



ADIRONDACK
CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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April 2012

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April 21st Program: The Maturation of the Gardens at Les Quatre Vents

We'll take a tour through the acclaimed [Les Quatre Vents](#), viewing a DVD created and narrated by the late Frank Cabot, consummate plantsman and founder of the Garden Conservancy. Set in rolling farmland between the shore of the St. Lawrence River and the boreal forest several hours beyond Ville de Quebec, the garden integrates the best gardening traditions with a splendid natural setting. The DVD shows how major elements of Quatre Vents, first established in the 1930s and 1950s, evolved under Frank's stewardship during the last quarter of the twentieth century.

A number of us were privileged to receive a personal tour from Frank in 2007. We'll follow the viewing of the DVD with spontaneous personal recollections to share. Cabot's former residence, now a public garden, is Stonecrop in Cold Spring, NY.



The stone steps serve to provide perfect planting spaces for choice rock garden gems.

The April 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 from noon on. Program begins at 1:00 p.m.

From the Chair

Billie Jean Isbell

I am sorry that I will miss the showing of Frank Cabot's DVD on the building of Quatre Vents at our April meeting. I will be in NYC to attend an anthropological meeting, but I am going to sneak away and visit the High Line, NYC's linear park. Visiting Quatre Vents and meeting Frank Cabot were memorable experiences [Chapter-sponsored trip in June 2007]. I hope that the Garden Conservancy, also one of his creations, can maintain the garden. I think that my favorite part of the garden was the Japanese teahouse and the 'Cabot-made' environment surrounding it. It has quite a remarkable construction history. I will never forget crossing the suspension bridge over the gorge below which the Tea House is located (see photos at right and below, taken by me).

Cabot's first garden was Stonecrop and our chapter will visit that garden on April 28th. If anyone wants to be added to that trip, please let me know by email bjj1@cornell.edu. Garden builders never stop. Frank was building a new garden in New Zealand when he passed away.



*A peak at 1 of the teahouses
at Les Quatre Vents*

I am working with Angela at Bristol Gardens to arrange garden visits in the Rochester area on Saturday, June 2nd. We have chosen that date because Jerry Kral will be able to show us his garden. You can look him up on the web [<http://gvnargs.blogspot.com/2009/07/jerry-kral-garden-wow.html>] and see a preview. His garden is amazing. Angela is arranging for us to see other private gardens as well. I do love to organize these trips. The three-day trip to Quebec [in 2007] took a lot of organizing. I don't think I'll take on organizing a trip to Cabot's last garden in New Zealand. But if any of you have ideas for trips closer to home, please let me know. Take seedlings home and grow them for our plant sales.



Plant Time Times Two: Free April Seedling Exchange & May Plant Sale

David Mitchell

Our annual seedling exchange will take place at the April meeting. Bring in your labeled seedlings to share. I'll have some pots and potting soil on hand to facilitate safe transport. Potted divisions (again labeled please) will also be accepted and priced for sale or held for the May plant sale. I'm hoping the seedlings will find good homes and that some will show up on our tables at the May and August plant sales. The seedling exchange is a great way to learn about what plants are easy to grow from seed and to learn from other's experiences in growing them on. Membership is not required to participate. Do come prepared to take home some plants!

The May plant sale will be held on May 19, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., same location as last year: the New York State Armory, 1765 Hanshaw Road. You are invited to help with set up on Friday beginning at 4 p.m. and ending about 7 p.m. If you can't make it Friday, arrive before 8:30 on Saturday to drop off plants and help complete the setup. Alternatively, you may drop off plants at my home along the driveway any time before the day of the sale. My driveway is on the Washington Street side of the corner of Washington and Esty Streets (402 Esty Street). My phone number is 607-342-3660 should you have any questions about the sale. Tompkins County Cooperative Extension can be reached at 607-272-2292.

Our plant sale booth will be located inside the large building at the Armory. Remember Chapter members receive a 25% discount on their plant purchases (you can join or renew at the sale as well as a list of paid –up members) and don't forget to tell your gardening friends to stop by.

Get Ready for Even More Plants with March & April Plant of the Month!

John Gilrein

Our March POM has arrived late but in time for the April meeting. The March POM is red trillium, *Trillium erectum*. There are also a few other trilliums, *Trillium sessile* and *Trillium grandiflorum*. For more information, see the March Green Dragon at <http://www.acnargs.org/newsletter/201203.pdf>.

And for April our POM will be trough plants from Evermay Nursery in Oldtown, Maine and they will be priced well to give you the opportunity to grow rock garden plants, if you have not done so. These plants are all small perennials that will grow well in containers or in the open ground. *Androsace sarmentosa* is a gentle spreader. All the other plants, except the Primula, are cushion plants that will slowly spread but will not overwhelm a trough. All the plants will need better than average drainage from well drained soil (WD) to very well drained/rock garden soil (VWD/RG) soil conditions.

It's easy to prepare a special soil mix for a trough using sand, gravel, and loam or potting mix. If you don't have gravel, just use more sand. Sharp sand (a gritty sand with uneven particle sizes) is the preferred sand. A fairly standard mix would be a mixture of approximately 1 part each of loam, sand, and gravel for a good general container mix. Gravel mulch would be the preferred mulch for all the plants.

Regarding the exposure provided for the plants, it's commonly heat that's the bigger concern for plants grown in full sun than the amount of sun. Providing a cooler exposure will help the more heat sensitive plants (especially the Saxifrages) prosper. This could be a site with mid-day or afternoon shade or the north side of a building without overhead trees.

Regarding watering, plants in containers are always more susceptible to drying out, so even those with minimal needs for water will need attention during dry spells and very hot weather.

Plant Name	Height	Flowers	Exposure	Soil	Origin	Water Needs
<i>Androsace sarmentosa</i> v. <i>chumbyi</i>	3"	Pink	FS/PS	WD/RG	Himalayas	minimal
<i>Draba ridiga</i> v. <i>bryoides</i>	2-3"	Yellow	FS/PS	VWD/RG	N. Hemisphere	minimal
<i>Draba</i> sp.	2"	Yellow	FS/PS	VWD/RG	N. Hemisphere	minimal
<i>Edraianthus</i> <i>pumilo</i>	2"	Blue bells	FS/PS	VWD/RG	European Alps	minimal
<i>Gypsophila</i> <i>aretioides</i>	1"	seldom	FS	VWD/RG	Iran	very minimal
<i>Primula</i> x <i>alliioni</i> 'Helmwell Blue'	4"	Pink	AM sun/ PS	VWD/RG	Europe	minimal

Plant Name	Height	Flowers	Exposure	Soil	Origin	Water Needs
Saxifraga fredericii-augusti grisebachii	7"	Red flower stems	PS	VWD/RG	Europe	very minimal
Saxifraga 'Whitehill'	6"	white	PS	VWD/RG	Europe	very minimal

*Note: Plant photos can be found on the Evermay website: <http://www.evermaynursery.com>

Membership has its Benefits

Mary Stauble

Just a reminder that your ACNARGS membership runs the calendar year regardless of the month in which you paid your annual dues last year. Coming up we have one really good reason to become a member. Actually, it's a no brainer if you plan to purchase plants from our table at the May Plant Sale. Members get a 25% discount on everything they purchase from our already reasonably priced plants. With individual membership priced at \$10, it is easy to see what a deal we offer.

Spread the word. Anyone may join at the May sale at the time of his or her plant purchase to receive the discount. If you have any questions about your membership (for example, have I renewed yet?), email me at mes2@cornell.edu.

Welcome two new ACNARGS members - Cristina Gomez and Mildred Staples – who joined at our March meeting!

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

BZ Marranta

When you receive this the seed exchange is...done for another year! Thank you to all who gave time to make this one another big success! I know National really appreciates our willingness to assume this responsibility (our 4 year stint) and the degree to which you have all been so conscientious in filling the seed orders. We get a break! Siskiyou Chapter will be assuming Round 2 next year.

Will YOU be our Next Newsletter Editor?

Carol Eichler

If all goes well, the “Responsible People” of our Chapter are planning a shift in leadership but it is contingent upon one important element. You could be that “element.” Billie Jean, because of an increased workload, needs to step down as Chapter Chair. We have found someone willing to assume the Chair position – yours truly – but unfortunately I would do so at the expense of vacating the newsletter editor position.

We are looking for someone to step forward to fill this job as newsletter editor. I am happy to speak to anyone about what this position involves. Good computer skills, good communication and organization skills, and a comfort level with writing and editing (more of the latter than the former) are good qualities to possess. Because we are an all-volunteer organization, the ability to take initiative is highly desirable. You have the freedom to make the newsletter what you want of it.

The good news is that our new editor will benefit from the experience of myself (granted, my tenure has been short) and of Craig Cramer, who was the previous editor for more years than I can remember.

Our newsletter, along with our website, are our primary communication links with our membership. The press releases about programs, also sent out by the editor, become our links with the public – and our source for new attendees and members. Nothing could be more important to the present and future well-being of our Chapter.

We are hoping to implement these changes this summer. Please contact me, Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com before I have to come looking for you. ☺

A Garden Adventure Downstate: Oh So Many Possibilities!

Carol Eichler

Ever since we received a guided tour of the Rock Garden at the New York Botanical Garden two years ago I have been talking with others about returning to volunteer some time to work there, I've been in touch with Curator Jody Payne who is eager to welcome us some time in September. I am building an overnight trip around that event.



View of the Alpine house at Wave Hill

These are nearby visit possibilities on my radar: Storm King Sculpture Park in Mountainville, Innisfree Cup Garden in Millbrook, and Wave Hill with its alpine house. Has anyone been to Fort Tryon Park with its recently renovated Alpine Garden, Heather Garden and the gardens at The Cloisters? The Manhattan Chapter have planned a day there and it sounds absolutely wonderful! If there's interest, we could consider incorporating visits to Garden Conservancy Open Days gardens either in Westchester County, NY (9/9) or in Fairfield County, CT (9/16). And to complete our plant fix, we might check out LorJon Nursery in Pine City on our way home, highly recommended by Judy Fogel. Your suggestions are welcome! Please contact Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com.

Upcoming Spring 2012 Programs and Activities

April 28: Day Trip to Stonecrop Gardens and Annual Alpine Plant Sale (see March newsletter for info on the plant sale) in Cold Spring, NY. Departure time and place TBD. Sign up with Billie Jean Isbell. Drivers wanted.

May 5: Trough Workshop 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Bill Stark's and Mary Stauble's home site (see details, this issue)

May 18: Set up for Plant Sale, 4 – 7 p.m. (approximately), NYS Armory, 1765 Hanshaw Road, Ithaca.

May 19: Our Plant Sale Fundraiser at CCETC Garden Fair, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., NYS Armory, Ithaca. Members receive 25% off their purchases at our table.

June 2: Day Trip to Bristol's Nursery, Jerry Kral's garden and other private gardens in the Rochester area. Details in the next newsletter. Coordinated by Billie Jean Isbell. Drivers wanted.

Sept. 16: [Nick Turland](#), 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.

September Date TBD: Working trip to New York Botanical Garden Rock Garden and overnight to visit other gardens in the vicinity. (See article, this issue)

October 20: David Fernandez, owner of Cayuga Landscape in Ithaca: gardening with deer

November 10: Jerry Krall, Rochester gardener *extraordinaire*

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

Trough Workshop Unlimited: Mark your Calendar for May 5th

Bill Stark

What if we offered a workshop where you can build as many troughs or hypertufa rocks or sculptures as you want and of any size? And you could use different mixtures, inner molds, outer molds, foam cores or metal armatures (see examples below) On May 5th beginning at 10 a.m. and continuing through 4 p.m. the Chapter is offering just such a workshop at our home site under construction at 232 Cedar Cove in Lansing.

We have space for about 18 people in our unheated 28' by 40' garage/shop – so sign up at the next meeting or contact us at mes2@cornell.edu or 607-229-9924. We will need to know by April 28 the type of and how much hypertufa you will be using so that we can have it ready for you. We plan to be there on Friday and Sunday so if your project requires more time, we can also work then (please contact us in advance if you plan to come either of these days). From experience we know some advanced projects require more than one day to build.

Directions: From Ithaca and points south, go north on 34B. 5 miles after the Lansing High School, turn left on Algerine Rd. After 1 mile, turn right on Cedar Cove Rd. Cedar Cove is a private gravel road that's easy to miss. The sign is set back and is only 3 feet high. Follow Cedar Cove down to the lake - go right at the two forks. Look for a house with a green roof and a small sign at the top of the driveway that says Stark/Stauble. Come down the driveway. We will place stakes with red ribbons at parking spaces. Don't park too close to a drop-off.

From points north: Go south on 34B, about 1 mile after the entrance to the power plant, turn right on Algerine Rd. and proceed as above.

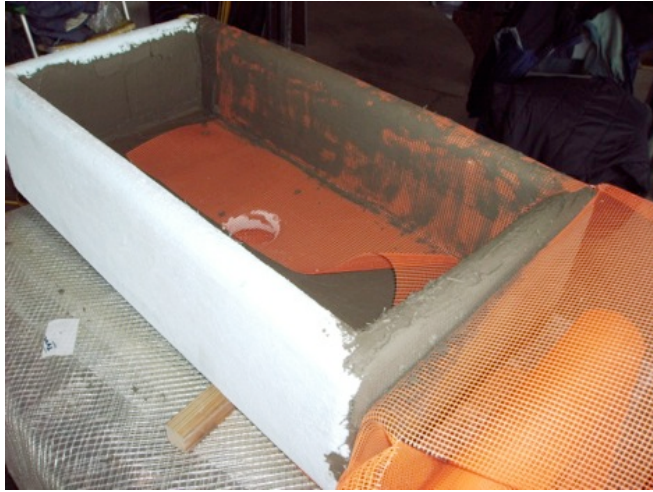
What to bring: waterproof gloves, dust mask, one or more forms/boards to build your creation(s) on, a container to hold your hypertufa, simple tools like forks, knives, wide putty knives, "church key" can openers and wire brushes for shaping and texturing, and old clothes (the house is heated, the shop is not – so dress accordingly). We will charge only for the cost of materials that you use – so bring some money. If you want to build several troughs or big troughs – bring more money. See below for a detailed list of material costs.

We will provide: An electric cement mixer, arc welder, hot wire foam cutters, running water, tables under cover in case it rains, about ten chairs and several different hypertufa mixes at your request (see some options below). We will also have fiberglass window screen, fiberglass reinforcing mesh and enough hardware cloth to cover drain holes. Since I've eaten as many of the club's cookies as I could manage for many years, we will supply snacks (although we won't refuse any goodies you want to bring). If you bring a lunch, you can use our small refrigerator, propane grill and microwave. We have a picnic table on the beach.

Cautions: You are entering a construction site. Although our work area will be quite safe, you should be careful elsewhere. There are sheer drops inside the house with simple safety rails, sheer cliffs on the grounds with no safety rails, irregular stone stairs with no safety rails, and slippery grass and

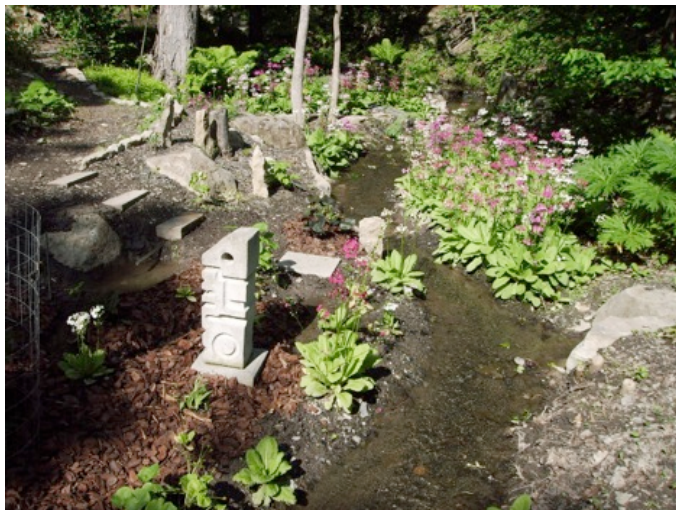
gravel-covered slopes. If you are a bit unsteady, you may need a walking stick if you want to walk around the ravine garden that we're building. At present, we only have a porta-potty.

The photos below are provided to generate **construction ideas**:



A large 36" x 20" x 11" trough built with a foam core, reinforced surface bonding cement, and an outer layer of hypertufa. The completed trough will weigh about 40 lbs. I have all the hot wire tools to rip, miter and round the edges of foam planks. I'll bring this trough to the next meeting. Contact me if you're interested in this type of construction.

Packing a form for the firebox of a Japanese snow lantern with a sand hypertufa mix. I'll have the 5 forms for the lantern empty at the workshop in case someone wants to use it.



An architectural block made with a carving mix. I'm interested in building garden structures with these shaped blocks.

Hypertufa Mixes & Notes

Type	Cem	Peat	Sand	Verm.	Perl.	Acrylic	Fibers
Basic NARGS	2	3			3	1 or 2 cups/batch	1/10oz/gallon wet mix
Carving Mix	1			2			
By Gallon	1gal	1½ gal			1½ gal	1/3 cup	
Weak	1	1					
Light	1	2	½				
Stronger	2	1½	½		2		some
Concrete	1		2 + 3 gravel				
Wikipedia	3	4			5		
Light & Porous		1	1		1 or	1 but not both	
Granite Look	1	1½			1 ½		
Sparkles	1	1½		1½			
Stronger	1	1	1	1 or	1 but not both		
Fibers	2cup	1 ½ cup		½ cup	2 cup		1 Tbs
8"x12"x12"	30lbs	1 cuft			1½ cuft		

Most recipes have a 1:3 cement:other ratio. 1:7 ratios are dangerously weak. 1:1 ratios are the limit of too much cement. Use type 1 Portland cement. Use only sand appropriate for concrete. Sand strengthens the mix but adds weight. Use milled sphagnum peat moss sifted through a ¼" screen. Perlite provides a coarse finish to hypertufa. Vermiculite is available from fine to coarse grade.

Mix all the aggregates dry, then add cement dry and mix. Break up the fibers or they will make balls. Can use 1" walls on troughs < 2", 1½" walls on troughs 12" to 24", 2" walls on troughs >24". Cover drain holes with window screen to keep soil in and pill bugs out. Don't bother to use inner forms for troughs. Don't use grease on foam forms. Cure for 24 hours, remove mold, then continue to cure for several weeks. Leave outside in the rain to reduce alkalinity before planting.

Cost for a trough somewhat larger than 8" x 12" x 12":

Cement: \$9.98/93lb x 30lb =	\$3.22
Compressed sphagnum peat moss: \$9.49/2.2cuft x 1cuft =	\$4.31
Vermiculite: \$29.56/6cuft x 1.5cuft =	\$7.39
Fibers	Free
Acrylic (NARGS 2 cup mix): \$70/5gal x 1gal/16cup x 2cup =	\$1.75
Total Cost	\$16.67

I'll work out additional cost estimates once I get feedback on what people want to build.

Dwarf Conifers for Troughs

Stan Metsker

(from our archives, the Rocky Mountain Chapter Newsletter, October 1987)

To some people, a collection of alpiners in a sink [sic] represents a miniature garden, but to me it is incomplete without one or more dwarf conifers. They give a proportion and meaning to any small group of plants, which, with a tree or trees, become a miniature landscape.

Dwarf conifers are as varied and as beautiful as their arborescent kindred. They are not as well known as they should be, for these delightful little trees have many characteristics which endear them to all who know them, and are a joy to all who own them. The beauty of their form and colour [sic], and their sturdy healthiness make them indispensable to all who love trees, and who also have a weakness for miniature things.

Trees may be artificially dwarfed, as in the bonsai displays made famous by the Japanese. This technique will not work well in a trough because we provide too much soil and room for root growth. However, a certain amount of judicious pruning may be very helpful on occasion. Dwarf conifers must



Chamaecyparis pisifera 'Gold Dust' sharing a trough with a dianthus & other plants

be grown from cuttings or be grafted to insure that the new plants will retain their dwarf form and other characteristics such as texture, form, and color.

Please note that "dwarf" is a relative term. Many of the conifers normally grow to a height of 80 or 90 feet. So what is dwarf? A selection that only grows to 10 feet could be considered dwarf. For our purposes, anything over 12 inches would be considered large. Fortunately, in a trough we have some good things going for us. We can keep fertility low, which slows growth. We have restricted root space and that also helps. But choosing the right plants to start with is really important.

There is a great deal of confusion in regard to the names, but for most of us, it is the plants that we love, not the name. The important thing to read is the description of the plant, how tall and wide it grows and how hardy it is. Hardiness is a function of low temperature and not wind or sunlight. My standard practice is to put troughs on the ground and in the shade for the winter. This helps to protect them from wind and dryness. If they stay under snow, it is like pulling up a blanket at night: they are snug and safe.

What dwarf conifers have you had success with?

SALVIA caespitosa – Imposter!

Nari Mistry

Here is the saga of a mysterious plant that has puzzled many around the world!

My part in it starts in August 2009. At the annual ACNARGS dish-to-pass at the Plantations, I got two tiny seedlings marked *Salvia caespitosa*. "Caespitosa" means "grows in tufts", just what I needed in my rock garden, so I planted them in two spots in bright sun. Alas, they both burned, they were too small to stand the hot days. I should have sheltered them longer

At the May 2011 plant sale I found a small plant labeled "Salvia biennial" which looked very much like the seedlings I had in 2009 but a more robust plant. So I planted it in my rock garden, in full sun. However, the leaves were like no *Salvia* species I ever saw, so I decided to look up images of *Salvia caespitosa* on the internet. To my amazement, I came upon an image exactly like my plant, with the label *Salvia caespitosa* – NOT.



Salvia or Not Salvia? That is the question.

It was part of a garden discussion, which I copy below:

Salvia caespitosa - is it the real deal? (April 2007)

- I thought I would post a photo of seedlings of this plant I am growing out from seeds I obtained in the North American Rock Garden Society seed exchange. The packet was labeled *Salvia caespitosa*. It has quite unusual leaves for a *Salvia*, at least I haven't seen such leaves on a sage...have any of you grown *S. caespitosa*, and if so, am I growing the real deal or is it an impostor?

The discussion continued around the world, with respondents offering suggestions of identification and all awaiting the flowering of the plant. I never found any later discussions showing the plant in flower.

But then I found this in another discussion, I think from New Zealand(?):

- **Received seed Jan 09 from NARGS as *Salvia caespitosa*, which it isn't.** Any ideas?
- I've just completed a search of Garden Web forums under *Salvia caespitosa* and interestingly an entry appears, April '07 showing a pic of my plant, and asking for an ID. That person had also raised it from seed --also from NARGSdonated from a person in England..... So it's obviously being donated under an incorrect name for a number of years now.
- I posted a pic of this plant a year or two ago and I think it's some form of *Teucrium* with small purple flowers. I've received it from NARGS 2 years running from at least 2 different donors listed as pink flowers by one and purple by the other! It's probably firmly entrenched as ***Salvia caespitosa*** in many gardens and being re-donated again and again!

Meanwhile, back in my garden, my mystery-*Salvia* had grown in to a nice little shrubby plant about 8" tall shown below (no flowers yet).

The plant did bloom with small pink flowers, looking exactly like a picture shown as *S. caespitosa* on the Smith College botanic guide (see below)!



S.caespitosa,
Smith College botanic guide

What *is* the plant whose seeds are being circulated through NARGS as *S.caespitosa*? Your ideas about this mystery plant will be appreciated!



"*Salvia biennial*", plant obtained at May 2011 sale in Nari's rock garden with *Helianthemum num.* & *Dianthus gratianopolitanus* in background.)

In contrast, Wikipedia (below) and Harvey Wrightman show pictures of the *true S. caespitosa*, that has quite different leaves and flowers, more like true *Salvia*!



S caespitosa from Wikipedia

Calendar of Local Garden Events

Pat Curran

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

April 21: "Kissing Cousins and Family Skeletons: Rock Garden Plants and Modern Evolution," by Tony Reznicek, New York Botanical Garden, begins at 9:00 a.m. with continental breakfast at the Lillian and Amy Goldman Stone Mill. Afterward, tour NYBG's Rock Garden with Curator Jody Payne; after lunch on your own complete the day with a trough-making demonstration with Yukie Kurashina and Stefan Farage at 1 p.m. NYBG or NARGS Member: \$48/Non-Member: \$51 (Includes Continental Breakfast)

May 11-20: Lilac Festival, Rochester NY

May 31 & April 1: [Garden Conservancy Open Days in Tompkins County](http://www.gardenconservancy.org) [http://www.gardenconservancy.org]: 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)

June 9-10, 2012 US National Bonsai Exhibition, The Fair Expo Center, Rochester, New York; info: http://www.internationalbonsai.com/store/1708315/uploaded/2012_national_exhibition/index.html

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.

Responsible People/2012 Board Members

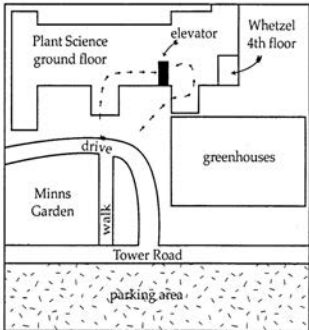
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Green Dragon Tales

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Some Hellebore beauties from Marcia Meigs Garden
Photos by Carol Eichler, taken 3/17/12



Map locating Whetzel Room on CU campus

