



ADIRONDACK  
CHAPTER

*North American Rock Garden Society*

# Green Dragon Tales

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[www.acnargs.org](http://www.acnargs.org)

September 2007

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## September 15 program: Ellen Hornig on 'My Improbable Garden'

Ellen Hornig, proprietor of Seneca Hill Perennials, will kick off our fall program season on Saturday, September 15, speaking on "My Improbable Garden." Ellen will discuss the wide range of plants, from around the world and from an array of very different natural habitats, that grow in her Zone 5 garden in Oswego, N.Y. She will help provide a framework for thinking about why they all manage to coexist in the same space. For more information about Ellen and her nursery, visit: [www.senecahillperennials.com](http://www.senecahillperennials.com)

The program will begin at 1 p.m. in the Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building on the Cornell Campus. Bring a bag lunch and socialize starting at noon. **Board meeting at 10 a.m.**

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## Ellis Hollow Fair plant sale September 8

The Ellis Hollow Fair will feature a plant sale, on Saturday, September 8th, from noon to 4:00 PM, at the Ellis Hollow Community Center, at 111 Genung Road, Ithaca. The selection of locally grown perennials includes Astilbe, Digitalis lutea, D. purpurea, Aстранtia major, Helleborus orientalis, Asarum europaeum, Ligularia przewalskii, Polygonatum, Lavender, Brunnera 'Jack Frost' Acanthus mollis, Cimicifuga racemosa, Erigeron, and a variety of Epimedium, Euphorbia, Acorus, Campanula, Hosta, Geranium, ferns, irises and more. Surprise offerings always show up on the day of the fair. More info: Donna Gibson ([dmg6@cornell.edu](mailto:dmg6@cornell.edu)) or Mary Royer ([mroyer@twcny.rr.com](mailto:mroyer@twcny.rr.com)).

## Mark your calendar: Upcoming programs

**September 15 – Ellen Hornig**, proprietor of Seneca Hill Perennials: "My Improbable Garden." 404 Plant Science. Brown bag lunch at noon. Program begins at 1 p.m.

**September 29 – Hypertufa workshop** with Art Friedel, Watson Greenhouse, Lafayette, N.Y. ([www.watsongreenhouse.com](http://www.watsongreenhouse.com)). Cost will be \$35 and limited to 10 registrants. See article below.

**October 21 – Janis Ruksans**, owner of Ruksans Bulbs Nursery in Latvia, a world renowned bulb grower and collector and author of five books on bulbs will give two presentations. (See details below.) **Note this meeting will be on a Sunday** due to Ruksans' tight speaking schedule. 404 Plant Science. Brown bag lunch at noon. First program begins at 1 p.m., then break followed by second presentation around 3 p.m.

**November 10 – Annual meeting and dish-to-pass.** Location to be announced.

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## Hypertufa grow stone workshop September 29

Make a Hypertufa Grow Stone Workshop  
Taught by Art Friedl, Watson Greenhouse  
2980 Sentinel Heights Road, LaFayette, New York  
Saturday, September 29, 10 to 11:30 a.m.  
Cost: \$35 to make a medium-sized planter

Participants will create the beginnings of a unique free-form hypertufa planter, "stone" by "stone." Because of the required curing time (ideally 24 hours), Art will get us started and demonstrate the procedure for shaping and carving planting pockets, which each of us will then do on our own time. You must bring a pair of rubber gloves and a sturdy, portable working surface for transporting your planter back home. There's a maximum of 10 registrants. Art says if the weather is good, he'll hold the class outside on his working tables.

Art wears many hats at Watson Greenhouse - hypertufa expert, class organizer, sales and marketing coordinator, and more. Additionally, he frequently connects with activities at The Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Men's Garden Club of Syracuse and other garden-related organizations, and Central New York television. If you have ever been to Watson's Greenhouse, you will surely have noticed and admired his handiwork with hypertufa, using the traditional materials beyond the basic trough.

Look for Art in the Men's Garden Club Booth during the entire NY State Fair. This booth is located near the ever popular Doug's Fish Fry in the Horticulture Building. If you're going to the Fair, he invites you to say "hi." We are fortunate to have Art offer us our own special class.

Visit the website: [www.watsongreenhouse.com](http://www.watsongreenhouse.com) for directions.

To reserve a spot, contact Carol Eichler: [cme24@cornell.edu](mailto:cme24@cornell.edu), 607-387-5823.

**Carol Eichler, chair**

## **Sneak preview: Bulb expert Janis Ruksans, two presentations October 21**

The Adirondack Chapter is in for a treat **Sunday, October 21**, when we will be visited by Janis Ruksans from Latvia. Janis' claim to fame is that he has developed a mailorder bulb nursery based on his extensive collecting experience in Eurasia.

Ruksans' selection truly differs from what you see in all those catalogues you get every spring and fall. This is not just another listing of hard-to-distinguish narcissi or tulips but truly a connoisseurs' lucky dip of known, named, best varieties of such things as Colchicums, or Corydalis, to name just two genera, as well an extensive listing of species and rarities that you never see anywhere else.

The same can be said for just about any other genus of bulbous plants from the broader reaches of the northern hemisphere. All the plants he sells are nursery grown. And in addition to the rarities, he has developed many new selections and cultivars to stimulate the most jaded of bulb lovers among us. Anyone who has even just one grape hyacinth in their garden should get something out of his talks. Our program coordinator Robin Bell says, "I already have a hole in my back pocket I haven't even heard him yet. Be warned."

His book on bulbs will be available for sale at our meeting. To quote Robin, "It's a gem."

**Please note that this meeting is on a Sunday.** Brown bag as usual at noon, followed by two presentations: "Bulbs of USSR" beginning at 1 p.m., then a short break followed by "Versatile Fritillarias" at about 3 p.m.

We are looking for volunteers to bring snacks. (Drinks will be provided.) Any takers should contact Carol Eichler at [carol\\_eichler@excite.com](mailto:carol_eichler@excite.com) or 387-5823. We are also looking for someone to meet Ruksans when he arrives in Syracuse the evening of Saturday, Oct 20., and to host him that night. He will be in Ithaca until Wednesday when he'll need to be transported to the Amtrak Station in Syracuse. We need hosts for the rest of his stay as well.

**Here's more on Ruksans:** Janis Ruksans is the owner of Ruksans Bulbs Nursery in Latvia, a world renowned bulb grower and collector, and author of five books on bulbs. Since launching his first international mail-order catalog in 1991, Ruksans has rapidly gained a reputation as one of the world's foremost experts on rare and unusual bulbs: Juno irises striped like exotic birds; gem-like corydalis; dusky, brooding fritillaries. For decades, Ruksans has been scouring remote and dangerous regions of Europe and Asia to bring back the botanical treasures that he offers through his nursery, often contending with corrupt government agents, armed rebels, drunken drivers, and even (before the fall of the Soviet Union) the KGB. He has been growing bulbs since age twelve.

His book *Buried Treasures, Finding and Growing the World's Choicest Bulbs* will be offered for sale at cost. Once you read the accounts of his extensive travels, you'll never look at a flowering bulb in the same way. A crocus will take you to the shores of Lake Abant in northwest Turkey, a tulip to the mountains of Chimgan in Uzbekistan. The flowers meld with the wild and rugged landscapes that nurture them. Although adventure abounds, there's a great deal more for the gardener seeking trustworthy information. As well as being a renowned collector, Ruksans is a grower and propagator of bulbs second to none, and he generously shares his professional knowledge about the care and cultivation of every major and minor genus of bulb-forming plant. If you've tried and failed with a choice specimen, Ruksans will arm you with the knowledge to try again and succeed.

Ruksans has also worked at the Latvian National Botanical Garden and was the editor-in-chief of a horticultural magazine for nearly twenty years. He is currently on a NARGS-sponsored speaker's tour. A display copy of his nursery catalog will be available. The Chapter hopes to organize a group bulb order next year if there is sufficient interest

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### **Picnic and plant sale thanks**

Many thanks to Bill Plummer for hosting the members plant sale and potluck. We had about eighteen people signed in. There were many great plants for sale in another great garden. We sold \$740 in plants before we were allowed to eat lunch. I wish everyone luck with the plants they purchased.

***David Mitchell, plant sale coordinator***

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### **Letter from the Chair**

The day after our member sale found me very excited about all the wonderful plants I had just bought – the best plants I never knew I wanted! Now my mind is busy rethinking my gardens to find the best locations for everything from vines to woodlanders. Of course, I have visions of their intended effects in next year's garden. I can hardly wait.

In spite of a smaller-than-average turnout, we had an absolutely fantastic selection and number of plants. I want to thank Bill Plummer for generously hosting and providing his shaded front yard as the setting for the sale. Before proceeding to lunch and Bill's guided tour, we kept everyone hungry until most of the donated plants had found new homes

Our fall program speakers promise to keep you enthusiastic and inspired even as our gardening season starts to wind down. This issue contains more information about them, as well as our hypertufa workshop coming up on September 29th.

Every summer has its gardening challenges, and the heat and lack of dependable rainfall have been among them this year. A passing deer just ate the beautiful blooms off my canna lily. So it goes. Hope you have enjoyed the summer and are looking to the fall and our programs coming up.

See you!

***Carol Eichler, chair***



## Welcome new members!

Welcome our latest member Margaret Bald and our first renewing member for 2008 Lee Adler! Also see the chapter directory supplement sent along with this newsletter.

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## Treasurer position available

The Adirondack Chapter of NARGS will need a replacement Treasurer in 2008. The perks are great:

- You get to take in lots of other people's money and then spend it;
- You get to hear all the news first hand and help shape the future direction of the Chapter;
- You get to work with the current treasurer to learn the job.

The only requirement is basic knowledge of computers and Excel spreadsheet software. No bookkeeping experience is necessary and it takes only a few hours a month of your time. Plus, you'll learn a marketable (perhaps even new) skill!

If you are interested, please call me, at (607-844-9462).

***Carolyn Yaeger, treasurer***

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## Need Sand?

Jerry Yaeger has a truck load of sharp sand. If any members would like a bucket or a pickup truck load please contact him at [jay7@cornell.edu](mailto:jay7@cornell.edu) or call 844-9462 evenings/weekends.

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## 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. (This is the slate to be voted on at our Feb. meeting):

- **Chair/Membership:** Carol Eichler, [carol\\_eichler@excite.com](mailto:carol_eichler@excite.com), 607-387-5823
  - **Vice Chair/Program:** Robin Bell, [rgb2@cornell.edu](mailto:rgb2@cornell.edu), 607-272-2074
  - **Treasurer/Secretary:** Carolyn Yaeger, [cao2@cornell.edu](mailto:cao2@cornell.edu), 607-844-9462
  - **Garden trips/tours:** Billie Jean Isbell, [bj1@cornell.edu](mailto:bj1@cornell.edu), 607-539-6484
  - **Plant sales:** David Mitchell, [dwm23@cornell.edu](mailto:dwm23@cornell.edu), 607-342-3660
  - **Plant of the Month:** John Gilrein, [basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu](mailto:basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu), 315-492-0844
  - **Newsletter editor/Webmaster:** Craig Cramer, [cdcramer@twcny.rr.com](mailto:cdcramer@twcny.rr.com), 607-539-7233
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## Green Dragon Tales

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