



ADIRONDACK
CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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March 2012

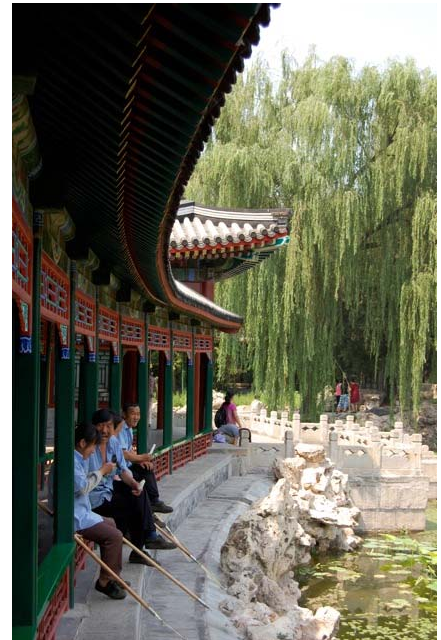
In this issue:

- March 17 program, 1 pm, 404 Whetzel Room, Cornell Plant Science Bldg.
- From the Chair: A day trip to Stone Crop
- Membership Renewal Reminder
- NARGS Seed Surplus Round Update
- Updated Program Plans for 2012
- Plant-of-the-Month
- April Program Changes
- New Hardiness Zone Map
- NARGS new-ish website
- Letter of Appreciation
- Paintings on Display
- Additions to the Lending Library
- A Tribute to Alice Davis
- Calendar
- People

March 17th Program Carol Bradford: “Water, Wood and Stone: Classical Chinese Gardens”

Considering the tumultuous history of China in the last 200 years, it is amazing that so many gardens survive, dating to the 12th century and earlier. Emperors, government officials, scholars and priests made gardens. Some gardens are large and some small. A common aim was to create a series of intertwined miniature landscapes, which can be viewed from pavilions and walkways protected from the weather. Gardens of Shanghai, Suzhou and Beijing from the Song, Ming and Qing Dynasties will be shown, plus a few bonus pictures of life in China today.

Carol Bradford is a freelance garden writer, photographer and consultant who lives and gardens in Syracuse, but who takes every opportunity to see the rest of the world. This May she'll be traveling to the Netherlands for Floriade 2012 and to the Chelsea Flower Show in London. She's a graduate of the Cordon Bleu in Paris and Cornell University. She's been the garden columnist for the Post-Standard newspaper since 1994; her weekly columns can be found online at <http://connect.syracuse.com/user/cbradford/>



Garden of Harmonious Pleasures, Beijing
© Carol T. Bradford 2011

This meeting will be held at the Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (see map on the last page). Brown bag lunch at noon. Program begins at 1:00 p.m.

From the Chair

Billie Jean Isbell

Please email me bjj1@cornell.edu if you are interested to joining the day trip to Stonecrop Gardens on April 28th (if you did not sign up for the trip at the last meeting). The plant sale starts at 9:00am and it is a 3½ hour drive to Stonecrop. If we want to arrive early, we would have to leave Ithaca at 6am. I suggest that we coordinate departure time, cars, and drivers. If you are willing to drive, please contact me as well. More info will be available at the Chapter's March meeting.

Stonecrop - what we might see in bloom

Bulb display throughout the Garden
Rock Ledge, Raised Beds, Trough Display (see right)
Alpines, Saxifraga, Draba, Alyssum, Phlox
Himalayan Slope, Gus's Slope
Deciduous Rhododendron, Native Shadblow
Wisteria Pavilion
Woodland Garden



We have timed our trip to take in the annual alpine plant sale. In addition to Stonecrop's offering of alpine plants and troughs, the following nurseries and vendors will participate in the sale: Wrightman Alpines, Ontario - Grower and supplier of choice alpine plants and rock garden plants; Evermay Nursery, Bangor, ME - Specializing in alpine plants and Primula species; Garden Vision Epimediums, Templeton, MA - Grower and supplier of Epimediums and other choice shade perennials; My House Leeks, Gloucester, MA - Small grower of primarily hardy sempervivum, sedum and other hardy succulents along with a variety of handmade hypertufa troughs in many shapes and sizes; Debra Pope, Auburn, MA - Creates unique, custom hypertufa troughs; Don Dembowski, Pelham, NY - Spring Ephemerals and Woodland Wildflowers; Bill Perron, Cortlandt Manor, NY - Offers a variety of Cyclamen species, Arisaema, and Hellebores. Refreshments will be available for purchase. Admission: \$5/members-free.

Very close to Stonecrop is the fabulous outdoor sculpture garden, Storm King, which is worth a visit if there's time.

Stay tuned for details on a trip to private gardens in Rochester and Bristol Nursery to be scheduled some time after our plant sale, May 19th.

****If any of you have checked out books from our library, please remember to return them at the next meeting.**

Time to Renew Your Membership: Second Reminder

Mary Stauble

First, we want to extend a hearty welcome to 3 first-time members who joined at our February meeting. Welcome Joan Lawrence and Tamara Lovell of Ithaca and Candy Filios from Trumansburg.

If you haven't done so already, please fill out a membership form for the 2012 calendar year and mail it to the address on the form. Or you can bring it with you to the March 18 meeting. If you received this newsletter via snail mail, a membership form is attached. You can also download one at <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf>

Dues help to support our organization. Membership entitles you to participate in the seedling exchange, the member only plant sale and gives you a 25% discount on ACNARGS purchases at the Ithaca Spring Plant Sale, our biggest fund raiser.

If you have any questions about your membership, email Mary Stauble at mes2@cornell.edu.

“Surplus Round” - aka Round 2 - NARGS Seed Exchange Update

BZ Marrantca

On March 5th our Chapter begins packaging for Round 2 of the NARGS Seed Exchange. The orders, seeds, and everything else you will need, including instructions, are set up in the basement of Ken Post Lab. Any amount of time you can offer will be much appreciated. Ken Post Lab locks its doors after 5 p.m. so if you plan to come after 5, simply let me know and I can be there to let you in.

Laura Serowicz reports that the amount of seed available this year in the surplus round will be much less than in the previous few years since a lot less was donated, and many more numbers are sold out already (18 boxes as opposed to 30 last year). We don't know what that will mean as far as our portion of filling orders as there's still likely to be a similar number of participants as in previous years and many remaining seeds from which to choose. We are aiming to have all orders completed by March 25th, then we distribute left over seed to chapters, pack up and call it another year and the completion of our 3-year commitment to NARGS for distributing Round 2.

As a bonus, SeedEx volunteers will be granted donor-status in the 2013 seed exchange. Contact BZ Marrantca mmm10@cornell.edu for further information.

Upcoming Spring 2012 Programs

*****April 21, 2012: Speaker TBA as of press time.** Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science, Cornell University. We will also hold our annual (free) seedling exchange. Bring your labeled seedlings. Pots, soil, and additional labels will be supplied. The trough workshop that was planned to follow the meeting is being re-scheduled (*see article, this issue*).

*****April 28: Day Trip to Stonecrop Gardens** and Annual Alpine Plant Sale, Cold Spring, NY. Planning in progress, coordinated by Billie Jean Isbell. Details at the March meeting, on the website when available, and in the April newsletter. Drivers wanted.

May 19: Our Plant Sale Fundraiser at CCETC Garden Fair, NYS Armory, Ithaca. Members receive 25% off their purchases at our table.

Sept. 16: Nick Turland (<http://tinyurl.com/7cvvwju>), NARGS Speaker, Associate Curator in the Division of Science and Conservation at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri since 1993, Co-Director of the Flora of China Project; he will give 2 talks yet to be selected.

October 20: David Fernandez, owner of Cayuga Landscape in Ithaca: deer resistant plants

November 10: Jerry Krall, Rochester gardener *extraordinaire*

Details as we learn them will be included in future newsletters and <http://acnargs.blogspot.com/>
When in question, visit our blog.

March Plant-of-the-Month

John Gilrein



The March 2011 POM is *Trillium erectum*, (Wake Robin, Stinking Benjamin, Red Trillium). Red Trillium is native from New Brunswick to Georgia, and west to Michigan and Ohio. It is hardy from zones 3 to 8 and generally grows 12 to 18 inches high. Red Trillium is one of the pedunculate Trilliums, with flowers on short stalks held above the leaves. It is the most common trillium for acid soil sites in the East. It is reported to be vigorous and adaptable, and will form a clump over time.

Trilliums prefer a moist well-drained, humus rich soil in part shade. Rhizomes should be planted approximately 6 inches deep (Bill Cullina suggests planting container plants only 3 inches deep and letting them adjust themselves over time). Woodland conditions with part sun in spring and shade in summer would imitate their natural environment; they can handle more sun than available in a mature forest. Blooming is in May (though who knows this year). Unfortunately deer will eat Trilliums; they're not yet bred via genetic engineering to taste like garlic. Rhizomes of mature plants can be dug in the fall as the leaves turn yellow and be cut to produce more plants. Our source is Eastern Plant Specialties in Bath, Maine.

Trials and Tribulations of the April Speaker and Trough Workshop

John Gilrein, Program Coordinator

The program plan for our April meeting was to have a short presentation on trough making followed by a trough workshop, during which members could make their own troughs. We had a promising speaker lined up, then the program plans proceeded to fall apart – a long complicated story (ask John if you want to know the details) with the result that we were without both speaker and workshop. Meanwhile we're hard at work to schedule both a program and a trough workshop – but they will not be on the same day.

Current trough workshop plans are to have a trough building session at Bill Stark's new home site (in a garage) in Lansing. Participants will need to sign up at the March meeting, pay a minimal fee for materials, and bring their own form. Date is yet to be determined.

An alternate trough building opportunity will be a workshop at Baker's Acres Nursery in North Lansing. Baker's Acres is offering their own trough workshop in June 2012 (not sponsored by the Adirondack Chapter; note too they have not yet posted this info on their website). We're also considering working with Baker's Acres on a Chapter-sponsored trough workshop.

The April *Green Dragon* and the website will post details as they become available. We will have more info at the March meeting.

NARGS New-ish Website - Now For Everyone...and a Great Resource

Harold Peachey

What's up with the NARGS website? You no longer need to be a member of NARGS to use the website, it is open to anyone. Getting started-go to www.NARGS.org, look down the right side of the page and request a user name and login password. Volunteer moderators will process your request quickly and once you are deemed not to be a spammer or forum bully you will be emailed your user name and password. You can then go to the website, sign-in and choose to remain signed-in eliminating the necessity of ever having to do so again.

Once signed in you have many options for altering the appearance of the site, some do not like the default black background. Next start exploring the site. There is NARGS news, a forum, "wiki" and links to chapter sites. Delving deeper you'll find a very nice introduction to rock gardening and information on choosing plants, building a rock garden, propagation and most any other information you may desire regarding the world of gardening including woodland gardening, bulbs, woody plants and bog gardens.

The FORUM is my most frequent destination. I check in daily to see updates to topics of interest and to see what new topics may be interesting. I have set up my forum experience to indicate any new postings and find that about five minutes is more than enough time to keep up with the daily postings unless, of course as often happens, I am drawn to the topic and want to explore more deeply. It is also a good idea to include your geographic location and hardiness information to your FORUM ID so that when you post, folks have some idea of your gardening climate. You will find it is very easy to add pictures to your posts. I keep a "wish list" on my desktop and frequently add species to the list as new postings inspire my curiosity. This is very helpful when it comes time for ordering seeds on the new slick seed exchange feature. The forum is organized by topics including NARGS news, Genus and species by family, bogs, bulbs, woodlands, etc. The forum is search-able by topic, date and poster as is the entire NARGS website, so tons of information is available with a few keystrokes.

Other features of the site include a NARGS "wiki", an interactive site that is so far underutilized. Once NARGS members begin sharing their immense and diverse knowledge on the venue it will hopefully become one of the best worldwide sources of information in all things gardening related. A separate sign-in is required for the wiki-resource, if you choose to contribute. There are also links to other chapter information including contact information with officers and often links to their newsletters.

So in conclusion, the NARGS website is ideal for anyone with an interest in gardening, horticulture, taxonomy or social interaction with other folks with similar interests. The website connects you with incredible gardeners worldwide who are eager to share their experience and knowledge and to learn about yours. So what's stopping you? Get on that old laptop, smartphone, tablet or "grampa box" and sign in and start enjoying.

A Letter of Appreciation from White Pine Camp

Dick and Mary George

Dec. 1, 2011

Dear Friends,

On behalf of White Pine Camp Associates we send our most sincere thanks and gratitude for your very generous donation of bulbs for the Frederic Heutte Alpine Rock Garden at White Pine Camp. And an even bigger thank you to those members of your Chapter who were kind enough to travel to White Pine Camp to plant the bulbs and offer their expertise and advice on maintaining the garden; Harold Peachey, Karen Hansen, Bob Schneider, Steve Dell'Orto and Carol Eichler. Your efforts are all very much appreciated not only by White Pine Camp Associates but the hundreds of visitors who visit the garden each year.



Without your kind support the Frederic Heutte Alpine Rock Garden would not be nearly as special and beautiful as it is today. Again many thanks for your generous contributions.

USDA New Hardiness Zone Map - How “hardy” are you?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the new version of its Plant Hardiness Zone Map, the first update since 1990. The new map—jointly developed by USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Oregon State University's PRISM Climate Group—is available online at <http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/> ARS is the chief intramural scientific research agency of USDA.

Paintings on Display by One of our Own

An exhibition of paintings by ACNARGS member Nari Mistry, titled "Landscape Paintings: Scenes of Ithaca in Bold Colors," will be on display at the Nevin Welcome Center, Cornell Plantations from March 2 to April 28, 2012. Landscapes in watercolors, oils & acrylics in a continuing series depict the beautiful scenes around the Ithaca area and the many local waterfalls.



"I try to use expressive bold colors to represent the subjects that inspire me. Even a scene of winter ice and snow can contain a touch of warm color in a few spots!" says Nari. Some of my paintings are representational, most are expressive, some are more abstract, some are pure fantasy," he adds.

Learning watercolor techniques through practice and observation, he says he was inspired especially by close examination of the watercolors of Winslow Homer, John Singer Sargent and other great artists. "Every painting I do is another step in learning better techniques."

He retired in 2003 after 39 years as a physicist at Cornell, to catch up on painting, gardening and music, missed in those busy years. His work can be seen at <http://www.ArtbyNari.com>.

(Editor's Note: the work is also for sale)

Additions to the AC-NARGS Lending Library

Our library is growing! We want to thank Johnnie Davis, husband of the late Alice Davis, for the donation of gardening books we received late last year. Alice, who was always so thoughtful, especially requested that the Chapter receive her books about building with stone (see the article, *Pigs in the Pease: A Tribute . . .*)

ACNARGS has added the DVD "The Maturation of the Gardens Quatre Vents, narrated by Frank Cabot. As a consummate plantsman and the founder of the Garden Conservancy, this DVD offers an illustrated talk about Quatre Vents, his acclaimed garden in Quebec. Set in rolling

farmland between the shore of the St. Lawrence River and the boreal forest, the garden integrates the best gardening traditions and the splendid natural setting.

The DVD shows how major elements of Quatre Vents, first established in the 1930's and 1950's, evolved under Frank's stewardship during the last quarter of the twentieth century. It also serves as an animated counterpart to Frank's handsome book, *The Greater Perfection* (Hortus Press, 2001), also available for loan through the Chapter's lending library.

Pigs in the Pease: A Tribute to Alice (Lobdell) Davis 1943-2011 and to her Legacy of Stone

Peg Ross, Town of Greene Historian

(Reprinted by permission from the Chenango American)

A light has gone out in the Town of Greene. A light that could bring a smile on when you saw her beautiful smiling face with pink cheeks. A light that was more than generous with her gifts of stone (perhaps I should use the word rocks), plants and flowers among other things to many people. A light that supported her community in various ways-from school activities and library functions to her farm where she was described to me as the perfect farm wife- a true helpmate to her husband, Johnnie, and her son, Paul, in running a very successful farm. Her family, encompassing sons Paul and Adam and their families, plus a large extended family, was the most important part of her life – the life of Alice Davis.

Alice never put herself forward and many don't know how responsible she was in making things happen quietly behind the scenes. She was a remarkable woman and my friend.

Soon after we met, I realized that she was especially interested in stone walls and anything to do with rocks. We began to attend the Adirondack Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society and enjoyed their activities. I knew she liked to build with stone and one day she asked me if I would like a stone wall on my property, that she'd like to build it. Of course, I would!

So it began. She would bring field stone from her farm in her truck to our property and unload it. Thankfully, her grandson, Booker, helped with the heavy pieces, and a little later, Brandon could also lift them. Load after load of stones were brought in.

Then the digging began. She wanted it to be dug down deep enough to have a good foundation. I could help a little, removing the dirt in a wheelbarrow but I did very little. I had no talent to see where a stone might look good. She said she liked working with stone because it was so much work. And that got her thinking process going. She enjoyed working on the wall by herself, finding just the right stone, communing with nature and thinking about the past and all the reading she had done on the history of the stone wall.

How Stone Walls Came to Be

When the first Europeans came to New England and New York, the land was covered with forests. The forests were cleared of the trees so that the settlers could grow their crops. Following the tradition in Europe, the settlers built their houses close together while farther away were their common fields and pasturelands, called the "great lotts." They began to build fencing for their animals.

The first fences were tree stumps and brush that were accumulated from the forest removal. Later zigzag rail fences were erected with brush and dead wood on top. Sometimes tree trunks were stacked up. As time went on, people began to own their own fields and even more fencing

was necessary. But after the Revolutionary War, wood was scarce. The settlers had destroyed their best resource.

Every year, the settlers noticed that new stone was appearing in the fields (not knowing about the geology of the area), and coming up after the freeze of winter. Many a diary of a farmer in the 1800's mentions "picked stone today." The stone was thrown into piles by the side of the field and in the late 18th century the stone began to be used to build stone walls. Because the New Englanders believed that a small field was better than a very large one, they often built stone walls encompassing one acre in size. There were also strange laws about who was liable for what. Was the farmer liable if someone else's pigs were in his "pease" because of a broken stone wall or was the pigs' owner responsible for letting them run free?



Photo by Peg Ross

"Alice's wall is a dry wall technique using field stone... she was able to finish seven tiers.

"It is a living wall just as stone is. Stone has a voice that comes out of the deep. It tells us things of the past. Please come and see Alice's wall."

Many animals, including swine, were taken to a stone pound to wait for retrieval and more stone walls were built to abide by the fencing laws. In 1871 there were estimated to be 95,364 miles of stone walls just in New York State alone.

The Demise of Stone Wall

When industrialization came to New England, it was the demise of stone wall fencing. Folks were moving west where the fields had no stones. Farmers left for a steady job in a factory and abandoned their farms. In 1860, there were 31,000 farms in New Hampshire. In 1930, there were half that many. One of the reasons the farms were abandoned was the proliferation of the stone walls.

The new machinery could not be used in the small fields of New England and New York and farmers could not compete with the produce coming out of the western states of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. The stone wall cannot take complete blame for the downfall of the New England farm, however; the hilly, rocky, exhausted soil was the larger reason. The farmers survived by turning to dairy farming. But what to do with all the stone walls?

Some dug ditches right by the walls and threw the stones in to make a drain. Others just left them and if you drive on any back road in this area, you will see them everywhere. Now many are in the woods because the forests are back. Barns and houses have rotted. The only things left are the stone structures: wells, foundations and miles of stone wall ruins.

Stone Walls Resurrected

Fortunately, the well-to-do wanted to have stone walls around their properties and began buying up stone walls in New England and New York. I know people have felt bad to see some of the stone in the ruined walls around [Greene] being shipped out but at least there is still a trade of wall builders who do amazing work. I like to think there is another stone wall somewhere else that is now beautiful again.

There is a rediscovery of stone building. One of the last programs Alice and I attended at the Rock Garden Society was a talk and slides by Dan Snow, a wall builder from Vermont. He does all kinds of wall structures using only the dry wall technique. He has walls with built-in seats and stone sculptures that defy gravity. I showed him a photo of Alice's wall and he said it was beautiful.

Alice's wall is a dry wall technique using field stone and it blends in very nicely with the landscape. It is covered with moss, lichens, alpine plants, hostas, and many perennials as well as some annuals to fill in the niches. It goes up a hill and she was able to finish seven tiers.

It is a living wall just as stone is. Stone has a voice that comes out of the deep. It tells us things of the past. Please come and see Alice's wall. My husband put up a plaque that says simply, "Stone wall built by Alice Davis with the help of her grandsons, Booker and Brandon 2011" I can't think of anything that Alice would have liked better than this wall as her memorial. May it survive for hundreds of years.

Calendar of Local Garden Events

Pat Curran

March 4-11: Hawaii: Islands of Aloha! (<http://www.theflowershow.com>) Philadelphia International Flower Show, Pennsylvania Convention Center, Phila. PA. Fee

March 15-18: Recipe for Springtime, (<http://www.gardenscapepros.com>) Greater Rochester's Flower & Garden Show, Henrietta Dome near Rochester. Fee

March 21: Panel Discussion, "Issues in Native Gardening," 7:00 pm, Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, Unitarian Church Annex, 2nd floor. More info: <http://www.fingerlakesnativeplantsociety.org/> *Finger Lakes Native Plant Society Plant Walks meet at different times and locations. Topics vary from wildflowers to lichens to winter twig ID. For more information, call Anna Stalter (607) 379-0924 or Susanne Lorbeer at (607) 257-0835.*



March 22-25: Taste of Spring, (<http://www.plantasiany.com>) Plantasia Garden & Landscape Show, Hamburg, NY. Fee

March 24: "Colorado Wildflowers: An Excursion into the Alpine Tundra," presented by Carol Eichler; 2:00-3:30 pm. Tompkins County Cornell Cooperative Extension Education Center, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca

March 29: "Shade Garden Flowers & Ferns," 6:30 -8:30 pm. Tompkins County Cornell Cooperative Extension Education Center, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca. Pre-registration recommended, fee. Info: Pat Curran 607-272-2292, pc21@cornell.edu

March 31: "Pictures of Permaculture through Australia, New Zealand and Trinidad," presented by Erin Marteau; 2:00-3:30 pm. Tompkins County Cornell Cooperative Extension Education Center, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca

April 18: Susan Cook, "Non-Native Species in Our Midst: a Curse or a Blessing," 7:00 pm, sponsored by Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, Unitarian Church Annex, 2nd floor

May 11-20: Lilac Festival, Rochester NY

May 31 & April 1: Garden Conservancy Open Days in Tompkins County: (<http://www.eartothe-ground-pro.com>) Hitch Lyman's Snowdrops, 3441 Krums Corners Road, Trumansburg. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission to the garden is \$5, Also May 19 (at Hitch Lyman's Garden) and August 4 (4 private gardens in Ithaca and Dryden)

And looking further ahead...

Sept. 9: Gathering of Gardeners, Rochester NY

October 12-14: Autumn in the Garden – A Time for Troughs, NARGS Winter Study Week-end sponsored by Allegheny Chapter, Pittsburgh, PA

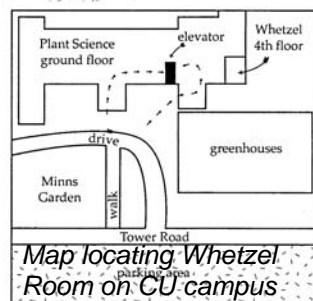
To have your garden event listed, contact Pat Curran, pc21@cornell.edu.

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Green Dragon Tales

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Military official, Ming Tombs,
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