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CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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Visit our blog: acnargs.blogspot.com

October 2016

OCTOBER 15: POCKET GARDENS AND POCKET PONDS: WORKING SPECIAL NEEDS PLANTS INTO YOUR GARDEN

Jill Nicklaus, October speaker

NOTE: We are meeting in the classroom at Ken Post Lab



Hi! I'm Jill and I'm addicted to gardening.

Well, I do try to cram as many different plants as possible into a suburban back yard. I tend to get obsessed/interested in one particular thing, read and learn as much as I can, and then try to get it to grow. I've overwintered tall bananas in my basement, grown hundreds of African violets from cuttings, and grown (from seed) dozens of different heirloom tomatoes, basil, and peppers in a single season. This summer, I brought back 18 potted roses from a Canadian fishing trip. Gardeners never get bored, do we?

I've been writing garden articles for nine years on Dave's Garden website (davesgarden.com) and also for the National Gardening Association (garden.org). Online, I'm known as "critterologist" or just "critter." As a toddler, I wanted to be a naturalist, thanks to PBS's Hodge Podge Lodge.

I have a BS in biology from Duke University and a MS (ABD) from the University of Chicago. Now I live in Frederick, Maryland, where my garden efforts entertain my young daughter and amuse my patient husband. We have cats and fish and occasionally tadpoles and caterpillars in the house. Outside, we're an official NWF Backyard Wildlife Habitat, with lots of birds and a host of other visitors.

I'm looking forward to meeting all of you and telling you more of what I've learned in my garden, specifically "Pocket Gardens and Pocket Ponds: Working "special needs" plants into your garden-scape."

Our meeting will be held in the classroom at Ken Post Lab on Post Circle off Tower Road ([Map Ken Post Lab](#)), Cornell University – where we have met before. Free parking is either behind Ken Post (limited) or in the Peterson lot across the street on the corner of Tower and Judd Falls Roads. Bag lunch and socializing at noon. Program begins at 1:00 pm and there is plant-of-the-month for members.

FROM THE CHAIR

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

Fine summer weather lasted this year all the way to the last day of summer – a little reward for a summer drought? Over the years I have read many times about a dearth of flowers at the end of summer, or gardens having a lack of interest late in the season. Sure, some plants will be tired after a long, dry summer but with all the plants currently available, a gardener can keep the garden interesting, especially with attractive foliage and texture. It's a good time to see how your garden is doing in early autumn, and assess what you want to remove, what to plant, and what to prune in order to keep the garden in a condition with which you, the gardener, are content.

I have not always been aggressive enough at editing my garden, but I'm editing more aggressively than I did in the past, and editing is critical as gardens change over time. Now that it is cooler and moister, it's a good time to plant trees and shrubs. For fall planting, one is not a slave to the hose and watering can like summer plantings.

Here are some plants with late season flowers and/or fruit and their season of interest:

Lobelia syphilitica, blue lobelia – August/early September

Lobelia cardinalis, cardinal flower – August/early September

Caryopteris x clandonensis, blue mist shrub – August/September

Callicarpa, beautyberry – September/October

Heuchera villosa, hairy alum root - September

Solidago, goldenrod – late August/September
(cultivar 'Little Lemon' is not invasive)

Hosta lancifolia, lance leaved hosta - September

Hosta plantaginea, August Lily - September

Aster tataricus 'Jindai', tatarian aster – October

Cyclamen hederifolium – September/October

I will sadly miss the October meeting (schedule conflict) and I look forward to seeing you in November.

John

PLANT OF THE MONTH: BULBS

John Gilrein



Close-up of *Callicarpa dichotoma* 'Early Amethyst.' Photo: Wikimedia.org

For October 2016, we will have two Plants of the Month, *Ipheion uniflorum* and cultivars of *Iris reticulata* and *Iris histrioides*. We'll skip POM for November (with apologies for everyone who likes planting bulbs in cold, drizzly November weather!).

Our first selection, *Ipheion uniflorum* 'Wisley Blue,' has blue violet star-shaped flowers. *I. uniflorum* blooms in April/May, is 3 to 6 inches high, and foliage has an odor of onion or garlic when crushed, so it's deer resistant. Plant these 4 inches apart and 4 inches deep in full sun to part shade. It's hardy to Zone 5 (some sources reference it being less hardy, but I have had mine for years, so I believe the Zone 5 rating is reliable). We'll have these for sale in lots of a dozen. Our supplier is Van Engelen.

The second POM for October will be rock garden Irises (*I. reticulata* and *I. histrioides*) but they can be grown in the open garden as well. These Irises grow 4 to 6 inches high, and should be planted 4 to 5 inches apart and 4 inches deep in full to partial sun. Once the flowers have passed the foliage continues to grow to a height of 10 inches or more.

Iris histrioides 'Major' is blue with yellow markings on the falls. *I. reticulata* 'Sea Breeze' is white with blue and yellow markings. *I. reticulata* 'Velvet Smile' is blue violet with white and yellow markings on the falls. *I. reticulata* 'Armenian Form' is purple. These Irises are hardy to Zone 5 and bloom in late winter to early spring. Irises 'Sea Breeze' and 'Velvet Smile' are recent Alan McMurtrie hybrids (he was a speaker at one of our meetings several years ago). The irises will be sold in very small lots of a few bulbs because recently developed cultivars are pricey. (For photos, see the September Green Dragon newsletter)

NEWS FROM NATIONAL: INTRODUCING NARGS TOURS

Carol Eicher, newsletter editor

Hot off the press! NARGS has announced two members-only "Plantsman's Tours" The destination of the first is the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming led by a member of Denver Botanic Gardens; the second, the Italian Dolomites June 28-July 17 via Venice International Airport, is a private tour led by Naturetrek. Information about both of these fabulous trips can be found in the NARGS *Fall Quarterly*. This is so news-breaking there is not, as of this writing, any information on the NARGS.org website yet. The trips seem perfectly timed for the ambitious traveler to do both! Are you going?

AN INVITATION TO THE TRI-STATE METRO MEETING

Steve Whitesell

You are all welcome to hear Eleftherios Dariotis (Liberto Dario) speak on two topics: Mount Olympus and The Botanical Paradise of Greece at New York Botanical Garden (Ross Hall, Moshulu Drive entrance) on Sunday, October 16th. He is the speaker for the Tri-State meeting of Metro NY NARGS chapters (Manhattan, Hudson Valley, Connecticut, Long Island, Berkshire and Watnong) on a coast-to-coast whirlwind tour. The Tri-State meeting is a fun, annual event with a plant and book sale, a raffle, with free admission and parking to NYBG rock garden including the rock garden. There is

more info on the NARGS website. The event starts around 10:30 that morning and runs to 2:30-3. If anyone from ACNARGS would like to come, please email me, Steve Whitesell (elysium214@aol.com), so I can put you on the list for free admission and parking. Hope to see you there, though I know it's a long trip.

Editor's Note: Steve coordinates the NARGS book reviews and has recently moved upstate. He now considers ACNARGS and the Berkshire Chapters as his "home" rock garden chapters.

PLANT PROFILE: CAMPANULAS

Pat Tucker, reprinted by permission from the *Journal of the Ontario Rock Garden and Hardy Plant Society*, May 1988 issue

After the initial burst of bloom, flowering wanes in the rock garden and the blues set in. The blues are fortunately reinforced by the genus *Campanula*, which literally clothes the garden in shades of blue from July to August.

The genus name derived from the Latin *campana* or "little bell" aptly describes the typical flower shape, although a few produce star-like blooms. Of European, Asian or North American origin, many are excellent rock garden plants that are easy to grow from seed.

Two major groups are recognized; one the creeping type is ideally suited to the rockery, the other produces clump-like growth and contains many species and cultivars that may be grown in the perennial border.



Campanula cochlearifolia from the mountains of Europe, belongs to the former group, possessing threadlike underground roots that creep into new locations yearly. It displays tiny blue bells on 7.5 cm stems above shiny green leaves. A white cultivar, *C. cochlearifolia* var. *alba* is available.

C. elatines garganica is a vigorous creeper that roots and anchors on or under rocks as it creeps into crevices. Basal leaves are round and crenate or toothed, topped by well-proportioned sprays of star-like flowers in mid-July.

C. poscharskyana from Calmatia is considered to be a form of *C. elatines*, however, it is more rampant in its creeping habit, consequently it would be a good ground cover in sunny well-drained locations. Starry lavender flowers are exhibited above coarsely-toothed leaves.

Of the clump-forming group *C. aucheri* is a dwarf type, well-suited to the rock garden. Easy to grow from seed, it flowers prolifically in July, showing



white centered, pale-blue, upturned blooms 10-15 cm above narrow green leaves.

Birch-like leaves adorn the clump-forming *C. betulifolia*, hence the species name. One of my favourites, its bright green crenate foliage covers the soil surface topped by relatively large white bells that droop over rocks giving the impression that it is one of the creeping types.

Campanula collina, an erect type, exhibits purple outward facing bells on 30 cm stems above a basal rosette of coarse foliage. A somewhat similar type, *C. sarmatica* possesses paler blue flowers on 30 to 60 cm stems. This latter bellflower with its greyish-green basal leaves is best suited to the perennial border.

C. aucheri

A circumpolar plant of the northern hemisphere, *C. rotundifolia*, the common harebell, grows naturally in rock crevices on the shores of the Great Lakes. Thus it makes an attractive crevice plant displaying nodding blue bells swaying 30 cm over linear green foliage.



Finally, *C. macrorhiza*, a bellflower that extends the season of bloom into October, is a sturdy plant that slowly spreads by rhizomes. The linear leaves are topped by sprays of true blue blooms, a welcome addition to the rock garden when flowers are relatively scarce.



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UPCOMING

2016

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 *macrorhiza* approved Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

Oct. 15: Jill M. Nicolaus, critterologist, author, and writer-contributor to Dave's Garden website. *Pocket Gardens and Pocket Ponds*. Note meeting will be held at Ken Post Lab Classroom.

Nov. 12: Elizabeth Lawson, Primroses. Also annual meeting with dish-to-pass luncheon starting at noon.

As we learn more details of our meetings they will be included in future newsletters, our blog, acnargs.blogspot.com, and our Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/acnargs>. Programs for 2017 are shaping up nicely and promise to deliver another exciting, informative year of speakers.

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. 17: Spring Bulbs. 6:30-8:30pm, CCE Tompkins. \$5-\$10 sliding scale. Pre-registration required

Oct. 19: Introduction to Home Cidermaking. 6:30-8:30pm, CCE Tompkins. \$5-\$10 sliding scale. Pre-registration required

Oct. 19: Jesse Hoffman presents Albany Pine Bush. 7pm, Unitarian Church annex (corner of Buffalo & Aurora Sts)

Oct. 26: Simran Sethi presents Bread, Wine, Chocolate: Saving and Savoring Our Favorite Endangered Foods. Cornell Plantations Lecture Series, 7:30pm Statler Auditorium, Cornell campus

Oct. 27: Getting your Landscape Ready for Winter. 6:30-8:30pm, CCE Tompkins. \$5-\$10 sliding scale. Pre-registration required

Nov. 2: Rainwater Harvesting. 6:30-8:30pm, CCE Tompkins. \$5-\$10 sliding scale. Pre-registration required

Nov. 2: Doug Tallamy presents It's for the Birds. Cornell Plantations Lecture Series, 7:30pm Statler Auditorium, Cornell campus

Nov. 7: Deer Resistant Ornamental Plants for your Garden, 6:30-8:30pm, CCE Tompkins. \$5-\$10 sliding scale. Pre-registration required

Nov. 7-19: 5th Annual Leaf Swap & Compost Giveaway. 10am – 1pm each day, CCE Tompkins. Bring leaves (CLEAN, no branches or other yard waste) or take leaves. Also free screened compost (up to 5 gal. in your own container)

Nov. 16: Tim Tolen presents Native Green Roof at SUNY ESF building. 7pm, Unitarian Church annex (corner of Buffalo & Aurora Sts.)

March 14-15, 2017: Trip to Philadelphia Flower Show and Longwood Gardens. Fee. Coming soon, promotion by Swarthout & Ferris Bus Company requiring sign-up and payment.

May 10-15, 2017: 3rd Czech International Rock Garden conference, Prague, Czech Republic; info at [Czech Rock Garden Conference on Facebook](#).

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.

What can the Chapters do for National? Would local chapters exist without National? How do the Chapters benefit from National? Why do so few Chapter members become NARGS members? What would make National more appealing for Chapter members to join? How can National better support its Chapters?

RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE/2016 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. Seeking a new Chair for 2017. Help!

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. Seeking a Co-Chair for 2017 to work alongside David...Why not you?

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: Terry Humphries, terryehumphries@gmail.com
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 November 2016 issue. The newsletter is always posted and printable each month on our website: www.acnargs.org

PHOTOS OF THE MONTH: TERRY HUMPHRIES' ROCK GARDEN IN SEPTEMBER (NEXT PAGE)

