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April 2013

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## APRIL 20: TOM STUART & SEEDLING EXCHANGE



*Nari Mistry, David Mitchell*

### GARDEN FERNS FROM ADIANTUM TO WOODSIA

Come learn all about FERNS from a fern expert!

Tom Stuart has gardened on a glacial moraine in Putnam County for 25 years. Along with others he was responsible for resurrecting the best articles of the first 50 years of the ARGs Bulletin into the anthology *Rock Garden Plants of North America*, still a good read.

Interests change -- now he is focused on ferns. He writes regularly on fern topics for the newsletters of the American Fern Society and the Hardy Fern Foundation. He is responsible for the **Hardy Fern Library**, a web site devoted to ferns.

**Note:** This meeting will be in the **Kenneth Post Lab** on Tower Rd on the **Cornell University campus**. As usual, brown bag lunch at noon; program starts at 1pm.

The Kenneth Post Lab is a greenhouse facility just east of the intersection of Tower Rd. and Judd Falls Rd. The classroom is at the north end of the greenhouse complex, across the hall from the 'headhouse' where we sometimes have hands-on activities. There's limited parking on the north side of the facility. Best bet is the metered parking to the west. It's a Saturday, so you don't need to feed the meters. Most other restricted parking lots are up for grabs, but watch for 'at all times' signs for parking for service employees, handicapped parking etc.

### APRIL SEEDLING EXCHANGE

The seedling exchange will take place at our April meeting. Bring in your seedlings to share. We'll have some pots, labels, and potting soil on hand. Seedlings are free for members with a nominal charge for non-members (bring quarters or better yet join the Chapter!) Potted divisions will also be accepted and priced for sale or held for the May plant sale. There may even

be a bidding table if we get something special! With so many options, we'll attempt to do this in an organized fashion with everyone's cooperation, please.

We're hoping the seedlings will find good homes and that some will show up on our tables at the May and August plant sales once they get to good size. The seedling exchange is a great way to learn about what plants are easy to grow from seed and to learn from others' experiences in growing them on.

## FROM THE CHAIR

*Carol Eichler*

As I write this article on the first day of spring (and from Iowa City, Iowa) the weather is setting records. Unlike last year when we also set records, but for high temperatures, this year is just the opposite. With wind chill I woke up to -1° F (at least we didn't get snow – it was too cold). Brrr!



Photo by Nari Mistry

Despite what the calendar says, the weather is playing its fickle tricks on us at the very time when we gardeners are aching to see a sign, any sign, that the growing season will soon be upon us.

Thank goodness for ACNARGS where we've been talking plants and gardens and seed starting and the like since our February meeting. Our April program promises to bring us more visions of green – it doesn't get much greener than ferns – about which you can read the details in this newsletter.

Our April 20th meeting promises to be action-packed to include our annual seedling giveaway for members and ferns as our plant-of-the-month sale.

Other Chapter activities coming soon include an overnight trip to public and private gardens in the Philly/Delaware Valley area on April 26-28 about which you received a special email, our big plant sale/fundraiser on May 18<sup>th</sup>, a propagation workshop tentatively scheduled for June 8<sup>th</sup>, and a day trip (date yet to be determined) to gardens in and around Cazenovia. We're also planning a visit to Mary Stauble and Bill Stark's gardens following the June 8<sup>th</sup> workshop, timed to catch blooming *Primula japonica* and to view their latest gardening projects.

With all this ahead, you can see there is much to look forward to – besides the growing season and the plans we have for our gardens this year. The Chapter's activities are meant to help us all become better gardeners.

See you on April 20<sup>th</sup>!

Cheers,  
Carol

## NEW ACNARGS POSITION IN SEARCH OF A VOLUNTEER

*Carol Eichler*

The ACNARGS library is growing and that means we are looking for a volunteer to help us with the sign-out and check-in process. We currently have a simple system in place but with a volunteer in charge we have hopes for improving this process. Another aspect of this "job" would be to look at what books we should cull and what books we might add to the library. If this position sounds like something you'd enjoy, contact Carol (carolithaca@gmail.com or 269-7070).

## POTTING SOILS & OPEN HOUSE AT GREENTREE

*Holly McIntyre*

Last month, John Gaunt of **GreenTree Garden Supply** spoke to us about various soil amendments to include in our custom potting mixes. GreenTree Garden Supply is excited to announce that we're launching a line of potting soils made right here at our facility at 606 Elmira Road in Ithaca.

We've focused on using environmentally sustainable, high-quality materials, which we've purchased locally where possible. We're offering a range of soils for any gardener -- from GreenTree Seed Starter to GreenTree Pro, our high-porosity professional mix. Our nutrient-rich GreenTree Blends are appropriate for indoor and outdoor container gardening. We also offer made-to-order soil mixes, and we can provide any mix in bulk quantities.

Stop by to check out our soils, meet the soil scientist, and take home a sample at our open house from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday and Saturday, April 5-6.

But it's not all soils at GreenTree. We also sell the best in hydroponic gardening setups and grow lighting, plus nutrients, containers, irrigation and more. **Check us out for your spring gardening!**

## PRIMULA PARADISE

*Amy Olmsted, APS Director*

The New England chapter of the American Primrose Society is hosting the next National show at Tower Hill Botanic Gardens in Boylston, Massachusetts the first weekend in May. We think many of your members would be interested in attending as this show is always a great educational and inspiring look at our favorite genus! (*Primula auricula* was our plant of the month in March.)

There will be vendors selling lots of Primula as well as companion plants, talks by experts, a judged show of beautiful plants. The Seven States Daffodil Society will also be holding their yearly show at the same time, so you get 2 shows for 1 entry! More information [here](#).

## CALENDARS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

*Kathy Purdy*

A Google calendar widget has recently been added to the **ACNARGS blog sidebar**. It is a handy way to quickly identify upcoming ACNARGS events. Furthermore, if you use Google calendar to track your other appointments and birthdays, you can incorporate the ACNARGS calendar into your app with the click of a button. There is a similar calendar at **my website** for Upstate NY Gardening Events. And for a really comprehensive listing of events, hop on over to the **Upstate Gardeners' Journal website**.

Spring is a movement, a mighty surging upward. It isn't coaxed from above, but moved from below. The growing things break upward through the crust of chill earth the way a man gets out of bed on a zero morning — gradually, reluctantly, cover by cover, a toe at a time; not because some one has waked him, but because he has accumulated the necessary refreshment of sleep and is ready to go forth and do the day's work.

That day's work may not be anything very strenuous, and yet it has a purpose. The earliest flowers in the garden are usually small flowers — as if Nature herself were putting out a toe at a time — snowdrops, crocus, and scillas. If these can stand it, then she comes out flat-footed on the cold floor of the earth with hyacinths, narcissus, tulips, and iris pumila. Once up, she shivers into a kimono of leafing trees, washes her face with April rains, does up her hair into delightful flowering shrubs, and sallies forth — the vain old thing! — in a gorgeous creation of peonies and German iris and lush green grass. ~Richardson Wright, Truly Rural, 1922

## PLANT OF THE MONTH: FERNS

John Gilrein

Our April Plant of the Month is ferns from **Fancy Fronds**, in Gold Bar, Washington. Our fern selections will perform best in woodland conditions (except where noted), that is, in well drained soiled amended with organic matter in partial shade. They should be tolerant of the soil pH in most of our area, with Hart's tongue ferns preferring some alkalinity. Cultivation is easy: mulch after planting, ensure ferns do not dry out too much in the first year after planting, and last year's fronds may be cut off in the spring if the grower prefers a more manicured effect. Try to avoid planting in heavy, dense shade, sites with competition from tree roots, or in hot or dry exposures.

With ferns, "evergreen" should be understood to mean the fronds will stay green into the winter, though in our climate the stipes (stems) may weaken to the point the fronds will lie on the ground.

The *Asplenium trichomanes* would be the best fern below for planting in a trough, out of our selection. In general, fertilizer applications of compost, minimal/dilute chemical fertilizer, should be used--or none at all.



*Asplenium trichomanes* (pictured at left) is a local fern found growing near rocks and cliffs in lime rich areas; one reference reports that *A. trichomanes ssp. trichomanes* is found in acidic substrates.

Commercially available Hart's tongue ferns are cultivars of European ferns, reputedly much easier to cultivate than the naturally rare American Hart's tongue ferns. *Osmunda regalis* is interesting, as this fern has a huge native range, including Europe, N. America, and S. America, including tropical areas.

After a few years, ferns can be multiplied by division: the rhizome of long-running or short running ferns can be cut, then divisions dug up and replanted. This is easy if separate crowns or growing points are visible.

More fern photos at the end of this newsletter. Also visit the **Fancy Fronds** website for more photos and

information.

### WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

BBG on cultivation:

[http://www.bbg.org/gardening/article/how\\_to\\_grow\\_ferns](http://www.bbg.org/gardening/article/how_to_grow_ferns)

Glossary of fern related terms:

<http://www.fancyfronds.com/glossary.cfm>

Fern basics from American Fern Society:

<http://amerfernsoc.org/lernfrnl.html>

### BOOKS ON FERNS:

**Encyclopedia of Garden Ferns** Sue Olson

**Ferns for America Gardens** John T. Mickel

**Peterson Field Guide to Ferns: Northeastern and Central North America** B. Cobb, C. Lowe, and E. Farnsworth

Reference: **Ferns for American Gardens**, John T. Mickel, 2003, Timber Press.

NAME	HEIGHT	EG/SEG/DEC *	SPECIAL NOTES origin	HARDINESS ZONE (hardy to zone)
<i>Adiantum venustum</i> Himalayan maidenhair	6-12" short	SEG	Colonizing China/Himalayas	5
<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i> <i>ssp. trichomanes</i> Maidenhair spleenwort	6-12" short	EG	Good drainage NW US	2
<i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i> Hart's tongue cultivars 'Cristatum types' 'Undulatum'	short to medium 12-20" 6-12"	EG	Alkaline Good drainage Europe	5
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i> 'Frizellae' Tatting fern	6-12" short	DEC	Ireland	4
<i>Dryopteris affinis</i> 'Crispa Gracilis' Golden scale male fern cultivar	5-8" short	SEG	OK with ½ day sun UK	4
<i>Dryopteris crassirhizoma</i> Thick stemmed wood fern	3-4' tall	EG	E Asia	5
<i>Dryopteris tokyoensis</i> Sword leaved wood fern	2-4' med-tall	SEG/DEC	E Asia	5
<i>Osmunda regalis v. r.</i> <i>purpurascens</i> Purple stemmed royal fern	3-6' very tall	DEC	Moist to wet Sun OK if wet Europe	3
<i>Polystichum</i> <i>polyblepharum</i> Tassel fern	2' medium	EG	Japan & Korea	5
<i>Dryopteris complexa</i> (4") 'Stableri'	3-5' tall	SEG	England	5
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i> (4") 'Barnesii' (4")	3-4' tall	SEG	England	5
<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i> (4") 'Fluctuosa Cristata'	6-12" short	SEG	England	4
<i>Dryopteris lepidopoda</i> (4")	2' medium	EG	E Asia	6

\*EG = evergreen, SEG= semievergreen, DEC=deciduous

Please note that semievergreen and evergreen ferns may take a beating in a cold, snowy climate. The fronds may still be green during the winter, but they will not likely retain their form after being frozen and snow covered. The last 4 ferns in the table will be smaller plants than the others.

Plant of the Month is a member benefit, partially subsidized by your dues, to provide additional encouragement to attend meetings and expand the horizons of our members. The goal is to coordinate the

plant of the month to the meeting topic, though sometimes that is not possible. Please send suggestions for Plant of the Month to John Gilrein.

## DELAWARE VALLEY, HERE WE COME!

*Carol Eichler*

Please consider participating in an ACNARGS-sponsored trip to the Delaware Valley to visit both public and private gardens April 26, 27, and 28. Rock gardens should be in their prime and we can expect to see many bulbs, perennial flowers, shrubs, and trees in bloom at a time when our gardens are just breaking dormancy.

There are 2 trip options: a 3-day/2 night trip starting bright and early on Friday or join in later on Saturday for the 2-day/1 night option. We hope to carpool so please respond to Carol Eichler ([carolithaca@gmail.com](mailto:carolithaca@gmail.com)) **no later than April 20th** (earlier is even better!) if you plan to go. She will need to know whether you plan to drive and are willing to take an extra passenger or 2, or if you will need a ride.

We may meet at a central place in Ithaca where we can park unneeded cars for several days or simply make individual arrangements for assembling each carload - we'll have to wait and see what makes most sense since we may be departing from very different points of origin.

Travelers will also need to make their own motel arrangements with the contact information provided (see itinerary). This motel is modest, reasonably priced, and has been recommended by Mt. Cuba for those reasons (some area motels are quite pricey). Don't delay in making your reservation! Want to share a room? Contact Carol as soon as possible to link up with another traveler. She is coordinating drivers and riders, and serving as contact to garden hosts at the other end. We recently sent out the itinerary and garden descriptions. Further questions, contact Carol ([carolithaca@gmail.com](mailto:carolithaca@gmail.com) or 607-269-7070).

This trip is open only to ACNARGS members. (A good reason to join if you're not a member and want to go!)

## WANTED: YOUR PLANTS → MAY PLANT SALE

*David Mitchell*

Pot up your divisions now for the May plant sale. Please use **only soilless potting mix** and remember to **label every pot**. For your convenience, at our April meeting we'll have plenty of free plant labels for you to use. This is the largest source of revenue for the Chapter. Your donations of plants allow us to bring in great program speakers for our meetings.

The May plant sale will return to the Ithaca High School on May 18. Sale hours are 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Set up is Friday beginning around 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. and plants can be dropped off during those hours. Last minute set-up continues Saturday beginning at 8 a.m. when plants can also be dropped off.

Our booth will be located indoors, exact location to be determined. This year we're asking volunteers to sign-up for specific time slots in advance. We'll circulate the sign-up sheet at our April meeting and through the May newsletter. Though volunteering is not a requirement, it helps us spread the workload. Remember, members receive a 25% discount on their purchases!

My driveway is available for drop offs any time before the day of the sale if you can't make it to the high school Friday or Saturday morning. The driveway is on the Washington Street side of the corner of Washington and Esty Streets (402 Esty Street) in Ithaca. My phone number is (607) 342-3660 should you have any questions about the sale. For more information about

this year's plant sale call Tompkins County Cooperative Extension at (607) 272-2292 or visit the [plant sale website](#).

## OPEN GARDEN: BILL PLUMMER

*Bill Plummer*

On Sunday May 19<sup>th</sup> Bill Plummer will be hosting an "Open Garden" from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. If you are coming to the Ithaca Plant Sale on Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup>, feel free to come over that afternoon before you head on home. If you cannot make it either day give him a call at 607-962-2640 or email him at [remmulp@stny.rr.com](mailto:remmulp@stny.rr.com) for a visit. The address is 10 Fox Lane East in Gang Mills (Painted Post).

The garden was started in 1965 on a wooded lot of mature oaks, maples, pines and hickories and has been underplanted with native wildflowers, ferns, shrubs and trees. A shrub border of native plants obscures the deer fence that protects the rest of the garden from deer. Mountain laurel is used extensively as is the great laurel and native azaleas.

The epimedium lining the driveway invite you in. You will be greeted by a paper bark maple and mature rhododendrons. Then you will see the long stone wall separating the lawn from the woods and above the wall the swath of *Trillium grandiflorum*. Another foundation planting bed is filled with hellebores, spring bulbs, perennials and shrubs.

Moss-covered paths wind through both the front and back woods allowing close-ups of many of the wildflowers and ferns. Many of these have either self-seeded or been transplanted to provide accent.

The large flagstone patio off the living room overlooks the back woods. This patio is bordered by low broad-leaved evergreens and a foundation planting of ferns.

In addition to the native plants, the garden contains rock garden plants above the east-facing stone wall, numerous other shade loving plants as well as a number of Asian maples, a small collection of dwarf conifers, and a large collection of rhododendrons, including many dwarf species.

## PROPAGATION WORKSHOP

*Pat Curran*

The Adirondack Chapter is planning a propagation workshop on Saturday June 8. We have arranged to use the mist propagation greenhouse at Cornell's Ken Post Labs in order to root cuttings (mostly shrubs). Participants will be charged a small fee for supplies (perlite and growth hormone) and the greenhouse space. Here is the very tentative schedule: 8:30 am, meet at KPL to moisten the perlite for the propagation trays and discuss the procedure; 9 am, go take cuttings (or you can bring cuttings from home); 10 am, return to KPL headhouse to 'stick' cuttings in propagation trays; 11am, move propagation trays to the mist house and set up the mist schedule.

We want an early start so that the cuttings will not be water-stressed, in case it's a really hot day.

This is very tentative, and I still need to discuss details with CU staff, but if you are interested in participating, please e-mail me, Pat Curran, at [pc21@cornell.edu](mailto:pc21@cornell.edu)

Please start thinking about what you want to propagate, and how many cuttings of each you want to take. We have the whole 3x20 ft. bench reserved just in case we need that much space.

Greenhouse staff are concerned about insects and diseases being brought accidentally into the mist house (which cannot be sprayed), so I also need knowledgeable people to examine the cuttings for problems. If you can help with this, please let me know.

## OPEN GARDEN: BILL & MARY

*Bill Stark, Mary Stauble*

The Stark/Stauble garden at 232 Cedar Cove Rd in Lansing will be open for viewing after the Propagation Workshop on Saturday, June 8th. We'll be ready to discuss the construction details of three new tufa gardens. The garden also includes a new tree peony walk, candelabra primroses in a ravine garden, waterfalls, rills, ponds, and ten foot tall limestone ledges. The garden is still under construction - we are currently planting an eighty foot bamboo grove.

## 2013 PROGRAM PLANS

*Mark your calendars! Unless otherwise specified, all ACNARGS events start with a brown bag lunch at noon with the program following at 1 pm, and take place at the Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (see map on the last page).*

**April 20: Tom Stuart** will speak on "Ferns in the Garden, from *Adiantum* to *Woodsia*". We will also have a seedling swap which is free to members; a charge will apply to non-members. This meeting will be in the Kenneth Post Lab on Tower Rd on the Cornell University campus. As usual, brown bag lunch at noon; program starts at 1pm. Plant of the month: Ferns.

**May 18:** look for us at the **Ithaca Garden Fair and Plant Sale** at the Ithaca High School. Members get a 25% discount! Plan on volunteering for part of your visit.

**August 17:** Members-only plant sale and picnic.

**September 21: Matt Mattus** on non-hardy bulbs.

**October 19: Harvey Wrightman** on *Clay Crevice Construction: A new technique for new plants*

**November 9: Don Leopold**

Details as we learn them will be included in future newsletters, our blog, [acnargs.blogspot.com](http://acnargs.blogspot.com), and our Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/acnargs>.

## CALENDAR OF GARDEN EVENTS

### APRIL & MAY

**Citizen Pruner Training**, Mon. April 1, 8, 15, 7-8:30 pm, and Mon. April 22, 5:30-7 pm, at TCCE, see Earthkeeper for details

**NY Botanical Gardens Orchid Show** now thru April 22: [nybg.org/tos](http://nybg.org/tos)

**GROS Spring Orchid Show & Sale**, April 6-7, RSMC Eisenhart Auditorium, Rochester, **details**.

**Spring Into Gardening!** Sat. April 6, 9am-5pm, DeWitt Middle School, Ithaca – one day-event: registration includes choice of 5 workshops, box lunch, soil testing, and children's activities

**GreenTree Garden Supply Open House**, Fri., April 5 and Sat., April 6, check out our soils, meet the soil scientist, and take home a sample at our open house, 606 Elmira Road.

**Creating a Garden Using Basic Principles of Art**, April 13, 7-9pm, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Franklin

**Gardens 4 Humanity Training**, April-May, dates and locations TBA. For more info, contact Josh Dolan at [sapsquatch7@gmail.com](mailto:sapsquatch7@gmail.com)

**Getting Started with Vegetable Gardening**, Tues. April 16, 6:30-8:30 pm, Pat Curran, TCCE (this is a repeat of the Feb. 28 class)

**Prairie Restoration**, Hal Gardner, Wed. April 17, 7pm, Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, Unitarian Church Annex, 2nd floor

**Ferns in the Garden from *Adiantum* to *Woodsia***, Sat. April 20, time TBA, Adirondack Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society, Kenneth Post Lab, Cornell

**Earth Day**, Sun. April 21, 12-5pm, Ithaca Farmers' Market

**American Primrose Society 2013 National Primula Show**, May 3-5, Boylston, MA, **details**

**Compost Fair & 4-H Duck Race**, Sun. April 28, 12-4pm, TCCE

**Designing for Four Seasons of Interest**, May 4, 7-9pm, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Franklin



**Revisiting the Mire: Floristic Explorations at McLean Bogs**, Torben Russo & Robert Dirig, Wed. May 15, 7pm, Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, Unitarian Church Annex, 2nd floor

**Lilac Festival**, Rochester NY, early to mid May, 2013 dates not available yet

**Garden Fair Plant Sale**, Sat. May 18, 9am-2pm – SAVE THE DATE!!! AC-NARGS will have plants for sale, and members get a 25% discount.

## JUNE

**Designing a Garden with Rooms**, June 1, 7-9pm, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Franklin.

**Southern Cayuga Garden Club Garden Tour** (Genoa area), Sun. June 9, 2013, in the afternoon (exact hours TBA)

**Tompkins County Garden Conservancy Open Garden Day**, Sat. June 15, 2013, 10am-4pm (DEBI LAMPMAN'S GARDEN IS ONE OF THOSE FEATURED)

**Unusual Plants for Zone 4/5** June 22, 7-9pm, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Franklin, NY

## JULY & BEYOND

**Gathering of Gardeners**, Sat. Sept. 14, 2013, Rochester (featuring Barry Glick of Sunshine Farm & Gardens, and Karen Bussolini, garden writer and photographer)

## MORE FERN PHOTOS (PLANT OF THE MONTH)



*Asplenium scolopendrium*



*Dryopteris affinis* 'Crispa Gracilis'



*Dryopteris crassirhizoma*

## RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE/2013 BOARD MEMBERS

*If you want to volunteer, we'd love to hear from you!*

Chair: Carol Eichler, [carolithaca@gmail.com](mailto:carolithaca@gmail.com)

Program: John Gilrein, [basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu](mailto:basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu)

Program Committee Members: Nari Mistry, [nbm2@cornell.edu](mailto:nbm2@cornell.edu)

Secretary: Mary Stauble, [mes2@cornell.edu](mailto:mes2@cornell.edu)

Treasurer: BZ Marranta, [mmm10@cornell.edu](mailto:mmm10@cornell.edu)

Plant Sales Chair: David Mitchell, [dwm23@cornell.edu](mailto:dwm23@cornell.edu)

Plant Sales Committee Members: Michael Loos, BZ Marranta

Plant of the Month: John Gilrein, [basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu](mailto:basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu), Karen Hansen

Membership: Mary Stauble, [mes2@cornell.edu](mailto:mes2@cornell.edu)

New Member Hospitality: Terry Humphries, [terryh@workingsolutionsrome.org](mailto:terryh@workingsolutionsrome.org)

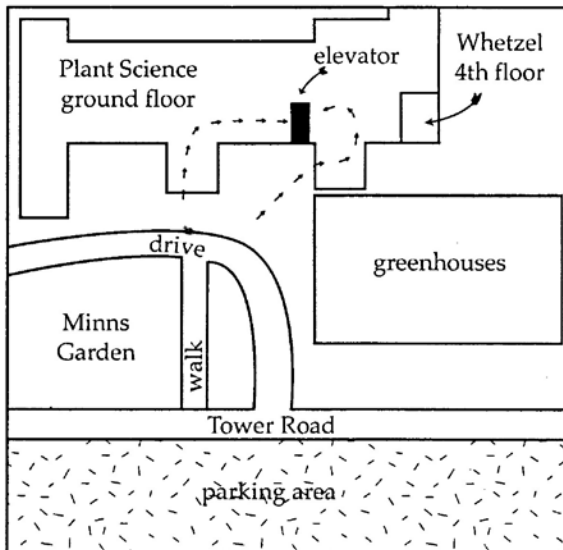
Newsletter Editor: Kathy Purdy, [kopurdy@gmail.com](mailto:kopurdy@gmail.com)

Newsletter Assistant: Pat Curran, [pc21@cornell.edu](mailto:pc21@cornell.edu)

Webmaster, Program Tech: Craig Cramer, [cdcramer@gmail.com](mailto:cdcramer@gmail.com)

## HOW TO GET THERE: MEETING ROOM MAP

This is on the Cornell University Campus.



[Click here for additional Cornell University maps and directions](#)

## GREEN DRAGON TALES

Published eight times a year (Feb., March, April, May/June, July/Aug., Sept., Oct. Nov./Dec.). Submit articles by the fourth Friday of the month preceding publication to Kathy Purdy, [kopurdy@gmail.com](mailto:kopurdy@gmail.com).

Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be in May 2013.