

ADIRONDACK CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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October 2014

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OCTOBER 18: MIKE KINTGEN

John Gilrein

Note new start time and new location for this meeting.

Mike Kintgen, plant enthusiast, plant explorer, and senior horticulturist at the Denver Botanic Garden where he oversees seven gardens including the rock alpine garden and the rock garden at Mount Goliath, a mountain peak section of the Mount Evans area. He will be presenting two talks starting at 11:00 a.m.: "Searching for plants on some of the most beautiful places on earth" and "Plants of the western US for east coast gardens" (this includes small plants from the steppes and plains as well as Alpines).

Our October meeting will be held at Kiwanis Hall, the main building at 4 H Acres east of the Ithaca Airport, due to a Cornell Home football game.

Join us at 11:00 a.m. on October 18th at 4-H Acres. Following the first talk we will have bring-your-own bag lunch and social time with drinks provided. Goodies always welcome for sharing. The second talk will start at approximately 1 p.m.



Directions to 4-H Acres : 4-H Acres is located at 418 Lower Creek Road outside of Ithaca. From Ithaca take Route 13 North past the airport (Warren), past Hanshaw Road (on the right). Turn on the first left onto Lower Creek Road. From Route 13 in Dryden Lower Creek Road is the 1st right once you pass the traffic light at the junction of Route 366. Look for the green "4-H Acres" sign. See map at the end of this newsletter.

FROM THE CHAIR

Carol Eichler

My husband got the call Thursday morning. The contractor would be coming the next day to install our replacement septic system. 24 hours notice to get ready...except we didn't have any details about where the system would be placed, just an inkling of the mess we should expect.

I say inkling because back in late July when the old system failed, we put in a call to our contractor and he came with a backhoe and someone from the county health department. That time it was about 30 minutes notice. An hour later we had a 3-foot test hole, a long, deep overflow trench leading from the old septic tank, and mounds of soil and compacted earth.

Back to the present, my husband and I spent a good part of the next 24 hours moving plants and stone from the front walkway and speculating where the excavations would be, once the outflow pipes left the house. I was so focused on doing what had to be done I never took any "before" photos. Darn.

In the end the contractor got delayed and the work didn't start until Monday. So now the fun begins rebuilding the gardens. I'm sure the plants will go in a lot slower than they came out.

To look on the bright side, I didn't have to move any trees or shrubs, the system design missed most of my gardens, and I won't have to live through this experience ever again (I hope!). And by the time of our October meeting, the ordeal will be over!

Our October meeting is a very special one. Note the different location – 4-H Acres – and different time since he's presenting 2 talks. Look elsewhere in this newsletter for the details.

I hope to see you there!

Carol

PLANT OF THE MONTH: CORYDALIS SOLIDA

John Gilrein

Our October POM is *Corydalis solida*. *Corydalis* is a huge genus of plants in the poppy family, Papaveraceae. The similarity is more evident with bleeding hearts and Dutchman's breeches than with poppies. *C. solida* is native to a wide area of Europe, from western Europe to the Ural mountains, and Scandinavia to Italy.

C. solida grows from bulblike corms. The standard color is a mauve purple, which we previously had as a POM. Now named varieties are available in specific colors. We will have 2 varieties for our POM, 'Beth Evans' a pink, and 'George Baker' a red, from Brent & Becky's bulbs in Gloucester, Virginia. Beth Evans was the wife of an alpine gardener at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh; George Baker was a mountaineer. *C. solida* is very easy to grow, and spreads by seed. Reading about its height, hardiness, and cultural preferences could make one confused, as there is inaccurate/conflicting information on the internet. *C. solida* is tolerant of many soil types and variable pH, hardy to at least Zone 4, and it is a spring ephemeral, going dormant (estivating) in the summer. It can be planted with other perennials that would overshadow it later in the season. General planting recommendation would be humus rich soil in part shade, though it would do fine in ordinary soil in full sun, since it's dormant by the time the soil

normally dries out. Plant 4 to 5 inches apart, and around 3 to 4 inches deep. Height is 6 inches or so. If you do not want mixed colors, plant each variety in a separate area (though bees may cross pollinate them).



Corydalis George P. Baker (red)
Photos courtesy of Brent & Becky's
Bulbs

Corydalis Beth Evans (pink)
Photo courtesy of Brent &
Becky's Bulbs



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.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Mary Stauble

Please welcome new member Marlene Kobre from Ithaca who joined at the September meeting! Our membership for 2014 now stands at 71 members. That's one more than last year and 3 fewer than in 2012. We have 49 individual members, 12 household memberships, 8 individual life members and 1 household family membership.

Our 2014 Member Directories are out! You received it electronically via email or for those who have opted to receive the newsletter by snail mail, the directory was sent to you by parcel post last month.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED

Want to contribute to your rock garden chapter in a meaningful way? Please consider signing up as newsletter editor for next year. Kathy has done a terrific job setting up a template and our contributors are very reliable at submitting their articles on time so that pulling the newsletter together is a cinch. The newsletter is constructed from a MS Word document which means our editor should have some basic computer skills (but certainly not desktop publishing).

The newsletter is an important communication tool to keep our members informed about upcoming meetings and engaged in the activities of our Chapter. That means it is essential that our editor be timely in getting the newsletter completed so that it can sent out and posted online. Mary Stauble and Craig Cramer take care of newsletter distribution.

Carol Eichler has agreed to fill in as editor for the remainder of this year. Please contact her if you are interested in this position for the 2015 program year.

NEWS FROM NARGS

Carol Eichler

By all reports the National Conference in Santa Fe was a great success. (No, I didn't attend) Matt Matthus' blogged about it [here](http://www.growingwithplants.com/2014/09/sante-fe-botanizing-forest-and-sub.html). (<http://www.growingwithplants.com/2014/09/sante-fe-botanizing-forest-and-sub.html>)

Speaking of Matt he was elected as the new NARGS President and Betty Ann Spar was elected Vice-President. Three new Board of Directors were elected as well: Brian Carson, Payayoti Kelaidis, and David White.

Mark your calendars now to attend the next National Conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan on May 7-10. The meeting host will be the NARGS Great Lakes Chapter. While they haven't revealed the details, they are expecting three outstanding speakers and daytime visits to some of the excellent gardens that abound in that part of Michigan. There will also be a post-conference trip to the Upper Peninsula – an unusual opportunity, and one that promises to be quite exciting.

TIME TO THINK SEEDS

Carol Eichler

Yes, it's that time of year... again. Time to think about the NARGS Seed Exchange. Joyce Fingerut reminds us all that now is the time we should be collecting and packaging our own seeds from our gardens, or from the wild.

She has asked our Chapter to help in dividing and re-packaging the donated seeds, as we have done for the last 2 years. Because of such a receptive response from our members at last month's meeting, we are prepared to help out again this year.

While more information will be forthcoming this is what we can expect:

- The seeds and packaging supplies are mailed to our Chapter Coordinator just before Thanksgiving.
- We will handle 150 taxa, the same number as last year.
- So that no one group gets stuck packaging the same items each year (this is how we learn what seeds look like) we will receive seed from a completely different alphabetical range.
- We need to complete our phase of packaging on or around January 1st so basically we have a “long month” to complete our assignment.

NARGS is very appreciative of our commitment as one step in a rather complex and remarkable process that the NARGS Seed Exchange represents- relying as it does on hundreds of people and thousands of hours for its success. Many of our members find it to be a rewarding way to support NARGS... and have fun besides.

I am looking for someone in the Chapter to step up as Coordinator this year. Basically, the Coordinator is responsible for receiving the seed, providing temporary storage (3-4 smallish boxes), scheduling work sessions (reserving a work space, collecting sign-ups, etc.), and lastly, sending the packaged seed onto the distribution phase on schedule. This is a short-term commitment requiring minimal time and a great way to support our Chapter! Plus National offers very detailed instructions so nothing is left to guesswork. Please contact Carol Eichler.

A CONIFER-FUL WEEKEND

Carol Eichler

At least 4 ACNARGS were caught “playing hooky” instead of attending the Chapter’s September program, but it was for a good reason. They were attending the American Conifer Society Regional Meeting in Rochester and the location and agenda were just too tempting to pass up.

The Meeting was kick-started Friday evening with the keynote speaker, Rich Eyre of Fox Willow Pines Nursery in Woodstock, Illinois. The man is knowledgeable, inspirational, and most of all a storyteller who really got our taste up for viewing some of these wonderful conifers he spoke of up close and personal.



Sciadopitys verticilatta
cultivar, Umbrella pine, in
hypertufa planting at Jerry
Kral’s garden

Bright and early Saturday the 158 of us in attendance boarded 3 buses transporting us to 4 amazing and different gardens. After spending time at the Pinetum at Highland Park we ventured to Jerry and Karen Kral’s garden. Speculation as to how so many of us would “fit” in his city garden was soon dispelled because of the many intimate “rooms” he has created in a surprisingly small space. There’s so much detail to see the space didn’t seem small at all.

We proceeded to see more amazing gardens. Because of my bias towards rock gardens I really appreciated David Swinford’s aptly displayed dwarf conifers at eye level along a concrete ledge/wall. Brooke Henninger created an intimate retreat with her small lot using conifers of various shapes, sizes and gradations of soothing green. Notably her design omitted the use of blues and yellows that other gardens commonly used. Lastly but certainly not least was Merton Bohonos’ garden where well-tended bonsai framed his patio. Interestingly but perhaps not surprisingly, he used bonsai techniques – training

growth above and pruning roots below ground - to shape and limit the growth of his conifer beds.

That meeting concluded with dinner and annual auction and raffle, which raises funds for their scholarship program. The bidding wars over choice conifers – many of them not available in the trade and truly one-of-a-kind (many selected from the late Dennis Dodge's Bethlehem Nursery in Connecticut) - and companion plants such as Japanese maples and ginkgoes brought top dollar prices. Rock garden people aren't the only gardeners who go crazy over plants.

Sunday morning a tailgate sale was held with 7 nurseries represented including several familiar ones from the Rochester/Syracuse area but also ones from Connecticut, Tennessee and another from Oregon. Plants, plants, and more plants were available for purchase.

The meeting was great fun and very inspirational. Conifers are great complements in the rock garden, especially the miniatures that by definition grow less than 1 inch a year. Next September ACS is holding its annual meeting in Sonoma, California. It's on my calendar.



Betsy Knapp built tufa garden at Jerry Kral's.

As a footnote: I was pleased to meet up with Art Trimble who as 90-something is still very active as a docent at Highland Park and no doubt active in the greater Rochester garden community. Art was a member of our Chapter until the Genessee Valley was formed. These days driving to Ithaca is too much for him but I hope he might invite others from Rochester to join us for our October meeting and thus provide transportation for him to attend.

UPCOMING ACNARGS PROGRAMS

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).

October 18: Mike Kintgen, Rock Gardening, and Alpines of Colorado and Wyoming at 4-H Acres, 418 Lower Creek, Ithaca, NY (see map on last page of this newsletter)

November 8: John Gilrein, A Tour of Newfoundland, Annual Meeting and Dish-to-Pass, location to be determined (watch for announcement in the November newsletter)

December dates TBD: Seed packaging session(s): sign-up at Oct. and Nov. meetings

February 21: Member's Share; more information will be forthcoming

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

CALENDAR OF GARDEN EVENTS

Oct. 2-26: Kiku: The Art of the Japanese Garden, New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY

Oct. 8: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON NATURAL HISTORY AND CONSERVATION AT MALLORYVILLE BOG by Bob Beck; Finger Lakes Native Plant Society (FLNPS) Lecture, 7 p.m. Unitarian Church Annex, Buffalo St. Entrance

Oct. 15: Personal Habitat: Creating a Haven for Wildlife (and Yourself) by Julie Zickefoose, Plantations Lecture, 7:30 p.m. Statler Auditorium

Oct. 18: FLNPS ANNUAL SEED COLLECTION OUTING led by Krissy Boys, Meet at CCE at 1pm

Oct. 20, 6:30-8:30 pm: Getting Your Landscape Ready for Winter at Tompkins County Cooperative Extension (TCCE)

October 29: "A Living Sympathy with Everything That Is" by Scott Peters, Cornell Plantations Lecture, 7:30 p.m. Statler Auditorium

Nov. 10 - Nov. 22: 3rd Annual Leaf Swap and Compost Giveaway, at TCCE

Nov. 12: An Introduction to Classical Bonsai Art by William N. Valavanis, Cornell Plantations Lecture, 7:30 p.m. Statler Auditorium

Nov. 19: ICE AGES IN THE FINGER LAKES. Lecture by David Barclay, SUNY Cortland, (FLNPS) Lecture, 7 p.m. Unitarian Church Annex, Buffalo St. Entrance

RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE/2014 BOARD MEMBERS

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

Chair: Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com

Program: John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu

Program Committee Members: Nari Mistry, nbm2@cornell.edu

Secretary: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu

Treasurer: BZ Marranca, mmm10@cornell.edu

Plant Sales Chair: David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu

Plant Sales Committee Members: Michael Loos, BZ Marranca

Plant of the Month: John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu, Karen Hansen

Membership: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu

New Member Hospitality: Terry Humphries, terryh@workingsolutionsrome.org

Newsletter Editor: Carol Eichler (temporary through 2014), carolithaca@gmail.com

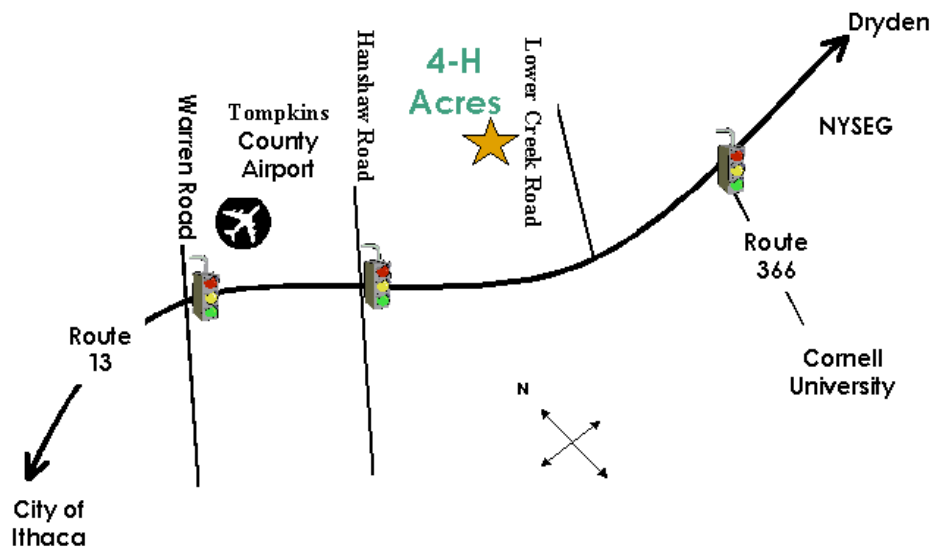
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GREEN DRAGON TALES

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 Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be in Nov. 2014.

Directions to 4-H Acres



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