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April 2010

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## **April 17 program: Dwarf Conifer Gardens**

At our April 17 meeting, internationally known Rochester gardener Jerry Kral will speak on Dwarf Conifer Gardens. Jerry has grown more than 350 conifer varieties – mostly dwarfs – over the last 18 years.

“My slide presentation will touch on the importance of plant form,” says Jerry. “The growth habit of a conifer can benefit a rock garden even if it is not a dwarf. I will also explore the various colors and color variegation available in conifers today.

“Plant texture is another area in which conifers excel and can add interest to rock gardens,” he adds. “I will also touch on the 'true miniatures' and how to use them in rock gardens of all sizes. The emphasis of my garden is not as a collection of conifers but to display the unusual in an aesthetic manner.”

Jerry has been a Master Gardener for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County for 15 years. During that time, more than 250 tour groups have visited his garden, which has been featured in national gardening magazines and on TV. He is also president of the Greater Rochester Perennial Society, a Director in the American Conifer Society (ACS) and primary organizer of the “Gathering of Gardeners” symposium now entering its thirteenth year.

Our Plant of the Month will be a selection of dwarf conifers from Evermay Nursery. And we'll have our annual seedling exchange. (Look for tables for the plants you bring in the hall outside the Whetzel Room.) See articles below for details.

We'll meet in 404 Plant Science Building (Whetzel Room) on the Cornell University campus. Brown bag lunch at noon. Program begins at 1:00 p.m.

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## From the Chair:

*From Billie Jean Isbell, chair:*

My garden is popping! But so are those awful pepper weeds that look pretty this time of year and then pops its seeds and takes over. As I dig them out, I am also digging seedlings for our annual seedling exchange to take place after our next meeting, Sat. April 17th in the Wetzel Room. We will set up tables in the hall outside the Whetzel room and hold the seedling exchange after our speaker, Jerry Kral, talks on dwarf conifers.

Please bring seedlings to the next meeting for our members-only exchange. And now is not too early to start potting up plants for the plant sale May 15th. These two plant sales are our major source of revenue for our excellent speaker series enabling us to bring speakers of the caliber of Anne Spiegle, who gave a fascinating talk last month and Jerry Kral, this month. Our members make it all happen. So start dividing and potting now. For the May plant sale, remember to use soil-less mix.

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## 2010 program plans

Our **tentative** program line up for 2010. Details in future newsletters or: [acnargs.blogspot.com](http://acnargs.blogspot.com)

- April 17: **Dwarf Conifer Gardens**, Jerry Kral. See article above.
- May 15: **Plant Sale**, Stewart Park, Ithaca.
- June 5-7: Chapter **Summer Trip** to Stonecrop, Storm King, NY Botanical Garden, Wave Hill, Planting Fields and more. (See article below.)
- June 18-20: **White Pine Camp work weekend**. See details in this newsletter.
- July 17: **Member garden tours**.
- August 21: **Members only plant sale**.
- September 18, October 16 and November 20 **programs to be announced**.

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## Dwarf Conifers – April Plant of the Month

*From John Gilrein, Plant of the Month coordinator:*

Our April POM will be dwarf conifers from Evermay Nursery. These will be small plants, at great prices, suitable for a rock garden, perennial border, or trough. The beauty of dwarf conifers is that they always look good. Though there's no flush of gorgeous color, they have no season of blackened, withered foliage or otherwise looking worn out. Dwarf conifers may grow slowly; these will stay small. The plants will generally be less than 12 inches high when mature, except 'Little Jamie', which will grow to around 2 feet.

The supplier recommends well-drained soil, though some are native to wet soils in nature, and recommends no more than a light dose of fertilizer. They should do well in full sun or part shade in soils that are not excessively acidic or alkaline. For planting in troughs that will not receive winter protection, a plant 2 zones hardier than your USDA hardiness zone is the general recommendation.

Our selection will include some of the following [approximate shape]:

- *Abies balsamea* 'Nana' (balsam fir), from Northern North America, is hardy to zone 3. [cushion]

- *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Nana' (Hinkoki cypress), from Japan, is hardy to zone 5. [globe]
- *Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Tsukumo' (Sawara cypress), from Japan, is hardy to zone 5. [globe]
- *Chamaecyparis thyoides* 'Little Jamie' (Atlantic white cedar), from the Eastern coastal US, is hardy to zone 4. [cone]
- *Picea abies* 'Little Gem' (Norway spruce), from Europe, is hardy to zone 3. [globe]
- *Picea mariana* 'Nana' (black spruce), from Northern North America, is hardy to zone 3. [mound]
- *Thuja occidentalis* 'Hetz midget' (American arborvitae), from Northeastern North America, is hardy to zone 3. [globe]

For additional information, check the Evermay Nursery web page for dwarf conifers (<http://www.evermaynursery.com/store/dwarf-conifers.asp>), or the book *Rock Garden Plants* by Baldassare Mineo.

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## April Seedling Exchange, and new location for May Plant Sale

From David Mitchell, plant sale coordinator:

In addition to our fabulous speaker, we'll have our annual seedling exchange at our April meeting. Bring in your seedlings to share. I'll have some pots and potting soil on hand. Potted divisions will also be accepted and priced for sale or held for the May plant sale. I'm hoping the seedlings will find good homes and that some will show up on our tables at the May and August plant sales. The seedling exchange is a great way to learn about what plants are easy to grow from seed and to learn from other's experiences in growing them on.

The May Plant Sale will be held on May 15, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Due to Ithaca High School construction, **the plant sale will be held at Stewart Park**. We will not be able to set up on Friday afternoon, so please come early on Saturday to help. Our booth will be located inside the large pavilion.

My driveway is available for dropoffs any time before the day of the sale if you can't make it to Stewart Park on Saturday morning. The driveway is on the Washington Street side of the corner of Washington and Esty Streets (402 Esty Street). My phone number is (607) 342-3660 should you have any questions about the sale. Tompkins County Cooperative Extension can be reached at (607) 272-2292.

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## Chapter Summer Trip June 5-7

From Susanne Lipari, membership coordinator ([sel3@cornell.edu](mailto:sel3@cornell.edu)):

Please let Susanne ([sel3@cornell.edu](mailto:sel3@cornell.edu)) know if you are interested in coming along so she can start making plans for lodging North of New York City and on Long Island. At this point, you are not definitely signing up – just expressing interest.

**On Saturday, June 5**, we will be heading down to [Stonecrop](#) to visit that lovely Cabot garden in its early summer glory. People wishing to also visit the sculpture garden at [Storm King](#) can do that afterwards and then join the rest of the group at the lodging (TBA).

**On Sunday, June 6**, we will be given a tour of the [rock garden at NY Botanic Garden](#) by garden's curator, Jody Payne. After the tour, we can explore the rest of the garden or visit [Wave Hill](#), not far away. We will meet at the [East Norwich Inn](#) in Oyster Bay on Long Island. There will

be a cocktail hour in the courtyard of the lovely [Chelsea Mansion](#), one of the Gold Coast mansions, followed by dinner in a local restaurant (TBA).

**On Monday, June 7**, we will visit [Planting Fields Arboretum](#), with its synoptic garden, newly established Daphne collection, the rose garden, heather garden, late flowering rhododendrons.... Leaving Planting Fields, we can stop in at [Martin Viette Nursery](#) and – most importantly - stock up on goodies at [Trader Joe's](#). Return to Ithaca whenever you have had enough of Long Island.

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## Work weekend at White Pine Camp June 18-20

*From Carol Eichler:*

I'm organizing another working weekend at White Pine Camp in the Adirondacks for the weekend of June 18-20, with an emphasis on adding plants to the garden.

Anyone who is interested in going this year should contact me by April 17 - our April meeting. Space is limited. Priority will be given to people who have not yet been there. We will stay for 2 nights - Friday and Saturday. It is a working weekend so we will plan to spend about a half day on Saturday working - doing fun stuff like weeding, planting, watering, mulching, etc. Between White Pine Camp and the George's we have a budget of \$150 to spend on plants. Hopefully we can supplement this with plants from our own gardens and the seedling exchange or other donations. I'll gather together our notes on what seemed to do well. Last summer we found many plants survived that shouldn't have been hardy because of the heavy snow cover.

On the way up on Friday we will take a side trip to Seneca Hill Perennials for a tour of Ellen Hornig's wonderful gardens. (But the nursery will not be open so we can't buy plants.) If you're interested in the trip or have questions, contact me: [ceichler@twcny.rr.com](mailto:ceichler@twcny.rr.com) or 607-387-5823.

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## Delaware Valley Chapter at the Philly Flower Show

*From Carol Eichler:*

The Delaware Chapter always had an exhibit at the Philadelphia Flower Show and it was well worth seeking out. This year they truly (in my opinion) outdid themselves so I wasn't surprised when they received "Best in Show for Plant Societies."

I took a lot of photos that I'll plan to show at one of our meetings. However in the meantime their website has posted some with comments here:

[www.dvcnargs.org/flowershow.html](http://www.dvcnargs.org/flowershow.html).

It also has their plant list with over 80 species and cultivars. I spoke briefly with the member who was tending the exhibit. He said a retired architect designed the exhibit and they were really scrambling to get it built and planted up to the last minute. I can only imagine the work.



## Thanks to 'seed pickers'

From BZ Marranta, treasurer:

A special thanks go out to all the members who helped with the Round 2 Seed Exchange this year. We filled 249 orders in 11 days. Thirty one people invested approximately 222 hours in the process. As I write this, I'm still waiting for any orders that were mailed from overseas for the final count. But so far we've picked 16,483 packets and received orders for \$4,098. Some of the top workers were Susanne with 26 hours, Marcia with 17, Rosemarie 11, Karen Hansen 8, David Mitchell and Bill Plummer with 6 each and the rest with 5 or less. After will fill the final orders, we'll then spread the rest of the seeds over 33 chapters and pack up the supplies to ship back to various places.

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## Garden Conservancy Open Days

This year's Garden Conservancy Open Days for Tompkins County will feature:

- May 8: Hitch Lyman's Garden
- June 12: Der Rosenmeister, Lion Garden, Myers Garden
- July 31: Lipari Garden, Bassuk/Trowbridge Gardens, Nancy Ridenour

For more information, visit: [gardenconservancy.org/opendays/](http://gardenconservancy.org/opendays/)

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## Other events

- July 11-14: **NARGS Annual Meeting**, Salida, Colo. More info: [www.rmcnargs.org](http://www.rmcnargs.org)  
Carol Eichler and Donna Kraft have registered and are getting psyched to go on some serious/fun alpine hikes. Are others from the Chapter going too? If so, maybe we could share a car rental from Denver to Salida. Contact Carol at [ceichler@twcny.rr.com](mailto:ceichler@twcny.rr.com).
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## People

- Chair/trips: Billie Jean Isbell, [bj1@cornell.edu](mailto:bj1@cornell.edu), 607-539-6484
  - Vice chair/program: Donna Kraft, [sanibel.tully@gmail.com](mailto:sanibel.tully@gmail.com), 315 696-8626
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  - Treasurer/Plant sales: BZ Marranta, [mmm10@cornell.edu](mailto:mmm10@cornell.edu)
  - Plant sales: David Mitchell, [dwm23@cornell.edu](mailto:dwm23@cornell.edu), 607-342-3660
  - Plant of the Month: John Gilrein, [basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu](mailto:basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu), 315-492-0844
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