



ADIRONDACK CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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December 2021

Letter from the Chair

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

We have weathered the storm of 2021 and we're heading for 2022. I want to thank the Adirondack Chapter board, the many volunteers who helped maintain the Wurster Garden, the donors of plants to our plant sales, the garden tour hosts, and the seed sorters working on the Seed Exchange. You have helped to make our organization fun and viable and ready to head into 2022! May you be lucky and get a gift certificate for plants during the holidays.

Coming up in January 2022: we plan to have a meeting via Zoom, so keep checking your email for details. Also, for NARGS members, you will be able to order seeds from the NARGS Seed Exchange starting December 15; the list of seeds available is already up on the website. Ordering early is a good idea for the best selection and to give you plenty of time for stratification. There is a NARGS Zoom presentation, ***Succulents on the Rocks, on Saturday January 15, 2022 at 10:30 AM***. I believe there is a fee for that. The NARGS Rocks Zoom presentation from November 2021 was taped and is available on NARGS' website (again for a fee).



Blue leaved sedge (Carex ? platyphylla) with yellow leaves

One of the big questions for us is whether we might be able to meet in person in 2022. It still remains unclear, and the latest COVID variant isn't helping with that goal. We would have been able to do our seed processing



High falls on the West Branch Sacandaga River, Wells, NY

project; I removed the cobbles and stones down to a foot or 15 inches; added topsoil and sand, and added organic matter, including compost, old potting mix, coir, and occasionally peat moss. The goal was a porous soil fairly rich in organic matter, and the goal seems to have been met, after many bags of amendments. Primulas, ferns, and other shade loving perennials are doing well. Both of these beds are mulched every year, which helps to replenish the organic matter lost through oxidation. Standard advice for amending clay soil is not to add sand and just add organic matter. I believe if you have clay soil that adding sand can be helpful if added along with significant amounts of organic matter. Warning: if you're amending soil with not fully composted horse manure or wood chips, these can create a nitrogen sink in your soil (i.e. the wood chips or manure, which usually contains wood chips or sawdust, will tie

day at Ken Post Lab (KPL) this month, but I found that there were several restrictions (like no food and continuous mask wearing), so that wasn't very attractive for our several hours of seed processing. As of now I'm thinking we should do our February member's share meeting via Zoom (the February weather can be tricky) and consider a live meeting in March. I'm still wishing for a crystal ball!

So now I'm going to start talking dirty! Like most avid gardeners, soil is something I'm thinking about much of the time. I admit I may be a little obsessed at times, though in the past I wasn't obsessed enough about my rock garden soil to ensure adequate drainage. The first presentation in the November NARGS Rocks presentation was also soil obsessed and added a very large amount of organic matter to her sandy soil to ensure it would keep her woodland plants happy. The natural topsoil where I am is a silty loam, perhaps slightly heavier than the perfect loam, and slightly alkaline at pH 7.5. Some areas in my gardens have more challenging soil due to digging for the leach field in one area, and rocky fill in another area. Near the leach field the soil is more clayey, so I've added both sand and organic matter (compost and coir). Where there was rocky fill, the drainage was good, but this was an area with shade or part shade where I wanted to grow woodland plants. Changing the soil in this area was a longer



Lush tall moss, unidentified species

up nitrogen so it's not available for your plants); a friend learned this the hard way in her vegetable garden. If you're not already doing this, old potting mix (which is usually made from peat moss or coir and perlite or vermiculite) is a good amendment to loosen your soil. And old potting mix is readily available in the fall at the curb when people discard their chrysanthemums (normally grown as annuals) and potted annual plants.

I want to touch briefly on the controversy of using peat moss. Peat moss is built up remains of bog plants, chiefly sphagnum moss, from peat bogs. The plant residues in a peat bog don't break down due to the low pH and lack of oxygen (the peat moss build up in a wet environment). Peat moss will break down in your garden, as will any other organic amendment. Harvesting peat is considered environmentally detrimental in the British Isles. The United Kingdom is approximately the size of Oregon or twice the size of New York State and has a population of around 61 million (a bit overpopulated for my taste). Peat has been harvested for centuries in the UK for fuel and more currently for a soil amendment, and the UK has only a small percentage of the world's peatlands. I wouldn't say peat moss is the *best* source of organic matter for your garden. However, our peat moss comes from Canada, which has 25% of the world's peatlands, so at least it is more sustainable than peat harvesting in the UK. Like all controversies, there are multiple points of view on this. Of course, the most sustainable source of organic matter is one's own compost and leaf mold that doesn't require shipping from somewhere far away.

Happy holidays and hope to see you in 2022!

Report on Seed Packing

Carol Eichler, Plant Sales Chair

Like scenarios that I expect are happening at NARGS Chapters through the country – and maybe even internationally, our Chapter got together on Sunday, December 5th to package seeds for the annual NARGS seed exchange. We have been doing our part to package seeds for many years now.

For those members who were fully vaccinated we were able to gather at my house – we opted for this rather than meeting at our usual Ken Post Lab classroom, which was far more complicated to pull off. At peak time in the morning there were ten of us, fewer in the afternoon, for the 100 taxa we had committed to packaging. While that may not sound like many taxa to do, the process is very time-consuming and tedious.

But seed packaging is not just about the seeds. It always means a great time to socialize and to eat. We did a great deal of both. Thank you to all who brought goodies and who came to help.

The packaging process involves opening the envelopes of each donated seed, filling glassines with the suggested number of packets based on past interest and desirability, sealing with glue, labeling, recording, and placing the packets in numerical order in a provided tray. As you can see there are lots of moving parts. And the task is not made easier by the size of some seeds varying from small to miniscule.

Packaging is a labor of love for sure, made even more amazing when you consider the exchange offers between 3,500 to 4,000 taxa. Divide our commitment of 100 into that big number, then multiply times our 10 volunteers (as an average number of volunteers) and you'll get a sense of how much time and people are involved. To me, it's a miraculous process.

In spite of all the help and dedicated hours, we did not complete all 100 taxa that day. That meant some of us went home with homework to continue the packaging process. Our 100 taxa will all come together in another week or so packaged and ready to be sent off to the Delaware Chapter, who will take over order fulfillment beginning in early January. That's a whole other process!

Hats off to Laura Serowicz who as far as I can tell has been assembling and cataloging all the donated seeds, then packing and distributing boxes of seeds complete with other necessary supplies (I can only imagine how many that must be) to the packagers like us. She has never ever sent us an incomplete box of supplies, probably as a result of her years of experience performing this task.

In case you need to be reminded, seed ordering begins December 15th and for those who volunteered to help this year, you are granted the benefit of ordering an extra 10 genera, bringing the total order to 35. First or main round ordering ends on January 31st, and 2nd or surplus round ordering follows on March 1st. If you plan to order, it pays to submit your order early while selection is at its best, however it's good to know volunteers' orders are given priority fulfillment. You must be a NARGS member to order, one of the many benefits of being a member. Your order must be accompanied with a modest fee, and I for one am spoiled by the cost when compared to seed purchased from commercial suppliers.

NARGS has a great online system for placing your order too, including often times links to species photos. Unlike some people, I haven't done a good job of building a wish list in advance so choosing 35 genera out of literally thousands is a bit daunting but an annual ritual that I look forward to in the dark days of December. It becomes a great winter gardening activity!

Unfortunately, despite good intentions I did not take any photos of our Sunday gathering. I was too busy playing hostess, I guess. So, you'll just have to picture in your mind the group of us sitting around tables in the living room, another table with supplies, and the kitchen counters full of delectable goodies to nourish us. It sure beat a Zoom meeting!

The Rock Garden Meadow: A Contrast and Relief from the Rocky Garden

By Panayoti Kelaidis, Denver Botanic Gardens Outreach

If you are in a bonsai club, you're expected to have a lot of little trees beautifully trained in pots and not necessarily anything else in your garden. I've visited many a succulent collector in Southern California where the entire garden was bristling with cacti, aloes, agaves—anything succulent and not much else. The same phenomenon occurs with many collectors: dahlia, hosta, conifer, iris—most any specialist collection is often arrayed in rows often surrounded by bare soil. There are “native plant gardens” where any plant from beyond an arbitrary political boundary is eschewed, banished, reviled!

And then there are rock gardeners. I suppose you have alpine gardeners in Britain who may possess only teeny plants in pots—but in North America rock gardening is truly catholic (not necessarily in the religious sense! I'm Orthodox after all): I don't think I've ever visited a rock gardener in our continent who didn't have some special trees, unique shrubs, a patch of woodland and often a pond, a bog and perhaps even a dry spot with some cacti.

Rock gardens aspire to the peaks, but we are always nestled in reality. Our art exemplifies the Taoist principle expressed in chapter 11 of the *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu:

“Mold clay into a bowl
The empty space makes it useful....
Therefore, the value comes from what is there
But the use comes from what is not there.”

Perhaps the best example of a “not there” of rock gardening would be a meadow. The “alpine lawn” has been a feature described in many rock gardens—which can manifest itself in any number of forms. In Colorado many of us have patches of buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*) or blue gramma grass (*Bouteloua gracilis*) which are the dominant short grasses of the Great Plains. These provide an ideal matrix for spring and fall bulbs—not to mention perennials like *Liatris punctata*, that benefit from the competition of grass roots. For others a lawn can be a few square feet or yards of thyme or veronica that provide a contrast and relief from the rocky garden presence and venue for social plants.

Anyone who's designed a meadow knows it's every bit as tricky as creating a crevice or other rock garden. I've noticed a half dozen or more books on the subject published in just the last few years. Midwestern designers like Roy Diblik have raised the tall-grass prairie to new heights (so to speak) and I was transfixed when I visited Great Dixter: the “lawns” there are fantastic anthologies of indigenous orchids and all manner of wildflowers that have become increasingly rare in overpopulated Britain.

I invite you to sign up for NARGS last Webinar of this winter season scheduled for Saturday February 19th. This will be the first time I know of that an entire symposium has been dedicated to the creation of meadows and the use of grasses and graminoids in rock gardens. The talks are being orchestrated by Kenton Seth, better known for his crevice garden creations around the world: Kenton designs all manner of gardens, and meadows are especially near and dear to his heart. I have no doubt this Webinar will be revelatory and great fun: do check the NARGS website (www.nargs.org) in the coming months for further announcements and a sign up to this seminar!

For some views of a Colorado prairie check out this post: <http://prairiebreak.blogspot.com/2017/09/prairie-daze-magical-preserve-north-of.html>

AGM 2022 Stipends

By Carol Eichler, Plant Sales Chair

Want to attend the 2022 NARGS Annual General Meeting in Ithaca this June? Then you want to remember this date: January 1st.

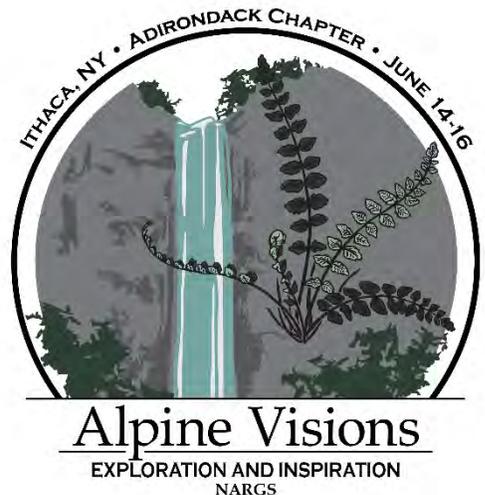
That's the date that stipend requests to assist with the registration fee is due. Just a reminder, our Chapter is offering \$300 stipends to our members, reducing the registration cost to \$150. Registrants will be able to fully participate in all activities at the meeting.

To apply for a stipend simply send an email to John Gilrein, <basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu> stating your intent to register and requesting the stipend. A committee will review the requests.

To be eligible, you must have been a member of our Chapter in 2020 and 2021 and must not have received a previous Chapter stipend to attend a NARGS meeting. There are no needs-based criteria. There is however the expectation that you will volunteer at the AGM and commit to volunteer to help with Chapter tasks.

Registration for the AGM will open January 31st. Stipend recipients will be notified approximately 2 weeks before. For additional details, please refer to the November issue of the Green Dragon. Remember the dates of the AGM are June 14–16, 2022.

As a footnote, Carol Eichler is the volunteer coordinator and will be contacting our membership starting in January. We will need lots of volunteers and most tasks will involve only a few minutes to a couple hours directing our out-of-town guests to the scheduled events such dining hall, lecture auditorium, plant sale, residence hall, etc. We hope to be able to allow any unregistered members to attend one of the talks, space permitting, on either Wednesday night, Thursday morning, or Thursday evening. All of our members are invited to attend the plant sales on both Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons and hopefully buy some plants. We've got some great nurseries participating.



Notes From the Schachen Garden Lecture by Jenny Wainwright-Klein

The Schachen Garden, founded in 1901, is a satellite garden of the Munich Botanical Garden. Located in the mountains some 70 miles south of Munich and accessible only by foot, it is open about 3 months of the year. Speaking to us live via Zoom from Germany, Jenny Wainwright-Klein has served as the supervisor of both the alpine propagation unit (since 2000) and of the Alpine Garden, altogether a career spanning 28 years. The cool, wet climate of this idyllically set garden located in the Wetterstein Mountains is favorable to over 1,000 species of plants endemic to the Himalayas, South Africa, Bavarian Alps, and even some North American species.

Growing Alpine at the Schachen Alpine Garden, a satellite garden of the Munich Botanic Garden

- Northern limestone Alps – Wettersteingebirge – 1850 m
- opened on the 14th July 1901 (opening ceremony in Garmisch-Partenkirchen on the 13th July 1901)

- 120 km south of Munich
- open for 3 months in the summer, from the middle of June until the beginning of September
- cool moist summers are the norm although, we are experiencing hotter drier summers most years since 2010
- 2000 mm precipitation p/a – approx. 600 mm in the 3 months the Garden is open
- snow lies until the end of May, north side of the Alps.
- the Alpine Garden is 8032 m² and ca. half of the area is planted

Internet and social media

- <https://www.foto-webcam.eu/webcam/meilerhuette/> In the centre of the photo you can spot the neighbours of the Alpine Garden, Schachenhaus and the Kings House
- https://www.botmuc.de/en/garden/schachen_alpine_garden.html
- https://www.botmuc.de/en/garden/alpine_gardens_map.pdf
- https://www.botmuc.de/en/garden/schachen_weather.html
- Facebook: Alpengarten Schachen
- Instagram: JennyWainwrightKlein
- European Alpine Gardens website <http://www.rambertia.ch/european-alpine-gardens/>

Plants In order of appearance:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| - Meconopsis x sheldonii (Mec. betonicifolia x Mec. grandis) | - Primula tyrolensis | - Felicia rosulata |
| - Meconopsis integrifolia ssp. souliei | - Primula minima | - Hirpicium armerioides |
| - Meconopsis punicea | - Saxifraga bursleriana | - Crassula setulosa |
| - Meconopsis x cookie 'Old Rose' | - Draba hoppeana | - Diascia barberae |
| - Meconopsis quintuplinervia | - Dianthus alpinus | - Felicia uliginosa |
| - Meconopsis paniculata | - Saponaria pumila | - Senecio macrospERMUS |
| - Meconopsis wallichii | - Dianthus callizonus | - Athrixia fontana |
| - Meconopsis simplicifolius | - Lilium carniolicum ssp. jankae | - Felicia drakensbergensis |
| - Meconopsis yaoshanensis | - Campanula alpina | - Ursina alpina |
| - Meconopsis balangensis var. atrata | - Primula amoena | - Kniphofia caulescens |
| - Meconopsis betonicifolia | - Daphne glomerata | - Berkheya multijuga |
| - Primula ioessa | - Campanula saxifraga ssp. aucheri | - Senecio macrocephalus |
| - Primula elliptica | - Linum hypericifolium | |
| - Primula ioessa ssp. subpinnatifida | - Campanula collina | |
| - Primula vialii | - Primula luteola | |
| - Primula glomerata | - Lilium monadelphum | |
| - Primula reptans | - Androsace laevigata | |
| - Androsace mucronifolia | - Androsace nivalis | |
| - Androsace muscoidea | - Toxicoscordion nuttallii | |
| - Primula munroi | - Primula parryi | |
| - Silene davidii | - Castilleja elmeri | |
| - Silene nigrescens | - Polemonium viscosum | |
| - Cremanthodium brunneipilosum | - Heuchera pulchella | |
| - Cremanthodium ellisii | - Mertensia ciliata | |
| - Aster farreri | - Townsendia rothrockii | |
| - Nomocharis oxypetalum ssp. insigne | - Ourisia caespitosa | |
| - Adonis pyrenaica | - Calceolaria biflora | |
| - Androsace carnea ssp. laggeri | - Celmisia semicordata | |
| - Ranunculus amplexicaulis | - Hebe hectorii | |
| - Ranunculus parnassifolius | - Olsynium junceum | |
| - Buglossoides gastonii | - Geranium multisetum | |
| - Gentiana angustifolia | - Delosperma nubigenum | |
| - Saxifraga retusa ssp. augustana | - Dierama pauciflora | |
| - Campanula excisa | - Helichrysum albobrunneum | |
| - Primula latifolia | - Zaluzianskya oreophila | |
| - Gentiana froelichii | - Moraea alpina | |
| - Primula wulfeniana | - Rhodohypoxis milloides | |
| | - Cotula socialis | |

Plants outside the Alpine Garden

- Primula auricula
- Primula farinosa
- Doronicum grandiflorum
- Ranunculus alpestris
- Silene acaulis
- Gentiana punctata
- Gentiana clusii
- Gentiana verna
- Clematis alpina
- Gymnadenia conopsea
- Nigritella nigra
- Traunsteinera globosa
- Gentiana pannonica
- Gentiana x laengstii
- Gentiana lutea
- Lilium martagon
- Campanula cochlearifolia
- Gentiana asclaepeadea
- Aconitum napellus
- Saxifraga caesia
- Saxifraga aizoides
- Eriophorum scheuchzeri
- Petrocallis pyrenaica
- Soldanella pusilla

Membership

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

This is a reminder that our membership year runs the calendar year. So starting January 1, everyone's membership will have expired and we all will need to renew. Rates are \$15 a year for an individual /

\$20 for a household. Hopefully we will be able to hold our plant sales and exchanges and members-only Plant-of-the-Month subsidized sales in 2022. I will send out an email reminder in January and there will be an announcement in the February newsletter. If you have questions please contact me at mes2@cornell.edu.

Upcoming 2021/2022 ACNARGS Programs

NOTE: Due to covid our meetings will take on a different format for the foreseeable future. We will hold live meetings via Zoom for now. For those of you unfamiliar with Zoom, contact Terry Humphries terryhumphres@gmail.com for assistance.

December 15: NARGS Seed Exchange ordering begins

June 14–16, 2022: NARGS Annual General Meeting, *Alpine Visions: Exploration and Inspiration* more information at <https://www.nargs.org/event/alpine-visions-exploration-and-inspiration-ithaca-ny-2022>

Upcoming 2021/2022 NARGS Programs

January 15, 2022: NARGS Study Day, *Succulents on the Rocks*. Fee.

February 19, 2022: NARGS Study Day, *Rock Gardening Does Meadows*. Fee.

Same great deal as before: If you're not yet a NARGS member — you must be one to watch these webinars — join for \$40 (lots of great benefits) and then you're eligible to get one webinar for just \$10 (regularly \$25)!

Don't forget, if you missed any of the *Woodlanders in the Rock Garden* webinar from November, the recorded videos are now available: <https://www.nargs.org/nargs-rocks-woodlanders-buy-ticket> (Look to the far right of the page under "Enter Here.")

Calendar of Select Events & Programs

[Cornell Cooperative Extension](#) gardening resources and information

[Cornell Botanic Gardens](#) events

[Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy](#) is offering two Zoom presentations by our friend Seamus O'Brien, the Garden Manager of the National Botanic Garden of Ireland at Kilmacurragh. He is an incredible plantsman, author, lecturer, and plant explorer. First talk: **Thursday, December 16th** at 11:00 AM PST. Second talk: **Thursday, January 13th** at 11:00 AM PST. Each Zoom talk is \$15 for FRBC members, \$20 for non-members.

[Finger Lakes Native Plant Society](#) monthly meetings. Celebrate the Winter Solstice with the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society! **Wednesday, December 15**, 7 pm via Zoom. In the spirit of festive, in-person solstice gatherings of pre-pandemic yore, the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society is hosting a virtual winter solstice event to bring a little mid-winter light into the lives of Finger Lakes plant lovers. Short presentations will include a visual tour of some botanical highlights of the past year, an introduction to a great new online flora of a favorite Finger Lakes park, a closer look at the gametophytes of maidenhair spleenwort, and so much more. There will even be chances to identify some winter mystery plants and win plant-related prizes. Registration required.

Visit www.flnps.org to register.

[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.

2021 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: Seeking someone to do this. **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



Carol Eichler's rock garden in December.