

ADIRONDACK CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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Visit our blog: acnargs.blogspot.com

April 2017

APRIL 15: ELIZABETH LAWSON

Our April program features Elizabeth Lawson speaking about "Primroses: A Natural, Social, and Horticultural History." Ms. Lawson's knowledge of primroses is extensive. Her talk, like her forthcoming book *Primrose*, in the Reaktion's *Botanical Series*, integrates horticultural and botanical writing with a broader account of the cultural and social impact of primula, one of gardeners' much beloved genera of flowers. We can also expect Ms. Lawson to speak about Florence Bellis, an extraordinary horticulturist, who in the early 1930's developed the supremely colorful and vigorous Barnhaven primroses, named after her home in Oregon

Our meeting will be held in the Whetzel Room, Room 404 Plant Science Building, on Tower Road, Cornell University. Map at the end of this newsletter. Bring your own bag lunch at noon for socializing. Refreshments to share are appreciated.

SEEDLING EXCHANGE – MAY PLANT SALE: COMING UP!

David Mitchell, Plant Sale Coordinator

Our annual tradition of exchanging seedlings continues this year at the April 16 meeting. Bring in your seedlings to share. We'll provide plastic bags and labels. 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!

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 how to start plants from seeds.

It is also time to pot up your divisions for the May plant sale. Please use only soilless potting mix and remember to label every pot.

The May plant sale will return to the Ithaca High School on May 20. Sale hours are 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Set up is Friday beginning at 4 p.m. until approximately 7 p.m. and Saturday beginning at 8 a.m. Arrive early Saturday to drop off plants and help complete the setup. Our booth will be located indoors in the new gymnasium. This year we're asking volunteers to sign up for time slots in advance. We will circulate a sign up sheet at the April meeting. We especially need "fresh" volunteers to help with take down after 2 p.m. on Saturday. Though this is not a requirement to volunteer, it helps us spread the workload.

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). 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 at [CCE 2017 May Fair and Plant Sale](#).

FROM THE CHAIR

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

As I write this article, I'm recalling how a month ago, when it was winter on the calendar, the temperature was around 50 degrees and spring flowers were blooming. Now, that it's officially spring, everything here is buried under a foot of snow, and it's around 20 degrees (it was warm the last 2 days, so our 2 feet of snow compacted down to 1). I am grateful that at least there's a blanket of snow to protect the plants for this cold spell.

I'm wondering how the blooming *Cyclamen coum* will look after the snow melts; they may be fine, as they are tougher than they look. This year I did see some damage on the flower buds of some plants of *Helleborus X* (Lenten rose), which were deceived by the warm spells into thinking that it was spring in February. It looked like only some plants experienced this damage, and I'm not sure why some were more eager than others to bloom. *Helleborus X* is rock hardy, so I'm sure the plants will recover well, though I will lose this season's bloom on the damaged ones. Lenten roses used to be considered to be *Helleborus orientalis*, but botanists realized their genetics were more muddled (breeding has been going on for many years), so now they are just considered hybrids (thus the X).

Due to the cold, stormy weather a week ago, the vendor was unable to ship our March 2017 Plant of the Month, *Trillium erectum*, so we'll have a double POM for April 2017. I'm not sure how nurseries hold their Trilliums over the winter, I thought they might have been kept in an unheated hoop house, but perhaps they were in the ground and needed to

be dug. After having bare ground and warm weather, I'm really itching to get back out into the garden and do some more weeding, pruning, and cleanup.

The Adirondack Chapter board has been discussing ways of making a contribution to NARGS [at the request of National]. We'll be making a donation to NARGS in the near future. The Rocky Mountain Chapter (Denver) will be matching donations to NARGS to a certain dollar level, so our donation to NARGS will be doubled.

If you missed the March meeting, you missed a great slide show of what you could see at a NARGS Conference, which in this case was plants of the montane and sub-alpine mixed environments of Colorado.

Coming up in the summer is our annual garden tour, coordinated by Ellen Lane with help from Deborah Banks. As long as the garden hosts are willing, our tour will be in the Franklin (Delaware County) and Oneonta (Otsego County) area. It will be interesting to expand our horizons with a completely new area to explore through visiting gardens. Our previous garden tours have been around Ithaca, Rochester, Syracuse, Binghamton, and Cazenovia. We'll keep you posted when we have a plan.

Two weeks after our April meeting is the annual plant sale at Stonecrop Gardens in Cold Spring, NY, on Saturday April 29. Vendors at the sale include alpine plants, native plants, and trees and shrubs. The Stonecrop website includes a list of vendors. [Some of us have made this a day trip with time allowed to visit the gardens too]

Happy Spring 2017!
John Gilrein, Chair

PLANT OF THE MONTH: SEQUIM RARE PLANT SELECTIONS

John Gilrein, POM Coordinator

Our April POM will be an assortment of plants from Sequim (pronounced Skwim) Rare Plants in Western Washington State. Our assortment will include plants for different conditions of sun exposure, soil type, and hardiness. The nursery in coastal Washington is in hardiness zone 8, so I'm taking their winter hardiness data with a grain of salt.

Agapanthus campanulatus, with a common misname of lily of the Nile (it's from South Africa) is the hardiest species of *Agapanthus*; our selection is a hybrid of this species. I have had *A. campanulatus* here in my garden for at least 5 years, surviving winter in well-drained soil with mulch and a little wind protection. I expect it will be hardy for most of us, just don't plant it in a cold or exposed site.

Sequim recommends a protected site for *Primula* 'Belarina Valentine'. If you're not familiar with *Jovibarba*, it looks just like *Sempervivum*, and has the same common name of Hens & Chicks; botanically there is a difference. The there is the quintessential rock garden selection *Saxifraga* with a pale yellow flower. Which will you pick? I want one of each!

For photos see the last page of this newsletter.

Plant Name	Hardiness Zone	Height	Flower Color	Sun Exposure	Soil Type
<i>Agapanthus Headbourne</i>	At least 6	18 to 30"	Violet	FS	WD
<i>Allium sikkimense</i>	6	6"	Blue	FS/PS	WD/RG
<i>Campanula pulla</i>	4	4"	violet	FS/PS	WD/RG, T
<i>Jovibarba 'Blaze'</i>	4	Low	Bright red leaves	FS	WD/RG, T
<i>Nepeta nervosa 'Fornsett Select'</i>	5	10"	Violet blue	FS	WD
<i>Primula 'Belarina Valentine'</i>	5	4-6"	Red double	PSH	MR
<i>Primula 'Drumcliff'</i>	5	4-6"	Pink with dark maroon	PSH	MR
<i>Saxifraga paniculata</i>	4	2-3", 10" in flower	Pale yellow	PS/PSH	RG, T

KEY

Sun Exposure: FS = full sun, PS = partial sun, PSH= partial shade

Soil Type: WD = well drained, RG = rock garden, MR = moist rich, T = trough plant

ADVENTURES IN GROWING FROM SEED: PART 2

Carol Eichler, Newsletter Editor

Last month I wrote an article about my seed-sowing technique this year on growing alpiners from seed. I've already learned of one big blooper. One day above freezing this week I went to check on the pots. The good news is that as of March 23 I had one pot germinate! It was *Arabis pumila*! I couldn't believe it!

The bad news is that about ¼ inch of water was sitting on top of each pot from the snowmelt. The potting soil was frozen so the water couldn't drain. What to do? Emergency measure #1 was to use my turkey baster to suck up as much water as I could (yeah, and maybe some of my precious seeds, who knows?). The second measure I took was to bring the flats indoors to thaw and drain. Water is draining out the bottom so that seems to be working. Step #3 will be to purchase plastic covers before setting the flats back outside. Who knows if my efforts will pay off or if the seeds will drown and rot. Time will tell and I'll keep you up-to-date.

MYSTERY PLANT: SOLVED!



Remember this lovely mystery plant? Terry and Carol included it in their slide presentation as one of a few plants they were unable to identify. As luck would have it, a photo of this plant

graces the cover of the 2017 *Spring Quarterly*! It is *Monardella macrantha*, and likely the cultivar "Marian Sampson," Kenton J. Seth recommends it as a great plant for the crevice garden. High Country Gardens offers it but only rates it a Zone 7 plant. However, Panyoti Kelaidis has posted photos of it thriving in several rock garden locations in and around Zone 5 Denver. In some cases it looks to be planted in the vertical. It's a stunner worth trying!

A PLANT SAMPLER OF NEW ZEALAND

Carol Eichler

Captain Cook, one of the first European explorers to reach New Zealand, was an excellent cartographer but he was certainly no botanist. Over the course of many months and three expeditions to the South Pacific he mapped the New Zealand coastline.

His expedition named many plants. These common names are used to this day and had me confused for some time since they ran contrary to my knowledge of what these plants should look like.



Flax, *Phormium tenax*

To start, I kept hearing about the significance of the flax plant as a major product for import – used for its fibers by both Maoris and Europeans. Yet I saw no flax plants. Maybe they cultivate the plants in a part of the country I wasn't visiting? I was going through all kinds of brain contortions until I realized their "flax" was a completely different plant – actually *Phormium tenax*. I had been seeing it everywhere; it is native and prolific. It's actually a rhizome growing to 6 feet or more, once thought to be related to agave, and very similar in foliage but not in flowers. Only hardy to zone 8, the species flower is orange-red but the cultivars come in a variety of flower and foliage colors and are popular in the xeric landscape.

Another plant I heard so much about was the mighty beech tree. Yet I saw no beeches. Another New Zealand trick! Their beeches are not *Fagus* they are not beeches – *Nothofagus*! And New Zealand has four species, often comprising the dominant species in their rain forests. I was told (if I can believe these tricksters), that they are evergreen, small-leaved, very slow-growing, and very long-lived. To me their branching – asymmetric with clumps of leaves near the ends of branches - took on the look of a well-manicured tree in a Japanese garden although of gigantic proportions. They were often laden with lichens, mosses, and ferns.



Then there's the tea tree – no, not *Camellia*, but *Leptospermum scoparium*, noted for its fragrant blossoms (unfortunately not in bloom while I was

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New Zealand Christmas Tree



Nothofagus sp.

there) that bees transform into curative and very expensive manuka honey. This tree, also called Manuka, is capable of growing in very inhospitable environments.

I would remiss not to mention the Pohutukawa fondly referred to as the New Zealand Christmas Tree, *Metrosideros excelsa*, so-named because its bright red blooms appear around the Christmas season. I was fortunate to see one in bloom in February.

Of course, I have saved the best for last – tree ferns - in a land where the forests are literally covered with ferns. It's amazing to see a forest of them, where to the casual observer they resemble palm trees. They are fast growing and quick to move into disturbed areas. The most common and most beloved is the Silver Fern, *Cyathea dealbata*, which has become a national symbol. It is recognized by the silvery underside of its fronds.



Cyathea dealbata

I could go on. New Zealand is a plant-lovers paradise. Its climate is ideal for growing things. New Zealanders know and appreciate their native plants. Unfortunately, invasive species flourish there too and it is an on-going and never ending battle to contain them. Sound familiar?

WHY JOIN NARGS: MATT MATTHUS

*Matt Mattus, NARGS President and professional futurist
Excerpted by permission from NARGS Quarterly, Winter 2016-17*

So why do any of us join an organization such as NARGS?

We join because we crave self. We crave travel, be it virtual or real, and we value it as an experience-building part of our lives. We join because we appreciate the members-only amenities of a seed exchange, travel and talks. We may not all be social, nor techy, and certainly not trendy, but we certainly are more curious, intelligent, and learned than most folks in our demographic.

We NARGS members are not cynical, we are curious. We crave more from our experiences than most people do. Luxury for us is a rare saxifrage or a gentian, not the latest and greatest Lumberjack-Obsession-themed coffee shop. We are the original Prosumers,¹ expecting excellence and quality from everything we join.

I am optimistic that NARGS itself will remain a part of our lives. While everything seems to be on a path of continual change, one thing is certain: deep in its core, NARGS is still about what it was in the very beginning – a shared love of plants - trends or no trends, we all know exactly why we first joined NARGS, and if you are reading this now, I know that you still care about its future.

In the end, NARGS will continue to evolve and change as society and its members do, but what won't change is its rejuvenating qualities. It may be a forward-thinking statement, but in some strange way, a membership in NARGS offsets the debilitating effects of our

everyday world – the ugliness of global politics, the never-ending consumerism, and perhaps even easing some pains of aging. It's what keeps us young.

¹ *Prosumerism is a movement where everyday consumers make and share their own content because companies are not providing that information – like those YouTube videos that help you assemble an Ikea shelving unit.*

NEWS FROM NARGS: ANNA'S REPORT

Anna Leggatt, our NARGS Chapters Committee representative

As of this writing Anna is in the desert of southern California but she sends these reminders.

The NARGS-sponsored "Plantsman Tour of Wyoming" is still showing availability for its second departure date (the original tour is sold out) that will run from June 14 to June 19, 2017. See NARGS Quarterly for details. The Tour to the Dolomites is sold out.

In the meantime don't forget the STUDY WEEKEND in Madison, Wisconsin - May 19-20 2017. Info [here](#). Prices increase on April 19. And mark your calendar for the annual meeting Nov. 17-19 in Raleigh-Durham, N.C. Info [here](#).

Nominations for the new board have now been closed. On-line election will be from June 1-15, 2017

And from Bobby Ward:

The Delaware Valley Chapter of NARGS won two first place awards at the March 2017 Philadelphia Flower Show. One award, from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, was given for "best society exhibit"; the other, from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, was earned for "best use of design." Click [here](#). Congratulations to all the volunteers who made these awards possible.

Two NARGS members are 2017 Book Winners from the American Horticultural Society. They are Marta McDowell (*All the Presidents' Gardens*) and Joseph Tychonievich. (*Rock Gardening: Reimagining a Classic Style*). See news release [here](#). Congratulations to both Marta and Joseph.

Please contact me if you have any queries or concerns.

May all your seeds germinate! ==Anna, anna.leggatt@sympatico.ca

JOIN THE SPRING GARDENING GALA!

Time is drawing closer if you plan to register for the NARGS springtime weekend in Madison, Wisconsin hosted by the Illinois-Wisconsin Chapter. Scheduled for May 19 and 20, you won't believe how many gardens and talks can be packed into just 2 days. Visit [Wisconsin Spring Garden Gala](#) for logistics and to register NOW!

TIME TO RENEW: 2017 CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

Please welcome new member Gail Lyman of Ithaca! It looks like she has a wonderful garden to explore - lots of rocks! A grandkid commitment prevents her attendance at the April meeting but she will join us after that.

If you have not renewed for 2017, you should do it now so you'll be eligible to purchase the plant-of-the-month and get free seedlings at the seedling exchange! The renewal form is at <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf>

Your membership status is reported to you in the email with the newsletter link. Contact Mary Stauble at mes2@cornell.edu if you have any questions.

CHAPTER SERVICE AWARD: HAROLD PEACHEY

John Gilrein

Harold Peachey has consistently been a major contributor of plants for both of the annual plant sales, providing many plants that are both interesting and high quality. In addition, Harold works every year at the larger May plant sale that is our largest and most labor-intensive event.



Harold has not only been generous in providing plants for the plant sales. In his relatively short time living outside Syracuse, NY, Harold has done extensive planting, installing perennial beds, a woodland garden, a rock garden, and a greenhouse. Harold has opened his garden to visitors for garden tours numerous times, for both Chapter-sponsored events, and private tours for small groups. A garden tour at Harold's is an event not to be missed, as the lucky tour participants normally return home laden with divisions from Harold's garden, or seedlings from his prodigious seed raising work. And once we were even allowed to dig plants from perennial beds that were in the process of being decommissioned.

Prior to moving to central New York, he was an active member of the Berkshire Chapter, which helped form the base of his rock gardening knowledge. He is a contributor to the NARGS seed exchange and an avid propagator, which may even be his favorite gardening activity. Again, he is generous in sharing plants that he has propagated. He obviously loves plants, knows and appreciates plants, and exhibits an all-around enthusiasm for plants. As he prepares to move to Maine (and start a new Chapter?), he will sorely be missed by our Chapter.

Harold has earned this recognition for a Chapter Service Award for his contributions.

UPCOMING 2017 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 renovated Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

April 15: Elizabeth Lawson: "Primroses: A Natural, Social, and Horticultural History"

May 19-20: Spring Gala Week-end (a NARGS Study Week-end), Madison, Wisconsin, sponsored by Wisconsin-Illinois NARGS Chapter. More info in this newsletter and at [Spring Gala Week-end](#).

May 20: Our big Plant Sale fundraiser as part of CCETC's Garden Fair

Aug. 27: ACNARGS Picnic and Members' Plant Sale at Upper Treman State Park. Note the meeting is scheduled for the 4th Sunday of August. Mark your calendar now.

Aug. 17-19: American Conifer Society national meeting in East Syracuse. [Info here](#). Save the date

Sept. 16: Ken Hull, Native Orchids

Oct.21 Yasemin Kon, author of *Wildflowers of Turkey*

Nov.11: Mary & Steve Squyres: "Following the Secret Lives of Plants: snooping on your garden [with help from technology]"

Nov. 17-19: NARGS Annual Meeting, Raleigh-Durham, N.C. Save the date. [Info here](#).

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

April 8 (tentatively): Garden Conservancy Open Days, Hitch Lyman's garden, CANCELLED

April 19: Make a Bee Hotel for Native Pollinators, sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension, 615 Willow Av., Ithaca. 6:30-8:30 pm

April 23: Stonecrop Gardens Plant Sale, <http://www.stonecrop.org/>

May 10: Using Native Plants in Your Garden - It's For the Birds! sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension, 615 Willow Av., Ithaca. 6:00-8:00 pm.

May 20: Garden Fair and Plant Sale, sponsored by Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County

May 20 & 21 (tentatively, depending on weather): Tree Peony Festival at Linwood Gardens, Pavillion NY. And May 27-28, June 3-4. <http://www.linwoodgardens.org/>

Finger Lakes Native Plant Society Plant Walks meet at different times and locations. Topics vary from wildflowers to lichens to winter twig ID. For more information, call Anna Stalter (607) 379-0924 or Susanne Lorbeer at (607) 257-0835.

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. Download a membership form here: <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf>.

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 visit gardens, and take field trips, often to alpine areas, as well as hear talks by outstanding plants people from around the world. More recently, they have begun sponsoring botanical tours each year open to members only

RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE/2017 BOARD MEMBERS

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

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

Program: Terry Humphries, terryehumphries@gmail.com

Program Committee Members: Could this be you?

Secretary: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu

Treasurer: BZ Marranca, mmm10@cornell.edu

Plant Sales Chair: David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu. Thanks to the members who offered to help this year!

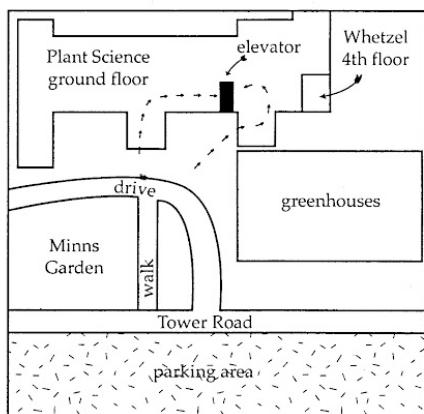
Plant Sales Committee Members: Michael Loos, BZ Marranca, Carol Eichler

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

Membership: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu
New Member Hospitality: Nari Mistry, rbm2@cornell.edu
Newsletter Editor: Carol Eichler carolithaca@gmail.com
Newsletter Assistant: Pat Curran, pc21@cornell.edu
Webmaster, Program Tech: Craig Cramer, cdcramer@gmail.com

GREEN DRAGON TALES

Published eight times a year (Jan/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 our combined May/June 2017 issue. The newsletter is always posted and printable each month on our website: www.acnargs.org



Map: Whetzel Room,
Cornell campus

PHOTOS OF THE MONTH: OUR PLANTS-OF-THE-MONTH

Next Pate. Photos courtesy of Sequim Rare Plants Nursery



Agapanthus
Headbourne



Campanula pulla



2015 © SequimRarePlants.com

Jovabarba 'Blaze'



2010 © SequimRarePlants.com

Nepeta nervosa
'Forncett Select'



2011 © SequimRarePlants.com

Allium sikkimense



2014 © SequimRarePlants.com

Primula 'Drumcliff'



2014 © SequimRarePlants.com

Primula 'Belarina Valentine'
