



ADIRONDACK  
CHAPTER

*North American Rock Garden Society*

# Green Dragon Tales

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July-August 2015

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## **AUGUST 15: ANNUAL MEMBER PLANT SALE & DISH-TO-PASS PICNIC AT UPPER BUTTERMILK STATE PARK**

*David Mitchell and BZ Marrantca*

We hope you've been enjoying the summer. Please think about potting up plants now for the sale in August.

Plans are set for this year's members plant sale to be held at Upper Buttermilk State Park inside and outside the picnic pavilion (directions at the end of this article). Note this is a members-only sale. To fully participate in the sale, we invite and welcome non-members to join (or renew) at the meeting. Membership for 2015 is still only \$10 for individuals (or \$15 per household). It's still a great value since we have half of our program year ahead of us.

The schedule is as follows:

10:00 a.m. Arrive, get your plant sale number and help with sale set-up.

11:00 a.m. Plant sale begins; early arrivals get first pick

12:00 noon Lunch

(Optional, after lunch): Walk the beautiful gorge trail a little or a lot

As in past years, it pays to arrive early and sign in. There's always a broad selection of plants at great prices. You may even see some grown-out seedlings from our spring seedling exchange. For the treasured and special plants – and we should have some real gems, we will have a silent auction table. Remember this is one of only two fundraisers for the Chapter and these funds are critical to bring in informed, quality program speakers.

Not that after 10 a.m. the state park charges a vehicle use fee of \$7, unless you hold a 2015 season park pass.

Directions: For those unfamiliar with the upper entrance to Buttermilk State Park the simplest way to get to there is via Route 96B also known as Danby Road that goes by Ithaca College. Turn

at W. King Road where there is also a traffic light and road signage to the Park. Stay on King Road to the park entrance – again marked by a sign – on the left. The picnic shelter where we will meet is just beyond the immediate parking area. There will be temporary parking near the shelter for unloading. Here's the link to a [Park map](http://www.nysparks.com/parks/attachments/ButtermilkFallsParkMap.pdf) - <http://www.nysparks.com/parks/attachments/ButtermilkFallsParkMap.pdf>) or use this Mapquest link (<http://www.mapquest.com/us/new-york/business-ithaca/buttermilk-falls-state-park-1874088>) to get specific directions from your starting point.

## FROM THE CHAIR

*John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair*

Our El Nino summer has been interesting. More rain than I would like for playing outside, but then I have hardly had to water any plants in the ground, other than watering plants right after they were planted. So this summer has been good for growing. A few of my rock garden plants looked a little unhappy when we were having daily rain, but now everything seems to be doing better, maybe due to a few dry days between the rains.

Lately I've been thinking a lot about two somewhat related topics: trees and planning ahead. My home landscape has changed a lot the last 2 years, due to the trees. A very large (at least 40 feet high and trunk diameter of 2 to 3 feet), and recently healthy (as of a few years ago) *Acer saccharum* (sugar maple) next to the road died. Probably the road salt killed it. Onondaga County is a heavy salt user, and does not use any sand. This was the last of a line of roadside maples that held out years after its brethren. I'm planning to replace it with an oak (sugar maples don't cope well with road salt, oaks generally tolerate it pretty well) and would have liked to replace it even before it got cut down, but I don't think it would be safe for its replacement. Sad to see it go, but the roadside plantings get a lot more sun. The plan (at least for now) is that a *Quercus alba* (white oak) is going to replace it.

The *Acer saccharum* due south of the house had to get cut, as it was shading the solar panels, and not cutting it would kill the subsidy. This tree was not as large, and I was not as sad that it had to go. I'm planning a small tree with 2 or 3 season interest: *Cercis canadensis* (redbud) 'Forest Pansy' with purple leaves, *Acer japonicum* or *shirasawanum* (Japanese maple/full moon maple), or *Stewartia pseudocamellia* (Japanese stewartia)? The tree needs to be tall enough to hang a bird feeder on, and not so tall as to shade the solar panels. Again, I would have preferred the replacement before the maple came down, but my tree cutting skills are adequate for safety and economy, not superlative at dropping the tree on a dime. The plan right now: just ideas right.

Lest I appear like a non-tree lover, I'm not like my neighbor who called hedgerow trees "brush", and I have planted a lot of trees. With all the gardens, I'm conflicted about leaving them all there, or taking some out to provide enough sun. I do sometimes practice planning ahead with tree planting, and a *Quercus bicolor* (swamp white oak) is happily growing under a large 3-trunk *Salix alba* (white willow) that's destined for the chopping block. The willow has nice corrugated bark and a nice presence due to its large size, but it has very greedy roots and is always dropping branches. Dropping the willow might require professional arborist services, but it has to go sooner or later.

We have a large *Liriodendron tulipifera* (tulip poplar, really a Magnolia cousin and not a poplar) planted around 25 years ago on the west side of our house. It's fast growing, and a nice tree [a;sp native], which provides late afternoon shade for the house. The feeder roots are pretty shallow, and this is not the sturdiest tree. A large bark wound (not sure of the cause) looks like it will result in damage to the core of the tree. I'm grateful for the tree now, but it's getting pretty

big and may result in a hazard to the house. I planted a *Quercus alba* whip close to the tree this spring to be its replacement (planned ahead but not far enough, as the oak is a slow grower).

Tree planting is challenging when the garden plan is continuously evolving, especially if one is planting a large tree. You want to think about where the tree will cast shade, and where it might fall if damaged, in addition to the soil/site/moisture being suitable for the tree planned. I don't want too much shade on my sunny (or mostly sunny) borders. On the other hand, I enjoy working in the shady gardens when it's really hot out and need my gardening fix. So think about your trees, plant more if you can. There are a lot of nice small trees with 2- or 3-season interest, and these have less risk for building damage, and financial risk, as well as being easier to manage on your own or with family labor. Plan(t) ahead if you can.

Hope to see you at the picnic. If you are not an Adirondack Chapter member yet, you can attend the picnic, become a member, and then join in the member plant sale we're having. There are bound to be some interesting plants, considering some will be the grown up seedlings from the NARGS seed exchange.

John

## MAY PLANT SALE REPORT

*David Mitchell and BZ Marranca*

We reached a grand total of \$1,391.00 from our plant sale! Thank you to all who helped make our plant sale a success. Many hours were invested in potting plants, caring for them, delivering plants, organizing the sale, marking prices, building and planting the trough, advising customers, and ringing up sales. We had a nice selection and as usual the special plants sold out quickly.

We signed up five new individual members. We also had eight individual renewals. Seventeen people signed up to receive email notifications of meetings. Eight people took ACNARGS membership forms and are thinking about joining.

Thank you to Bill and Mary for bringing the planted trough garden and coordinating a member recruitment effort. The trough got a lot of attention and sparked conversations about construction and growing alpenes.

## 2015 MEMBERSHIP: WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Welcome 5 new members to our Chapter who joined at the May plant sale: Mary Squyres, Therese O'Connor, Francine Urda, GeorgiAnne Carney, and the Joanne Button Family. Another new member joined at our garden tour. Welcome Susan Mann. We hope to see you at our August meeting, one of our most anticipated meetings of the year and certainly the most delicious!

It's not too late to join our Chapter at the August meeting to enjoy the benefits of membership. Plus, there's still three excellent speaker programs lined up for the fall – that's half of our speaker program year. What a deal for only \$10 for an individual, \$15 for a household membership! Memberships run the calendar year.

## JUNE 20: A FABULOUS SUMMER OUTING!

*Carol Eichler (one who attended)*

Considering the wet summer, our large group of 20 or so were fortunate to have scored a pleasant day (not too hot with the threat of rain holding off) for visiting four Binghamton gardens.

Karen Anderson's country garden was first on the itinerary. Especially memorable for me was her rustic garden structures and the meadow walk (a birder's delight).



Next, we were impressed by Mary Matway's thriving vegetable garden (creative re-purposing of a swimming pool) and her Calluna and Erica (heath and heather) collection, which unfortunately weren't blooming, although many other plants were putting forth a riot of color.



Lilium Dalhansonii

After a lunch break we were ready to visit the latest iteration of Lee Nelson's ever evolving garden on a deep but narrow city lot, oohing and aahing over many specimen plants including this Lilium that was blooming in abundance throughout various spots.



Lastly, we immersed ourselves in Camilla MacLeod's gardens, wandering meandering paths and discovering tucked away gems. Did you find the dragon garden? Thank you to our hosts and a special thanks to Lee Nelson for setting up the itinerary.

More photos are posted on our [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/acnargs) (<https://www.facebook.com/acnargs>), Adirondack Chapter, Ithaca NY of the North American Rock Garden Society.

## BILL PLUMMER ON NATIVE PLANTS

Member Bill Plummer, along with a Dundee nursery, is featured in a video posted by Red Tail Ridge, a new winery in Penn Yan. For those of you who didn't have the opportunity to visit Bill's gardens at his open house, visit this link for your chance to get a glimpse of them:

[Bill Plummer video](http://www.redtailridgewinery.com/native-plants-and-landscaping/) (<http://www.redtailridgewinery.com/native-plants-and-landscaping/>).

## NEWS FROM NATIONAL NARGS: FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Excerpted from "From the President" by Matt Matthus, The Rock Garden Quarterly, Spring 2015, volume 73 #2*

Why should I pay a membership fee to NARGS? What do I receive for it?

And, yes, I get it: your local chapter offers camaraderie, a place where you can chat with like-minded people, meet friends, share plants, talk about all that we find curious and interesting in the plant world, and listen to a knowledgeable speaker passionately describe adventures in the Himalaya. It's like a university and social club mixed up into one – plus coffee and pastry.

But what is added from the national level? For the national dues, you receive a rather beautiful quarterly journal and the ability to participate in a world-class seed exchange. You may also decide to attend a national meeting; but is that about it?

Well, consider the national programs that benefit chapters directly, like the Speakers Tours, which brings world-class speakers to all chapters; or the many packets of free seeds that all chapters receive at the end of each Seed Exchange. (*Not mentioned in the article was the wonderful resources offered through the NARGS website*)

[If you are a member of NARGS,] ...speak with non-NARGS members so that they understand the value that NARGS national can bring to the chapter...and to their lives as gardeners.

What do you feel will make NARGS the type of organization to which all local members will feel it worthwhile to join? What can NARGS do to be more engaging to chapter members?

*For NARGS members and non-members alike, these questions are for YOU. Matt Matthus would welcome your ideas. Contact him at [mmattus@charter.net](mailto:mmattus@charter.net)*

## LOOKING FOR A GOOD GARDENING READ?

*Bobby Ward, NARGS Recording Secretary*

There are two recently posted Books-of-the-Month on the NARGS web site—one in which the author learns to garden while battling breast cancer and the other a history of gardening through tools. You can find these reviews on the Web site under "Plants." Or click here: [NARGS Book-of-the-Month](https://www.nargs.org/book-of-the-month) (<https://www.nargs.org/book-of-the-month>)

Are you interested writing a book review for the NARGS Book-of-the-Month website link? Steve Whitesell, Coordinator of NARGS Book-of-the-Month, [elysium214@aol.com](mailto:elysium214@aol.com) can provide a list of possible reading choices, or you can suggest book choices for approval. The book will be sent to you at no charge and you're free to keep it after submitting a 300-500 word review. Book-of-the-Month reviews can be found on the website under "Plants." You don't need to log in to read them.

And don't forget, books purchased through the NARGS Web site's brown Amazon banner logo benefit NARGS, as NARGS receives a percent of the sales.

## UPCOMING ACNARGS PROGRAMS

*Mark your calendars! Unless otherwise specified, all local events start with a brown bag lunch at noon with the program following at 1 pm, and take place at the Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (see map on the last page).*

August 15: Annual Picnic and Members' Only Plant Sale, at the Picnic Shelter at Upper Buttermilk Falls State Park, Ithaca (see lead article this issue for details)

September 19: Krissy Boys & Rosemarie Parker: "All about Seeds: collecting, cleaning, treatment/stratification, storing, & more." Plant-of-the-Month sale to current members. Note location is Ken Post Lab Classroom.

October 17: John Gilrein : "Alpine & Subalpine Plants of Wyoming." Plant-of-the-Month sale to current members. Note location is Ken Post Lab Classroom.

November 14: Sharee Solow, horticulturist, landscape designer and garden writer from Philadelphia: "From Front Yard to Rock Garden: Step by Step." Dish-to-pass luncheon at noon followed by a brief annual meeting and speaker presentation. Note 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday meeting date.

### Looking ahead for 2016:

February 20: Members Share. PLEASE CONSIDER SHARING YOUR FAVORITE PHOTOS & EXPERIENCES. Plan now as you take photos of your gardens, specimen flowers, or travel highlights of gardens or alpine/subalpine environments (including mountains, stones, and plants) that you visit.

March 19: Elizabeth Lawson: "Primroses"

April 16: Elisabeth Zander, NARGS Recording Secretary and Officer, Berkshire Chapter. Topic to be announced

As we learn more details of these meetings they will be included in future newsletters, our blog, [acnargs.blogspot.com](http://acnargs.blogspot.com), and our Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/acnargs>.

## SELECT CALENDAR OF GARDEN EVENTS

*To have a garden event in your area listed send all pertinent information to Carol Eichler at [carolithaca@gmail.com](mailto:carolithaca@gmail.com)*

August 14-16: Northeast Regional American Conifer Society Meeting, Wayne, PA; [ACS Northeast Regional Meeting](#)

Sept. 10-12: National American Conifer Society Meeting, Sonoma County CA. [Conifer Society 2015 National Meeting](#)

Sept. 12: Gathering of Gardener, Rochester, NY. [Gatheringofgardeners.com](http://Gatheringofgardeners.com)

October 13: Carol Eichler, Making of the Wurster Memorial Garden. Liberty Hyde Bailey Garden Club, Ken Post Lab Classroom, Cornell University, Ithaca, 6:30 – 8:00 pm

## WAYS YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO OUR CHAPTER

*Carol Eichler*

Would you consider getting more involved with ACNARGS? Contact John Gilrein, Chapter Chair. Here are some ways to contribute:

- host a speaker by providing overnight accommodations
- join outside speakers for dinner and conversation
- suggest topics and/or speakers for program meetings
- bring refreshments to our meetings
- offer to be a trip/tour coordinator
- write a newsletter article or send in garden photos
- prepare a slideshow or presentation for Members Share
- donate plants for our plant sales
- submit posts to our Facebook page

## ABOUT US – ACNARGS

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, overnight garden trips, hands-on workshops, and 3 plant sales a year. 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 \$10 a year based on the calendar year. Membership includes these benefits: newsletter sent to you electronically (or option by mail for an extra fee), opportunity to travel on our planned overnight garden trips, 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 \$30 a year. Benefits include a seed exchange, a quarterly publication, and an on-line web site featuring an archive of past publications, a chat forum and a horticultural encyclopedia. NARGS national also conducts winter study weekends and holds its Annual Meeting in interesting places where attendees have the opportunity to hear and visit with outstanding plants people from around the world who present talks and workshops.

## RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE/2014 BOARD MEMBERS

*If you want to volunteer, we'd love to hear from you!*

Chair: John Gilrein, [basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu](mailto:basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu)  
 Program: Nari Mistry, [nbm2@cornell.edu](mailto:nbm2@cornell.edu)  
 Program Committee Members: Could this be you?  
 Secretary: Mary Stauble, [mes2@cornell.edu](mailto:mes2@cornell.edu)  
 Treasurer: BZ Marranca, [mmm10@cornell.edu](mailto:mmm10@cornell.edu)  
 Plant Sales Chair: David Mitchell, [dwm23@cornell.edu](mailto:dwm23@cornell.edu)  
 Plant Sales Committee Members: Michael Loos, BZ Marranca, Carol Eichler  
 Plant of the Month: Colette Colby De Haan, [4kotobuki@gmail.com](mailto:4kotobuki@gmail.com) and Vashti De Haan, [vadkam@yahoo.com](mailto:vadkam@yahoo.com)  
 Membership: Mary Stauble, [mes2@cornell.edu](mailto:mes2@cornell.edu)  
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### GREEN DRAGON TALES

Published eight times a year (Feb., March, April, May/June, July/Aug., Sept., Oct. Nov./Dec.). Submit articles by the fourth Friday of the month preceding publication to Carol Eichler, [carolithaca@gmail.com](mailto:carolithaca@gmail.com). Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be in September, 2015.

Now for the Photo-of-the-Month:  
*Veratrum virginianum*, Bunch Flower



This plant had me baffled. I acquired it as a seedling and it's been living in my nursery bed for 3 years with a plastic label with the writing long gone. In the spring it sure looked like a daylily and I couldn't figure why I would have given it such a favored spot. Daylilies are just deer fodder for me. Tempted as I was to pull it, I gave myself a little more credit. Thanks to Harold Peachey, for identifying it (and also donating the seedling).

Look at this plant now! In flower today (July 14) and about 4 feet tall it's lovely and unusual, no? This plant is native to New York and throughout much of the area east of the Rockies where it prefers to grow in moist woods, seepages, and damp clearings though it doesn't seem particular to soil type. Like *Eucomis* for example, the sepals appear to be persistent, thus extending the interest in the garden. Though this one is planted close to my house, the upper leaves have been eaten. Growers beware!

