

ALASKA ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY



This Saturday, April 19:

ARGS General Membership Meeting, at 1:00 PM via ZOOM

ARGS Garden Supply Sale, Midtown Mall

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April 4, 2025

From the President

Leaves are beginning to pop and blooms are beginning to happen in favorable microclimates. Let's enjoy the early spring while remaining prudent. Mother Nature and Alaska have a proven way of keeping us humble. Patience is a virtue.

I have some exciting news to report. The Alaska Rock Garden Society has received a very generous donation of garden supplies from VF Grace. They are a wholesale supplier and are closing out their garden supplies. We have taken possession of over \$8000 worth of tools, fertilizer, and various supplies that we can sell to raise money for our club and use in our maintenance of public gardens. Items will be available for sale at the Midtown Mall Spring Garden Show on April 19, and at our two ARGS plant sales in May.

In order to continue making headway at keeping our website updated, we have been training club members to be able to refresh or revise the site.

Our new hiking events coordinator, Todd Bradley is scheduling trips to explore native plants. Check out Page 7 of this newsletter for a calendar of these summer hikes. We have also been able to get some of our past program videos uploaded to our new YouTube channel. Look for a list of video links on Page 10 in this newsletter. These links are for dues paying members. Please do not share the links beyond this newsletter.

I'm eager for the overnight temps to stay above freezing. I'm ready to get my living room back from germinating seedlings, and start hardening things off. I look forward to seeing some of you on Zoom on April 19th, for Forrest Baldwin's presentation about our native Saxifrages.

Happy Gardening,
Jaime Rodriguez

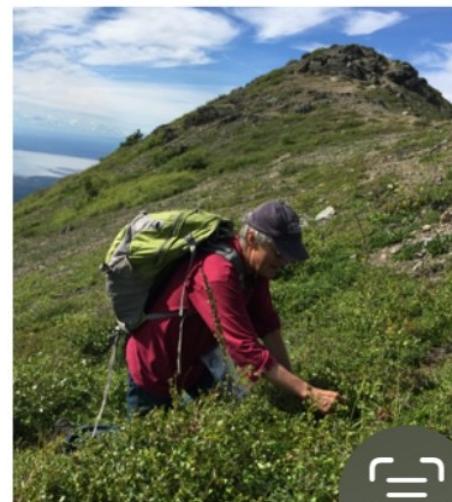


Saxifraga and Micranthes in Alaska

**Alaska Rock
Garden Society
Zoom Program**

**April 19, 2025
1:00 p.m.**

Forrest Baldwin has been hunting wildflowers in Alaska since 1979. His passion for flowers has taken him on some amazing trips throughout Alaska and Canada, including Utqiagvik, Atka, and Ellesmere Island. Join Forrest as he shares his love of *Saxifraga* and *Micranthes* with photos of plants and the beautiful habitats where they are found.





Do you recognize this plant?

What an early bloomer! ARGS member Dorte Mobley shared this photo of our mystery plant blooming on April 3!



Welcome New or Renewing Members:

**Sharon Powder
Carol Ann Lovejoy
Dorte Mobley
Lisa Oakley
Pat Tremaine
Florene and Doug Carney
Gina Docherty
Charlie Kempton
Celia Rosen
Leesa Wingo**

Membership for the Alaska Rock Garden Society is for the calendar year. Renewal information can be obtained on the ARGS website at:

[https://www.akrockgardensociety.org/
membership.html](https://www.akrockgardensociety.org/membership.html)



Annual memberships are just \$15 for individuals and \$20 for families. ARGS strongly encourages use of on-line renewals by eliminating surcharges for using your credit card.



This year, the national meeting of the American Primrose Society will be held in Juneau!

APS National Show and meeting May 16 - 18, 2025
Juneau, Alaska

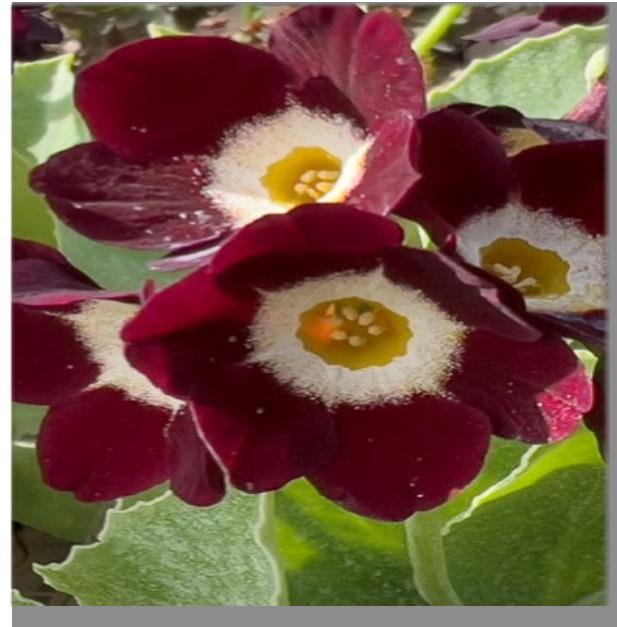
Hosted by the
**Juneau Chapter of the American
Primrose Society and**
**Jensen-Olson Arboretum, holder
of the**
**Nationally Accredited™ Collection
for the Genus *Primula***

Keynote speaker:
Amy Wagenfeld PhD, OTR/L
**Blending occupational therapy and
accessibility into landscape design**

Primula display and judging •
plant and seed vendors Primula
dividing workshop • Garden
tours • and more! \$75 Registration

Coincides with the Southeast Alaska Master
Gardener Conference
(combined registration information to come)

**For more information contact Pat
Hartman, Juneau chapter President,
patricia.hartman4@gmail.com or Gin-
ger Hudson, JOA manager, gin-
[ger.hudson@juneau.gov](mailto:ginger.hudson@juneau.gov)**





Save the Dates:

ARGS Plant Sale at Alaska Botanical Garden, Saturday, May 10th

The Alaska Rock Garden Society plant sale is held the same day as the ABG spring sale. Come find us by the rock garden and, if you wish, join us for spring cleanup!

Snowfire Garden Annual ARGS Plant sale will be Saturday, May 25th. We'll be starting at 10:00 am and going until everything is gone or 4:00 pm. Vendors can come at 8:00 am to set up or the evening before. Come tour the garden, visit with other plant enthusiasts, and pick up a few plants to fill out your summer garden. See you there!



Alaska Rock Garden Society

Plant Sale & Open Garden

Snowfire Gardens

May 24th

10:00 to 4:00

3379 S. Inlet Vista Circle

Wasilla (off Fairview Loop Rd.)



ARGS Calendar of Activities and Meeting Dates for 2025

***Society meetings are the third Saturday of the month and are held at 1:00 PM via ZOOM unless otherwise indicated. Dates for events and field trips are approximate and when available, additional information will be sent to members.**

Saturday, January 18— General Membership Meeting, Paul Spriggs — My Rock Garden: Gardening on the Dry Side of Victoria Island

Saturday, February 15—General Membership Meeting, Todd Boland— Plants of the Beartooth Mountains

Saturday, March 15 – General Membership Meeting, Jaime Rodriguez— Overview of the Saxifrage Family Including European Treasures

Saturday, April 19 – General Membership Meeting, Forrest Baldwin—A Talk on the Genera *Saxifraga* and *Micranthes* in Alaska

May Activities

- Clean-up at ABG Rock Garden in Anchorage
- Clean-up at Palmer Visitor Center Rock Garden
- May 10 - ARGS Plant Sale at Alaska Botanical Garden
- May 25 - ARGS Valley Plant Sale at Snowfire Gardens

June, July, August Field Trips, Pop Up Garden Visits - Time and Locations will be sent through our Crevice bulletin

Saturday, September 20 - General Membership Meeting, In Person - Plant Exchange and Social, Elks Hall, Eagle River

Saturday October 18 - General Membership Meeting

Saturday November 15 - Last General Membership Meeting of 2025

No General Membership Meetings are held in December



ARGS Summer 2025 Hikes

Todd Bradley, ARGS' new hiking events coordinator, has scheduled a series of summer hikes through Southcentral Alaska's most breathtaking landscapes! Todd invites members and their guests to explore alpine meadows, rocky slopes and other unique habitats where see unique wildflowers and resilient native plants thrive. Whether you are a seasoned hiker or just starting out, come connect with other nature lovers. While more details will be coming, our proposed schedule of hikes is listed here.



May 17th- Glen Alps/Blueberry Hill
Distance: 2.12 miles Elevation gain/loss: 417 feet
[<https://caltopo.com/m/0K7TOPQ>]

May 31st-Hatcher Pass/Gold Mint trail
Distance: 5.19 miles Elevation gain/loss: 636 feet
[<https://caltopo.com/m/B817KRD>]

June 14th-Arctic Valley/Muktuk Marston Trail
Distance: 3.53 miles Elevation gain/loss: 499 feet
[<https://caltopo.com/m/UBBDD9C>]

June 28th-Hatcher Pass/Gold Cord Lake
Distance: 1.8 miles Elevation gain/loss: 468 feet
[<https://caltopo.com/m/4DAM283>]

July 12th-Eklutna Lake/Pepper Peak
Distance: 5.23 miles Elevation gain/loss: 2414 feet
[<https://caltopo.com/m/G0K0170>]

July 26th-Girdwood/Crow Pass
Distance: 6.23 miles Elevation gain/loss: 2063 feet
[<https://caltopo.com/m/JJ2EE73>]

August 9th-April Bowl/Hatcher Pass
Distance: 1.84 miles Elevation gain/loss: 709 feet
<https://caltopo.com/m/1UNQ015>

Photo credit: Todd Bradley



Did you guess this plant? April Plant Profile



In habitat in the Swiss Alps, photo NARGS archives



Saxifraga oppositifolia

by Todd Boland, May 2023
Plant of the Month, NARGS

Mountain Saxifrage has a circumpolar distribution, found on high alpine mountaintops as well as the high Arctic tundra. Plants form tiny evergreen rosettes on trailing stems, forming flat mats. The foliage is lime-encrusted, opposite, and held in four rows. The solitary 1 cm. diameter flowers are various shades of pink to purple. They bloom within weeks of snow-melt in the wild; while in cultivation, they bloom March to May. It is the highest known elevation plant in Europe (growing in the Alps at 4505 m. elevation) and the highest north latitude plants in the world growing at the north end of Greenland at 83 degrees north latitude. Generally those that grow atop mountains are restricted to limestone substrates while those from the high Arctic are not as restricted.

Cultivation: While this species is found across the northern hemisphere, the European forms are the easiest in cultivation while the North American forms are extremely difficult. While in the Arctic, plants grow in full sun, in cultivation part shade is best, especially if there is early morning or late afternoon sun. The media needs to have excellent drainage yet retain moisture as the plants are not particularly drought-tolerant. This species performs best in alpine troughs or crevice gardens.

Propagation: Cuttings may be taken in mid-summer and rooted in pure damp sand. Plants may also be grown from seed, requiring about three months of cold stratification.



Continuation of Plant Profile, *Saxifraga Oppositifolia*, by Kathy Swick

In Alaska: *S. oppositifolia* ssp *smalliana* & ssp *oppositifolia*



Photos this page ssp *smalliana* from Swick garden, Anchorage



In our Anchorage and Mat-Su Valley gardens subspecies *smalliana* is in cultivation, thanks to the seed-collecting and propagation efforts of Jaime Rodriguez. As its name implies it is a very dwarf version, making an especially dense mat of tiny rosettes. The flowers are also smaller than the European varieties and frequently paler.

It grows well in crevices and rocky sites with a sunny or mostly sunny exposure and adequate moisture. It tolerates our heavy fall rains as long as it is given excellent drainage. The mat will also do better if planted on a slope so that excess moisture drains quickly away from the surface.

The other form growing wild in Alaska is ssp. *oppositifolia*, which has both larger rosettes and larger darker-colored flowers. For the botanically inclined the identifying difference in characteristics is whether the hairs on the sepal margins are glandular (ssp. *smalliana*) or non-glandular (ssp *oppositifolia*). See Flora of North America for all the details.



Did you miss an ARGs program? Is there a program you would like to view again? First group of videos are available to watch now.

ARGS President, Jaime Rodriguez has created a YouTube page for our club and has begun to upload videos of our meeting programs. Below are the links for videos that have been uploaded to YouTube so far. Each video has its own link. Jaime will continue to update tags and descriptions for each video, but the links will not change. The videos have been posted as "unlisted", which means that they can be watched by anyone who has the link, but they are not available to the public or searchable.

March 15, 2025 Jaime Rodriguez, The Genus Saxifraga <https://youtu.be/OOptTrxR9uY>

February 15, 2025 Todd Boland, Alpines Along the Beartooth Highway <https://youtu.be/QvbAOR1CU-4>

January 18, 2025 Paul Spriggs, Gardening on the Dry Side of Vancouver Island https://youtu.be/N_8xhKn6mrY

October 19, 2024 Todd Bradley, Creating a Crevice Garden <https://youtu.be/t4x8WESnsgc>

November 16, 2024 Kristina Tornqvist Norway's Tromso Botanical garden and International

Seed Repository Svalbard Island <https://youtu.be/OAVg0E-efJ0>

April 2021 <https://youtu.be/htlcqD9Hlew>

January 2021 <https://youtu.be/iI4PSWTqUmE>



POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

President: Jaime Rodriguez

Vice-President: Vacant

Secretary : Dorte Mobley

Treasurer: Madge Oswald

Past President: Florene Carney

Membership: Charles Utermohle

Programs: Kathy Swick

Newsletter Editor: Bonnie Friedman

Palmer Visitors Center: Jaime Rodriguez

Librarian/ABG Rock Garden: Kathy Swick

Technology Upgrader: Charles Utermohle

Sunshine Committee: Dorte Mobley

Hike Committee: Todd Bradley



**NORTH AMERICAN
ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY**

If you are not already a member, considering joining the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS). You can enjoy the Rock Garden Quarterly, featured plants and books of the month, photo galleries, blogs of interest to rock gardeners, and information about upcoming events. Go to www.args.org/join and give yourself the gift of national membership.

**ENJOY OUR FACEBOOK PAGE,
WORKSHOP OR FIELD TRIP?**

Then Become an ARGS Member!

We have about six meetings per year, plus plant sales, field trips and workshops. Our meetings are generally on the third Saturday of the month, Fall, Winter, and Spring, and may be via ZOOM or a Hybrid format with an in person at the Elk's Club in Eagle River and ZOOM. To join, please send your name, address, phone number, e-mail address and a check payable to ARGS at 12001 Audubon Dr., Anchorage, AK 97516 or join 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 \$25.00 US

Membership is for the calendar year and includes all issues of the newsletter and Crevice Bulletins for that year. The ARGS Newsletter is published 4-6 times per year and our bulletin, CREVICE is published to announce special news or events. We invite your suggestions and contributions to the newsletter. Please contact Bonnie Friedman, email Bonnief@gci.net

Seeking your input: If there are any program topics or activities you would like to see in the next year, please contact Kathy Swick, our program coordinator.

WWW.AKROCKGARDENSOCIETY.ORG

Webmasters: Open

ARGS is on FACEBOOK at:

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