

June/July 2022

Volume 62, Issue 4

Skagit Gems

Official Publication of the Skagit Rock and Gem Club
Serving Skagit County WA Since 1961

Next Meeting: June 4th, 10am --No Regular July Meeting--See below

Gem of the Month: Pink and Purple Stones

Refreshments: Feel free to bring a snack to share

Annual BBQ and Swap Meet

RAIN OR SHINE!

WHEN: July 9th -The swap starts at 10am or
come at Noon for the BBQ. Bring a dish to share.

It is also time that club members can bring items from
their own collection to share, sell or trade.

Directions: 6414 Fruitdale Rd.

Head up Fruitdale from Sedro or
Hwy 9 from Sedro to Mosier Rd
(a little over 2 miles up). Take a
Right on Mosier and a Left on
Fruitdale. When you pull in the
driveway, head straight up the hill to
find the parking area.



You're Invited to a
BBQ

What Is Lepidolite?

Lepidolite is the name of a rare lithium-rich mica mineral that is usually pink, red, or purple in color. It is the most common lithium-bearing mineral and serves as a minor ore of lithium metal, with rubidium and cesium sometimes being byproducts. When impregnated with quartz, lepidolite is used as a minor gemstone. Flakes of lepidolite are sometimes responsible for the color of pink and red aventurine.



Lepidolite Mica: This photo shows how lepidolite mica occurs in stacks of sheets, sometimes referred to as "books". This photo also shows a typical purplish pink color exhibited by the mineral, its perfect cleavage in one direction, and its pearly to vitreous luster.

Geologic Occurrence of Lepidolite

Lepidolite can only form in geochemical environments where high concentrations of lithium are available for mineral formation. Lepidolite is a rare mineral because these geochemical situations rarely occur.

The lithium ion is very small, and it does not readily substitute in other minerals. As a result, it is usually one of the last ions to form minerals during the crystallization of a subsurface magma. As other ions are depleted, the residual fluids of magma crystallization become progressively enriched with lithium.

During the final stages of crystallization, there might finally be a high enough concentration of lithium present to form discrete lithium minerals such as spodumene, lepidolite, and petalite. Elbaite tourmaline is another lithium-bearing mineral that forms in association with lepidolite and other lithium minerals. Other associated minerals include: beryl, cassiterite, cleavelandite, muscovite, quartz, topaz, and a variety of feldspar minerals.

Pegmatites, greisens, and hydrothermal quartz veins are rocks of late-stage magmatic crystallization. They are the rocks where much of the world's lithium minerals are found. In these rocks, lepidolite occurs as disseminated particles, aggregates of fine grains, "books" of flat sheets, and aggregates of curved sheets. Most deposits of lithium-bearing minerals formed by igneous processes are small pod-shaped deposits of a few hundred to a few thousand tons where hand mining and hand separation are required.

Notable occurrences of lepidolite have been found in Minas Gerais, Brazil; Manitoba, Canada; Honshu, Japan; Madagascar; Ural Mountains, Russia; Skuleboda, Sweden; California, Maine, and New Mexico, United States; and Coolgardie, Western Australia.



Lepidolite in Curved Sheets: This photograph shows a cluster of grayish purple lepidolite crystals that have a curved, layered habit instead of the typical flat book habit. This specimen is from Minas Gerais, Southeastern Region, Brazil

Color In Lepidolite

Most specimens of lepidolite have pink, red or purple as their dominant hue. These are the expected colors of lepidolite. The mineral sometimes has a dark tone, which gives it a grayish appearance. Rare specimens of lepidolite are colorless or yellow.

Many people assume that lithium produces the color of lepidolite; however, lithium rarely serves as a chromophore in minerals. Manganese is the cause of color in pink, red and purple lepidolites.

The properties of lepidolite make most specimens easy to identify. If you find a pink to purple mica mineral, it is probably lepidolite.

Lepidolite As a Gem Material

Lepidolite as a mineral lacks the hardness and tenacity to be a good gem material. However, it is sometimes impregnated with quartz, and that gives it durability. Lepidolite impregnated with quartz makes an attractive pink to purple gemstone, but what makes these stones even more desirable are the bright flashes that occur when the mica cleavage surfaces reflect light. This material is used to produce cabochons, beads, tumbled stones, and ornamental items. They are usually sold as “lepidolite” without giving the quartz proper credit for its important job.

Lepidolite is also an important ingredient in the quartz gem known as “aventurine”. The aventurescence and color of pink, red, and purple aventurine is often caused by the presence of tiny flakes of lepidolite within the quartz. Just a few weight percent of lepidolite flakes can be enough to impart a distinct color in aventurine. geology.com



Lepidolite Cabochons: These two cabochons show lepidolite in two different forms. In the cabochon on the left, coarse flakes of purplish-pink lepidolite are completely impregnated by quartz to produce a cabochon that flashes brightly from the coarse flakes. This cabochon measures 26 x 43 millimeters and was cut from lepidolite mined in Brazil. The cabochon on the right contains microscopic-size flakes of lepidolite suspended in a translucent quartz. Just a few percent by volume of lepidolite is enough to impart a purplish pink color throughout this stone.



Pink Aventurine: This photograph shows a tumbled stone of pink aventurine. Aventurine is a variety of quartz that is colored by tiny mica flakes that also impart an aventurescent luster. [Click here for a close-up view that shows how few flakes of lepidolite are needed to impart color in aventurine.](#)

Skagit Rock and Gem Club
Meeting Minutes
May 7th, 2022

Meeting called to order at 10:06am

Board Members present: Wes Frank, Dave Britten, Debbie Frank, Eric Self

Guests: Kevin & Norma, Lacey and James, Sandy, Kiersten, Aliston, Todd and Barbara. All the guests received a prize. Thank you for joining us! We hope to see you again!

Dave read the treasurer's report and it was approved.

Dave ran the share table and we had lots of blue stones brought in. James won the share table prize.

Larry brought in a mystery rock and, even after passing it around the room, I don't think we came up with a definitive answer as to what it was.

Wes brought his gem identifying tool, a refractometer, and gave a presentation on its use to identify gemstones.

Club dues will resume and will give membership thru August 2023. Please pay dues if you would like to continue your membership and receive the newsletter. Membership dues must be paid to use the club shop.

The shop is in the process of getting cleaned and ready for use. We will put out an announcement when it is open for members.

Gem of the month for June: Pink and Purple Stones-- Bring a stone in for show and tell.

Meeting Adjourned 11:12am



Don't forget--Check out the WA State Mineral Council webpage for all the gem shows and field trips this summer

<https://mineralcouncil.wordpress.com/>



VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!



Meetings are on the FIRST Saturday of the month (except for Jan, July and Dec) at 10:00 am at the Mount Vernon Community (Senior) Center
1401 Cleveland St. Mount Vernon WA 98273

- The purpose of this non-profit earth society shall be to stimulate interest in the study of geology, lapidary, and the collection of geological specimens
- We are a member of the Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies and the Washington State Mineral Council. We are affiliated with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies.
- Dues are \$15.00 per year for adults and \$7.50 for those under age 16
- Visit our website: skagitrockandgem.com
- Email: skagitrockandgem@gmail.com
- Mailing address: PO BOX 244 Mt. Vernon 98273

2022 Officers

President	• Wes Frank 360-757-6276
Vice President	• Greg Hochmuht 360-223-5453
Treasurer	• David Britten 360-755-0741
Secretary	• Linda Keltz 360-424-6525
Fed. Director	• Virgil Keltz 360-424-6525
Bulletin Editor	• Debbie Frank 360-853-6883
Past President	• Eric Self 360-840-8342

Committees

Annual Show Chair-Eric Self
Facilities/Field Trips- Dave Britten
Greeter-Linda Keltz
Scholarship-Linda Keltz , Peggy Peterson
Publicity-Frank Isca
Stamps-Virgil Keltz
Swap-Vandenbурgs

Membership Dues

DUES are DUE!

We are collecting dues again which will give you membership thru August 2023!

The club's year runs from September to August.

Payment can be made by cash or check at a meeting or sent to Dave Britten

PO BOX 244 Mt. Vernon 98273

Dues are: \$15.00/ yr for adults age 16 and older

No Charge at this time for children under age 16



Skagit Rock and Gem Club
Debbie Frank, Editor
20379 Aliston Ln.
Burlington WA 98233

You Might Be a Rockhound If

1. You can pronounce "molybdenite" correctly on the first try.
2. The bookshelves in your home hold more rocks than books; and the books that are there are about rocks.
3. You think road cuts are built as tourist attractions.
4. On a trip to Europe, you're the only member of the group who spends their time looking at cathedral walls through a pocket magnifier.
5. You think you KNOW how to pronounce "chalcedony."
6. You describe your vacations by the rocks you brought home.
7. You planted flowers in your rock garden.
8. You purchase things like drywall compound just to have another nice bucket to carry rocks in.
9. The first thing you pack for your vacation is a chisel and a hammer.
10. You find rocks when you empty your pockets at night.