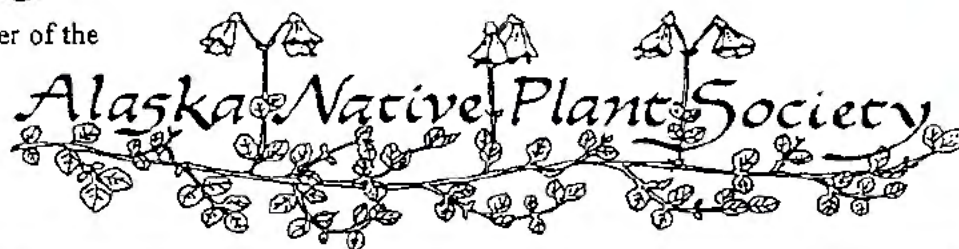


# Borealis

the newsletter of the



PO Box 141613, Anchorage, Alaska

February/March 2017

## Join us at our Next Meetings!

### Monday, Feb. 6, 7:00 p.m

Main Topic: "Rare Plants Well Done"  
Speaker: **Justin Fulkerson**

Ericaceae Family: *Vaccinium* and  
*Oxycoccus*  
Presenter: Glenn Brown

Endangered Species: *Monotropa uniflora*  
and *Cypripedium montanum*  
Presenter: Glenn Brown

### Monday, March 6, 7:00 p.m

Main Topic: "Our Shifting Treeline"  
Speaker: **Roman Dial**

Endangered Plants: *Oxytropis*  
*kobukensis*  
Presenter: **Dennis Ronsse**

Ericaceae Family Plant: *Loiseleuria*  
and *Kalmia*  
Presenter: **Megan Keller**

For the latest information about ANPS events  
and field trips, go to [www.aknps.org/](http://www.aknps.org/)

"Like" Us on Facebook!



## Verna Pratt (1930-2017)

In Memoriam

Alaska has lost one of its most valuable treasures. Face it. We wouldn't be here without her. There is likely not one botanical/gardening organization in Anchorage that doesn't have her name and leadership all over it. Verna and her husband Frank founded this organization, the Alaska Native Plant Society in 1982. She served as its first president from 1982-88. In 1997 she founded the Alaska Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society and also served as its first president. She was a vital fixture in the Wildflower Garden Club and the Alaska Master Gardeners Association. Verna participated directly in the local community in other ways as well – by helping to care for and maintain the gardens at the Alaska Botanical Garden, Campbell Creek Science Center and she volunteered as Alaska Native Plant Society's Chief Weed Warrior.

Anchorage garden columnist Jeff Lowenfels perhaps best summarized her reputation and contribution to knowledge about Alaska's native plants and wildflowers in these words: "In the wildflower world around the country, everybody knows Verna Pratt," and "if you want a book on wildflowers in Alaska, this (the first field guide) is the one you get, period."

Continued on Page 2.



# MYSTERY PLANT

I am a very common plant I can grow practically anywhere in the state of Alaska. You can find me from the barrier islands in the north to the Sitka sound in the south, west to the Pribilof Islands as well as Nunivak and the Aleutians. To the east I ignore the international boundary and freely cross over into Canada.

I am a woody plant with creeping branches. My leaves are really clever. They are linear and my edges are rolled to the mid-vein so as to never expose my lower surface to harsh environmental conditions, like strong wind which could make me lose all my water!

My flowers are inconspicuous, but really a treat to find. They have a lovely deep purple color. You have to look early because I bloom shortly after the snow melts. The centerpiece of my flower is a flabellate stigma.

Later in the season I produce tasty black berries. Who am I?

ANSWER on Page 4.

(Many thanks to Marilyn Barker, to whom Verna Pratt passed the Mystery Plant torch after more than a quarter century. Marilyn has a lot of catching up to do!)



After arriving in Anchorage in 1966 Verna's interest in gardening and learning about plants native to Alaska blossomed. Verna became a master gardener and a respected amateur botanist. She wrote and published several field guides to Alaska wildflowers, a berry identification guide and a children's book. Verna and Frank enjoyed traveling throughout the state, with Frank photographing flowers for the books they published together. She taught numerous classes and led hikes through mountains and fields, inspiring generations of Alaskans to look more closely at the beauty around them and appreciate even the smallest of wildflowers.

Verna has been recognized nationally and internationally for her expertise and contributions, winning numerous awards. . In 1991, and again in 1993, she received the Helen S. Hull Literary Award from the National Council of State Garden Clubs for "literary production of horticultural interest" and in 1999 she received the Meritorious Service Award for "producing books to help people learn." In 2000 she was honored locally as a Woman of Achievement by the Anchorage YWCA and in 2002 was elected to the (national) board of directors, North American Rock Garden Society. Pratt also is a recipient of the Edgar T. Wherry Award given by the North American Rock Garden Society (date unknown) for "outstanding contribution in the dissemination of botanical and/or horticultural information about native North American plants." In 2009 Pratt and her husband were the first persons awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Anchorage Chapter of the Alaska Master Gardeners Association. On that occasion, it was humorously pointed out that they were being recognized: "For your ability to teach and teach and teach and run up mountains with people following you." In 2014 she was inducted into the Alaska Women's Hall of Fame.

Despite all these achievements, she always found time for family and friends. Whether babysitting grandchildren, cooking meals for guests in her home or inviting family to join her in wildflower field trips, Verna always demonstrated her most valuable achievements were the personal connections with loved ones. Our tribute to her must be in picking up those many threads she wove and continuing on. Volunteer!  
(Photo Courtesy of Amelia Walsh)

## *Cassiope* and *Phyllodoce* – Mythical but not “True” Heathers

The Ericaceae family of dwarf, evergreen shrubs has been sometimes divided into three groups, based not so much on scientific description as by general looks: Group I – plants with showy, upward-facing flowers; Group II – plants with bell-shaped flowers; and Group III – plants with juicy berries. Group II includes the genera *Cassiope*, *Andromeda*, *Phyllodoce*, and *Chamaedaphne*.

Carl Linnaeus, the father of our plant taxonomic system, got to give a lot of plants their scientific names. While some of the names he chose related to the physical description of the plant, many of the genera in the Ericaceae family are names from Greek mythology. Such is true of the two genera Ann Ronsee highlighted at our January monthly meeting. *Cassiope* is named for the mother of Andromeda (another genus) and *Phyllodoce* was a sea nymph. (He also gave a worm genus this name.) *Chamaedaphne* is a combination of the Greek nymph, Daphne, and the Greek word chamae, meaning “ground”.

### *Cassiope*

***Cassiope*** are native to the Arctic and north temperate montane regions. Common names, shared with several other similar related genera, include heather and heath, but they are not true heathers. They have scale-like leaves lying against the stems, and produce solitary bell-shaped flowers in late spring.

***Cassiope tetragona*** This small, shrubby, evergreen, high-elevation, ground cover is known as "Arctic bell heather," "mountain heather" or "white Arctic mountain heather" but may be more appropriately called the "Phillips Screwdriver Heather". In fact tetragona means “four-sided”. Blossoms which sometimes appear before the leaves have fully "greened-up" in the spring.

***Cassiope mertensiana*** is a species of flowering plant known by the common names **western moss heather** and **white mountain heather**. It is native to subalpine areas of western North America, from Alaska to the mountains of California. It is a small, branching shrub which forms patches along the ground and in rocky crevices. *C. mertensiana* has short, erect, snakelike stems that are covered in tiny leathery scalelike leaves only a few millimeters long. From between the layers of scale leaves emerge reddish pedicels each bearing a petite, hanging, down-facing, bell-shaped flower. The bractlets are red and the contrasting flower is white.

***Cassiope lycopodioides*, clubmoss mountain heather**, is native to southern Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. It is found on rocky slopes in arctic and alpine tundra at elevations up to 2000 m. The specific epithet "*lycopodioides*" refers to the plant's superficial resemblance to some species of clubmoss (*Lycopodium*).

*Cassiope lycopodioides* is a perennial herb forming mats lying close to the ground. Leaves are narrow, up to 3 mm long, closely pressed against the stem. Flowers are white, bell-shaped, up to 20 mm across

*Cassiope stelleriana*, Alaska moss heather, is actually so unique that it is now classified in its own genus *Harrimanella*. *Harrimanella stelleriana* is named for the Harriman expedition to Alaska and its naturalist Georg Steller. A partial explanation for the reclassification and some great photos of extensive fields of Alaskan mountain-heather can be seen [here](#), on the [UBC Botanical Garden webpage](#).

#### FLOWERS

Corolla White to Pinkish

Sepals reddish,

Broadly bell shaped,

deeply lobed petals

Solitary flowers on stems

#### LEAVES

Evergreen, spreading

Alternate, Not in 4 rows.

Linear to lance shaped, glabrous,

*Cassiope (Harrimanella) stelleriana*



© Hans Roemer (Photo ID #19845) E Flora BC Photo Gallery

Alaska Moss/Mountain Heather



## ***Phyllodoce***

Phyllodoce is a small genus of sub-shrubs, also in the Ericaceae. Known commonly as mountain heaths, or mountain heathers, they are native to arctic-alpine regions of North American and Eurasia. It is hard to imagine how Linnaeus decided to name them after a sea nymph!

They often grow from rhizomes, the stem bases formed by clumps of old leaf stalks. They have erect or spreading stems, the new shoots covered in glandular hairs, the old ones bare, tough, and shreddy. The leaves are alternately arranged. They have narrow, leathery blades that roll under tightly at the edges. The inflorescence is a solitary flower or an array of up to 30. The flower has a cup- or bell-shaped corolla of five petals that are fused together for at least half their lengths. There are usually ten stamens, which sometimes protrude from the corolla. The fruit is a capsule containing over 100 tiny seeds.

There are four species of Phyllodoce in Alaska. In trying to separate the species, it does help to remember the Latin meanings of some of the species names. The name "*P. glandulifera*" is well-deserved - the flower stems and the outsides of the flowers are densely glandular-hairy, even the leaves are finely glandular-hairy. *Caerulea* is Latin for "blue", and the pitcher shaped corolla of *P. caerulea* matures to a deep, virtually blue color. *P. empetriformis* has an aspect that looks very much like *Empetrum nigrum* (crowberry), but it has longer leaves and larger, more showy flowers.. *P. aleutica* is most common in the Aleutian Islands. There are also hybrids of many of these plants.

Many species of *Cassiope* and *Phyllodoce* grow in the same locations. These species can be very hard to tell apart when not in flower, and some even have similar flowers. *H. stelleriana* has leaves that are rounded on the underside, rather than grooved, like *P. empetriformis* and *P. glanduliflora*. *H. stelleriana* has white bell-shaped flowers, while pink mountain-heather has pink flowers, and *P. glanduliflora* has pale yellow, urn-shaped flowers. But *C. mertensia* also has white flowers. Its leaves are more scale-like, however, which sets it apart. *Empetrum nigrum* (crowberry) is yet another species that looks quite similar to the mountain-heathers, but it has very small and inconspicuous flowers and smaller, shorter leaves. The leaves are also grooved on the underside, unlike *H. stelleriana*.



***Phyllodoce glanduliflora***



***Phyllodoce empetriformis***



***Phyllodoce caerulea***



***Phyllodoce aleutica***

# ANPS Native Plant Seed Sale - 2016

The following seeds, collected by ANPS members, will be available for sale starting in January. All proceeds will go to the Alaska Native Plant Society.

*Aconitum chamissonianum*, 5 to 6 ft., tall, large light blue flowers. Easy, scatter seeds outside in winter.

*Caltha leptosepala*, Mountain Marigold, scatter outside in winter. Likes wet conditions

*Dodecatheon jeffreyi*, Sow outside in winter. Likes wet conditions

*Fritillaria camschatcensi* Chocolate lily, sow outside.

*Gentiana glauca*, Glaucous gentian; 3 in. Sow outside.

*Leptarrhena pyrolifolia*, Leather-leaf Saxifrage, 10 in., Sow outside

*Papaver alboroseum*. Pale pink poppy. 3 in. Does best in open ground

*Swertia perennis* Star Swertia, flowers violet blue, 12 in.

*Valeriana sitchensis*, Sitka Valerian 2 ft., flowers pink-tinge

*Viola langsдорffii*, Alaska Violet

**Borealis**

the newsletter of the



## ALASKA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

### State and Anchorage Chapter Officers

President	Beth Baker
Vice President	Dennis Ronsse
Secretary	Mike Monterusso
Treasurer	Mary Stella

### Anchorage Chapter Program Coordinators

Membership	Mary Stella
Plant Family	Dennis Ronsse
Mini-Botany	Dennis Ronsse
Field Trips	Marilyn Barker

### Newsletter ("Borealis")

Editor	Ginny Moore
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*Borealis* is published bi-monthly, fall through spring. Articles may be sent to Ginny Moore, , Anchorage, AK 99516. Phone or FAX: , E-mail: [elfinwood@gmail.com](mailto:elfinwood@gmail.com)



### IT WORKS!

**ANPS HAS ALREADY EARNED \$\$\$  
FROM JUST A FEW MEMBERS SHOPPING AT FREDDY'S!  
WON'T YOU JOIN US?  
IT DOESN'T AFFECT YOUR OWN REWARDS POINTS.**

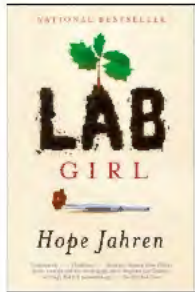
Fred Meyer is donating \$2.5 million per year to non-profits in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington, based on where their customers tell them to give. Here's how the program works:

- Sign up for the Community Rewards program by linking your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to (non-profit) at [www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards](http://www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards). You can search for us by our name or by our non-profit number **90390**.
- Then, every time you shop and use your Rewards Card, you are helping (non-profit) earn a donation!
- **You still earn your Rewards Points, Fuel Points, and Rebates, just as you do today.**
- If you do not have a Rewards Card, they are available at the Customer Service desk of any Fred Meyer store.
- For more information, please visit

[www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards](http://www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards).



# FROM OUR BOOKSHELVES



## Lab Girl

Author: Hope Jahren

Publisher: Knopf

Hardback: April 2016

Paperback: February 2017

**A *New York Times* Notable Book**

**Winner of the American Association for the Advancement of Science/Subaru Science Books & Film Prize for Excellence in Science Books**

**One of the Best Books of the Year: *The Washington Post*, TIME.com, NPR, Slate, Entertainment Weekly, Newsday, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Kirkus Reviews**

Geobiologist Hope Jahren has spent her life studying trees, flowers, seeds, and soil. *Lab Girl* is her revelatory treatise on plant life—but it is also a celebration of the lifelong curiosity, humility, and passion that drive every scientist. In these pages, Hope takes us back to her Minnesota childhood, where she spent hours in unfettered play in her father's college laboratory. She tells us how she found a sanctuary in science, learning to perform lab work "with both the heart and the hands." She introduces us to Bill, her brilliant, eccentric lab manager. And she extends the mantle of *scientist* to each one of her readers, inviting us to join her in observing and protecting our environment. Warm, luminous, compulsively readable, *Lab Girl* vividly demonstrates the mountains that we can move when love and work come together. *Review from Penguin Random House.*



## Remarkable Plants

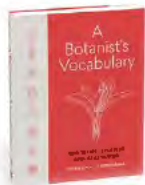
Author: Jeff Probst

Publisher: Puffin Books

January 3, 2017

Category: Middle School

New from Emmy-Award winning host of *Survivor* and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Stranded*, Jeff Probst comes a dynamic and graphic line of trivia books! Packed with full-color photos, fascinating facts and trivia, and great callouts from Jeff, this series is perfect for every kid looking to know the coolest, weirdest facts and trivia around! Challenge yourself to discover the world's most extreme plants! From the biggest trees to the deadliest fungus and everything in between, find out all the fascinating facts about the plants that surround us with the Emmy Award winning host of *Survivor* and *New York Times* bestselling author, Jeff Probst! Features quizzes, trivia, facts, and incredible stories that will shock and amaze!



## A Botanist's Vocabulary: 1300 Terms Explained and Illustrated

By Susan K. Pell and Bobbi Angell

Timber Press 2016

Susan K. Pell,, former Director of Science at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and current Science and Public Programs Manager at the United States Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C, has teamed with Bobbi Angell, a scientific illustrator for the New York Botanical Garden, to publish a reference for professionals and gardeners alike. *A Botanist's Vocabulary* gives gardeners and naturalists a better understanding of what they see and a way to categorize and organize the natural world in which they are so intimately involved. Through concise definitions and detailed black and white illustrations, it defines 1300 words commonly used by botanists, naturalists, and gardeners to describe plants. "Students, gardeners, and even professional botanists will find much to like in this expanded glossary, with its concise definitions and elegant drawings ... Botany reference collections will find this a welcome addition for users of all levels."

# ANPS News and Business

- **Sedge Workshop** – July 2017

ANPS has received a \$900 grant from the Anchorage Wildflower Garden Club to help us fund a seminar on Alaskan sedges in July 2017. Details are still being worked out, but the plan is to have Tony (Dr. Anton) Reznicek offer the class in Anchorage in mid- July, for about 10 participants.

Tony Reznicek is an internationally known authority on grasses and sedges, a past president of the North American Rock Garden Society and Curator of Vascular Plants at the University of Michigan Herbarium. When he's not collecting data for ecological impact studies in Alaska or plant collecting in Chile and other far points, he tends his rock- and rarity garden in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He has offered numerous workshops in Alaska in the past decade, and comes highly recommended by everyone who has participated.

- **The Fairbanks Native Plant Society** group meets at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. At their January meeting they hosted JJ Frost, who talked about his 2010 Expedition to Franz Josef Land: Flora and Natural History of the Russian High Arctic”.

*“I journeyed with a team of American and Russian scientists on an expedition to Franz Josef Land, a High Arctic archipelago featuring some of the northernmost land in the world. This expedition was part of a series of studies examining tundra vegetation, soils, and permafrost along a 1,000-mile long Arctic transect from the treeline of West Siberia northward along the Yamal Peninsula and finally to Franz Josef Land. Though High Arctic tundra is often termed “polar desert,” FJL has a moist climate and differs in many respects from the much drier Canadian High Arctic. Despite an average July temperature of only +34 degrees F, forbs, grasses, mosses, and lichens are surprisingly productive in ice-free parts of the landscape. FJL also supports vast numbers of breeding seabirds that thrive in the productive marine ecosystems of the Barents Sea. This talk focuses on the flora and other aspects of natural history of FJL and the places we passed along the way.”*

For more information about the group’s events, contact Amy Tippery, [Amy.Tipper@colostate.edu](mailto:Amy.Tipper@colostate.edu) or [amy.c.tippery.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:amy.c.tippery.ctr@mail.mil), or

- **Treasurer’s Report:** Income for 2016: \$2,475.53 including \$181.95 from Krogers Fred Meyer Rewards. Expenses for the year were \$1,121.11. Total income \$2,475.53. As of 12-31-16 the ANPS bank account balance was \$54315.53. The number of memberships is currently 120 people, 84 of whom have signed up for e-mail newsletters, 29 for snail mail, and 7 for both.
- **Field Trips:** Marilyn Barker is starting to plan for Summer 2017 field trips. A field trip planning sheet is being sent to all members with a request for return to her by April 15. If you have an idea for a field trip, don’t hesitate to contact Marilyn at [marilynbarcker29@gmail.com](mailto:marilynbarcker29@gmail.com). Several field trips are already being considered for 2018. Julianne McGinnis hopes to lead one in Newfoundland, and Beth Baker would like to lead one in Southeast Alaska.
- **Senior Membership:** A question was put to the Membership Chairman as to what age constitutes “Senior Citizen”. At the January Board Meeting the Board agreed that the age would officially be 65 years old.
- **Honoring Verna Pratt:** The Alaska Native Plant Society has received many suggestions for ways we can honor Verna – from wildflower hikes to scholarships to naming a garden bed, or installing plaques and benches. The Board would like for all members to help in this decision. We do plan to offer a wildflower hike in her name sometime in July. Other actions will be taken as future decisions are made. The successful accomplishments of this organization are some of our most positive ways to honor her. Lets have more hikes and invite more people to become members and keep ANPS strong for years to come!

## 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 | \$12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Senior Citizen    | \$12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Individual        | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Family            | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Organization      | \$30 |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership is on a calendar year basis.

**IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOUR ANPS MEMBERSHIP!**  
Don't get caught unprotected! If you haven't renewed your membership by February 1, 2017, we'll be forced to cut your name from the roster, and you won't receive further issues of the newsletter, or the Summer Field Trip Schedule, or e-mail updates, such as the notification that they January meeting had been postponed a week, or the message about Verna Pratt's passing. Plus, you won't be doing your part to help promote the cause for Native Alaska Plant education for everyone! **JOIN or REJOIN TODAY!**

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