



Wildflower Garden Club of Alaska Newsletter ~ March 2022

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Messages from the Presidents

I just got back from a 2-week vacation in Arizona. I saw evidence that spring is coming. Of course I bought a bunch of large plants to bring home for bonsai. I noticed this morning that it was getting light at the same time here as in Arizona! I found that particularly exciting. The fact that we are switching back to Standard time this weekend will not deter my enjoyment and anticipation. Spring is just about here! Hopefully, we will see each other at the Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show in April. There will be green things there!!

Paul

Once again, just like every other March, my hopes for an early spring have been dashed by the recent snowfalls and the reminder that this is what living in Alaska is all about.

Our continued gain of daylight is welcoming, with the sun beginning to give off the feeling of heat and the return of rainbows dancing on the walls from the crystal prisms hanging in my southside windows is a nice sight which keeps me believing that we will turn the corner soon. I am looking forward to the coming months and activities we have planned as 'Wildflowers'.

Kathy



What's Growing Now

Our March meeting was a delightful presentation about Juneau's **Jensen-Olson Arboretum** by none other than the curator, **Ginger Hudson**. We know Ginger from her years in Anchorage, at ABG and as editor of the AMGA newsletter, maker, and presenter of videos on local gardeners, and is writing the biography of Verna Pratt. What lovely gardens and an ideal location for this Alaska jewel. Ginger's talk seems to have inspired a number of us to visit the Arboretum and the state's capitol.

Ginger has supplied contact and resource information for those of you interested in the seed exchanges and/or contacting or following the Arboretum:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CBJJOA/>

The Friends of the Jensen-Olson Arboretum: <http://www.friendsjoarboretum.org/>

When we have seed for sale it will be posted under the "Support" tab.

Friends of the Jensen-Olson Arboretum Instagram: @friendsjoa

JOA donates Primula seed to the American Primrose Society each fall for the APS seed exchange. Members get first notice, then it opens to the general public: <https://americanprimrosesociety.org/>

Scheduled Events so far:

- May 1 - Tide Pooling and Seaweed Identification for Families
- May 8 - Mother's Day
- May 15 - Primula Day
- May 28 - Alaska Public Gardens Day
- June 4 - Local Garden Groups tour JOA and The Shrine
- July 28 - JOA 15th Anniversary



Special wildflowers that bloomed this month

Ruth Bauman, Ken Blaylock, Collette Fry, Gail Heineman, Maurine Loopstra, Alice Samuelson, and Nancy Tone



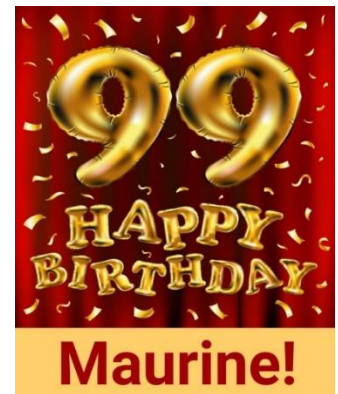
Beautifully bright and light, daffodils are the birth flower for the month of March. These blooms remind us of sunshine and the coming summer.

A genus of predominantly spring flowering perennial plants of the amaryllis family, *Amaryllidaceae*, they are also known as narcissus and jonquil. As a spring flower and one of the first to bloom, daffodils are symbols of rebirth, hope, and positivity. Daffodils' cheerful bright

yellow and white colors signify new life and resilience as they are strong little survivors who have weathered the winter storms.

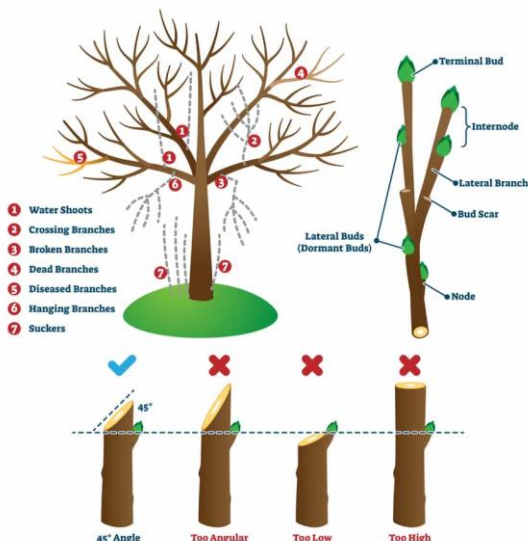
A special mention for a special lady is in order to recognize the birthday of one of our longest standing Wildflower Garden Club members. Maurine Loopstra has been a stalwart supporter of the Wildflower Garden Club for decades.

Inspiringly, Maurine is celebrating her 99th birthday this month! Her cheerful presence has been an inspiration to us for many years. Congratulations to our friend Maurine. She is a true perennial, and a perennial favorite at that!



March Gardens

TREE PRUNING



Now is a good time to start evaluating the trees & shrubs in your yard. On those sunny, warmer days you can begin to prune the 3 D's ... dead, diseased, and damaged. These basic pruning steps you will improve structure and add to the vitality and longevity of the plant.

“Fruit tree pruning, and any pruning, really, is less of a science than it is a conversation. You prune, the tree answers, you prune again.”

Ann Ralph

Club Business

2022 Grants Awarded -

Dennis Ronsse requested \$1000 for a UAA student to digitize orphaned herbarium voucher plant collection (donated to UAA) of the BLM Campbell Tract managed area, Chugach Mountains, and Limestone Gap.

Committee's Recommendation and Board Approval :

\$500 for 2022 and **\$500** for 2023 grant cycle.

The committee felt strongly the project is important and worthy of full funding, were additional funds to be made available this year. The information will provide important cataloging of Alaska's botanical species that may be significant in such things as climate change studies.

Eagle River Nature Center requested \$500 to continue work on beautification through redesign of gardens making them more accessible to the general public and highlighting labeled native and endemic species. In 2022, funding would be used for continued enhancement of the rock garden through purchase of topsoil, organic fertilizer, and native perennials.

Committee's Recommendation and Board Approval:

\$500, since the Nature Center serves to educate the general public and receives wide volunteer and financial support.

Furthermore, the committee found the application from the **Alaska State Fair** to meet qualifications for the grant program, but better suited to a direct **donation**. The Fair requested **\$1000** to augment their plant budget for an additional 15 - 20 hanging baskets. The fair is operating under a reduced budget due to the loss of funds caused by the pandemic. **Board Approved for 2022.**

A fourth application was received, but the Grant committee felt it did not adequately meet the criteria for programs we wish to sponsor.

March 2022 Treasurer's Report

Denali Federal Credit Union

Business Savings APYO .10%	\$7,500.44
Business Checking	\$3,122.28
CD - 6 month	\$2,501.60
CD - 12 month	\$5,006.45

Balance 2/28/22 **\$18,130.77**

Morgan Stanley Balance 2/28/22 **\$47,231.94**

Total Assets 2/28/22 **\$65,362.71**



Upcoming Meetings, Projects, & Workshops

Thursday, April 14 at 10am – “Pioneer Peonies” with Denise Bowlan (ZOOM ONLINE)



Pioneer Peonies in Wasilla is a part of the growing wave of peony farming in Alaska. The Bowlan family has a farm that has been making quite a success of it. Denise Bowlan will present on the industry, their processes, and challenges. She will also discuss general care of peonies and offer information on how we can order and buy these beautiful, hardy, must-have-in-the-garden plants from this local business.

Saturday, April 16 - Children’s Marigold Giveaway at the Midtown Mall Garden Show!

One of our most popular **Service Projects**, we will either hand out or assist children in planting their very own marigold. Last year, over 100 children walked away with a prized plant!

Volunteers are needed to help at our WGCA booth to make this a success event between the hours of 9am-4pm to help with set-up & take down, answer questions, and most of all have fun with other club members! Please contact Chairperson **Barbara Baker** at **907-274-6385** and be sure to wear your Wildflower name badge!



Announcements

Member’s Corner needs submissions. It is not just Editor’s Corner. Please consider contributing to the newsletter by sending us things to share with the rest of the club. The purpose of the section is to inspire and encourage each other. Photos, gardening hacks, recipes, articles on a plant that you grow or want to know more about are all welcome.

If you have something to give away, or are in search of items, this would be a great place to mention it as well. The deadline for submitting items for our newsletter is the 1st of each month. Send to Kathy Liska at akliska@aol.com or Paul Marmora at pmarmora@aol.com

~ Our Motto... Show, Share and Tell ~



Plant Chat - Oxalis Triangularis: A Low-Maintenance Houseplant

There are plenty of low-maintenance houseplants that thrive with just minimal care. Oxalis triangularis, often referred to as “purple shamrock” is one of them, and a delightful addition to your home for growing indoors as long-lived houseplants. This plant adapts well to indoor conditions and thrives indoors year round.

Basic Care

Oxalis triangularis bulbs look like small, immature pinecones. When planting a container for indoors, go ahead and crowd your bulbs, spacing them just an inch apart for a full look fast. Just poke the bulbs into the soil



– any way up is right. Water lightly just once every couple of weeks until new growth appears. In about 6 weeks from planting, your new purple shamrocks will begin to appear, and will fill in to become lush and full soon after. Weekly watering should be light. Too much water will send the plant back into dormancy.



Indoors, keep your oxalis triangularis in a sunny spot. You will find the deep purple foliage really brings out the vibrant green of other plants, and the color contrast makes your other houseplants seem to glow with health.

Oxalis triangularis occasionally go dormant, looking like the entire plant has died. Because this happens generally during the summer every 2-7 years when the plant is indoors, it seems like a serious problem rather than a periodic event. There is no need to toss your beloved triangularis! Simply stop watering and let the soil thoroughly dry. Set the plant aside where it is no longer center stage, but where you will still see it. In a few weeks, you will see a new leaf emerge. That is the time to resume watering. Soon, your purple shamrocks will be lush and full again.

Special Traits

Oxalis triangularis are highly “photophilic,” which means that they open and close not just their blooms, but also their leaves in response to light. At night, neatly folded, oxalis triangularis looks like a cluster of little purple butterflies that then open wide to the morning light. Both the vivid purple color of its leaves and this constant slow motion seems to enchant all who grow it – even “non-gardeners” fall in love this charming beauty. To capitalize on its unusual coloring, containers in silver or chartreuse are especially effective.

www.easytogrowbulbs.com



Member's Corner

Pasta and Spinach

Paul Marmora

Ingredients:

4-5 packages frozen chopped spinach

3-4 TBSP good olive oil

2 tsp fennel seed

2tsp dried rosemary leaves

$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp granulated garlic

1TBSP dried parsley flakes

1 TBSP dried basil leaves

1 TSBP dried oregano leaves

$\frac{3}{4}$ Cup grated parmesan

2 pounds medium shells pasta

Method:

Start heating water for the pasta.

In large saucepan, place oil, fennel seed and rosemary over medium heat.

Before it becomes hot, put in the frozen spinach, and cover well.

You will need to stir the pot frequently, so the spinach does not stick.

I usually set the timer for every three minutes so I do not forget to stir.

If the spinach burns, it ruins the entire meal.

Once the spinach is warmed, add in the rest of the spices; turn off heat, and let sit, covered, until the pasta is ready.

Drain pasta, place in large bowl, place spinach on top, add parmesan and stir well to mix.

Serve with extra parmesan if people wish to add more.

This makes a very good meal served either hot or as a cold pasta salad.

Common Redpoll

Acanthis flammea

Finch Family

Making the daily rounds for Nyjer & black oil sunflower seeds in my yard.

Photos by Kathy Liska



In search of

Member Kathy Swick is in search of salad-type clamshell containers to use to start seeds. She is looking for the 10oz and 16oz sizes. If you have any or can collect some, please Email Kathy at swick@alaska.net to get them to her.

Just for Laughs!

