

# ALASKA ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY



# NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 2

MARCH 2021

## CALENDAR

*Membership Meeting, Saturday,  
March 20, 2021, 10:30 AM*

*Via ZOOM*

*(Link will be Distributed Separately)*

### Agenda

Welcome and comments

Minutes

Treasurer

Board Meeting Update

Program: **“Hardy Plants for the Alaska Rock Garden”**  
by Florene Carney

Adjourn

**FROM OUR  
PRESIDENT,  
FLORENE  
CARNEY**

Today felt a “little” like spring! Still cold, but unfiltered sunshine sure brightens the days.

NARGS seeds are arriving, and folks are sharing and discussing how to propagate the seeds they have received. Kathy Swick shared with me a site that I found to be super useful. It’s the Ontario Rock Garden & Hardy Plant Society and is a wonderful site that includes thousands of plants with germination codes listed. Find it at: <https://onrockgarden.com>.

We are working hard to have an exciting spring and summer of events in the rock

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garden community. I am proud to say that after reviewing the comments from around the country on how folks are handling the pandemic, we are doing good. We have continued to have E Board and Membership meetings on Zoom and are working through some of the kinks. I really feel like an old dog learning new tricks! The bright side is that we can have speakers from any where in the world (if we can get the times worked out so that neither the watchers nor the presenter is up at 2:00 A.M.) If you see something in your browsing through the internet that you think would be a good program for our group, please contact either Dorte or myself and we'll look into making it happen.

Check the Coming Events in this Newsletter and see where you can either help out or attend one of the events. It is your club. The more people who participate and share ideas and information the more vital it will be.

Many of you will remember Stan Ashmore and Dona Calcote, who were members of our group for many years. I heard from Dona this week and she reports that they are now living in Hammond, LA, and working on a new house and garden. They say that the big ice storm gave them three nights of freezing temperatures, but they think everything will survive. They and their Blue Poppies are missed here in Alaska.

**Our Club Motto: WWVD – What Would Verna Do?** The Board voted to keep it. Anytime we have a question on how to handle a situation, that will be our guiding light. In my opinion it's a strong and steady influence.

Happy seed hunting, researching, planning and planting.

Florene Carney  
President

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### **PROGRAM: MARCH 20TH**

#### **“Hardy Plants for the Alaska Rock Garden”**

Florene Carney

This program was designed by Verna Pratt and Florene Carney to cater to the beginning rock gardener, while tantalizing the experienced gardener with plants that have proven hardy in our South Central Alaska rock gardens. A discussion period will follow the program so that beginners can ask questions and our more experienced members can answer them.

#### **WHY ARE YOU A MEMBER OF ARGS?**

An informal interview with the Editor.

It must have been after a plant identification hike with Verna Pratt in the late 1990s. That was followed with more field trips to Bison Gulch; building the rock garden at the Alaska Botanical Garden; and visiting the gardens of Carmel Tysver, Rhonda Williams, and Florene Carney. This was also a period in which I was reintroduced to Jaime Rodriguez, whom I knew earlier from bonsai workshops. Although a novice, I joined the seed collecting expedition to China led by Dan Hinkley with eight other ARGS members. It was a successful expedition that returned with a large variety of seeds to clean and package. Plans were already underway to host the national North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) meeting in Anchorage. I took over as ARGS Editor to free Jaime for preparations for the national conference. Preparations included plant identification field trips to Flat Top, Turnagain Arm, and Bird Ridge. My only rock garden was in a platter populated with door prizes. Even from this small collection I was able to contribute to the seed exchange! Rock gardening has been a way to be outdoors and meet dedicated friends.



## ARGS COMING EVENTS

It's shaping up to be an exciting Spring and Summer for ARGS. Check the upcoming events and see where you can help out, attend, or if you have some new ideas share them with a Board member. All dates are as solid as we can make them and may change due the COVID restrictions. We will make every effort to notify everyone of any changes.

- March 20: **Membership meeting via ZOOM. "Hardy Plants for the Alaska Rock Garden"** by Florene Carney. Watch your email for the invitation to sign in.
- April 17: **Membership meeting Via ZOOM.** Speaker to be announced.
- May 12 **Clean-up at Palmer Visitors Center.** Weather permitting. Jaime Rodriguez
- May **Alaska Botanical Garden Rock Garden clean-up.** TBA (depending on spring thaw) Madge Oswald & Kathy Swick
- May 22: **Anchorage ARGS Plant sale.** At old DMV location at Benson and Spenard Road (more information as time draws near) Debbie Hinchey
- May 29: **ARGS Plant Sale and Open Garden at Snowfire Gardens, Wasilla.** Florene Carney
- July 10: **Palmer Garden and Arts Fair.** ARGS will have a booth, plant sale, demonstrations of troughs. Dorte Mobley & Jaime Rodriguez
- July 24: **Hatcher Pass hike and visit to Les Brake's garden.** Jaime Rodriguez & Florene Carney **[A members only event]**
- All summer: **Pop Up Garden Tours.** When your garden is looking terrific, call Dorte (907) 232-5422 and she will notify membership so that they can visit - day and time of your choice. More information will be available before those sunny summer days roll around. **[A members only event]**

NOTE: We are looking for **program ideas for next fall and winter.** Please contact Dorte (907) 232-5422, or Florene (907) 376-5390, if you have any suggestions.



Plant Profile: *Adonis amurensis*  
By Jaime Rodriguez

*Adonis amurensis*, the Amur Pheasant's Eye, is one of the very first plants I grew from NARGS seeds twenty years ago. It was notoriously difficult to germinate, and took three years of outdoor treatment before a single seedling emerged. It is native to Eastern Asia, from Siberia, China, Korea and Japan. It is from the Ranunculaceae, Buttercup family, and grows in mountainous grassland meadows and forest edges in alpine and subalpine zones.

It prefers rich, well drained soils in full sun, but tolerates part shade. My own seedling grew well for ten years, proving extremely hardy in Alaska, but never bloomed until I learned from Panayoti Kelaidis that it is a heavy feeder. Once I started fertilizing it, it has bloomed every year, and finally begun to increase the growing points on the crown.

The flowers are two inch wide buttercups that open in sunlight and close at night or under cloud cover. The flowers appear before the finely divided foliage. The flowers are hermaphrodite, and supposedly self fertile, though I have yet to get any germination from the seeds my plant sets.



The Japanese name for the plant, Fukujuso, means “fortune-longevity” plant, is a symbol for wealth, and much grown or displayed there at the New Year. The Japanese have created many cultivar selections, some of which are quite pricey. They tend to grow around one foot tall, in a well behaved clump, perfect for a sunny rock garden in Alaska. Hardy to zone 3.



## THE SOIL SANDWICH IN ALPINE GARDENS BY KATHY SWICK

During presentations on rock/crevice garden construction many questions about soil media are posed by attendees. And for good reason—it is one of the essential ingredients for success. I have been particularly interested in these discussions for a long time and would like to share some observations. First, the media can be adjusted to your local climate, as well as the needs of particular plants. Many plants are truly not fussy about soil and will be happy in the garden with ordinary care. But for some of the most treasured plants and the hardest ones to grow, the makeup of the soil will be a critical factor. Rock gardens in our area tend to be built by mounding up rock rubble and gravel on the bottom, with quite a bit of ordinary soil above, topped by a thin layer of small grit.



Consider the method used in other locales, illustrated vividly here by Kenton Seth's artwork. What you see is congruent with advice I have read from many sources—to make soil the bottom layer topped by a THICK layer of drainage material, such as rock fines of varying sizes. Once roots are established this provides better protection from temperature and moisture vagaries near the surface for deep rooted alpine plants. In addition this arrangement creates pristine drainage around the crown and taproot, preventing the rot that is fatal to so many plants in ordinary soil. What I find especially interesting is that this method has been successful at both rainy Victoria Island, British Columbia, as well as the extremely dry steppe climate of Colorado. Food for thought .



ALASKA ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY  
Executive Board Meeting  
ZOOM  
January 21, 2021  
10:30 AM

MINUTES

Jan 21, 2021 Alaska Rock Garden Society - Executive Board Meeting

President:	Florene Carney	Present
Vice President:	Dorte Mobley	Present
Secretary:	Jamie Smith	Present
Treasurer:	Madge Oswald	Present
Past President:	Carmel Tysver	Absent
Program Chair:	Dorte Mobley	Present
Newsletter & Crevice Editor:	Charles Utermohle	Present
Website Coordinators:	Carmel Tysver	Absent
	Florene Carney	Present
	Gina Docherty	Present
Membership Chair:	Gina Docherty	Present
Palmer Visitor Ctr Chair:	Jaime Rodriguez	Present
Library Chair:	Kathy Swick	Present
Aline Strutz Award Chair:	Jerry McEwen	Absent
Sunshine Committee Chair:	Dorte Mobley	Present
Seed Exchange Co-Chairs:	Debbie Hinchey	Present
	Carmel Tysver	Absent

I. Florene Carney called the meeting to order at 10:30am, welcoming all who were attending.

II. SECRETARY'S REPORT: Jamie Smith read a brief synopsis of the Oct 9, 2020 ZOOM Exec Board Meeting.

MEETINGS: Jaime Rodriguez - like it or not, we'll still be facing COVID-19/Pandemic restrictions. He suggested we continue to use ZOOM for Meetings, Presentations, Videos, etc., adding that what we don't know, we'll figure out along the way. The Board UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

YEARBOOK: After much input, Florene Carney summarized the discussion: Update the Yearbook with the new Calendar, Program List, and Membership List. Send first update after the first of the year via The Crevice. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

HONOR FOR CARMEL: Florene Carney - We need to pursue the suggestion of a Special Honor for Carmel Tysver as we weren't able to do it during 2019-2020 year. Florene will contact Jerry McEwen, Committee Chair, regarding the award.

NEW MOTTO FOR 2021: Florene Carney asked the Board if we should have a new motto for this year. (Our current motto is 'What Would Verna Do?') Everyone UNANIMOUSLY AGREED we should leave it as it is.

MEMBERSHIP DUES: Dorte Mobley asked if we're going to charge dues for 2020-2021. Other clubs have waived charging dues due to the impact of COVID-19 - meetings could-



n't be held, programs were placed on hold, presentations set aside, etc. Discussion led to:

- If dues for Current Members are already PAID up to date, they will be extended for 2020-2021.
- Current Members whose dues ARE NOT Paid up to date will have to pay their back dues.
- New Members will have to pay the \$15.00 Membership Dues.

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Secretary's Minutes were APPROVED AS READ.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT: Madge Oswald reported a BALANCE of \$7,754.43. UNANIMOUSLY voted to Stand as Presented

#### IV. NEW BUSINESS

At the 16 Jan 2021 Membership Meeting Fran Durner requested we consider a link Alaska Botanical Garden fund from Alaska Rock Garden Society Home Page for donations only. That way if any ARGS members want to donate to ABG it could be done right from our site. Following a short discussion, Fran's request was UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED. Gina Docherty will contact ARGS web manager to make it happen. This led to a discussion of the \$45.00 charged by the Webmaster to make changes to our website. Jaime Rodriguez asked there there's a \$45.00 charge. We should be able to change/upgrade automatically. Gina Docherty explained it's a 'per time flat fee' whether you have a single change or multiple changes made at the same time.

**COMING EVENTS - What do we know?:** This question was aimed at what's happening - or not happening - in regard to COVID-19, meetings, and other gatherings. As far as we know there will be no Plant Sale at Mid-Town Mall (the former Sears Mall). There has been no reduction in mandates so at this time we'll continue to use ZOOM for Meetings & Presentations.

The group discussed various ways to sell plants online and how we might still have them at outdoor locations such as private homes or parking lots. Details will be worked out as we move closer to Spring.

Possible VALLEY PLANT SALE: Florene Carney, Chair. At Florene's on May 29<sup>th</sup>; outdoors with social distancing.

ANCHORAGE PLANT SALE: Debbie Hinchey, Chair. Date: May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Possibly in parking lot near Alaska Botanical Garden Entrance. (Do we need to get OK from the school to use the lot or from the Muni?). Another possibility Debbie recommended is the old REI building. We may be able to use it, incorporating one-way foot traffic with wearing masks and social distancing.

Florene Carney: What about Virtual Plant Sales? Various ideas came from Debbie Hinchey and Gina Docherty such as doing the sale thru Face Book Sales. Gina suggested doing person to person, or doing virtual sale. Dorte suggested the Anchorage Market (now at Dimond Center instead of downtown Anchorage) and/or the Friday Fling in Palmer.

The discussion of Plant Sales was tabled for now and moved to the February Executive Board Meeting.

Gina Docherty: Suggested we have Ginger Hudson video take various Rock Gardens using her drone and make the videos available on our website.

Debbie Hinchey suggested we document the garden at the Alaska Botanical Garden, and then set it up as a Power Point presentation. Could also make available



on our website.

Jaime Rodriguez said he could put together Power Point programs of Building Workshops with various subjects such as Building Troughs, various ways of Planting Troughs, as well as various gardens. Once completed, the programs could be presented using ZOOM. Dorte Mobley made the motion to accept Jaime's suggestion; Debbie Hinchey seconded. UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.

Dorte Mobley: We could do Garden Tours in the Valley or Anchorage as long as we still practice mandates of COVID-19: Wear Masks and Socially Distance. Gina Docherty said she wasn't sure as there are now 3 variations of the COVID Virus. Jaime Rodriguez commented there should be a lot of vaccinations during the next 3 months but we'd still wear masks and practice social distancing as precautions. Tabled for now, but added to next month's Agenda.

#### V. OLD BUSINESS

Rock Garden signs - designate dollar amount for plaques. Jamie pulled up the minutes of the meeting where this was discussed - review minutes and move to next step. The Committee of Anchorage ARGS members, chaired by Kathy Swick, have found ABG Management very fussy about signage in the gardens at Alaska Botanical Garden. Any new signage must be approved by their Design Committee. Another attempt to address the topic with Will Criner at ABG may be tried but at this time the subject is tabled.

As for the large Rock Garden at Palmer Visitor Center, Alesha PVC's Horticulturist posted signage last Summer indicating Alaska Rock Garden Society members had established that particular garden and ARGS members are continuing to care for it.

The smaller Rock Garden at Palmer Visitor Center has a much longer history of its creation. Jaime Rodriguez has the information, but suggests we only go forward with the signage already at the Palmer Visitor Center for both gardens there.

Florene Carney suggested the entire Signage Subject be tabled for now, with possibility of re-addressing it in the future. ALL AGREED.

#### Program Suggestions:

Dorte Mobley suggested Propagating Plants. Jaime Rodriguez: Could include rooting, grafting, etc. Possibly for the March Membership Meeting.

Kathy Swick asked if we can use NARGS presentations. If so, she suggested Bobby Ward's presentation. Florene Carney will check with Bobby to make sure we can use his program and set up the required documentation to do so.

Florene Carney suggested Jaime Rodriguez and Kathy Swick submit their programs to NARGS for a stipend. Their programs would be added to NARGS' list of programs available for other Rock Gardeners thru the national organization.

Marilyn Barker and Debbie Hinchey also should submit some of their programs. Other suggested programs included Panayoti Kelaidis (just about any program of his is good!) and Mark McDonough's 'Alliums' program.

Florene Carney made the motion we budget \$1000.00 for Programs; Seconded by Charles Utermohle. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

#### VI. ADDITIONS:

VIDEO STORAGE; Jaime Rodriguez asked how we're able to store our Presentation, How-To Info, etc., videos for future use by our members. Is there a way they can be



stored indefinitely - perhaps on our own YouTube Channel? How long will they remain on our YouTube Channel? Preferable we'd like long term storage only accessible by our Members. Possibilities will be looked into, and then reported on later.

As an aside, Kathy Swick asked if we had Joseph Tychonievich's OK to post his presentation from Jan 16, 2021 Membership Meeting. Madge Oswald assured we do have his written permission documented.

**ACCESSION Committee:** *At Oct 9, 2020 Exec Board Meeting Florene Carney suggested the need an Accession Committee - particularly for our Rock Garden at ABG - whose only job is to maintain the Accession list and nothing else. Reason: We need to keep Accession Records to show how long plants have or haven't survived in our climate, as well as other information we might gather on each plant. Again Jaime said he'd be happy to help with that project as he had information that should be included - including photos! Also, Jaime's been working with Will Criner (Gardens and Facility Manager at ABG) for years. Florene recommended Debbie contact Members to ask if they're interested in helping out, set up her Committee, then report back at the November Executive Board Meeting.*

Fast forward to the Jan 21, 2021 Executive Board Meeting (There was no E Board Meeting in November or December 2020). Debbie Hinchey reported she could help but not Chair the committee. Kathy Swick said she already provides information to ABG regarding the rock garden plants removal / addition to ABG personnel. Florene Carney recommended tabling the discussion for now and having a face-to-face meeting with ABG reps. Jaime Rodriguez will talk to Will Criner about getting copies of Accession records from ABG. **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED.**

**VII. BUDGET:** Madge has provided a list of last year's (2020) expenditures (listed below) to help Committee Chairs build a budget going forward.

Operations: Madge Oswald explained this includes miscellaneous expenses that are incurred throughout the year to keep our club running. They include; postage, donations, USPS Box, door prizes. Zoom.

Madge added: I did not include Yearbook in this year's budget list since we voted to just add new sheets to last year's Yearbook if new members joined. However, due to the popularity of the yearbook, I recommend we look at doing a new one for 2022, which might need to be budgeted this year to get it started so it's ready by the beginning of next year. (Gina has agreed to give it a go)

ARGS 2020 Expenditures:

Space rental....Eagle R. Elks.	Jan/Feb	\$100.00
Zoom fees Dec, 2020.		149.50
Office expenses. J.S. / MO.		74.94
Paper, postage, etc.		
ARGS Survey		88.26
Domain name		72.17
Website maintenance (Spoon Frog).		475.00
Donation NARGS.		300.00
Books from NARGS.		80.54
Yearbook postage/labels.		111.30
Printing yearbook.		<u>430.00</u>

TOTAL Spent 2020. 1,881.71

**\*\*\*2021 BUDGET\*\*\***

Zoom fees	149.50
Office expenses. J.S. / MO	150.00
Paper, postage, etc.	
Domain name	72.17
Website maintenance (Spoon Frog)	475.00
Donation NARGS	300.00
Books from NARGS	100.00
Seed Exchange (Debbie)	50.00
Rock Garden at ABG (Kathy Swick)	200.00 (New Plants; Mulch)
Rock Gardens at PVC (Jaime Rodriguez)	200.00 (New Plants; Top Dressing)

(Printing / Mailing of Yearbook. Move to 2022 Budget for printing a NEW Yearbook. Only UPDATES will be provided in 2021, and Membership will print them if they want to insert them to the 2020 Yearbook.)

\*\*\*After trying to itemize the 2021 Budget and with our ZOOM time growing short, Jaime Rodriguez made the motion to TABLE the discussion until the next Executive Board Meeting; Jamie Smith seconded. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

**Membership Dues:**

Members whose dues are current will extend their dues thru 2021.

Members who are behind on dues must pay balance to bring them current.

New members must pay dues for this year.

We currently have 56 Members. Of those 56, 12 are Lifetime or Honorary Members.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:20.

###

**NARGS ROCKS:****CREVICES****HORIZONTAL & VERTICAL**

**A VIRTUAL STUDY DAY.**

**AT YOUR CONVENIENCE.**

The North American Rock Garden Society [NARGS] will present its second virtual study Zoom session from February 6th on-demand from the web. The cost is \$25 for NARGS members; and \$50 (which includes an introductory NARGS membership) for nonmembers. [[nargs.org](http://nargs.org)]

**Paul Spriggs** - How did we get here? A brief history of Crevice Gardening

**Kenton Seth** - Crevice Gardening for the Masses and recent News

**Jeremy Schmidt** - From Big Rocks to Little Rocks

**Susan Sims** - Between A Rock and A Hardscape or When Schist Hits the Fan

**Jay Akerley** - Crevice Gardens for Small Spaces

**Roslyn Duffus** - From the Mighty to the Modest

Moderators: **Mike Kintgen** and **Elisabeth Zander**



## POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

**President:** Florene Carney

**Vice-President/Program Chair:** Dorte Mobley

**Secretary :** Jaimie Smith  
**Treasurer:** Madge Oswald

**Past President:** Carmel Tysver

**Membership:** Gina Docherty

**Newsletter Editor:** Charles J. Utermohle

**Seed Exchange:** Debbie Hinchey

**Librarian:** Kathy Swick

**Palmer Visitors Center Garden:** Jaime Rodriguez

**ABG Rock Garden:** Madge Oswald

**Sunshine Committee:** Dorte Mobley

## JOIN NARGS

If you are not already a member, considering joining the North American Rock Garden Society. (NARGS) The “Rock Garden Quarterly for Winter 2019/2020” just came and it is pure eye candy. Great articles on alpines, gardens, and upcoming events. Go to [www.args.org/join](http://www.args.org/join) and give yourself a gift that lasts all year.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

### Join Us!

We have about six meetings per year, plus Plant sales, Field Trips and a Seed Exchange. Our meetings are generally on the third Saturday of the month, Fall, Winter, and Spring, and rotate between the Mat-Su Valley and Anchorage. To Join, and receive this newsletter, send your name, address, Phone number, e-mail address and a Check payable to ARGS at 12001 Audubon Dr., Anchorage, AK 97516 or on the web at <https://www.akrockgardensociety.org/membership.html>

Individual Membership \$15.00  
Family Membership \$20.00  
Canada Membership: \$20.00 US  
Overseas Membership \$20.00 US

Membership is for the calendar year and includes all issues of the newsletter for that year. The ARGS Newsletter is published 6 times per year. We invite your contributions. Please contact Charles Utermohle, ARGS Editor, at [thule@alaska.net](mailto:thule@alaska.net).

**CURRENTLY A MEMBER?  
YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS EXTENDED  
THROUGH 2021!**

### ARGS Newsletter Dates

	<u>Submission date</u>	<u>Distribution Date</u>
Feb/Mar issue	January 15	February 1
April/May Issue	March 15	April 1
Summer issue	May 15	June 1
Sept/Oct issue	August 15	September 1
Nov/Jan issue	October 15	November 1

[WWW.AKROCKGARDENSOCIETY.ORG](http://WWW.AKROCKGARDENSOCIETY.ORG)

Webmasters: Carmel Tysver, Florene Carney, and Gina Docherty

ARGS is on FACEBOOK at:

<https://www.facebook.com/alaskarockgardensociety/>



*Say...* Did you miss the **NARGSROCKS**  
*Virtual Study Day?*

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*...you can BUY and WATCH now!*

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