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CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

www.acnargs.org

September 2006

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September 16 program: Plants of the Higher Altitudes of Greece

Nickolas Nickou, MD, will kick off our fall programming Saturday, September 16, with a presentation on "**Plants of the Higher Altitudes of Greece.**" The meeting will be held in the Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, on the Cornell University campus. Bring a bag lunch and socialize starting at noon. The program will begin at 1 p.m.

Most of us think of Greece as having a Mediterranean climate with cool, wet winters and hot dry summers. That's true for Greece's lower altitudes. But at higher elevations in Greece and adjacent Jugoslavia, the winters are colder and there is rainfall through the summer. As a result, **many plants from this area can be grown in our climate.** Nickolas will introduce us to these and other unusual plants, as well as beautiful scenic areas including views of historical importance.

Nick is so passionate about the plants of Greece that he has traveled there eleven times. Seeing plants in their native habitats in many countries is a thrill for him and helps him to know what kind of conditions to provide for them while growing them in his southern Connecticut garden. His 45-year-old garden, featured as one of the Garden Conservancy's "Open Days" tours this year, is well known for his rare trees and shrubs especially its rhododendrons and azaleas, coupled with woodland flowering plants and

ferns. He has been a member of the North American Rock Garden Society for many years and is a charter member of the Daphne Society.

Welcome Nick at a dish-to-pass supper at Carol Eichler's, Fri. Sept. 15. Details below.

Plants of the Month for September meeting

Our plants of the month for the September 16 meeting come from Maria Galletti at Alpine Mt. Echo (1182 Parmenter Road, Sutton, Quebec, Canada JOE 2K0, 450-243-5354, info@alpinemtecho.com, www.alpinemtecho.com). They include:

Ramonda myconi (Pyrennes, Zone 3) Evergreen perennial for part shade in vertical rock crevices or walls with humus-rich soil but where you can protect hairy foliage from resting on moist soil. For those of you who saw Harry Jans presentation, you should remember the spectacular *Raymonda Myconi* he had growing in his tufa wall.

Edrainthus gramminifolius (Zone 5) Sun, prefers light soil alkaline. Excellent for rock garden, scree, dry wall or trough. Blue up-facing bell flowers bloom in June and July. I have one that has survived and bloomed faithfully for several years.

Centaurea bagadensis (Caucasus, Zone 3) Sun thistle. Endemic to limestone crevices in Caucasus Mountains of Georgia. Prefers full sun and wind.

Daphne domini (Bulgaria, Zone 3) A slow-growing evergreen species closely related to *D. oleoides* with a very compact habit. Tufts of narrow green leaves on red-tinged bark and half-closed pink and white flowers that reliably produce orange fruit. Height: 6".

Campanula garganica (Italy & Greece, Zone 3) Spreading clumps of toothed leaves and lavender stars in early summer. For a sunny scree, overhanging rocks or crevice. Height: 2".

Dianthus Haematocalyx ssp pindicola (Balkins, Zone 3) Cushions of grey-green, pointed, broad leaves; small clusters of purple-red flowers on stiff short stems. Summer bloomer for scree conditions or troughs. Height: 3".

Bornmeullera bardacii (Greece, Zone 3) Subshrub with soft silver foliage.

Billie Jean Isbell, Plant of the Month coordinator

Mark your calendar: 2006 Programs at a glance

- Sept. 15 – Dish-to-pass supper at Carol Eichler's to welcome Nick Nickou.
- Sept. 16 - "Plants of the Higher Altitudes of Greece," Nickolas Nickou, MD, 404 Plant Science Building, Tower Rd., Cornell University.
- Oct. 21 - Program TBA. 404 Plant Science.
- Nov. 11 - Annual Meeting and dish-to-pass. 404 Plant Science.

Look for more details on these events in future issues of *The Green Dragon* and on our website: www.acnargs.org

Letter from the Chair

Sometimes I don't appreciate good luck until later – the power of hindsight.

The Saturday morning of our August picnic and plant sale was very threatening with a forecast of rain. "Oh no," I thought. "How could we be so unfortunate? We've had two weeks of perfect, sunny weather. Why couldn't we have just one more for our outdoor meeting today? No one will come. Our sale will be bust. Next year's programs will be jeopardized ... " and on and on I fretted. As Chair I feel one of my responsibilities includes worrying about such things.

Well I couldn't have been more wrong on all counts. First, we had great attendance – maybe even a record for our picnic with 31 people signing into our register. We even acquired four new members! People brought plants and people – many times the same people – bought plants. We ate well (thank you all for such delicious dishes) and we enjoyed Billie Jean's wonderful gardens. An impromptu weeding party closed out the afternoon.

But I haven't gotten to the really lucky part. Just as I arrived home, the heavens opened up and it began to rain in earnest and I don't think it let up one iota until nearly 7 o'clock that evening. Yes, at Billie Jean's it drizzled off and on but it was nothing to stop a gardener on a search for new garden treasures. And so we concluded another very successful meeting.

In this issue, read more about the sale and about what you have to look forward to at our next meeting. Shortly after our last newsletter was distributed, Maria Galetti notified us that she had to cancel as our September speaker. Instead, she found us another speaker, Nick Nickou whose garden in Connecticut some of you visited a couple years ago, and still remember I'm sure, with all those gorgeous rhododendrons in bloom. Nick will be arriving on Friday and you are welcome to join a dish-to-pass at my house to welcome him. See details below.

Our gardens may be winding down but we have a lot of "program" left for the year with September and October offering guest speakers and concluding in November with a dish-to-pass, reflections on the past year (our so-called annual meeting), and a presentation by member Billie Jean. Please plan to join us.

Happy gardening,

Carol Eichler, chair

Welcome Nick Nickou at dish-to-pass supper

Help welcome our September meeting speaker Nick Nickou to the area at a dish-to-pass supper the evening of Friday, Sept. 15, beginning at 6:30 p.m., at Carol Eichler's home, 1562 Taughannock Boulevard (Route 89), north of Ithaca. (Beverages and table settings will be provided.)

If you can attend, please RSVP by calling Carol (607-387-5823) or emailing her (cme24@cornell.edu).

Directions to Carol's: From Ithaca and points south, and east of Cayuga Lake, take Route 89 North (it begins at Joe's Restaurant, corner of Buffalo and Meadow Streets/Route 13). Go 2 stoplights and turn right onto Route 89 (The Jewelbox on corner). From that intersection, you will drive approx. 7.5 miles. The route will take you through Cass Park and up the west side of the lake. When you pass Cayuga Nature Center on the left, you have another 1.5 miles to go. You will pass 1 intersecting road (Kraft/Willow Creek Point). Driveway for 1562 is on the left, 6th house, almost directly across from a big blue "Adopt-a-Highway" sign. Pull behind the house where there is ample room for parking. I will try to have someone posted down at the road.

From points north and west of Cayuga Lake, 1562 is 1.5 miles south of Taughannock State Park. Road "sign" is a yellow bicycle sign just before the driveway on your right past Agard Road.

Picnic report

Saturday August 19 was great a day (despite the drizzle) to get together and share plants and more importantly, to eat! Billie Jean's house and garden are amazing. For the plant sale we had a good number of plants to choose from. Thank you all for donating and buying. We made about \$704.00 in plant sales and \$40 in membership fees. Last year we made on \$318.00. (Remember the drought?) The year before that, a normal year weatherwise, we took in \$752.00. Even with the drizzling rain at this year's event, we had 31 folks signed in to participate in the sale.

David Mitchell, Plant Sales Coordinator

Drizzle didn't slow down set up for the plant sale (top). Members view Billie Jean's newly installed water garden (bottom).



Welcome new members ...

... who joined at the August picnic/plant sale:

- Margaret Bald, Newfield NY
 - Mae Kang, Owego NY
 - Janet Thomas, Endicott NY
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Letter to the editor

I harvested many seedpods from yellow horned poppy plants, *Glaucium flavum* (original parent plant obtained at an August Rock Garden Society sale). I will try to bring them to the next September 16 meeting, since I forgot to bring them to the picnic last Saturday. I also have seeds from a lovely little yellow ornamental onion, *Allium flavum*. It's a softer yellow than *Allium moly* and blooms in July. Thanks to Billie Jean for hosting a great picnic and garden tour, and to the organizers for a fun plant sale!

Pat Curran

Editor's note: Have surplus seed of favorite plants? Don't hesitate to bring them to meetings to share.

Like to read about rock gardens?

If you can't read enough about gardening, I could use some help. As editor of *The Green Dragon*, I receive newsletters from other NARGS chapters across the continent. There's a great spirit of sharing between most of the newsletter editors. See for example, *Epimediums and Friends* on page 4, reprinted from the Minnesota Chapter newsletter.

The problem is, I don't have time to read through all the newsletters I get to identify articles that might be of value to our chapter's members. If you'd like to read some of these newsletters and flag interesting articles, let me know and I'll forward some to you. (Email: cdcramer@twcny.rr.com) For those of you without computers, I'll bring hard copies of some newsletters to meetings.

Keep in mind, too, that this sharing between chapters is a two-way street. I'd love it if more of our members would share their expertise through our newsletter so that other newsletter editors can tap our knowledge and share it with members of their chapters.

Craig Cramer, Newsletter editor

Annuals website

Each summer, Dr. Bill Miller and his staff in the Cornell's Department of Horticulture test new and soon-to-be-released annual flower and foliage plants at the Bluegrass Lane Research Facility in Ithaca. While the plantings aren't open to the public, you can peruse the photo gallery and ratings at this website <http://www.hort.cornell.edu/departement/faculty/wmiller/bglannuals/>

Other events: Cornell Plantations free fall lecture line-up

This fall's free lecture series from Cornell Plantations is moving to an every-other-week schedule. While you may be disappointed that there aren't more programs, you won't be disappointed by the spectacular line-up.

With the exception of the September 6 program, the lectures start at 7:30 p.m. in Statler Auditorium on the Cornell University campus. Ample free parking is available after 5 p.m. in the

parking garage on Hoy Road, just a short walk away. For additional information about these and other educational programs sponsored by Cornell Plantations this fall, visit www.plantations.cornell.edu or call 607-255-2400.

- September 6 (5:30 p.m., Warren Hall Auditorium, B45, Cornell University) – “Balancing the Earth: Native American Philosophies and the Environmental Crisis.” **Eric Cheyfitz**, Ernest I. White Professor of American Studies and Humane Letters, Cornell University
- September 20 – “Sustainable Gardening for the Planet,” **Dean Koyanagi**, sustainability coordinator, Cornell University.
- October 11 – “Gardening--Passion for a Lifetime,” **Ken Druse**, gardening and environmental journalist, author of *The Passion for Gardening* and *Making More Plants*.
- October 25 – “Heirloom Gardening,” **Amy Goldman**, gardener and author of two award-winning books: *Melons For The Passionate Grower*, and *The Compleat Squash*.
- November 8 – “The Livable Landscape,” **Rick Darke**, photographer, landscape designer and author of *The American Woodland Garden* and *Timber Press Pocket Guide to Ornamental Grasses*.

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, 607-387-5823
- **Treasurer:** Carolyn Yaeger, cao2@cornell.edu, 607-844-9462
- **Speaker Coordinator:** Anne Klingensmith, aekling@lightlink.com, 607-256-9308
- **Garden Trip/Tours:** Peg Ross and Alice Davis, pogr@aol.com, 607-656-4237 (Peg), 607-656-9931 (Alice)
- **Plant of the Month:** Billie Jean Isbell, bj1@cornell.edu, 607-539-6484
- **Plant sales:** David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu, 607-342-3660
- **Membership:** John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu, 315-492-0844
- **Newsletter editor/Webmaster:** Craig Cramer, cdcramer@twcny.rr.com, 607-539-7233
- **Rep. to National, and Ex-officio:** Robin Bell, rgb2@cornell.edu, 607-272-2074

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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 Craig Cramer: cdcramer@twcny.rr.com. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be in **October**.

