



ADIRONDACK
CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

September 2023

IN THIS ISSUE:

- September Program
- From the Chair
- Labrador Hollow Outing
- Membership
- POM
- Position open for New Member Hospitality
- 2023 NARGS & ACNARGS Calendar
- Other Garden Events
- Contacts

SEPTEMBER 30, 2023: JIM JERMYN

Terry Humphries, Program Chair

NOTE DATE: September 30

LOCATION: Nevin Welcome Center (upstairs) Cornell Botanic Gardens with on-site free (on week-ends) parking; 124 Comstock Knoll

TIMES: 10am 1st talk; break for BYO bag lunch; 12:30pm 2nd talk. Come for 1 or both. Join us for social time at lunch.



The NARGS speaker tour is making it possible for us to once again hear from Jim Jermyn, a man passionate about plants, their natural habitats, and the challenges of cultivating them in lowland gardens. The name may be familiar, as he came to us via Zoom in spring 2022. This time, we not only get to enjoy him in person, but we are making a day of it with two talks, once focusing on unusual plants from the other side of the globe, and the other providing cultivation tips from his vast experience as a nurseryman, horticulturalist, and head gardener.

The Talks:

10a.m. *Growing Alpine Plants in True Character*

For many of us who are enthralled with Alpine plants, the challenge is to attempt to emulate their true character in a relatively lowland garden.

Having studied alpine plants in their native habitat for several decades, Jim is keen, when trying to grow the same plants in the garden, to try and re-enact similar conditions. This has resulted in the frequent use of tufa and the construction of crevice gardens, whether in the form of a raised bed or in troughs.



Physoplexis comosa

Jim plans to provide useful insights as to how we might successfully to grow a diversity of plants from all parts of the world. His practical information will surely inspire us to take up new challenges in our own gardens.

Break for bring you own bag lunch. Our break should be a full hour, maybe more. You may wish to use some of this time to explore the Cornell Botanic Gardens surrounding the Nevin Welcome Center. Refreshments to share are most welcome!

12:30 p.m. - A Look at some of Japan's Finest Alpine and Woodland Plants



Spectacular autumn color in the mountains on Hakkaido

Japan is host to one of the most botanically rich as well as diverse floras in the world and fortunately many of its endemic genera can be easily grown.

Despite its small size, Japan is relatively rich in plants, notably Alpine and Woodland species. There are over 550 species represented in the Japanese Alpine zone, of which around 180 are endemic. Join Jim as

he shares experiences from a seed collecting trip to Japan he took with the Alpine Garden Society one autumn years ago. The trip centered mainly on the island of Hokkaido.

While he was unable to enjoy the Spring delights of the high mountains, he has been given permission to show slides taken by joint Tour leader, Atsushi Kuyama from trips he has made in the Alpine zone at flowering time.

Look out for choice Woodlanders, from Shortia to Glaucidium as well as exciting Alpine plants, including *Dicentra peregrina*, *Gentiana algid*, *Sorbus matsmurae* and many ericaceous species.

About Jim Jermyn

Jim has had a long career in the horticultural industry and, as well as being a world-renowned Alpine plant expert, he has also operated a successful nursery, specializing in Alpine and Woodland plants as well as exhibiting at the very highest level.

After obtaining his horticultural qualifications in 1973 at the Hertfordshire College of Agriculture and Horticulture, Jim held a variety of posts in Germany (Munich Botanic Gardens), Italy and the U.K. and for twenty years was the proprietor of Scotland's distinguished Edrom Nurseries, which was established in 1930. He has led many botanical tours to the Dolomites and was Horticultural Consultant and Show Manager for Gardening Scotland, Scotland's national Gardening Show, held in Edinburgh and the Ayr Flower Show. In January 2017 he took up the post of Property Manager/Head Gardener for the National Trust for Scotland's Branklyn Garden in Perth. The garden enjoyed its centenary in 2022. Recently retired, Jim is currently a horticulture consultant, lecturer, and volunteer. He plans, in due course, to once again offer a limited range of plants and seeds on a commercial scale.

He is a frequent lecturer on garden topics in the UK, U.S.A., Canada and shortly in New Zealand. Jim has written several books related to plants and gardens: *The Himalayan Garden*, *Growing Plants from the Roof of the World*; *Alpine Plants of Europe, a Gardeners Guide*; *Mountain Flower Walks: The Eastern Alps, including the Dolomites*.

Jim currently serves as a committee member on the Royal Horticulture Society Joint Rock committee along with his role as a Trustee of the Merlin Trust. He has recently joined the Charity Trellis as one of the Board of Directors. He is currently a Horticultural Consultant with J&A Consultancy, based in Haddington, East Lothian, in the eastern lowlands of Scotland.

For this meeting we are meeting in the upstairs conference room in the Nevin Welcome Center, Cornell Botanic Gardens, 124 Comstock Knoll, Cornell University. The Gardens have a parking lot which is free on week-ends.

Just a reminder, we ask all attendees to be fully vaccinated. With covid on the rise at the time of publication, do pay attention to current CDC, NYS, and Cornell covid protocol. At this time masks are recommended but not required masks, though you may choose to wear one. Please do not attend if you are not feeling well.

FROM THE CHAIR

John Gilrein, Chair

We've gone from an exceptionally dry spring (May) to a wet summer. The hose here has hardly been used since June. One upside of this summer's weather is that the seedlings

transplanted into my rock garden have generally thrived, with a minor amount of watering. All you rock gardeners know though that it seems one can never have 100% success planting in one's rock garden – possibly bare rooting the plants takes its toll sometimes.

You all know about deadheading – removing the seeds from a flowering plant before they fully develop, which reduces (possibly eliminates) self-sowing, and allows the plant to use its energy to grow vegetatively, and/or rebloom in some cases. Beyond deadheading is a process that I call giving a plant a “haircut”. I’ll discuss some plants that get a haircut in my rock garden, and I’m sure that other plants could benefit from the process. Of course, when one wants more self-sowing or seeds to harvest, some of the seeds will need to remain on the plant(s) until they’ve matured. *Aurinia saxatilis* (syn. Alyssum), basket of gold, I’d consider a rock garden plant, though a bit big and susceptible to partial die off. It’s good at self-seeding. For this plant I take handfuls of leaves with immature seeds and snip well back into the foliage, removing the young seeds and shaping the plant. It looks a bit sparse afterward, but the plant will recover with a smaller and more pleasing shape. There is a dwarfer version of this plant available, but I haven’t seen it via mail order. *Iberis sempervirens* (candytuft) is another fairly large rock garden plant and can get fairly loose and wide. I like to give it a haircut just like Aurinia, and any overly long stems can be cut at the same time to control the size. If you have the dwarfer species of Iberis, *I. saxatilis*, it won’t need nearly as much trimming as it’s a much more compact plant. Euphorbia myrsinites, myrtle spurge, is another vigorous re-seeder. My haircut technique is to cut the stems with seeds back close to the crown and leave the current year’s stems (which have not yet flowered). The result is a smaller plant. One could just cut off the developing seeds, but I prefer the reduced plant size. Bonus, this euphorbia is longer lived when it doesn’t go to seed. NOTE: one should wear gloves when cutting euphorbias to avoid the sap or cut with caution and let the trimmings dry a day before removing from the garden. *Alyssum argenteum* is a sub-shrubby alyssum, very unlike the small trailing species and Aurinia. A good haircut for this plant is to cut the flowering stems with developing seeds down close to the crown to allow new stems to develop, and possibly reflower. *Lavandula vera*, lavender, also benefits from trimming to remove old flowering stems and shape the plant, though I have to confess to little practice at this. I’m thinking about Penstemon hirsutus, a very easy plant in well drained or rock garden soil. I’m experimenting with just deadheading or removing all the stems with seeds down to the crown – the jury is still out on which may be best.

I hope you’re having a successful gardening summer!



Habenaria orbiculata



Habenaria psychodes



Habenaria psychodes

A TRIP TO LABRADOR HOLLOW: A BOTANICAL OUTING

Carol Eichler

How do you turn a 30-minute hike into a 2-hour stroll? By botanizing along the way! This is what plants people refer to as “a botanical pace.” A small but intrepid group ventured out to Labrador Hollow outside of Tully, officially a NYS Unique Area. The hills rise suddenly, formed by deposits from the terminal moraine of the last glacier, which also carved out the narrow valleys. Now heavily forested and state owned, it is distinctly beautiful. A 2,000-foot-long boardwalk loop offers a great view of the flora in this wetland. At the furthest point the walk looks out upon Labrador Pond. The view of the adjacent hills is reminiscent of a secluded Adirondack lake (see photo).



With John Gilrein as our guide, we (mostly John) were able to identify a remarkable number of native plants and relatively few invasives (what you might expect: honeysuckle, buckthorn, purple loosestrife). Afterwards, John easily assembled a list of 40 natives that we observed. Pictured here are false violet (*Dalibarda repens* right) and swamp rose (*Rosa palustris* left). The wild blueberries were ripe too! In spring the pinxter azaleas (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*)



are such a treat and still to come were the late summer bloomers – the goldenrods and asters, which could very well be starting to bloom now.



Just beyond the access road to this walk it's a short drive and walk to Tinkers Falls (photo of our group minus Carol as photographer right), also worth a stop. If you're really ambitious, there are several miles of hiking trails, including one that begins at the Falls and goes to an overlook and popular hang-gliding launch point.



Some of us proceeded to lunch at the Blue Canoe and then on to Nelson Swamp, another NYS unique area outside of Cazenovia. It was not as impressive unless you're fond of horsetail and mosquitoes. We were hopeful to see wild orchids but no luck.

Perhaps this article will pique your interest to check out these truly “unique areas.”

MEMBERSHIP

Mary Stauble, *Membership Coordinator*

Wow!!! We have five new members to welcome this month!

Jane Milliman is from Rochester and is the publisher and editor of Upstate Gardeners' Journal - I'm sure many of us enjoy every issue!

Current member Frank Bittman (blog at katob427.com) brought three friends from the Scranton, PA area to the August plant sale - Lisa Lindquist, Kimberley Protzman and Kevin Sowa.

And Ellie Sussman from Trumansburg also joined at our August sale.

If you haven't yet renewed for 2023 it's not too late - you already know the many benefits and we have 3 meetings left! The mail-in form is at www.acnargs.org/join.pdf or you can join at our September meeting. Membership is for the calendar year; dues are \$15 for individual and \$20 for household. If you have any questions email me at mes2@cornell.edu

I will be attaching an ACNARGS Membership Directory to September's email newsletter announcement. Please let me know if you have any corrections to your entry.

PLANT OF THE MONTH: ALLIUM CYATOPHORUM FARRERI

Marlene Kobre, POM Coordinator

September is a tough month for ordering a POM. By then most nurseries' stock has been depleted, so bulbs become the feasible choice. Many of the bulb suppliers, however, can't ship until October because they don't receive Holland bulbs until late September. But once again Brigitta Stewart, owner of Arrowhead Nursey in Michigan, has come to the rescue. She is able to supply enough bulbs of the chosen selection and can ship them to arrive in time for our Sept. 30 meeting.

A member of the Lily family, the Allium genus is huge, with over 900 species, many familiar ones like garlic, onions, and leeks are grown for their culinary and even medicinal usefulness. The name Allium is said to derive from a Greek word for garlic—the verb “aleo” that means “to avoid.” Lucky for us, there's no shortage of Alliums with great ornamental value, and I hope you will agree that *A. cyatophorum farreri* counts among them. It is native to mountains in western China, growing at elevations as high as 11,000 ft. The species name means “cupbearing,” which accurately describes the flower's structure: many scapes topped with nodding clusters of pendant flowers. To me this offers a refreshing alternative to the many Alliums with often enormous globe-shaped domes.



Allium cyatophorum farreri

Photo courtesy Plant World Seeds

Description and Cultivation Requirements

HZ 5-8 (with at least one source claiming hardiness to zone 4)

Bloom Time: Late spring to early summer

Height: Descriptions ranging from 5"-12", but agreement about its suitability for the rock garden.

Foliage and Flower Color: Thin blades form a grassy clump and flowers are described variously as "good purple," violet-purple, and purple-pink.

Light, Moisture, and Soil: This Allium is unique among its flowering relatives: it thrives in acidic, moist but well-drained soil and tolerates partial shade. If you have clay soil, amend it with grit or coarse sand to insure adequate drainage.

Planting Advice: As soon as it arrives in autumn plant 5-10 cms (2"-4") deep.

Benefits: Rabbit and deer resistant (I guess both understand Greek), attracts pollinators.

Caveats: Toxic to dogs and cats.

CHAPTER VOLUNTEER POSITION OPEN

Graham Egerton and Anne Redfern have been sending out new member welcome packets for several years. It is now time to pass the torch to a new volunteer. Please let John Gilrein know if you are interested. He can describe what is involved. Normally we do not have many new members in a year (this year being the exception) so the time commitment is minimal. New members get a welcome packet in the mail. However, you are welcome to build on what they've been doing if you are so inclined. John can talk about his ideas for that too.

NARGS & ACNARGS UPCOMING 2023 PROGRAMS

September 30, 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.: Jim Jermyn, NARGS Traveling Speaker from Scotland. Note this is the 5th Saturday of the month. **NOTE: For this meeting only, we are meeting in-person in the large upstairs meeting room at Cornell Botanic Gardens, Nevin Welcome Center. 124 Comstock Knoll.**

October 21: Program meeting, speaker to be announced.

November 11: Program meeting, speaker to be announced. Note this is the 2nd Saturday of the month due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

Join the ACNARGS member forum. Share photos, ask questions, and more. Contact Carol Eichler carolithaca@gmail.com to be invited to this closed google group.

CALENDAR OF SELECT AREA GARDEN EVENTS

For the latest information, visit the websites of these gardening organizations.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. Online program information: cctompkins.org

Finger Lakes Native Plant Society monthly meetings – a hybrid of in-person and zoom: <https://flnps.org/> Recordings of past programs are available to view online.

Cornell Botanic Gardens: <https://cornellbotanicgardens.org/explore/events/>

Habitat Gardening in CNY, local Wild Ones Chapter: <https://www.hgcny.org/>

To have your garden event listed send all pertinent information to Susanne Lipari, sel3@cornell.edu

2023 ACNARGS BOARD MEMBERS AND CONTACTS

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

Chair (aka head honcho): John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu

Program Coordinator: Terry Humphries, terryehumphries@gmail.com

Program Committee Members: Would you like to help? Share your speaker suggestions!

Secretary: Currently rotating amongst "Responsible People"

Treasurer (aka CFO): Marlene Kobre

Plant Sales Chair: Carol Eichler carolithaca@gmail.com

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

Membership: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu

New Member Hospitality: this position is open

Newsletter Editor: Susanne Lipari, Sel3@cornell.edu

Wurster Garden Coordinator: Carol Eichler carolithaca@gmail.com

Wurster Volunteers: Elaine Caso, Marguerite Fabrizio, Ellen Lane, Sheila Stone. Others always welcome! Contact Carol Eichler if you wish to be added to the email list.

Book Order Manager: New NARGS program to offer NARGS' members select books at deeply discounted prices. New Chapter position. Looking for a volunteer!

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

ABOUT US – ADIRONDACK CHAPTER NARGS

We are an all-volunteer organization and one of thirty-eight NARGS affiliated chapters active in North America. Our annual Chapter activities include 6 program-speaker meetings, the Green Dragon newsletter, web and Facebook pages, garden visits, occasional 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), invitations to our garden day trips, 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.

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 a wealth of information including current and archived of Quarterly's, recordings of past study days and more. NARGS National also 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.

GREEN DRAGON TALES

Published eight times a year (Jan./Feb., March, April, May/June, July/Aug., Sept., Oct. Nov./Dec. Submit articles no later than the fourth Friday of the month preceding the monthly publication to Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be October 2023.