

March 2024

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**MARCH 16, 2024**

*Terry Humphries, Program Chair and Presenter*

**NARGS Trip to the Dolomites – June 28 to July 5, 2017**

In June of 2017, NARGS launched the first of a new series of international tours, beginning with the Italian Dolomites. Fourteen members from across the USA made their way to the Italian Alps to botanize high peaks and numerous passes surrounding the Fassa Valley. The spectacular flora of the Dolomites thrives in a climate our part of the world, inspiring the North American rock gardener to seek out gems in their natural habitat.

Retracing the steps we took on this trip, we'll explore beautiful natural rock gardens, observing the factors that make these species thrive. The Dolomites are some of the finest mountains in the world, where a complex mix of geology and habitat supports a great range of plants amidst stunning scenery. The rock is mostly weather-worn limestone, but acid soil pockets have been formed by drift and leaching. The variations in terrain and exposure provide unique habitats for an unbelievably wide range of flora. Stunning mountains present dramatic scenery and an awesome background for fascinating alpine plants, some of which are unique to the area.

In the screes among boulders the silvery leaves and early pink flowers of *Potentilla nitida* clothed the rocks. *Paederota* (*Veronica boderata*) hung from rugged crevices, while *Papaver rhaeticum* thrived in loose rubble. On high passes, we saw Heart-leaved Leopardsbane,

*Doronicum columnae*, swathes of Mountain Avens (*Dryas octopetala* at peak bloom, and dwarf willows, including *Salix reticulata* and rock-hugging *S. serpyllifolia*. On rocky limestone outcrops, we found treasure troves of *Eritrichium nanum*, tiny Erigerons, *E. uniflora* and *E. neglecta* along with miniscule yellow *Viola biflora*. Some other alpine we came across included *Antennaria dioica*, *Arenaria ciliata*, *Linaria alpina*, *Euphrasia roskoviana*, *Minuartia austriaca*, *Hutchinsia alpina*, nine species of silene, and ten of saxifraga. Being partial to small plants, these were some of my favorites.

While charmed by the sound of cowbells in pastures, we found fragrant orchids, Dark and Austrian Vanilla (*Gymnaedenia rhelliconi* and *G. austriaca*), Frog Orchid (*Dactylorhiza viridis*) and Snow Gentians (*Gentiana nivalis*). High meadows were full of Monte Baldo Anemone (*Anemone baldensis*), carpets of Globeflower (*Trollius europaeus*), a few Martagon Lily and around a bend, the gentians!! Bavarian Gentian (*Gentian bavarica*, *G. verna*, and short-leaved *G. brachyphylla*. Boulders held patches of *Androsace obtusifolia*, alpine snowbell, *Soldanella alpina* and *Saxifraga oppositifolia*. On and in, in total we discovered nearly 400 species of mountain flowers, while hiking at “NARGS” pace, which includes endless stops and much botanical discussion.

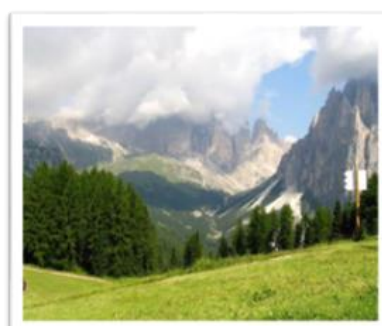
At the close of each day, after a world-class meal, we would review plant lists to recount the delights discovered during the day’s trek to a mountain pass or meandering through a valley. The plants were so numerous and each day so stimulating, it was impossible to retain it all. However, Jessica, our excellent guide from Naturetrek had botanized the area for years, and she knew just about every plant.

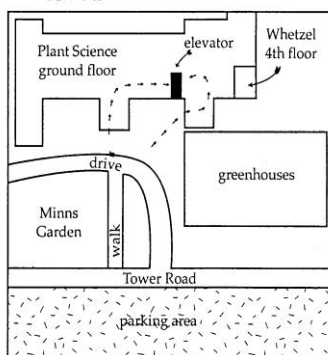
While Central New York may not boast the altitude of the Dolomites, our weather conditions are quite similar to the ranges we visited on the 2017 NARGS trip, so we made lots of notes and have been inspired to try to cultivate plants discovered on this trip in the years hence.

Join us at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday March 16 in the Whetzel Room (Room 404 Plant Science Building, 236 Tower Rd, Cornell University).

Optional bring-your-own lunch starting at Noon. Drinks provided.

Goodies always welcome for sharing





The west wing of the Plant Sciences Building has been shut down for renovations. But those won't start until next year sometime. So other than having those hallways walled off, everything should look pretty much as it did last time you were here. Remember the elevator to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and then exit right down the long hallway. You will be facing the Whetzel Roo

**Just a reminder**, we ask all attendees to be fully vaccinated. Additionally, we will be following CDC, NYS, and Cornell 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 am glad to report that the 2023/34 Seed Exchange is over (at least for me)! After the last orders were filled, there were still some more jobs (like shipping off the seeds and supplies), and the last of those was wrapped up this week. There were a lot of orders, possibly a record number and filling those would not have been possible without the help of many of you who volunteered filling orders, some who worked multiple times. (I'm not sure how many orders we filled, and it's hard to determine, as there are breaks in the order ID numbers, but I expect Laura knows.) Thank you volunteers! The second round of seed ordering is underway, being done by the Potomac Chapter. I have gotten most of my seeds sown, and most of those are outside getting moistened by the chilly rain today.

Regarding the May plant sale, many of us were hoping that Cooperative Extension (CCE) would have their plant sale/Garden Fair at the Ithaca High School, like in pre-COVID times. Unfortunately, CCE opted to have the plant sale at the Ithaca Farmer's Market on a Friday afternoon, just like in the past few years. We were very seriously considering having our plant sale at the CCE event. At our February 17 meeting, those present voted to have our own plant sale, i.e. members only, at Myer's Park, which will be on Saturday May 18. Details will be out in the April newsletter.

Be sure to check out the article about the garden tours the weekend of April 26. One of the highlights will be shopping for plants at Stonecrop April 27, with a great array of vendors. Maybe you'll want to just go to Stonecrop for the day if you won't join us on the overnight trip.

Hope you can join us at some of our spring events.

## PLANT LIST FOR THE NOVEMBER '23 PRESENTATION

Here's the plant list from Robert Wesley's November presentation: The Chaumont Limestone Barrens Nature Reserve is one of the best examples of Alvar grasslands in the world.

All these plants are native and lime-loving, most requiring sharp drainage

The Barrens are located 15 miles W of Watertown

Clints and Grykes refers to the geological stone formation

<i>Cladonia rangiferina</i>	Reindeer lichen
<i>Botrychium multifidum</i>	Leathery grape fern
<i>Houstonia longifolia</i>	Longleaf summer bluet
<i>Zanthoxylum americanum</i>	Pricklyash
<i>Corydalis aurea</i>	Golden corydalis
<i>Viola canadensis</i>	White violet
<i>Ranunculus fascicularis</i>	Early buttercup
<i>Phlox divaricata</i>	Wild blue phlox
<i>Maianthemum stellatum</i>	Starry false lily of the valley
<i>Rhus aromatica</i>	Fragrant sumac
<i>Arabidopsis lyrata</i>	Sand cress
<i>Polygala senega</i>	Seneca snakeroot
<i>Lilium michiganense</i>	Michigan lily
<i>Lilium philadelphicum</i>	Wood lily
<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Wild columbine
<i>Cypripedium parviflorum</i> var. <i>pubescens</i>	Yellow lady's slipper
<i>Cypripedium arietinum</i>	Ram's head lady slipper
<i>Spiranthes magnicamporum</i>	Lady's tresses
<i>Anemone virginiana</i>	Tall thimbleweed
<i>Anemone cylindrica</i>	Candle anemone
<i>Scutellaria parvula</i>	Small scullcap
<i>Comandra umbellata</i>	Bastard toadflax
<i>Micranthes virginiensis</i>	Virginia saxifrage
<i>Packera pauperula</i>	Balsam ragwort
<i>Geum triflorum</i>	Prairie smoke
<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>	Harebell
<i>Democallis arguta</i> (formerly <i>Potentilla</i> )	Tall cinquefoil
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Tufted hairgrass
<i>Anticlea elegans</i> ssp. <i>glaucus</i>	White death camas tall, poisonous
<i>Solidago ptarmicoides</i> (former <i>Aster</i> )	White upland goldenrod
<i>Castilleja coccinea</i>	Paintbrush
<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	Gray dogwood
<i>Viburnum rafinesquarium</i>	Downy arrowwood
<i>Juniperis communis</i>	Common juniper
<i>Symphocarpis albus</i> var. <i>albus</i>	Common snowberry
<i>Soiribykykys heterolepsis</i>	Dropseed grass

Times to visit: mid to late May; mid-June for castilleja

## MEMBERSHIP

*Mary Stauble*, Membership Coordinator

If you have not renewed for 2024, you should do it now, so you'll be eligible for our many membership benefits. You can renew at the March meeting or by mail. Your new or renewed membership will allow you to purchase the March Plant-of-the-Month, which we sell at a discounted price. The renewal form is at <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf>. Your membership status is reported to you in the email with the newsletter link. Contact Mary Stauble at [mes2@cornell.edu](mailto:mes2@cornell.edu) if you have any questions.

## PLANT OF THE MONTH :

*Marlene Kobre*, POM Coordinator

### **DODECATHEON 'RED WINGS'**

Our POM selection for March is a member of the genus Dodecatheon (family Primulaceae) that includes more than 12 species, all North American natives. The genus name derives from two Greek words meaning twelve gods,\* and 'Red Wings' belongs to the species pulchellum, from the Latin word for beautiful. Our plants have been grown by Urs Baltensperger, owner of Edelweiss Perennials in Canby, Oregon. Urs has again offered us a generous discount on not only the plants but also the transcontinental shipping fee.

### DESCRIPTION AND CULTIVATION REQUIREMENTS

Dodecatheons live up to their common name, Shooting Stars, putting on a showy display in the woodland spring garden. In spring they rise from a basal rosette of "lance-shaped" leaves on leafless reddish flower scapes up to 18" tall. The payoff comes in late spring when 8-18 flowers open at the end of each umbel, with 1-inch long flowers comprised of 5 upward reflexed petals joining at the bottom to form a downward facing point surrounded by a white ring. Flower color can vary from shades of purple and pink in the north to white in the south.

Light, Soil, and Moisture: We might expect so beautiful a flower to be temperamental, but Dodecatheons are unusually accommodating about their cultivation preferences. They will be happiest grown in a woodland setting in moist, well-drained, humus-rich soil in part shade, but they will tolerate clay soil, full shade, and even full sun providing they have enough moisture.

HZ: 4-8

Bloom Time: April/May; dormancy begins in mid-late summer when the basal rosette fades.

Height: 8"-12", perhaps a bit taller

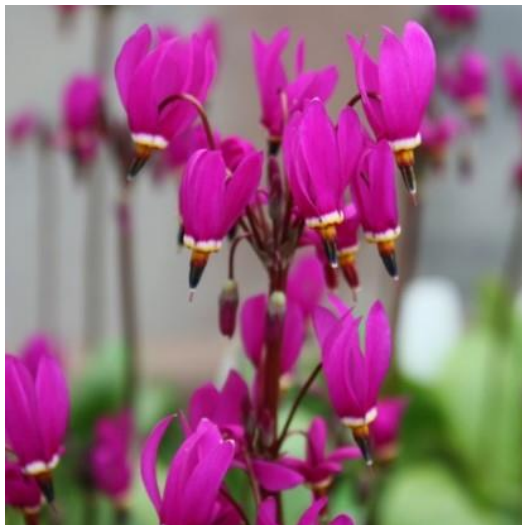
Foliage: see above

Flower: dazzling magenta with a complex structure described above

Propagation: by division in fall when dormant; hard to grow from seed

Benefits: complex, graceful nodding flowers; neat foliage; deer resistant; attractive to Bumblebees and other native bees but not honeybees because the flowers don't provide Nectar.

\*Note about the scientific name: I was intrigued by the meaning of the name in Greek. Most sources provided the translation of 12 gods but without commenting on the connection between this plant and the gods governing the Olympian world. Finally one source ventured a plausible explanation: Dodecatheons were once classified as belonging to the Primula genus, and those plants were believed to be protected by the gods. Forgive my foray into name nerdiness.



## ACNARGS UPCOMING 2024 PROGRAM

### April Garden Tour Trip

We have planned a garden tour and plant shopping trip for the weekend of April 26-28, 2024.

**Day 1 Friday April 26** we're leaving early in the morning with the first stop at Elisabeth Zander's garden in Goshen, CT. This garden was featured in the latest NARGS Zoom meeting. It includes an extensive and established rock garden, including stone that was split by Elisabeth's husband, Rod. Elisabeth is a member of the Berkshire Chapter, NARGS and has been an involved member of NARGS for several years, if not decades. The second garden we will visit on April 26 is Hollister House Garden <https://hollisterhousegarden.org/> in Washinton, CT; this is a private garden open to the public transitioning into a public garden. Admission is \$10 or a current AHS card. This garden is in the English style with clipped hedges, water features, and several different borders. Spring perennials will be in bloom there. We're lodging at a hotel in Brewster, NY, which is close to Stonecrop.

**Day 2 Saturday April 27** we're going to the annual Alpine Plant Sale at Stonecrop Gardens <https://www.stonecrop.org/> in Cold Spring, NY. Stonecrop is a former home of Frank and Anne Cabot (of Au Quatre Vents fame). It includes a fabulous woodland garden which will have many blooming woodland plants, a rock garden, troughs, an alpine house, a conservatory, and borders. The big lure for many of us is the plant sale vendors this year include Benedicts Nursery from

Indiana, Jay's Conifers, Lori Chips, Broken Arrow Nursery, and several others. Admission is \$5. We'll be leaving mid-day for Untermyer Gardens <https://www.untermyergardens.org/> in Yonkers, NY, formerly the home of a wealthy New Yorker and now a city park. No admission fee. We're staying overnight at a hotel in Yonkers.

**Day 3 Sunday April 28** we're going to the New York Botanic Garden

<https://www.nybg.org/> in the Bronx. This is a very large botanic garden. One of the many highlights will be the rock garden, which will have plants in bloom during our visit. Admission is \$31 for seniors (over 65 with ID), \$35 adults, possibly lower for NYC residents. There is an optional nursery stop at Catskill Native Nursery <https://www.catskillnativenursery.com/> in Kerhonksen, NY (near Ellenville) on the return trip home.

All the gardens we will be visiting have an internet presence – i.e. you can see photos online if you're curious. If you want to see the itinerary with travel times, time at each garden, and hotel costs, please email me [John Gilrein [jgilrein@twcny.rr.com](mailto:jgilrein@twcny.rr.com)]. Please let me know if you're interested. We have a block of rooms reserved at each hotel, it's best to reserve your room early if you will join us.



## CALENDAR OF SELECT AREA GARDEN EVENTS

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

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. Online class information: [ccetompkins.org](http://ccetompkins.org)

Finger Lakes Native Plant Society monthly meetings – a hybrid of in-person and zoom: <https://flnps.org/> Recordings of past programs are available to view online.

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

Habitat Gardening in CNY, local Wild Ones Chapter: <https://www.hgcny.org/>

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

To have your garden event listed send all pertinent information to Susanne Lipari [sel3@cornell.edu](mailto:sel3@cornell.edu)

## 2024 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 Coordinator: Terry Humphries, [terryehumphries@gmail.com](mailto:terryehumphries@gmail.com)

Program Committee Members: Would you like to help? Share your speaker suggestions!

Secretary: Currently rotating amongst "Responsible People"

Treasurer (aka CFO): Marlene Kobre

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

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

Membership: Mary Stauble, **mes2@cornell.edu**

New Member Hospitality: Graham Egerton, Anne Redfern

Newsletter Editor: Susanne Lipari **sel3@cornell.edu**

Wurster Garden Coordinator: Carol Eichler

Wurster Volunteers: Elaine Caso, Ellen Lane, Sheila Stone; Others always welcome! Contact Carol Eichler if you wish to be added to the email list.

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**

## 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.

## 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.

## GREEN DRAGON TALES

Published eight times a year (Jan./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 Susanne Lipari, **sel3@cornell.edu**. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be April '24.