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March 2011

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March 19 Program: Native, low-maintenance meadow

Our March 19 program will feature local favorite Dan Segal from The Plantsmen Nursery (www.plantsmen.com), who will speak about incorporating native plants into a low-maintenance meadow. Whether you want to cut down on mowing, create a transition from cultivated to uncultivated spaces, enhance habitat for desirable wildlife, or simply increase plant diversity in existing open spaces, a planned meadow garden may be the solution. Dan will guide us through the many native plant options to accomplish this.

Dan has 20 years of ecological restoration, landscape and nursery experience working with native plants from almost every habitat in a wide range of applications from industrial-scale erosion control to small-scale residential gardening. He'll also be speaking at the other local events in March (see Other events below), but this is his only talk on this subject.



To complement Dan's talk, our Plant of the Month will feature meadow plants (see below). And there's a special plant gift planned for members. We'll meet in 404 Plant Science Building on the Cornell University campus. Brown bag lunch at noon. Program begins at 1:00 p.m.

Volunteers needed for round two seed exchange

Once again, our chapter will be filling orders for the second round of the NARGS seed exchange in March. It's a chance to get together and talk about plants and gardens, and as a bonus, volunteers get 'donor status' in next year's exchange. So, if you would be willing to come select seeds and stuff envelopes please let BZ Marranca know your preferred work times: mmm10@cornell.edu. See directions and details farther down in this newsletter.

2011 program plans

Our **tentative** program line up for 2011. Details in future newsletters or acnargs.blogspot.com:

- March 19: Dan Segal, The Plantsmen Nursery – **Meadow gardens**. 404 Plant Science Building, Cornell. Plant of the Month will be meadow plants from The Plantsmen.
- April 16: Carol Eichler – **The Tame and Wild Alpine Flora of Colorado**. Cornell Cooperative Extension, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca. Plant of the Month will be plants growable in the East from Laporte Avenue Nursery, Fort Collins, Colorado.
- May 14: **Ithaca Plant Sale**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., location to be determined (likely NYS Armory off Rt. 13 N at Hanshaw Rd.)
- June 18-20 – Working trip to **White Pine Camp**. See details below.
- July 10 – **Member garden tour**, Syracuse area.
- August (date to be announced) – **Member plant sale** and picnic.
- September (tentative, date to be announced) – Working trip to **White Pine Camp**.
- **Fall programs** to be announced: September 17, October 15, November 12 (note November meeting is on the second Saturday).
- Other possibilities include propagation and trough-building workshops. Details coming.

March Plant of the Month: Meadow plants

From John Gilrein, Program/Plant of the Month coordinator.

The theme for the March 2011 plant of the month is meadow plants, to go along with the talk by Dan Segal. I took a few liberties with the “plant” of the month for March. We’ll have 2 plants that are not meadow plants, one fern and one rock garden plant. All the others will be perennial meadow plants. All are native to the Northeast and/or Midwest, except Ephedra, which has species native to Asia or the Western U.S. Selection may vary slightly, depending on availability.

Key:

Light needs – FS = full sun, PS= part sun, PSh = part shade, Sh= shade

Hardiness- lower zone limit listed. Z5= zone 5, Z4 = zone 4, Z3= zone 3.

- *Dryopteris marginalis*, leather wood fern. An easy adaptable evergreen fern for moist woodland conditions. PSh to Sh, 1.5 to 2 feet high, Z3.
- *Ephedra minuta*, joint fir/Mormon tea. A leafless evergreen shrub for scree/rock garden conditions. FS, 4 to 6 inches high, Z5.
- *Sporobolus heterolepis*, prairie dropseed. A tough grass for borders or meadows. FS to PS, 1 to 3 feet high, Z3.
- *Poa alsodes*, grove bluegrass. A perennial grass. FS to PS.
- *Asclepias incarnata*, swamp milkweed. A perennial for moist to wet soil, tolerant of normal garden conditions. PSh to FS, 2 to 4 feet high, Z3.
- *Baptisia australis*, false indigo. A long lived perennial for soil with a pH below 6.5 FS, 2 to 3 feet, Z4.
- *Eryngium yuccafolium*, rattlesnake master. A prairie perennial with light green flowers for moist to dry soil. FS, 3 to 4 feet high, Z4.

- *Echinace paradoxica*, Ozark coneflower. A yellow coneflower (that's the paradox), slow growing in first year. FS to PS, 2.5 to 3 feet high, Z4.
- *Echinacea tenesseeensis*, Tennessee coneflower. Petals are not reflexed like *E. purpurea*. FS to PS, 1/5 to 2 feet high, Z4 or 5.
- *Monarda bradburyana*, Eastern bee balm. FS to PS, 1/5 to 2 feet high, Z4.
- *Solidago nemoralis*, gray goldenrod. A clump forming goldenrod, for moist to dry soil. FS to PS, 6 inches to 3 feet, Z3.
- *Zizia aurea*, golden alexanders. A perennial for moist to wet conditions. FS to PS, 1 to 3 feet high, Z4.

Working trip to White Pine Camp coming in June

From Carol Eichler.

Our Chapter is planning its fourth working trip to the Heutte Rock Garden at White Pine Camp near Saranac Lake on Saturday through Monday morning, June 18-20. (Unfortunately this overlaps with the NARGS national conference in New Hampshire, but it was the only time the Camp has a cabin available for our use.)

Our wonderful friends at WPC have offered us the use of Kirkwood Cottage for the 2 nights, a small cottage that sleeps 4 people (go to www.whitepinecamp.com for more information about the Camp). We will plan to work about 4 hours doing general clean-up, weeding, and planting, with the rest of the time spent enjoying the Camp and surroundings.



Some of the flowering fruits of our labor. The Japanese maple has survived two winters!

Plant donations will be appreciated! Since space is limited, priority will be given to Chapter members who have not previously made this trip, unless you can make other lodging arrangements. Contact Carol Eichler (ceichler@twcny.rr.com) to reserve your space. Note, in addition we are considering a fall trip this year to plant bulbs. That will give more members the opportunity to join us on this project.

The 2011 surplus seed exchange has begun!

From BZ Marranta mmm10@cornell.edu:

We'll use the same set up as last year. There are orders ready to pick on the shelving in the basement of Ken Post. Please feel free to come and go as you please. The building is open from around 8 to around 5 daily. I'll be there in the afternoons until around 6 pm. If you think you'll be later than that please let me know. [Need directions to Ken Post?](#) If you enlarge on the url you would go in the double doors where the H is. Walk to the center of the building. To

your left should be the corridor that runs down between the greenhouses. To your right will be a set of stairs going down. Turn right at the bottom of the stairs and walk all the way to the end of the hall. The seeds will be on the left on a couple of tables.

Other events

- **Ithaca's 3rd Annual Designing With Native Plants Conference** - March 4-5, La Tourelle Resort & Spa, Ithaca, N.Y. [More info](#).
 - **Winter Travel Slide Show** - March 12, 2:00 p.m. with Dan Segal, The Plantsmen Nursery. Tompkins County Cooperative Extension, 615 Willow Ave. Ithaca. Dan will highlight some of the most beautiful native species that make this area a travel destination.
 - **Garden Conservancy Open Days** - Tompkins County: April 2, June 11. Onondaga County: July 31, September 18. More info coming soon at: <http://gardenconservancy.org/opendays>
 - **American Primrose Society 2011 National Show** - Tower Hill Botanic Garden, Boylston, MA April 29-May 1. More info: www.americanprimrosesociety.org
 - **Open Garden at Bill and Jane Plummers**, May 21, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 10 Fox Lane East Gang Mills (Painted Post). Details coming in May newsletter.
 - **NARGS 2011 Annual Meeting: Discovering the Flora of New England** - June 17-19, Colby-Sawyer College, New London, N.H. Hosted by The Fells Chapter-NARGS with post conference trip options June 20. More info: fellschapter.wordpress.com/about/
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News from National

NARGS publications - Part of restructuring of the NARGS former Book Service called for volunteer sales of NARGS publications. This service is now available: Dave Collura (WI) jdsongraham@aol.com is handling orders for NARGS published or co-published books and Bobby Ward (NC) nargs@nc.rr.com for past issues of the Quarterly. Find info at www.nargs.org under "Sales, Books".

Time to renew

If you haven't done so already, it's time to renew your membership for 2011. You can do so at the next meeting, or download a membership form at our website: www.acnargs.org/join.pdf

Lily Propagation

This handout from a workshop led by Lorette Cheswick appeared in Growing Interests, the Watnong NARGS Chapter newsletter, January-February 2011.

Propagation is a powerful mechanism for adding plants to our gardens. Many plants that are rock garden worthy are expensive or not readily available except in seed or other propagation forms. Any way we can develop propagation skills is a way we improve our opportunities for improving or expanding our plant collections.

Lilies are bulbs that are composed of multiple scales. These scales have potential cells that can produce new bulblets. Scale propagation can be done at any time of year. Lilies selected should have no signs of disease.

1. Moisten a growing medium: vermiculite, perlite, or peat moss.
2. Place a small amount of medium in a zip lock bag with the name of the plant-to-be-propagated and the date.
3. Rinse the bulb in water.
4. Remove scales from the bulb's basal plate. (Scales spiral around basal plate, which is the lily's stalk.)
5. Place closed ziplock bag in a welllit, warm area. Sixty to 70 degrees is a good temperature range.
6. Keep checking scale for growth of bulblets at the base of the scale. This should take at least 2 weeks.
7. When bulblets are large enough, they can be potted up individually. (You can cut the scale in two if two bulblets have developed).
8. Once the bulblet is potted up, put it in a cooler environment, such as a refrigerator. This needs to be 6 weeks for Asiatic lilies. Orientals and other hybrids need 12-14 weeks. This treatment will break the dormancy of the bulbs. Leaves will sprout.
9. The bulbs can be planted outside when the soil temperature is warm enough, approximately 60 degrees.
10. Outside, plant the new bulbs as deeply as possible, in well-drained soil approximately 8-12 inches. There is minimal need for fertilizer.

People

- Chair: Billie Jean Isbell, bjj1@cornell.edu, 607-539-6484
- Vice chair/program: Open
- Secretary: Harold Peachey, hpeachey@gmail.com,
- Treasurer/plant sales/trips: BZ Marranca, mmm10@cornell.edu
- Plant sales: David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu, 607-342-3660
- Plant of the Month/program: John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu, 315-492-0844
- Membership/trips: Susanne Lipari sel3@cornell.edu 607-387-9308
- New member hospitality: Judy Fogel jfogel@twcny.rr.com 607-275-3332
- Newsletter editor/Webmaster: Craig Cramer, cdcramer@gmail.com

Green Dragon Tales

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