



ADIRONDACK

CHAPTER

North American Rockgarden Society

Green Dragon Tales

August 2002

Letter From The Chair

While many rock gardeners may be sitting in the shade enjoying the summer respite of alpine gardening, now is a busy time for seed collectors. NARGS seed donors are busy gathering, cleaning and packaging seed to send to the exchange. I encourage all chapter members to harvest seed from their gardens. Even if you aren't a NARGS member, your seed can be donated. See the Chapter donations excerpt following in the Newsletter.

And speaking of busy, what a full schedule the Chapter has had for this summer. Garden tours, Cutting Workshop, Summer Picnic, care of the Wurster garden, assisting with the Alternative's Garden, digging plants for the Plant Sales, and planning already underway for next year.

Susanne has asked member to help in contributing material for the Newsletter. If you have an experience that you would like to share with the Chapter, please

write it up and provide it to Susanne. You might share your successes with a specific plant, germination techniques, a tour through a neighbor's garden or maybe a homemade slug deterrent recipe. Your contributions would be greatly appreciated.

Recently in the NARGS bulletin, Bobby Ward, NARGS president, thanked the Adirondack Chapter for its significant contributions to the Norman Singer Fund. He specifically mentioned the Chapter's matching funds donation. I would also like to express appreciation to our members. I feel that we are an innovative, dynamic, community-minded chapter that has positively impacted NARGS, our members and our communities.

Before signing off, I would like to share one of my great gardening pleasures this year - watching ARISAEMA urishima flower and ripen. I purchased the tuber from Barry Yinger several

years ago and this year it reached maturity. Not only 1 large flowering stalk, but several smaller offshoot stalks as well. The flower, in my opinion, rivals ARISAEMA candidissimum. It has magenta tones, rather than pink, with the green hood nearly iridescent. It's spadix grew like a looped and twisted whip. The plant looked tropical in its robustness. Planted in deep loam in the shade of maple trees, it has thrived with the moist Spring and Summer weather. The seeds are now ripening, becoming plump and bright red. I check them everyday to insure chipmunks, mice or insects aren't destroying the developing seeds. I plan to send the seeds to the seed exchange and think they will be a treasure.

I've been digging for the August Plant Sale, have you?

Michelle

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NARGS Editors may reprint **unaltered** articles in their newsletters. Cite the date, publication, and author and notify the *Green Dragon* editor.

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Program Notes

August Plant Sale

The August Plant Sale will be on August 16, 2003.

This year, will will be at Cooperative Extension (rather than at KPL on the Cornell Campus, our usual plant sale location.)

Arrive around 8 AM to set up your plants. We start the sale at 9 AM.

To make sure your plants look their best and contribute to a best ever result for money raised at the August plant sale, please make sure you dig your plants up ASAP if you haven't done so already.

Directions to Cooperative Extension on Willow Avenue, Ithaca: Go to Rt. 13. Willow Avenue crosses Rt. 13 just South of the exit to Stewart Park and Rt. 34 (Auburn.) Take a sharp right immediately after turning off Rt. 13. This will be a good occasion to see how the Wurster Garden has flourished!

[map to Cooperative Extension](#)

Looking forward to September...

The date, so far, is the only thing that's certain: **September 20, 2003** at the Whetzel Room, 401 Plant Science on the Cornell Campus.

But Anne is working on a wonderful program with an exciting speaker. So make sure you keep the date free and join us!

... and October

Jim Jermyn, our October speaker this year, is from afar (Great Britain) and is brought to us by the NARGS Speakers Bureau. We hope to schedule him for two talks on **October 18th**, tentatively "The challenge of Growing Himalayan Plants" and "Northern Italy and the Dolomites- A Gardener's Paradise". I can't promise that these will be the topics, but all the topics that were offered look great.

Jim Jermyn is the author of a recent Timber Press book, "The Himalayan Garden- Growing Plants from the Roof of the World" which is fantastic as far as I have read. He will bring signed copies to sell. You can read a review of this book in the NARGS Quarterly (Fall 2001, page 292).

Plant Portrait

Centaurium chloodes

Years ago in Michigan I saw a tiny flower that captured my fancy. It was a single bloom of *Centaurium chloodes* growing in a trough. Its perfect symmetry and incredible pink color made me want to grow it.

I have grown it for the last 6 years and have never been disappointed in its performance. While this plant is an annual, in form it competes with the best perennial alpiners. A clump of seedlings, planted out in early spring, quickly forms a mound of petite stems, never more than 4 inches long, with dainty emerald-green leaves. By mid-summer there are many flowers clustered at the ends of the stems. The flowers are 5-petaled and radially symmetrical. Their color is unusual in its intensity, a very saturated pink, and the striking pink contrasts with a yellow eye. As they open and close, the petals furl and unfurl over each other in a very pleasing way. It flowers freely from mid-summer until frost, and if there is a flaw in this plant it is only the the flowers close unless there is sun on them.

C. chloodes reseeds itself in my troughs, but never grows fast enough to bloom before frost. It is best to start a pot of seedlings in late winter and divide it up as you plant it out in early spring.

Seed of *C. chloodes* is often available from the NARGS seed exchange. A plant that Michelle gave me two years ago that she grew from seed exchange seed labeled *Centaurium scilloides* turned out to be identical to my *C. chloodes*, so there is some confusion in this Genus. I call what I have *C. chloodes* because Bill Dress identified it as such for me!

Anne Klingensmith



Rock Gardening” will inspire you to build yet another trough, sand bed, or planted wall, or to build your first one.

Rock Garden Design and Construction contains all new material written by experienced NARGS members.

There are 103 color photos and 12 line drawings in this 316-page book that includes an annotated bibliography and index. The book is hardcover and 6” x 9”. It retails for \$29.95.

Special Pre-publication Price for NARGS Members on orders received before October 1, 2003: \$21 includes shipping. (Delivery scheduled for October 2003)

Chairs: contact Jan Slater now for special pricing on quantity orders (24 books per case) for use by NARGS chapters for sales or promotions. Orders for cases of books must be placed before October 1, 2003, to receive special pre-publication pricing.

Pre-publication Special Price: Rock Garden Design and Construction

A Publication of the **North American Rock Garden Society** and **Timber Press**

Edited by **Jane McGary**

Foreword by **Panayoti Kelaidis**

Numerous authors have contributed to this collection, the first comprehensive treatment of rock garden design and construction in North America. Topics include

rock placement, materials, planting, and maintenance. There are chapters on types of rock gardens, structures and containers, regional styles, design and techniques, and impact of regional climate—and much more. Included are descriptions of a dozen public rock gardens in the United States and Canada. Panayoti Kelaidis’s beguiling “Invitation to

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The July Picnic

What a great opportunity our picnics present to see some wonderful gardens in a relaxed and congenial atmosphere! I have traveled a lot farther from home to see gardens far less impressive than both of our last two picnics have given us. Some times as rock gardeners we get caught up in our own little area of interest, but this year at Susanne's we were able to see cottage style gardening at it's best. Susanne's home is right on Rt. 228 South out of Mecklenburg and you can't possible miss it. It's the kind of garden that appears suddenly as you [drive by](#) and it says WOW, slow down. It captures your eye with a burst of color and charm seldom seen in these parts. Going to the picnic gave us a chance to enjoy, not only this [beautiful garden](#), but a lovely old home that has only improved with age.

Being new to the group I am continually impressed with the camaraderie of our get togethers. In addition to the visual delights we're always introduced to gastronomic surprises when everyone brings "a dish-to-pass." Being a part of the old school "meat and potatoes" crowd, I sometimes have a problem with my uneducated tastes and I always manage to find something that I didn't know I didn't like.

If you have never visited Susanne and seen her garden, you should find a way to visit before the summer goes by and plan next year to go wherever the picnic is hosted. Thanks again, Susanne, for a wonderful locale and perfect weather for [the annual picnic](#).

May Trip to Connecticut

The May trip to Connecticut on Friday and Saturday, May 23-24 was a wonder of excellent planning by Anne Klingensmith. She knew who was going, how many cars and drivers there were, and how many people could join in as a result. Nearly 20 of us went. Anne was kind enough to pick up Erica and me in Binghamton, we got an early 7:30AM start, and got to Stonecrop by 11 AM.

I hadn't been to [Stonecrop](#) in 10 years or more and was astonished by how big it is, how beautiful, how varied, and how well maintained. To me, it's now a major garden destination and well-organized for visitors. We were given a good introduction along with their excellent site map, so we could tour on our own. The map contains 29 points of interest, from a [lake](#) with a [wisteria pavilion](#) on it to a scarecrow - "Miss Jekyll" guarding the vegetable garden!

The late daffodils were still in bloom and the woodland paths were especially beautiful with azaleas and rhododendrons in bloom. It was a beautiful time of year to go. By 12:30 PM we were hungry and hadn't had enough, so we ate hasty sandwiches in the parking lot and went back for more.

Mid-afternoon found us at John Spain's garden in Middlebury, CT. In an attractive neighborhood, his home sits below the street, facing a fairly steep bank, all of it beautifully and lovingly planted. But that wasn't all: in the back is a vegetable garden, a wonderful woodland garden, greenhouse benches for all of his cacti, and seedling plants for his many troughs. The woodland garden, though not huge, has paths with many surprises.

John was such an accommodating, excellent guide, and so generous with many little potted-up desirables for OUR troughs or gardens.

Anne picked a perfect place to stay in Waterbury, with an attached Italian restaurant, where the conversation never stopped at our long table. And we had a chance to dry our socks!

After an early breakfast, we drove through Hartford near the coast to Nick Nickou's garden in Branford. Like John, he's been refining his 3 + acres for about 40 years. Thus, his rhododendrons and azaleas can be seen in the full beauty of their maturity. He is now in his 80's, but his partner is still extending the gardens! Under a high canopy, we had a wonderful tour with Nick able to tell or locate the name of every plant and tree.

The last stop was Oliver Nurseries in Fairfield, where we arrived after a lunch eaten in the cars in their parking lot, thanks to Anne and others, who had the forethought to bring extra food. After all, no one wanted to spend time in a restaurant! Oliver's is large and has beautiful plants in wonderful condition, and most of us went on a buying spree.

With trunks full of plants, we headed home. Thank you Anne for a wonderful trip ! Please, let's do another one!