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January 2022

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JANUARY 22, 1P.M. VIA ZOOM: LIZ KNOWLES

Terry Humphries, Program Chair



For our January program, Liz Knowles will be talking about some of the plants that she has seen and subsequently been able to grow in the garden during her 25+ years of travels to mountain areas. These plants will include spring ephemerals as well as European, Central Asian, Himalayan, and Japanese alpinists and a smattering of plants from the southern hemisphere.

Liz is a member of the Ontario Rock Garden and Hardy Plant Society. Along with her husband they have been gardening in the Hockley Valley, in Mono, Ontario for 45 years. Their property is situated close to the steppe limestone of the Niagara Escarpment, where they experience winter temperatures as low as -33 degrees C (-27 F) and summer heat as high as $+33$ (92 F). Her one hectare (2.5 acre) garden includes several perennial beds, extensive rock and crevice gardens and raised tufa beds. She also cultivates a woodland garden and a grass and pollinator garden.



Liz and her husband George have written extensively about their visits to botanically rich regions both north and south of the equator, and Liz has presented a number of programs about alpines and other unusual plants.

Note: We're still Zooming. Don't be shy; give it a try. We're here to help. And we spend some time chatting following our program. It's the next best thing to being together. Can't attend? We hope to record this program (as with others in the recent past). Request the recording from Terry Humphries.

And upcoming programs:

February 20 Members Share (note date change to 3rd Sunday so as to not conflict with "NARGS Rocks: Succulents on the Rocks" virtual program on February 19)

March 19: Christopher Gardener, "Flora of the Silk Road"

April 16: Jim Jermyn, Head Gardener, Branklyn Garden in Perth, Scotland

FROM THE CHAIR

John Gilrein, Chair

I have been hoping that as more people were vaccinated and we moved through the COVID epidemic, that we might be able to meet on campus in 2022. We would have been able to meet on campus in December 2021 before the omicron variant hit our area, but we would have had multiple restrictions (including wearing a mask).

With the increase in COVID cases, Cornell is now at a higher level of restrictions, so we won't meet on campus for our January or February 2022 meetings. It's impossible to predict ahead of that for the March and April meetings, but it's very possible we won't have any Spring 2022 meetings on campus. Our January and February meetings will be on Zoom, like our 2021 meetings. The Green Dragon will continue to advise everyone whether our meetings will be in-person or remote. You can always check the most recent edition of the Green Dragon on our website acnargs.org.

Seed ordering via the NARGS Seed Exchange is now underway (since December 15). If you haven't already ordered your seeds, ordering early is better to give you more time to plant and get those cold stratification days in. Ordering seed is really easy and relatively inexpensive, all explained on the NARGS website. If you're not already a member, you can join first and then order.

As gardens mature and continue to age, they may get to the point of needing rejuvenation, though perhaps some of you are more on top of this than me. I know the border on the south side of my house is one of those. This border was last reworked years ago; the Japanese yew (*Taxus cuspidata*) there was too large and needed more pruning than I wanted to do, some of the perennials had died; many of the crocuses were eaten by chipmunks. I replaced the yew with *Taxus x media* 'Majestic' which is narrow with more restrained growth. I'm still working on what else I should plant in this border; removing the overly large yew opened up more space. Armchair gardening season (winter) is an ideal time to plan a renovation before we get tied up with spring clean-up and planting.

NOTE: Upcoming NARGS program: NARGS on the Rocks, on succulents is scheduled for Saturday January 15 at 10:30 AM Eastern Standard Time. It's \$25 for members/\$50 for non-members (which includes a discounted membership), and you do need to sign up in advance. Check the website for more information if you're interested.
John Gilrein, Chair

Editor's Note: The NARGS program will be recorded and is accessible to those who've registered either beforehand or once the recordings are posted at nargs.org/

AGM STIPEND DEADLINE EXTENDED TO JANUARY 31

Maybe it was the distraction of the holidays. Or chalk it up to another impact of covid. But John reports we got no applicants for the Chapter stipend to attend the 2022 Annual General Meeting aka NARGS Conference that we are hosting June 14-16, 2022. Last time in 2019, we had several applicants. We also know that registration for that AGM in 2019 was filled by the time it, and pretty much everything else, was cancelled in mid-March.

With an application deadline of January 1st, we had hoped the applications could be reviewed, decisions made, and applicants notified before registration opened up this January 31st. Now, that will not be possible.

We don't want anyone who is interested in attending and eligible for the stipend to miss out. So the NARGS Board is extending the application deadline to January 31, 2022. See the December 2021 Green Dragon newsletter for details on what's involved ([website acnargs.org](https://www.acnargs.org/)). We have set aside up to \$3,000 from the net of income over expenses from the AGM to encourage more of our members to attend (FYI, we stand to clear far more than \$3,000). If you attend the AGM. we guarantee you will have a wonderful time!

While no decision can be made yet as to whether we'll be able to meet in-person for the June conference, from our past experience last time we know all registrants were refunded in full – every last penny - including payment for parking. We can assure you there's no risk to registering now and everything to lose if you get closed out.

WINTER GARDENING

Deborah Banks

Now that we have made it through the holidays, the seed-starting season has begun. The season starts with the seed exchanges. I'm sure the beginning of the NARGS seed exchange was on your calendar. For me, the American Primrose Society (APS) seed exchange (<https://americanprimrosesociety.org/>) is just as thrilling. The Hardy Plant Society (<https://www.hardyplant.org/>) also has an impressive seed exchange list. All of these offer unusual varieties for the low cost of a membership and a few dollars.

Why isn't everyone growing plants from seed? I think a lot of people believe it's difficult or too much trouble or that it takes a greenhouse or a lot of shelving and lights. I'm here to tell you it doesn't have to be like that. You may need those things for difficult species that only germinate on moon rocks sprinkled with fairy dust gathered in Scotland on a dark night. And you need warmth and light for plants like tomatoes and eggplants. But for many garden-worthy plants, none of that is necessary. Most plants actually want to

grow and will put up with a lot to do it. I choose to grow these tougher perennials and a few hardy annuals.

For containers, I often buy the 36 or 72-cell trays with plastic covers for seed starting. I also save large clear plastic boxes with lids like you can buy at the grocery full of salad greens. I use an old pair of scissors to burn small holes into the top and bottom of the salad boxes. The kitchen's gas stove is great for heating the scissors blade periodically. It works better if you do this when your family is not home.

You can find elaborate recipes online for creating the ideal soilless mixture to use in your containers. I buy ordinary seed starting mix. These mixes typically consist primarily of sphagnum peat moss supplemented by other additives. It is hard initially to get the mix wet. When I open the bag, I pour water directly into the bag, mix it in, add more water, mix, repeat, until finally the mix has a nice damp quality. Then I fill my first tray or box with some of the mix and I'm ready to start sowing seed. (*Editor's note: I've learned the trick of using warm/hot water to wet the medium which makes this process much easier*)

I use one of the trays with the rows of individual cells when I have a small quantity of seed for a large number of varieties. I cut a notch on the side of the tray that faces me when I am planting. As I plant my seeds, I make a list of what I planted. For example, Col 1 Row 1-3 tells me the exact location of the cells used for the first variety I planted. For varieties where I have a larger quantity of seeds, I use a salad box. On the boxes I cut various notches to differentiate the boxes from each other, because "permanent" markers can fade and plant labels can get lost. I also note on my list what I sowed in each of these boxes and how it was notched.

Many *Primula* species have seed that ranges in size from tiny to dust. When I am sowing them, I put the seed on the top of the soil and then sprinkle a small amount of the finest soil mix particles on top. After I finish planting, I partially submerge the tray or box in water for a while, watering from the bottom. After it drains a bit, it's ready to go outside. That's right. I plant in February and set my boxes outside. Many hardy species won't sprout anyway until after being exposed to moisture and cold temperatures for a few weeks (including *primula*). I do "winter sowing" by covering the planted containers securely and setting them outside in a protected area. The lids have holes in them so that rain and snow can get in to add moisture and the bottoms also have holes to let the moisture back out. I secure each lid to the tray or salad box with duct tape to ensure it doesn't blow off in a snow storm.

I set up a makeshift table on sawhorses on the north side of the house. My containers are in the light there but out of direct sun and sheltered somewhat from the wind. As temperatures warm up, I take the lids off periodically to check on them and water if needed. The seeds won't sprout until spring. After the seedlings have a couple of 'true' leaves, I move them to bigger containers with some compost.

This method won't give me the earliest plants in the seed exchange. Grown under lights indoors, my seeds might have sprouted by March and grown into little beauties by June. In March my trays are still sitting outside in a block of ice. But a month or six weeks later when my seedlings start emerging, it's just as exciting.

A (NEW TO ME) RESOURCE FOR SEED SOWING

Carol Eichler

I just learned of a great new resource for growing plants from seed in Robert Pavlis' YouTube channel called Gardening Fundamentals. Altogether he has recorded over 200 gardening videos on various topics. He gave a short presentation for the January 9th zoom meeting of the Ontario Rock Garden and Hardy Plant Society on using gibberellic acid (GA3) to assist with the germination of particularly difficult plants (something I've never tried but now might).

While this most likely doesn't interest many of our members, I learned about his YouTube channel, which includes no less than 32 videos on just this one topic – growing plants from seed. You can be sure I for one will be checking these videos out (and probably a whole lot more). Here's the link
file:///localhost/Growing From Seed/ Everything You Need to Know

MEMBERSHIP 2022

Mary Stauble

Time to renew your membership! The ACNARGS membership year runs the calendar year. So, unless you've already renewed or you're a lifetime member, your 2022 membership is due now (Individual @\$15, Household @\$20, Business with business card listing @\$30). If you have not renewed, you will see a reminder message in the email announcing this newsletter.

Why join? It's true we have had to adapt a bit during the covid pandemic, resulting unfortunately in no in-person program meetings since the end of the 2018 program year. But we are still holding program meetings by zoom, allowing us the luxury of bringing speakers from afar that normally we could not afford to bring to Ithaca. We have also held extra program meetings (such as the January one coming up) and published extra newsletters in order to stay in touch. And we've still held spring and late summer plant sales and at the same time be covid-compliant. Depending on the turn of the pandemic, we may be able to offer garden tours in the upcoming season.

This June we will be hosting NARGS annual general meeting/conference. We will be seeking volunteers from our membership which also has the advantage (if you are not registered) of allowing you to shop at the plant sale (presently 7 vendors are participating) and to attend one of our program talks.

So why delay? Before you forget, print and complete the 2022 Membership form now: <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf> Questions? Contact Mary at mes2@cornell.edu

GET READY FOR FEBRUARY MEMBERS' SHARE

Please think of topics and photos you are willing to share with the group for our February 20 meeting. If you prepare a presentation, all it takes is a click to share your screen and show us the scenes, tools or tips you have pulled together on your computer.

By now, most everyone knows how easy it is to participate through Zoom, and everyone has met Nicole, our Zoom Coach, who can solve any issues along the way.

You may have found resources or videos online that would interest the group. During this time of social distancing you may have discovered special gardens, researched cultivation techniques, or found new online resources. Perhaps you may wish to use this time to pose a question about how others address a particular challenge. This is your meeting, so please plan to participate, even if it is for only a short share. We are after all asking each participant for no more than 5-10 minutes time. Just send an email to terryehumphries@gmail.com, with information on your topic and we will include you in the program. This is a easy way to contribute to the Chapter.

Note the date for this meeting is Sunday, February 20. NARGS has scooped us again with a study day on the 3rd Saturday of February (February 19th), which would be our usual meeting date.

NARGS 2021 YEAR END REPORT: LOOKING BACK/LOOKING AHEAD

Panayoti Kelaidis, President on behalf of the NARGS Board of Directors (Excepted)

Rock gardeners possess a sort of magic wand in our art that has guided and perhaps protected us through the COVID-19 era of the last two years (and counting). Our gardens, troughs, and seed pots (not to mention our fellow gardeners) have provided a haven from the plague that those who aren't so connected to Nature may not have.

Those of us who love to travel found time to catch up on neglected chores at home, and through the mixed blessing of Zoom, have found powerful new ways to connect and communicate with friends near and far. NARGS had the temerity to even schedule a LIVE annual meeting ("Edge of the Rockies") last August in Durango, Colorado, with over 200 participants and local volunteers that was a resounding success. (Good news! Video replays from our Annual General Meeting Durango 2021 are now available free to members. To view the presentations just log in, then from the home page click on videos on line or go directly to <https://www.nargs.org/edge-rockies-durango-agm-2021-videos>.)

Despite COVID-19, the year 2021 has so far been a good financial year for NARGS; however, we will still be dependent on membership renewals and year-end donations to cover our expenses for the remainder of 2021 to get 2022 started. The Crevices and Woodlanders study days were great successes and brought us new members and additional funding. Continued postponement of the Traveling Speakers Tour cut our expected expenses. Postponement of the members' Tours and Adventures program for 2021 because of COVID-19 has, however, left a financial hole as the year closes. We intend to return to both activities—in much the same fashion—as soon as feasible.

However, there are three tours planned in 2022, organized by David White (North Carolina). These include a three-day tour of the Adirondacks in upstate New York, a twelve-day tour of the Bernese Oberland region of the Swiss Alps (currently full), and a seventeen-day tour of Argentine Patagonia. The Adirondacks tour is scheduled for June 12 - 14 (immediately before the Annual General Meeting in Ithaca) and will open for

registration at the same time as registration for the AGM, planned in January. Registration is currently open for the Argentina tour, which is scheduled for November 28 – December 14, 2022.

The Traveling Speakers Program will emerge from pandemic-induced dormancy in 2022, starting with talks planned from the spring through the fall 2022. The program is funded by an anonymous, generous donor and headed by Rosemary Monahan (Massachusetts).

In 2021 under the duress of the COVID-19 restrictions, the Siskiyou Chapter (Oregon) and the Great Lakes Chapter (Michigan) volunteers safely handled a total of 824 orders (an increase over the previous year's 771) for the 2020 - 2021 Seed Exchange. After which, thirty chapters received a portion of the remaining seed to share among all their chapter members, as well as some community groups.

After months of preparation, the 2021-2022 Seed Exchange is now in progress with Main Round ordering beginning December 15th. The Delaware Valley Chapter has stepped up and volunteered to handle the Main Distribution for the next two years, and the Great Lakes will do the Surplus Round once again. We are very grateful to all the seed donors and chapter members and volunteers who have made the Seed Exchange the successful asset that draws in new members each year.

Looking ahead to 2022, the Adirondack Chapter is hosting the NARGS annual meeting in Ithaca, New York, on the campus of Cornell University (June 14 – 16). The conference is titled "Alpine Visions: Exploration and Inspiration." Information has been published in the Rock Garden Quarterly with registration opening in January 2022.

As we move into volume 80 of the Rock Garden Quarterly, our editor, Joseph Tychonievich (Indiana) is excited that the journal is still evolving and growing. As you will see in the January (winter) 2022 issue, Matt Mattus (Massachusetts) and Joseph have finished a redesign of the look of the Quarterly's cover and pages, and there are new projects in the works. The summer 2022 issue is going to be a special extra-length issue focused on the basics of rock gardening for beginners to serve as a tool to introduce this wonderful form of gardening to new growers. That is, this will be a new "Beginners" handbook.

Our past president (and current webmaster) Elisabeth Zander (Connecticut) inaugurated the first Winter Webinars (virtual conferences) via Zoom that have garnered a tremendous international audience. The conference recordings will remain on the website for ticket holders to view at their leisure. Gradually after two years, they will all be free for the entire membership. Some talks, like those from the Durango 2021 Annual General Meeting, are currently free now to all members. Have you checked them out yet?

We thank all those panelists who made these programs possible. And we plan to present two more virtual conferences this winter: January 15 (succulent plants) and February 19 (meadows). They may be viewed live but will be recorded for later viewing.

The NARGS website is in the midst of a complicated software upgrade from Drupal 7 to Drupal 9, a website content management system. In addition to publishing the Rock

Garden Quarterly on the website, we have added custom programming for our Tours and Adventures and also tapes of our virtual conferences. We anticipate easier future access to these events on our website.

Each year many of us have watched as this or that magical woodlot where we once marveled at the trilliums or trout lilies transform into another subdivision. Our gardens are a haven for forms of all manner of choice plants, even whole species that may no longer be found in the wild. Gardens become an anthology of plants one cannot live without—and for many of us, our fellow gardeners that we meet at chapter meetings or at Study Weekends and Annual meetings become as precious. These are a sort of family gathering—a family that one picks rather than one you happen to be born into! We believe the extended family of NARGS, with your help, will embrace new generations of gardeners who will be committed to preserving Nature in the wild, and cherishing her wildlings in our home gardens.

NARGS & ACNARGS UPCOMING 2021 PROGRAMS

NOTE: Due to covid our meetings will take on a different format for the foreseeable future. We will hold live meetings via Zoom for now. For those of you unfamiliar with Zoom, contact Terry Humphries terryehumphres@gmail.com for assistance.

January 15: NARGS virtual program Succulents on the Rocks Host: Rod Haenni
Speakers: Lori Chips, Jay Akerley, Vince Russo, Amanda Bennett, Kiamara Ludwig, and Rod Haenni. Fee. NARGS membership required.

January 22: ACNARGS speaker program with Liz Knowles, "Echoes of Wild Places" 1pm via Zoom. Link will be sent mid-week prior to the Saturday program. Note this program will be held the 4th Saturday of the month.

January 31: Registration opens for "Alpine Visions: Exploration and Inspiration," NARGS Annual General Meeting in Ithaca hosted by us, Adirondack Chapter

January 31: Main/First Round Ordering ends for NARGS Seed Exchange

February 19: NARGS virtual program: "Rock Gardening Does Meadows." Host: Kenton Seth. Fee. NARGS membership required. More info forthcoming.

February 20: Members' Share via Zoom. Note the change of date to the 3rd Sunday.

March 1 (open) -21 (close): Surplus Seed/Round 2 Ordering for NARGS Seed Exchange

March 19: ACNARGS speaker program bringing you Christopher Gardener, English writer and botanical tour guide, "Flora of the Silk Road"

April 16: Jim Jermyn, Head Gardener, Branklyn Garden in Perth, Scotland

June 14-16: NARGS Annual General Meeting hosted by ACNARGS

Dates TBD 2023: NARGS Annual General Meeting hosted by Nova Scotia Chapter

CALENDAR OF SELECT GARDEN EVENTS

For the latest information, visit these websites of these gardening organizations.

Feb. 7: "Lucky Dip," American Primrose Society Seed Exchange opens to non-members.
<https://americanprimrosesociety.org/>

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. Online class information:
<http://ccetompkins.org/gardening>

Finger Lakes Native Plant Society monthly meetings via zoom. <https://flnps.org/>

Cornell Botanic Gardens: Verdant Views virtual programs; no on-site events at this time; visit
 Cornell Gardens at home: <https://cornellbotanicgardens.org/explore/events/>

Liberty Hyde Bailey Garden Club: <http://www.hort.cornell.edu/LHBGC/>

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

2021 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, David Mitchell
 Plant of the Month: Marlene Kobre, mkobre@ithaca.edu
 Membership: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu
 New Member Hospitality: Graham Egerton
 Newsletter Editor: David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu and sometimes Carol Eichler.
 Looking for a new editor!
 Calendar: Pat Curran, pc21@cornell.edu
 Webmaster, Program Tech: Craig Cramer, cdcramer@gmail.com

ABOUT US – ADIRONDACK CHAPTER NARGS

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, two 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 [our Zoom subscription limits participants to 100].
 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.

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 online website 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.

GREEN DRAGON TALES

Normally published eight times a year (Feb., March, April, May/June, July/Aug., Sept., Oct. Nov./Dec., during covid we've been publishing monthly. Submit articles no later than the fourth Friday of the month preceding the monthly publication to David Mitchell, david_mitchell_14850@yahoo.com Note: We will send a February meeting announcement only. The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be March 2022.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST: (ON THE NEXT PAGE) PHOTOS!

Common and Uncommon Winter Bloomers



Hellebore x 'Pink Frost' blooming since Nov. with *H. niger* in its pedigree, purchased at Wegmans. Credit: Kathy Purdy



Hamamelis x intermedia 'Jelena' a Japanese/Chinese cross and earliest of 4 of my wirschazels & 10 weeks ahead of 2021. Credit: S. Whitesell



Another confused hellebore from Rosemarie Parker.



Polemonium sp, (Jacob's Ladder) Credit: Carol Bayles



Galanthus elwesii v monostictus (snowdropse)from Montrose Nursery, Hillsborough, NC where they have drifts of thousands blooming in November. Credit: Steve Whitesell.



Chimonanthus praecox, Japanese Allspice, z6 hardy? Credit: D. Mitchell



Helleborus foetidus, known for its winter blooms but nevertheless this year. Credit: R. Parker



Amaryllis 'Quito' Credit: K. Purdy