



ADIRONDACK
CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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April 2019

April 13: Virginia Hildebrandt, Flora of Iceland

Terry Humphries, Program Coordinator

Virginia Hildebrandt is a member of the Ontario Rock Garden and Hardy Plant Society. She lives southwest of Toronto, in Puslinch, Ontario where she has extensive gardens and a large greenhouse.

She says, "I have been a life-long gardener, perhaps because I had an English Granny. She never finished school but knew the genus and species of everything in her garden. I went back to school with children, 4 and 2, and finished a 4 year B.Sc. in Biochemistry in 7 years. They were my first priority. I worked 4 years in Research and then went back to do a M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Plant Physiology. I loved cloning plants but worked in research for 10 years at Stokes Seeds before I set up my own Propagation company. I cloned about 50,000 to 60,000 plants per year in my own laboratory for about 12 years. I have retired and concentrate on gardening, traveling and family."

Virginia has taught Plant Biochemistry, Plant Physiology and Evolutionary Botany. She still propagates plants and is active in the ORGHPS chapter where she has also presented on Micropropagation and Plants of the Arctic.



For our April program, Virginia will share photos and knowledge about the unique plants she discovered on a trip to Iceland as well as her experiences traveling there.

Our meeting will be held in the Whetzel Room, Room 404, at 236 Tower Road, Cornell University. Map at the end of this newsletter. Refreshments are welcomed.

Annual Seedling Exchange

Carol Eichler, Plant Sales Coordinator

Our annual tradition of exchanging seedlings continues this year at the April 13 meeting. If you have any unwanted seedlings sprouting up in your garden, we encourage you to pot them up and bring them in to share. Have extra seeds? They are welcome too. Winter has been reluctant to leave us so let's hope between now and then that we get some spring-like days for our plants to wake up.

Expect seedlings, if sown this winter, to be quite small and fragile (if they've even germinated yet). We suggest if you can, to bring them potted up or alternatively, we will provide paper towels in addition to plastic bags to transport them home. We are also encouraging everyone to bring in extra seeds if you have them. Labels, small pots, and soil mix will also be provided.

Seedlings are free for members with a nominal charge for non-members (bring quarters or better yet join the Chapter!). Larger potted divisions will also be accepted and priced for sale or held for the May plant sale. There may even be a bidding table if we get something special!

We are seeing more and more first season rock garden seedlings being offered by our members at the August plant sale, when the plants have had a chance to become bigger and more established. Fewer of us are starting the seed indoors in winter under lights or in a greenhouse (who has a greenhouse? Ah, how we miss Harold). Perhaps in future years we'll eliminate the spring seedling exchange altogether.

The Exchange is here this year but this may possibly be our last. We'd love your thoughts on whether you think we should continue this "tradition." Contact Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com your new Plant Sale Coordinator.

PS. It's not too soon to be thinking about our May plant sale and potting up your divisions. Please use only soilless potting mix and remember to label every pot. We will bring labels for you to take. Elsewhere in this newsletter you should read about extra precautions you should take to help combat the spread of those nasty jumping worms that have invaded this area. (See the article in this newsletter and also in ACNARGS' Green Dragon January/February 2018 issue and these links: Video - [Youtube on Jumping Worms](#) and fact sheet [Jumping Worms Fact Sheet](#))

From the Chair

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair. Photos by John Gilrein

If you have not been to one of this year's meetings, please be advised that the April meeting will be on Saturday April 13 (a week early) and not on the 3rd Saturday of the month. The October meeting is also changed from the 3rd Saturday to Sunday October 6. The speaker for the April meeting, Virginia Hildebrandt, of Ontario, Canada is an accomplished gardener, member of the Ontario Rock Garden and Hardy Plant Society, and had a small nursery based out of her home. The topic of her talk will be plants of Iceland, and if you're thinking Iceland lives up to its name, it's mostly (USDA) Zones 6 and 7, so the winters there do not get as cold as here!

Another reason to attend the April meeting is that we expect to share the spoils of the NARGS Seed Exchange. The Adirondack Chapter helped package seeds back in December, and part of the reward for our work is we will get a share of the seeds left after the SeedEx is completed this month. And you can take home some seeds! I don't know the germination requirement of most of the plants I'm trying to grow from seed, and I usually stratify all of them by planting demand leaving them outside in the cold. My understanding of *Draba* is that they generally germinate well without cold stratification, so I started seeds of 2 species inside. Both are sprouted and doing well! In case you aren't familiar with *Draba*, it's a genus of mostly yellow flowered small rock garden plants. Some of

the *Drabas* grow easily in a sunny rock garden or trough. I would like to bring some to the April seedling exchange, but they're tiny plants and I'm skeptical that they will be big enough to repot in 3 weeks. Soon they will need to move from the window to under the grow light.

Gardeners in general I believe appreciate our local wildlife, especially the birds and butterflies. Here we even like the snakes and spiders, and have not had any serious run ins with any of them. (I promise not to bring any to my friends in Cayuga Heights!) One of my conflicting goals here is gardening for wildlife. Probably the best things any of us can do for our local wildlife is to plant some native plants. What's a native plant? The strictest definition might be a plant native to your county, and the most hard core native plant enthusiast want to plant specifically the local genotype. I'm all for encouraging the local genotype, and encouraging that is a worthy goal.

Practically speaking though, there is not a native plant nursery in every county propagating those genotypes. So at home I'm planting plants native to the eastern USA along with some that are exotic. With changes in climate and weather, I'm thinking diversity could be helpful, and the native insects will still pollinate (or eat) a native plant even if it's genotype is Wisconsin or Pennsylvania. Anyone who has been to my garden would know that I'm not a hard nosed native plant person, and I have plenty of exotics, so I'm not preaching native only.



Cyclamen coum

Some of the worthy natives you can plant are oaks (*Quercus* sp.), black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), dogwoods (*Cornus florida* and *alternifolia*), spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), honeysuckle vines (*Lonicera serotina* and *periclymenum*), native asters and goldenrods (sticking to old genus epithets, *Asters nova-angliae*, *oblongifolius*, *Solidago speciosa*, *rugosa*, *ridiga*), coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea* and *pallida*), lobelias (*L. cardinalis* and *syphilitica*), milkweeds (*Asclepias incarnata*, *tuberosa*, *syriaca*, and *speciosa*), and violets, (*Viola papilionacea*, *canadensis*, *sororia*, and *striata*). Native plants provide nectar for bees, birds and butterflies, leaves for caterpillars (which feed the birds), fruit and seeds for birds and mammals. These books are sources of more information: *Bringing Nature Home*, Doug Tallamy; and *Native Plants of the Northeast*, Don Leopold. Some non-native (alien) plants support wildlife also including *Weigela florida* (hummingbirds), umbellifers like dill, queen Anne's lace, and fennel (many small bees), Japanese raisin tree (*Hovenia dulcis*). The really bad alien plants are the ones that invade our yards and wild areas, like Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), tartarian honeysuckle (*Lonicera tartarica*), and swallowwort (*Vincetoxicum nigrum*). I would recommend culling the invasive aliens from your space, and the sooner the better.



Witch hazel at Cornell (*Hamamelis x intermedia*) on March 16.

June 15 Garden Tour

Stay tuned for this year's garden tour, which is currently in the planning stages, and will tentatively happen on Saturday June 15. This date conveniently avoids both the Scotland trip in early June and the Ireland trip later in June that involve some of our members. Our planned tour area is the east side of Cayuga Lake, Lansing to Union Springs. (See Stark/Stauble Garden article in this newsletter.)

Membership

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

Please welcome new member Kerry Angie, an Auraca Herbarist, from Aurora. Also Persephone Doliner of Ithaca is renewing after a long absence; I believe her wonderful garden has been on the Fall Creek Garden Tour in the past.

If you have not renewed for 2019, you should do it now so you'll be eligible to purchase the plant-of-the-month and get free seedlings at the seedling exchange! The renewal form is at www.acnargs.org/join.pdf. Your membership status is reported to you in the email with the newsletter link. Contact Mary Stauble at mes2@cornell.edu if you have any questions.

To our Chapter members: A membership directory is published electronically every year in September and accompanies the September newsletter as an attachment. For those who receive a paper copy of the Green Dragon, you will be mailed a printed directory. To respect our members' privacy we do not post the directory online.

Plant of the Month

Marlene Kobre, POM Coordinator. Photos from High Country Gardens website.

As our POM for March we are offering three selections from High Country Gardens (HCG): *Salvia sylvestris* 'Little Night,' *Androsace sarmentosa* 'Chumbyi,' and *Penstemon barbatus* 'Elfin Pink.' This nursery, originally located in Santa Fe, NM, was owned by David Salmon, a well known plant explorer and hybridizer who was an early proponent of sustainable gardening, with an emphasis on drought tolerant and xeric plants. He continues to serve as their head horticulturalist. If you aren't familiar with this nursery, do check out their excellent website, which provides detailed information about each of their offerings, including an honest assessment of their suitability for gardens in the northeast.

Most of us have probably grown salvias and may even have become smitten by them as valuable additions to our perennial beds, and for good reason. *Salvia* is the largest genus of plants in the mint family (Lamiaceae), including over 1,000 species of perennials, shrubs, and annuals. The genus name derives from a Latin word meaning to heal or to save, reflecting the medicinal value of some of the species. And those whose leaves offer culinary value are often referred to as sages. But our focus is on their ornamental value arising from the lovely flower spikes arranged in racemes or panicles appearing at the end of clump-forming, usually square stems. The flowers range in color from blue to red, even yellow and white, and they have a complex structure with a tubular calyx that is divided into two parts. The upper three-toothed lip is larger than the lower two-toothed lip.

***Salvia sylvestris* 'Little Night'** is a dwarf form of the well-known 'May Night,' which makes it a good choice for either the front of the border or rock gardens. It is one of the High Country offerings billed as readily adaptable to the conditions in our



northeast gardens, tolerating heat and cold as well as a wide range of soils, even clay, provided it is well drained. It has performed well in our garden for three years, planted in a perennial bed with good, well-drained soil and a little more than a half day of sun.

Zone: 4

Height: 9-12”

Bloom Time: May-June, with re-bloom throughout summer if dead-headed

Foliage: Tightly mounded basal clump of blue-green leaves

Flowers: Deep indigo spikes at the top of strong, straight stems

Soil and Moisture: Tolerant of most soils, but it never hurts to add a little sand/gritty gravel for good drainage. Drought tolerant, so minimal watering once established

Other Virtues: Fragrant, resistant to deer and most insect pests; attracts butterflies



Androsace sarmentosa ‘Chumbyi’: Many members of this genus have a reputation for being “miffy,” to borrow Lori Chips’ term for finicky alpine. But this Himalayan native, aka “silky rock jasmine,” is an irresistible cutie, unusually accommodating for the genus, and well suited to the rock garden or even a trough. I grow it in both settings and they seem equally happy. Everything about it will make you smile. It produces furry, gray-green rosettes that scramble on red runners, much like strawberries, to form semi-evergreen patches. In early summer the rosettes develop clusters of fragrant pink flowers with yellow eyes on short stems. Quite the show-stopper.

Zone: 3 (hardiness beyond question!)

Height: 2-4” **Width:** 8-12”

Bloom Time: Early summer

Light: Sun or partial shade

Foliage: Furry gray-green rosettes spread on red runners. They

look wonderful spilling over the edges of a trough or scrambling over rocks.

Flowers: Clusters of fragrant pink flowers with yellow eyes on short stems put on a cheerful display.

Soil and Moisture: Performs best in sandy/gritty, well-drained soil. Drought tolerant once established. Avoid high humidity and soggy conditions.

Not, alas, deer resistant. But attractive to pollinators.

Penstemon barbatus ‘Elfin Pink’:—Penstemon is the largest genus of plants native to North America, with 250 species, many of which produce dazzling flowers in a bold range of colors. The genus name is derived from two Latin words meaning “five stamens,” which refers to the fifth (and infertile) stamen that distinguishes the flowers’ appearance. They are also notoriously difficult to grow in eastern gardens, preferring the hot, sunny, dry conditions of our Southwest. Fortunately, the species barbatus is more accommodating, and High Country Gardens singles out the ‘Elfin Pink’ barbatus cultivar as especially well suited to gardens in the Northeast since it tolerates richer soils and more moisture than its relatives.

Zone: 4

Bloom Time: May-June and even later in the summer

Light: Full Sun

Height: Conflicting reports: HCG says 24” (which may hold true in New Mexico), while the Missouri Botanic Garden says 9-12,” which is true of other barbatus cultivars.

Flowers: Long-lasting (up to four weeks!), bright pink, tubular two-lipped flowers with a conspicuous long and fuzzy protruding fifth stamen, giving rise to the common name of beardtongue and the species name barbatus,



meaning “bearded.” The flowers form terminal racemes, or spikes, at the top of the straight stems. Dead head after flowering to encourage late summer re-bloom.

Leaves: Clump forming. If the plants look disheveled after flowering, cut growth back to the basal clump for a neater appearance

Soil and Moisture: ●●Essential●● Though tolerant of more moisture, even barbatus requires a lean, fast-draining, sandy/gravelly soil. Avoid clay, high organic content, and bark mulch; instead mulch with gravel to protect against winter wet that can cause rot. This cultivar is drought tolerant, but water regularly for the first 8-10 weeks. Once established reduce the amount and frequency.

Other Virtues: Resists those pesky critters like deer and rabbits. Attracts beneficial pollinators like bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds.

Lecture Notes from March Meeting: Lee Ginenthal

Carol Eichler

5 Big Ideas that Bonsai Forest Plantings Teach Us

“Garden design is based on propositions: under, around, behind...” so spoke Lee Ginenthal at this April presentation on Forest Plantings in Bonsai. The purpose of design he maintains is “to engage the viewer.”

Ever the teacher (he recently retired after 42 years as a middle school instructor he gave us practical tips, what he called 5 Big Ideas, that we can apply to build garden landscapes big or small. His slides of Chinese and Japanese bonsai forest plantings served to illustrate how their application can be interpreted into something exquisite and expressive.

In fact, with a trough building workshop coming up soon, he gave us much to think about when we take the next step of planting our new creations. At the risk of getting this information wrong, here are my notes about those 5 big ideas to consider:

1. Asymmetry: work in odd numbers
2. Work with positive and negative spaces: don't fill every space; give the eye a place to rest
3. Create a sense of movement/direction: allow the eye to travel from a main focal point; a dynamic landscape engages the viewer, gives a sense of naturalism, of impermanence
4. Think scalene triangle: perhaps use 3 of the same plant with tallest as main focal point placed 1/3 from center; never 3 in a row; use to build illusion of depth
5. groupings: after establishing the base of 3 fill in especially around the largest element

While bonsai practitioners probably have proper words for creating their stunning designs, it comes down to thoughtfulness – observing nature and then attempting to imitate that look. As a rock gardener viewing an alpine region first-hand can literally be “eye-opening” because you are able to identify different niches that nature has built, the micro-climates they establish, and the plants and plants colonies that have found those niches.

During Q & A Lee made two important points that is worth noting too. Growing rock garden plants can be a bit counter-intuitive so these

Soils: We know sharp drainage is key. But here's the thing: you want to use particles of the same size throughout to maintain air spaces. Examples of mix he suggested are granite grit, turface (though it should be less than 25% of the mix or it will hold too much water), and pumice. if you use different sizes, then the smaller particles settle into those spaces.

Pruning top growth is the way to keep trees or shrubs small. Root pruning is not required at all if the tree is planted in the ground and required only occasionally in a pot (this could be every 1 – 2 years) to promote new root growth and prevent them becoming pot bound. To promote new feeder roots at the tips cut pie slices out of the root ball so that they grow inward, rather to the outside of the root ball.

Now, are you inspired to create a really knock-your-socks-off trough planting?

[We hope to offer a workshop perhaps as soon as this fall on planting your trough]

Trough Workshop, June 9

Bill Stark and Mary Stauble.

Mary and I are hosting a light weight trough workshop on Saturday June 8, from 10:00 am to 2 pm (or until done), at 232 Cedar Cove Rd in Lansing. We'll have tents set up with tables underneath so that the sun or a light rain won't bother us. Mary will have snacks and drinks and will run garden tours if desired. You're invited to bring a lunch – we have a picnic table and gas grill on the beach. A good sized trough should cost you about \$12 in materials. If you want to attend, e-mail us at mes2@cornell.edu.

These 10 to 20 lb troughs are based on synthetic stucco building technology. A foam box is reinforced with fiberglass mesh and two coats of surface bonding cement and is then covered with a very thin layer of hypertufa. We like foam core troughs because you can move them into your garage or greenhouse during the winter to protect your plants. A drawback of foam core troughs is that they have a flat surface – you can't deeply texture them like hypertufa troughs. On the other hand, we've never had a foam core trough break like fiber reinforced hypertufa troughs do.

You have to get your foam box ready **BEFORE** the workshop! Here's what you have to do:

- 1) Get or make a foam box. You can use fish boxes from a grocery store or Omaha Steak boxes from a yard sale. You can also make a box from expanded or extruded foam boards that you can buy at Lowes or Home Depot and glue together with foam adhesive. You could make a multi –level multi-compartment box.
- 2) Optional – reduce the height of your box with a knife or saw. A deep box is harder to move because of the weight of the soil, but is a better growing environment for some plants. It's much easier to apply the fiberglass mesh if the top edge is straight and not bumpy.
- 3) Optional – Fill in dents, holes and depressions in the foam box with Great Stuff Gaps & Cracks. Mist the box and Great stuff with water to speed its cure rate and give a better texture. Cut off the excess Great Stuff with a serrated bread knife or saw.
- 4) Use a hole saw or a narrow knife to cut a drainage hole(s) in the bottom of your foam box. I always use a single 2 ½" hole because I fit all my troughs with a drainage/aeration mat. We will have screen material to cover the hole(s) at the workshop.
- 5) Optional -If your box has thick walls (about 2"), you can get considerably more area for plants and rocks if you remove a triangle of foam from the top inside edge of your foam box so that the remaining top of your box is 3/4 inches thick; I cut out a triangle of foam about 2 1/2" deep. Even though this makes the top edge thin, it will become strong because of the glass mesh reinforcement. It will be much easier to wrap this area with the stiff glass mesh if you are careful to make a smooth and even cut as you remove the triangle. Mark lines where your knife or saw will enter and exit the foam.
- 6) Round your edges and smooth your cuts so that you can easily wrap them with the glass mesh. Use 50 grit sandpaper on a small sanding block to round off all edges to a minimum radius of ¼ inch. This includes the edges of the drain hole(s). Wear old clothes and a dust mask. Set up a card table in the middle of your lawn and have a vacuum nearby to clean off the box and yourself after sanding. At past workshops we've heavily sanded all exterior

and interior surfaces of the box so that the surface bonding cement would adhere to the foam. I don't think this is necessary anymore because we're spraying the foam with an adhesive that will act as a bonding agent. However, it won't hurt to dull any shiny foam surfaces with the sanding block.

7) Vacuum and brush off all of the dust you just created and place your box in a black garbage bag to keep it clean and out of the sun. You'll later use the bag to cure your trough. Your box is ready!

Stark/Stauble Garden, June 15 Garden Tour

Bill Stark and Mary Stauble. (Note: This garden will be part of the June 15 Garden Tour.)



We garden on the edge of a glacier cut canyon that's over 1000 ft deep. Over thousands of years, it has filled with sediments and a trillion gallons of water to form Cayuga Lake. At the center of our garden, glaciers fragmented the 15 ft thick Tully limestone formation, leaving dramatic cliffs, waterfalls and thousands of the fragments (weighing up to 90,000 lb) that we've used to build rock gardens, paths, walls and sculptures. We've exposed large areas of the 375 million year old Devonian era Tully limestone and found deep fissures (joints) that were formed 250 million years ago when Europe collided with the North American tectonic plate.

Artesian springs at the base of the Tully limestone form a brook and a series of ponds and waterfalls at the bottom of a ravine. We've added water rills in the ravine so that we can grow more moisture loving plants such as candelabra primroses, ferns and ligularias. There are multiple tufa and crevice gardens. The largest rock gardens are built on the Tully limestone above the ravine.

This garden has many level changes and stairs. It is still under construction and heavy equipment may be present during your visit. Beware of uneven ground, loose gravel, mud and deep fissures in the bedrock. Please wear sensible shoes or boots.

Unraveling a Mystery: Why Didn't My Seed Germinate?

By Carol Clark with input from Anna Costea and Anna Leggatt. Originally appearing in the Journal, March 2019 issue of Ontario Rock Garden and Hardy Plant Society. Edited by Carol Eichler. Reprinted by permission.

Your seed order has arrived and carefully planted by you...and now you are anxiously awaiting germination. But alas! Nothing; the pot just sits there. It's so disappointing when that happens. What might have gone wrong? Here are some possibilities.

1. HYDROPHILIC SEEDS WILL NOT SURVIVE DESSICATION

Some seeds have a high moisture content. If they lose much of this moisture, the embryo inside will die. Even when stored at optimal temperatures, they quickly lose viability. This group is classified as "recalcitrant" (Eric H. Roberts, 1973); Bill Cullina of the New England Wildflower Society introduced the term "hydrophilic" to describe them. "Recalcitrant" suggests "obstinate". In fact, hydrophilic seeds are anything but obstinate. Their embryos are raring to go.

In the past, recalcitrant seeds have been referred to as "ephemeral", but that term causes confusion and has fallen out of practice. ("Ephemeral" is more properly applied to those spring-flowering woodland plants which die back shortly after blooming and disappear until the following year. Some of them produce hydrophilic seeds; others do not).

Success in propagating hydrophilic seeds will depend on how they were stored. If they were stored in a plastic bag and kept in slightly moist vermiculite or peat moss at the same temperature that the seeds would experience out of doors through the seasons, that is to say warm during summer, coolish towards the fall and then slightly above freezing (~40° F) at the onset of winter. Freezing is a no-no. The seed will form ice crystals and damage cell membranes.



Seed moist-packed in vermiculite Photo: Gabriela Costea

2. SOME SEEDS HAVE A SHORT LIFESPAN

Many genera include species bearing seeds of a fairly limited viability. However, not all species in a given genus will necessarily demonstrate this characteristic. If planted after 6 months, they might germinate but are less likely to produce vigorous plants. Within this category, germination is affected by a wide range of factors like genetics, temperature and moisture conditions under which the seed ripened, the maturity of the seed at harvesting, and the altitude at which the mother plant grew. Alpines, with their brief growing season and cool conditions for seed maturation, bear seed that is of shorter viability than the identical species grown at lower elevations.

In addition, some species of Aconitum, Adonis, Delphinium, Epimedium, Erythronium and Trillium are partially hydrophilic, and will tolerate a degree of drying.

3. ALL SEED DETERIORATES OVER TIME, BUT ESPECIALLY IF IMPROPERLY STORED

After collection, seeds must be dried well and placed in a paper container. Mold can destroy seeds stored in plastic.

Glassine envelopes work well for storage. Once collected the seed should be stored in a cool dry place.

Your own stash of leftover seed presumably will be very dry if it is not sown within a year. The stash probably will not then be harmed by storage in a freezer. Old seed might be coaxed into germinating by using GA-3. Other approaches are soaking the seed in malt extract, beer or an enzyme-based product. (J.L. Hudson, Seedsman)

4. CHAFF IS NOT THE SAME AS SEED

Did you sow seed or chaff? The family Asteracea (commonly known as composite flowers) must be observed carefully. Many of the fruits are empty and only a few contain viable seeds. Achillea, Aster, Anaphalis, Solidago and Syneilesis are but a few examples of plants whose seed heads are composed primarily of chaff. So look your “seed” over carefully, especially if you received it from a seed exchange. Seed is the hard, plump material, which cannot be crushed between your fingers. Discard any soft, loose fibrous material.

From a recent Seed Exchange recipient: contained just one small, hard seed in this packet of *Eriogonum pinnatisectum*. Can you find it? The rest was chaff. Photo: Gabriela Costea



HYDROPHILIC SEEDS

Adonis vernalis
Amaryllis
Anemone nemorosa
Anemone quinquefolia
Anemonopsis
Anthurium
Asarum
Caltha palustris
Caulophyllum
[Castanea sativa \(Sweet Chestnut\)](#)
Claytonia
Clintonia
Clivia
Coptis trifolia
Dicentra
Dysosma
Eomecon chionantha
Hepatica
Hylomecon vernalis
Jeffersonia

Lindera benzoin
Medeola
Maianthemum
Nerine
Paris quadrifolia
Plagiorhegma
Podophyllum
Ranzania
Sanguinaria
Symplocarpus
Stylophorum
Trillium albidum, grandiflorum
Uvularia

SEEDS WITH SHORT VIABILITY

Acantholimon
Aconitum
Anemone
Astrantia
Callianthemum
Corydalis

Daphne
Delphinium
Epimedium
Eranthis
Erythronium
Fritillaria
Gentiana
Glaucidium
Helleborus
Primula
Pulsatilla
Ranunculus
Saxifraga
Soldanella
Tanacetum
Thalictrum
Tiarella
Trillium chloropetalum, erectum, kurabayashi, rivale
Viola
Zephyranthes

Beware the Jumping Crazy Worm

From Cornell Cooperative Extension

Some gardeners are still not acquainted with the invasive jumping crazy worm, but it is important that we take steps to avoid spreading it around when we share plants.

A little background first: none of the earthworms in central NYS are native. The native earthworms were obliterated by the latest glaciation. Since their dispersal from more southern, unglaciated areas was so slow, they didn't reappear in our area before the colonists brought in European earthworms. Most of us grew up thinking of

those earthworms as beneficial to our soils, and this may be true in some garden settings or when we are making topsoil from subsoil (as I had to do in my home landscape where the builder hired by the previous owners almost certainly sold off the topsoil).

However, in the native environment, especially in our climax vegetation which is forest, the flora and fauna evolved in the absence of earthworms for the last 10,000 or so years. Other organisms recycle the forest duff (fungi, etc.), but much slower, and leave a nice cushion on the forest floor to nourish and protect plant roots and small vertebrates such as salamanders. So even the European earthworm is not beneficial in forest.

Back to the jumping crazy worm: I won't spend a lot of time giving you the back story because you can google that. Here's a link from CCE: <http://cctompkins.org/resources/jumping-worm-fact-sheet>.

Many worm species can reproduce without mating, which means a single worm can start a whole population. Because jumping worms are more aggressive and their populations can grow faster than the common.

The practical aspect is that this worm reduces organic matter, whether it be forest leaf duff, or your mulch, to deep, dryish, large granules quite unlike the moist earthworm castings of European earthworms – and often within one growing season. The result in a garden situation is no mulch left – if you apply more, you are feeding more jumping worms! Your beloved plants may heave more readily among other drawbacks.

In the forest, wildflowers adapted to forest leaf duff are left high and dry. Native snails (that may provide calcium to native birds' eggshells) have nothing left to eat, salamanders nowhere to hide either. Seedlings dry out and die before their roots go deep enough...I could go on.

How can we gardeners slow down this disaster and prevent it from spreading?

Currently there is no cure, but we can use practices so that we are not spreading the jumping worms further.

Some biology: there are about 3 similar species, and there is still a lot that is not known. But we think, or know, that this is an annual worm. It overwinters in the egg stage in little parcels called cocoons, which are basically too small to detect with the naked eye for all practical purposes. So you won't detect jumping worms early in the growing season when they are very small.

As the season progresses, they grow fast, often getting to 5 or 6 inches long. The easiest way to distinguish them from European earthworms is their behavior – they move very fast like snakes, hence the jumping crazy worm nickname. They feel more muscular too. Their clitellum is slightly different: see the factsheet above for details. Of course, if it's chilly out, they won't be moving as fast. We think the adults die when winter comes, but in warmer climates, there might be more than one generation.

So how do we prevent or slow down their spread when we share plants or plant divisions? Here's the procedure that the Tompkins County Master Gardener group has come up with, when we are dividing and potting up plants for the Garden Fair Plant Sale (Saturday, May 18 this year at Ithaca High School, 9am to 2 pm). As an educational group, we decided to confront the situation.

All donated plants are barerooted, whether the donor has the jumping worm or not (because he/she may not be familiar with it, or the garden may have been recently infected). We typically root prune the plants to stimulate new root growth and to fit the root ball in the pot, anyway.

Next, we divide the root ball to the desired division size. Then we triple wash the roots in 3 changes of water until there is no more soil on the roots.

We rinse out the plastic pots that we re-use, and then pot the divisions up in soilless potting mix. Since the Tompkins County Cooperative Extension landscape is infected with jumping worms, the pots are then placed on pallets or tables so that the pots are not in contact with soil or with the stone patio (which has soil between the stones).

I personally am wary about accepting plants from other sources, and I worry about plants from some nurseries, especially little home nurseries where the owners may not even have heard of these worms. I think that this problem may still be under the radar for the NYS nursery inspectors, but I'm not sure about that.

I do know that a midwestern state has banned plant sales because of the jumping worm problem, so it is also in our own interest to practice prevention. It would be a big financial blow to many garden groups if our plant sales were to be banned, or restricted to seedlings or cuttings, when most of us don't have the facilities to produce those.

Upcoming 2019 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 renovated Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, 236 Tower Road, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

April 13: Note 2nd Saturday. Virginia Hildebrandt, Flora of Iceland. Annual seedling exchange.

May 18: Cooperative Extension Garden Fair and Plant Sale at Ithaca High School. ACNARGS plant sale – our biggest fundraiser of the year.

June 8: Trough Workshop at Bill and Mary's. (See article.)

June 15: Garden Tour. Stay tuned for this year's garden tour, which is currently in the planning stages, and will tentatively happen on Saturday June 15. This date conveniently avoids both the Scotland trip in early June and the Ireland trip later in June that involve some of our members. Our planned tour area is the east side of Cayuga Lake, Lansing to Union Springs. (See Stark/Stauble Garden article in this newsletter.)

August 17: Annual Dish-to-Pass Picnic and Members-Only Plant Sale. Upper Buttermilk Falls Picnic Shelter.

September TBA: Michael Peden Crevice Gardens: "Good Practice in Rock/Crevice Gardening from a Seasoned Grower of Small Things".

Oct. 6: Note 1st Sunday. Two presentations by Cliff Booker, from the United Kingdom. Part of NARGS Speaker Tour.

November 16: Lori Chips Hypertufa Troughs book signing and presentation.

June 18-20, 2020: Foresight 2020: Exploration and Inspiration, NARGS Annual General Meeting, hosted by ACNARGS in Ithaca, NY

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

Calendar of Select Garden Events & Programs

April 13 and 14: VaVa Bloom Garden Show, Dickman Farms Auburn visit dickmanfarms.com

April 27: [Annual plant sale at Stonecrop Gardens](#), Cold Spring, NY. Guest vendors.

April 27: "[Millennial Gardens: Savor, Sizzle and Shrub](#)," Gathering of Gardeners symposium, RIT Inn & Conference Center, Rochester NY; sponsored by Monroe County Master Gardeners.

May 3-5, 2019: "[Rooted in Diversity](#)," [NARGS Study Weekend](#), based at Sheraton Great Valley Hotel, Frazer, PA, a Philadelphia suburb. Hosted by Delaware Valley Chapter NARGS with details in the Fall Quarterly and in this newsletter. (Note: the conference is sold out, but there is a waiting list.)

May 8-11, 2021: [International Rock Gardening Conference](#), Perth Scotland. Start saving your pennies.

May 10-19: [Rochester Lilac Festival](#), Highland Park, Rochester, NY.

May-June: usually the last 2 weekends of May and the first weekend of June, [Linwood Gardens Tree Peony Festival](#), Pavilion NY.

October 28 – November 8: NARGS Tour to Greece. This tour is now full and a wait list has been created.

[Cooperative Extension Horticulture Programs](#), located at 615 Willow Av., Ithaca. 607- 272-2292. Unless otherwise stated, classes require pre-registration and have a self- determining sliding fee scale.

[Finger Lakes Native Plant Society Meetings](#) from 7-8:30pm at the Ithaca Unitarian Church annex (corner of Buffalo & Aurora, enter side door on Buffalo St. & up the stairs). Also look for FLNPS Walks meeting at different times and locations.

[Cornell Botanic Gardens](#) (formerly Cornell Plantations) calendar of events visit: [CBG Calendar](#).

To have a garden event in your area listed send all pertinent information to David Mitchell at david_mitchell_14850@yahoo.com

Have Some, Want Some

Here's our new monthly feature – a classified section – to facilitate your gardening wants and needs. Do you have too many large pots? Do you want some small pots? Do you have too many divisions (that will otherwise go into the compost)? Are you seeking a certain plant? The idea is to use this newsletter to express your “haves” that you are willing to give away and “wants” for any items you are seeking. To post a listing contact Carol Eichler at carolithaca@gmail.com.

Have: *Panax trifolius* and *Asclepius quinquefolia*. Contact Bill Plummer, remmulp@stny.rr.com

Want: Sturdy styrofoam boxes for ACNARGS trough workshop. Contact Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com

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 5 program-speaker meetings, the *Green Dragon* newsletter, web and Facebook pages, garden visits, overnight garden trips, hands-on workshops, 2 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), 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. Download a membership form at www.acnargs.org/join.pdf.

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 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 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.

2019 ACNARGS Board Members and Contacts

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

Chair: **John Gilrein**, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu

Program: **Terry Humphries**, terryehumphries@gmail.com

Program Committee Members: **Could this be you?**

Secretary: Currently rotating amongst "Responsible People"

Treasurer: **BZ Marranca**, mmm10@cornell.edu

Plant Sales Chair: **Carol Eichler**, carolithaca@gmail.com

Plant Sales Committee Members: **Michael Loos**, **BZ Marranca**, **Carol Eichler**

Plant of the Month: **Marlene Kobre**, mkobre@ithaca.edu

Membership: Seeking someone to do this. **Could this be you?**

New Member Hospitality: **Graham Egerton**

Newsletter Editor: **David Mitchell**, dwm23@cornell.edu

Calendar: **Pat Curran**, pc21@cornell.edu

Webmaster, Program Tech: **Craig Cramer**, cdcramer@gmail.com

Green Dragon Tales

Published eight times a year (Jan/Feb., March, April, May/June, July/Aug., Sept., Oct. Nov./Dec.). Submit articles by the fourth Friday of the month preceding publication to David Mitchell, david_mitchell_14850@yahoo.com. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be our May/June issue. The newsletter is always posted and printable each month on our website: www.acnargs.org

Map: Whetzel Room, Room 404 Plant Science Building, 236 Tower Rd., Cornell campus

