



ADIRONDACK
CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

www.acnargs.org

May/June 2006

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Excitement grows for May 20 Ithaca plant sale

We're all looking forward to the May Plant Sale at the Ithaca High School, May 20, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. We're one of more than 40 vendors at this not-to-be-missed annual sale.

Please pot up your donations for our table in a soil-less potting mix, label them, and drop them off as soon as possible at my house in Ithaca (402 Esty St., corner of Esty and Washington streets, a block east of Meadow St. My driveway is on Washington St.).

You can also bring plants when we setup at the Ithaca High School on Friday, May 19, from 4 to 6 p.m. and on Saturday from 7 to 9 a.m. Please try to get your plants to us early. Once the sale starts our table gets mobbed! We're still looking for volunteers to work a couple of hours setting up on Friday or Saturday, or help with sales on Saturday.

Remember that ACNARGS members will receive a 25-percent discount at the sale. New and rejoining members will also receive the discount. If you have any questions about plant sales, don't hesitate to ask: dwm23@cornell.edu or 607-342-3660. Happy plant hunting!

David Mitchell, plant sale coordinator

Mark your calendar: Member picnic and plant sale August 19

Billie Jean Isbell will host this year's annual picnic and member plant sale August 19 at her home in Brooktondale (10 miles east of Ithaca). She has significant and ever-changing rock gardens and last year added a pond and a new garden area to fill with plants. Details to come in the July/August newsletter.

New England trip canceled

The road trip schedule for May 27 and 28 to the Garden in the Woods owned by the New England Wild Flower Society and other points of interest has been canceled. (I think everyone thinks they'll be too busy gardening.) We still think an overnight trip is a good idea and we may try to schedule others in the future.

Peg Ross, garden trip/tour co-coordinator

Register now for June 17 cutting workshop

We will be having a woody plant green cuttings workshop on June 17 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The workshop will be led by Nina Bassuk, woody plant expert and director of the Urban Horticulture Institute in the Department of Horticulture at Cornell. We'll meet at Kenneth Post Lab greenhouses at Cornell to discuss cutting techniques, and then move on to the shrub collection at Cornell Plantations to take cuttings of some of the plants. Cuttings in hand, it's back to mist benches at the greenhouse to root our cuttings. Participants may also bring cuttings from their own plants.

There will be a fee of \$25 for this workshop but the end result should be a tray-load of rooted woodies to take home. **Pre-registration is required.** Contact me to register or if you have questions: : dwm23@cornell.edu or 607-342-3660

David Mitchell, plant sale coordinator

Syracuse area garden and nursery tour June 24

On June 24, we will have a garden tour in the Syracuse area, including two of our members' gardens, city park (including a rose garden with more than 3,400 roses), and an exciting visit to Seneca Hill Perennials in Oswego, another of our members' businesses. Here's the line-up:

10:00 to 11:30 a.m. – John Gilrein's gardens, 4403 Bussey Rd., Syracuse, N.Y.

The garden is on about an acre that goes from the sun-baked rock garden to bog, pond and marsh. The rock garden is large and planted with a diverse array of alpines and other low plants. John has a bog garden in a naturally wet area planted with primroses, lobelias and other moisture lovers. There is a large iris-lined pond (about 70 by 40 feet) with water lilies, patches of woodland garden with native plants and other shade lovers, mixed borders with trees, shrubs and perennials, and a vegetable garden. The "back

40" is an acre of young trees of many different species in a partially restored woodland. Several parts of the garden are works in progress.

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. – Eat lunch and drive to Lida Black's

12:30 to 2:00 p.m. – Lida Black's gardens at 712 Ackerman Ave., Syracuse, N.Y.

Lida has varied gardens on a slope including a tufa garden, veggie garden, flame garden, pink and blue garden, perennial garden and water garden. The tufa garden will be exciting to view.

2:00 to 2:30 p.m. – Visit Thornden Park

The park is across the street from Ackerman Avenue. The nationally-renowned E.M. Mills Memorial Rose Garden occupies a corner of the park. There are 3,400 roses in the garden, including a bed dedicated to fragrant roses. Thornden Park also has a perennial garden, herb garden, lily pond, and pinetum, which is an evergreen arboretum. You really won't have too much time here because it will take about 45 to 50 minutes to get to Oswego. Our recommendation is to visit the rose garden to complement our program on hardy roses this year and save the rest for another day.

2:30 to 3:00 p.m. – Drive to Oswego

3:00 to 5:00 p.m. – Visit Ellen Hornig's Seneca Hill Perennials, Oswego, N.Y.

Ellen is a member of the Adirondack Chapter of NARGS and on the Board of Directors of NARGS. Seneca Hill Perennials is a small mail-order nursery that specializes in (but not exclusively) hardy cyclamen, species peonies, hardy aroids, and hardy plants of the Drakensberg of southern Africa. In the catalog you also will find a mix of new and old plants for sale and an increasing number of US native plants. Ellen says that a lot of them are passed over by gardeners but should not be. Positive comments about Seneca Hill Perennials include the following: "Take a huge van and huge purse of money. You'll want to buy and buy."

5:00 to ? – Suggestion for dinner: Rudy's Stand, 79 CR-89, Oswego, N.Y., overlooking Lake Ontario

The restaurant serves 5,000 sandwiches using 2,500 pounds of fish each week. In addition to favorites like fish and chip and Texashots, Rudy's menu now also includes grilled chicken salad and broiled scallops. Some members of NARGS who have eaten here recommend it highly. It is an informal place with many picnic benches.

Driving directions:

To John Gilrein's, 4003 Bussey Rd. Syracuse, N.Y.
55 miles (1 hour 10 Minutes from Ithaca)

1. Take I-81 N to Exit 14, RT-80/Tully (If you're coming from the north, make sure you go west on Rt. 80. below.)
2. Turn LEFT onto NY-281 (.1 miles).

3. Turn LEFT onto NY-80 (12.2 miles).
4. You will cross RT 20 (first stop sign).
5. Stay STRAIGHT at the stop sign where RT 80 turns right in South Onondaga.
6. This is now MAKYES RD (1 mile).
7. Turn LEFT onto TANNER RD (.5 miles).
8. Turn RIGHT onto BUSSEY RD (1.5 miles).

John's house is the first house on the left after a farm with multiple red farm buildings, a green house with a detached garage. Parking on the road is OK.

From John Gilrein's to Lida Black's, 712 Ackerman Ave., Syracuse, N.Y.
9 miles (20 minutes from John Gilrein's)

1. Go North on BUSSEY RD to the end (2 miles).
2. Turn RIGHT onto NY 175/Seneca Tpk.
3. Take the SOFT LEFT at the 4th traffic light on NY 175 (3 miles) onto SOUTH AVE/NY 175.
4. Turn RIGHT at the traffic light AFTER Wilson Farms onto BRIGHTON AVE.
5. Turn LEFT at traffic light onto SALINA ST/US 11.
6. Turn RIGHT at traffic light onto COLVIN ST.
7. Turn LEFT at traffic light onto COMSTOCK AVE.
8. Turn RIGHT at traffic light onto Euclid Ave.
9. ACKERMAN AVE will be the 4th LEFT.

Lida's house is on a steep hill with many steps up to the house. You can identify it by the steep planted bank in front of the house. You can park on the street, but Syracuse has an odd/even system for street parking, so pay attention to the signs. You may need to park on Euclid or in another block of Ackerman Ave.

Thornden Park is across from Ackerman Ave. The rose garden is directly across Ostrom Ave. from University place (West side of the park.)

From Lida Black's to Seneca Hill Perennials, 3712 County Route 57, Oswego, N.Y.
38 miles (45 minutes from Lida Black's)

1. Go north on ACKERMAN AVE. toward CLARENDON ST. (.1mile).
2. Turn LEFT onto CLARENDON ST. (.1 mile).
3. Turn RIGHT onto OSTROM AVE. (.4 miles).
4. Turn LEFT onto HARRISON ST. (.6 miles).
5. Merge onto I-81 N. (8.5 miles).
6. Merge onto NY-481 N via Exit 29N toward OSWEGO (27.6 miles).
7. Turn LEFT on CR-45 (.4 miles); at this turn there will be signs for the Seneca Hill health community.
8. Turn RIGHT onto CR-57 (.2 miles).
9. Nursery is on the right.

From Seneca Hill Perennials to Rudy's Stand, 79 County Route 89, Oswego, N.Y.

1. Start out going NORTH on CR-57 toward DUTCH RIDGE RD. (1.9 miles)
2. Turn LEFT onto NY-481 / E RIVER RD.

3. Continue to follow NY-481. 2.2 miles
4. Turn LEFT onto NY-104 / E BRIDGE ST.
5. Continue to follow NY-104 W. (2.6 miles)
6. Turn RIGHT onto FRED HAYNES BLVD. (0.7 miles)
7. Turn LEFT onto CR-89. (0.1 miles)
8. End at Rudy's Stand

Peg Ross and Alice Davis, garden trip/tour coordinators

Mark your calendar: 2006 Programs at a glance

- May 20: Plant Sale, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Ithaca High School.
- ~~May 27-28: Overnight Massachusetts garden tour. **Canceled**~~
- June 17: Cutting workshop, Ithaca, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$25 per participant; pre-registration required
- June 24, 2006: Garden tour, Syracuse area, Seneca Hill Perennials.
- August 19. Member picnic and plant sale, Billie Jean Isbell's, Brooktondale, N.Y.
- Sept. 16 - Maria Galetti of Alpines Mont Echo, expert grower of extraordinary alpine and rock garden plants from Quebec.
- Oct. 21 - Program TBA.
- Nov. 11 - Annual Meeting and dish-to-pass.

Look for more details on these events in future issues of *The Green Dragon* and on our website: www.acnargs.org

Letter from the Chair

I just came indoors wet and muddy but exhilarated. You all know the scenario. I looked out on a drab, overcast day that promised rain and thought, "It doesn't look good but I've got so much to do in the garden. I'll just go out and check things out."

Before I even realized what I was doing, I was pulling a weed, then another and another. And there's that plant that needs moving, and here's some others that I should dig and divide for the plant sale, making a mental list (that kept growing) of tasks to do. Twice it started to rain but before I could pack it in, it stopped. When it started to drizzle a third time, I wasn't even phased. Hours later I could look back on my accomplishments. Those tangible results, in a world where often what one does is not so obvious, are one thing I like about gardening. And on this particular day it raised my spirits. I might even say it "saved the day."

With the full growing season ahead I have much to look forward to and that list of garden tasks is never-ending. The garden is always calling. I have to remind myself to stop once in a while to simply enjoy. While our Chapter won't hold another "traditional" meeting until September, we are offering a whirlwind of activities that have everything to do with enjoyment. So I hope, like me, you will, on occasion, stop thinking about all the things to do in your own garden and join us. I'm keeping my own comments short this month because I know the newsletter is packed with details about these activities.

First up is the Garden Fair and Plant Sale sponsored by Cooperative Extension on May 20. Please plan to donate plants, help at our sales table, and take advantage of the 25% member discount to purchase plants and support the Chapter. This sale is key to supporting our Chapter activities, most notably the costs associated with our guest speakers. I might add as I look around my garden that my most cherished plants are those that I acquired through all of you at the Adirondack Chapter. Come look for treasures!

Happy gardening.

Carol Eichler, chair

Meeting follow-up: Robin Bell tours Patagonia

At our April 22 meeting, Robin Bell spoke on the flora he encountered during an early-spring (late November/early December in the southern hemisphere) excursion to the sub-arctic steppes of the Patagonia region of Argentina. The general appearance of the sub-arctic steppe is fairly boring – not much elevation change and a somewhat straggly, dry grass. The guides for Robin's group helped the participants find many unusual and beautiful plants in bloom. Robin had lots of excellent slides showing these plants as well as some spectacular snow covered mountains.

My absolute favorite flowering plant shown was *Calceolaria uniflora*. The Latin translation means little slipper. Indeed the flower looks like a small orange/bronze slipper with a striking white horizontal stripe running through the middle. Slides of single flowers as well as groups of these flowers were stunning. Now everyone wants one.

Other flowers of interest to me were the orchid *Gauilea litteralis*, *Petunia patagonica*, and a really unusual *Viola sacculus* with leaves resembling sempervivum.

Robin did an excellent job of giving the group a feeling of what it is like to go on a plant expedition to a somewhat remote, but botanically interesting locale. We got a taste of what their lodging and even some of their meals were like. Time well spent on a wet, dreary afternoon.

Tom Myers

Seedling sale a success

Thanks to all who donated plants and helped with the set-up for our April 22 seedling sale. If you missed it, some of the leftover seedlings will re-appear at the May 20 sale at the Ithaca High School. We took in a little under \$300, shy of what we had budgeted but hopefully we'll make up for that at our next sale.

Spring garden tour report: It was worth it!

Fifteen intrepid rock garden enthusiasts gathered at Rick Lowenstein's home near Walton and began a garden tour that covered the four points of the compass. From Rick's we went to Dana Kaiser's home and nursery near the Pennsylvania border, and from there to George Erdman's hillside garden west of Endicott. The logistics were a challenge due to the distance traveled and the relative isolation of each property. But despite some directional glitches and a marked reluctance to leave each place we completed the tour.

It was worth it! The early date and the capricious weather precluded masses of floral display. However, the lust for color was appeased by the ephemerals which are gone in a blink and other frost-hardy gems that will be pushed aside by their more brazen bed mates later in the season. We also enjoyed the lovely shapes and shades of new growth that define spring.

Most gardeners worth their salt are familiar with the rewards of flower gardening, that is to say: flowers. We had, this day, an opportunity to see the structural framework of three distinctively different landscape designs, built and planted by experts, before the lush growth of summer maturity obscured them. In addition, the hosts conducted seminars worthy of a lecture hall on subjects as varied as design, construction, plant identification and culture, soil structure, varmint and erosion control and much, much more. The probing questions and note taking was testimony to the level of interest of the guests and the patience and willingness to share their expertise by the hosts is deeply appreciated.

When mention of ACNARGS is made to non-members the most common reaction is, "but I don't have, (or like) a rock garden." While the theme of our organization is rock gardens, most members have an eclectic mix of styles in their landscape and the gardens we visited on this first tour of the season was no exception.

Alice Davis, garden trip/tour co-coordinator

Other events

Garden Conservancy Open Garden Days:

- June 4 – 4 gardens in the Syracuse area
- June 10 – 4 gardens in Tompkins County
- July 8 – 3 gardens in Tompkins County

Many more open days throughout New York and the Northeast through November.
More info: <http://www.gardenconservancy.org/opendays>

Cornell Plantations is hosting many programs including wildflower walks, botanical garden tours and classes. More info: <http://www.plantations.cornell.edu>

People

Questions? Want to find out how you can help the Chapter? Don't hesitate to contact one of the volunteers who help make everything happen:

- **Chair:** Carol Eichler, cme24@cornell.edu, 607-387-5823
- **Treasurer:** Carolyn Yaeger, cao2@cornell.edu, 607-844-9462
- **Speaker Coordinator:** Anne Klingensmith, aekling@lightlink.com, 607-256-9308
- **Garden Trip/Tours:** Peg Ross and Alice Davis, pogr@aol.com, 607-656-4237 (Peg), 607-656-9931 (Alice)
- **Member participation:** George Erdman, gerdman@binghamton.edu, 607-748-3984
- **Plant of the Month:** Billie Jean Isbell, bj1@cornell.edu, 607-539-6484
- **Plant sales:** David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu, 607-342-3660
- **Membership:** John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu, 315-492-0844
- **Newsletter editor/Webmaster:** Craig Cramer, cdcramer@twcny.rr.com, 607-539-7233
- **Rep. to National, and Ex-officio:** Robin Bell, rgb2@cornell.edu, 607-272-2074

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