



Newsletter

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Coming Events

Mark your calendars for all the exciting events coming up this Summer:

June 21st & 22nd, 2008 Alaska Botanical Garden Fair
 Plant Sale

July 19, 2008 State Garden Club Convention, Palmer
 Coyote Gardens Open
 Garden & Arts Festival at Fairgrounds

Coming soon: Information on Summer Garden Tours—watch your mailbox for a postcard!

Harry Jans Was Inspiring

Starting with his talk at APU Grant Hall about “The Plants of Tibet” Harry enchanted us with the culture, plants, and history of the area. His photographs bordered on art, showing not only the plants of each area but the people who live there as well. We traveled throughout Tibet and saw beautiful plants, high mountains, a different mode of travel and when it was over felt like we knew a lot more about the area than when we came in. A couple of days later at Mat-Su College he again introduced us to ideas that we have not seen before when he spoke on “Gardening in the ‘hills’ of Holland”. How about building a tufa wall and filling it with all those wonderful plants that love lime? If not that, then maybe you’d like to try building a peat wall and filling it with plants that prefer a damper, more acidic growing medium. Both ideas were exciting and something that many of the audience are anxious to give a try.

Final Rock Garden Clean-up at ABG

Verna Pratt will be at the Alaska Botanical Rock Garden at 1:00 pm. on Thursday June 19, to do a final clean-up before the Botanical Garden Fair. This is a great time for members to get involved in the Rock Garden and spend some time with Verna. The rock garden at the Botanical Garden is a show place when it is clean and weed-free, so we hope to see a lot of folks over there helping out!

From the President

By Jaime Rodriguez, President



In spite of our weird winter and spring our gardens are growing better than ever although some things are blooming at unusual times. Some of the visitors that I have had in the last month have commented that they would like to see us consider more seed collecting of Alaska alpine plants, have more of the Alaska alpine natives available at our plant sales and use them more in our gardens.

Just a reminder to bring your most beautiful rock garden plants in nice containers to put on the show table at the ABG Fair.

What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Alaska Science & Engineering Fair

Carmel Tysver

This year the Alaska Rock Garden Society sponsored awards at the fair April 12, 2008. We offered three awards of \$25.00, one winner each in grade school, middle school and high school. The award description was Research or Experimentation in the field of Botany or Horticulture. Not having offered an award before I wanted to make it vague as we had no idea if there would be any entries. I think this was a positive way to describe the award and would recommend we keep this description as it allows wide discretions to the judges when selecting the award winners.

In early April, I put out a plea via e-mail for judges, I felt there needed to be several members judging the exhibits, and sometimes I know it can be close. I also had another engagement so I would not be available to help. I want to thank Lori Able and Nancy Beck who agreed to be there in the afternoon and select the High School Winner, also thanks to Celia Rosen and Unisom Hubbard for agreeing to judge in the morning, which included both the elementary and middle school entries. Since none of them had ever judged before this was a learning experience. I am sure once they agreed and looked at the judging information they were daunted but followed through and we had three winners.

Celia and Unisom selected the exhibits presented by Katie McNealy and Daleanna Charensook titled "Coffee or Lemonade". Katie and Daleanna are 5th and 6th graders at Aquarian Charter School. They watered (?) primroses with either lemonade or coffee. The primroses preferred coffee. Interesting subject! Wonder why they picked primroses? Celia and Unisom also selected an entry for the middle school division. The win-

Alaska Science & Engineering Fair (Continued)

ner is Andrew Hutton who is a student at Central Middle School of Science. His project was titled "Tomato Seedling Growth Rates". He showed that tomato seeds grew better when planted with part of the parent plant attached than when the seeds were clean of any parent plant prior to planting.

Nancy and Lori let me know that they had an easy job as there were only 2 entries in the high school level. The winner is Hanna Atkinson from Kotzebue Middle High School and her project was titled "Quite Contrary, How Does Your Garden Grow". She examined the relationship between scarification and physical crushing on grains, oats and wheat, as well as sunflowers. The only other entry from a high school student was from Skagway. We need to get the word out to all of the local students so we have more entries.

I was at the awards ceremony on Sunday, April 13, 2008 and all of the students were present to accept the awards. I even had someone take pictures. For the students there was a lot of applause which has to make them feel good. This was a good experience and hopefully the club will follow through in future years. I received many positive comments from the organizers and the more organizations that give out awards the better. For those of use that were involved it was work and involved time and I do feel it was well worth the effort. And again a big **thank you** to our volunteer judges.

Garden Visits Are Being Planned

Garden visits for the current year are being planned. There are many beautiful gardens that we should all see and enjoy. If you know of one call Verna so she can add it to the list she is compiling. Part of the joy of having a nice garden is being able to share it with fellow enthusiasts so don't be shy!

Verna can be reached at: 1-907-333-8212

Plant Show at ABG

Carmel Tysver

It is time for the annual plant show at the Alaska Botanical Garden Fair, June 21st and the 22nd. The show has been enjoyed by the fair attendees and a way of sharing our rock garden plants with the public. In the past few years there have only been two entrants which I think this is a very sorry showing for our club. Please consider planting up a rock garden plant into a clay pot for the show. The more we have the better the show will be plus it will show the public that we have an active gardening organization. If you plant up a container but are not able to take it to the garden please call me, Carmel Tysver, at 522-3490, leave a message if I am not available and I will see that the plant is picked up and returned. It would also be nice to have volunteers to be on site to answer questions. I find it an enjoyable day of learning and educating the public about our type of gardening. Surely we all have at least one plant in bloom that we can take to the fair. Let us make this a year of more than two people representing the Alaska Rock Garden Society.

Two Lectures in One

Debbie Hinchey

China Survivors and Other Uncommon Worthy Plants

Lecture by Teena Garay March 15, 2008

The lecture from Teena Garay was two lectures in one. The first part was about the plants that she propagated from the 2000 seed collecting expedition to China. The second portion was about uncommon but worthy garden plants that she grows in her Homer, AK garden. Her lecture was entitled China Survivors and Other Uncommon Worthy Plants.

Her are my notes the best I could write down:

- Meconopsis integrifolia* 15'' pastel yellow, is early spring bloomer and is monocarpic, and does not seem to reseed itself so it needs to be started yourself. In seed exchange.
- Primula sikkimensis* 15'' soft yellow with melon fragrance, is easier from seed to propagate than from dividing, in seed exchange.
- Phlomis sp.* 18'' tall pretty lavender-purple whorls .
- Primula secundiflora* 16'' magenta flowers.
- Thalictrum delavayi* var. *decorum* 3' tall lavender flowers with nice foliage, in seed exchange.
- Delphinium sp* was dark blue and about 2' tall.
- Bergenia atropurpurea* has nice red fall leaf color, the flower is bright pink .
- Incarvillea zhongdianensis*...Hardy gloxinia, grows to about 2', deep pink, best in raised border with good drainage; the rosette spreads to about 18'' wide so give it room, in seed exchange
- Aruncus sp.* Only gets about 2' tall with creamy white plumes; bushy, but not aggressive spreaders like cousins. A good garden plant.
- Cremanthodium campaulatum* 8'' tall with chocolate bells early in spring, in seed exchange.
- Cremanthodium reniforme* is taller at 2', yellow lampshade flowers, nice leaves, but slugs like it.
- Rogersia aesculifolia* has only bloomed once for her and has cream astilbe-like blooms.
- Rheum alexandre* is a perennial but the flowers seem to be biennial, great fall color, yellow hooded spiked flowers.

Other plants grown but no slides:

- Polygonatum cirrhifolium*. Gets to be about 5' tall with small cream bell flowers.
- Lonicera sp.* is a honeysuckle shrub that gets about 5' tall with arching branches. The flowers are insignificant soft yellow, but the orange berry is ornamental.
- Scopolia carniolica* 4'tall herbaceous woodland perennial with chocolate bells.
- Aconitum sp.* does well, but the grey flowers are not attractive.
- Spirea sp.* 3' x 3' white flowers has leaves that are smaller but similar to the birch-leaf spirea.
- Iris bulleyana* flower is deep purple with leopard-like spotting. Nice garden plant.
- Iris sp.* pale lavender flowers, foliage is similar to Siberian iris
- Adenophora lilifolia* 2' tall, has pale blue, belled flowers
- Hydrangea sp* 2' serrated red foliage and dies to ground in winter, cream flower has good apricot fall color

Plants from China 2000 expedition that other members (present at today's meeting) have in their garden were: *Gentianopsis sp.* That Carmel Tysver and Jaime Rodrigues have. It is a biannual with shallow roots. The ro-

Two Lectures in One (Continued)

sette is easy to mistake for willow herb and thus weeded out of garden, so label it well to prevent this error. *Podophyllum sp?*. Is a May Apple type plant with pretty leaves, Verna Pratt has this one blooming early spring.

Triosteum sp.? Jaime has.

Saussurea sp.? has wooly, serrated foliage and purple thistle-like flower, for a rocky area. Florene Carney has.

Sedum sp.?

Thalictrum _ and *Thalictrum* __ Stan Ashmore has.

Other uncommon, garden worthy plants that Teena Garay has doing well in her Homer garden (at 600' elevation) are:

Draba condensata is the first to bloom in April with white flowers.

Draba bruniifolia has yellow flowers, and eventually forms a bun.

Soldanella montana has purple multi-petaled blooms that continue for about a month. An early charmer!

Anemone numorosa 'William Roberson' 3" lavender flowers, slowly spreads in a nice way, for shade.

Lathyrus vernus 'Albo-roseus' is woodland sweet pea about 2' wide and 15-18" tall, pink and white flowers, is very hardy and long blooming. Tricky from seed.

Carex 'Beatles' is a short grass about 8" with yellow variegated leaves.

Carex 'Bowles Golden' is taller, about 2' with nice golden foliage

Campanula shamasonius? is an evergreen groundcover with purple bells.

Bergenia purpurascens selection (from Helen Dillon's garden) that is particularly red in fall.

Cypripedium guttatum ssp *yatabeanum*. is a native orchid from the Aleutian Islands.

Dactylorhiza aristata is also a native Aleutian orchid for border or meadow

Allium flavum has bright yellow flowers 16" tall. Easy from seed.

Astrantia minor has white flowers in a clump about 16" tall. A nice plant that is slow to start from seed.

Primula hirsuta nice early magenta pink flowers, nice multiplier but not invasive.

Primula marginata early bloomer and nice open lavender flowers, nice foliage

Primula nivalis 15" lavender, mid season bloomer

Primula florindae usually comes in yellow, but Teena likes the orange and red varieties.

Primula vialii blooms three weeks with its unique flowers. This is an iffy primrose for most gardeners in Anchorage and Mat-Su Valleys.

Rheum palmatum var. *tanguticum* has red flowers, leaves are red when just emerging. Needs moist, rich soil. To gather seeds leave them to ripen on the plant as long as possible and sow fresh seed in fall. This variety is superior to species.

Paeonia veitchii is an attractive peony with single pink blooms and good foliage through fall. The seed pods are reddish with blue-black seeds showing. Best to just place seeds under mother plant and push into ground about an inch. May take year or two to germinate, but easier and more reliable than taking them indoors and sow.

Euphorbia griffithii 'Fireglow' is good all seasons perennial for her. It comes up like orange asparagus, later the flowers are orange with orange bracts and apricot fall color.

Lillium martagon album is easy from seed and blooms in 3 years. The flowers are pink, white or maroon, the plant foliage is succulent-like with whorls eventually a foot across. Best in parts shade, bulbs are available from Brent and Becky's Bulbs

Two Lectures in One (Continued)

Lillium 'Citronella' yellow outward facing with nice spots, she got from Brent & Becky's Bulbs.

Arnica sp. Came from seed collected in Adak, large clear yellow daisy flowers mid-summer.

Geranium 'Nimbus' spreads about 2' lavender blooms all summer and does not reseed, and has bright red fall foliage.

Filipendula glaberrima Is 3'-4' and looks great with Martagon lilies coming up though the foamy white plumes.

Sedum 'Purple Emperor' 18'' Good purple foliage and flowers and is very hardy here.

Aconitum maximillium 4' tall large purple hooded flowers, grows in the Aleutian Islands and is poisonous.

Aconitum lamarckii 5' creamy yellow flowers and needs support – which her clematis tangutica hold up nicely and blooms at same time.

Achillea 'Terra Cotta' has soft orange colors that work well in her garden.

Potentilla 'William Rollingson' 1' double orange flowers with apricot reverse.

Aster divaricatus 18'' woodland aster, airy white flowers and hardy late summer bloomer.

Aster sp. 15'' airy lavender flowers mid-season, in seed exchange.

Eupatorium purpureum 4' tall purple-pink late summer border plant that goes well with ornamental grasses, easy from seed.

Gentiana asclepiadea does well in sun or shade and blooms last in the garden with late summer flowers.

Veronica 'Pink Damask' that has pink flowers about 3 feet tall.

I was not able to record all of the good information that Teena presented, but I hope what I was able to copy down is as interesting to you as it was to me. Her photos were good and said so much more than my notes could. Too bad for some of you that missed her pretty pictures, too.

Debbie Hinchey

P.S. Teena took my abbreviated notes and fleshed them out to this fine list. Thank you, again, Teena!

ABG Fair—Y'All Come

The Alaska Botanical Garden will be hosting the Annual Botanical Garden Fair this coming week-end. June 21st and 22nd. ARGs will be participating with our annual plant sale at the Garden. You can bring your plants in on Friday the 20th from 2 pm to 4 pm or Saturday morning from 7 am to 9 am. Go online to events@alaskabg.org for information on parking and passes. Be sure that all your plants have tags with the name of the plant and a colored tag with price and your initials on it so that you will be paid for your efforts. The guest speaker at the Garden Fair this year is Brent Heath, from Brent and Becky's Bulbs. There will be more information on Bonsai with Paul Marmora. Be sure and bring an extra potted plant for the Plant Show too. We look forward to getting to see all of you and spend a little time visiting about your favorite plants and new discoveries.

In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.
-Margaret Atwood

Plant Sale and Open Garden at Snowfire

The Plant Sale and Open Garden at Snowfire was very successful even though the weather didn't cooperate at all. Along with the first guest (who showed up before the signs were out) came a steady rain that lasted most of the day. People came anyway. They visited the gardens, carrying umbrellas and wearing rain gear and returned to the tables to buy plants. Verna Pratt manned the tables and Florene Carney toured people around the gardens. Doug Carney and Frank Pratt gave support where needed. There were plants on sale from Carmel Tysver, Jaime Rodriguez, Verna Pratt and Florene Carney.

2008 Plant Sales

Mary Moline

Sears Garden Day –April 12

Sales for the event were \$1091.50 with the ARGS earning \$242.50

Approximately 235 plants were sold. Thanks to Mary Jo Burns, Verna Pratt, Jaime Rodriguez, Carmel Tysver and Amelia Walsh for participated in the annual Garden Day at the Sears mall. Sally Arant was back in spirit by providing her book “Alaska Primrose Primer” for sale.

Anchorage Sale May 17, 2008—Sales for the day were \$1796.00. Only 4 members brought plants to sell. 420 plants were sold.

Verna Pratt, Jaime Rodriguez, Carmel Tysver and Loretta Wieler brought plants to sell.

2007 sales were \$3025.00 with 8 members participating selling 696 plants.

Sales for the May 24 at Snowfire Gardens were \$977.00 with 4 members participating, Florene Carney, Verna Pratt, Jamie Rodriguez and Carmel Tysver had plants to sell. A total of 251 plants were sold.

Sales again were down from last year (2007) when 8 members sold a total of 476 plants for \$2041.00

Next sale Alaska Botanical Garden Day June 21 & 22, 2008

Contact Verna at 333-8212

Set up Friday June 20 from 2-4 pm

Saturday June 21, 10am-6pm

Sunday June 22, 11am-5pm