



ADIRONDACK CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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October 2015

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Oct. 17 John Gilrein
- From the Chair
- Plant-of-the-Month times 2
- Seed Collecting & Propagation
- News from NARGS
- Upcoming ACNARGS Programs
- Calendar of other garden programs
- About Us: ACNARGS
- About NARGS National
- Photo of the Month

OCTOBER 17: MOUNTAIN PLANTS OF WYOMING

John Gilrein, Chair

Our October speaker needs no introduction – it's John Gilrein, long-time ACNARGS member, sometimes speaker, and current Chair of the Chapter. In August 2014, John and his family visited daughter Erica, a student at University of Wyoming in Laramie. His slide presentation will show photos mainly from high places in Wyoming, including Vedawoo, the Snowy Range, and the Wind River Range, taken on day hikes (first 2 locations) or backpacking (second location). Most of Wyoming is a semi-arid steppe climate (high elevation, short grass, high plains), with the mountains receiving more precipitation. Laramie, WY is at an elevation of around 7,000 feet, and all the trips were at even higher elevations up to 11,000 feet in the Wind River Mountains.

John is a self-proclaimed pathological gardener who enjoys outdoor activities in wild places, especially when there are interesting plants.

Our meeting will be held in the classroom at Ken Post Lab, Post Circle off Tower Road, Cornell University, same as last month. It will not be Cornell homecoming so parking should be easier but it's always wise to allow a little extra travel time. Bag lunch begins at noon. Drinks will be provided; refreshments to share are always welcome. Program begins at 1:00 p.m.

Directions if you need them can be located here: To get driving directions, go to [Cornell map](https://www.cornell.edu/about/maps/) (<https://www.cornell.edu/about/maps/>). Tower Road construction has been completed. There is free week-end parking in the large parking lot at the corner of Tower and Judd Falls Roads). Do read parking signs carefully as some require permits even on week-ends.

FROM THE CHAIR

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

Now that it's nearing the end of the season, I'm seeing some of the projects that I hoped to finish, and did not yet start. A few of them, like cutting down the topped maple tree, will get done in the next month. After seeing all these projects for several months, if not years, I finally decided I need to work on simplifying the garden. Not that that will make the garden easy, as it is far from small. I have been tolerant (another word for lax) of volunteers that sowed their way into less than ideal places. Not liking to waste (kill) excess plants, I have tolerated plants being out of place, like garlic in 10 different areas of the garden.

Why didn't I think about simplifying years ago? Maybe I was just focused on all there is to do. Some of the plans for simplifying are:

- to grow garlic in only 2 locations, which will make removing the scapes and digging the bulbs easier;
- only allow 1 clump of garlic chives, and fewer clumps of ornamental onions, and fewer plants of *Allium hollandicum*, as these need deadheading to prevent excessive seeding about;
- edging borders, which will improve the garden's appearance and impair spread of thugs like creeping charlie (*Glechoma hederacea*) into the garden;
- reducing little grassy nooks which complicate mowing;
- getting rid of invasive groundcovers like yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*);
- covering the dormant vegetable garden with leaves or paper to keep the early spring weeds from growing;
- cutting down a large white willow (*Salix alba*), which has a nice presence due to its imposing size but is always dropping branchlets and sometimes branches, and is a greedy water hog; and
- getting rid of most of the patches of black raspberries.

I won't get all THAT done this Fall, but I will at least get started on it. The time saving I can reap should give me more time for gardening—fun things like hiking or reading. Some of the tasks that did not get done on time this year were:

- getting the vegetable garden weeded and planted;
- planting out trees and shrubs in pots;
- potting up my seedlings from NARGS seed from the seed exchange;
- planting out my newly acquired plants;
- pruning trees; and
- expanding the rock garden.

I think it was a good gardening season (still is actually), and I'm feeling positive in spite of the "it could be better" tone here. Next month I intend to focus on the upside of this gardening season.

You won't want to miss the October meeting, with a good presentation on Wyoming alpine, rocks, & scenery (no need to bring the last of the tomatoes to throw) and LOTS of great plants to add to your gardens. Hope to see you at the Ken Post Lab classroom on October 17th!

PLANT-OF-THE-MONTH: A POM BONANZA

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair



Hyacinthus
'Dark
Dimension'

October is going to be "bonanza month" for plant-of-the-month! We're going to have multiple offerings. *Hyacinthus orientalis* 'Dark Dimension' will be a member appreciation gift (free), one bulb per person with any extras for sale. This is a new variety in an unusual color. Like all new varieties, it's going for a premium price. *Crocus tommasinianus* is a species crocus that will spread if the rodents don't munch on it; these will be in lots of a dozen. *Cyclamen cilicium* is similar to *C. hederifolium*, with marbled foliage and pink or white blossoms. It's found in Turkey, at quite a range of elevations, likely the reason it's so hardy. *C. cilicium* is not quite as hardy as *C. hederifolium*, so it would be beneficial to plant it in a somewhat protected location. Hardiness is unfortunately not an exact science, and references give varying hardiness ratings to this plant. We value experimentation, though it does have its risks.



Crocus tommasinianus

All these plants want soil with decent drainage, especially *C. cilicium*. If you have clay or clay loam soil, the soil may need to be amended to improve the drainage for this plant. We don't have a photo of *C. cilicium*, but it will look a lot like *C. hederifolium*.

Plant Name	Planting Depth	Flower Color Bloom time	Height	Exposure Hardiness Zones
Hyacinth 'Dark Dimension' (bulb) 1 bulb FREE!	8 inches	Indigo & black Mid Spring	6 inches	Sun – Part Sun 4 to 8
<i>Crocus tommasinianus</i> (corm)	5 inches	Purple Late winter/ early Spring	7-12 inches	Sun – part sun 3 to 8
<i>Cyclamen cilicium</i> (corm)	3 inches	Pink or white September/ October	4 inches	Shade 5 or 6 to 9

BUT WAIT...THERE'S MORE! ANOTHER POM SELECTION!

Colette De Haan & Vashti De Haan, Plant-of-the-Month Coordinators

We are able to offer dwarf conifers and a couple of plants that fill a similar visual niche to our members at discounted prices. These plants are not readily available in the area, especially at this more affordable, smaller size being offered. We won't be able to set prices until we have final confirmation that all plants ordered will be shipped (they vary in price a bit). The plants are being supplied by the wholesale Iseli Nursery in Boring, OR.

Planted into the garden in fall, well-watered until the ground freezes, then protected with coarse mulch such as evergreen boughs should ensure winter survival and good growth next spring. Selections were made with an effort to thwart the habits of our voracious deer population. Our source has made a few cancellations - disappointingly of varieties well-suited for troughs - and could change again. Please note the suitability for RG (rock garden) and/or trough, keeping in mind that growing in a trough generally requires one zone colder than your usual climate zone. The list of trees to be offered, as of now, is:

Abies koreana 'Oberon' RG

Picea abies 'Hildburghausen' Trough/RG

Picea glauca 'Achat' RG

Pinus mugo 'Teeny' - Trough(at least for a few years)/RG

Buxus 'Justin Brouwers' - evergreen for a sheltered spot for the more adventurous/zone-pushing among us

Ulmus minor 'Jacqueline Hillier' - deciduous, but good structural winter interest in a trough, RG or Bonsai container for those who are looking for a choice non-conifer specimen.

Here's more detailed information:

Abies koreana 'Oberon' (Korean Fir) USDA Hardiness Z: 5 (-10 to -20 F)

Dwarf Seedling Selection (2-3" per year, producing a small tree 24" h x 12-20" w)

Very slow-growing with short dark green needles, more closely resembling a Hebe than a conifer, with striking white buds in autumn and winter. Usually it does not form a leader, but with a little help it will manage to grow upright. Naturally it becomes a small rounded dwarf with many upright shoots, and white winter buds give a beautiful appearance.

Picea abies 'Hildburghausen' (Norway Spruce) USDA Hardiness Z: 5 (-10 to -20 F)

Miniature cushion/bun. (Less than 1" per year; 8" - 12" at 10 years)

A miniature globe shaped Witch's Broom of Norway Spruce. Leaves very small and light green. Every terminal shoot grows the same length every year. First listed by G. Bohme, Germany about 1990.

Picea glauca 'Achat' (Dwarf Alberta spruce) USDA Hardiness Z: 3 (-30 to -45)

Dwarf (2-3" per year; 2' x 1' at 10 years)

Very nice dwarf, narrow conical form for a rock garden or small conifer garden. Can survive down to zone 3a provided that it is totally covered for the winter. Can take extreme cold but needs protection from drying sun and winds during winter and early spring before the ground thaws.

Pinus mugo 'Teeny' (Mugo Pine) " Same as *P. mugo* 'Sherwood Compact' " (Gelderen & Smith)

USDA Hardiness Z: 3 (-30 to -45 F) Dwarf (1-6" per year; 3-6' at 10 years)

Dwarf, compact mounding/bun/globose, very slow growing, short needles. Information from the Conifer Society states this plant will grow approximately 1" per year and stay globose for quite some time.

Buxus 'Justin Brouwers' (Boxwood) Hardiness Z: 5b-6 Exposure: Sun, Part Sun, Shade

(1"-3" per year; 2' h x 2'w at 10 years; max size: 2.5'w x 3.5'h) Slow to medium growth rate

One of the best compact, mounding to rounded cultivars available. Responds very well to shearing or pruning. Small leaves with deep green winter color. Naturally develops into a spectacular somewhat rounded plant. Very low maintenance. Shows sensitivity to poorly drained soils. Sun-tolerant, some shade preferred but not required.

Ulmus minor 'Jacqueline Hillier' Dwarf Field Elm Tree. USDA Hardiness Z: 4 Full Sun
 Deciduous Dwarf (2' x 3' at 10 years)
 Perfect for bonsai training, slow growing, dwarf elm tree discovered in Birmingham, England.
 Great for trough, rock garden, patio or landscape planting. Natural canopy shape gives the look
 of a mature full size tree in a dwarf form.

SEED COLLECTING AND PROPAGATION THOUGHTS

Carol Eichler, Newsletter Editor

Are you a beginner at this – that is, someone who wants to try their hand at growing plants from seed? Here are some thoughts (strictly my own).

First, I suggest passing on the seed collection phase by ordering seed from the generous donors to the NARGS Seed Exchange. For a nominal fee you can order up to 25 selections. If you volunteer to help our Chapter with seed packaging, you can order an additional 10 selections. To participate however, you must be a member of NARGS National. First-round ordering begins near the end of December and can be done very conveniently online. The seed list, nearing 2,000 species, contains internet links to many of the plants for reference. Alternatively the Chapter receives many packets of surplus seed that is leftover after all the orders have been filled. These are sent to the Chapter in the spring (March or April?) and made available at our meetings at absolutely no cost to you.

Second suggestion, and one that I tried this past year with satisfactory success, is to “let nature takes its course” with stratification (that is, the warm and/or cold periods required for germination). I sowed my seeds in the winter, shortly after receiving them, and placed them outdoors – in a cold frame at first, then later as the weather warmed up, in a protected spot. (I didn't use hardware cloth for critter protection but think I may try that this year)

I had some seed germinate as soon as day temperatures consistently reached 40°F while most germinated much later and some are still dormant in the pots. I saved a lot of work (and cost on my electric bill) by no longer needing to set up and monitor lights but I still had to keep a watchful eye on watering especially through the summer. The trade-off of course is that the plants grew on their timetable, not mine.

One last word of advice, which I heard last month from Krissy Boys and it needs to become my mantra, “Trust the seeds.” I have to admit I far prefer to propagate from cuttings because I can “see” them. Sowing seed takes an act of faith, especially when the seed is so small!

For the more ambitious, Rosemarie and Krissy gave us a wonderful reference table outlining the needs of many common rock garden plants. (There were extra copies if you did not receive one that will be available at our October meeting). They also provided several online resources for researching this information including

- Norm Deno's monographs (3), downloadable from USDA National Agricultural Library Digital Collections
- T. Clothier's index <http://tomclothier.nort.net/index.html> as a quick reference and accompaniment to Deno's
- Ontario Rock Garden & Hardy Plant Society Germination Guide: <http://www.onrockgarden.com/germination-guide/plants>.

The Rocky Mountain NARGS Chapter also has a wonderful resource online and downloadable from their website: <http://www.rmcnargs.org/index.php/documents/18-handouts-from-chapter-meetings>. Click on the last hand-out “Bill Adams – Plant Propagation Spreadsheet.”

Growing plants from seed can be very rewarding. There's a great deal of pride in being able to say "I grew that plant from seed."

NEWS FROM NATIONAL: CONTRIBUTING TO THE SEED EXCHANGE

Excerpted from the NARGS website

The NARGS website offers detailed information about contributing seed to the annual seed exchange and can be referenced at <https://www.nargs.org/seed-donation-instructions>. Seeds MUST BE RECEIVED by November 1 to be added to the catalog. Donors may find this *Rock Garden Quarterly* article by Jan McGary *Collecting and Cleaning Seeds* - beginning on page 205 (https://www.nargs.org/sites/default/files/free-rgq-downloads/VOL_59_NO_3.pdf#page=55) helpful. (Note this is another resource for would-be seed collectors)

MORE NEWS FROM NARGS: NICK NICKOU HAS PASSED AWAY

Lifetime NARGS National member Nick Nickou has passed away at the age of 94. He was a member of the Berkshire Chapter and possibly others. Our Chapter visited his Branford, Connecticut garden some years ago. He also spoke at one of our Chapter meetings, although I don't remember the topic.

To me what was most notable about his garden was his collection of azaleas and rhododendrons - in bloom and gorgeous! - and Nick could recite the cultivar names of every one of them from memory. I believe he was engaged in breeding rhododendrons with his garden partner Carol Hanby and may have introduced several cultivars. He may even have been a

From his official obituary "His grand passions were botany and horticulture. He traveled extensively observing plants in China, Russia, Greece, Patagonia, South Africa and many other destinations. His garden on Sunset Hill Drive was a mecca for plant enthusiasts with numerous rare plants. And trees with a specialty in rhododendrons."

Tony Avent, owner of Plant Delights Nursery, offered these comments, "We are fortunate to have a number of plants that Nick shared, growing in our garden, including his two most popular introductions, *Athyrium* 'Branford Rambler' and *Athyrium* 'Branford Beauty' (pictured here). According to Peter Podarus he gave the world *Coreopsis* 'Moonbeam' too.



Athyrium 'Branford Beauty'
(Photo courtesy of Plant Delights Nursery (www.plantdelights.com))

If you have any of these cultivars, you can thank Nick Nickou for his passion for gardening.

PLAN AHEAD FOR MEMBERS SHARE PROGRAM

Nari Mistry, Program Chair

February seems a long way off but it pays to PLAN AHEAD. Now is the time to take photos (if

you haven't already) so that you can share your best garden pictures at our Members Share meeting on February 20, 2016. We enjoy seeing not just photos of gardens and specimen plants but also other photos illustrating such things as your planting methods or hypertufa construction; or collect travel highlights of notable gardens or alpine/subalpine environments and scenery that you have visited. Details about presentation format, etc. will be in the January/February newsletter.

Your photos will be most welcome to view when we are in the throes of winter.

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.

October 17: John Gilrein : "Alpine & Subalpine Plants of Wyoming." Plant-of-the-Month sale to current members. Note location at the Ken Post Lab classroom.

November 14: Sharee Solow, horticulturist, landscape designer and garden writer from Philadelphia: "From Front Yard to Rock Garden: Step by Step." Dish-to-pass luncheon at noon followed by a brief annual meeting and speaker presentation. Note 2nd Saturday meeting date. Note location is Ken Post Lab classroom.

Looking ahead for 2016:

February 20: Members Share

March 19: Elizabeth Lawson: "Primroses"

April 16: Elisabeth Zander, NARGS Recording Secretary and Officer, Berkshire Chapter. Topic to be announced

June 23-27: "Steppe to Alpines: A Higher State," NARGS National Conference and Annual Meeting in Denver and Steamboat Springs; sponsored by Rocky Mountain Chapter. Registration for the meeting will commence early in 2016, possibly as early as January. Go to nargs.org for more info as soon as it's available.

As we learn more details of these meetings they will be included in future newsletters, our blog, acnargs.blogspot.com, and our Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/acnargs>.

CALENDAR OF SELECT GARDEN EVENTS

To have a garden event in your area listed send all pertinent information to Carol Eichler at carolithaca@gmail.com

Oct. 6: Dan Segal, Rain Gardens, 6:30-8:30 pm, Cooperative Extension Education Center, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca. Fee

October 13: Carol Eichler, Making of the Wurster Memorial Garden. Liberty Hyde Bailey Garden Club, 6:30 – 8:00 pm, Ken Post Lab Classroom, Cornell University, Ithaca

Oct. 13: Sean Dembrosky, Fall Propagation of Fruit and Nut Trees, 6:30-8:30 pm, Cooperative Extension Education Center, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca. Fee

Oct. 14: Marc Hachadourian, Modern Plant Exploration in the Tropics: The Age of Rediscovery, 7:30 pm, Statler Auditorium, Cornell

Oct. 16: Invasive, Native, or Neither: Which Plants to Remove, Which to Plant, 6:30-8:30 pm, Cooperative Extension Education Center, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca. Fee

Oct. 22: Getting Your Landscape Ready for Winter. 6:30-8:30 pm, Cooperative Extension Education Center, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca. Fee

Oct. 28: Courtney Roby, Plant-Based Medicines: Ancient Greece and Rome and Beyond, 7:30 pm, Statler Auditorium, Cornell

Oct. 29: Brian Caldwell & Akiva Silver, Getting Started with Nut Trees, 6:30-8:30 pm, Cooperative Extension Education Center, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca. Fee

Nov. 9 - Nov. 21: 4th Annual Leaf Swap & Compost Giveaway, Cooperative Extension Education Center, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca

Nov. 11: Professor Sir Peter Crane, Ginkgo: The Tree that Time Forgot, 7:30 pm, Statler Auditorium, Cornell

Dec. 7: Mark Whitmore of Cornell's Natural Resources Dept., Emerald Ash Borer and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Update, 6:30-8:30 pm, Cooperative Extension Education Center, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca. Fee

ABOUT US - ACNARGS

We are an all-volunteer organization and one of thirty-eight NARGS affiliated chapters active in North America. Our annual Chapter activities include 6 program-speaker meetings, the Green Dragon newsletter, web and Facebook pages, garden visits, overnight garden trips, hands-on workshops, and 3 plant sales a year. Our meetings are informal, friendly gatherings that provide a wealth of information and offer a source for unusual plants, plus the opportunity to be inspired by other gardeners. The public is always welcome.

Chapter membership starts at \$10 a year based on the calendar year. Membership includes these benefits: newsletter sent to you electronically (or option by mail for an extra fee), opportunity to travel on our planned overnight garden trips, and plant sale discounts and member only sales, including Plant-of-the-Month sales.

ABOUT NARGS NATIONAL

NARGS National is our parent organization: We encourage you to join (online at www.nargs.org) for only \$40 a year. Benefits include a seed exchange, a quarterly publication, and an on-line web site featuring an archive of past publications, a chat forum and a horticultural encyclopedia. NARGS National also conducts winter study weekends and holds its Annual Meeting in interesting places where attendees have the opportunity to hear and visit with outstanding plants people from around the world who present talks and workshops.

RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE/2014 BOARD MEMBERS

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

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

Program: Nari Mistry, nbm2@cornell.edu
Program Committee Members: Could this be you?
Secretary: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu
Treasurer: BZ Marranta, mmm10@cornell.edu
Plant Sales Chair: David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu
Plant Sales Committee Members: Michael Loos, BZ Marranta, Carol Eichler
Plant of the Month: Plant of the Month: Colette Colby De Haan, 4kotobuki@gmail.com and
Vashti De Haan, vadkam@yahoo.com; starting November, John Gilrein,
basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu
Membership: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu
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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 November,
2015. The newsletter is always posted and printable each month on our website:
www.acnargs.org

Now for the Photo of the Month: a trough using dwarf conifers

