



ADIRONDACK CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

IN THIS ISSUE:

Letter from the Chair
Members Only Sale 2020 Covid Style!
Member Forum on Google Email
A Try at Daphne Cuttings
Specialist Bees

Membership
Tufa Tower
Upcoming ACNARGS Programs
Calendar of Select Events & Programs
About ACNARGS
About NARGS National
ACNARGS Board Members and Contacts

August/September 2020

Letter from the Chair

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

I hope this newsletter finds you well and coping with the many difficulties of COVID-19. The future of our activities involves changes and we'll have to be flexible. We are having an in person picnic with modified procedures (and I'm sure also reduced attendance) and you should have already received an email message about this. Cornell is planning to have students on campus in September, but in spite of that we should expect Cornell will not allow us to meet on campus, at least in Fall 2020. I'm predicting that the next few meetings will be via Zoom. Many people who are still working are familiar with Zoom, which is a program which allows people to have meetings via computer rather than in person. Having a Zoom meeting is perfect for distancing and it's easy to work with. Having a distanced meeting via Zoom is probably the best we can expect for now. It's not what I want (what I really want is to be done with the outbreak!) but it's what we've got. The only thing required to be on a Zoom meeting is a decent computer and a little patience with setting up the meeting. We'll get into more Zoom information before the September meeting. I hope that we can roll with the punches this year and that we will have a better time in 2021.



Hydrangea anomala ssp. petiolaris

The growing season this year has been a bit crazy -is it global warming unpredictability? Snow multiple times in May, almost no rain in June, over 10" of rain in July (in the town of Onondaga anyway). In spite of this weird weather, the garden here is doing pretty well. There are a lot worse things than a glut of zucchini and beans! Most of the perennials I planted this spring and summer have done well helped initially by lots of watering and they've survived the heat and humidity.

I've communicated with a few people about Japanese beetles and lily leaf beetles recently. Some of you already know this, I just hope it can help a few who have less experience. Japanese beetles have been in our area for at least decades. Lily leaf beetles arrived much more recently; I didn't have them until 3 or 4 years ago. Japanese beetles have diverse food tastes and they will eat roses (leaves and flowers), hydrangea vine (*Hydrangea anomala* ssp. *petiolaris*), Impatiens (*Impatiens glandulifera* anyway), and several other plants. Lily leaf beetles are small scarlet beetles around ¼ inch (less than 1 cm) long. Lily leaf beetles eat the leaves and flowers of plants in the lily family including the true lilies (genus *Lilium*) and fritillarias (in the lily family) but not daylilies (genus *Hemerocallis*). Since lily leaf beetles are small, one should check for leaf (and flower) damage, look at the undersides of the leaves, and check for the larva, which cover themselves with their feces, so they look mostly like fecal matter rather than a larva. Both Japanese beetles and lily leaf beetles respond to perceived danger, e.g. trying to catch them in your fingers or agitating the plant, by dropping off their perch. You can use this behavior to your advantage by adding dish soap (several drops or a teaspoon) to a cup or 2 of water in a quart plastic container. Place the container with the liquid under the beetles and let them fall in. This is more reliable than trying to catch them in your fingers and there's no mess. The lily leaf beetle larvae can be knocked off the plant fairly easily, and I haven't had a problem with them climbing back. For Japanese beetles, I check their favorite plants daily until I no longer find them; they appeared this year in July. Lily leaf beetles appear much earlier, May. It seems like I need to check the lilies for them when the fritillarias are up, checking daily for a few days once I find them and then approximately every week or 2 for the next few months. It seems like I eliminate all the adults on my plants and then a few weeks later more find their way in (or hatch).

I'll have the remains of the SeedEx extra seeds at the picnic for your perusal.

Hope to see you at the picnic, or in the not too distant future.

Members Only Sale 2020 Covid Style!

Carol Eichler, Plant Sales Chair

As of this writing (July 28) the ACNARGS annual member only sale is still scheduled for August 22 at Myers Park, in the Town of Lansing. Because of covid-19 we will have to run things differently to follow mandated safety precautions. This communication explains the process. **Note, unless you are a resident of the Town of Lansing, there is a \$6 entrance fee per vehicle to enter the park.** PLEASE READ THIS DOCUMENT CAREFULLY.

NOTE: These plans could change between now and Aug. 22, depending on the course the coronavirus could take. If we have to change plans, we will notify you!

We have rented Pavilion B at the Park, which is a large pavilion. (see map), near the playground. To give you a size of its scale, it can seat up to 200 people. It is set up for proper social distancing and is regularly sanitized. When social distancing of 6 feet cannot be maintained, we will be required to wear masks. **Bring your own mask and hand sanitizer.** Gloves (if you choose) might be a good idea too. As a further precaution, we will be providing table coverings.

Before you make your decision to attend, we ask you to please consider your activity in the 14 days prior to our sale. Have you not practiced social distancing and mask wearing? Have you attended any social gatherings where this was not practiced? Have you spent time out of state? Based on the answers to these questions, your responsible decision may be to choose not to attend.

We recognize we each have differing risk tolerances and that some of us may still not be comfortable attending.

We understand and we'll miss you. (Feel free to donate plants, if you wish, and arrange for a fellow member to bring them OR drop them off at David Mitchell's downtown Ithaca house, at 402 Esty Street).

From a poll we took, we know a number of us are planning to attend and a number of us responded that we are also bringing plants. So it promises to be a good sale (if perhaps somewhat downsized).

Here is the procedure for the sale. It will take a little extra effort on everyone's part. This is what life as we know it has become these days. But these precautions will be worth it. To paraphrase Dr. Fauci, "there's no such thing as being too cautious," or words to that effect.

Advance Plant List to be Sent Out

If you are planning to attend, please consider sharing some plants and remember to wash the roots and repot into soilless mix to avoid the spread of the invasive jumping worms.

We won't be able to do mingling and browsing of plants for sale in the usual way. So to address this differently, we are asking those who will be bringing plants to send an advance list of said plants no later than August 12 (10 days prior to the sale) to Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com. Please try to make this list as complete as possible. Include Latin name, common name if there is one, its category (rock garden, herbaceous perennial or biennial, non-hardy/annual/houseplant, tree/shrub), approximate number (even 1 of something is quite acceptable), and any notes (if you wish) as to what you like about this plant.

We hope this process will help minimize day-of-sale browsing. Do your homework. Prepare a wish list. This way we can all anticipate the plants available and hence the plants you might want to purchase.

We realize there may be some late additions that won't make this deadline. It's preferable to send our lists as they stand on the August 12th deadline than to send no list at all. That's OK. Late additions can be talked about at the sale.

The plant list will be compiled and sent out hopefully by August 17 (5 days prior to the sale). It's looking promising that we'll have a choice selection of rock garden and other plants.

Day of Sale Set-up

Some of us will arrive as early as 9 a.m. to begin set-up (anyone is welcome to arrive early to help), which starts officially at 10 a.m. Plants will be arranged alphabetically by Latin name with each table marked with the appropriate letters of the alphabet. We will spread the plants out over several tables. Place the plants you bring on the appropriate table. We can provide plant labels but prefer that plants be labeled in advance. Each of us need to bring our own pencil. We will only allow one person at a time at a table during set-up.

Browsing

Once set-up is complete we will allow browsing with only one person is allowed at a table at a time. Please be considerate of others. Also, we will offer the opportunity for donors to talk about plants that weren't on the advance list. No touching plants or pots at this point.

We will take a little time to talk about items on the bid table too and provide the opportunity to ask questions about sale plants.

Simplified Pricing

We are trying to keep pricing as simple as possible. This isn't a perfect system but it will eliminate a lot of extra touching. Prices will be determined by pot size: 2-inch pot = \$2, 3-inch pot = \$3, 4" pot \$4, etc. If we consider a plant in a 2" pot is worthy of a \$4 price tag, the smaller pot can be placed inside the larger pot. Extra special plants will be placed on the bidding table. To place a bid we must all bring our own pen or pencil.

With this system it may be that some plants may seem to be overpriced. But some plants will be underpriced so all in all things should even out. At such bargain prices, I hope no one will complain – after all this is a fundraiser for our Chapter and the ONLY one this year. Remember, we will go to half-price at some point, so those \$4 not-so-special plants will then be priced at \$2.

Let the Sale Begin!

For the sale, which we hope to begin close to 11a.m., we will use a similar but modified system as in recent years. When you arrive, sign in. Shoppers will be called one-by-one by order of arrival. Your number on the sign-in sheet is also your number for the bid table. Only touch the plant/pot that you intend to buy. Round: 1 plant. 2nd round: 2 plants. 3rd round: 3 plants.

Generally at this point we open the sale up for free-for-all. Obviously that can't happen this year, so we'll assess what plants are left and determine how best to proceed to be both expedient and safe. At some point we will begin mark-down pricing.

Don't Forget the Bid Table

Meanwhile, the bid table is open until last call when the silent auction is closed.

Purchasing Your Plants

Pay for your plants one person at a time to maintain social distancing at the designated cashier's table. **We need a volunteer to serve as cashier.**

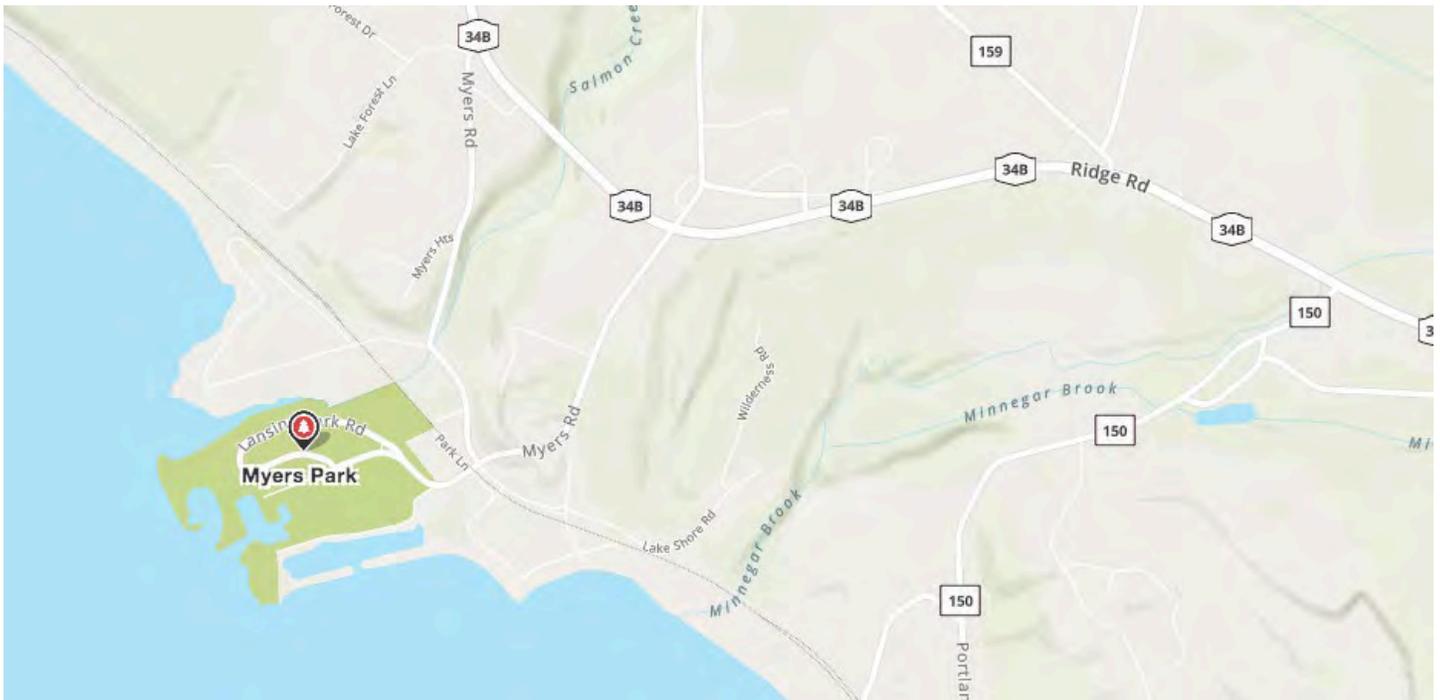
Time to Socialize and Lunch

If you wish to stay after the plant sale, bring your own lunch, your own water to stay hydrated and a beverage if desired. We will provide individually wrapped cookies for dessert. We can eat in small groups at the shelter or, if the weather is nice, lunch can be enjoyed outdoors anywhere within the park.

How to get to Myers Park and the Pavilion

The Park website states "Approximately 60 miles southwest of Syracuse, and 10 miles north of Ithaca, Myers Park sits on the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake, one of the Finger Lakes in Tompkins County. Located in the southern part of the Town of Lansing off of Route 34B, the park is graced with 31 acres of grass covered, tree shaded land, with extensive Cayuga Lake frontage. Admission for Town of Lansing residents is free, all others **\$6 per car.**" This fee cannot be avoided.

Here are maps to Myers Park and of the Park layout.





Layout of picnic shelters. We have rented **Pavilion B**, near the playground, circled in yellow here. Take the one-way road in the park which loops around to this shelter. The Park has no GPS coordinates that I could find.

Member Forum on Google Email

Carol Eichler, Plant Sales Chair

The ACNARGS_Member_Forum was created in June and has been quite active. 24 of our members responded to the invitation to join and we have had some lively discussions. It was created in part as a way to stay in touch since we've been unable to meet since February.

But it also serves a greater purpose – to ask gardening questions, share our garden experience including posting photos of garden successes, or to help with identifying a plant. By pooling our “hive mind” maybe someone will even have an answer!

If you have not joined but would like to, please email Carol at carolithaca@gmail.com. You must be invited to join and then to respond to that invitation within a certain time period. The group has been created for ACNARGS members only and only members can view content. Only members can post and only members can view the list of members who have joined the forum. More information about this google group

(ACNARGS_Member_Forum) was included in the June newsletter.

I'd like to share some posts responding to the question, "what plants are doing well for you during this summer of heat and drought? Or for that matter what plants have struggled?"

From Susanna Lipari: *Ruellia humilis* (wild petunia) has been in my garden for years and I don't remember how it got here. But I'm glad it did! It is a short-lived perennial that self-seeds quite profusely, but is still quite easy to manage. Neither the wet summers in the past few years, nor the drought this year have bothered it. It's a compact plant covered in light lavender petunia-like blossoms all summer. When it gets leggy, I just trim it back. It will grow happily in my gravel paths or settle in the rock garden. I just pull any plants that are not in the right place.



From Rosy Glos Here's my contribution to the thread on plants that performed well in our recent oven-like temps. My rock garden is mostly expanded shale with a bit of compost mixed in. I watered once in the past three weeks. Most established things did pretty well, but here are some of my particular favorites. I attached a collage of pictures. (*Editor's note: See last page for pictures.*)

1. Cacti (duh!). It was an especially good year for *Opuntia*. Shown in the collage are *O. humifusa* 'Mulberry Creek' and the straight species. I picked up the cultivar at Bristol's GC in Victor, NY. The others are from my time working at Motherplants in Enfield (now closed).
2. Horned poppy (*Glaucium flavum*). I started these from seed swiped from the herb garden at Cornell Botanic Gardens [by permission]. This is their second year and they tend to be short-lived, so I will collect more seed this year. They mingled nicely with *Arnica chamissonis* and *Eritrichium canum*, which also weathered the drought fairly well although the latter look a bit crispy.
3. *Digitalis ferruginea*. I fall more in love with this biennial every day. They form tall (5+ ft) spires with hundreds of rusty-spotted yellow flowers. The best-looking ones were in full sun. I also have some in shade that look okay, but the tips of the spires died back before blooming. I started them from the seed exchange last year and will be collecting this year.
4. *Berkheya purpurea*. A fabulous spiky composite with purple-tinged flowerheads. Did just fine in the drought and has been blooming away.
5. *Clematis integrifolia*. Easily one of my favorite garden plants of all time. It started blooming on June 10th and is still going strong. Every time I deadhead it, it just sends up two more (albeit slightly smaller) flowers. Eventually, I will just stop cutting them off and enjoy the seedheads for the rest of the season.
6. *Campanula barbata*. A biennial campanula that is currently blooming en masse. The flowers are pale purple with finely hairy edges (hence 'barbata'). The leaves of some plants got slightly rusty-colored in the heat, but blooming certainly hasn't been affected.

From Pat Curran: 3 natives that are doing well at my house. *None of them got watered (by me) until yesterday, so despite what the websites say, they do have some drought resistance when they are established.*

- 1) *Thalictrum pubescens*. My native meadowrue is in full bloom right now, 6 ft. tall, in almost full sun (although the Missouri BG website says part shade, but OK in sun in cool summer climates -- do we still consider we are in a 'cool summer climate'? Maybe, compared to Missouri!)

Anyway, it is a great native that can be hard to find. I got seedlings from the Finger Lakes native Plant Society at a Plant Sale several years ago. No staking required at my house in almost full sun, anyway. I see that it is often dioecious, but if it produces seed, I can give you some. Let me know if you are interested, and I will not deadhead it later. Did I say lovely foliage, deer and rabbit resistant (according to the MBG, anyway)

2) *Sisyrinchium angustifolium*, Blue Eyed Grass. The next native that is flourishing and spreading at my house is at the other end of the height spectrum, about 8 inches tall. Blue-eyed grass is actually a member of the iris family with flattened leaf clusters. Flowers are true blue, tiny but cute. This is becoming a small scale groundcover in partial shade at my house, but it would be easy to control. I first spotted it many years ago, about half an hour after I pulled it up, thinking it was a grass, but fortunately it sprouted elsewhere and I finally realized what it was. There is a cultivar 'Lucerne' with bigger blue flowers, that I have paid good money for at least twice, but it doesn't flourish...

This is getting ready to go to seed at my house, but I could also give you a clump in early

3) *Lobelia siphilitica*. The third native may be more familiar to you, as we have offered it at the Plant Sale several times. Blue cardinal flower appears to be easier to keep going than the red cardinal flower. It grows wild in part shade at my house, but I also planted several clumps in a flower garden, and they have persisted for at least 4 years. (If I don't allow the red cardinal flower to self-sow, it may disappear, unfortunately).

Missouri Botanic Garden says partial shade and moisture, possibly full sun in that 'northern cool summer climate.'

Who says that clay soil is bad? In a drought like this one, clay soil (improved with organic matter, hopefully at one time or another) may be the savior of some of your plants, due to its moisture retentiveness. However, when I am weeding, I have dry clumps that I pulverize, instead of mulch. I don't want to mulch any more until we have more rain.

From Carol: Performance of a plant in drought seems dependent on its growth cycle. For example, I have a large planting of monardas that look great this year. There have been other dry years when they suffered tremendous wilt and looked very unhappy, but not this year. Micro-climates really make a difference too. Plants getting more shade or located on a downward slope, even ever so slight, did noticeably better. Also I expect there could be a critical time in the growth cycle for when a species gets water. (How else can I explain how well my shell peas performed this year?)

As for rock garden plants, most established plants are hanging in there. Their deep roots grow down to moisture. I grow in builders' sand which surprisingly holds quite a bit of moisture once you go down a few inches. Those plants that suffered were too recently planted to establish this root system. Also I think sun and heat were the bigger stressors. Just my humble opinion. For some reason dianthus have not fared well this summer.

A Try at Daphne Cuttings

Carol Eichler, Plant Sales Chair

Daphne x 'Lawrence Crocker' looked like a goner at the end of the 2018 growing season. We had experienced an extremely wet season and daphnes don't like wet. At least I attributed this rather dramatic dieback to our unfavorable weather. Note the photo taken in May 2019, which shows the extent of the die back. Pretty sad. It was alive – at least parts of it were, but rather disfigured. Would it ever return to its past glory? With fingers crossed, I didn't give up.



That spring I cut it back rather conservatively, removing much of the dead stems/branches and cutting it back to bare wood. This spring there was all new growth along the bare wood so I cut it back even more aggressively to achieve a better shape and stimulate new growth. Not wanting to remove too much at once, I pruned once again this July, applied to a different part of the shrub. It has recovered beautifully as you'll see in this recent photo.

With those prunings from May and July, I attempted to root them using rooting compound and "sticking" them into a growing medium. The medium I used horticultural vermiculite which I had on hand and have used successfully in the past for this purpose.

Ideally cuttings should be taken well into the summer when a plant shows new "green" growth. Don LaFond, who gave a daphne cuttings workshop at the NARGS virtual conference, says that's about July 4. He lives in Michigan where the climate is comparative. That's why I took those July cuttings. I used newly-purchased #3 rooting hormone, which is what is suggested for daphnes. (Note I have successfully taken cuttings of *D. x Carol Mackie* some years ago and found that it rooted quite readily)

The late May cuttings were thus taken under less than ideal conditions, according to him. First they were taken from wood, that is to say last year's growth. To add a further disadvantage, the rooting compound was quite old and of unknown strength, but again I was using what I had on hand.

Skip ahead to today...July 27 at this writing. I can report that I had success with rooting a fair number of the May cuttings. You can never claim 100% success but I was pleased that 10 of 25 rooted, after about 6 weeks. They've been potted up and I've been attempting to keep them alive so that I can bring some to the August sale.

It's still too soon to see if any of the July cuttings will root but I will say I've struggled to keep them happy in the medium and have already lost about half of them. (When I say "lost," I mean they have dropped all their leaves) I'm "growing" them under the exact same conditions – on my potting bench in the garage, which provides bright natural light from windows.



The variable between the two batches, the one that seems significant anyway, is temperature. One can't deny the high temperatures of July as compared to June. I was not misting either set but was keeping them well watered. In hindsight, perhaps this was my error with the second batch. Now, with those surviving cuttings I am misting, hoping for a late rescue. The results are yet TBD.

I also took July cuttings of the *Daphne x hauseri* 'Leila Haines' at Wurster. I've lost a few, but the majority are looking promising. They are very small, only about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. One can hope some of them will root.

I was always told winter is a critical time for these newly-rooted shrubs since they will not have had a chance to harden off. They should be provided some protection, though I'm not sure exactly what that means – planted in the ground with mulch, left in pots in a cold, unheated room perhaps. I've done both.

It should also be noted that daphne plants are poisonous. I remembered this as I was taking spring cuttings and found my eyelids tingling (no direct contact). So my warning to you is: handle this plant with care. The use of gloves would be wise.

Specialist Bees



Rosemarie Parker

I sent this notice out recently on the Finger Lakes Native Plant listserve and Facebook. I realize that many ACNARGS members are also likely to be interested in native bees, yet not on either of those lists. So, belatedly, and with apologies to those of you for whom this is a duplicate message.

There is a new brochure, put together with cooperation between folks in the entomology department and the botanic gardens natural areas at Cornell. I found this fascinating because I learned so much about SPECIALIST bees, which I had really never even heard about. The name sounds self-evident, but the details are eye-opening. I suspect that many people, like me, think of butterflies and generic "bees" when thinking about pollinator gardens. In fact, most photos accompanying pollinator gardens tend to be non-native honeybees

and showy butterflies. Most of the practices suggested here are beneficial for a range of different pollinators, but to help preserve healthy populations of these important native bees, please read the brochure. Thanks.

[Creating a pollinator garden for specialist bees of New York and the Northeast](#)

If you find this useful, and especially if you would like to see it in print, please send me comments. Printing will depend on grants, and grant applications are enhanced with "testimonials" from the intended audience, i.e. gardeners. I am collecting comments for Brian Danforth.

Membership

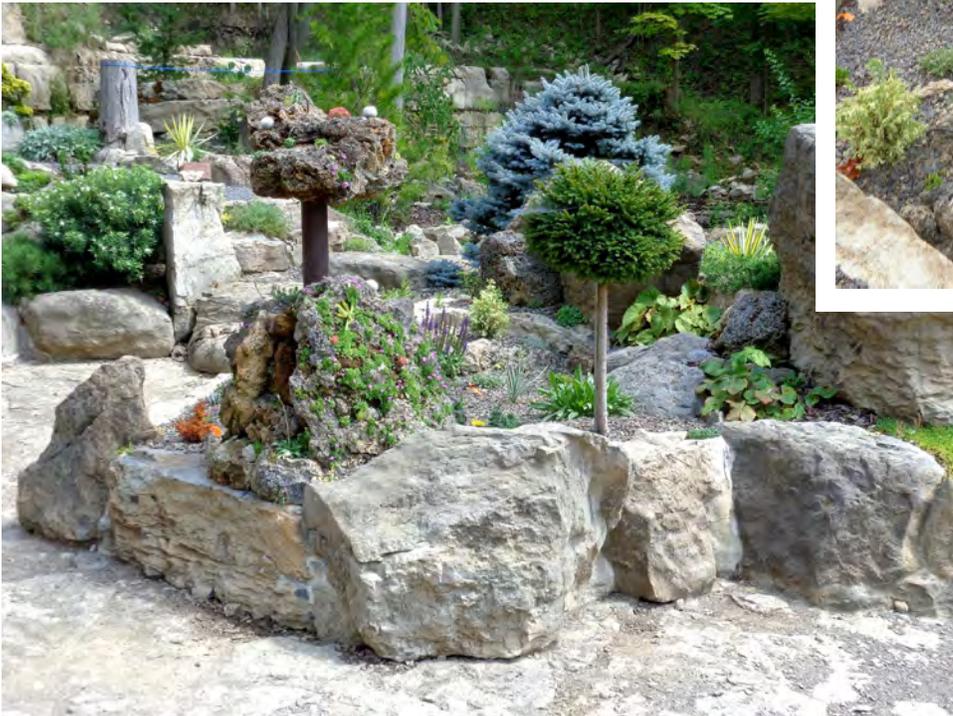
Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

If you have not renewed for 2020, you should do it now so you'll be eligible to purchase plants at the members only plant sale in August. Also, only current members are listed in the membership directory which will be published in September. The renewal form is at <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf>. Dues are \$15 for individuals, \$20 for a household. Check my email announcement of the newsletter link for your membership status. Contact Mary Stauble at mes2@cornell.edu if you have any questions.

Tufa Tower

Bill Stark

The tufa tower is complete.



Upcoming 2020 ACNARGS Programs

NOTE: Due to covid our fall meetings will take on a different format. We do plan to hold live meetings via Zoom and are currently in the process of booking speakers, hopefully on our “usual” meeting dates. For those of you unfamiliar with Zoom, we will be sending out information about how to connect and can offer assistance to anyone who requests it. We hope to have our meeting calendar finalized - as much as anyone can plan ahead these days - for publication in our next newsletter.

August 22, 2020: Members Plant Sale and Picnic. Myers Park, Lansing. Information in this newsletter.

September 19: Teri Dunn Chace, *Seeing Seeds*.

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

Practical Earthkeeper, Home Gardening Program, [Cornell Cooperative Extension](#)

[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.

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**, terryhumphries@gmail.com

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

Secretary: Currently rotating amongst "Responsible People"

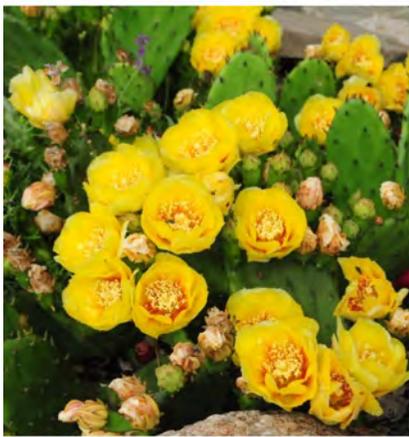
Treasurer: **BZ Marranca**, mmm10@cornell.edu

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

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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



Collage by Rosy Glos.