



ADIRONDACK CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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June 2020 SPECIAL ISSUE

Letter from the Chair

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

As I write this, it's the last day of May, and businesses in Onondaga County are opening up after being closed for a few months. Everything is not back to normal, but perhaps we're heading there. So what about our picnic and plant sale, on August 22? The best we can say for now, is we hope to hold this event, and we will let you know via email whether it's on or off. I would like to be able to say for certain right now, but that's impossible. It's nice that we're starting to see light at the end of the tunnel.

I had a report of an unusual wildflower recently, and just went to see it. It's *Salvia pratensis*, European meadow sage, which is a common cultivated plant and it's not even listed in the wildflower guidebook. *S. pratensis* is an attractive wildflower, and in this case it had dark violet colored flowers and there were large groups of it growing in a limestone barren type of habitat. Limestone bedrock is exposed in large areas here. Where it was growing seems like it would be dry, very sunny, and with shallow soil in spots. There were large colonies of both *Sedum acre* and *Sedum album* nearby, neither of which is native but both are highly adapted to dry, rocky sites.



Salvia praetensis
growing in the wild

The site is Split Rock [in the Town of Onondaga], which is a strange amalgam of land owned by the government (possibly both state and county) and at least 1 private landowner. Split Rock was used in the past as a quarry and as a site to manufacture explosives; currently it's kind of a no rules area with trails used by hikers, mountain bikers, and dirt bikes. This salvia is a bit tall, around 2 feet, but I would call it a rock garden plant. This plant is listed as invasive in Washington State, which surprised me. In spite of the hard use on some of the trails at Split Rock, this plant was thriving.

Our experiment with the leftover NARGS seeds from the Seed Exchange has been underway a few weeks. This was a new process, listing all the seeds available and allowing our members to order seeds. There was very little interest in the seeds, though there's still another month left in which you could request them. As it stands now, it wasn't worth the effort to offer the seeds this way, though this could change if there were to be a sudden rush of interest. I expect we would continue to have the seeds available at the meetings in the future. Should you still be interested in some of these surplus seeds, please refer to the May Green Dragon. [Order deadline: July 1st]

Hope your garden is growing well!
John Gilrein, Chair

Announcing Taproot 2020: a NARGS Virtual Conference

A message from NARGS President, Elisabeth Zander



Yes, we have all been pent up in our gardens for weeks now. Seedlings are sprouting. Orders from nurseries are arriving. But we are missing the inspiration from visiting other gardens. Oh yes, and hiking in the field. We here at NARGS have been busy though, preparing for our first virtual international rock garden symposium for you. It is so exciting! We have gathered first class speakers and gardens to give you ideas for plants and gardens at our live conference: TAPROOT 2020.

Our lineup includes talks and tours by rock-star plants persons: Nick Courtens (Betty Ford Alpine Gardens), Anne Spiegel (Millstream Award Garden), Tony Avent & Jeremy Schmidt (Juniper Level Botanic Garden), Mariel Tribby (Missouri Botanical Garden), Todd Boland (MUN Botanical Garden), and David Sellars (Millstream Award Garden). There is even a live workshop on Daphne cuttings by the master Don LaFond. We will end the conference with a look at the AGM in Durango 2021. [R. Robert Wesley and Kristine Boys from Cornell Botanic Gardens will present too. Their talk is titled "Finger Lakes Plants and Geology: Creating Unique Native Plant Displays."]

True, we are very sorry to have missed you all at our annual meeting in Ithaca with all its fantastic gorges. Another time perhaps. But consider saving the date for this virtual conference on June 26-27, 2020! Registration details will follow soon. The cost is \$50 for NARGS members \$50, \$90 for non-members. [The \$40 difference just happens to be the cost of joining NARGS, so why not?] More info should be posted here: <https://www.nargs.org/conference> soon.

Introducing the ACNARGS Forum

Carol Eichler

Maybe we can't meet in person right now but that doesn't mean we can't continue to communicate. We are introducing an online group so that we can chat together as a group about all things plant-related. This group is through Google Groups. It is called ACNARGS_Mamber_Forum and the email address is ACNARGS_Member_Forum@googlegroups.com. The stated purpose of the forum is "to share garden photos, ask and answer plant, gardening, and cultivation questions, and share lessons learned."

The only guideline we ask is that you please keep the email thread to the topic in the subject line. If you want to initiate a new discussion – for example about a new plant to identify, start a new email and thus initiate a new thread.

You will be invited to join this group so watch an invitation email coming to your Inbox soon. It is strictly your option to respond yes or no to that invitation. Only members of ACNARGS will be asked to join. You may manage your account from your "My Groups" page, where you can choose (among other things) how often to receive emails from this group and how to leave this group. Carol Eichler is manager of this group so if you have further questions, contact her (carolithaca@gmail.com).

Some of us have been holding informal email chats to help with identifying a plant or to share photos of flowers in bloom. I for one have found it quite beneficial. Therefore it became our motivation to set up a more official and inclusive "chat" available to all our members. It's certainly worth giving it a try for now, especially since we've not been able to meet in person.

We encourage you to join our Group and to take an active part. There are no "dumb" questions. My most frequent post is "what is this plant?" I have to say it has prompted many interesting conversations!

Un-Conference T-Shirts for Sale

It's not too late to purchase an un-Conference t-shirt. We will be running a limited edition printing of the conference t-shirt. Check out this mock-up, which is a reasonable facsimile to the actual product:



Beefy Fruit-of-the Loom sage green background with full color logo depicting Taughannock Falls and a botanically-accurate fern *Asplenium tricomane* in the foreground, found in our local gorges. Pre-orders will be taken until July 31st with mail delivery date approximately August 31st. Simply supply the information below when you order.

Unisex Size Chart	S	M	L	XL	2XL
Body Length (inches)	28	29	30	31	32
Body Width (inches)	36	38	40	42	44

Cost \$20 plus \$8 for shipping per t-shirt. As a Chapter member you can save on shipping by arranging to pick up your t-shirt. Send check (with or without shipping fee) with size, quantity, and mailing address to:

ACNARGS T-shirt
c/o Carol Eichler
1562 Taughannock Blvd.
Ithaca, NY 14850

Questions: carolithaca@gmail.com or 607-269-7070 Note: we are extending this offer to NARGS members and will be needing volunteers in August to help assemble the orders, again coordinated by Carol. Let her know if you'd be interested in helping.

Unusual Trilliums

From Rosemarie Parker: I bought a “*Trillium erectum* ‘albidum’ from a local NARGS sale in 2005. [T. erectum is the red trillium] It was overtaken by a Rhododendron for many years and found only last year (right where the plant database said it would be) when the Rhodo was cut back. But it was definitely misidentified. This year



Rosemarie's
Trillium flexipes

I worked with David Werier to get a good ID, taking lots of photos and removing stamens and measuring everything. His final statement, after many details:

“Overall I would call your plant *T. flexipes* [nodding or drooping trillium] and perhaps having some *T. erectum* introgressed in at some point. Seeing you got this from another grower anything is possible although hybrids and introgression between *T. flexipes* and *T. erectum* are well known in some areas.” (Presumably his last point is that it could even have happened in the wild. Not around here, though.)

Then John Gilrein and Harold Peachey were having some email discussion recently about a white *T. erectum* in Baltimore Woods, thinking it might have been a cross with *T. undulatum* [painted trillium]. Or is it a virus? John sent this photo of said trillium, which is growing in the wild. It's pretty, whatever trillium it is and obviously doesn't care about the proper nomenclature.



John spotted this white
Trillium erectum or?

Have Some/Want Some

Carol Eichler, Plant Sales Chair

In lieu of our usual May plant sale, we are re-launching the Have Some/Want Some “classifieds.” Please send any listings to carolithaca@gmail.com for inclusion in the June and subsequent newsletters. You will need to include your contact information so that respondents can get in touch with you. Then the two of you will have to work our arrangements for making the exchange.

We realize this is a poor substitute for our normal plant sale, but we wanted to create an opportunity for you to acquire a plant on your wish list or to find a good home for your excess.

Other suggestions for those extra divisions? Find another place in your garden to plant them. Give them to a neighbor or friend. Or as a last resort set them at the end of your driveway with a free sign.

For plants on your wish list, perhaps the plant is listed in the surplus seed we received from the NARGS seed exchange so what better time than now to try to grow it from seed. See the article in this newsletter about obtaining seed. Or order the plant(s) from a mail order nursery. They could really use your business.

Have Some

Artemisia abrotanum (southernwood) shrub with lemon scented foliage, *Caryopteris x clandonensis* (blue mist shrub), *Lamprocapnos spectabilis* (bleeding heart), *Penstemon hirsutus*, *Hieracium* species unknown, silver leaves, rhizomatous, best for trough; and *Primula cortusioides*. seedlings of *Dianthus alpinus*.

John Gilrein jgilrein@twcny.rr.com

Staghorn Fern (houseplant), *Lobelia syphilitica*. Assorted colors dwarf bearded iris. Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com

Allium cernuum, (nodding wild onion), *Filipendula venusta* 'Rubra' (queen of the prairie in a nice warm pink), *Hosta ventricosa*, *Digitalis grandiflora* (perennial yellow foxglove), *Corydalis lutea* (yellow), *Corydalis ochroleuca* (white) or a mixed *Corydalis* clump, seedling hostas, a nice blue, and a variegated one, Chives, *Lysimachia punctata* (circle flower), *Ajuga Catlin's Giant* (originally from Robin Bell), *Pulmonaria* (lungwort) probably 'Trevi Foundatain' seedlings. Pat Curran, pc21@cornell.edu

Miscanthus giganteus, also known as M. Floridulus. Elke Schofield, <elke.schofield@icloud.com

Want Some

Rosa rubrifolia (glauca) (redleaf rose), *Primula kisoana*. Pat Curran pc21@cornell.edu

Symphotrichum (Aster) *novae-angliae* 'Purple Dome'. John Gilrein jgilrein@twcny.rr.com

Climbing rose (red or white). Elke Schofield, elke.schofield@icloud.com

Podophyllum peltatum (May apple), carolithaca@gmail.com

Kingbird Farm: A New Local Source for R.G. Plants

Marlene Kobre

We are delighted to announce a new source for rock garden plants—and this one is locally grown. Many of our members are already familiar with Kingbird Farm, a small organic farm in Berkshire, NY owned and operated by the Glos family for 20 years. Michael, Karma, and their daughter Rosy have been lovingly raising chickens, pigs, herbs and vegetables and selling their poultry, pork, and plant products both at the farm and at the Ithaca Farmer's Market.

Their most recent expansion into growing and selling rock garden plants has been propelled by Rosy, who has just graduated from Cornell University, where she has majored in plant sciences, with a concentration in evolution and a minor in botanical illustration. We are delighted that Rosy is also our newest member in the Adirondack Chapter of NARGS.

Long fascinated with botany and gardening, Rosy characterizes rockery and alpine plants as her "current gardening obsession." Since joining NARGS in 2017 she has participated in their seed exchange as both a grower and donor. She describes her own rock garden as "fairly small" but crammed to overflowing with close to 200 taxa germinated from NARGS seed. Selling the surplus plants that she started from seed felt like the next logical step. See the rock garden plant list with selected photos.

Rosy also sees her rock garden as a way of "reconnecting" at home with the plants she has encountered in their native habitat when researching in the field. Her travels have included botanizing expeditions to Patagonia, Suriname's rain forests, Costa Rica, and California's sequoias.

The retail greenhouse on the farm opened on May 2. In addition to rock garden plants they sell culinary and medicinal herbs, vegetable 4-packs, even tropicals. The greenhouse and farm store, located at 9398 W. Creek Rd., Berkshire, are self-serve and open seven days a week. They also have a stand at the Saturday Ithaca Farmers Market. For more information about what the Glos's raise, grow, and sell, check out the website: www.kingbirdfarm.com.



9398 West Creek Road, Berkshire, NY 13736
www.kingbirdfarm.com

Rock Garden Plants available starting May 2nd
 in 4" round pots from \$5

Asarina procumbens
Aquilegia oxysepala
Capnoides sempervirens
Echium vulgare
Linaria aeruginea
Linaria aff. *alpina*
Lychnis flos cuculi 'Nana'
Petunia exserta
Streptanthus maculatus
Taraxacum atrans
Taraxacum leucanthum
Taraxacum pseudoroeseum
Thymus lanuginosus
Thymus praecox 'Coccineus'



Upcoming Rock Garden Plants (still too young – ready mid-May)

Anemone multifida 'Rubra'
Aquilegia viridiflora
Blumenbachia hieronymi
Carlina acaulis subsp. *caulescens*
Clarkia pulchella
Cleome hirta
Dicranostigma lactuoides
Iberis simplex
Leontopodium nivale subsp. *alpinum*
Plantago nivalis
Silene regia
Thalictrum alpinum



Also available: culinary/medicinal herbs, vegetable starts, tropicals, and more (see www.kingbirdfarm.com for plant list and pricing)

Ordering Surplus Surplus Seeds

This heading is not a typo. John Gilrein still has surplus seeds left from the NARGS seed exchange after 1st and 2nd round ordering, so that makes them surplus [from the] surplus NARGS seed exchange. Try your hand at growing from seed and enjoy the benefits of this low-cost way of propagation and the satisfaction of saying, "See that plant? I grew it from seed!" See the May newsletter and the attachments to the May newsletter for how to obtain seeds from John and the listing of available seeds.

Upcoming 2020 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, 236 Tower Road, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

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

June 26-27, 2020: TAPROOT 2020, NARGS virtual conference via Zoom. Online registration \$50 for NARGS members, \$90 for non-members. See article in this newsletter or visit NARGS.org/conference

August 22, 2020: Members Plant Sale and Picnic, Myers Park, Lansing. Hopefully still on, though will likely be restructured a bit. July newsletter will have more information.

Optimistically, here's the meeting line-up for the remainder of the year.

September 19: Teri Dunn Chace, author of *Seeing Seeds*, Lecture and book signing.

October 4, SUNDAY, presentations at 11:00 & 1:00: Ger van Buiton, Netherlands. The Rock Garden at Utrecht Botanic Gardens and Peatbeds, a Perfect Place to Grow Woodlanders and Plants of Alpine Meadows.

November 14: Darren Heinbecker, [Whistling Gardens](#), Canada's newest botanic garden.

Calendar of Select Events & Programs

Be sure to check online to confirm that these events are happening.

June 27: Dryden Open Gate Garden and Art Tour, 9-2.

July 11 or 12: Southern Cayuga Garden Club Summer Tour in the Genoa area.

July 11: [Garden Conservancy Open Days](#), Ithaca area, 10-4.

July 12: Fall Creek Garden tour, usually 11-4.

Aug. 8: [Garden Conservancy Open Days](#), Ithaca area, 10-4.

Check out additional gardening programs of these organizations below.

Practical Earthkeeper, Home Gardening Program, [Cornell Cooperative Extension](#). They've been holding classes via Zoom.

[Finger Lakes Native Plant Society](#) monthly meetings

[Cornell Botanic Gardens](#) events

[Liberty Hyde Bailey Garden Club](#)

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

About 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, two 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 online website 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.

2020 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, David Mitchell

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. Looking for a new editor!

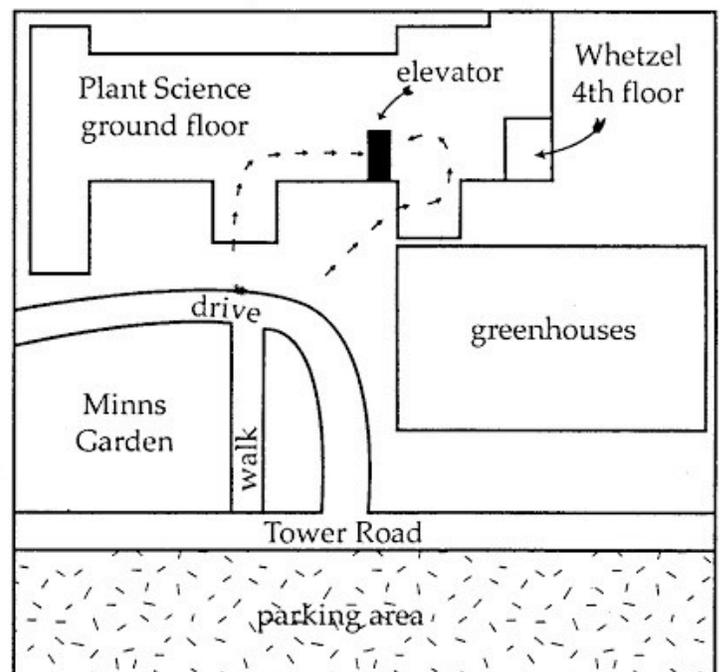
Calendar: Pat Curran, pc21@cornell.edu

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. 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



Building a new rock garden showing the framework of wood, stone, and lots of sand, time and patience.





Finished and planted showing different planting sections and the wall which integrates with the rest of the garden area. Design inspired by the Burren in the Republic of Ireland.



Carol Eichler's Rock Garden #2
Constructed from October 2019
through May 2020 and on-going

Photos from John Gilrein's spring garden



Primula polyneura, native to NW China for moist well-drained shade



A happy *Ramonda myconi* growing out of a vertical stone crevice



Species peony possibly obovata; showy black seeds develop later on red stalks