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CHAPTER
North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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March 2018

MARCH 17: BOTANIZING IN PATAGONIA WITH BARBARA AND BELLA

Terry Humphries, Program Chair

Barbara Cooper and Bella Seiden are our speakers for March. They write: "We are amateur gardeners who have been gardening together in Toronto for more than 20 years. From our broad interest in gardening, we have developed a particular interest in seeing plants in their natural habitat. The first big trip we planned was in 2012 when we travelled to South Africa to see plants in their spring. In 2014, after hearing friends describe their experience botanizing in South America, we decided to travel to Patagonia.



We had great resources in the books of Hilary Little and Martin Sheader, describing the Patagonian flora and where to find plants, which became available just as we were beginning the planning process. We chose to go alone, renting a car and engaging guides where we thought it would enhance our experience. We were there for a total of four weeks most of which were spent in Argentina. Our talk will present highlights of the time we spent botanizing there.

"Since then we have travelled in Wyoming and Colorado, Lesotho [Ed. note: I had to look this up. Lesotho is an enclaved country completely surrounded by South Africa], and Chile. Currently we are the program chairs for the Ontario Rock Garden and Hardy Plant Society, and are planning more adventures."

Our meeting will be held in the Whetzel Room, Room 404, at 236 Tower Road, Cornell University. Map at the end of this newsletter. Bring your own bag lunch at noon for socializing before the meeting. Refreshments to share are appreciated.

FROM THE CHAIR

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

As I write this, we're having a taste of spring, warm weather trying to melt the last snowdrifts. I'm wondering if some of the earliest spring wildflowers will open this week, *Eranthis hyemalis* (winter aconite), *Galanthus nivalis* (snowdrops), *Cyclamen coum*, and *Helleborus niger* (Christmas rose).

My *Helleborus niger* buds have been emerged for months, waiting for a trigger to open more fully. I hate to see the snow go so early, in part because the snow is a protective blanket over the perennials to moderate the ground temperature and reduce desiccation of anything with green leaves.



Hepatica acutiloba emerging,
Thatcher Park. Photo: J. Gilrein

Next month we'll have Plant of the Month starting back up with *Hepatica acutiloba* (liverleaf). I was treated to seeing a colony of this plant at an unexpected place, a wooded cliff top in Thatcher Park (Voorheesville, near Albany). Thatcher Park is perched on the Helderberg Escarpment, a line of cliffs separating the lowlands from the rugged limestone based upland. This site was more exposed than most of the sites where *H. acutiloba* grows, but it does reinforce two points: this plant likes limey soil and good drainage. It does grow in our woodlands, but it's frequently found on slopes and next to trees, so it is also tolerant of dryness, once established. The

purple of the *Hepatica* leaves mixed in with the deciduous leaf litter was a pretty sight, which caught my attention, and possibly made me jump the fence to photograph it.

Yesterday I started my seed sowing for the season with woody plants from my NARGS seed order. Today I'll continue the second phase of sowing with the woodland plants from my seed order (rock garden plants next). One of the amazing benefits of NARGS is for a very modest price one can get 25 (35 if you're a volunteer or seed donor) packets of seed including many non-alpine plants like *Acer griseum* and *Arisaema sikkokianum*. I wouldn't say I've dialed in the exact soil formula for my seed starting. I start with commercial potting mix and add a little more organic matter for woodland plants, or more sand/grit for rock garden plants. So nature will stratify my seeds for the next few months. If you would rather not stratify in the pot, you can stratify seeds in your refrigerator in a moist paper towel in a Ziploc bag or moist (not wet) potting soil. Though everything doesn't germinate successfully, I have started many interesting plants this way.

At the end of the week, I'll be saying farewell to Harold Peachey and Marie Greener when they relocate to the Maine coast. I have really enjoyed their companionship on many trips to Ithaca, garden tours, and plant sharing for the last 10 years. Harold was a boon to our Chapter with the multitude of plants he shared from his garden and his seedlings. A fine new garden is soon to be underway on the Maine coast!

Looking forward to seeing all of you in March!



Witch Hazel in bloom 2/20/18, CBG's Winter Garden. Photo by C.Eichler

PLANT-OF-THE-MONTH: HEPATICA

Marlene Kobre, POM Coordinator



As the POM for March, I've selected one of the earliest and, to my mind, loveliest of spring wildflowers, *Hepatica acutiloba*, purchased from Arrowhead Alpines in Michigan. Everything about this delicate plant—the flowers, the leaves, even the name—gives us something to delight in.

The genus *Hepatica*, also known as Liverleaf or Liverwort, is a member of the buttercup family (*Ranunculaceae*). Formerly classified as *Anemone*

hepatica, it was promoted to a genus of its own that now includes 10-12 species.

Acutiloba is one of two that are native to Eastern North America. The other species are native to Europe or Asia. The flowers, often white in the wild but also sometimes ranging from pink to blue to purple, emerge with the crocuses in early spring to bloom before the new leaves unfurl. Each flower arises on its own stem, which is several inches tall and covered in fine hairs. Mature plants, if they are happily located, are long-lived and can sport large clumps of 20-30 flowers. The flower petals are actually sepals (as many as 6-20 per bloom), each surrounded with three bracts. The flowers are open most fully on sunny days and they can last for weeks. Because the old leaves that last through the winter can look bedraggled, sources recommend removing them so as not to conceal the new flowers with unsightly foliage.



As welcome heralds of spring the flowers would be enough to recommend this plant, but they are followed by three-lobed, pointed leaves (hence the name *acutiloba*) that are also

of interest. The leaves are heart-shaped at the base and unfold from neatly furled scrolls to bright shiny green, growing darker as they mature.

Cultivation Requirements

Light: Although they prefer shade, especially in summer to protect the young leaves from burning, they will appreciate some sun to encourage the fullest flowers. Planting them under deciduous trees provides the best of both worlds by allowing for sun in early spring to keep the flowers happy, with shade to follow as the trees leaf out.



Soil: In the wild, hepatica are often endemic to areas with alkaline conditions, so Arrowhead recommends a neutral to alkaline soil, moist but not wet and rich in organic matter. Native Wildflowers Nursery notes that flower color may depend in part on soil type. Other sources describe it as adaptable to a wide range of soil types (see the following reference to Glenn Shapiro's article).

Caring for Bare Root Plants: The Hepaticas from Arrowhead will be shipped bare-rooted, so here are some tips about caring for them. If the ground is still frozen when they arrive, you can mist the packing medium and store the bag for a few days in a cold but not freezing basement, garage or the fridge. If the ground remains frozen, you can also get a head start by potting the plants in a container a couple of inches wider than the root ball and growing them in a bright window (unless you're lucky enough to have a greenhouse). Before transplanting outside, preferably when the temperature has reached the 40's, gently rinse the potting medium from the roots and soak them for 30 minutes or so in a bucket of tepid water to plump them up.

You Tube has lots of videos demonstrating the exact techniques for digging the hole and planting a bare root specimen. Most of them recommend creating a mounded cone of soil in the center of the hole and sitting the crown on top of the cone, with the roots spreading down its sides (if the roots are too long to place them without doubling back on themselves, they should be trimmed). With the crown ever-so-slightly above ground level, backfill the hole with soil and water them in thoroughly.

Dormant plants that have only been stored a few days in a cold place should tolerate early spring temperature fluctuations, but if the plants have sprouted, as they probably will if you've potted them, you might need to harden them off gradually while still in pots and protect them from mid-to-late spring freezes after planting them out in the garden.

A Note on Names and Taxonomy

As its common names Liverleaf and Liverwort suggest, Hepatica comes from the Greek word for liver, reminding us that many plant names are metaphorical. In this case some saw in the three-lobed leaf an image of the human liver, and based on the early belief in the Doctrine of Signatures, the plants were used medicinally to treat liver ailments. But beware: one source says in large doses the leaves can be toxic. Even so, we can be grateful that the plants are far more attractive than the human organ they are said to resemble.

The nomenclature and taxonomy for this genus can be a bit confusing, so I want to recommend the article by Glenn Shapiro, "A Journey Up the Rocky Road of Hepatica," featured in the Winter 2017/2018 issue of NARGS' *The Quarterly*. Her Hepatica collection has been awarded status in the UK as a National Collection, and the article invites us on a readerly stroll through her collection's geographical principle of organization, clearly dividing the genus into European, American, and Asian species. At least one other source classifies *Hepatica acutiloba* not as an American species but as a variation within the species *H. nobilis*, which is endemic to Europe. But I find Shapiro most trustworthy when it comes to such matters, and she views *acutiloba* as a separate species endemic to America. She also believes that the apparent preference for limestone in the wild may have more to do with drainage than soil pH, noting that in her garden Hepaticas also grow well in acidic leaf litter.

Thanks to her article, I'm currently on the lookout for "Millstream Merlin," an American hybrid with deep violet flowers found in Lincoln and Laura Foster's garden. As you can see, I'm hooked, and I hope you will be too.

A NEW YEAR MEANS TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

If you have not renewed for 2018, you should do it now so you'll be eligible to purchase the plant-of-the-month at our March meeting. You can renew at the March meeting or by mail. 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.

To our Chapter members: A membership directory is published electronically every year in September and accompanies the September newsletter as an attachment. For those who receive a paper copy of the Green Dragon, you will be mailed a printed directory. To respect our members' privacy we do not post the directory online.

MAKE A DATE WITH PLANTS: APRIL 21ST & MAY 20TH

David Mitchell, Plant Sale Coordinator

It's March and that means spring is coming! Our gardens are starting to wake up. So here are two early reminders.

The tradition continues. At our April meeting we are welcoming our members to bring in extra seedlings they would like to share.

Please note and SAVE THE DATE NOW for our big plant sale fundraiser at the annual Cooperative Extension Garden Fair. The sale is now scheduled for Sunday, May 20 at the Ithaca High School. We expect to set up at our usual indoor location. More information on both of these events will be forthcoming in future newsletters.

NARGS REMINDER: JULY NEWFOUNDLAND CONFERENCE



It's coming! The NARGS annual meeting/conference in Newfoundland "Where Alpines Meet the Sea!" on July 6-8. Registration is still open.

If you go you might consider extending your trip to tour Newfoundland on your own, since the post-trip organized by NARGS has filled up. John Gilrein traveled there a few years ago and I'll bet he could offer some suggestions for an itinerary.

For further information regarding the conference visit the website [NARGS Newfoundland Annual Meeting](#).

SOIL & SCAN ART: FOLLOW-UP FROM CRAIG

Thank you Craig for your presentation last month at our Members' Share meeting. ! Because so many expressed interest, Craig directs you to these 3 websites that will give you more information: About soil-painting (<https://soilhealth.cals.cornell.edu/about/soil-painting/>), [Sweep of Light scanner photography exhibit](#), (located at Mann Library Gallery open noon to 5 on March 17th and features some of Craig's work), and [Nevin Center, Cornell Botanic Gardens exhibit](#).

WATCH READ AND LEARN: MORE VIDEOS THIS MONTH!

David Mitchell

Bill and Mary's November meeting lecture on English garden design inspired me to revisit some of my favorite garden videos on YouTube: BBC's *Great British Garden Revival*, BBC's *Gardeners' World*, Monty Don's *Around the World in 80 Gardens*, and Sarah Raven. All are enjoyable programs that teach many aspects of gardening.

Books too, of course, are a source for learning. I just finished Jinny Blom's *The Thoughtful Gardener: An Intelligent Approach to Garden Design*. It's a wonderful book that takes you through her design process. Winter into early spring, when it may still be too cold or wet to work the garden, is a great time to catch up on watching instructional videos, reading, and attending lectures.

Editor's Note: Speaking of reading: Access to all NARGS Quarterly issues are available on line. The three most recent years are available to Members-only and you must log in to gain access. [Join today](#) and gain immediate access. Access to all older issues dating back to 1938 is FREE TO ALL and loaded with great gardening information.

ROCK GARDENING IN THE SOUTH PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE: RECAP OF NARGS 2017 ANNUAL MEETING

Kathie Luke. Reprinted by permission from the January-February 2018 newsletter of Sierra Rock Garden Society



Charles and Kathie Luke at the Reception
Photo Val Myrick

When I first saw the schedule for the NARGS annual meeting held November 17-19 in 2017, my first thought was "Do I really want to fly to North Carolina now?" After all, it was scarcely a week before Thanksgiving and I was just returning from a two-week trip to New York. Fortunately, the answer to my question was "yes," because the informative conference and its stellar line-up of speakers and tours more than exceeded my expectations.

The conference was held in Durham, NC, at the Imperial Sheraton Hotel, where most of the attendees stayed. On Friday morning, we boarded shuttle buses for an optional visit to Juniper Level Botanic Garden at Plant Delights Nursery, Sarah P. Duke Gardens, and the North Carolina Botanical Garden.

It was a lovely, cool day to walk among the different plants and foliage, and I began to understand that every region faces its own challenges in establishing rock gardens. I had been under the misconception that growing might be easier there because of the



Urbanite Crevice Garden at Plant Delights Nursery. Photo by Charles Luke

abundant moisture. But, the growing season is long, and heavy rains can be sudden and prolonged, creating drainage problems. And, unsurprisingly, gardeners there want the same delicate alpine plants that rock gardeners everywhere covet.

Because of these conditions, crevice gardens are becoming increasingly popular. These make it possible for the plants to grow a deep, vertical root system, which keeps them cooler in the summer and allows for better drainage. Southern gardens also use an abundance of cacti, which I was not expecting to find.

After the tour, we returned to the hotel for a reception where we met and mingled with fellow gardeners. After eating our fill of Carolina classic appetizers, we convened for a presentation about using recycled materials for rock gardens. Tony Avent and Jeremy Schmidt showed slides illustrating how cement from old sidewalks could be reconfigured into crevice gardens. Later, we would see such a garden at Plants Delight Nursery, where Tony is president.



Rooftop Crevice Garden
JC Raulston Arboreum
Photo C. Luke

Our second night at the hotel got off to a rocky start when a fire alarm went off around 3:00 am on Saturday morning. My husband, Charles, and I trudged up and down seven flights of stairs with the other guests. We later found out that the alarm had gone off because a guest had been smoking in their room. Of course, it was *not* one of the conference attendees. Because of this incident, I overslept and missed the opening lecture on the history of rock gardening by Bobby Ward. All the reports indicated that his talk was wonderful, but there were many more riches to follow.

I was impressed at how well the conference was organized, and how the lectures perfectly complimented the tours. There were many highlights of the conference, and each presentation focused on one specific aspect of rock gardening.

Andrea Sprott, who is Garden Curator of the Elizabeth Lawrence Garden in Charlotte, gave a delightful history of the legacy of Lawrence, a pioneer who is listed as one of the top twenty-five gardeners of all time. Lawrence's exquisitely written book, *A Rock Garden in the South*, was an early influence for gardeners everywhere.

Joseph Tychonievich, who was named by Organic Gardening magazine as one of "... six young horticulturalists who are helping shape how America Gardens," educated us on millennials' views of gardening. Apparently, they don't want "your grandfather's" garden, but rather wind swept landscapes or various small space gardens. Probably, each generation wants to put their own imprint on their endeavors. Joseph edits *The Rock Garden Quarterly*.

Following a delicious and abundant lunch, we were treated to a presentation on gardening with bog plants by Larry Mellichamp. His slides on carnivorous plants were fascinating, as were his humorous interpretations. Larry is recently retired Professor of Botany and Horticulture and Director of the Botanical Gardens at the University of North Carolina, where I am sure he kept his students amused as well as informed.

Tim Alderton talked about the background of JC Raulston and the arboretum which is named after him. Tim has been a horticulturalist there since 2006. This provided a wonderful introduction to the extensive arboretum, which many of us were to visit the next day.

After a dinner of Southern food and camaraderie, we reconvened for a presentation by John Grimshaw on "Snowdrops and Other Delights". John's knowledge of snowdrops, or *Galanthus*, is truly encyclopedic. His photographs of the snowdrops he has grown were uniquely beautiful. Following this, there were several short presentations, including photos from a NARGS trip to Yunnan, China.

On Sunday, the final day of the conference, we boarded buses for Plants Delight Nursery, JC Raulston Arboretum and Montrose Gardens. Nothing could have prepared me for the experience at our first stop, the aptly named Plants Delight Nursery. Outside we saw row after row of carefully labeled perennials, as well as many more in greenhouses. Some of the plants are not available elsewhere in the US, and many were collected by founder, Tony Avent, during



Snowdrops for Sale -
Montrose Gardens
Kathie Luke

trips to other countries, including China, Greece, South Africa and Argentina. More than 1700 of these plants are for sale on the nursery's online site: Plant Delights Nursery (<https://www.plantdelights.com/>).

Our next stop was JC Raulston Arboretum, a 10-acre botanical garden at North Carolina State University. We barely had time enough to wander through all of the themed gardens, which are constantly evolving. Our last stop on the tour was Montrose Gardens, a complex of gardens founded in the mid-19th century. There, we wandered through sunny gardens and wooded areas where snowdrops were proliferating by the paths.

In addition to all these tours and presentations, there were other activities at the conference, including raffles, plant sales, book signings and silent auctions. There was even a plant auction chanted by Tony Avent in the cadence of a tobacco auctioneer.

The organizers of the conference deserve kudos for putting together such an interesting and inspiring experience. People from all over North America were brought together by their love of rock gardening and were eager to share their knowledge and experience. I returned from the conference invigorated by the energy generated by the supportive group of gardeners who gathered there.

Editor's Note: For some other personal accounts about the NARGS annual meeting in North Carolina this past November check out these newsletters: New England Chapter Newsletter (https://nargs.org/sites/default/files/chapter-newsletters/NENARGS_Feb-March_copy.pdf) and Manhattan Chapter Newsletter (https://nargs.org/sites/default/files/mcnargs/UrbanGardner_SepOct2016.pdf).

THIS YEAR CHALLENGE YOURSELF

Carol Eichler

Most people think of making resolutions for New Year's but a gardener's equivalent might be the mental notes we often take at the end of a growing season. We consider our successes and failures - and formulate a to-do list for next year. If I am really organized, I might even scribble some notes on paper, and if I am even more organized, I consult and perhaps implement some changes (if I can find the list that is).

But, it struck me as I was sowing the seeds from the various seed exchanges this month: Now is really the best time to make my garden resolutions for the year ahead – and I mean not just about what to move where or what to divide, but how I will become a better gardener.

So much of our Chapter meetings involve learning more about plants – from our speakers, from each other, and from the new plants we purchase through plant-of-the-month or our plant sales. I also learn by doing, by trying new plants and techniques, by trying to find right plant-right place. Sometimes my best lessons come from my mistakes. You've heard the saying, "The best gardeners kill the most plants," right? Maybe that means I'm making progress.

So this year I resolve to be more purposeful in identifying what I want to learn. Here's my pledge: I want to learn the names of the plants in my rock garden (that's over 250 genera!). I have my work cut out for myself.

People say resolutions are made to be broken. Maybe so, but what progress will I make if I don't have a goal? Do you want to make resolution? And what will it be?

THE "PROBLEM" WITH ASTERS

Barbara Lee, Reprinted by permission from the author

While not on a comparable level as such classic moments of global trauma as, for example, the Bay of Pigs, many resentful home gardeners may feel that the recent reclassification of many Aster species into new, unfamiliar and tongue-twisting genera is likewise a psychic blow.



Symphyotrichum nova-angliae aka *Aster nova-angliae*. Photo: wikipedia.org



Asa Gray, 1841 Photo: © User:Haeferl / Wikimedia Commons

What we may not realize is that this is not a new phenomenon. The genus *Aster* has long frustrated botanists over the course of its taxonomic classification, starting with the botanist who may credibly be considered one of the founders of North American botany, Asa Gray.

Asa Gray (1810—1888), a professor of botany at Harvard University, was intimately involved with the nascent field of evolution and the taxonomic classification of species according to morphological characteristics. The first definitive work on North American botany was his *Manual of the Botany of the Northern United States*, now known more simply as *Gray's Manual*, which is to this day a standard text in the field.

Yet even this giant struggled with *Aster*. Alan Weakley, a UNC Herbarium curator, has noted in his witty article "The Curious Case of the Disappearing Asters" in the March-April 2004 NCBG Newsletter that "Asa Gray... struggled with *Aster*—at all levels, from its circumscription [what to include in it], to the taxonomy of the component species." Late in his life, he wrote: "I am half dead with *Aster*. I got on very fairly until I got to the thick of the genus, around what I call the *Dumosi* and *Salicifolia*. Here I work and work,

but make no headway at all. I can't tell what are species and how to define any of them... I was never so boggled....If you hear of my breaking down utterly, and being sent to an asylum, you may lay it to Aster, which is a slow and fatal poison."

Likely due to this taxonomic anguish, Gray ultimately dealt with the Aster dilemma by lumping many "segregate genera" under the single genus. For decades, most botanists agreed with him.

In the 1990's, the scientific consensus - that the hundreds of species then included in the Aster genus actually belonged there - began to shatter. As the ability to analyze DNA morphed from an impossible dream to a common research technique, botanists studying the Aster genus began to realize that despite their morphological similarities, North American "asters" were not closely related to the Old World species. The "segregate genera" which had been driving Gray to potential residence in an asylum were once again recognized as distinct and separate genera.



Aster alpinus. Photo: User: Plugwash, commonswiki, Sept. 2005 Wikipedia

The once mighty Aster genus has now been reduced to about 180 species, all but one restricted to Eurasia—the sole Aster in North America being *Aster alpinus*, a circumboreal species found throughout the northern hemisphere, though now critically endangered in eastern Canada.

So what have our native asters become? In Ontario we may encounter some of the following species.

Doellingeria umbellata, formerly *Aster umbellatus*, is a towering perennial up to five feet tall. Growing in full sun to part shade, it

prefers moist or wet well-drained, slightly acidic soils. The many small white flowers are held in much-branched, flat-topped umbels.

Eurybia divaricata, once *Aster divaricatus*, can also be found in about 25 populations in Ontario and Quebec, though it is much more common throughout the U.S. It grows along forest edges and clearings in dry open woods from Alabama to Quebec. A rare late bloomer for shady conditions, *Eurybia divaricate* blooms from mid summer to early autumn. Foliage is heart-shaped or oval. A



Doellingeria umbellata, by Joshua Mayer - <http://www.flickr.com/photos>



Eurybia divaricata, formerly *Aster divaricatus*, White Wood aster
Photo: Wikipedia Commons

shorter perennial, it

ranges from two to three feet in height, and two to four feet in width, spreading gently from underground rhizomes. Very similar to the former *Aster cordifolius*, (now *Symphyotrichum cordifolium*), *Eurybia divaricata* is white rather than blue flowered, and slightly shorter

and less upright than *Symphotrichum cordifolium*. Both enjoy the same conditions in the garden. *S. cordifolium* is widely distributed throughout Canada and the U.S.

Symphotrichum laeve (formerly *Aster laevis*), or Smooth Aster, is one of the easier North American "asters" to identify in the field due to its smooth-textured foliage.



Aster cordifolius (now *Symphotrichum cordifolium*) - Blue Wood Aster
Photo: uniprot.org/taxonomy/41480

Growing in full sun and tolerating dry conditions, both this species, and a new cultivar, *Symphotrichum laeve* 'Bluebird', reach about three feet tall and two feet wide, with a very floriferous habit lasting well into autumn.

One of the commonest species from Canada to northern Mexico is *Symphotrichum ericoides*, aka *Aster ericoides* or Heath Aster. Tolerant of drought, it prefers full sun though it will bloom to a lesser degree in open woods as well. Small,



Symphotrichum ericoides, Heath Aster Photo: Cody Hough, 2007

one cm wide flowers cover the plant in dense racemes from August to October. Interestingly, according to Wikipedia, "plants sold in the horticultural trade labeled as *Aster ericoides*, the old name of the plant, are almost invariably cultivars or hybrids involving ... *Symphotrichum dumosum*, *S. lateriflorum*, *S. pilosum* or *S. racemosum*, a mistake that has apparently occurred continuously since the 19th century. "



Symphotrichum laeve (syn. *Aster laevis*) - Smooth Aster. Photo: Wikipedia Commons, Heike Löchel, CC BY-SA 2.0 de

Garden cultivars of North American asters have often been created by European horticulturalists not jaded by familiarity with their annual autumn display. Other local species such as *Symphotrichum nova-angliae*, *S. nova-belgi*, *S. oblongifolium*, and *S. laterifolium* have also contributed to the creation of the Michaelmas daisies so greatly appreciated in British and European gardens.

Our problem with asters is that, despite their new and unfamiliar names,

we really cannot do without them in the late summer garden. Cultivars such as *S. laterifolium* 'Lady in Black,' *S. oblongifolium* 'October Skies,' *S. nova-angliae* 'Purple Dome,' and *S. laeve* 'Bluebird' are invaluable for adding vibrant bloom and abundant pollen from August to



Symphotrichum nova-angliae 'Purple Dome'

Photo: Homegardengreen

October, a time when few other plants are in bloom. Sooner or later we will overcome this trauma and learn to love even the names *Symphyotrichum*, *Doellingeria* and *Eurybia*.

UPCOMING 2018 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, 236 Tower Road, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

Mar. 1-31: Sweep of Light: Scanner Photography and the Art of Horticulture, exhibit by Craig Cramer and others at Mann 2nd floor Gallery, Mann Library, Cornell. For hours and more info: [Sweep of Light Exhibit](#).

Mar. 1: NARGS Surplus Round Seed List is in progress

Mar. 17: Barbara Cooper and Bella Seiden: Botanizing in Patagonia

April 21: Anna Leggatt: 2 talks at 11am and 1pm. Favorite Plants from Around the World and Can We Grow Them? AND Rock Gardening, Troughs, Screens and Sand Beds

May 20: Plant Sale fundraiser as part of CCETC's Garden Fair. NOTE the change of date! This is the Sunday following Mother's Day week-end.

June 13-29: NARGS-sponsored botanical tour to Yunnan China. Info [here](#).

July 6-8: "Where Alpines Meet the Sea," NARGS Annual Meeting in St. John's Newfoundland, Optional post-conference trip: July 9 – 15. Info here: [Newfoundland Meeting & Post-Conference Tour](#).

May 3-5, 2019: "Rooted in Diversity," NARGS Study Weekend in the Philadelphia area, sponsored by Delaware Valley Chapter NARGS

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

March 2-3: Ithaca Native Plants Landscape Symposium. Info at <https://www.ithacanativelandscape.com/>

March 3-11: Philadelphia Flower Show "Wonders of Water" <https://theflowershow.com/>

March 8-11: GardenScape, "The Flower City Blooms Again," Henrietta, NY. <https://rochesterflowershow.com/>

March 22-25: Plantasia, Hamburg, NY, "Cityscapes into the Night."
<https://plantasiany.com/>

March 23-25: Capital District Garden & Flower Show, Troy, NY [Capital District Garden and Flower Show](#).

March 24: Garden Conservancy Open Days: Snowdrops at Hitch Lyman's. Info and preview of 2018 schedule: [Garden Conservancy](#).

April 28: Stonecrop's Alpine Plant Sale, Cold Spring, NY. Info about this and other events at stonecrop.org.

May 19: All About Alpines workshop, Stonecrop. Info at [Stonecrop Calendar](#).

Cooperative Extension Horticulture Programs, located at 615 Willow Av., Ithaca. 607-272-2292. Unless otherwise stated, classes require pre-registration and have a self-determining sliding fee scale. More info at www.ccetompkins.org

Finger Lakes Native Plant Society Meetings from 7-8:30pm at the Ithaca Unitarian Church annex (corner of Buffalo & Aurora, enter side door on Buffalo St. & up the stairs). More info at www.FLNPS.org. Plus FLNPS Walks meeting at different times and locations.

Cornell Botanic Gardens (formerly Cornell Plantations) calendar of events visit: [CBG Calendar](#).

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 \$15 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, annual membership directory, 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, NARGS is offering botanical tours each year, both within the US and abroad.

2018 BOARD MEMBERS AND CONTACTS

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

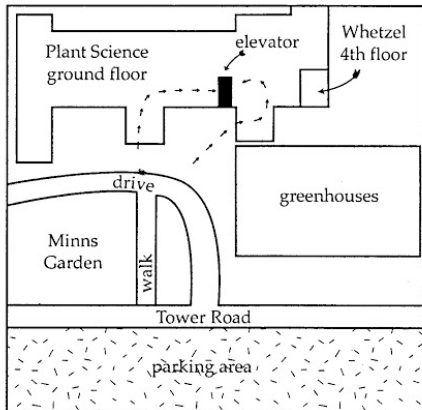
Chair: John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu
 Program: Terry Humphries, terryehumphries@gmail.com
 Program Committee Members: Could this be you?
 Secretary: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu
 Treasurer: BZ Marranta, mmm10@cornell.edu
 Plant Sales Chair: David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu. Seeking a Co-Chair for 2018 to work alongside David...Why not you?
 Plant Sales Committee Members: Michael Loos, BZ Marranta, Carol Eichler
 Plant of the Month: Marlene Kobre, mkobre@ithaca.edu
 Membership: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu
 New Member Hospitality: Nari Mistry, nbm2@cornell.edu
 Newsletter Editor: Carol Eichler carolithaca@gmail.com
 Calendar: 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 April

2018 issue. The newsletter is always posted and printable each month on our website:

www.acnargs.org



Map: Whetzel Room, Room 404 Plant Science Building, 236 Tower Rd., Cornell campus

PHOTOS OF THE MONTH: THE MOUNTAINS IN WINTER

Photos by Carol Eichler

See next page



Carol's garden imitation of a mountain range and the Dolomites of Italy.