

ALASKA ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

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ISSUE 6

October 2024

Coming Events:

October 19, 1:00PM ARGS In Person and ZOOM Program, "From Idea to Reality, Creating a Crevice Garden"

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From the President:

How did it get to be the middle of October already? I trust you are all successfully getting your pre-winter to-do list accomplished. I'm feeling smug that my seed donations to the NARGS, AGS and SRGC have already been received. If you have been collecting seeds, please consider sharing them with NARGS.

I'm ready for the slower pace of winter and indoor creative activity. I am looking forward to our combined In Person and ZOOM meeting this Saturday, October 19 at 1:00PM at the Eagle River Elks Club. Hope to see you there.

Jaime Rodriguez

**Todd Bradley:**

I have always taken interest in the alpine plants that I have experienced in my travels in the mountains, especially while mountaineering in the Pacific Northwest.

After moving to Alaska in 2020 and exploring the wilderness here, I realized I wanted to learn more about the native plants here and joined the Alaska Rock Garden Society and was able to attend the seed collecting trip near Denali National Park led by Jaime.

Through the knowledge I gained, I was inspired to start growing plants from seed and to build a crevice garden. I hope that I am able to shed some light on the subject and potentially inspire you to build your own.

From Idea to Reality, Creating a Crevice Garden

by Todd Bradley

Saturday, October 19, 1:00 pm

Eagle River Elks Club, 17111 North Eagle River Loop Road**

**This program will be both in-person and by zoom. We encourage you to attend in person for the lively questions and discussion Todd will inspire.

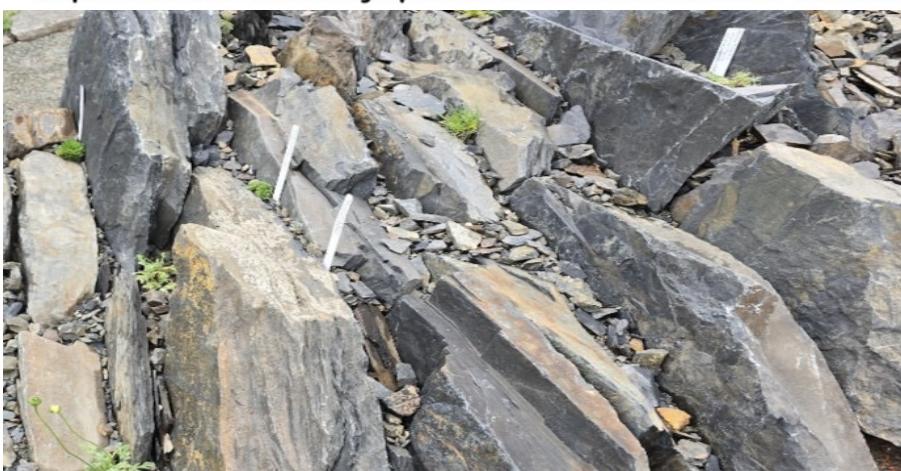


Photo of a portion of Todd's first year crevice garden near mid-town Anchorage.



Do You Recognize This Plant?



This plant is native to the western United States including eastern California, Nevada and Colorado. It is very compact and mat forming, growing in dry, open and rocky areas. The leaves are no more than half a centimeter long and the inflorescence is a tubular flower with a flat white or pale pink corolla.

Welcome New or Renewing Members

We had no new members this month, but please remember that membership for the Alaska Rock Garden Society is for the calendar year. In a few short months, it will be time again for members to renew. Renewal information can be obtained on the ARGS website at:

<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.





ARGS Calendar of Activities and Meeting Dates for 2024

*Society meetings are the third Saturday of the month. Dates for events and field trips are approximate and additional information will be sent to members.

Saturday, January 20—General Membership Meeting, Jay Akerley, Rock Garden Microclimates — Sea to Sky

Saturday, February 17—General Membership Meeting, Marilyn Barker, Plants of the Bering Glacier region

Saturday, March 16 – General Membership Meeting, Jaime Rodriguez, Report on 2023 Seed Collecting Expedition to Mt. Healy, and Rob Staniland, Light Weight Trough Planters

Saturday, April 20 –General Membership Meeting, Panel Discussion “Coping With Challenges in the Rock Garden” - Presented by ARGS Board Members

Saturday, May 11 - Clean-up at ABG Rock Garden in Anchorage
May 2 - Clean-up at Palmer Visitor Center Rock Garden
May 11 - ARGS Plant Sale at Alaska Botanical Garden
May 25 - ARGS Valley Plant Sale at Snowfire Gardens

July Field Trip: April Bowl, Hatcher Pass Bog Plants

Saturday, September 21 - General Membership Meeting, In Person - Plant Exchange and Social, Elks Hall, Eagle River

Thursday, October 3—Bonus Zoom Meeting with NARGS Traveling Speaker, Esther Benedict, 6:30 PM

Saturday October 19 - General Membership Meeting, In Person and Zoom, Todd Bradley, From Idea to Reality, Creating a Crevice Garden

Saturday November 16 - Last General Membership Meeting of 2024

No General Membership Meetings are held in December



Did you guess this plant? It's *Phlox condensata*!

Plant of the Month Profile

by Todd Boland, originally published June, 2013

Phlox condensata forms a dense cushion of evergreen foliage. Numerous, nearly stemless white to pale mauve flowers are produced individually or in pairs. In the wild, it occurs on high mountain slopes, screes, fell-fields, and rocky ledges, generally on limestone substrates. Elevations range from 6100-14,000 feet depending on the mountain range it inhabits. While frozen for many months, the strong winds of their natural haunts prevent the accumulation of much snow. Essentially, it grows in very xeric alpine environments. The minute leaves are linear, almost needle-like and sparsely hairy on the subspecies *condensata* while more elliptical and densely hairy on the subspecies *covillei*. Those with lavender-colored flowers are generally restricted to the subspecies *covillei*.

Cultivation: This species requires full sun and sharply drained medium that is alkaline in nature. Winter wet must be avoided. This is a challenging species to grow outside of its naturally-occurring region. In wetter areas, an alpine house is almost essential.

Bloom: In the wild, this species blooms in July and August. In cultivation at lower elevations, blooming may commence earlier.

Propagation: Cuttings or seed. Seed requires a stratification period of about three months at 4 C. (or outdoor stratification) before exposing them to gentle heat. Plants have just a single main stem so division is not practiced. Tip cuttings 2-5 cm long may be taken after blooming and rooted in sharp sand.

NOTES ON GROWING IN SOUTH CENTRAL ALASKA by Kathy Swick



Our increasingly wet summers and fall deluges are very hard on plants like this. For long-term success it is important to site it with extreme drainage, in a crevice or on a slope. It has persisted for more than 20 years on the edge of one of my troughs, where it also has access to the lime in the hyperfufa. The other place it has persisted in my garden is on the very gravelly road shoulder verging on street pavement, where it has crawled on top of a rock to get the heat and drainage it requires. Its close relatives *Phlox pulvinata* and *Phlox multiflora* are similar, with *multiflora* perhaps being slightly, very slightly, easier

since it prefers acid soil. Seed is sometimes available from Alplains or the NARGS seed exchange. Plant picture: from Swick garden, edge of pavement, intergrowing since 2005 with *Soldanella pulvinaris*.



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 Garden: Jaime Rodriguez

Librarian/ABG Rock Garden: Kathy Swick

Technology Upgrader: Charles Utermohle

Sunshine Committee: Dorte Mobley



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/>