



ADIRONDACK  
CHAPTER

*North American Rock Garden Society*

# *Green Dragon Tales*

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[www.acnargs.org](http://www.acnargs.org)

May 2005

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## **Excitement grows for plant sale May 14**

I know we're all looking forward to the May Plant Sale at the Ithaca High School, May 14, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Please pot up your donations in a soil-less potting mix, label them, and drop them off now at my house in Ithaca (402 Esty St., corner of Esty and Washington streets, one block east of Meadow St. My driveway is on Washington St.).

Plants will also be accepted at setup at the Ithaca High School on Friday, May 13, from 4 to 6 p.m. and on Saturday from 7 to 9 a.m. Please try to get your plants to us early, once the sale starts our table gets mobbed! We're still looking for volunteers to work a couple of hours setting up on Friday, and Saturday, and helping with sales on Saturday.

Remember that ACNARGS members will receive a 25-percent discount at the sale. New and rejoining members will also receive the discount. If you have any questions about plant sales, don't hesitate to ask: [dwm23@cornell.edu](mailto:dwm23@cornell.edu) or 607-342-3660. Happy plant hunting!

***David Mitchell, plant sale coordinator***

## Letter from the chair

Plants, plants, and more plants! I have to confess (though I consider myself an optimist) that I approach our plant sales with some degree of trepidation. Not enough to lose sleep over, but still the lingering question remains: "Will we have any plants to sell?"

Every time, and in hindsight, my concerns seem laughable because you all have never let us down. This time around at our April 16 seedling sale we had many participants and plenty of variety, including the unusual and rare. And of course, there are always eager buyers. Our treasurer, Carolyn Yaeger, reports we took in \$422 – more than double last year's total. After four years, our seedling sale has come of age. Thank you all (and especially plant sale coordinator David Mitchell) for making this sale such a success – and so much fun!

Lee Nelson's talk before the sale on heaths and heaters certainly opened my eyes to a whole new gardening perspective. But these plants will also be challenging if, like me, you have alkaline soil. In true rock gardener spirit, I will not be deterred and will see if my newly acquired *Calluna* is also up to the challenge.

I was pleased to announce at the meeting that the Chapter has awarded its first grant to Art Trimble. Art has been an active Chapter member from day one since joining four years ago. He served on our Board as membership coordinator, keeping our records up-to-date, sending welcome packets to new members, and mailing and emailing our newsletters.

Though he no longer serves on the Board, he still is a key assistant to John Gilrein, our current member coordinator. Art rarely misses a meeting, driving all the way from Rochester. He is active in Rochester garden organizations and is a very knowledgeable plantsman in his own right. This grant will help defray Art's cost of attending the NARGS national conference in Newfoundland in July. We have tentatively scheduled Art to present a program about his experiences there – he's also a talented photographer – at our annual meeting in November. Congratulations Art!

We are moving into the busy months of gardening season. The Chapter has planned a number of activities through the summer so I hope you will participate to the fullest. We'll not come together for a "regular" meeting until August, when we'll combine a picnic, garden tour, and our members' only plant sale at Debi Lampman's in King Ferry. In the meantime . . .

Happy Gardening!

**Carol Eichler, chair**

## New look for our newsletter

Our newsletter has a new look to our newsletter! After some discussion, the Board opted for expediency over aesthetics. By dispensing with our 3-column, "designer" lay-out, we decrease our labor and cut a week off production time to get the newsletter to you in a more timely manner.

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## Greene garden tours

We hope you'll join us on Saturday, June 11 for a tour of some great gardens in Greene, N.Y., and Cutler Botanic Garden in Binghamton. You can tour the Greene gardens anytime from 9:30 a.m. until noon. (See the April issue of *The Green Dragon* for more information about some of the gardens. It's available online at [www.acnargs.org](http://www.acnargs.org).) The Cutler Garden is open all day. If you attended our April meeting, you'll especially want to see the heaths and heathers planted there.

Please let me know if you're planning to attend, especially if you are interested in carpooling. If you can offer a ride or are looking for one, I'll try to make connections between people in your area. Just email me (Peg Ross, [pogr@aol.com](mailto:pogr@aol.com)) or call me at 607-656-4237.

Here's a **suggested itinerary** (see also the **map at end of the newsletter**):

Travel to Greene from the east or west on NY-206, or from the north or south on NY-12. At the traffic light where the two roads intersect, go north on NY-12. (That will be a left-hand turn for the people coming from Ithaca.)

If you wish to see a stone wall **Alice Davis** is building and planting while the building is in progress, go 1 mile and then turn left onto a steep dirt driveway. The sign on a white post says the Ross Family. There will be a red balloon on the newspaper holder. You can turn around at the top of the driveway.

To get to the next garden, continue north on NY-12 for three more miles, then turn left onto King Road. **Shirley Halwig's** garden (right) is at the second house on the left. She has a circular driveway. If it's dry, park on the lawn to the left of the drive closest to NY-12. If it's wet, park in the driveway itself. Do not park in the road as the visibility is limited.



Next, continue west on King Road just a short ways to a Y in the road and go right onto Hattie Clark Road. Go 1.6 mile to the property of **Logan Hurst and Nancy Reynolds**. Admire the flag on the barn roof. Logan cast the concrete stars as well as made the Monet-like bridge across the brook. You can turn around in their driveway.

Go back to NY-12 and turn right (south) and go back to the stoplight at the intersection of NY-12 and NY-206. Turn left and then take the first left onto Birdsall Street. (It's right after the Xtra Mart.) Then take the first right onto Jackson Street. **Shirley Girton's** is the fourth house on the left, 14 Jackson Street. Park on the street.



Next, continue east on Jackson Street until it ends at North Chenango Street. Turn right and go to the stoplight. Turn left onto Genesee Street (NY-206) and go over the bridge and up the hill to Juliand Street. Turn left. (The house on your right is the oldest house in Greene, built in 1810.) Keep going .6 mile and turn left at the **Greene Intermediate School**. Go around the circular drive in front of the school nearest the road. Near the entrance to the school is a small garden that Sharon Davis helps to maintain. Members of the Adirondack Chapter of NARGS contribute greatly to the beauty of their communities.

Go back to the stoplight in the middle of Greene, just across the bridge. (**Not** the one at the intersection of NY- 206 and NY-12.) Note that straight ahead, downtown Greene has several **great places to eat lunch**: Le Joli Café, the Sherwood Hotel, Mimi's, Foo Chow, Bonnie's, and Sweets & Eats. There's also Baron's, which you will pass on your left on the way to Binghamton on NY-12, after Sharon Davis's garden.

Back to the directions ... Turn left at the light onto South Chenango St. and go .8 mile to the garden of **Sharon Davis** on your left, 110 South Chenango Street. As there is no parking at her house, go up the hill to the next house on the left which is a business, The Cheese Trap. It's an octagon house full of great things including cheeses, fabrics, gifts, spices and lots of surprises. The owner has said graciously that you can park there. It's worth a visit. Walk down the hill to Sharon's.

Coming out of the Cheese Trap, turn left. Go a short ways and then turn left again onto NY-12 and continue south 15.5 miles to the **Cutler Botanic Garden**. NY-12 will pass under I-81, and you'll pass Broome Community College on your right. The garden is on the left, just after a new Applebee's Restaurant.

There is an entrance to I-81 south immediately to the south of the garden (which leads to NY-17). A little further south on Front St., you'll find the entrance ramp to get back onto I-81 north, so you can get back home very easily from there.

We hope you enjoy the tour.

***Peg Ross, garden trip/tours coordinator***

### **Wurster Garden work party June 25**

Mark your calendars. We'll be having a work party a Wurster Memorial Rock Garden, June 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please join us for weeding, dividing plants, brown bag lunch, and socializing.

The garden is located at the Tompkins County Cooperative Extension office, Willow Avenue, Ithaca. The garden is actually kitty-corner to the Cooperative Extension building and can also be reached from Dey Street (312 Dey Street). Please call Anne Klingensmith if you need directions: 607-256-9308.

The Wurster Garden was built and planted in 2001-2002 and there are many plants there that are ripe for editing or dividing. Come and see many rock garden gems, get your hands dirty weeding, get answers to your most difficult rock garden questions, enjoy the company of fellow rock gardeners!

The party will be postponed only if it is raining heavily.

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### **Vermont road trip June 30**

The trip to North Hill Garden in Readsboro, Vt., has one car with four people going. If anyone else would like to go and meet us there, it would be a pleasure. You must make your own reservations online. Go to [www.aidsprojectsouthernvermont.org/events/nhgt\\_tickets.html](http://www.aidsprojectsouthernvermont.org/events/nhgt_tickets.html)

Four reservations can be made in one name. Our tour is on June 30 at 1:20 and as of April 24, there were 10 spaces left at that time. All the information you need is on the website. I understand that there is a fantastic planted wall on the grounds with a "host of tiny treasures." If you have questions, contact me at: [pogr@aol.com](mailto:pogr@aol.com) or 607-656-4237.

***Peg Ross, garden trip/tours coordinator***

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### **Container planting workshop July 16**

We will be holding a container planting workshop Saturday, July 16, at 10:30 a.m. with Dana Keiser at Stony Hill Farm, 3801 Brady Hill Rd., Binghamton, N.Y. (Between Binghamton and the Pennsylvania state line. Directions below.)

Dana will demonstrate how and what to plant in a container whether it be a trough, pot or old shoe. She will concentrate on how she designs and plants trough gardens.

There is no set fee for the workshop. Participants receive a 10-percent discount on plants and potting soil purchased from Dana, and can either bring their own or buy one there. (Dana has a huge supply of containers, from a small terracotta pot for \$2.99 to a large cast iron urn for \$90.00.) Plant cost will vary widely

depending on the size of the container. But you could put together a nice 10- to 12-inch container for \$15 to \$20.

Hopefully you saw our display about Stony Hill Farm at our April meeting. You can stop by our table at the May 14 plant sale to sign up for the workshop, or you can sign up by contacting me by July 2: [pogr@aol.com](mailto:pogr@aol.com) or 607-656-4237.

Directions to Stony Hill Farm:

**From Owego and points west:** Take NY-17 east. Take Exit 67S and follow NY-26 south 6.4 miles. Turn left onto State Line Rd. and travel 2.8 miles. Turn slight left onto County Road 117/Pennsylvania Ave. and travel 2.8 miles. Turn right onto County Road 125/Saddlemire Rd. and travel .4 mile. Turn slight right onto County Road 8/Brady Hill Rd. and travel .3 mile to Stony Hill Farm on the left.

**From north of Binghamton:** Take I-81 south. Stay on I-81 where it merges with NY-17 East. Just beyond where they merge, take Exit 4 South, Rt-7. (You'll need to move across traffic to the right quickly to make the exit.) After exiting, stay straight through first traffic light where roadway changes to Rt. 363. (Rt. 7 exits to right after the first traffic light. Do **not** follow Rt. 7.) Go about 1.5 miles on Rt. 363. Take exit on right for Rt. 434, Vestal. Cross Susquehanna River and into sweeping right curve. Go straight through traffic light, then exit to the right onto Pennsylvania Ave. Follow Pennsylvania Ave. south for 6 miles. Turn left on Saddlemire Rd., then right on Brady Hill Rd. Stony Hill Farm will be on your left. Follow red and white signs along the way. It's very well marked.

***Peg Ross, garden trip/tours coordinator***

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### **Mabel G. Harkness, 1913-2005**

Mabel Harkness died April 23, 2005, at her home in Geneva, N.Y. An honorary member of the Adirondack Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society, she inspired and encouraged a generation of rock gardeners and horticulturists. She may be best remembered for maintaining the *Seedlist Handbook*, a reference to hard-to-find plants offered by the major exchanges, started by her late husband, Bernard. Mabel was also library director of The Garden Center of Rochester. Her gardening interests focused on a vegetable garden, a fruit orchard and a treasured peony collection.

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### **April meeting follow-up: Heaths and heathers**

At our meeting in April, we enjoyed slides and a talk on heaths and heathers presented by Lee Nelson. Lee was the horticulturist at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County for 19 years, during which time she and her crew of Master Gardeners designed and planted the beautiful heath and heather gardens at the Cutler Botanic Garden. Since I work at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County now, I have the opportunity to see that garden year-round. It is, in fact, just like Lee told us and showed us in her slides: beautiful, changing

colors as the seasons change, with the *Calluna* (heather) blooming from June to October, and the *Erica* (heath) blooming through the winter and early spring.

Lee also showed us slides of her home garden, which showed the very effective use of heaths and heathers in combination with evergreens. Lee pointed out to us that this combination makes a particularly lovely winter garden, and the slides of her garden illustrated that.

We learned that these plants are very rugged and not difficult to care for, but that they require a place that simulates their native environment, especially with respect to acid soil. She told us how they started from scratch at Cutler Botanic Gardens, mixing peat moss and sand with lots of organic matter and pouring it over boulders. The best pH is 5.0, although soils with pH up to 6.0 grow beautiful heaths and heathers. If the soil is right, she assured us, the plants do not need fertilizer, although they will need pruning. She suggested that mulching was also important, as the plants have shallow roots.

The *Calluna* has scaly-leaves, like little spikes, while the *Erica* has needles, not scales. The *Erica* is much larger, growing up to 4 feet across. Lee suggests planting only one, or perhaps as many as three, but that could take up 10 feet of space eventually! She also suggested that *Erica* looks nice trailing over a wall. We learned that *Erica* should be sheared for size—and that the pruning really stimulates the bloom, too. May is a good month to prune *Erica*, Lee told us.

*Calluna* also should be pruned, but March is the month to prune it. Lee told us of how she came to understand the way in which heather is pruned in the wild when she saw goats and ponies grazing on acres of it on Yorkshire Mound.

Lee's talk was enjoyed by an enthusiastic roomful of members, and a lot of new *Calluna* and *Erica* plants went home with members, too—along with Lee's helpful list of cultural and propagation tips, and resource materials and nurseries. Grow those heaths and heathers!

### ***Krys Cail***

The heaths and heathers sold at the April meeting were from Rock Spray Nursery. Their website features pictures of many heath and heather varieties as well as growing information. Visit: [www.rockspray.com](http://www.rockspray.com)

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### **Programs at a glance**

- **May 14:** Plant Sale Fundraiser, Ithaca High School.
- **June 11:** Garden tours in Greene and Binghamton.
- **June 25:** Work session and brown bag lunch at Wurster Garden, Cooperative Extension, Ithaca.
- **July 16:** Container planting workshop, Stony Hill Farm, Binghamton, N.Y.
- **Aug. 20:** Member Plant Sale/Picnic hosted by Debi Lampman, Bedlam Gardens, King Ferry.

- **Sept. 17:** Meeting speaker: Harry Jans from the Netherlands. Cooperative Extension, Ithaca.
  - **Oct. 15:** Meeting speaker: TBA. Cooperative Extension, Ithaca.
  - **Nov. 19:** Annual Meeting & Lunch. Members share tips on overwintering plants in pots. Whetzel Room, Plant Science Building, Cornell.
  - Updates and more information: **[www.acnargs.org](http://www.acnargs.org)**
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### Other events

- **May 15:** Garden Conservancy Open Garden Day, Tompkins County. [www.gardenconservancy.org](http://www.gardenconservancy.org)
  - **June 12:** Fall Creek Garden Tour, Ithaca
  - **June 18:** Garden Conservancy Open Garden Day, Tompkins County. [www.gardenconservancy.org](http://www.gardenconservancy.org)
  - **June 28 to July 8:** Fern Tour of the Central Piedmont. [www.bps2005.org](http://www.bps2005.org).
  - **July 14-17:** North American Rock Garden Society Annual Meeting, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada <http://www.nargs.org/meet/meetings.html>
  - **Sept. 10:** Plants For Life Sale to support the Ithaca Breast Cancer Alliance. Ithaca. [www.ibca.net/plantsforlife](http://www.ibca.net/plantsforlife)
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### People

Questions? Want to find out how you can help the Chapter? Don't hesitate to contact one of the volunteers who help make everything happen:

- **Chair:** Carol Eichler, [cme24@cornell.edu](mailto:cme24@cornell.edu), 607-387-5823
  - **Treasurer:** Carolyn Yaeger, [cao2@cornell.edu](mailto:cao2@cornell.edu), 607-844-9462
  - **Speaker Coordinator:** Anne Klingensmith, [aekling@lightlink.com](mailto:aekling@lightlink.com), 607-256-9308
  - **Garden Trip/Tours:** Peg Ross and Alice Davis, [pogr@aol.com](mailto:pogr@aol.com), 607-656-4237 (Peg), 607-656-9931 (Alice)
  - **Picnic:** Debi Lampman, [bedlam@bluefrognet.net](mailto:bedlam@bluefrognet.net), 315-364-8725
  - **Member participation:** George Erdman, [gerdman@binghamton.edu](mailto:gerdman@binghamton.edu), 607-748-3984
  - **Plant of the Month:** Billie Jean Isbell, [bj1@cornell.edu](mailto:bj1@cornell.edu), 607-539-6484
  - **Plant sales:** David Mitchell, [dwm23@cornell.edu](mailto:dwm23@cornell.edu), 607-342-3660
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### *The Green Dragon*

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**Note:** The next issues of *The Green Dragon* will be in July.



