

Borealis

the newsletter of the



PO Box 141613, Anchorage, Alaska

October/November 2008

Join us at our Next Meetings!

Monday, November 3, 7:30 p.m.

Plant Family: Iridaceae

Presenter: Glenn Brown

Monday, December 1, 7:30 p.m.

WHAT'S COMING UP?

Did you miss it this past summer? Here's your 2nd chance! The Alaska Native Plant Society is helping to sponsor a workshop by botanical artist Linda Vorobik this winter, at the end of February 2009. This past summer Linda provided two very successful workshops: a two day workshop in Fairbanks through UAF, and another in Anchorage via the Botanical Garden. Each workshop was preceded by a free lecture on botanical art.

Linda has descriptions of her work and her credentials on her website, <http://www.vorobikbotanicalart.com>. Look for more information about her Alaska trip in the next newsletter and on our website.

APOLOGIES

This is a late and abbreviated edition of the October/November Borealis. The December/January newsletter will be published at the end of December, as usual.

For latest information on ANPS events, check our website at:

[http:// AkNPS.org](http://AkNPS.org)

"Nature's Beloved Son"

John Muir (1838-1914) was one of the most influential conservationists and nature writers in American history. Founder of the Sierra Club, and its president until his death, Muir was a spirit so free that all he did to prepare for an expedition was to "throw some tea and bread into an old sack and jump the back fence." But did you know that Muir was trained as a botanist and throughout his life referred to himself as such?

A newly published book "*Nature's Beloved Son, Rediscovering John Muir's Botanical Legacy*", by Bonnie Gisel and Stephen Joseph, examines Muir's evolving relationship with the natural world-through his close study of botany.

Touching on his childhood in Scotland and Wisconsin, his sojourn in Canada and Indianapolis, his thousand-mile walk from Louisville, Kentucky to the Gulf of Mexico, his travels in California's Sierra Nevada and Yosemite Valley, and his exploration of Alaska, Gisel and Joseph define Muir's belief in "nature's irresistible, divine beauty."

Gisel and Joseph take you on a journey through each step Muir sauntered as he found his plant friends and made new ones. They ask you to join Muir and engage in a retrospective study of his life and journey and discovery through his experience an opportunity to be introspective about your own journey in the natural world. Now, you may own prints from his collection-selected by Gisel and Joseph, among them Muir's favorite orchid-the "Calypso borealis".

"Nature's Beloved Son" with 150 historical and botanical images (in cloth) is available for \$45 after October 1st, 2008. Advanced copies may be ordered from www.heydaybooks.com, Berkeley, Ca. (510-549-3564, ext. 304). Prints are available as of June 1, 2008. Check the Purchase Print page on their website for information.

(<http://www.johnmuirsbotany.com/index.html>)

Iridaceae, —The Iris Family

The iris family of showy-flowered monocots, is comprised of 60-80 genera worldwide and 1500 species. In Alaska we have 2 genera, *Iris* and *Sisrinichium* and 3 species: *I. setosa*, *S. litorale* and *S. montanum*.

The iris family is easy to recognize. First it has some striking vegetative characters.—the leaves are: simple, entire, alternate, distichous, equitant, and conduplicate with an open basal sheath and parallel veins. Distichous, equitant and conduplicate probably require some explanation.

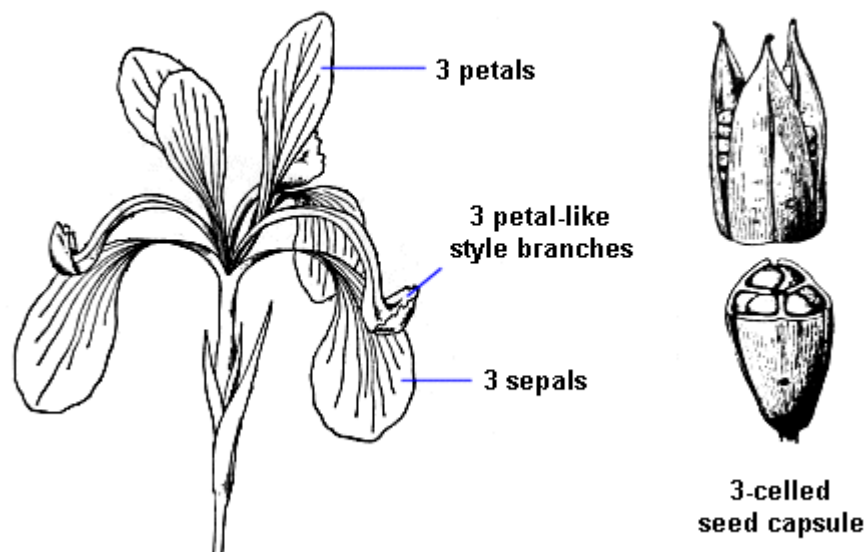
Distichous: two vertical ranks on opposite sides of the axis.

Equitant: overlapping or straddling in two ranks.

Conduplicate: folded together lengthwise in such a way that only the undersurface is visible.

The flowers are perfect with an inferior ovary and a well developed hypanthium. Flowers consist of 3 petaloid sepals, 3 petals, 3 stamens and 1 ovary made of 3 fused carpels. Often the stigmas are petaloid as well.

IRIS FLOWER PARTS



As you peer into an iris flower, the stigmas are directly in the center, each situated above a sepal. The petals stand upright in an alternate position. The stigma pollen receptive surface is a small flap of tissue located on the underside of the stigma (facing the sepal). Between each “sepal-stigma” combination is a stamen. A pollinating insect must push the stigma and sepal apart to get to the nectar/pollen, increasing the likelihood of cross pollination. Bumble bees are often pollinators of irises.

The economic importance of the family lies primarily in its showy flowers; members of the family cultivated as ornamentals include: *Freesia*, *Gladiolus*, and *Crocus*. The expensive spice, saffron, is produced from the stigma of *Crocus sativus*.

MYSTERY PLANT
ANSWER
Melandrium apetalum
 Apetalous Catchfly
 also called
Gastrolychnis apetal,
Silene walenensis ssp. *apetal*
Silene wahlbergella
 Caryophyllaceae/Pink
 Family

SPECIAL THANKS TO.....

ALL of those who generously gave of their time for community/ANPS projects this past summer. Records of attendees were not kept so we apologize to anyone not mentioned here.

Project #1: Campbell Creek Science Center Garden Maintenance; The time spent here reduces the fee that ANPS pays for our monthly meeting room. Big thanks to Brigitte Ressel, Patricia Kinnunen, Diane Toebe, Charlu Choate, Bernie and Peter Raiskums, Jean Christy, Ken Johnson, Luise Woelflein, Cheryl Larsen Verna Pratt.

Project #2: Tragopogon Weed Pull on Seward Highway. Great progress was made and a few years of control could eliminate this showy but obnoxious weed. Thanks to Brigitte Ressel, Patricia Kinnunen, Diane Toebe, Susan McNeil, Ken Johnson, and Verna Pratt. Apologies to Alan Batten who wasn't able to locate us one evening!

Project #3: Dandelion Dig on the Lowenfels Trail at Alaska Botanical Garden. Most of the big flowering plants are gone but it will take more persistent trips to eradicate all of the babies that keep popping up. Thanks to Patricia Kinnunen, Brigitte Ressel, Diane Toebe, Tom Choate, Ken Johnson and Verna Pratt.

Thanks also to all of you who have helped with BLM's community projects in June and September. This also helps to reduce the cost of our monthly meeting room.



MYSTERY PLANT

This small plant can be found on mountain slopes in the alpine throughout most of Alaska, but is not often seen because of its stature and presence in rocky outcrops. It is prominent north of the Brooks Range but sparse in other locations.

The single (usually) flower is on a 3-5 inch hair stem that has 1-3 pairs of small narrow leaves. The entire basal leaves are loosely bunched together. The five connected inflated sepals are white, hairy, have purplish stripes and nod. The five white-to-lilac petals barely protrude beyond the calyx. The seed capsule is erect when mature.

ANNUAL SEED EXCHANGE



The 2009 ANPS Seed Exchange is now open for donations.

The Alaska Native Plant Society is proud to be able to offer seeds of plants native to Alaska for sale to members and other interested gardeners. This is made possible through the generosity of many ANPS members. It begins with members collecting seed of native plants in their garden or in natural areas.

Verna Pratt, our Intake Manager, will catalog the seeds and produce a Seed List. The Seed List is mailed to all members at the beginning of the year. At that time it will also be posted at our website. Seeds can be purchased at the regular monthly meetings or by mail order.

DONATED seed should be brought to the November meeting or sent to Alaska Native Plant Society, PO Box 141613, Anchorage, AK 99514 by November 15.

ALASKA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY State and Anchorage Chapter Officers

President	Andy Anderson-Smith	301-4793
Vice President	Ken Johnson	562-9787
Sec/Treasurer	Cara Wardlaw Bailey	698-3385
Treasurer	Beryl Wardlaw	698-3385

Anchorage Chapter Program Coordinators

Membership	Verna Pratt	333-8212
Plant Family	Marilyn Barker	333-0602
Mini-Botany	Ken Johnson	562-9787
Field Trips	Anjanette Steer	(907)745-5121

Newsletter ("*Borealis*")

Editor	Ginny Moore	345-7004
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Borealis is published bi-monthly October through May. Articles may be sent to Ginny Moore, 14530 Echo Street, Anchorage, AK 99516. Phone or FAX: 345-1355, or E-mail: tgmoore@gci.net

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

The Alaska Native Plant Society was organized in 1982 by an enthusiastic group of amateur and professional botanists. It is a non-profit educational organization with the goal of uniting all persons interested in the flora of Alaska. Membership is open to any interested individual or organization. If you wish to join us, please indicate the category of membership you desire, fill in the form below and mail it with the appropriate remittance to:

**Alaska Native Plant Society,
P.O. Box 141613,
Anchorage, AK 99514**

STATUS New RENEWAL

CATEGORY

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Full-time Student | \$12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Senior Citizen | \$12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Individual | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Family | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Organization | \$30 |

Name _____

Address _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____ E-Mail: _____

Membership is on a calendar year basis.

IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOU MEMBERSHIP - NOW!!

Alaska Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 141613
Anchorage, AK 99514