be shared at <https://groups.io/g/InteriorANPS>

RSVP Required: Contact Alan at alanbatten@acsalaska.net or text 907-378-6384 prior to June 16. Please have "ANPS" somewhere in the subject line and let him know if you will be using a tent or bringing an RV.

Jun 28 Sat: Williwaw Nature Trail Native Plant Walk

Meeting Time/Location: 10 AM, Trail of Blue Ice Ponds Trailhead on Williwaw Ponds Rd.

Trip Leader: Marilyn Barker, marilyn.barker29@gmail.com

Description: Join Marilyn Barker for a scenic 1-mile walk along the Williwaw Nature Trail in Chugach National Forest. This easy-going trail showcases a beautiful mix of boreal and coastal forest plants - all nestled in this stunning glacial river valley. The trail is a highly accessible flat, gravel surface. This event is open to the public. Don't forget to bring a snack/lunch and water.

Jul 19 Sat: Williwaw Nature Trail Native Plant Walk

Meeting Time/Location: 10 AM, Trail of Blue Ice Ponds Trailhead on Williwaw Ponds Rd.

Trip Leader: Beth Baker, daisymae@mtaonline.net

Description: Join Beth Baker for a scenic 1-mile walk along the Williwaw Nature Trail in Chugach National Forest. This easy-going trail showcases a beautiful mix of boreal and coastal forest plants - all nestled in this stunning glacial river valley. The trail is a highly accessible flat, gravel surface. This event is open to the public. Don't forget to bring a snack/lunch and water.

Aug 2 Sat: Williwaw Nature Trail Native Plant Walk

Meeting Time/Location: 10 AM, Trail of Blue Ice Ponds Trailhead on Williwaw Ponds Rd.

Trip Leader: Dana White, nativeplants.aswcd@gmail.com

Description: Join Dana White for a scenic 1-mile walk along the Williwaw Nature Trail in Chugach National Forest. This easy-going trail showcases a beautiful mix of boreal and coastal forest plants - all nestled in this

Continued on next page

2025 Field Trip Schedule, cont.

stunning glacial river valley. The trail is a highly accessible flat, gravel surface. This event is open to the public. Don't forget to bring a snack/lunch and water.

Sept 1 Mon: Red Mountain (Palmer)

Time & Location: 11 AM, contact leader for meeting location

Trip Leader: Lorene Lynn, lorene.lynn.uaf@gmail.com

Description: Hike is approximately 4.5 miles one way, summit is ~3,300 feet, some steep pitches but mostly gentle uphill, expect 5-7 hours round trip, bring a lunch, layers for the summit, and bear spray.

RSVP Required: Contact Lorene at lorene.lynn.uaf@gmail.com or (907) 354-5444 to confirm space and get an update about possible changes to the plan.

Other Field Trip Ideas:

Flora & Pollinators at Bremner Gold Mine

Time & Location: This is a self-guided trip in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park

Description: Visit https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?taxon_id=47126&user_id=aksusan&verifiable=any to view iNaturalist observations from Bremner Mine in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park compiled by Susan Boersma; contact her at susan.boersma@gmail.com for more information about visiting the historic mine, flora & pollinators, and the public use cabin at Bremner. Susan has offered to assist with trip planning and has information about interesting flora in the area.

November 2025, Flora of Patagonia (Tentative)

Description: AKNPS member Debbie Hinckley has visited Patagonia previously and would like to coordinate an AKNPS field trip with a botanical tour company she knows there. Debbie previously 'botanized' Argentina's portion of Patagonia with this company. The knowledgeable tour leader, botanist and author Marcela Ferreyra, has written field guides to the area. Debbie can connect you with this 'plant crazy' tour or she will coordinate a field trip if there is adequate interest. Debbie can send information to anyone interested after May 1.

Contact: Debbie Hinckley, DHgardens@outlook.com



Eastern Fairy-Slipper (*Calypso bulbosa* var. *americana*) at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, photo by Susan Boersma.

Use our Native Plant Field Guides to plan your own trip!

The Alaska Native Plant Society offers field guides and checklists for native plants observed along a number of Alaska trails and in backcountry areas. Visit our [Native Plant Field Guides and Checklists](#) page to explore the extensive resources that have been put together by AKNPS field trip coordinator Dennis Ronsse.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

To join the Alaska Native Plant Society or renew your membership, you can either 1) fill out our online form and pay online at <https://aknps.org/membership> or 2) fill out and mail the form below with an enclosed check to **Alaska Native Plant Society, PO Box 141613, Anchorage, AK 99514**. There are two types of memberships:

- Single-year annual memberships are tied to the calendar year. Dues received in October-December are applied to the following year. After the first of the year, there is a two-month grace period for membership renewals before we consider your membership inactive.
- Recurring annual memberships are not tied to the calendar year and renew automatically. They must be paid online, and your membership is considered active until you cancel it. You can log into your PayPal account to view and manage your recurring payments.

Need some help? Contact membership@aknps.org

STATUS **NEW** **RENEWAL**

CATEGORY	E-mail Newsletter	Mailed Newsletter	Email + Mailed Newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time Student	\$12	\$22	\$22
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen	\$12	\$22	\$22
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$15	\$25	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$20	\$30	\$30

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (Home) _____ (Cell) _____ E-mail: _____

Anchorage, AK 99514

Po Box 141613

Alaska Native Plant Society