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September 2022

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## ACNARGS MEETING IN PERSON – CAN IT BE?

*Terry Humphries*

Yes! September 24, 2022 at 1:00 PM. Michael Hough: Creating a Native Bog  
BorgWarner East Community Room Tompkins County Public Library



Michael's bog in bloom

We not only aren't bogged down, we are getting creative! We are going to learn from avid gardener, botanist and lecturer, Michael Hough all about his knowledge and personal experience in his talk titled, Creating a Native Bog. Michael will describe how to build something similar to a rain garden but with an impervious liner and appropriate substrates for growing bog, fen, or swamp plants. The presentation will include step-by-step photos of the build and also show how his bog project has evolved over the years to something that hosts distinctive plants but requires very little maintenance.



*Spiranthes sheviakii*

Michael brings us expertise about native plants that thrive in a bog environment, and has broad familiarity with the flora of Central New York. In fact, he regularly botanizes in choice locations locally and posts his findings on the New York Flora Association blog.

He also maintains his own blog called Plants of the Northeastern United States. We'll have to get him to tell us how exciting it was for him to recently discover an unnamed species of orchid near Onondaga Lake! He named it *Spiranthes sheviakii*.

A full-time lecturer in the Science Department at SUNY Cortland, Michael is author of "Flora of Cortland and Onondaga Counties, New

York". He regularly leads outings and has given talks for the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, The New York Flora Association, and the Leatherstocking Botanical Society. He is an avid gardener and enjoys propagating and cultivating plants native to the Northeastern United States, sometimes incorporating them into his research. Michael has a B.S. and M.S. from SUNY.



\*\*\*NOTE\*\*\* This meeting is being held at the Tompkins County Public Library East BorgWarner Room AND on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month. We are meeting in person for the first speaker program since February 2020!

[Tompkins County Public Library is located at 101 East Green Street.](#) (click for the map). The Library will be open. At the main entry on Green Street the BorgWarner Room is to the left past the stacks, following a wide aisle that parallels Green Street. The room is conveniently located across from the restrooms.

**PARKING** on the street is free on the week-ends. There is limited parking on Cayuga Street and more readily available on side streets. There is a handicapped spot on the Cayuga Street side of the library building.

The Cayuga Street parking garage (235 S. Cayuga Street) is located behind the Library and above Coltivare Bistro. It is fully accessible with elevator and has plenty of spaces. The charge is \$1 per hour. Pick up a ticket as you enter, pay at the street level machine as you leave (credit accepted).

Just a reminder, we ask all attendees to be fully vaccinated. Additionally, we will be following CDC and NYS covid protocol, which at this time does not require masks though you may choose to do so. Please do not attend if you are not feeling well.

## FROM THE CHAIR

John Gilrein, Chair

I'm feeling more at ease about the garden after good rains last week (around August 23) and today (August 30). I hope all of you were lucky enough to have more rain this week. Thank you to all those who made our successful August plant sale possible: organizer, set up helpers, plant donors, cashier, clean up crew. I'm sorry to have missed it. This plant sale was exceedingly efficient, time wise, and worked out well for all thanks to the help of many people.

### IMPORTANT MESSAGE:

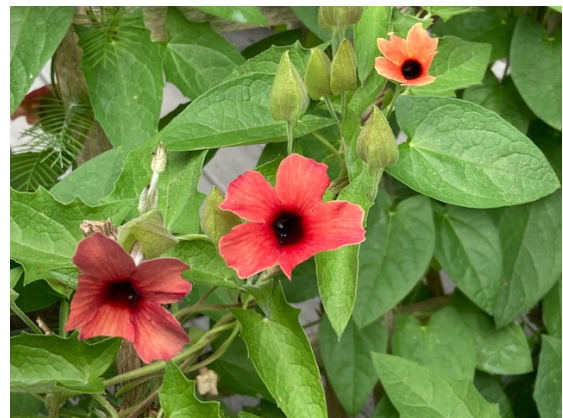
For the September meeting, we are meeting in person on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of September, September 24 at the Tompkins County Public Library in downtown Ithaca. See the article about the program for the address. If you're like me and not familiar with this library, you'll arrive a little early to find parking, and give yourself time to walk to the building. I'm betting it won't be farther than the walk down the parking lot at Cornell to get to Plant Science. This is a new venue for us!



Pitcher Plant in flower, Mud Pond, Arietta, NY

The NARGS Annual General Meeting is over for the registrants, but the organizing committee still has to wrap up a few last tasks. I just heard from Cornell Conference Services last week about the accounting (Cornell collected all the registration fees, paid vendors, and deducted the costs before paying out the residual to us). The process was slower than expected, but Cornell still had to still collect from one person who registered and attended without paying (not sure how that happened!). I hope in the next Green Dragon I can report on the chapter's profits.

Comments on the photos in this article- *Thunbergia alata* is an annual vine (but perennial in the tropics) that is easy to start from seed (which I did) and comes in white, yellow, orange shades, pink, peach, and red. It's not fussy and did well with a little bit of supplemental water. *Liatris ligustylis* I bought as a plant in the spring. It's grown quite large in a sunny spot with some supplemental water and it turns out it's quite a butterfly magnet. The ice plant (*Delosperma*) I'm growing in the rock garden in sand/sharp drainage. I'm testing this again after having fairly poor results with a plant grown in a trough. This ice plant has been blooming for a month and I'm hoping it will continue for another month. Ice plants like dryer winters than we have but it may be OK and survive the winter with the sharp drainage. If it doesn't survive the winter, I think it has been a satisfactory annual!



*Thunbergia alata*



*Liatris ligustylus*

I hope to see you on September 24!

John Gilrein, Chair



Delosperma

## ABOUT THAT PLANT SALE

*Carol Eichler, Plant Sale Coordinator*

Thank you all for coming, bringing plants, and buying! With my husband's arrival, we hit 30 in attendance. We got one new member - Alex Solla. He's an interesting guy if you have a chance to talk to him (check out more about him in the Membership article).



Yes! We had plants! Photo: Nigel Dyson-Hudson

Set up was completed by 10:05 with time for socializing before we opened the sale at 10:30 as publicized. By 11:05 the sale was over! Judging by how few plants we had left when we went to half-price and finally free, I'd say we had a really good selection. Every year it seems we have more rock garden plants too. What a bargain everything is!

Catered lunch was scheduled to arrive at 11:30 (in actuality it was 11:45, because Wegman's didn't have our order ready in time). It was difficult to know

how many folks to plan for lunch. I planned for 30 and I was spot-on. Still there was more than enough to eat and I was thrilled that all the food disappeared one way or another.

And what a success the sale was! Marlene, our "CFO," reports proceeds from the sale of plants (and a few books) was over \$850 pending one additional sale (not bad for only about 30 people).

I hope those of you who attended are pleased with your purchases and that the new plants will soon be gracing your gardens! Until next year....

## 2<sup>ND</sup> CHANCE TO ORDER THE CREVICE GARDEN

NARGS is offering Chapters a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance to order The Crevice Garden book by Paul Spriggs and Kenton Seth. Ordinarily selling for \$39.95, if we order 5 or more copies, our price is only \$23 inclusive of taxes and shipping. The book is a very helpful how-to but also includes a large section on plants to grow. You can even build a crevice in a trough. You can read a recent review by Susan Schnare [here](#). To place an order, contact Carol Eichler by October 31<sup>st</sup>.

## DROUGHT SURVIVORS AND SUFFERERS

*This is a compilation of comments from the ACNARGS Forum (appearing in various formats)*

Carol Eichler initiated a discussion on the ACNARGS Forum with this request: "Most of central NY has been under serious rain deficit since this spring. I thought it would make a good article to note, from our own gardens, how our plants - rock garden and not - have held up. Which are doing OK? Which are suffering? Also what do you do about it?"

Weather can be so fickle. Last summer was on the wet and cool side – the opposite of our 2022 conditions of hot and dry. You can compare these observations with your own. How did your gardens fare this summer? Thank you to all who contributed.

John Gilrein:

I didn't measure the rainfall in July, it rained probably 4 times and amounted to about an inch total, as most of the times the accumulation was pretty low. I have loamy soil where the soil hasn't been messed with, so it's fairly moisture retentive. The water table is on the high side noticeable at the lower part of the lawn, which is resistant to browning. A fair amount of the lawn is still green due to that high water table or shade during part of the day. The plants that I have in shade are all holding up well, though now I see a Helenium that's in partial shade is wilting. And Solomon seal has gone dormant early.

The rock garden has gotten a little bit of water from the hose a few times. RG plants that I had planted in May or June have been getting water from the watering can fairly regularly, so they're doing well except for a few that died. The vegetable garden is doing great in spite of the droughty conditions. I have watered it slightly sparingly with the hose probably 3 times, and I will water it again soon if we don't get rain tomorrow (August 2). The tomato plants are much happier with a dry summer than a wet one (like last year).

Susanne Lipari:

- My established Hellebores are doing fine, but the ones I moved in the spring are drooping.
- Ostrich and Cinnamon ferns are still ok, as is the wild type felix-femina, but the various felix-femina cultivars are suffering. They perked up with the single watering I gave (some of) them and the rain last weekend, but they are looking pretty sad again.
- Astilbes in mostly shade are still doing ok and even blooming a bit, but any that get much sun are turning crisp.

- Established rock garden plants are doing fine, but they have benefitted from supplemental water about once a week.
- The daylilies that are the mainstay of my July garden bloomed much less than in other years, but the later ones that got some of that good rain last week and that are in part shade are lovely right now.
- Untroubled – and I wish it was troubled – is the Arundinaria that is getting out of hand.
- Before the rain last week even the phlox was wilting, but it is ok now.
- Totally untroubled are the various Rudbeckias, as well as the Heliopsis and all my different Echinaceas.
- I have soaker hoses in the vegetable garden and water the tomatoes and the few beans that the groundhog left me every couple of days. I “planted” clay pots next to each pepper plant and they love it. I have 2 large stock tubs and collect the rainwater from most of the house. I use those to water the tender plants in pots.
- For some reason (not prescient, just lucky!) I planted all my Dahlias in large pots and they get watered at least every other day. But none of the Dahlias that Daniel planted in the ground (full sun) made it beyond just a couple of leaves, which then died.

Carol Eichler:

Plants in part sun/part shade as a rule are faring better - no surprise. Established rock garden plants for the most part are doing fine with the exception of dianthus. I deadheaded the plants after flowering to avoid additional stress that might be caused by seed production. Not having much well water to spare, I collect rainwater which was exhausted some time ago (recently replenished with the rains of August). I did water the 2 rock gardens twice earlier in the summer after very hot days.

I was surprised that hellebores did not seem to do very well – at least the ones located on a slope which exposed them to dry and somewhat sunny conditions. 40+-year old peonies planted near a water sucking river birch suffered. One astilbe that gets more sun has partial die back. Gaura is doing well and seems to tolerate a fair amount of shade, love that plant. My Boltonia asteroids is the tallest its ever been – go figure.

I've been growing some veggies in containers (grow boxes) and straw bales for the tomatoes. They take watering every day and we were hauling water in through the month of July rather than risk our well going dry (which it has never done...but you never know). My tomatoes didn't set a lot of fruit. Most blossoms dried up, a symptom of prolonged heat. Some cultivars are more sensitive to this, so I may look to grow something other than Early Girls, which have been my “go to” tomato for years.

Pat Curran:

Astilbes that get morning sun have crispy edges. Hydrangea 'Endless Summer' nearby wilted until watered heavily.

Other perennials are not showing signs of stress YET -- but I have a stream, ryobi battery pump, 2 stock tanks and another pump to supply the hose, so I can water as much as I have the stamina to do -- which isn't as much as I should when it's hot. Most daylilies and Hosta are about to get their first hose drink later today.

Clay soil does have its uses. Underneath the topsoil, such as it is, is about another 300 ft. of glacial Lake West Danby clay, which I imagine facilitates water storage and capillary

action up somewhat. But it is dry enough that shallow rooted weeds such as forget-me-nots are shriveling up. Even the perennial Hibiscus is looking good except for a few holes in the leaves.

But barren strawberry, *Waldsteinia*, has died back completely. I have about 100 sq. ft. of it behind the tall summer shrubs in quite a lot of shade, and it bloomed well this year but all the stems are lying down brown. Of interest, the *Waldsteinia* next to the pink-flowering *ajuga* is still a good green and not wilted. It had been appearing that the *Waldsteinia* would overrun the *ajuga* eventually, but this may not happen now.

Linda Uhl:

Like Pat, I have clay soil in Ellis Hollow and also a fair amount of shade so I think that's given my gardens a bit of protection during this extended drought.

I don't believe I've lost any plants yet (and I only water my containers and troughs, nothing in the garden beds), but some things are showing signs of stress. The *astilbe*, *Hydrangea arborescens*, *Ligularia 'The Rocket'* and Royal Fern all wilt during the hot part of the day.

The Royal Fern and Ostrich Ferns are all getting crispy edges, much earlier than usual which is typically later in August. And a couple of epimediums in more sunny spots have turned brown.

I have some saplings in pots in a holding bed and a *Cornus kousa* lost leaves on about half of its branches since I didn't water that area while I was down with Covid. I'm hoping it'll survive.

The main thing I've noticed is a shorter flowering period for some plants including the *Ligularia*, clematis, roses, and even some alliums before they just dry up.

With the little watering that I do, our well is running low so I'm keeping my fingers crossed this won't last much longer.

Rosemarie Parker:

I have silty clay over shale bedrock, much of it on a slope. There are a couple of filled terraces that have more than 6" of soil. I water the beds and occasionally the meadow and even woods plantings because my yard is very, very well-drained in most locations and water completely disappears in a couple of days, even on the flat terraces. Overall I had many half-sized plants with fewer flowers and often no mature seeds.

What really suffered:

Ferns – Japanese painted fern totally collapsed in some locations; Interrupted fern had several inches of dried frond tips.

Hemerocallis – in less modified soils, many cultivars began shedding leaves in mid-July and had minimal or no bloom. *H. fulva* was least affected, of course. The dwarf cultivar 'Penny's Worth', which is truly rock garden size, was OK in a regularly watered bed.

Hydrangeas – oak leaf and *paniculata* both wilted frequently, and bloom was short-lived

Thyme – creeping wooly thyme died in a pot after several successful years there

Columbines – produced seeds but stalks dried out early and basal leaves slow to recover

Bloodroot – early dormancy

*Astilbe* – Most died in part sun. Ironically one patch had plants most affected right at the stone wall that gave them some shade. Possibly the stone retained heat or enhanced drainage.

Antennaria sp maybe parlinii- crisped and curled in shade, but recovered with watering  
Shrubs/trees in pots – almost lost a couple but they recovered with extra water and more shade

*Phlox paniculata* in less watered areas

*Gentiana clausa* most unhappy

What did surprisingly OK:

*Campanula americana* wilted but stayed erect and produced lots of flowers.

*Dianthus* in troughs – but watered frequently.

*Phlox subulata* & *P. bifida*

*Talinum calycinum*

*Orostachys* sp.

*Allium cernuum* (earlier blooming alliums had few flowers, few seeds)

*Delphinium exaltatum*

*Eryngium planum* 'Blue Glitter' (courtesy of John Gilrein)

*Linaria aeruginea* (from Rosy Glos – reseeded)

Penstemons of several species

A wonderful dwarf variegated *Carex* – looks like a dwarf (6") - *C. oshimensis* 'Evergold'

*Ruellia humilis*- very happy

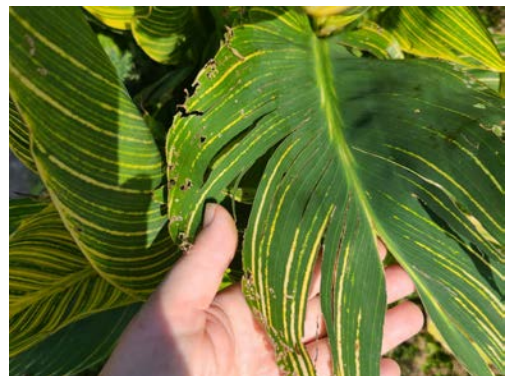
## HAIL! ANOTHER GARDENER'S CHALLENGE

Kathy Purdy

The Wednesday before our plant sale, my garden experienced a weather event. We got two and half inches of rain in two hours—with most of it coming in the first hour. I've never seen rain come down to hard, and just as it came down the hardest, it turned to hail. The hail was pea-sized and I think it lasted about ten minutes. The damage wasn't as bad as it could have been. The rain came down so fast that I'm sure a great deal of it ran off instead of soaking in. All the plants look a little happier, but I was weeding tonight and the soil was dry. Hopefully we'll all get more typical rainfall soon.



Coleus got shredded the worst.



Cannas sustained some damage as well

A lot of plants didn't look damaged at all, but after a couple of days I noticed speckling on many of the plants, like on this dahlia (far left photo).





At first I thought it was some kind of insect causing damage. Then I noticed it was the exact same marking on many different plant species, and I realized it was hail damage.



I was thankful it wasn't worse. Just imagine what hail this size (see left) would do to a garden! This fell at my sister-in-law's parents' house in Wallowa, Oregon about a week ago. It completely ruined her parents' greenhouse.

## MEMBERSHIP 2022

Mary Stauble

Please welcome new member Alex Solla from Trumansburg! Many of you met him at the August Plant Sale. He has lots of pretty pics at [Alex Solla \(@alexollaphotography\)](#) • [Instagram photos and videos](#) and on his website.

If you haven't yet renewed for 2022 it's not too late - you already know the many benefits (and we have 3 program meetings ahead of us – hooray, we are meeting in-person too)! The mail-in form is at [www.acnargs.org/join.pdf](http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf) or you can join at our September meeting. Membership is for the calendar year; dues are \$15 for individual and \$20 for household. If you have any questions email me at [mes2@cornell.edu](mailto:mes2@cornell.edu)

I will be attaching an ACNARGS Membership Directory to September's email newsletter announcement. Please let me know if you have any corrections to your entry.

## BULB SALE OPEN NOW THROUGH OCTOBER 1

Pat Curran

The Fall On-line Bulb Sale curated by the Tompkins County Master Gardeners is now open. This is a major fundraiser for the Master Gardener program. A number of ACNARGS members are also Master Gardener Volunteers. Although the Sale is open until Oct. 1, some bulbs will sell out, so don't wait too long to order.



These quality bulbs (from Van Engelen) have been chosen for their vigor and performance. Some new types have been added and the Master Gardeners have had experience and success with all of these. The Sale website allows you to sort for such categories as bloom by month, shade-tolerance, critter-resistance, or those bulbs suitable for forcing or cutting.

Imagine how much fun it will be in spring waiting for these flowers to show up after what is being predicted as a long cold snowy winter.... Oh dear!

Here's the link: <https://cctompkins.org/events/2022/09/01/2022-master-gardener-fall-bulb-sale-fundraiser>

## NARGS & ACNARGS UPCOMING 2022 PROGRAMS

**NOTE:** As of now, we are planning in-person meetings this fall. Please take special note regarding meeting dates and locations because we have had to do some juggling and are not meeting at "our usual" time of the month or location.

September 24: Note we are meeting at the Tompkins County Library AND this is the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month. Michael Houghton on Creating a Native Bog.

October 12: Note this is a Wednesday. Kaj Andersen, part of the NARGS traveling speaker program; 2 talks: "Bangsbo Botanical Garden, Crevice and Tufa Gardens" and

"Visiting Dutch Alpine Gardens" with a short dinner break in between. Attend 1 or both talks. We are still determining meeting time and place. Stay tuned.

November 1: Deadline for seed to be received for the NARGS Seed Exchange (see NARGS.org for details)

November TBA (probably Nov. 12): We are working to book Karen Perkins, owner of Garden Visions Epimediums. She will speak and bring plants for sale. Since her nursery is closing at the end of this year, here is your chance to enhance your garden with her special offerings. More about the nursery and Karen here: [epimediums.com](http://epimediums.com).

December TBD: Seed packaging for the NARGS Seed Exchange

May 5-9, 2023: 4<sup>th</sup> Czech International Rock Garden Conference, Pruhonice, Czech Republic. Info <https://czrgs.cz/>. Registration is limited but seems to still be open.

June 8-11 2023: Rocks, Plants, Habitats, NARGS Annual General Meeting hosted by Nova Scotia Chapter in Truro, Nova Scotia. Info <https://nargs23.org/>. Scroll down to watch the video – what a beautiful place! This should be an awesome meeting in an awesome location. Start planning now to attend.

## CALENDAR OF SELECT GARDEN EVENTS

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

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. Online class information:

Finger Lakes Native Plant Society monthly meetings. <https://flnps.org/> Note on Sept. 20, Michael Hough will speak on *Spiranthes* orchids of New York, in person, by zoom or post-meeting recording. Info [here](#). Recordings of past programs are still available to view online.

Cornell Botanic Gardens: <https://cornellbotanicgardens.org/explore/events/>

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

To have your garden event listed send all pertinent information to Carol Eichler [carolithaca@gmail.com](mailto:carolithaca@gmail.com)

## 2022 ACNARGS BOARD MEMBERS AND CONTACTS

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

Chair (aka head honcho): John Gilrein, [basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu](mailto:basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu)

Program: Terry Humphries, [terryehumphries@gmail.com](mailto:terryehumphries@gmail.com)

Program Committee Members: Would you like to help?

Secretary: Currently rotating amongst "Responsible People"

Treasurer (aka CFO): Marlene Kobre

Plant Sales Chair: Carol Eichler [carolithaca@gmail.com](mailto:carolithaca@gmail.com)

Plant of the Month: Marlene Kobre, [mkobre@ithaca.edu](mailto:mkobre@ithaca.edu)

Membership: Mary Stauble, [mes2@cornell.edu](mailto:mes2@cornell.edu)

New Member Hospitality: Graham Egerton, Anne Redfern

Newsletter Editor: Open. Carol Eichler (temporary)/We need someone to take on this responsibility!

Book Order Manager: New NARGS program to offer NARGS' members select books at deeply discounted prices. New Chapter position. Looking for a volunteer!  
Webmaster, Program Tech: Craig Cramer, [cdcramer@gmail.com](mailto:cdcramer@gmail.com)

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## **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, occasional 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. 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), invitations to our garden day trips, 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.

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## **ABOUT NARGS NATIONAL**

NARGS National is our parent organization: We encourage you to join (online at [www.nargs.org](http://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 a wealth of information including current and archived of Quarterly's, recordings of past study days and more. NARGS National also 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.

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## **GREEN DRAGON TALES**

Published eight times a year (Feb., March, April, May/June, July/Aug., Sept., Oct. Nov./Dec. Submit articles no later than the fourth Friday of the month preceding the monthly publication to Carol Eichler, [carolithaca@gmail.com](mailto:carolithaca@gmail.com). Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be October 2022.