



ADIRONDACK
CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

IN THIS ISSUE:

May 18: Plant Sale at Ithaca High School
From the Chair
Membership
Trough Workshop
Foresight 2020: Exploration and Inspiration
FLASH! I Need Garden Photos!

Upcoming ACNARGS Programs
Calendar of Select Garden Events & Programs
About Us, ACNARGS
About NARGS National

May/June 2019

Plant Sale Schedule

FRIDAY Set Up, May 17, arrive no earlier than 4:30. If you are bringing plants, pull north of the gym (building) and there is a paved area alongside the building from which to unload. There are several side doors that lead into the gym.

Saturday Morning, May 18, 7:30 AM Gym opens. If you are bringing plants on Saturday morning, please come in through a back door from the north east lot on Lake Street since vendors will be setting up via the main driveway and there is no room for to come in via the front of the building. Early arrivals on Saturday please park in the Teachers Parking Lot OR on Lake St. Leave the big lot in front of the school open for customers.

Plant Sale! Donate, Volunteer, Purchase

It takes a village to hold a successful plant sale, which is a bit of a cliché way to say – we need YOU to donate plants, to help out with the sale on May 18, and to buy plants too. Our members receive a 25% discount, so what's to stop you from stocking up? By and large my most valued plants have come from fellow ACNARGS members.

The sale is May 18 from 9 to 2 at the Ithaca High School. NOW is the time to be potting up your plant divisions. You do not need to be reminded that we rely on the proceeds of this sale to fund our Chapter's activities, especially to bring you knowledgeable speakers from far and wide. One reason we are able to bring such high quality speakers is that we pay them generously for their talk and travel expenses.

Thank you to those who have already signed up to help with set up and during sale day. We could use more help especially for the later shift on Saturday from noon and ending approximately noon includes final clean-up. This shift is much more relaxed than the frenzied first sale hours, so usually there is some time to chit-chat amongst ourselves. If we are lucky, we sell out before the close of the event at 2pm, which can make for an early departure.

As in past years, if you can't deliver your potted plants on Friday or Saturday day of sale (preferably between 8 and 9am), you can drop them off at David Mitchell's back door (through the driveway gate), located on the Washington Street side of 402 Esty Street.

Please label your plants in advance since this greatly eases our set-up. Common name is OK and Latin genus (and species) if you know it.

Until this past week of warmer temperatures – finally (and I will say what a difference a week makes), our late spring is just one challenge for our plant sale this year. As you know perennials have been slow to emerge, discouraging all but the intrepid to dig and divide right now (dividing we stand). But when has a challenge stopped an avid gardener?!

Discouraging the spread of jumping worms through their soil-laden eggs is yet another challenge for which there is no easy solution. Or as David Mitchell wrote, “There is no safe place for plants.” Please don’t let this menace deter you from donating plants! But also be diligent in bare-rooting your divisions and potting into soil-less mix.

Washing all garden soil from the roots is the most important precaution you can take. You should do this regardless of whether your own garden is infested or not, as this is one of those good gardening practices. What should you do with the wastewater? Can’t pour it down the drain. Don’t want to pour it back onto the soil. I’ve submitted this question to the Cooperative Extension Growline and thus far have not received a response. Stay tuned for the answer.

I’ve been debating what precautions to take to hold the pots until the sale. They should not have contact with the soil, where the worms can enter and contaminate the pot (after all your efforts to this point). The simplest solution seems to be to seek out some free pallets on which to place the trays of pots. I often find them along the curbs at different downtown businesses. Another option would be to elevate the pots on saw horses with some top devised of expanded metal mesh, requiring both expense and labor. A tarp laid on the ground sounded appealing until Pat Curran pointed out the issue of drainage. Perhaps, lay the tarp on a slope or pierce holes in it? What are your ideas?

Even better defense – at least as a gardener’s responsibility to curb the spread of the jumping worm – is to thoroughly rinse the soil from any field grown plants that you acquire and then bare-root plant them.

The Garden Fair and Plant Sale is always a date to look forward to. So many vendors, so many plants! It is also a wonderful day to spend more time with each other. Plan to come, donate, volunteer, and purchase!

Editor’s Note: Though Pat Curran has been synonymous with the Cornell Cooperative Extension, credit should have been given to her for the article on the jumping worm article in last month’s newsletter.

From the Chair

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair.

Spring is a glorious but sometimes exhausting time of year with all the work to do in the garden. Still, I’m glad it’s here! It’s very uplifting to be outside and see all the new shoots, buds, and green, and especially all the spring flowers. Many of the spring bloomers provide a big bang for the buck, over time that is, when planted in decent soil and not overrun with weeds or much bigger plants, they will spread. Mostly they’re not fussy about pH, sun exposure (as long as they get sun before the trees leaf out), or fertilizer, and they’re hardy and long lived. Some of the plants that fit that description are *Anemone blanda**, *Corydalis solida**, *Chionodoxa luciliae**, *Eranthis hyemalis**, *Mertensia virginica*, *Pulmonaria angustifolia*, *Pushkinia libanotica**, *Scilla siberica**, and *Stylophorum diphyllum*. *These geophytic plants can spread into your lawn (which I like) and don’t seem to need a long time to ripen their foliage to bloom the following year, meaning I can mow them before the foliage turns brown. I would advise not getting too eager with the mower though. They will go partially to fully dormant (aestivate) when they dry out in the summer and reappear again the following spring, so they are plants not needing watering (in our climate). Caveat: if you don’t want plants to spread from their initial planting spot, you might want to avoid these. However, I’m happy with the profusion of exuberant spring bloomers.

One of the joys of spring is starting plants from seed. One can get plants going early with a greenhouse or an indoor growing setup with lights. But all you need is some seed, plastic pots, potting mix, and patience. Sometimes

when growing plants from seed I end up with more plants than I need. It's easy to give away extra plants, and almost everyone likes free plants. And sometimes you get free plants in return as a reward. There is a sense of satisfaction from successfully raising your own plants. Another plus is one can grow plants that are unavailable or difficult to obtain from a nursery. Try starting some plants from seed, even you only try a few species.

The Ithaca Garden Fair plant sale is a great event, both for the Adirondack Chapter and the community. It's such a good opportunity to shop for plants from many vendors in one location, see some friends, and I hope you'll consider bringing plants for our plant sale booth and/or work at the sale. Adirondack Chapter members (if your membership is current) get a discount at our booth at the plant sale. Our booth always has some unusual and worthwhile plants, some of which are not available from any of the other vendors. I always enjoy working the plant sale, something I might not have predicted before I tried it; I think I really like talking about plants!

Our June event is a garden tour day on June 15 from Lansing to Union Springs (that is the east side of Cayuga Lake). Unfortunately we're not ready to publish an article on the tour yet (many details to organize, and that's still in process). We do know the gardens we'll be visiting, which are Bill Stark/Mary Stauble (Lansing), Len & Cindy Lion (Lansing), Debi Lampman (King Ferry), George Fearon (Union Springs), and possible one extra (to be determined). We'll start around 9, and the garden tours take most of the day. We'll send out information on the tour later, so save the date!

Membership

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

If you have not renewed for 2019, you should do it now so you'll be eligible to purchase plants at a discount at the May Plant Sale! The renewal form is at 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.

Trough Workshop, June 8

Bill Stark and Mary Stauble.

Mary and I are hosting a light weight trough workshop on Saturday June 8, from 10:00 am to 2 pm (or until done), at 232 Cedar Cove Rd in Lansing. We'll have tents set up with tables underneath so that the sun or a light rain won't bother us. Mary will have snacks and drinks and will run garden tours if desired. You're invited to bring a lunch – we have a picnic table and gas grill on the beach. A good sized trough should cost you about \$12 in materials. If you want to attend, e-mail us at mes2@cornell.edu.

These 10 to 20 lb troughs are based on synthetic stucco building technology. A foam box is reinforced with fiberglass mesh and two coats of surface bonding cement and is then covered with a very thin layer of hypertufa. We like foam core troughs because you can move them into your garage or greenhouse during the winter to protect your plants. A drawback of foam core troughs is that they have a flat surface – you can't deeply texture them like hypertufa troughs. On the other hand, we've never had a foam core trough break like fiber reinforced hypertufa troughs do.

You have to get your foam box ready **BEFORE** the workshop! Here's what you have to do:

1) Get or make a foam box. You can use fish boxes from a grocery store or Omaha Steak boxes from a yard sale. You can also make a box from expanded or extruded foam boards that you can buy at Lowes or Home Depot and glue together with foam adhesive. You could make a multi-level multi-compartment box.

- 2) Optional – reduce the height of your box with a knife or saw. A deep box is harder to move because of the weight of the soil, but is a better growing environment for some plants. It's much easier to apply the fiberglass mesh if the top edge is straight and not bumpy.
- 3) Optional – Fill in dents, holes and depressions in the foam box with Great Stuff Gaps & Cracks. Mist the box and Great stuff with water to speed its cure rate and give a better texture. Cut off the excess Great Stuff with a serrated bread knife or saw.
- 4) Use a hole saw or a narrow knife to cut a drainage hole(s) in the bottom of your foam box. I always use a single 2 ½" hole because I fit all my troughs with a drainage/aeration mat. We will have screen material to cover the hole(s) at the workshop.
- 5) Optional -If your box has thick walls (about 2"), you can get considerably more area for plants and rocks if you remove a triangle of foam from the top inside edge of your foam box so that the remaining top of your box is 3/4 inches thick; I cut out a triangle of foam about 2 1/2" deep. Even though this makes the top edge thin, it will become strong because of the glass mesh reinforcement. It will be much easier to wrap this area with the stiff glass mesh if you are careful to make a smooth and even cut as you remove the triangle. Mark lines where your knife or saw will enter and exit the foam.
- 6) Round your edges and smooth your cuts so that you can easily wrap them with the glass mesh. Use 50 grit sandpaper on a small sanding block to round off all edges to a minimum radius of ¼ inch. This includes the edges of the drain hole(s). Wear old clothes and a dust mask. Set up a card table in the middle of your lawn and have a vacuum nearby to clean off the box and yourself after sanding. At past workshops we've heavily sanded all exterior and interior surfaces of the box so that the surface bonding cement would adhere to the foam. I don't think this is necessary anymore because we're spraying the foam with an adhesive that will act as a bonding agent. However, it won't hurt to dull any shiny foam surfaces with the sanding block.
- 7) Vacuum and brush off all of the dust you just created and place your box in a black garbage bag to keep it clean and out of the sun. You'll later use the bag to cure your trough. Your box is ready!

Update: A number of members signed up our April meeting but there is room for more to attend. Please contact the Staubles directly. Carol (carolithaca@gmail.com) still has a few styrofoam boxes suitable for use as the foam core.

Foresight 2020: Exploration and Inspiration

Foresight 2020: Exploration and Inspiration is the theme of the 2020 NARGS Annual General Meeting and Conference held June 18-20, hosted by the Adirondack Chapter and co-hosted by Cornell Botanic Gardens. Why this theme? **FORESIGHT** because after attending this conference, we hope attendees will be armed with knowledge to become better gardeners moving forward. How many times have we all said "I wish I knew THEN what I know NOW?!"

Throughout the Conference we'll have a chance to **EXPLORE** gardening possibilities together.... whether it's the opportunity to view alpine plants of the world in their native habitat or salivate over cultivated beauties in public or private gardens. We'll learn from the experience of others and share our own successes and experimentations. In any case we will all seek to be **INSPIRED** in **2020** to try new plants, new techniques, and new challenges in our own gardens!

Packed into 3 days will be daytime field trips to private gardens and Cornell Botanic Gardens, optional "night owl" mini-talks, plant sales by choice vendors, door prizes, book signings, and an optional pre-conference tour to visit three exceptional private gardens in the Syracuse area.* We are especially excited to be able to bring two international speakers - Kaj Andersen and Harry Jans. And of course we've planned naturalist-led hikes to showcase the beauty of our gorges and waterfalls and the flora to be found there. Our logo designed by Cornell graduate Patty Chan features a little native fern found in our gorges, *Asplenium trichomanes*, Maidenhair Spleenwort.

Cornell's north campus and Robert Purcell Community Center will be "Conference Central." We are expecting over 100 people to attend from all over the U.S. and perhaps a few international attendees too. We hope a good number of our Chapter members will also attend. Registration is set at \$425 and includes all meals (with the exception of Saturday dinner), beginning with dinner Thursday through breakfast Sunday. To defray the cost to our members our Chapter is offering \$300 stipends to anyone who has not previously received a stipend to attend a national NARGS meeting. (A previous Green Dragon announced this news. More information will be forthcoming at our fall meetings and through fall newsletters)

We also hope our members will join in the fun by volunteering to help during the conference – whether you are registered or not. We've identified a number of opportunities from serving as bus monitor, to helping vendors with plant sales, to greeting and orienting out-of-town registrants, and the list goes on. Most of the volunteer needs require a minimal amount of time ranging from 2-8 hours. You will be hearing more about the needs we've identified as the months progress.

June 2020 might seem a long way off but for five of our members comprising the Planning Committee – John Gilrein, Terry Humphries, Marlene Kobre, Steve Whitesell, and Carol Eichler, these dates have been on their minds for some months already. We're off to a good start. So mark your calendar, save the date, and plan to attend.

*This tour includes the gardens of Dianne Bordoni, Michael Brennan, and Donna Kraft – three of the gardens we toured last summer.

FLASH! I Need Garden Photos!

Please take pictures of your garden this growing season and send them to me as you take them or at the end of the season. I want to put together a slide show for the 2020 Conference to highlight our members' gardens. My idea is to show them on a rotating basis in the auditorium as people are entering for the evening talks.

They do not have to be rock garden photos. They can be a landscape views or close-ups of a particular flower in bloom. I'd like to represent as many of our gardens as possible. So send me a few or send me a lot. They can even be photos from previous years. Send your photos to carolithaca@gmail.com. Thanks!



Arabis pumila (Carol Eichler garden)



Corydalis solida 'George P. Baker' (Carol Eichler garden)



Eunomia oppositifolia (Carol Eichler garden)

Upcoming 2019 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.

May 18: Cooperative Extension Garden Fair and Plant Sale at Ithaca High School. ACNARGS plant sale – our biggest fundraiser of the year!

June 8: Trough Workshop at Bill and Mary's. (See article.)

June 15: Garden Tour. Stay tuned for this year's garden tour, which is currently in the planning stages, and will tentatively happen on Saturday June 15. This date conveniently avoids both the Scotland trip in early June and the Ireland trip later in June that involve some of our members. Our planned tour area is the east side of Cayuga Lake, Lansing to Union Springs. (See Stark/Stauble Garden article in this newsletter.)

August 17: Annual Dish-to-Pass Picnic and Members-Only Plant Sale. Upper Buttermilk Falls Picnic Shelter.

September 15: Garden Conservancy Open Days: The gardens of Donna Kraft, Dianne Bordoni and Michael Brennan. Details forthcoming on the Garden Conservancy website.

September 21: Cate Crawford, Lyndaker Farms: "From Rock Peonies to Hardy Tree Peonies".

Oct. 6: Note 1st Sunday. Two presentations by Cliff Booker, from the United Kingdom. Part of NARGS Speaker Tour.

November 16: Lori Chips Hypertufa Troughs book signing and presentation.

June 18-20, 2020: Foresight 2020: Exploration and Inspiration, NARGS Annual General Meeting, hosted by ACNARGS in Ithaca, NY

As we learn more details of these meetings they will be included in future newsletters, our blog, acnargs.blogspot.com, and our Facebook page, facebook.com/acnargs.

Calendar of Select Garden Events & Programs

May 10-19: [Rochester Lilac Festival](#), Highland Park, Rochester, NY.

May-June: usually the last 2 weekends of May and the first weekend of June, [Linwood Gardens Tree Peony Festival](#), Pavilion NY.

October 28 – November 8: NARGS Tour to Greece. This tour is now full and a wait list has been created.

[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.

[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). Also look for FLNPS Walks meeting at different times and locations.

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

To have a garden event in your area listed send all pertinent information to David Mitchell at david_mitchell_14850@yahoo.com

Have Some, Want Some

Here's our new monthly feature – a classified section – to facilitate your gardening wants and needs. Do you have too many large pots? Do you want some small pots? Do you have too many divisions (that will otherwise go into the compost)? Are you seeking a certain plant? The idea is to use this newsletter to express your “haves” that you are willing to give away and “wants” for any items you are seeking. To post a listing contact Carol Eichler at carolithaca@gmail.com.

Have: *Panax trifolius* and *Asclepius quinquefolia*. Contact Bill Plummer, remmulp@stny.rr.com

Want: Sturdy styrofoam boxes for ACNARGS trough workshop. Contact Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com

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 5 program-speaker meetings, the *Green Dragon* newsletter, web and Facebook pages, garden visits, overnight garden trips, hands-on workshops, 2 plant sales a year, and frequent plant giveaways. 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 at 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 focused on rock gardening, 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.

2019 ACNARGS 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: Currently rotating amongst "Responsible People"

Treasurer: **BZ Marranca**, mmm10@cornell.edu

Plant Sales Chair: **Carol Eichler**, carolithaca@gmail.com

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

Plant of the Month: **Marlene Kobre**, mkobre@ithaca.edu

Membership: Seeking someone to do this. **Could this be you?**

New Member Hospitality: **Graham Egerton**

Newsletter Editor: **David Mitchell**, dwm23@cornell.edu

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 David Mitchell, david_mitchell_14850@yahoo.com. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be our July/August 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

