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May/June 2014

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## MAY 17 : ITHACA GARDEN FAIR & PLANT SALE

*David Mitchell, Plant Sales*

The time to pot up your perennial divisions is NOW! The May plant sale is at the Ithaca High School on May 17. Sale hours are 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We'll be there and so will many nurseries from around the area - heavenly for us plant-lovers.

We can use help with set up Friday - come anytime beginning around 4 p.m. and ending about 7 p.m. Bring your plant donations then or early Saturday. We'll be putting the finishing touches to our display beginning at 8 a.m.

Alternatively, 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 on Friday or Saturday. The 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** or visit the [plant sale website](#).

Our booth will be located indoors, exact location to be determined. This year we're asking volunteers to sign up for time slots before the sale. Though this is not a requirement to volunteer, it helps us spread the workload. We'll have a signup sheet at the next meeting or you can email me, David Mitchell at [dwm23@cornell.edu](mailto:dwm23@cornell.edu) to state availability. We need Friday set-up help, final Saturday set-up (8-9), sales people every hour (especially the 9-10 rush), and clean-up at 2.

Remember to pot your plants in soilless mix and to label each pot in advance (Latin name preferred). I'll have labels on hand at the sale setup (though it's preferable, if possible, to label your plants before sale day).

And lastly, don't forget to come to the Sale! We'll have some great plants at good prices and as a member you'll receive a 25% discount on your purchases from our table. We'll have a current membership list and 2014 membership forms on hand in case you have not yet renewed for the 2014 calendar year or want to join for the first time so you may do so at the time of your purchase.

Note: The Plant Sale replaces the usual AC-NARGS meeting.

## FROM THE CHAIR

*Carol Eichler*

It hasn't happened yet but I know it's coming - the dream where I wake up and the summer is gone and I don't remember where it went. It always takes me a moment to bring me back to reality – that spring is barely underway and summer days are still ahead. The gardening season seems to go fast and I plan to savor every minute. I have trouble convincing non-gardeners that all that hot, dirty, back-breaking digging and hauling is what I call fun. But it's true.

Our Chapter is taking its usual summer hiatus from regular speaker meetings but we have other activities planned as noted in this newsletter – our big plant sale fundraiser on May 17<sup>th</sup>, trough workshop on May 31<sup>st</sup>, and one-day garden tour on June 7<sup>th</sup> to the Cazenovia area. Before you know it, we will assemble again on August 16<sup>th</sup> at Upper Buttermilk State Park for our annual picnic and member-only sale, following which we invite you to enjoy a walk in the Buttermilk Creek gorge.

While you are in working in your garden, please consider donating any divisions you can spare for our two plant sales coming up. As I write this, spring is coming on fast and the garden is calling me to tend to a million and one things. Time to get out there. I'll be thinking of all of you out in your gardens and, like me, having great fun.

**Carol**

## NATIONAL MEETING REGISTRATION OPEN

Registration for the NARGS annual meeting in Santa Fe, New Mexico, August 28 - 30, 2014, is now available. Go to the NARGS Web site, [www.nargs.org](http://www.nargs.org), and click <https://www.nargs.org/santa-fe-registration>

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

*Mary Stauble*

Please welcome new member Wendy Fillmore of Ithaca! She joined at our Apr 19th meeting.

I have recently been sending 2 versions of the email announcing the newsletter - one is for those who have renewed, the other is for those members who have not yet renewed for 2014. Please pay attention to the text of the email - you want to be current so you can get the 25% member discount at our table at the upcoming Ithaca Plant sale! You can renew at the plant sale if that is more convenient.

## VELTHEIMIA BRACTEATA INFO

*Carol Eichler*

For those of you who got a Veltheimia seedling at the seedling exchange read [Matt Matthus' blog post about growing them](#). I have a couple established plants and yes, they are putting out babies.

They do go dormant and then tell me when it's their time to start growing. My larger bulbs haven't bloomed for me so that's my next challenge.

Weeds thrive in the company of humans. They aren't parasites, because they can exist without us, but we are their natural ecological partners, the species alongside which they do best. They relish the things we do to the soil: clearing forests, digging, farming, dumping nutrient-rich rubbish. They flourish in arable fields, battlefields, parking lots, herbaceous borders. They exploit our transport systems, our cooking adventures, our obsession with packaging. Above all they use us when we stir the world up, disrupt its settled patterns.

**Weeds: In Defense of Nature's Most Unloved Plants** by Richard Mabey, p. 12

## WURSTER: GARDEN IN PROGRESS

*David Mitchell and Carol Eichler*

Wednesday April 23 was a cold, wet, cloudy day – perfect for planting! We held a 2<sup>nd</sup> work session at the Wurster Rock Garden with 3 main objectives. Our first goal was to meet up with Lee Ginenthal, owner of **DerRosenmeister** and a local bonsai expert, to assess what to do with the *Pinus parviflora* 'Oliver Garden', a Japanese White Pine cultivar that has now grown out of scale with the rest of the garden. The second was to plant the new plants we recently purchased. The final objective was to get #1 and #2 goals accomplished quickly so we could go home, dry out, and warm up.



David Mitchell working at the 1<sup>st</sup> work session at the Wurster Garden

We're happy to say the rain took a break and the sun even peeked out briefly to allow us to accomplish all three goals. The pine received a drastic haircut (eliminating about 2/3 of the tree growth), transformed under Lee's vision. (Thank you, Lee!) The garden is starting to show some spring bloom and we can expect more flowers to emerge with each week.



Red pulsatilla and yellow draba in bloom



There was little sign of the many bulbs that had once been planted – possibly victims of neighborhood squirrels and chipmunks. One would hope “our” resident cat would do a better job of keeping the population in check.

We also developed a loose plan for the rest of the season. This will be a year to rejuvenate the garden. A number of plants have been extremely vigorous and they need to be contained. However we will wait until after our May plant sale and the flush of spring bloom has passed in the garden to hold some major work sessions. By then the work in our own gardens will have slowed down as well. Stay tuned as we will need many hands to get this work done. You'll be hearing from us.

For those new to our Chapter, the garden, located behind the Cooperative Extension building at 615 Willow Avenue in Ithaca, was created in 2000 in memory of Al Wurster. Al was

an avid and enthusiastic gardener who was an active participant in many gardening organizations including the Master Gardeners, L. H. Bailey Garden Club and of course ACNARGS. If you look closely, you'll find the etched stone that dedicates the garden to him.



The Garden is a sight not-to-be missed any time of year, but peak bloom occurs in mid-to-late May. Coming to the plant sale? Then why not plan to stop and view the garden?

## PROGRAM FINANCING

*Carol Eichler*

### UPDATE ON THE ADIRONDACK CHAPTER'S FUND OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Some of you have been around long enough to remember the Eastern Study Week-end that our Chapter hosted in 2000. The Conference was a huge success in many ways – it was well-attended, topics were timely, and it was quite financially profitable for the Chapter – netting approximately \$15,000.

After some months and years of discussion the Board recommended and the membership voted to place these funds in a Donor Advised Fund at the Community Foundation of Tompkins County. A major reason for this decision was precipitated by the fact that none of us wanted the responsibility of nor had the expertise to manage these funds. We chose to have them placed under professional management by a third party. It was at about that time that the Community Foundation was founded and it seemed a logical solution to our needs. The Fund has grown to \$21,933.01 as of December 31, 2013.

Our intention at that time, and continues to be, to grant these funds back to ACNARGS (or possibly other non-profit organizations) to further our mission. We also have to follow a few additional criteria set by the Community Foundation – including the fact that the grant funds must be used to benefit the public (thus the money could not be used for example, for a member-only benefit like our Plant-of-the-Month subsidy).

To date the ACNARGS Board has requested and received three grants. Two were to fund our speaker programs. This year's grant request was for \$2,300. Our speaker programs are always open to the public. The third grant was selected to honor Bill Dress by sponsoring a speaker for the fall Plantations lecture series, which is free and open to the public. We believed this grant was a public way to honor Bill, his career at Cornell University, and his love of gardens and the natural world.

## CALL FOR A TREASURER: COULD THIS BE YOU?

*Carol Eichler*

After four years as Chapter Treasurer, BZ will be stepping down in 2015. Fortunately she has given us plenty of time to find a replacement. The position requires managing our budget of approximately \$5,000 a year and tracking both revenue (plant sales, membership, plant of the month, etc.) and expense streams (speaker expenses, Wurster Garden, postage/copying, etc.). Being Treasurer has also meant being the “go to” person at our meetings when making purchases and making sure we have cash and cash boxes on hand for our plant sales. If you can manage your household finances, you can manage this position.

The Treasurer is elected by the membership for a two-year term and automatically becomes a member of the Board. The Board commitment includes a once a year planning retreat, the possibility of 1-2 additional meetings, but mostly in lieu of face-to-face meetings, we discuss pending business by email. As an all-volunteer organization we expect each Board member to be a self-starter in carrying out his/her duties. As a new Treasurer we can also help get you started and on-going assistance as needed.

If you have an interest in this position, please contact Carol Eichler, [carolithaca@gmail.com](mailto:carolithaca@gmail.com).

If I may add my editorial comment, I have served on the Board for so many years I've lost count – as Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and Newsletter Editor– and have found my involvement very enjoyable. I feel privileged to work with the other Board members because they have shown such dedication, accountability and creativity to make our Chapter the best it can be. An added benefit is that I have gotten so much more from the meetings and gained many friendships.

## A CRAM-PACKED DAY OF VISITING GARDENS IN CAZENOVIA

*Carol Eichler*

Our one-day trip to Cazenovia gardens on June 7th is shaping up nicely. We have lined up a full day of activities. Besides visiting the garden of Graham Egerton and Anne Redfern we have confirmed visits to the nearby gardens of Nancy Hook and Bobbi Cleaveland and hopefully one more garden we are trying to schedule.

We have planned an extended lunchtime to give you the opportunity to enjoy a leisure lunch at one of Cazenovia's downtown establishments or you may want to eat on the run while exploring one of two possibilities. You may choose to visit **Stone Quarry Hill Art Park** listed as #2 in National Geographic's top ten Sculpture Parks and Trails in **Secret Journeys of a Lifetime: 500 of the World's Best Hidden Travel Gems**. Alternatively, **Lorenzo State Historic Site** offers a historic view of Cazenovia Lake, formal gardens and the Dark Aisle arboretum. Both are very close by as are all 4 gardens on the tour.

Please contact Carol to receive the itinerary details when they are finalized and if you wish to arrange carpooling. We are scheduled to visit the first garden at 9:30 and will officially conclude by 4 p.m.

## WHAT YOU MISSED: BETSY KNAPP

*John Gilrein*



At our April meeting this year, Betsy Knapp of Rochester, NY did a presentation on trough planting. Betsy is a professional builder of very polished looking troughs, and also designs exhibits for the Philadelphia flower show. The demonstration revealed how quick and it easy it was to plant a trough, once all the materials were assembled: trough, moistened planting medium, rocks, plants, and stone mulch.

Betsy mixed her own planting medium using bagged potting soil and grit. The specific grit she used was hydroponic planting medium, but any grit would work, for example chicken grit. It's necessary to understand the pH needs of the plants going into the trough, and use compatible rocks and grit, e.g. use granite grit for dwarf ericaceous plants; limestone grit for plants that appreciate alkalinity. Mix grit into the planting medium to achieve the desired level of drainage, that is more rock

for moisture sensitive scree plants, and less for average rock garden plants. The planting medium should be moistened with enough water to hold together for ease in planting. She used 3 flat pieces of limestone in the trough, which added interest, increased soil depth, and provided

more drainage at the crowns of the plants. The stone needs to be positioned low enough in the trough soil to be stable, though not necessarily buried to 1/3 of its height.

Once the trough is packed with soil, the rocks can be positioned. The rock placement she used had the rocks aligned in an orderly but asymmetrical arrangement. The rocks were placed vertically with a narrow space (an inch or less) separating them. The soil was packed between the rocks, and then the plants were put in place with the aid of a chopstick. The goal should be an odd number of plants, again arranged asymmetrically. A dwarf conifer planted at the base of one rock looked good with its rock companion.

Once the plants are in, the trough can be checked from multiple perspectives. If one doesn't like the way the plants look, it's a simple matter to pull out plants and replant in a new arrangement. After plants, mulch covering the soil with gravel. Ideally, the trough, rocks used, and gravel should be compatible colors. Limestone or tufa looks good with a buff to gray trough; red sandstone might clash too much. After mulching, the trough should be watered, and you're done!

## TROUGH WORKSHOP MAY 31<sup>ST</sup>

*Mary Stauble*

We are planning a Trough Workshop on May 31st from 10am to 4 pm at the Stark/Stauble garden in Lansing. We will be building standard hypertufa troughs with the Hi Sand mix that was most popular at the last workshop. The cost of wet hypertufa will be \$0.60 per quart. This is \$0.24/qt less than the last workshop due to the gift of former member Robin Bell's supply of liquid acrylic. The largest trough at the last workshop required 31 quarts. Most troughs were 5 to 10 quarts. Troughs less than 1 foot can use 1" thick walls. 12" to 24" troughs should use 1 1/2" walls and larger troughs should use 2" walls.

If you plan to come, please sign up at an ACNARGS meeting or e-mail Mary at [mes2@cornell.edu](mailto:mes2@cornell.edu). When you sign up please estimate how many quarts of wet hypertufa you will need and indicate when you plan to arrive. (Multiply the sum of the wall areas in square inches by the wall thickness in inches. Then multiply by 0.0173 to obtain the number of quarts of tufa needed for your trough.) We hope attendees will spread out over the 6 hour period to prevent congestion. Most people have signed up to arrive at 10 or 11 pm, so there will be less congestion in the afternoon.

### YOU NEED TO BRING STUFF

- Building troughs is messy and the mix can burn your skin, so wear old clothes and bring rubber gloves.
- Small troughs can be built over forms while larger troughs should be built inside a form with sloping walls to prevent collapse.
- If you want to build a large trough with vertical walls, use inside and outside forms.
- Don't forget to bring a board covered with a sheet of plastic so that you can move your wet trough(s).
- Plan to use a plastic bag to cover your trough to keep it moist. We'll have tables under a tent on the front lawn so a light rain shouldn't be a problem.

You can bring a lunch and eat on the beach. We will supply finger food on toothpicks (your hands will be dirty) and drinks.

Remove the trough from its form after 24 hours. The hypertufa will still be soft and you can use a wire brush and tools to texture its surface or sandpaper to smooth it. Keep the hypertufa damp by sealing it inside a plastic bag and let it cure for several weeks in a shady spot. Then leave it outside in the rain to reduce its alkalinity before planting.

**Directions:** From 34B in Lansing turn onto Algerine Rd. (towards the lake). After 1 mile turn right on Cedar Cove Rd. Cedar Cove is a private gravel road. There's a small sign set back from the road. Follow Cedar Cove for 1 mile, going right at the two forks. When you're near the lake, look for our green roof and the low Stark/Stauble sign at the top of our driveway.

The workshop has been timed to coincide with the flush of *Primula japonica*, and Mary will be available for tours during the workshop.

## WE MEET AGAIN IN AUGUST

*Carol Eichler*

Since it will be a while until our next newsletter - July/August issue, I want to remind you now of our next "official" meeting on August 16th. Our agenda includes the annual members-only plant sale followed by dish-to-pass lunch. We have rented the picnic shelter at the upper end of Buttermilk State Park where we'll assemble beginning at 10 a.m. for you to bring in your plant donations followed by - as soon as they organized - the sale itself, followed by lunch. A short distance from the shelter is a beautiful gorge to hike (short but steep and often wet) for those who wish to stay and work off some of that lunch! Watch the next newsletter for more details.

## 2014 PROGRAM PLANS

*Mark your calendars! Unless otherwise specified, all local 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).*

**May 17:** 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.

**May 31:** Trough Workshop

**June 7:** Cazenovia Garden Tour

**August 16:** Members-only plant sale and picnic.

**September 20:** Judy Glattstein, topic to be determined

**October 18:** Mike Kintgen, Rock Gardening, and Alpines of Colorado and Wyoming

**November 8:** John Gilrein, A Tour of Newfoundland

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

**Keeping Critters out of Your Garden**, Thurs. May 1, 6:30-8:30 pm, 4H Acres

**Gorgeous Perennials for Your Garden**, Tues. May 6, 6:30-8:30 pm, Pat Curran, TCCE

**Dividing Daylilies & Other Perennials**, Wed. May 7, 6:00-8:00 pm, Pat Curran, TCCE

**Earth Day**, Sun. May 4, 1-5 pm at Boynton Middle School

>>**Garden Fair Plant Sale, Sat. May 17, 9am-2pm – SAVE THE DATE!!!**<<

**After-the-Sale Sale**, Tues. May 20, 3 to 6 pm, TCCE. MG plants from the Plant Sale, PLUS garden-related yard sale items – books, tools, garden gadgets, houseplants, pots.

**Discovering New Life in Great Smoky Mountains National Park**, Wed. May 21, 7pm, Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, Unitarian Church Annex, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

**Beautiful Shrubs & Vines**, Wed. June 18, 6:30-8:30, Pat Curran, TCCE

### GARDEN SHOWS/EVENTS in 2014:

**Lilac Festival**, Rochester NY, May 9-18, 2014

**Tree Peony festival** at Linwood Gardens in Pavilion, mid May to early June



**Southern Cayuga Garden Club Garden Tour** (King Ferry area), Sun. June 8, 2014, 1-5 pm (starts at King Ferry Winery with a free tasting with ticket)

**Fall Creek Garden Tour**, Sun. June 15, 11am-3pm

**Sycamore Hill Garden Tour**, Sat. June 14, 11am-3pm, 2130 Old Seneca Turnpike, Marcellus. Call 315-676-4850 for tickets.

**Annual Plastic Pot Swap**, Fri. June 20-Wed. June 25, 9-6 pm, TCCE (only pots and flats in good condition will be accepted); Canning Jar Swap is simultaneous

**Dryden Open Gate Garden & Art Tour**, Sat. Aug. 16, 9am-2pm (5 gardens for \$5)

**Gathering of Gardeners**, Sat. Sept. 13, 2014, David Culp and Elizabeth Licata, speakers

## RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE/2014 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 Marranca, [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 Marranca

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)

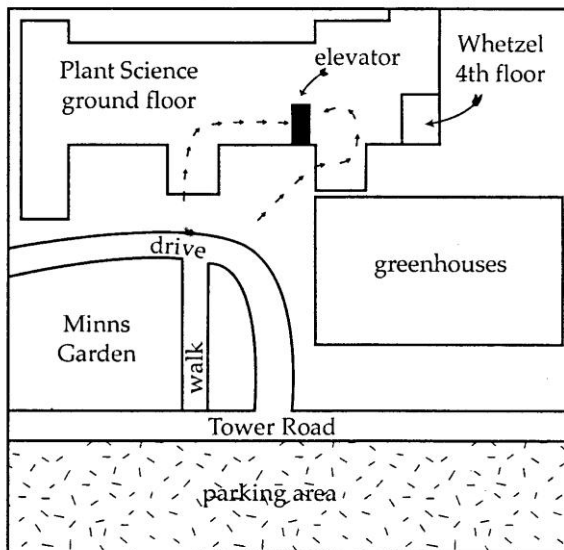
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Webmaster, Program Tech: Craig Cramer, [cdcramer@gmail.com](mailto:cdcramer@gmail.com)

## HOW TO GET THERE: MEETING ROOM MAP

The Plant Science Building is located at 236 Tower Road on the Cornell University Campus.



## 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 July 2014.