



**ADIRONDACK
CHAPTER**
North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

Visit our blog: acnargs.blogspot.com

April 2022

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APRIL 16, 1P.M. VIA ZOOM: EUROPEAN ALPINE PLANTS IN NATURE – A NEW LOOK WITH JIM JERMYN

Terry Humphries, Program Chair



Our April meeting presenter will be one of the most renowned gardeners in Scotland -

Jim Jermyn. He serves as the Property Manager/Head Gardener for the National Trust for Scotland's Branklyn Garden in Perth, Scotland. He will be coming to us live via Zoom to talk about plants he has successfully cultivated over the years, with lessons from their habitats in the wild.

First about historic Branklyn Garden: Branklyn is an enchanting two-acre hillside garden celebrating its centenary year. It began as a private garden in 1922, with the objective of creating a peaceful haven that featured rare and unusual plants and flowers from all over the world. Thanks to seeds collected by renowned plant hunters, including George Forrest and Frank Ludlow, and the remarkable gardening skills of decades of dedicated gardeners, the original vision is still being realized today. Gardeners and botanists are drawn from across the globe to admire Branklyn's outstanding treasure trove, particularly the rhododendrons, alpines and peat-garden plants. It also holds several National Collections of plants, including *Meconopsis*, *Erythronium*, *Galanthus* and *Cassiope*.



We are honored to have a speaker with such a long career in the horticultural industry and who is also a world-renowned alpine expert. After obtaining his horticultural qualifications in 1973, Jim Jermyn held a variety of posts in Germany, Italy, and the U.K. For twenty years he worked as the proprietor of Scotland's distinguished Edrom Nurseries, where he developed a keen interest in a wide range of woodland and alpine plants.



In addition to gardening, Jim has traveled widely and led a number of botanical tours to the Dolomites. For 17 years, he has served as the horticultural consultant and show manager for Gardening Scotland, Scotland's national gardening show, held in Edinburgh. He is currently chair of the *Meconopsis* Group, and serves as a trustee on

the Merlin Trust, a botanical scholarship founded by Valerie Finnis of Waterperry. Jim is an honorary member of the Royal Horticultural Society's Joint Rock Garden Committee and a council member of the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society (The Caley), Scotland's national horticultural & gardening society. He lectures widely in the U.K., Europe, Canada and the U.S., and has written three books, *The Himalayan Garden*, *Growing Plants from the Roof of the World*, *Alpine Plants of Europe – A Gardener's Guide* and *Mountain Walks in Eastern Europe*.

You won't want to miss this presentation coming to us live from Perth, Scotland on Saturday April 16th at 1p.m.

Though we miss our “plant chatter” during our in-person brown bag lunches, we find camaraderie in seeing each other’s smiling faces and sharing comments through Zoom’s audio and chat. This is your meeting, so please plan to join us. Look for the Zoom link in your email a few days before the meeting, and click to join.

As with several past programs this NARGS program may be recorded with the presenter’s permission and made accessible to those who send a request to Terry terryehumphries@gmail.com

Programs coming soon:

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

May 14: ACNARGS member-only plant sale, Myers Park

June 14-16: ACNARGS-hosted NARGS annual general meeting

FROM THE CHAIR

John Gilrein, Chair

I’ve really enjoyed this week’s (sometimes) delicious taste of spring, with sun and temperatures in the 60’s F. The earliest bloomers here are *Cyclamen coum*, *Eranthis hyemalis* (winter aconites), *Galanthus* sp. (snowdrops) and species crocuses. I have these spring cyclamen now in at least 4 locations, and as of March 18 it’s only the plants in the most protected site that have open flowers. I noticed this week the same phenomenon happening with the species crocus, that those in the warmest site opened first (rock garden with a south facing slope) with those in other sites following. You can use this same principal in your garden to extend the bloom season, which works especially well with the early spring bloomers.

The sites where flowers show up earlier would likely have one or more of these attributes: on the south or west side of your house or garage, near large rocks, a south or west facing slope, or a sunny spot where the snow melts early. Sites where flowering would be later would be the opposite: on the north side of the house or garage, a north facing slope, places where the snow piles up (this could be from the wind or the result of snow clearing), or a shady spot. I know the *C. coum* on the north side of my house blooms at least a week, if not 2, later than the site with earliest blooms. Of course there are a lot of intermediate sites where the spring bloomers would bloom in between the earliest and latest sites. All these spring bloomers will cope with partial sun, especially if they have sun before the trees leaf out.

How did your plants fare this winter, which has been a little short on cold and snow? Serious winter weather really started here (Onondaga County) in January. As of this week, Syracuse (measured at the airport) has only had around 67 inches of snow – that’s just over half our normal winter snowfall. I’m sure I had more snow at home, since I’m around 500 feet higher than the airport. We did have 2 short spells of very cold weather, with temperatures around 0 degrees F., or a little below. I’ve seen some winter burn on leaves of a few different plants: *Helleborus* hybrids (Lenten roses), *Helleborus niger* (Christmas roses, much less damage than the hybrids), and different cyclamen



Helleborus niger
J. Gilrein

species (not all leaves were damaged, perhaps just the older ones). I think what happened is that the snow blanket wasn't thick enough to insulate those leaves during the first cold spell. Since some people cut the last season's hellebore leaves off before bloom time, losing the leaves won't be a problem.



Cyclamen coum
P. Curran

The Ithaca 2022 NARGS Annual General Meeting is progressing with registration approaching the 100 mark. If you're thinking of going, check out the link (you'll find this on the NARGS website).

One of the issues coming up with the Adirondack Chapter is whether we should start meeting in-person (having live meetings), which we haven't done for 2 years. We are planning in-person, outdoor plant sales (the first is coming up May 14th - don't miss it!). COVID isn't going away, but life is starting to return to normal, albeit a new normal. If you have an opinion (either pro or con) about in-person meetings, don't hesitate to share your opinion with the board (contact information is at the bottom of the newsletter). The Plant Science Building at Cornell will soon be under renovation, so our meeting venue will have to be at a different, if we meet in the fall.

MAY 14 SAVE THE DATE: MEMBERS ONLY PLANT SALE

We have once again decided to limit our May plant sale to members only. It will be held May 14th at Myers Park in Lansing. We have held successful members-only sales last year and loved the informality and relaxed nature of the event plus we got to gather for some much-missed socializing. The broad selection of plants was also amazing! Note the Park charges admission for non-residents of the Town of Lansing.



Look for this plant at our sale - *Chrysosplenium macrophyllum* blooming now

It is not too early to start potting up plants. Do give some thought as to plants that would be of greatest interest to our members and avoid large quantities of any one plant. Remember to wash the roots thoroughly and repot into soilless mix to avoid the spread of the invasive jumping worms. I expect many of our gardens have the worms so we do not want to spread them to gardens that are free of this annoying pest.

To facilitate the sale, we plan to send out an advance plant list. Pricing will be by pot size, but plants that may be over or under-valued will be exceptions to the rule and can be individually marked and priced. There will be a special table for rock garden plants.

Volunteers are needed to help with set-up starting at 9a.m., cashiering, and take down/clean-up. Contact Plant Sale Coordinator Carol Eichler (carolithaca@gmail.com) and thanks for helping!

If you have attended previous member-only sales, you may remember the drill. Details will be provided in the May newsletter. Suffice it to say, set-up will begin early at 9a.m., with the sale starting no earlier than 11a.m. By noon-ish the sale will be over and we'll enjoy lunch (yet to be determined whether it will be a bring-your-own or bring a dish to share).

Please attend the sale – rain or shine, hot or cold. The sale will occur in all weather (fingers-crossed we won't have flooding again and need to relocate!). Whether you donate plants or not, don't worry. We need buyers too! Prices are extremely attractive so please be prepared to buy, buy, and buy again.

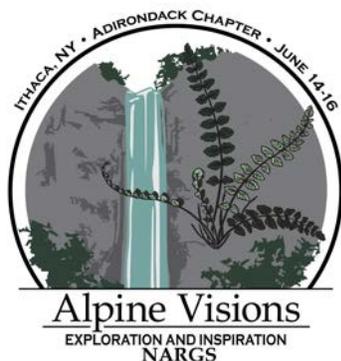
We have rented the large, roofed Pavilion B near the marina (the same as last May) with plenty of room to spread our plants and people. Sign in as you arrive since the first few rounds of shopping offers priority to early arrivals.

Following the sale, Bill Stark and Mary Stauble have invited us, once again, to visit their garden for us to visit. Each year the gardens continue to be expanded and transformed. So you will not want to miss this opportunity and watch their progress! Timing should be good to catch their *Primula japonica* in bloom and many other gems putting on their spring show.

Breaking News! We will be offering the long-missed plant-of-the-month at our plant sale too. Watch for more information in the May newsletter.

ALPINE VISIONS: EXPLORATION AND INSPIRATION

Carol Eichler, AGM Volunteer Coordinator



Attendance for our hosted NARGS national meeting is shaping up nicely. After an initial burst in registrations, they are now coming in slow and steady. We are nearing 100 total and will continue to get more. We are past our “break-even” number, which means we will start to clear revenue over expenses going forward. To date we have 10 of our Chapter members registered (a record for us!), of which 3 have received Chapter stipends. Our attendance capacity is 165 attendees. Sign up for the Pre-AGM Day Trip to Syracuse-area gardens has been popular, enough so that we have reached out minimum number and can guarantee that this trip will occur.

Volunteers



Galanthus nivalis path.
Kathy Purdy

That registration number does not count unregisters member volunteers. I've been reaching out to our membership to perform various tasks from bus monitoring and chase cars driving to assisting with registration and check-in and plant sales. As of this writing we have over 40 of you volunteering. If you have not been contacted and want to volunteer, we'll find a task to assign you. For example, we need just a few more to help out setting up for the banquet on Thursday, June 16th from 5 – 6p.m. Contact Carol at carolithaca@gmail.com.

All members are invited to join us for the plant sales on Tuesday June 14th from 3:30 to 5:30p.m. and Wednesday June 15th from 4:30 – 6:00p.m. in the Multi-purpose Room,

Townhouse Community Center, 106 Jessup Road. While we have some local nurseries participating, we also have several specialty nurseries coming greater distances such as Wrightman Alpines, Private Gardens, and Garden Vision Epimediums.

Volunteers get the added benefit of being invited to attend any or all of the 5 talks scheduled each day – two by Sue Milliken and Kelly Dodson from Far Reaches Farm, two by Eleftherios Dariotis coming all the way from Greece, and F. Robert Wesley from Cornell Botanic Gardens.

Another volunteer need which is related to this meeting is work on the Wurster Garden to get it ready for visitors on June 17th which is an on-your-own “open gardens” day at the meeting’s conclusion. But, as a public garden, it is of course always on display. The garden is in peak bloom from mid-May into early June and more and more people have learned about this garden and come to visit, especially at that time. Also Master Gardeners are scheduled to visit on June 1. I went by the garden just this week and felt a little dismayed at the work ahead of us. So I’ve scheduled our first workday for Wednesday April 13th starting at 10:30a.m. and working until our stomachs tell us it’s time for lunch. I hope some of you can join us! Contact me, carolithaca@gmail.com if you want to help.

Parking

If you know Cornell even a bit, you know that parking is scarce and it’s not free. For our volunteers, there are options for hourly metered parking using the ParkMobile app on your phone. The closest metered lot is behind the Hasbrouck Apartments. On-street parking is free if you can find it and A-Lot parking lot is free (and located close to the plant sale location) after 5p.m. We will reimburse our volunteers for any paid parking expenses.

Starting in early June, volunteers should watch for further instructions with details that will include a “job” description, AGM schedule, and parking information.

MEMBERSHIP 2022 REMINDER

Mary Stauble

If you have not yet renewed for 2022 dues are \$15 for individuals, \$20 for a household - perhaps you will be able to take advantage of our member benefits in 2022! That include plant-of-the-month as an exclusive benefit for members only. Check my email announcement of the newsletter link for your membership status. The renewal form is at <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf>. Contact Mary Stauble at mes2@cornell.edu if you have any questions.

COMING SOON! CCE GARDEN FAIR AND PLANT SALE

Pat Curran

The Cooperative Extension annual Garden Fair and Plant Sale is scheduled for Friday May 13 from 12 noon to 6 pm at the Ithaca Farmers’ Market. About 30 commercial vendors are already signed up for a booth to sell their plants. There are a

couple of changes from last year's covid-restricted format. First, the Sale will be held only the one day and vendors will not be so spaced out as was required last year.

The Master Gardener part of the Sale will be radically different. Because of the challenges imposed by the invasive jumping worms, MG's will not be donating and potting up plants from their gardens. Barerooting, triple washing, potting in sterile potting mix, and then storing the potted plants up on tables made it too arduous to continue our traditional donations of tried and true plants from MG gardens.



Iris reticulata
Pat Curran

Instead, there will be a Sale of spring-planted bulbs from a commercial nursery. For the last couple of years, MG's have offered an online sale of select fall-planted bulbs, chosen for their durability and performance in the home garden. Since this has been so successful in introducing home gardeners to bulbs they may not be familiar with, as well as being a successful fundraiser for the CCE Tompkins Master Gardener program, the MG's are trialing a sale of bulbs that are planted in spring or summer. Here's the link to order: [Master Gardener 2022 Spring Bulb Sale](#).

The sale will include hardy bulbs like liatris and crocosmia, but also the tender bulbs that so many gardeners enjoy in their summer gardens and which can be stored indoors for the winter. The bulb offerings will include cannas, gladioli, Colocasia, caladiums, and Acidanthera (fragrant gladiolus). Like the fall Sale, this Sale will start out online with advance orders, so be sure to check out the Tompkins CCE website for the link to the online Sale.

In addition to selling the remaining bulbs at the May 13 Sale, MG's will have several booths staffed by volunteers with information on important garden and landscape issues. There will be a GrowLine booth to answer questions, plus a booth with information on the spongy moth (formerly known as the gypsy moth) that defoliated so many of our trees last year. Another booth will address the selection of right plant for the right place, whether it's shade, drought-tolerance, deer-resistance, or whatever the limiting factor(s) in your garden. Additional booths will feature pH testing and information on growing native plants. There will be the traditional raffle of plants and garden-related items.



Black Pussy Willow
Pat Curran

Note: ACNARGS will not have a booth this year. Kingbird Farm (a new ACNARGS business member) has agreed to display our membership brochure and Wurster brochure at their sales booth.

PRE-ORDER BOOK OFFER: PATAGONIAN FLOWERS

Our Chapter is taking pre-orders of the book *High Mountain Flowers of the Patagonian Andes* (written in both English and Spanish) authored by Marcela Ferrerya, Cecilia Ezcurra, and Sonia Clayton. This is a 2nd edition printing of the book published by

Literature of Latin America and difficult and expensive to purchase in the U.S. Since we are purchasing directly from the publisher, we've been offered a quantity discount of \$30. It is a great value, with over 1,000 color photos (365 species) of those wonderful, often unusual Patagonian flowers, providing information on their characteristics and the environment in which they develop.



Iris histrioides 'Katharine
Hodgkin'
Craig Cramer

One of the authors, Marcela Ferrerya, is well-known to NARGS members having spoken at annual general meetings and slated to lead a NARGS tour to Patagonia later this year.

Want to order a copy? Contact David Mitchell david_mitchell_14850@yahoo.com by May 14th. Pick up your book at the AGM book table, running concurrently during the plant sale times on June 14 or 15. Payment of \$30 is by cash or check only.

THOUGHTS ON SPRING GARDEN EXCURSIONS

Carol Eichler

I like to head south in late April or early May. While we're still looking at a pretty stark landscape, spring comes early heading that direction – or at least much earlier than here (wherever your "here" is). South doesn't have to be that far – whether to downstate New York or, south in a slightly different direction, to the Philadelphia area.

Downstate I recommend visits to Stonecrop and New York Botanic Gardens. Stonecrop, located in Cold Spring, NY, typically holds its annual plant sale on the 4th Saturday of April. It is timed not only for the planting season but because their woodland plant and rock gardens are generally at their peak (not to mention their alpine houses). While the sale is cancelled this year, Stonecrop as of April 1 is open to visitors (some but not all week-days and Saturday by timed appointments). For info go to stonecrop.org or better yet, call 845-265-2000 since their website is often not up-to-date.

New York Botanic Gardens isn't far from there, where you'll find the woodland and rock gardens are at their peak in spring, overlapping in bloom by their extensive azalea collection. There is so much more to see there if you have the time, including their conifer collections, looking fantastic at any time of year and flowering trees, and the stand of old growth forest. The website even has a Spring Bloom Tracker – there are already flowers blooming, but so far they are a ways away from peak times. For more info visit nybg.org/

If you go, Terry has suggested planning for 2 days with an overnight in the Hawthorne area because it allows for an easy, hassle-free commute via train and station parking lot into NYBG.

You might consider planning your trip to these two gardens around the Garden Conservancy Open Gardens Day in that area (Duchess County) on May 7th this year.

Also on May 7th and 8th this year Deborah Banks suggests visiting the Hudson Valley area. There a major garden excursion is planned that includes over 30 workshops and open gardens. Check it out at <https://www.theworkshopexperience.org/> Note that Margaret Roach's garden in Copake Falls is open on May 7, with Broken Arrow nursery holding a plant sale in her driveway. Other open gardens include the Peter Bevacqua and Stephen King garden in Hudson NY and the Mark McDonald and Dwayne Resnick garden in Hillsdale NY. The workshops encompass topics ranging from gardening to cooking, fiber, crafting, and more. You could take in a holistic beekeeping class at Taconic Ridge Farm or learn podcasting with Mat Zucker and so much more. Be aware if you go, you must pre-register and pay to visit the gardens or attend the workshops.



Adonis vernalis
P. Curran

Philadelphia calls itself the “garden capital” and it’s hard to dispute that claim given that they boast of 38 gardens within a 25-mile radius of the city. Since from such an extensive list one has to make choices, my favorite spring gardens are Mt. Cuba Center and Winterthur, though I’m working at seeing them all...eventually. These two aforementioned gardens are located near each other in Delaware and both were founded by duPont family members. Mt. Cuba Center’s spring ephemerals are not to be missed. The Center is dedicated to the cultivation, preservation and research of native plants. Visit [Mt. Cuba Center](#). Winterthur’s 1,000 acres includes meadows, woodlands, ponds, and waterways to explore, but it is also noted for its museum and library. I suggest taking the narrated tram ride to get an overview before alighting on foot to enjoy the specimen collections. If your timing is right, the forest understory is adorned with a resplendent groundcover of spring bulbs. Around Mother’s Day you can expect an impressive display of the rhododendron and azalea collection. <https://www.winterthur.org/> These two gardens can be combined into a full, one-day visit.

Wow! So much garden activity, so little time! Whether you visit other gardens or work in your own this time of year (always so much to do), we are seeing hopeful signs of spring, even if it hasn’t acted like spring so much here recently.

HARDY PLANT SOCIETY: ANOTHER GREAT PLANT CONNECTION

Deborah Banks

Did you know that most avid gardeners belong to five or more* plant societies? Are you below your quota? You should check out the Hardy Plant Society/Mid-Atlantic Group (HPS/MAG). The MAG chapter is not that far from us, in the greater Philadelphia region.

HPS/MAG sponsors plant sales, trips, seminars, and garden lectures. A silver lining of the COVID epidemic is that their lectures are now virtual, so they really aren’t that far after all. They have an annual spring lecture symposium called “March Into Spring” which this year included Kelly Norris as one of the speakers. Other virtual lectures occur two or three times a month.

The HPS/MAG group also tours local gardens together. I might not drive the three or four hours to tour one garden with them (even if it's David Culp's!) but their bus trip to Virginia in May sounds dreamy, with stops at the Norfolk Botanical Gardens, the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, several private gardens, and some shopping at Brent and Becky's Bulbs and the Rare and Unusual Perennials Nursery. The national HPS society is planning an international trip in July to Devon and Cornwall.



A peak at Deborah Banks
hardy garden perennials

Speaking of shopping, their annual spring tour of nurseries in Lancaster County, PA, is seriously tempting. This April tour is described as visiting "many small family-owned Amish or Mennonite nurseries with unusual plants, new introductions and hard-to-find plants - all at good prices." They also have a Fall Gardeners' Market every year in August that attracts wonderful vendors. And they have a seed exchange in December and January that complements the NARGS seed exchange nicely, with seeds donated from gardening luminaries such as Charles Cresson, Lisa Roper, and the gardeners at Jenkins Arboretum and Stonecrop Gardens. Check out more details about HPS/MAG at the hardyplant.org website. The only problem with joining HPS/MAG is the persistent feelings of envy that you will have when you see all the great garden visits you are missing. We may need to charter our own monthly bus trip to the Philly area.

VIRTUAL PLANT OF THE MONTH: AETHIONEMAS

Rebecca Lance; Reprinted with permission from Sierra Rock Garden Society, April 2022 Newsletter



Aethionema stylosa
R. Lance

As I sallied forth in my mission to discover plants that could survive, perhaps even thrive, in the harsh sunbaked clay landscape I call a garden, I became particularly attuned to certain key phrases that occasionally appear in plant descriptions: "An excellent plant for hot, dry, sunny banks" or "for a baking hot position in well-drained soil." Such plant descriptions generate automatic interest. Could it be? Perhaps? Another plant that could live in my garden?

It was just such a description of Aethionemas, in an Alplains seed catalogue, that first caught my eye. Fortunately, I missed the damning description in Sunset's western gardening book that describes Aethionemas as "best adapted to colder climates," otherwise I might have missed out on experimenting with these tough and delightful rock garden plants. There are so many fantastic Aethionemas. Most of them form small shrubby mats of semi-woody stems and blue-grey succulent leaves. In the spring they are absolutely covered with pink flowers. They will reseed in the garden, ensuring that there will be a repeat bloom the following spring. In our garden they have moved about, populating the crevices between the paving stones, the edges of the paths, and pretty much any unoccupied area.

Some years, when I have really neglected the garden, they are almost single-handedly responsible for renewing my faith in the beauty of the garden. *Aethionema grandiflora* (Persian stone cress) is sometimes referred to as having the most floriferous display of

the stone cresses. This native of Turkey, Iraq, and Iran is the tallest *Aethionema* I have grown in my garden, with somewhat loose shrubby branches up to 8 inches high. The small, glaucous blue-green leaves are nicely complemented by flowers that range from a soft pink to a darker lavender. This species does have the most vibrant flower color, but of the stone cresses that do well in my garden it also blooms for the shortest amount of time. It is still well worth growing.

Aethionema schistosum has a similar loose shrubby look, with leaves that are perhaps a bit more blue. The flower spikes are of very pale soft pink, but they are wonderfully fragrant and bloom for a long time in spring. This stone cress is also native to Turkey.

I have grown *Aethionema iberideum*, but it has not been very happy in my garden. It has bloomed somewhat reluctantly early in the spring, but in the summer heat, it becomes brown and dormant. It would perhaps be worth trying at higher elevations, but I cannot recommend it for Sonora or below. If anyone has experiences to the contrary, I would like to know.



Aethionema armena
'Warley Rose'
R. Lance

By far my favorite *Aethionema* is *Aethionema armena*. This *Aethionema* is extremely compact, with branches that hug the ground or any rocks over which they might be growing. In my garden, this plant blooms for several months in early spring. It begins blooming before any of the other stone cresses, and is still in bloom long after most of the others have gone to seed. It is one of my favorite springtime flowers. is commonly available through rock garden nurseries, and is thought to be a hybrid of *Aethionema armena*. It has a similar compact form, but the flowers are a deep rose color. This is the most striking *Aethionema* I have ever grown. Sadly, it does not come true from seed, so I no longer have it in our gardens.

Aethionema caespitosum is another Turkish Alpine. This one forms a tufted bun of narrow needle leaves, the best foliage of any of the *Aethionemas* I have grown. I thought it was destined to become another standby in my garden. It, however, may have read the damning description in *Sunset's* western gardening. It has completely disappeared from our garden.

All of the *Aethionemas* are quite cold hardy, with most of them being rated to Zone 4 or 5. They have easily survived with weekly irrigation in my garden, although I am sure they could tolerate much more water. Some of the areas in which they have re-seeded are outside the reach of the usual irrigation, and yet they often survive. After flowering, much new growth will occur in the center of the plant, and you can cut back the flowering stalks to that point. This dead-heading helps them retain their dwarf shrubby character. I usually let one or two flowering spikes go to seed to ensure that I will always have more of these delightful plants in my garden.

I suspect their gopher resistance is mainly due to their reseeding ability, as I have seen gophers eat them when they are very hungry. And those cultivars that do not reseed (such as the lamented Warley Rose) inevitably disappear from our garden.

Seeds are often listed on the NARGS seed exchange list. I have 4-5 packets of such seed that I am eagerly waiting to try next year. If you are looking for small

and tough plants to grace your garden, and are happy with plants that want to seed themselves into position, you would do well to give the *Aethionemas* a try.

NEWS FROM NARGS: WHY DO WE ROCK GARDEN

Panayoti Kelaidis, NARGS President

You never know what reaction you'll get when you tell people you're a "rock gardener." "Do you try and grow rocks?" is one of the stranger responses. Most everyone becomes infatuated with stones at some point in their lives, and most people have a little gathering of pebbles they've amassed on trips hither and yon—a stone from Italy, a rock from Wyoming. I've even seen gardens planted among these heterogenous heaps of stone—not what most of us like to have associated with our art!



Anne Smith's alpine rock garden

In the course of my travels, I've seen all manner of rock gardens that range from vast landscapes with carefully crafted outcrops, waterfalls, and pools lined with masses of Himalayan primulas. Yesterday, I was shown pictures of a small property in Berkeley, California, that had steep little mountains on both sides of the winding sidewalk leading to the entrance encrusted with rocks not in the Czech style of upright, parallel flat slabs of limestone—these were volcanic, angular and irregular, knit together like a jigsaw puzzle and planted densely with all manner of South African and American succulents: echeverias, agaves, aloes, haworthias and strange crassulas and mesmebs—and oh, yes! cacti. It was as dazzling as a jeweler's window glowing on a rainy night.

And so the permutations of rock gardening move one, like a kaleidoscope—sometimes a raised bed filled with bulbs and cold frames filled with pots of treasures. Or Margery Edgren's extravaganza in Woodside, California—her garden consists of several refrigerators full of seed, germinating pots, and plants in various stages of dormancy in zip-lock bags she pots up and grows under lights—enjoying primulas in autumn, shooting stars in winter or snowdrops in the summer months.

Some rock gardeners grow miniature hostas, gesneriads and no end of trilliums in shady gardens, and in Colorado, most gardeners have "xeriscapes" with boulders interspersed with dryland shrubs, penstemons and buckwheats with big clumps of *Agastache rupestris* and hybrids for late summer color. More and more are experimenting with prairie type plantings to replace a boring lawn.



Radenbaugh's woodland garden

I know rock gardeners who live in apartments far above street level, who enjoy going to meetings to watch travelogues, or go on trips and come back to a few troughs on their balcony (or none): they may just belong for the camaraderie of fellow plant lovers.

This May the Rocky Mountain Chapter will tour three gardens: one filled with choice alpines—*Gentiana acaulis* in large drifts of cobalt color, huge mats of *Daphne arbuscula* and *Lewisia tweedyi* studded with apricot roses.



Scott's boulder steppe garden

The next garden is all woods, with mossy rocks and waterfalls and dozens of species of fern, huge clumps of *Cypripedium* in various species and hybrids, Japanese maples. The last garden is several acres tumbling down a steep hill overlooking the Great Plains, with massive rock work of limestone in one area, studded with Western dryland plants—buckwheats and penstemons, but also Central Asian acantholimon and bulbs. There is a meadow of native grasses and wildflowers, and more rock work along the fringes of the yard with prairie treasures—a forest of *Liatris ligulistylis* with

monarch butterflies flitting about: I doubt that there are any plants in common between these three gardens, and yet all are masterworks of rock garden art. Where does your garden fit on this spectrum?

Whatever the nature of your rocks, or gardens—I think rock gardening (like the nations of Canada and the United States) derives much of its strength from diversity: no two rock gardens are even vaguely alike. But all are utterly captivating!

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.

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

May 14: ACNARGS Members Only Plant Sale, Myers Park Pavilion B, Lansing NY (see article for details); set-up begins 9a.m., sale begins at ~11a.m. followed by lunch and optional visit to the Stark/Stauble garden nearby

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

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



Daphne mezereum
Carol Eichler

CALENDAR OF SELECT GARDEN EVENTS

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

May 7: Open Days in Dutchess County, NY. Anne Spiegel's garden is one of two. Pre-registration is required and admission is charged. Info is [here](#). More open gardens throughout the summer that are worth checking out the schedule at [open-days/garden-directory](#).

May 7-8: Hudson Valley Workshop Experience:
<https://www.theworkshopexperience.org/>

May 13: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County Annual Spring Plant Sale and Garden Fair at the Ithaca Farmers Market, noon – 6p.m. See also online class information:
<http://ccetompkins.org/gardening>

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

Cornell Botanic Gardens: Their gardens are open. See also Verdant Views virtual programs; no on-site events at this time; visit <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

2022 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:
 Plant Sales Chair: Carol Eichler carolithaca@gmail.com
 Plant Sales Committee Members: Michael Loos, BZ Marranta, 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 alternating with Carol Eichler
 Looking for a new editor!

Planning Committee for the NARGS AGM: Carol Eichler, Chair. John Gilrein, Terry Humphries, Marlene Kobre

Book Order Manager: New position. Looking for a volunteer!
 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 May 2022.