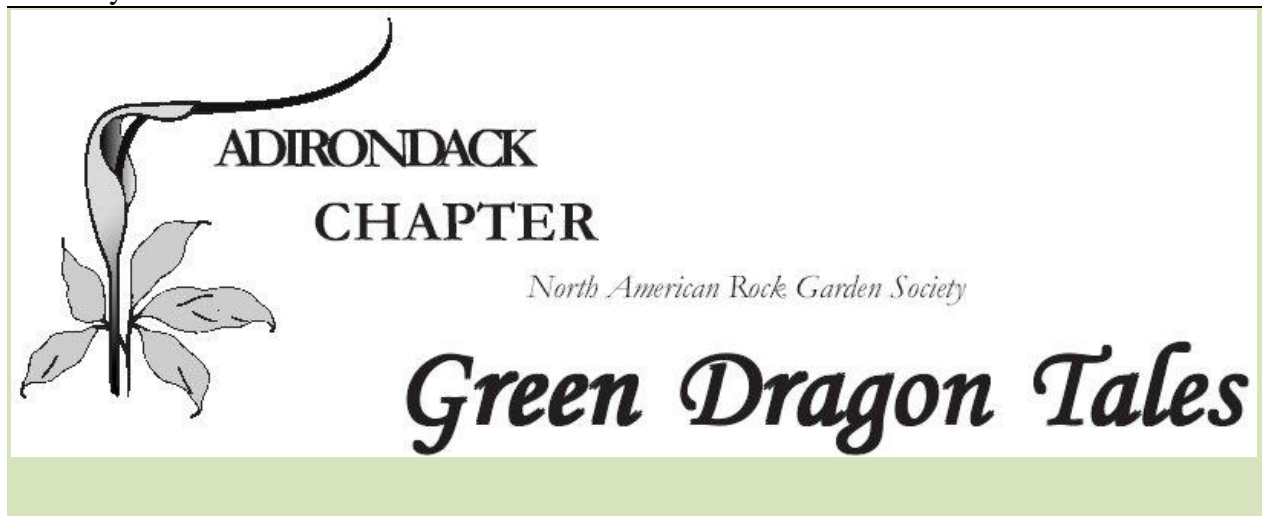


February 25



February 2025

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DATE : SATURDAY , FEBRUARY 15 , 2025 , 1 : 00 PM

Terry Humphries, Program Chair

ACNARGS Annual Members Share Meeting
Whetzel Room 404 Plant Science Building



On February 15th we will kick off our program year with our annual Members Share Meeting and hope that you will share some of your favorite aspects of gardening with the group.

We always inspire each other with our common interest in plants, and the Members Share meeting is a great way to focus on the gardening year ahead. Do you have any photos from your own garden or from your travels that you can share? We want to see your favorite plants, a garden that inspired you, or a beautiful natural area you visited. Or share

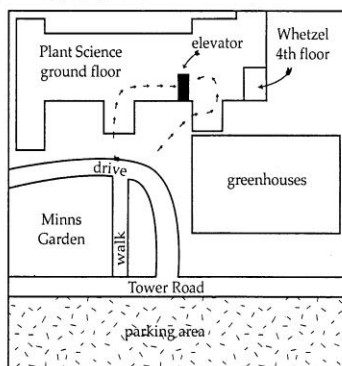
an experience about building a garden or growing special plants. Members are eager to learn and we all have so much to share!!

Our meeting will be held in Room 404 Whetzel Room, Plant Science Building, Cornell University (see map on last page). We will catch up with a brown bag lunch at noon. Drinks will be provided; snacks and goodies to share are always welcome. Our program begins at 1:00 p.m.

If you don't have digital photos, why not create a poster of prints or demonstrate a technique that works for you.? All are encouraged. Don't be shy! We are allotting 10-15 minutes per person, so plan accordingly. We already have a few people lined up to present but can use more. Please, if you plan to present, contact both Terry (terryehumphries@gmail.com) AND Craig

(cdcramer@gmail.com) by February 10. By the 12th, send your presentation by attachment or link, so that Craig can coordinate the AV setup. Should you need instructions on how to do that, Craig will walk you through the steps. If you want to bring your images on a thumb drive for backup, that is always a good idea.

*****NOTE: Our meetings are back at Whetzel Room,
Room 404 Plant Sciences Building
236 Tower Road, Cornell University! ******



The west wing of the Plant Sciences Building has been shut down for renovations. But those won't start until next year sometime. So other than having those hallways walled off, everything should look pretty much as it did last time you were here. Remember the elevator to the 4th floor and then exit right down the long hallway. You will be facing the Whetzel Room.

Just a reminder, we ask all attendees to be fully vaccinated. Additionally, we will be following CDC, NYS, and Cornell covid protocol, which at this time does not require masks though you may choose to do so. Please do

not attend if you are not feeling well.

FROM THE CHAIR

John Gilrein, Chair

OK, I guess it's really 2025 since I'm writing in the title! You should know your chapter isn't just hibernating until spring, we're actually working on our plans for 2025. Between now and spring is a great time to catch up on reading (especially gardening books), peruse plant catalogs, plan some of your garden work for the spring and summer, and order some new plants for your garden.

I hope you will come out in the cold and join us for our February member's share program on February 15. Terry has been working on programs for the year. Once again we expect to benefit from the NARGS speaker program. The speaker for 2025 is Paul Cumbleton, from Somerset County, UK. We'll move the date of our meeting earlier from the normal 3rd Saturday of the month to either the first or second Saturday of the month.

I anticipate there will be another trip to Stonecrop Gardens (Cold Spring, NY) to be there during the annual plant sale, probably Saturday April 26. Stonecrop doesn't list events this early in the year, so the plant sale has not been listed yet on their website. It's hard to imagine this extremely popular event, which also raises funds for Stonecrop, would be omitted. Last year we added tours to 2 private gardens and 2 public gardens to make this a 2 to 3 day trip and I'm planning to do the same this year. Some people included a visit to interesting nurseries within driving distance, including Oliver (Fairfield), and Catskill Native Plant Nursery (Kerhonksen). Last year was a wonderful weekend of seeing gardens with fellow gardeners, and plant shopping at some great nurseries. Stay tuned for the details.

We would like to participate in some form in the Cooperative Extension spring plant sale. The form of this plant sale has yet to be determined. We keep hoping for the return of the Garden Fair,

the big plant sale at Ithaca High School with 50 or so vendors – TBD if Extension will opt for a sale like this.

Our chapter-only plant sale and lunch we're planning for May at Myer's Point, Lansing. We may have to adjust our date based on the CCE plant sale.

The NARGS annual meeting (AGM) will be held at Cheyenne Botanic Garden in Cheyenne, WY this year June 12-16, 2025, titled Peaks and Prairies. Check the NARGS website in early February for more information.

I'm working on a local day trip of garden tours for this year, details To Be Announced.

MEMBERSHIP

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

Our heartfelt thanks to all who renewed your membership for 2024! It's time to renew for 2025! The ACNARGS membership year runs the calendar year. So, unless you've already renewed or you're a lifetime member, your 2025 membership is due now (Individual @\$15, Household @\$20). If you have not renewed, you will see a reminder message in the email announcing this newsletter.

Print and complete the 2025 Membership form now: <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf> or you can save a stamp and renew in person at our February meeting. Questions? Contact Mary at mes2@cornell.edu

While it's true that our meetings are free and open to everyone, there are advantages to becoming a member: mainly our members-only plant-of-the-month at discounted prices and our May and August member-only plant sales. Any of these can easily recoup the cost of your dues. And ... you can never have too many plants!

We hope to see all of you in 2025!

NEWS FROM NARGS NATIONAL

Carol Eichler, NARGS Director-at-Large

Another NARGS Rocks! Study Day is coming on January 25th and the theme is "From the Ground Up." It's a chance to explore in-depth methods and techniques of propagation and learn from the experts. For those of us who like me attempt to grow rock garden plants from seed, you know there are challenges, but also rewards. For those you haven't gotten the bug to do so, this study day just might tempt you to give seeds a try – or one of the other propagation techniques. The scheduling of this webinar is timed to roughly coincide with the receipt of NARGS' first round seed exchange. Or in time to get inspired and order from the second round of the exchange. The information about the study day is now available on the NARGS website, nargs.org.

By my own admission I consider myself to still be a novice at this. However, here are a couple of unsolicited words of advice. Start with some easy species. Here are some genera that I've had generally good luck with germination: *Aethionema*, *Dianthus*, *Draba*, *Linaria*, and *Silene* species, less so *Allium* and *Aquilegia* (plus there are generally a good number of species in all these genera to choose from). Realize that some seeds require a cold period; that's something I didn't realize. Remember, small seed equates to small seedlings and that makes transplanting a rather tedious project. Hopefully, the study will touch on transplanting techniques too. Lastly, don't get discouraged. I'm always excited when I get germination, but I know that is just the beginning of a

long road to a plant's survival. As I always say, there are many ways to kill a plant. A wise gardener once told me, the best gardeners kill the most plants. In other words, keep trying.

Did you catch the NARGS Rocks Study Day on Nov. 16 on "The Ecological Garden?" In my opinion, it was excellent. There's still a chance to register and view the recordings of all the presenters. I've been pondering some take-aways from the NARGS study day.

The presenters were from the west where the climate is much drier and many of the plants they spoke of would struggle to survive in the northeast where I live. Rather than trying to preserve and "save" plants that are not native here and often a cause for failure (though nevertheless we try), we might more appropriately turn to our local native plants, many of which are also struggling for survival.

No matter where we live, native plants are threatened by many of the same factors such as climate change, loss of habitat, and land development. Countering these threats are the numerous efforts to support plant preservation. As gardeners we can do our part, however small it may feel, to include growing some native plants in our own gardens. We can be part of the solution – a ray of hope for the future.

A TASTE OF SOUTH AFRICA

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

South Africa encompasses the whole southern tip of the African continent. It has an outrageous amount of botanical diversity in a country with an area slightly less than twice the size of Texas. There is a large variation in climate, from the Mediterranean climate of Cape Town, the humid subtropical east coast, interior steppe, and the warm to cool temperate grassland of the high country in the Drakensberg Mountains. The elevation of the Drakensberg varies from around 6,000 feet to the highest point at a little above 11,400 feet near Lesotho, and the range runs around 600 miles long. Most of the Drakensberg has adequate summer rainfall and is relatively dry in the winter. The higher elevations are comparable to USDA Zones 6 & 7, thus this area includes plants which would be hardy for at least most, if not all, of us.

Some of the native plants from South Africa not hardy for us are aloes, proteas, callas, clivias, society garlic (*Tulbaghia*), and ice plants like *Delosperma* (which vary in their hardiness but don't like wet winters). Plants that are both hardier and rewarding from here include *Agapanthus* (lily of the Nile), *Diascia* (twinspur), *Dierama* (angels fishing rod), *Eucomis* (pineapple lily), *Kniphofia* (torch lily), *Leonotus* (lion's tail), and *Phygelius* (cape primrose). The folly of common names: *Agapanthus* does not grow anywhere near the Nile, and *Phygelius* is far from a primrose. Many of the less hardy South Africans are happy as potted plants brought in for the winter (*Aloe maculata*), or geophytes protected during winter dormancy in a basement (callas). I did manage to get a society garlic through the winter one year in the ground, but this is not likely to be repeated.

Hardiness ratings are an estimate based on a least some experience, but some of the hardier South African plants have likely not been fully tested in colder temperate zones like our Zones 4, 5, and 6. I believe it's worthwhile pushing the envelope a bit, considering the warmer winters we're experiencing, along with careful management to encourage the plants to sail through winter. And it's worth noting that some plant catalogs are much more conservative in their hardiness zone ratings for their plants. Some tips for getting marginally hardy plants through winter include: planting on the south side of a house, wall, large rock, or evergreen shrub; a thick layer of winter

mulch; ensuring or enhancing drainage; and a winter cover, like a bag of leaves, a bale of hay, or basket filled with leaves. I have resorted at times to burying plants/troughs in snow, which at least works for me in many winters as I live in a snow belt. When planting a marginally hardy plant, one should avoid planting in heavy clay, a low spot, an exposed or windy site, etc.

Here's some information and suggestions about the hardier South African plants. These plants want adequate summer moisture, though they are mostly tolerant of a moderate amount of dryness in New York State, and they want a sunny location. They will all be happiest with good winter drainage. Kniphofias are the hardiest of this lot, with several species listed as hardy to Zone 5. There are many species of kniphofias, which have torchlike blooms in green, white, yellow, orange, or red (sometimes multicolored). Harold grew one species which was very large (2-3 feet tall); mine are in the range of 16". Diascias are sometimes sold as annuals. The variety "Coral Canyon" sold by High Country is the hardiest I know of, and mine has made it through 2 winters so far without any exceptional care. I did plant 'Coral Canyon' in a well-drained sunny site amended with a little sand. Agapanthus is a lovely plant with blue-violet, violet, or white flowers. *A. campanulatus* is the hardiest species and deciduous; unfortunately, plants are not always listed with the species epithet. Likely any Agapanthus listed as hardy for Zone 5 or 6 would be this species. Evergreen ones are not winter hardy but are good as potted plants (protected in winter). I've had very good success with overwintering Agapanthus in the garden without special care. I was surprised several years ago upon seeing 2 different Eucomis plants at Diana Smith's garden. I bought plants from her, which didn't come with identification. Eucomis is deciduous and has overwintered for me in 2 different locations for several years. If you purchase one, look for a hardier species; 'Sparkling Burgundy' is listed as Zone 6 hardy. Eucomis is supposed to be a bulb like geophyte, but to my eye looks more like a standard perennial. I expect it would overwinter well indoors dormant, and that's worth trying if you have clay soil. I managed to overwinter Phygelius years ago (beginner's luck?). I no longer have it, possibly due to it getting shaded out by other plants, but I want to try it again, especially now that winters are getting milder. Phygelius comes in an array of colors including yellow, pink, and red. Dierama is a plant that's new to me. I have one in the ground, and it's to be determined how it will fare through the winter. Last but not least is *Leonotus leonurus* is a mint that grows a few feet tall with attractive, tubular orange flowers; it's a favorite with sunbirds in Africa, so our hummingbirds would probably love it. Reading about it this fall made me want to grow it, though reputedly only hardy to Zone 8. Maybe it would do well dug up for the winter, or alternatively I could try rooting cuttings for overwintering.

Here are some nurseries which carry some of the hardy South African plants: Bluestone Perennials, Plant Delights, Far Reaches Farm, Digging Dog Nursery, and High Country Gardens. I hope you can try one of these.

NARGS & ACNARGS UPCOMING 2025 PROGRAMS

2025 ACNARGS Program Plans

March 15 *Ferns* (Title TBD)
James "Eddie" Watkins, Colgate University

Identifying Ferns the Easy Way: A Pocket Guide to Common Ferns of the Northeast

Lynne Levine, MA Forester, VT

April 19 *Four Passes in the Andes*

Barbara Cooper and Bella Seiden, Toronto

May 24 or 31 *Plant Sale*

August 23 *Member-only Plant Sale*

September 20 *The Perennial Plant Collector's Treasure Chest*

Kerry Mendez Kennebunk, ME

October 11 *NARGS Traveling speaker (two talks)*

Alluring Alpine

Crevice Gardens

Paul Cumbleton, Somerset UK

November 15 *Seeing Seeds,*

Teri Dunn Chace

NOTE: As of now, we are meeting in-person at Cornell in the Whetzel Room and not recording the sessions.

CALENDAR OF SELECT AREA GARDEN EVENTS

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

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. Online class information:
ccetompkins.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/>

Liberty Hyde Bailey Garden Club: <http://www.hort.cornell.edu/LHBGC/>

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

2025 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, terryhumphries@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 mkobre@ithaca.edu

Plant Sales Chair: Carol Eichler carolithaca@gmail.com

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

Membership: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu

Newsletter Editor: Susanne Lipari sel3@cornell.edu

Wurster Garden Coordinator: Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com

Wurster Volunteers: Elaine Caso, 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 Susanne Lipari, sel3@cornell.edu. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be March 2025