

October/November 2025

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DATE: OCTOBER 11, 2025 –TWO PRESENTATIONS

Terry Humphries, Program Chair

Paul Cumbleton, Somerset, UK: two talks:

at 10:30 AM 'Crevice Gardens'

and

at 1:00 PM 'Alluring Alpines'

Whetzel Room 404, Plant Science Building Cornell University

Brown bag lunch starting at noon



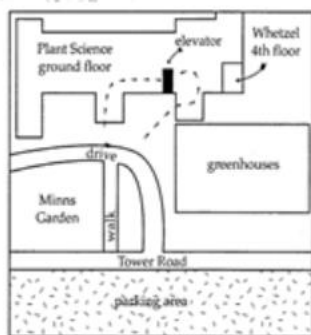
Crevice garden designed by Paul Cumbleton

The North American Rock Garden Society has arranged for Paul Cumbleton to travel from southeast England to tour northeast US chapters this fall, offering practical and inspirational talks based on his professional and personal gardening experiences.

Paul worked for the Royal Horticultural Society for 11 years, including as head of the Alpine section at the RHS Wisley garden, responsible for the rock garden, alpine meadow, crevice garden and the alpine display houses. Prior to that, he worked for more than 20 years for ADAS (the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service), assisting in agricultural and horticultural scientific research. Although he has a passion for all plants, he particularly enjoys growing alpinines, and winter-growing South African bulbs.

Paul's talk on crevice gardens includes the principles behind the popular rock garden design and how to use the crevice idea in small scale ways. For his afternoon talk, Paul will show us where and how to grow some of the plants that he has found most alluring. He has presented to dozens of groups over the years, including at various conferences. He has written many articles for publications such as 'The Garden', 'The Plant Review' 'The Alpine Gardener', 'The International Rock Gardener', 'The North American Rock Garden Quarterly', 'The Orchid Review'...and others. Now retired, he lives with his partner in Somerset, where they are enjoying developing a half-acre garden together.

Our regular meetings are held in Room 404 Plant Scien, 236 Tower Road on the Cornell Campus.



Currently, the west wing of the Plant Sciences Building has been shut down for renovations. 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 4th floor and then exit right down the long hallway. You will be facing the Whetzel Room.

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

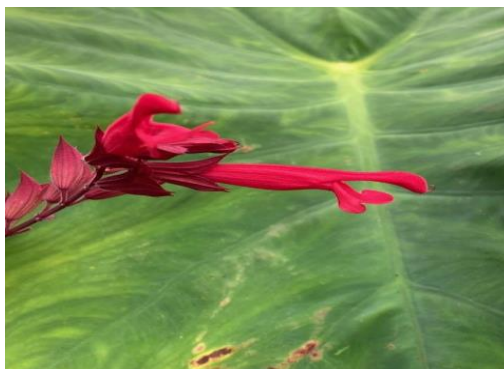
John Gilrein, Chair

We had a great September program on perennial plants by Kerry Mendez. Ms. Mendez is a fan of perennials that perform in the border by not requiring excessive maintenance and many having interesting foliage. As sophisticated gardeners, you know that form and foliage really matter in a perennial garden to carry the garden when the stars of the garden are no longer blooming. We saw a lot of interesting foliage with leaves that were chartreuse, burgundy, blue green, silver, or variegated. Talking to others I have found that not all variegated plants are equally appealing, for example I don't like variegated 'Nora Leigh' phlox. Easy enough to choose variegated plants that

appeal though. Colored foliage can keep the border interesting and make other plants ‘pop’ — that is stand out. One great point made was that dark plants recede and can be hard to see in a shady site – unless planted near another plant with chartreuse or variegated foliage. At home, I notice how a white & green variegated Brunnera (like ‘Jack Frost’) and Hosta (like ‘Patriot’) help to light up spots in a shady border. The helpful handout from Ms. Mendez that went with the talk includes a lot of recommended plants, and I’ll have extra copies available in October at the meeting.

Next month we have a speaker from NARGS, Paul Cumbleton, who was one of the gardeners highlighted in Kenton Seth and Paul Spriggs book, The Crevice Garden. This meeting is out of sync with our normal pattern, as it will be on the 2nd Saturday of October – October 11, with a talk in the morning followed by lunch and another talk in the afternoon at our usual meeting time of 1 PM.

I would like to sing the praises of a few tender perennial salvias, *S. guaranitica* ‘Black and Blue’ and *S. x* ‘Roman Red’. Neither is hardy here, the first to Zone 7 and the second to Zone 8 or 9. Black and Blue has deep blue flowers in a calyx of near black – thus the name. Roman Red has bright red flowers in a calyx of a muted dark red. The flowers are large, very showy, and attractive to hummingbirds. *S. guaranitica* also comes in other flower colors from sky blue to violet. Both salvias performed well in pots starting to bloom in July from starter plants and showing every indication of blooming until frost. I may have a bit of a weakness for jewel-toned flowers. Height this year is about 3 to 4 feet in a pot, and Black and Blue is 5 to 6 feet high in the ground. I believe I could have gotten even better performance by potting these up a 2nd time in midsummer. One fault of the plants is that they’re a bit gangly—not very bushy, so possibly best with other plants around them to fill in some of the space. As long as the other plants do not shade them. Both plants like rich soil and plenty of water. My experiment with Black and Blue over the last year was quite a success; I overwintered it in a pot in the basement as a dormant plant, and it received hardly any watering (that is the soil was mostly dry all winter). It overcame dormancy with ease in the spring. I will now try overwintering with Roman Red as well. Roman Red has different parentage than Black and Blue, though it looks like a red version of the same plan. Another experiment would be to try rooting these.



Another plant to love is large-flowered Calamint, *Calamintha grandiflora*. Note the grandiflora (large flowered) is relative, as the purple pink flowers of grandiflora are only large compared to its white flowered cousin. *C. grandiflora* is a minty long flowering plant that is super easy – it does well in a site with partial to full sun and good drainage. It spreads gently via rhizomes or seed, yet is easy to pull, covered with flowers that the bees enjoy, and it’s deer proof, due to the strong minty foliage. It’s also useful for tea. It’s only around 8-12 inches tall. It is a great filler, and what’s not to love about a plant in full bloom on the first day of autumn? It has 2 cousins that

are also good plants: *Calamintha nepeta*, with white flowers, which for me does not spread, and *Nepitella* (*Clinopodium nepeta*), with lavender flowers, a Mediterranean herb that spread a little more by seed.

Hope to see you soon.

MEMBERSHIP

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

Don't miss out on the plant of the month and all of our other benefits! If you still need to renew for 2025 the renewal form is at <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf>

NEWS FROM NARGS NATIONAL

By Carol Eichler, Recording Secretary, NARGS

Only about 100 of us made it to the Annual General Meeting in Cheyenne this June. So it is with great pleasure to share with you (if you haven't already discovered this), that the evening talks are available – at no charge – on the NARGS website. You will find it as one of the rotating banners on the home page.

For the meeting, a professional video production company was hired, and I have to say their finished product is almost better than being there in person – both visually and audibly. Take some time, some day when the weather outside is dreadful, to enjoy these presentations. I say almost better, because what you're missing while watching these videos is all the great people and conversations that are a big part of this annual in-person meeting. It's so worth it to save up your money to attend an AGM. There's a great one coming up in Calgary next year on June 25-27, with the Canadian Rockies as the backdrop. I suggest you plan ahead. Registration is likely to open this winter. (Our fall Quarterly will have more information than I do at present)

I am writing this in August, four days before I leave for the NARGS tour to the West Cape of South Africa. We are in the midst of a heat wave and a drought – the story of this summer. I will return in late September, and fall will have arrived. It feels like I will have lost out on a big portion of summer—the peak of tomato and pepper season at least. It's been difficult for gardens, though my rock gardens seem to be coping well, thanks to the harsh conditions under which they would typically grow. Their long root systems are a boon.

I've been crazy busy preparing for this trip too – mostly working through a long to-do list of items that need to be taken care of while I'm away and much of that pertains to gardening. For example, I was finishing the last of my seedling transplants the other day, in the midst of a summer heat wave. It felt oh so wrong, yet when else would I get to it? My flats will go to a fellow rock gardener to keep watered. (Rock gardening cultivates close friendships) Just last Saturday, I went to a plant nursery and of course couldn't resist buying a few plants. What was I thinking?! Yes, even writing this article got on that list. And now it is written, and that means I'm one more step to being ready.

So pardon me if my article this month is a little trip obsessed. Once I'm on my way, I'm sure I'll leave any unfinished tasks behind me and simply enjoy. The flowers should be spectacular in

the Cape Town area. I wish you all were joining me! I will promise some photos for my November article.

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

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

2025 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**

Program Coordinator: Terry Humphries, **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: vacant

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) 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 Quarterlies, 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, selj3@cornell.edu. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be March 2026.