

A Field Guide to Common Plants on the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge

This booklet is formatted to fit on a phone, and assist ID of common plants on the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge. A more complete checklist based on hiker observations, Alaska Native Plant Society field trips, and specimens held at the UAA Herbarium, is available at the Alaska Native Plant Society website: <https://aknps.org>.

This booklet is sorted by scientific names consistent with the 2020 Flora of AK Project, and cross-referenced to Hulten's 1968 *Flora of Alaska and Neighboring Territories*. All photos and field ID notes are copyrighted to Dennis Ronsse.

AKNPS is an organization founded in 1982 to promote awareness, education and preservation of AK native flora.

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Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Alnus incana tenuifolia

Thin-leaf Alder

Betulaceae

Thin-leaf Alder (*A. incana* ssp *tenuifolia*)- Leaves **dark green on top, dull**, not sticky when young, short pointed teeth. **Only in very wet places, often in standing water. Stalks shorter than cone-like fruits.** vs Green Alder (*A. viridis*)- Leaves **lustrous**, wet or dry habitats, but not usually standing water (3 species in SC AK).



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Betulaceae

Alnus incana ssp *tenuifolia*

370

yes

Botanical Name

Common Name

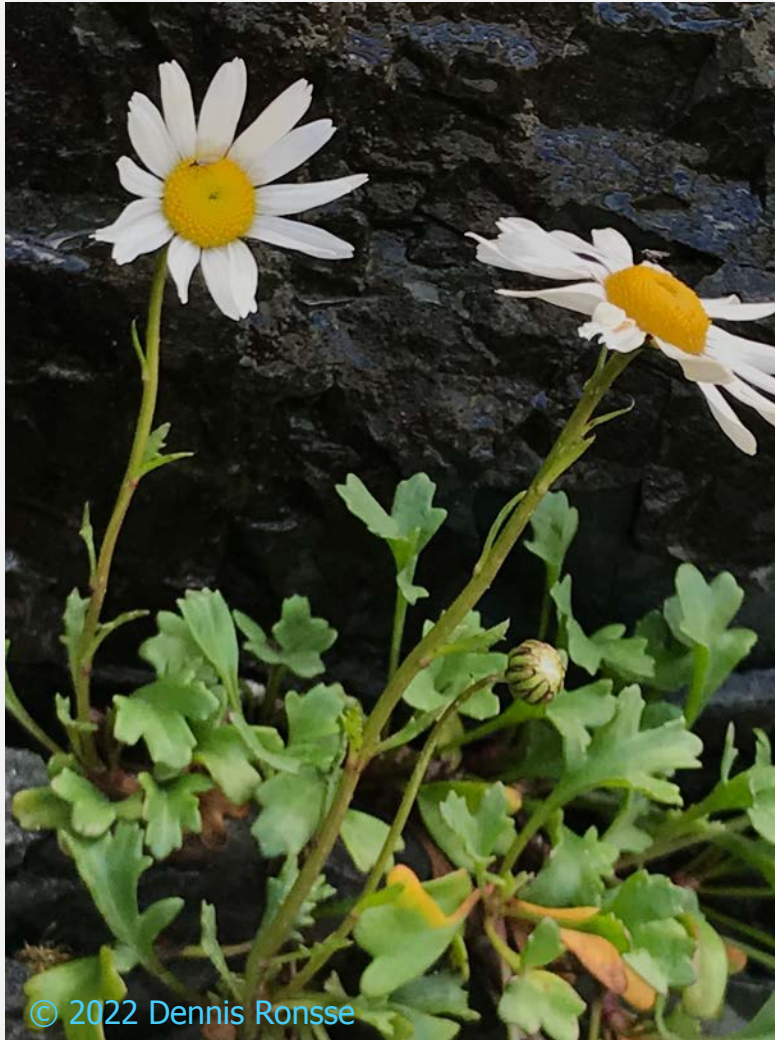
Family

Arctanthemum arcticum arcticum

Arctic Daisy

Asteraceae

Arctic Daisy- Large white flowers w/ yellow centers.



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Asteraceae

*Chrysanthemum arcticum ssp arcticum**

893

no

Botanical Name

Arctopoa eminens

Common Name

Eminent Bluegrass

Family

Poaceae

Eminent Bluegrass- Large grass or seashores mixed w/ sedges, up to 1 m tall. Leaves up to 10 mm broad. Panicle somewhat contracted.



Hulten Family

Poaceae

Hulten Name

Poa eminens

Hulten page

131

Accepted

yes

Botanical Name**Common Name****Family*****Atriplex gmelinii*****Salt Brush*****Amaranthaceae***

Atriplex gmelinii - Seashores. Leaves all narrow, lower opposite, upper alternate. Flowers in spikes and axillary glomerules. Said to be one of the best known edible wild greens in some parts of the world, used like spinach.

**Hulten Family****Hulten Name****Hulten page****Accepted*****Chenopodiaceae******Atriplex Gmelini******398****no**

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Bolboschoenus maritimus paludosus

Cosmopolitan bulrush

Cyperaceae

Involucral leaves 2-5 (not single) Spikelets few, large, capitate. UAA Nat Heritage Rare Plant S3. Bulrush is corruption of "pool-rush" (Pojar & MacKinnon, "Plants of Pacific NW Coast"). AK rare plant S3 (GNRTNR).



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Cyperaceae

*Scirpus paludosus**

208

no

Botanical Name*Caltha palustris***Common Name****Marsh Marigold****Family***Ranunculaceae*

Marsh Marigold- Leaves kidney shaped & finely toothed, arrive very early in spring are poisonous, but can be eaten after boiling 2x, reported to be good flavor.

**Hulten Family***Ranunculaceae***Hulten Name***Caltha palustris***Hulten page**

453

Accepted

yes

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Cardamine polemonioides

Cuckoo Flower

Brassicaceae

C. pratensis stems glabrous w/ leaves pinnate, several pairs of linear segments. Petals white or rose w/ darker veins. Wet (often organic) meadows.



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Brassicaceae

*Cardamine pratensis angustifolia**

514

no

Carex diandra

Lesser Panicked Sedge

Cyperaceae

C. diandra Spikes 5-7 dark brown almost continuous appearing spike, Inconspicuous male flowers at tips. **culms round and smooth below, very scabrous and angular above.** often in water on floating margin of woodland bogs.



Hulten Family

Cyperaceae

Hulten Name

Carex diandra

Hulten page

231

Accepted

yes

Botanical Name**Common Name****Family***Carex lyngbyei*

Lyngbye's Sedge

Cyperaceae

Lyngbye's Sedge- Pistillate spikes short, 5-7mm wide, abruptly truncated, long dangllng. (vs. *C. sitchensis* longer & thinner) Culms triangular longer than female spikes. Dense monocultures in salt marshes. Foliage is important food for migrating geese, nesting tundra swans, and coastal brown bears. Decomposing leaves all winter long provide food indirectly for young salmon. Hay and silage in Iceland.



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Hulten Family**Hulten Name****Hulten page****Accepted***Cyperaceae**Carex Lyngbyaei**

253

no

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Carex paupercula

Boreal Bog Sedge

Cyperaceae

C. magellanica - Pistillate scales dark & narrow with long awns make spikes bicolored w/pale perigynia. Lowest bract longer than inflorescence (unlike other Limosae).



Hulten Family

Cyperaceae

Hulten Name

Carex magellanica ssp *irrigua**

Hulten page

270

Accepted

no

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Carex pluriflora

Many flowered Sedge

Cyperaceae

C. pluiflora- **Pistillate scales wide & black. 10-20 flowered.** Dominant in coastal transition from bog to brackish tide influence, edge of *C. Lyngbyei*.



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Cyperaceae

Carex pluriflora

269

yes

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Cicuta douglasii

Poison Water Hemlock

Apiaceae

Leaves lanceolate **sharply serrate**. Fruit at least as long as broad. Extremely poisonous if ingested, even small amounts can be lethal to both humans & livestock. (The most poisonous plant in AK.)



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Apiaceae

Cicuta Douglasii

699*

yes

Botanical Name

Comarum palustre

Common Name

Marsh Five-finger

Family

Rosaceae

Long creeping (often floating) rhizomes w/ emergent stems. **Leaflets 5-7.** Flowers reddish-purple secrete fetid nectar attracting carrion flies.



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Hulten Family

Rosaceae

Hulten Name

*Potentilla palustris**

Hulten page

608

Accepted

no

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Dasiphora fruticosa

Shrubby Cinquefoil

Rosaceae

Shrubby Cinquefoil- **Stems are reddish-brown w/ shedding bark.** Leaves thick, bluish-gray above, 5-parted. Large flowers, Common throughout AK, wet and dry ground, prefers limestone.



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Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Rosaceae

*Potentilla fruticosa**

609

no

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Galium trifidum trifidum

Small Bedstraw

Rubiaceae

Small Bedstraw **leaves blunt (not mucronate)** in whorls of mostly 5 - 6, wet places vs. Sweet-scented Bedstraw **leaves mucronate (sharp pointed)**, not blunt, in whorls of 6 (moist woods & thickets). Used as mattress stuffing because of sweet small and not easily smashed square stems.



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Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Rubiaceae

Galium trifidum trifidum

840

yes

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Galium triflorum

Sweetscented Bedstraw

Rubiaceae

Sweetscented Bedstraw (*G. triflorum*)- **leaves mucronate (needle-like tip)** in whorls of 6, moist woods & thickets vs. Small Bedstraw **leaves blunt** in whorls of 4 - 6, wet places.



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Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Rubiaceae

Galium triflorum

838

yes

Botanical Name

Halerpestes cymbalaria

Common Name

Spade-leaf Buttercup

Family

Ranunculaceae

Spade-leaf Buttercup- Basal leaves undivided, egg-, heart-, or kidney-shaped w/ scalloped or blunt toothed margins. **Strawberry-like runners which root at the nodes.**



Hulten Family

Ranunculaceae

Hulten Name

*Ranunculus cymbalaria**

Hulten page

475

Accepted

no

Hippuris tetraphylla

Fourleaf Mare's Tail

Plantaginaceae

Fourleaf Mare's Tail- **leaves obtuse** (usually) 3-8 mm wide, **4-6 per whorl**. **Brackish water**. Flowers are small, and inconspicuous at leaf bases on emergent parts of the stem. The flowers, which lack petals and sepals, are reduced to a tiny rim, green or purple and very inconspicuous.



Hulten Family

Haloragaceae

Hulten Name

Hippuris tetraphylla

Hulten page

695

Accepted

yes

Botanical Name

Hippuris vulgaris

Common Name

Common Mare's Tail

Family

Plantaginaceae

Common Mare's Tail- **leaves acute**, 1-2 mm wide, **6-12 per whorl**. **Fresh water**. Yup'ik used for healing wounds, e.g. stopping internal and external bleeding, curing stomach ulcers, and soothing inflammation of the skin.



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Hulten Family

Haloragaceae

Hulten Name

Hippuris vulgaris

Hulten page

695

Accepted

yes

Botanical Name

Iris setosa setosa

Common Name

Wild Iris

Family

Iridaceae

Wild Iris- Poisonous, especially the rhizome.



Hulten Family

Iridaceae

Hulten Name

Iris setosa setosa

Hulten page

313

Accepted

yes

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Lathyrus palustris

Marsh Vetchling / Marsh

Fabaceae

Marsh Pea (*Lathyrus palustris*)- **Stem Winged. Leaflets mostly 6, narrower.** Wingl-ike stipules and more upright growth. Smaller flowers and usually more inland from the beach.



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Fabaceae

*Lathyrus palustris ssp pilosus**

673

no

Botanical Name**Common Name****Family*****Lemna turionifera*****Duckweed*****Araceae***

L. minor- Fronds green round or elliptical, floating. *L. trisulca* fronds grayish-green oblong-lanceolate, denticulate, submerged.

**Hulten Family****Hulten Name****Hulten page****Accepted*****Lemnaceae******Lemna minor******282****no**

Leymus mollis mollis

Beach Rye

Poaceae

Beach Rye- Tall robust grass generally along high tideline. basal leaves 15-30 cm long used for native basket making. Inflorescence a spike vs. Eminent Bluegrass (*Poa eminens*)- Inflorescence a loose panicle.



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

*Poaceae**Elymus arenarias ssp mollis var mollis*

193

no

Botanical Name**Common Name****Family*****Lysimachia thyrsiflora*****Tufted Loosestrife*****Myrsinaceae***

Tufted Loosestrife- Marshes & wet places. Yellow flowers in dense axillary long-peduncled racemes. Lower leaves scalelike mid & upper leaves opposite. Named for Thracian king Lysimachus (ca. 360-281 BC), a companion of Alexander. Used to drive away troublesome flies & gnats, calm oxen & horses (stopping their strife).

**Hulten Family****Hulten Name****Hulten page****Accepted*****Primulaceae******Lysimachia thyrsiflora*****750****yes**

Botanical Name

Malaxis monophyllos

Common Name

White Adder's Mouth

Family

Orchidaceae



Hulten Family

Orchidaceae

Hulten Name

*Malaxis monophylla**

Hulten page

330

Accepted

no

Botanical Name**Common Name****Family*****Menyanthes trifoliata*****Buckbean*****Menyanthaceae***

Buckbean- Leaves divided into 3 ovate leaflets. Flowers large, frilled with long white hairs. Blooming early in standing water. Used by German, French, and Native Americans to treat some intestinal problems, relieve fever, headaches & promote healing of ulcers.



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Hulten Family**Hulten Name****Hulten page****Accepted*****Menyanthaceae******Menyanthes trifoliata*****763****yes**

Botanical Name**Common Name****Family*****Myrica gale*****Sweet Gale*****Myricaceae***

Sweet Gale- An important nitrogen fixer in bogs. Stl'atl'imx people or NW coast called it "monkey bush" probably because it was used by sasquatches (for some purpose). On the ACWR, moose seem to prefer *Myrica gale* more than *Salix fuscescens*.

**Hulten Family****Hulten Name****Hulten page****Accepted*****Myricaceae******Myrica gale*****364****yes**

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Parnassia palustris

Northern Grass of

Parnassiaceae

Northern Grass of Parnassus (*P. palustris*)- wet meadows, ditches, lake margins most of AK. pointed petals, conspicuously veined. Petals almost twice as long as sepals.



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

*Saxifragaceae**

Parnassia palustris

589

no

Botanical Name

Phleum pratense

Common Name

Common Timothy

Family

Poaceae

Common Timothy



Hulten Family

Poaceae

Hulten Name

Phleum pratense

Hulten page

88

Accepted

yes

Botanical Name

Plantago maritima

Common Name

Goose Tongue

Family

Plantaginaceae



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Hulten Family

Plantaginaceae

Hulten Name

Plantago maritima

Hulten page

833

Accepted

yes

Polemonium acutiflorum**Tall jacob's ladder*****Polemoniaceae***

Tall Jacob's Ladder (*P. acutiflorum*)- Corolla lobes acuminate, margins ciliate, throat white. Anthers yellow. Leaflets glabrous (or nearly so), sharply pointed. vs. *P. boreale*- Corolla lobes broadly rounded, margins glabrous, throat yellow. Anthers white. Leaflets 10 or less / side, viscid-pubescent, not sharply pointed tips. Both very common in AK.

**Hulten Family****Hulten Name****Hulten page****Accepted***Polemoniaceae**Polemonium acutiflorum*

767

yes

Botanical Name**Common Name****Family***Potentilla anserina pacifica***Pacific Silverweed***Rosaceae*

Silverweed or "Anleq" a popular Yup'ik food at Kwigillingok, large caches made by voles in the fall. Roots look something like chow mein. Raw, boiled or roasted to sweeten (nutty parsnip - sweet potato like flavor) used in "akutaq."

**Hulten Family****Hulten Name****Hulten page****Accepted***Rosaceae**Potentilla Egedii ssp grandis**

622

no

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Puccinellia phryganodes

Creeping Alkali Grass

Poaceae

Creeping Alkali Grass- Coastal mudflats. Forming mats & tufts w/ long stolons which have short sprouting axillary shoots. Rarely flowering, reproduction mostly vegetative by rhizomes.



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Poaceae

Puccinellia phryganodes

155

yes

Botanical Name

Common Name

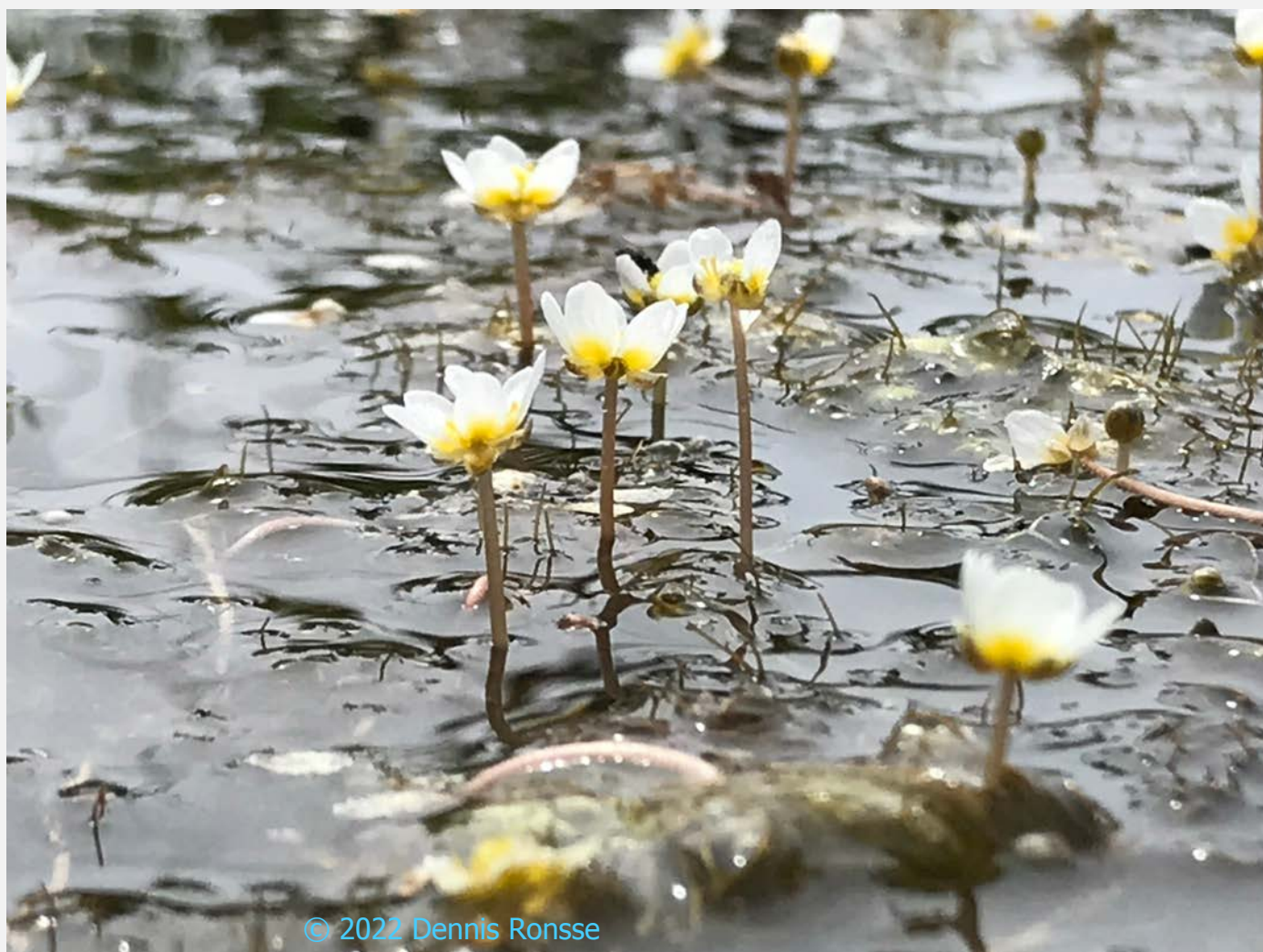
Family

Ranunculus hyperboreus hyperboreus

Arctic Buttercup

Ranunculaceae

Arctic Buttercup- **Plant minute.** Stems creeping in mud or floating. Leaves small 3-5 lobed. Sepals & petals 3 (-4). Flowers yellow.



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Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Ranunculaceae

Ranunculus hyperboreus

471

yes

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Ranunculus sceleratus multifidus

Celery-leaved Buttercup

Ranunculaceae

Celery-leaved Buttercup- Marshy habitat. Basal leaves reniform outline ternately lobed. Plant glabrous (or nearly so). **Stems fistulose (hollow).**



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Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Ranunculaceae

Ranunculus sceleratus ssp multifidus

479

yes

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Ribes glandulosum

Skunk Currant

Grossulariaceae

Skunk Currant- **Sepals small rounded, not hairy.** Ovary w/ stalked glands. Racemes mostly erect ascending 5-16 flowers **skunk like odor. Twigs fine, less than 3 mm thick.**



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Saxifragaceae*

Ribes glandulosum

592

no

Botanical Name

Ribes hudsonianum

Common Name

Northern Black Currant

Family

Grossulariaceae

Northern Black Currant- **Upright shrub w/ white flowers, racemes fairly short & ascending, calyx lobes white pubescent.** Strong rather unpleasant odor.



Hulten Family

Saxifragaceae*

Hulten Name

Ribes hudsonianum

Hulten page

591

Accepted

no

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Ribes triste

Red Currant

Grossulariaceae

Red Currant (*R. triste*)- **Usually upright (not sprawling). Bark shredding.** Sepals very small reddish to purplish. Ovary w/o stalked glands. Racemes drooping vs. **All other Ribes have strong odor & bark not shedding.**



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Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Saxifragaceae*

Ribes triste

592

no

Botanical Name**Common Name****Family***Rubus acaulis***Nagoonberry***Rosaceae*

Nagoonberry- 3 in SC AK & hybrids occur. Trailing vines w/ magenta flowers. Great tasting berries, but difficult to harvest in large amount. Rubus is the ancient Latin word for bramble.

**Hulten Family****Hulten Name****Hulten page****Accepted***Rosaceae**Rubus arcticus ssp acaulis**

603

no

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Rubus arcticus

Nagoonberry

Rosaceae

Nagoonberry- 3 in SC AK & hybrids occur. Trailing vines w/ magenta flowers. Great tasting berries, but difficult to harvest in large amount. Rubus is the ancient Latin word for bramble.



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Rosaceae

*Rubus arcticus ssp. arcticus**

602

no

Botanical Name*Salicornia depressa***Common Name**

Glasswort

Family*Amaranthaceae*

Glasswort- **Succulent w/ articulating segments**, often reddish. Found on shores w/o too much wave action. Pojar & MacKinnon, "Plants of Pacific NW Coast"... Edible, sometimes sold in seafood stores and chic new age restaurants as "Sea Asparagus". Reduced to ashes for glassmaking.

**Hulten Family***Chenopodiaceae***Hulten Name***Salicornia europaea****Hulten page**

401

Accepted

no

Botanical Name**Common Name****Family*****Salix fuscescens*****Alaska Bog Willow*****Salicaceae***

Alaska Bog Willow- Trailing shrub 10-30 cm tall. Wet tundra small bogs in most of AK. Leaves widest near tip, minutely toothed near base. Capsules long & thin, dark purple. Flower clusters 2-4cm. Scales hairy dark at tip.



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Hulten Family**Hulten Name****Hulten page****Accepted***Salicaceae**Salix fuscescens*

343

yes

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani

Soft-stem Bulrush

Cyperaceae

Soft-stem Bulrush- **Involucral leaf solitary, appearing as continuation of culm. Spikelets in terminal cluster of loose branches.** Very strong fibers, NW natives made baskets, mats, walls & roofs.



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Cyperaceae

*Scirpus validus**

208

no

Botanical Name

Sparganium hyperboreum

Common Name

Northern Bur Reed

Family

Sparganiaceae

Northern Bur Reed- staminate heads single, beak of fruit small, .5 to 1.5 mm long.



Hulten Family

Sparganiaceae

Hulten Name

Sparganium hyperboreum

Hulten page

69

Accepted

yes

Botanical Name

Suaeda calceoliformis

Common Name

Sea Blite

Family

Amaranthaceae

Sea Blite- Leaves fleshy, succulent. Flowers in leaf axils. Salt flats. AK rare plant S1S2 (G5).



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Hulten Family

Chenopodiaceae

Hulten Name

*Suaeda depressa**

Hulten page

402

Accepted

no

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Thalictrum sparsiflorum richardsonii

Meadow Rue

Ranunculaceae

Meadow Rue (*T. sparsiflorum richardsonii*)- **Tall plant w/ several stem leaves;** inflorescence paniculate. Carpels long stalked, filaments dialated, larger than anthers.



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Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Ranunculaceae

*Thalictrum sparsiflorum**

487

yes

Botanical Name**Common Name****Family***Trientalis europaea arctica*

Star Flower

Myrsinaceae

Star Flower- Woods, higher slopes. Leaves reddish, in a whorl. Flowers white w/ 7 petals. *ssp arctica* has more stem leaves (5-8), obovate shape, & rounded in apex. And pedicels glands above *ssp europaea* few stem leaves, more pointed, and pedicels rarely w/ glands.



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Hulten Family**Hulten Name****Hulten page****Accepted**

Primulaceae

Trientalis europaea

751

yes

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Triglochin maritima

Sea Arrow Grass

Juncaginaceae

Sea Arrow Grass- **Thicker fleshy leaves & thicker stalks.** **Fruits ovoid** w/ 6 carpels. **Mud flats,** tidal & freshwater marshes (often more coastal & brackish). Toxic to livestock.



Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Juncaginaceae

*Triglochin maritimum**

80

no

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Valeriana sitchensis

Sitka Valerian

Valerianaceae

Sitka Valerian (*V. sitchensis*)- larger (18-24"), upper stem leaves petiolated 3-5 foliated. Bractlets ciliate. buds Pink-white, turning white in bloom vs Capitata Valerian (*V. capitata*)- smaller (5-10") upper stem leaves sessile, simple or 3-lobed. Bractlets glabrous or pubescent only at base. Buds maroon, turning pink, then white in bloom.



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Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Valerianaceae

Valeriana sitchensis

846

yes

Botanical Name

Common Name

Family

Viola epipsila repens

Marsh Violet

Violaceae

Marsh Violet (*V. epipsila* ssp. *repens*) **leaves glabrous top and bottom**, leaf sinuses not as deep, **lobes not overlapping** vs. Woodland Violet (*V. selkirkii*) **leaves pubescent above**, glabrous below, w/ deep sinuses, **lobes often overlapping**.



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Hulten Family

Hulten Name

Hulten page

Accepted

Violaceae

Viola epipsila

683

yes

Botanical Name**Common Name****Family***Fucus distichus***Rockweed***Fucaceae*

Rockweed (*Fucus distichus*)- The tips of mature individuals swell up and provide flotation for the plant as well as reproductive chambers for developing sperm and eggs. During low tide, the swollen tips dry up squeezing out sperm and eggs which unite into a zygote during the next flood tide and settle onto a substratum. Native Americans historically harvested the dried swollen tips of *Fucus gardneri* – sometimes referred to as "Indian pop corn."

**Hulten Family****Hulten Name****Hulten page****Accepted**

00

yes