



## NEWSLETTER

MAY 2017

### FROM OUR PRESIDENT CARMEL TYSVER

Dear Members,

I really want to thank Charles Utermohle for agreeing to once again be our newsletter editor. The newsletter will be posted on the website and we need to decide how long to archive the copies, a year? I would like the input of the members regarding this. I think it is nice to be able to look back at the year at least and not have to print all of the newsletters as they come out.

I hope all of you have taken a good look at the website and note that the calendar is working and I can insert items plus we also need to decide how much to enter. Do we want just our organization or include all of the gardening organizations. It would be nice to have it all in one place on the web. Right now if I wanted to know what the Master Gardeners or the Native Plant Society is doing I have to pull up each website. I know that there is a lot of cross over between gardening organizations in Anchorage membership wise and with the members of our organization. So let me know your thoughts.

One other activity I would like to see started again this year is garden tours. There are many ways to do this. One is to have actual open garden days and these could also be used as fund raisers to increase the endowment fund. NARGS also list gardens that are open at any time with the caveat that the garden owner is called ahead of time to set a time to view. Even the smallest garden has something to share.

Do not know how often the newsletter will be available on line but keep looking and hoping many of you will become more involved in our organization.

Carmel Tysver  
[garden@gci.net](mailto:garden@gci.net) 907-727-7645

### CALENDAR

**May 13 at 11am -  
Cleanup of the rock  
garden plots** at the  
[Alaska Botanical Garden](#).  
Bring a sack lunch.

May 20 and 27—Plant  
Sales! (details on page 2)

June 13, 6pm-7pm,  
ABG Presentation  
about the Rock Gar-  
den—Members will be  
present to talk about rock  
gardening and introduce  
non-members to the de-  
signing and building of a  
rock garden plus showing  
them how to care for the  
rock garden plants. We  
will be able to mentor  
people who are interested  
in learning.

June 24, 2:00pm –  
4pm—Potluck picnic  
and planning party—  
Snowfire Gardens (see  
page 6)

NEXT MEETING SEPTEMBER 16TH

MEETING DETAILS ON PAGE

2

© Alaska Rock Garden Society 2017

Unless otherwise specified, contents may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes by crediting the author and ARGs.

**Book Reviews:**

Contributed by Florene Carney

“[Rock Gardening](#)”, H. Lincoln Foster and “[Cuttings From a Rock Garden](#)”, H. Lincoln Foster and Laura Louise (Timmy) Foster

“This is the final word on rock gardening in America. Not just a catalog of suitable plants, this is also a discourse on the art and horticulture of rock gardening. Useful for the beginner, and of lasting value in the gardening library.” - Flower and Garden

When the Alaska Rock Garden Society was first started these two books were THE reference books on Rock Gardening. They provided a wonderful guide for what a rock garden is, how to build a rock garden, plants that grow in different kinds of soil, and those that thrive in a bog or on a dry well-drained hillside. Over the years personal copies have become worn at the corners, highlighted, underlined, with colorful sticky notes here and there to make sure a reference is easy to find. Now, with a shelf full of modern references they sometimes get shoved aside for the fancy coffee table books with glossy pages and numerous references to plants we may never see nor could we grow if we wanted to. Going through these books takes me back to the days when enthusiasm ran high in ARGS and we gleaned everything we could from the references we had. They are worth another read. Timmy’s part of the “[Cuttings From a Rock Garden](#)” are like sitting down over a cup of tea with an old friend and discussing your favorite plants and gardens. Linc fills in the scientific reasons for doing things and received many horticultural awards over his lifetime. Timmy was editor of the Bulletin of the American Rock Garden Society, an artist and illustrator. Millstream, their home for many years became one of the most enchanting rock gardens in the world at the time. The books include a little poetry, a few pictures and a ton of enthusiasm along with serious, usable information about rock gardening.

**Plant Sales:**

Alaska Botanical Garden Plant Sale

When: May 20, 2017

Where: [ABG, 4601 Campbell Airstrip Rd.](#)

Anchorage, AK 99507

Time: 10 AM-5 PM

{ABG Members only between 9-10 AM and get 10% discount}

15<sup>th</sup> Annual Open Garden and Plant Sale at  
Snowfire

When: May 27, 2017

Where: Snowfire Gardens

[3379 S. Inlet Vista Circle](#)

[Wasilla](#)

(Just off Fairview Loop Rd.)

Time: 9:00 a. to 4:00 p.m.

What: Plants for rock gardens, kitchen gardens,  
borders, shrubs, trees, herbs, and tools

Lemonade, coffee, cookies, and sweet rolls to  
purchase

Tour the gardens Ask an expert

Visit with other gardeners

Bring a sack lunch to enjoy in the garden

The Valley Garden Club and Meadow Lakes  
Bloomers also have their plant sales on this date,  
so make a full day of garden shopping in the Val-  
ley! Start at Snowfire and we’ll provide maps to  
find the other sales!

**SEPT. 16TH ALASKA ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY MEETING**

September 16<sup>th</sup>

Board meeting begins at 1:00pm

Regular membership meeting at 2:00pm

This is the annual plant exchange. Please limit to 5 plants per member.

Location:

[Central Lutheran Church](#), 1420 Cordova St., Anchorage 99501.



### Field Trip to Eagle Summit July 15th

Join the Alaska Rock Garden Society members on a camping trip to Eagle Summit on the Steese Highway at mile 107.1. We will be hiking and viewing the wildflowers July 15<sup>th</sup>, which should be prime time for the flowers to be in bloom. For camping there is an area to park motorhomes or trailers and at the top via the old road there are sites where people have camped previously. We have camped there several times in the past.

I am including an article by [Helen A. White](#) that was in the Bulletin of the [American Rock Garden Society Volume 37 No. 3](#) from the summer of 1997. If you have not heard of her she wrote books on Alaskan wildflowers in the 50's and 60's. They can be found in used book stores and sales today. They are in black and white. It is nice to see that the place was popular even in the late seventies.

Carmel Tysver

#### NOTES FROM ALASKA

Botanizer's Bonanza at Eagle Summit

HELEN A. WHITE

Anchorage, Alaska

On the Steese Highway, out of Fairbanks 108 miles, one can find one of the best botanizing areas in Alaska. It probably is the best except for Attu Island in the Aleutians, Point Hope in northwestern Alaska and the Teller Road out of Nome. The good thing about this place, Eagle Summit, is that it is on a main highway and thus is easily reached. If you are traveling in a camper or motorhome, you have it made; just come on up and camp for a few days and look the place over and browse around among nature's gems.

Many people camp at Eagle Summit on the nights of the 20, 21 and 22 of June so that they can watch and photograph the midnight sun. If you are not prepared to camp, drive on to Circle City (54 miles), Circle Hot Springs (27 miles) or to Central which is only 19 miles from the summit. There are accommodations at these places but it is best to call ahead from Fairbanks for reservations. Incidentally, Circle City is on the banks of the mighty Yukon River and is the farthest north one can drive on interconnecting highways.

But, let's get back to botanizing. The feast really begins at Twelvemile Summit back at milepost 89.6. From here to Eagle Summit and on the surrounding mountainsides can be found a fabulous array of alpine plants. One could easily spend a week in this general area without seeing all that is to be seen. Eagle Summit is at an elevation of 3,624 feet which probably will not seem like a very high mountain to those of you who dwell in the South 48. However, when you consider the latitude as well as the altitude, it is equal to at least 10,000 feet in the Colorado Rockies. Some of the plants here will be familiar to those of you who have botanized the Rockies, too.

As you no doubt know, each degree of latitude north is the same as 200 feet more elevation. Thus one does not have to be very high above sea level to discover alpine plants found at much greater elevations farther south. And what a wealth of plants are everywhere underfoot. Some are bound to be crushed as we walk along.

Eagle Summit is a place of extremes. I have seldom been more uncomfortable from the heat than here. On another day I saw it raining harder than I have ever seen it rain before or since in Alaska. We could not see at all through the summer downpour and had to stop driving for half an hour until the torrent lessened somewhat. Also, I have seen more vicious mosquitoes per square inch on Eagle Summit than anywhere else, yet it is not always "buggy." In fact, most times I have found it pleasantly bug free. One summer we arrived at the Summit to find virtually no plants showing. It had been an exceedingly dry season and everything seemed to be dead. However, the next summer the myriads of plants had grown and blossomed as usual. But let us see what plants are to be found in this area which includes both Twelvemile Summit and Eagle Summit.

The lowly saxifragas are said to be our basic rock garden plant. There are nearly twenty saxifraga species in the neighborhood. This is the first place I ever saw *Rhododendron lapponicum*. If it isn't its flowering season you may have difficulty finding it, but it is there. There are also perhaps ten species of that intriguing little shrublet, *salix*. Even though *Silene acaulis* is a rather common alpine plant, it is a striking one, to be sure, and there is plenty of it here. Its broad bright green cushions with rosy purple flowers are seen on all sides. It is too bad that *Lloydia serotina* is not a more imposing plant because there are many of these little lilies. *Polygonum bistorta* stands out with its elegant plumes of pink. There are a couple of *claytonias* and *stellaria*, too, in variety. *Oxyria digyna* with its oddly shaped leaves is abundant. *Anemones*, *AA. richardsonii*, *drummondii*, *parviflora* and *narcissiflora* can be noted all around.

Many varieties of *minuartia*, *arenaria*, *melandrium* are also found in this area. The strange little blue flowers of *Corydalis pauciflora* are in evidence here and there and we must not overlook *Papaver macounii* with its gay yellow flowers dancing in the mountain breeze. *Parrya nudicaulis* is an attractive plant and there are several *cardamines*, including the appealing *C. purpurea*. We shall also see *Sedum rosea* (what Alaskan rock garden is complete without it?) and about a dozen species of *draba*. *Cornus canadensis* is manifest, of course, as it is over so much of Alaska. The legumes are certainly well represented in the region. Here are six *oxytropis*, *Lupinus arcticus*, six *astragalus* and two *hedysarum*.

In peaty pockets or along the few streams you may come across *Viola epipsila*, and *V. biflora* can be found on some of the slopes. Several nice *potentillas* make their homes in these mountains and some *rubus* and *vaccinium* do well in the sur-

(Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

rounding area. *Dryas octopetala* is interspersed with *D. integrifolia*, and *Geum rossii* is one of the more winsome plants to be found on the Summit. Alaska's state flower, *Myosotis alpestris* is obviously present. A related plant, *Eritrichium aretioides*, is the jewel of the natural flower garden on Eagle Summit and a real jewel it is. *Androsace chamaejasme* is another gem and it is here in great abundance.

I have heard that both *Cypripedium guttatum* and *C. passerinum* are in the area but I have not seen them. *Douglasia gormanii* and *arctica* are supposed to be up here, too, but I have not seen them either.

### What Happened on this Day?

Florene Carney

I think everyone should keep a garden journal. (I can hear you groaning already) I am a sporadic journaler at best. Every time someone gives me a beautiful new blank book with special bookmarks and a cover that is exquisite, I vow to really keep up with my notes this time. I have journals that have been kept diligently for months at a time but in reviewing them I always get distracted by the gorgeous knit afghan pattern that I stuck in the May dates thinking I would remember where it was in October when I again had time to knit. Then there's the recipe for fresh garden produce that is tucked in with the January notes waiting for me to find it in the summer when everything is fresh and delicious. This time of year I go back through the various bits and pieces of journals (still wishing I'd been a more diligent writer) hoping to have a clue about what to uncover first, move, divide or perhaps give a special bit of fertilizer.

As I thumb through it is apparent that in Alaska one year is never like the last! This morning I was perusing my old journals to see what might be blooming today. In 2003 on this day *Saxifragas* were blooming everywhere along with the *Drabas*, *Pulsatillas*, and *Douglasia montana*. In 2007 those plants were all in bloom along with *Primula auricula*, *Androsace carnea*, and *Saxifraga sancta*. In 2008 we still had snow on the rock garden at the end of April and first week of May. In 2011, *Saxifraga* "Ruth Draper" was blooming on April 19<sup>th</sup>. The leaves on the birch trees here weren't out yet on May 22, 2013 and my journal shows many losses that year, including *Saxifragas* and *Lewisiads*.

Today (May 1, 2017) I have to remember that the snow has just melted away. A few of the hardiest plants are welcoming spring joyfully: *Saxifraga sancta* is showing yellow although not completely open, in the same tufa bed the Sax with white blossoms and a green center is blooming near the rock – the tag is there indicating it came from Wrightman's but the name is gone. I'll make a note to research that later! The *Saxifraga oppositifolia* in the big trough is a solid mass of blossoms. On the east side of the house the *Primula* 'Fairy Rose' from Mt. Tahoma is just coming on. Out by the tall bird bath the *Bulba-*

*codium* has spread and is all abloom. In the big rock garden the *Draba polytricha* is blooming and by the bubbler corner of the house the *Scilla* is putting on a show. There now, I have journaled for today! If I can just be disciplined enough to keep it up, next year I will have a better frame of reference about what happened on this day in past years.

### Alaska Rock Garden Society Trip to Sichuan China

Teena Garay

This September 12, six members of the Alaska Rock Garden Society will be travelling to Sichuan China to collect seed for Alaskan gardens. Dan Hinkley, a world known plant explorer and writer, will be joining in Sichuan and lead the group. Dan has introduced hundreds of plants from seed he has collected from all over the world and he has been to Southwest China many times. China has almost 32,000 plant species compared to the US and Canada which only have 17,000 species combined. The diversity of the flora is pretty amazing. Without trips like this, our gardens would have less to offer and we would only be able to get unusual and rarely offered plants from specialty nurseries or seed shares from plant expeditions like this.

We will be starting at 1,650 elevation in the mountains and climb up to 13,000 feet where many of the rock garden plants exist. Hopefully we will be offering seed for Alaskan gardens, and I say hopefully because last week the Chengdu botanical guide Holger Perner, died in his sleep. He was only 55 and is survived by his wife Wenqing and 2 young daughters. It is a tragic situation and one that leaves us scrambling for a guide to help Wenqing who wants to continue as planned. She has many things to take care of so we are on hold right now until she can find someone to help her. Once we find out if she was able to find help and things are back on track, we will be offering seed shares to help pay back the group for Dan's help. We hope to have offerings of things like *Iris*, *Primrose*, *Meconopsis*, rock plants, shrubs and trees. I have included a few photos of plants I have grown from seed from our 2000 trip to Yunnan China and are now growing in my garden here in Homer.







**Legacies of Alaska Rock Garden Society 2000 Trip to Yunnan China – Teena Garay**



**Delphinium sp., Adenophera capillaris** behind



*Rogersia* sp.



*Iris bulleyana*



*Incarvilla zhongdianensis*, *Cremanthodium reniforme*, and *Hydrangia* sp.



*Lonicera* sp. berries





## POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

**President:** Carmel Tysver; (907) 727-7645;  
[garden@gci.net](mailto:garden@gci.net)

**Vice-President:** Florene Carney; (907) 376-5390;  
[snowfire@mtaonline.net](mailto:snowfire@mtaonline.net)

**Secretary:** Jamie Smith; (907) 376-7863;  
[topgun@mtaonline.net](mailto:topgun@mtaonline.net)

**Treasurer:** Madge Oswald; (907) 345-5144;  
[johnmadge@chugach.net](mailto:johnmadge@chugach.net)

**Past President:** Jaime Rodriguez; (907) 357-2747;  
[jrtinker@mtaonline.net](mailto:jrtinker@mtaonline.net)

**Member-at-large:** Fran Durner;  
[durner1@gmail.com](mailto:durner1@gmail.com)

**Newsletter Editor:** Charles J. Utermohle; (907) 231-5460; [Thule@alaska.net](mailto:Thule@alaska.net)

### CONTRIBUTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The Alaska Rock Garden Society is a diverse group sharing an appreciation for rock gardening. Help make the society valuable to you by contributing suggestions for presentations, articles, plant sales, and field trips.

The newsletter is always looking for meaningful content on rock gardening in Alaska. Send your articles and/or pictures to the editor at [Thule@alaska.net](mailto:Thule@alaska.net). Events related to other gardening will also be posted as space allows.

### 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, apply at: <http://www.akrockgardensociety.org/>.

Individual Membership \$15.00 US  
Family Membership \$20.00 US  
Membership is for the calendar year.

## Join NARGS

Join the [North American Rock Garden Society](http://www.nargs.org). Benefits include a subscription to the Rock Garden Quarterly, seed exchange, garden book purchases at a discount, study weekends, and annual meetings, as well as other benefits. Membership in the Alaska Rock Garden Society is separate from NARGS, the national organization. Membership is \$40/year (plus \$10 for additional members). Register online at <https://nargs.org/join>. The NARGS website is at [www.nargs.org](http://www.nargs.org).

### ARGS WEBSITE:

[HTTP://  
WWW.AKROCKGARDENSOCIETY.ORG/](http://www.akrockgardensociety.org/)  
CHECK THE [ARGS CALENDAR](#) FOR  
CURRENT AND FUTURE EVENTS.

### ARGS FACEBOOK:

[HTTPS://M.FACEBOOK.COM/  
ALASKAROCKGARDENSOCIETY/](https://m.facebook.com/alaskarockgardensociety/)

### ARGS EVENTS:

May 13 at 11 AM Cleanup of the rock garden plots at the [Alaska Botanical Garden](#). Bring a sack lunch.

June 13, 6pm-7pm,  
ABG Presentation about the Rock Garden—Members will be present to talk about rock gardening and introduce non-members to the designing and building of a rock garden plus showing them how to care for the rock garden plants. We will be able to mentor people who are interested in learning.

June 24, 2:00pm-4pm—Potluck picnic and planning party—[Snowfire Gardens](#)—A call to all gardens to a picnic in a beautiful garden to discuss gardening in the South Central area as the Alaska Rock Garden Society plans the next year as a tribute to Verna, our first president and active member who is missed by all.

July 15—Field Trip to Eagle Summit  
See article on page 3.

**April 8, 2017 Alaska Rock Garden Society—Board Meeting at Valley Hotel Restaurant in Palmer**

President:	Carmel Tysver	Present
Vice President:	Vacant	
Secretary:	Jamie Smith	Present
Treasurer:	Madge Oswald	Present
Past President:	Jaime Rodriguez	Absent
Program Chair:	Florene Carney	Present
Newsletter Editor:	Vacant	
Website Coordinators:	Jaime Rodriguez	Absent
	Florene Carney	Present
China Expedition Coordinator	Teena Garay	Absent

**New Business:****Carmel:**

Alaska Botanical Garden Gala – Our evening event should be prior to the Gala, and the Gala is 6/15/17. We'd like to have our event sooner – more around the ABG plant sale. Their plant sale is 5/20/17.

Bulk Mailing – Still working to get permit for bulk mailing. Plan is to send flyers to former and potential new members regarding who we are, what we do, etc.

**Old Business:**

China Trip - Selling Seed Shares: A special account, signable by Carmel & Madge (2 signatures) will be set up for collecting funds.

Prices of Shares: \$50.00, \$100.00, & \$200.00. Purchasers will be able to buy more than one Share. With only 6 people going on the trip, we anticipate smaller number of seeds. Teena will have access to shares and funds.

Endowment Fund: Need ideas for fundraising. Question will be put before the membership at today's meeting.

Garden tours at Florene's and Madge's: We could use both as fund raisers for the Endowment Fund, charging a small fee for visitors.

By-Laws: We need to review By-Laws again and make whatever changes are necessary. Carmel will send copy of current By-Laws via email for us to read thru and note where changes should be made.

Newsletter Editor: Charles Utermohle is the Newsletter Editor. Direct articles to him via email: [charles.uteromhle@alaska.gov](mailto:charles.uteromhle@alaska.gov)

Elections: Need to be held this Fall. Carmel has reached the term limits for the President's position. Vice President position is vacant.

Jane Baldwin may be interested in becoming a Board Member.

We should have 2 Members-at-Large. Ask for volunteers at the General Membership meeting.

**NEXT ALASKA ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY MEETING SEPT. 16TH**

**Board meeting begins at 1:00pm; Regular membership meeting at 2:00pm**

**This is the annual plant exchange. Please limit to 5 plants per member.**

**Location: [Central Lutheran Church](#), 1420 Cordova St., Anchorage 99501.**

ALASKA  
ROCK  
GARDEN  
SOCIETY



Anchorage, Alaska 99503

---

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2017

---

