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February 2010

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February 20 program: 'Members Share' meeting

We'll kick off the program year with our annual 'Members Share' meeting. Barb Hamlin will be bringing a PowerPoint presentation she's created on **One Valley: 5 Habitats**. Barb attended her first NARGS National Conference in Ottawa in 2008 and will share photos she took during the field trips to natural areas offering great biodiversity.

There will also be time allotted for member share contributions. Please contact Billie Jean Isbell if you'd like to be added to the program, and contact Craig Cramer concerning any audio-visual needs you may have. (See People section at the end of the newsletter for contact information.)

We'll meet in 404 Plant Science Building (Whetzel Room) on the Cornell University campus. Brown bag lunch at noon. Program begins at 1:00 p.m.

2010 program plans

Our **tentative** program line up for 2010. Details in future newsletters or : acnargs.blogspot.com

- February 20: **Members Share meeting**. See details above.
- March 27: **Gardening without Snowcover** Anne Spiegel of the Berkshire Chapter of NARGS. (Note this is **not our usual meeting date**.)
- April 17: **Dwarf Conifer Gardens**, Jerry Kral will talk about conifers he grows in his Rochester gardens and special treasures from his trip to the Czech Republic.
- May 15: **Plant Sale**, Ithaca High School.
- July 17: **Member garden tours**.
- August 21: **Members only plant sale**.
- September 18, October 16 and November 20 programs to be announced.

Seed Exchange deadline extended to Feb. 15

From Joyce Fingerut, director, NARGS Seed Exchange

The deadline for receiving Seed Exchange orders has been extended to Monday, February 15, giving NARGS members an extra weekend to pore over the Seed List and send in their requests.

View the 2009-2010 Seed List and ordering instructions at: www.nargs.org/ There are still many desirable seeds available. Those chapter members who do not yet belong to NARGS (national) may join now and be eligible to order seeds.

Time to renew you membership

It's time to 're-up' for 2010, if you haven't already. The easiest way is to fill in the form that's available online here: www.acnargs.org/join.pdf. You can do it right on your computer and email the form. Forms will also be available at meetings.

Other events

- February 18: "The Grass Family," with Jerrold Davis, Cornell Dept. of Plant Biology, presented by the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society 7 p.m., Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca.
 - March 5-6: **Ithaca's 2nd Annual Designing with Native Plants Symposium** - More info: www.cayugawaterfronttrail.com/
 - March 19-21, **Eastern Winter Study Weekend**, Devens, Massachusetts. More info: www.nargs.org Want to share transportation? Contact: John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu, 315-492-0844.
 - March 20: "A Luxuriance of Bulbs," presentation by **British bulb expert Anna Pavord**, author of *The Tulip and Bulb*, Statler Hall, Cornell University, 11 a.m.
 - July 11-14: **NARGS Annual Meeting**, Salida, Colo. More info: www.rmcnargs.org Carol Eichler and Donna Kraft have registered and are getting psyched to go on some serious/fun alpine hikes. Are others from the Chapter going too? If so, maybe we could share a car rental from Denver to Salida. Contact Carol at ceichler@twcny.rr.com.
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Art to drive away your winter blues:

Here are two Ithaca art exhibitions worth checking out:

Living Light: A Celebration of the Finger Lakes Flora - Tompkins County Public Library through March 26. Juried art show organized by the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society features 50 artists celebrating the beauty and diversity of our region's wild plants and fungi in a wide array of media and styles.

Chronicling Brief Lives: Botanical Portraits in Water Color – Mann Library, Cornell University through February 24. Showcases the award-winning botanical illustrations of milly archarya, a long-time Ithaca resident.

Seed starting info

From Susanne Lipari:

The Ontario Rock Garden and Hardy Plant Society has a very informative germination guide to over 6,000 species. The ones I had not found anywhere else were represented: www.onrockgarden.com/

Volunteers needed for round two seed exchange

From BZ Marranta mmm10@cornell.edu

Once again, our chapter will be filling orders for the second round of the NARGS seed exchange in March. (We still don't know the exact date that seeds will arrive.) This year, we'll be working in the Ken Post Lab on Friday afternoons through Tuesday.

It's a good time. Last year folks brought goodies to munch while we worked. And it's a chance to get together and talk about plants and gardens. As a bonus, volunteers get 'donor status' in next year's exchange.

So, if you would be willing to come select seeds and stuff envelopes, even for an hour, **please let me know**. And tell me your preferred work times: weekends (morning, afternoon, evenings?) or weekdays (around lunch, late afternoon, evenings, whatever?).

From the chair

I'd like to start the New Year by thanking the kind member who gave me this plant. It's also known as the Friendship plant, an appropriate name. I came back to Ithaca from two months in Santa Fe, New Mexico and *Billbergia nutans* was in glorious bloom in my green house even though my plants had been neglected. I can't recall who gave this gem (my aging memory is failing me) but I thank you so much. I really brightened my return.

Billbergia nutans or Queen's-Tears, a native of Brazil, is one of the most common Bromeliads grown.

We have an exciting program for the year to come. Barb Hamlin will share her pictures and experiences from the national NARGS meeting in Ottawa in 2008. Does anyone else want to share trips,



gardening tips, or other musings? Please let me know and contact Craig Cramer about AV requirements. (See People listings at end of newsletter for contact information.)

Cooperation Corner:

I would like to initiate a Cooperation Corner in our newsletter that can be used by members to ask questions like: What's the name of this plant? Or my current question: Any ideas on how to turn Styrofoam boxes into troughs? I remember that George Erdman used Styrofoam fish boxes as troughs. If I remember correctly, they were quite thick. The ones I have are 2 inches thick and vary in size. I'm wondering if I just poke drainage holes in them and paint them. I seem to remember that a sealant was also applied. Any ideas?

A volunteer is needed to provide housing for one night for Ann Spiegel, our speaker for March 27th. The chapter will treat the volunteer to dinner with Ann and other members. Please note that the March meeting is the last Saturday in March, not the usual third Saturday. Please let me know if you can help out.

I have received comments that we should continue visiting the wonderful gardens of our own members. Please let me know if you are willing to have the chapter visit your garden.

Also, if anyone is interested in serving on the board, you might come early and sit in on the board meeting, Feb. 20 at 11 a.m. before the regular meeting to observe how painless it is to serve the chapter.

Billie Jean Isbell, chair

Your input needed for spring trip plans

From Susanne Lipari:

BZ Marranca and I took on planning a spring/summer trip. We had a couple of thoughts regarding this trip:

- More visiting than driving.
- An itinerary that allows members with jobs to participate as much as they like.
- Inspiring gardens and fun plant shopping.

Below is a suggested tour. Please give us feed-back to let us know if we should get down to more detailed planning, or if we should look at an altogether different itinerary. If you tell us to abandon this one, please suggest alternatives. (sel3@cornell.edu or mmm10@cornell.edu)

The center point is a visit to the rock garden at the **New York Botanical Garden** with hopefully a tour given by Jody Payne, the curator who gave a presentation to the chapter in October 2008. Surrounding this are several other locations and combinations of locations that would allow different people to take part in all or just some of the visits.

Day 1: Stonecrop - If people feel strongly about attending the NARGS sale, the trip would have to start on Saturday, April 24. However, on our last visit there, some of us thought that the end of April was too early for a visit there and the garden would be more beautiful a couple of weeks later. Since Stonecrop (www.stonecrop.org) is open to the public on the 1st and 3rd. Saturday of the month, that would mean May 1 or June 5, since the third weekend in May is the high school plant sale and we can't plan a trip then. In any case, the visit to Stonecrop could be followed by a visit to **Storm King** (www.stormking.org) and a night spent at a motel somewhere north of New York City.

Day 2: New York Botanical Garden (www.nybg.org) - Guided tour. After that, people interested could either spend more time there or visit **Wave Hill** (www.wavehill.org), which is fairly close, also in the North Bronx. Return to Ithaca afterward, or drive to Long Island to spend the night in an Inn near the next day's destination:

Day 3: Planting Fields Arboretum (www.plantingfields.org) and after that head back to Ithaca.

What we like about this trip that people could either go along for the whole trip, or join for any one of the events that fit into their schedule. If this trip appeals to the membership, we will find some nurseries on Long Island to visit.

Progress Report – Norman Singer Grant

From Bill Plummer:

In 2008, Spencer Crest Nature Center in Corning, New York applied for and received a grant of \$2,000 from the Norman Singer Endowment Grant to construct a rock garden at the nature center that would feature plants native to Colorado, but not exclusively so. In addition the Adirondack Chapter gave a grant of \$200.



The construction of the rock garden itself has been completed and a few plants have been planted. The rock garden has been built against the south side of the Rockwell Pavilion using flagstones as the backing. Rotarians helped to collect local stone and also helped with the construction itself. A mix of sand, gravel and soil was used in the lower part with builder's sand in the upper portion. A number of rocks have been imbedded in the sand to provide planting pockets. Four dwarf conifers have been purchased with the *Abies concolor* shown above. The construction was not completed in time for planting the remaining conifers and they will be planted in early spring. They are: *Pinus aristata*, *Picea pungens* 'Victor' and *Pseudotsuga menziensis* 'Valdstejn'. In addition it is planned to purchase another dwarf *Picea pungens* glauca to plant on the west side of the rock garden matching the

Abies concolor on the east side. A few perennial plants have been purchased locally and planted as well as an *Iberis sempervirens* and a dwarf Geranium species from my garden. These are shown in the above photo. The remainder of the planting will be done in early spring using an assortment of rock garden plants many of which will be native to Colorado.

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|-------------------|---------------|----------|
| Expenses to date: | Flagstone | \$284.10 |
| | Sand & Gravel | \$227.13 |
| | Plants | \$164.80 |
| | Total | \$676.53 |

Bob Rockwell died last March at the age of 97. He has left some monies in his will to the nature center. I have begun to plant an eastern native plant garden to the east of the pavilion with wildflowers and ferns from my garden and we have purchased and planted a variety of trees and shrubs. This will be added to in the spring. We are considering creating a bog garden on the west side of the pavilion. These three gardens would nicely complement each other.

News from 'national'

If you haven't done so already, check out the new NARGS website: www.nargs.org. It's filled with new features, and makes it easier for NARGS leaders to keep everyone up-to-date on what's going on nationally. If you want the latest, click on the 'News' tab when you visit. Some highlights from recent email blasts:

- Malcolm McGregor of East Yorkshire, England is the new editor of *NARGS Rock Garden Quarterly*. Malcolm has been a NARGS member since 1996, is the former editor of the Scottish Rock Garden Club's *The Rock Garden*, and the author of recently published book, *Saxifrages*, from Timber Press.
- Pat Bender, past president of NARGS, died from heart problems in January.
- Deadline for the annual NARGS seed exchange is Feb. 10.
- Through a generous donation by Frank Cabot and his publishing enterprise Hortus Press, NARGS received 207 copies of *The Caucasus and Its Flowers* by Vojtech Holubec and Pavel Krivka. 100 copies of it are now available through the NARGS Book Service for a limited time for just \$30 copy in the U.S., including shipping.

Dwarf *Daphnes*

by Shirley Friberg, Minnesota Chapter, NARGS. Reprinted with permission from the October 2009 issue of *Minnesota Rock Plant notes*.

Dwarf *Daphnes* have become my latest obsession. Dwarf *Daphnes* are small shrubs from 4" – 18" with needle-like or linear dark green foliage. On most plants flowers grow in clusters, primarily pink but also white or a combination.

Almost all have very fragrant flowers and many are evergreen. They can grow as a small mound, spreading or branching, with clusters of rosette leaves at the tips of the branches. Most can take direct sunlight, some require semi-shade.

Cut back the bushes to obtain greater blooms and reblooming. This also encourages denser bushes and controls their height. Fertilize twice in the spring/summer with slow-release granular balanced fertilizer. Potassium (flowering) fertilizer increases blooms.

Dwarf *Daphnes* grow best in well-drained soil, made up of sand, peat and soil or compost. The composition of mix depends on whether a plant comes from an alpine area, continental Europe or the Mediterranean. They will not survive in heavy soil and propagate well from cuttings and seed.

In researching *Daphnes* I found over 50 small species and many hybrids. Some cannot survive in Zone 4, but as many of you know, we grow many Zone 5 plants and even try some Zone 6 plants. Presently, I have 6 *Daphnes*:

1. *Daphne caucasica* v. Russia (from Mt. Tahoma Nursery-2006) H 4-6" Robust small mound of dark green foliage, profuse, fragrant pink flowers, reblooms. Z-?
2. *D. arbuscula* (Gardens of Rice Creek-2008) H-6" Deep green round-shaped leaves, rosy-pink flowers borne on terminal heads, robust, likes lime soil, hardy, likes morning sun or part shade. Native to Transylvania. Z 5-8
3. *D. 'Juliae'* (Mt. Tahoma Nursery-2007) H-10" Native to Russian Caucasus. Compact mound of blue-green foliage. Deep pink fragrant blooms.
4. *D. cneorum pygmaea alba* (Wrightman Nursery-2008) H-6" green foliage grows on tufts at the tip of the branches, fragrant rosy-lilac flowers, increases by layers, likes direct sunlight, very hardy, evergreen. Native to European mountains. Z?
5. *D. cneorum pygmaea alba* (Wrightman Nursery-2009) H-6" same as above.
6. *D. x medfordensis* 'Lawrence Crocker' (*D. arbuscula* x *D. collina*) cross (2009) H-12" Dense mound, glossy dark leaves, perpetual bloomer, evergreen Z 6-9

Scouting dwarf *Daphnes* one cannot always find their hardiness zone. The ones I selected are indicated to be "hardy" or come from mountainous areas or colder climates. These are ones that I would try. I am hoping some hybrids crossed with hardy varieties will withstand colder weather. I have included plants up to 15". Trim them.

1. *Daphne alpina* H-15" Grey-green foliage, white flowers. Native to the Balkans.
2. *D. arbuscula f. radicans* H-4" Vigorous, narrow foliage, fragrant rose-purple flowers.
3. *D. blagayana* H 3-8" Dark green rosette-like foliage that grows in tufts at the tips of the branches, creamy white flowers, likes partial shade and sandy soil. Native to the Balkans. (? Hardiness)
4. *D. circassica* H-12" Very compact shrub, clusters of gigantic rose-pink flowers, rare in cultivation. Native to Transcaucasica.
5. *D. creonum* v. Verlotti x *D. arbuscula* H-6" Rare, dark green foliage, evergreen, likes sun and very sandy soil.
6. *D. domini* H-12" (formerly *D. kosaninii*) Narrow foliage, pink and white flowers with orange berries, likes sun and scree conditions. Native to Bulgaria.
7. *D. x Hendersonii* 'Aurora' (*D. cneorum pygmaea* 'alba' x *D. petraea* 'grandiflora') Cross by Mt. Tahoma. H-12" Very large white flowers with ruffled petals tinged pink.
8. *D. x Hendersonii* 'Ernst Hauser' H-12" Dark green foliage tinged purple in winter, fragrant pale pink flowers.
9. *D. x Hendersonii* 'Fritz Kummert' (*D. petraea* x *D. cneorum pygmaea*) H-12" Shiny green foliage, fragrant pink blooms.
10. *D. x Hendersonii* 'Marion White' H-10" Compact shrub, pure white flowers, compact enough for a trough. Cross of Robin White.

11. *D. jasminea* H 4-5" Erect and rounded shrub, evergreen, pink-white flowers, needs morning sun, hardy (?)
12. *D. 'Kelsey Ann'* (*D. velonovskyi* x *D. petraea* 'grandiflora' – cross of Mt. Tahoma named after granddaughter) H-6" Very compact, ovate leaves, fragrant pink and white flowers. Perfect trough plant.
13. *D. 'Maisy LaRae'* (*D. circassica* x *D. arbuscula*) H-6" Compact small domes of narrow, dark green foliage, fragrant rose-purple flowers.
14. *D. petraea* (syn. *D. rupestris*) H-2" Erect shoots, dense, compact tufts at end of stems, soft shaded pink flowers, from limestone mountains, grows in peaty, well-drained loam soil, slow growing.
15. *D. x rollsdorfii* 'Arnold Cihlarz' (*D. collina* x *D. petraea*) H-9" Tight growing, dark green foliage, fragrant rose-purple flowers.
16. *D. 'Stasek'* (*D. cneorum* hybrid) H-12" Glossy green leaves with golden edge, fragrant large deep pink flowers, reblooms. Native to Romania.
17. *D. x Susanne* 'Tichborne' (*D. arbuscula* x *D. collina*) H-12" Domes shaped habit, fragrant pink-purple blooms, very compact.
18. *D. striata* (fairy garland flower) Hardy, trailing, spreading form, 1-3 feet across, grow over a rock, fragrant rosy purple flowers. From the Alps.
19. *D. velenovskyi* H-4" Tiny species similar to *D. cneorum*, slow growing, bluish foliage, fragrant large pink flowers. Native to Vichren Mts. Bulgaria.
20. *D. x whiteorum* 'Beauworth' (*D. petraea* 'grandiflora' x *D. jasminea*) H-12" Small, dark green mounded foliage, fragrant rich pink blooms, trough.
21. *D. x whiteorum* 'Kilmeston' (*D. petraea* 'grandiflora' x *D. jasminea*) H-12" Small, grows well in a sunny wall or crevice, fragrant pink flowers.

Nurseries that sell Daphnes:

1. Mt. Tahoma, www.backyardgardener.com/mttahoma, (largest selection, no pictures)
2. Betty Ann Addison, www.gardensofricecreek.com
3. Wrightman Alpines, www.wrightmanalpines.com
4. Evermay Nursery, www.evermaynursery.com
5. Laporte Avenue Nursery www.laporteavenuenursery.com (pictures)
6. Tiny Treasures Nursery, www.tinytreasuresnursery.com
7. Arrowhead Alpines, www.arrowheadalpines.com

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