



ADIRONDACK
CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

July/August 2024

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Notice: This is the last Green Dragon before the Member Plant Sale!

AUGUST 17, 2024: PLANT SALE

Carol Eichler, Plant Sale Coordinator

Our August members only plant sale is coming right up. Didn't we just have the spring sale? How time flies! We're back at Myer's Park in Lansing, hopefully in our usual picnic shelter (there was a big screw-up for our May sale). We're also holding the sale on our traditional 3rd Saturday of the month – so that would be Saturday, August 17.

We'll run the sale the way we've run it for years – why fix what isn't broken? Bring plants if you have some to share – expect to see some special, limited-in-number plants. Be prepared to buy plants (as if you needed encouragement!). There are sure to be some "grown-on" seedlings, often rare plants that nurseries don't sell, and our pricing can't be beat. Our rock garden table selections have increased in recent years.

As usual, your plant sale coordinator (me) needs help with set-up and more importantly with clean-up. Please contact Carol (carolithaca@gmail.com) to volunteer. After a busy morning, (if you're like me) you'll be ravenous. The a dish-to-pass lunch is another tradition. Casseroles and cookies may be calling but let's all pitch in to clean-up so that we can enjoy lunch together. The chapter will provide beverages. Remember to bring your own table setting!

Here's the schedule:

- 9:00 a.m. Set-up begins at Pavilion B at Myers Park, Lansing
- 10:00 a.m. Plan to arrive if you are bringing plants (labelled please) and place them alphabetically by Latin name
- 10:30 a.m. Sale begins (and no earlier but it might be a bit later if need be)
- Time TBD: Sale concludes, and cashier opens to take your payment. The sale usually lasts about an hour. Then...
- EVERYONE PITCHES IN TO CLEAN-UP and set-up for lunch
- 12:30 p.m. (approximately) Dish-to-Pass is announced, if we finish earlier, we eat earlier!

Advance Logistics: The 3rd Saturday comes early so...

- Begin to pot your plant donations at the end of July
- Remember to use soil-less potting mix (not garden soil or what is labelled as top soil). Chances are we all have jumping worms. But if you think you do not, we suggest taking the extra measure to bare root any plant purchases before setting them out in your garden (and dispose—the removed soil compost—the removed soil).
- Label your plants in advance please.

Day of Sale Logistics: As you arrive, we ask that you place the plants that you bring on the appropriate tables, which will have signage so plants will be in roughly alphabetical order. Our sale procedure will be essentially the same as previous years (which I won't go into here; if need be, refer to past newsletters).

Silent Auction Table: Special plants should be placed on the bid table. With our pricing system maxing out at \$7, anything priced above \$7 automatically goes to the auction table. The auction will be open throughout the sale for some friendly bidding competition.

Directions to Myers Park and the Pavilion: Take 34B (whether approaching from the north or south). Before the bridge over Salmon Creek, turn onto Myers Road, towards the lake. If you miss the turn, this road forms a loop so it intersects 34B again after you cross the bridge. The entrance to Myers Park is ahead at the stop sign on Myers Road. You will cross the railroad tracks. Pavilion B is located near the marina with ample parking available. If you are not a Lansing resident, you may have to pay an entrance fee.

FROM THE CHAIR

John Gilrein, Chair

Last week was a clear reminder that we're leaving spring behind and heading into summer. We had a successful garden tour in Onondaga County on June 8, and as usual, the gardens were all different. I'm sorry that some of you who were planning to go could not make the tour. As a reminder, many of us gardeners are happy to open our gardens to fellow gardeners at other times, and our chapter directory indicates the people who have an open garden (i.e. are happy to allow visitors for planned visits). Gardeners are a sociable lot, and it's fun to share a garden with other like-minded people. So, if you are interested in a private garden tour, contact the gardener – advance notice is always helpful.

It's time to think about collecting seed from your garden for NARGS (and yourself or friends). Spring bloomers are already going to seed and some already have mature seeds ready for the picking. I've donated to NARGS the last few years and I'm getting a little better at remembering to start to

collect seeds. The seeds get mailed in October, so there's still plenty of time to gather seeds of the later blooming/ripening plants. Email me if you need some tips on cleaning seed [jjgilrein@twcny.rr.com]; it's not difficult, you don't need to clean them perfectly, mostly what's needed is separating the viable seeds from the dry pods, leaves, etc.

A few of us went on a nature/plant exploration walk at Chaumont limestone pavement barrens this month. This is a Nature Conservancy preserve northwest of Watertown, NY. It's an interesting habitat, with shallow soil over limestone. The plants there are subject to both inundation and drought, so they have to be tough! Some of the interesting plants include wood lily (*Lilium philadelphicum*), prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*), penstemon (*Penstemon hirsutus*), and *Houstonia longifolia*, a relative of bluets. The castillejas eluded us, as they were well off the trail.



Hope to see you at our next event, the August plant sale/picnic on Saturday August 17.

MEMBERSHIP

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

Please welcome 2 new members! Julia Lampman is from Aurora and came as a guest of Debbie to the May plant sale. Sue Gardner is from Barneveld and was a guest of Terry on our June garden tour.

If you have not yet renewed for 2024 dues are \$15 for individuals, \$20 for a household - perhaps you will be able to take advantage of our member benefits in 2024! That includes plant-of-the-month and the August plant sale. Check my email announcement of the newsletter link for your membership status. The renewal form is at <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf>. Contact Mary Stauble at mes2@cornell.edu if you have any questions.

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.

UNTERMEYER GARDENS

Carol Eichler

A Garden for All

What a treat it was to include the Untermyer Gardens in Yonkers, NY on our itinerary of our April “Stonecrop trip.” I have to admit I was unfamiliar with the gardens and did not know what to expect, which is perhaps one reason I was so impressed.

Once part of the opulent estate of Samuel Untermyer and wife Minnie. Mr. Untermyer commissioned the Beaux-Arts architect William Welles Bosworth to design the garden in 1916. As a knowledgeable horticulturist hobbyist, he wanted to create a garden no less than the “finest garden in America.” Whether one would agree with that ambition is up for debate, but his vision was expansive. The garden incorporates numerous architectural elements with inspirational plant selections.

His dream of preserving the estate as a state park after his death was not to be and most of his property was sold off over time. 43-acres were given to the city of Yonkers. Then in 2011 under head gardener Timothy Tilighan the Untermyer Gardens Conservancy has undergone a major reclamation effort to restore the former splendor of the original gardens. Much has been accomplished while much more work-in-progress could be observed.

It was wonderful to see so many people enjoying the gardens and hard to imagine a better time to visit with all the spring flowering trees. However, you can be assured of its all-season magnificence. The gardens are free and open to the public 360 days of the year. Located not far from Stonecrop, I consider this is must-see garden destination. There’s lots to explore on the website too including photos and videos year-by-year and season-by-season, videos – a great rainy-day activity perhaps.

<https://www.untermyergardens.org/>



UTTERLY GONE TO SEED

Panayoti Kelaidis, NARGS President

For eleven years in the late 1980s and 1990s my ex-wife, Gwen Moore, and I operated Rocky Mountain Rare Plants (RMRP), a seed company. We accumulated enough stories to fill a small book (maybe even a big book) in the process of running RMRP—some of which were quite funny. But that isn't what this article is about. I am going to attempt to organize a few of my thoughts about why seeds are so important and yet underappreciated (except of course, by the 640 or so members of NARGS who order seed from our Seed Exchange every year).

1. A seed is a plant, but a plant is not a seed, which is to say, that a seed contains all the DNA and everything that comprises every phase of a plant's existence. But full-grown plants are NOT seeds—they may produce seeds (although many hybrids and triploids are incapable of doing so). Plants are essentially just an end product of a seed. Seeds are somehow more all-encompassing and more complete than the mere mature plant.
2. Seeds are genetically variable. If you sow a large batch of seeds, you are apt to find a great range of variability. More and more plants sold in garden centers or lining our streets are clones—propagules from “superior” tree or flower varieties that are genetically uniform. Asexual propagation is gradually swallowing up the genetics of garden plants. Our rock gardens are even being filled with clonal plants. But rock gardeners are wild at heart; let's reverse the clonal tsunami, please! We're about bringing nature back, right?
3. Many plants are best grown from seed in situ. Few things amuse us more than visiting a garden center and seeing carrots in six-packs. I mean REALLY! I have even seen *Delphinium ajacis* sold that way. There are hosts of plants that really should be sown direct and allowed to do their thing—but the art of growing annuals, biennials, and even perennials like this has eluded a whole generation of gardeners. James Hitchmough recently wrote a vast book about growing plants directly from seed (titled *Sowing Beauty*): let's be like James!

I could go on and on and on with how utterly essential seeds are: so compact, so portable, so cute! But I am a severely afflicted seedaholic (apologies to Elisabeth Zander who coined the term). I am constantly teased because I always have a bundle of envelopes on me. Almost depressing to me as seeing the carrots in sixpacks is my distress when I visit the gardens of many friends and see a bank of *Fritillaria amana*, for example, perfectly grown, bending down under the burden of gorgeous seeds that will never be collected. Worse yet are those tidy gardeners who clip off and discard the unripe seed of this or that plant (so it won't be weedy, perhaps?) leaving the lonely foliage without decorative seedheads (or the opportunity to save a bit of it for the Seed Exchange).

There was a time when you could pinch a bit of seeds here and there along a country road or on distant mountains. I'm old enough to remember when you could purchase seeds from abroad and they would come across our border without incident.

Now botanic gardens are required to have written permission from landowners, political authorities, and anyone else who feels compelled to claim ownership over these tiny bits of wild germ plasm before they can be allowed into institutional collections. You are theoretically eligible for jail term if you so much as stuff a packet of dandelion seed (or any kind of seed) in an envelope and try to cross many borders. You must have phytosanitary certificates, plant collecting permits, and no end of other red tape to collect, transport, or obtain seed most anyplace on the planet any longer.

This makes the seed that is forming in your garden (seed you may dead-head or allow to scatter to the winds) all the more important in the short term. And especially in the long term.

I grant you visiting my house is not a good example for you: there are envelopes stuffed with seed in boxes over there. There are large bags full of seedheads covering the table there, the sideboard over there, all optimistically waiting for me to clean them. It's not a pretty picture—but it is a gratifying one for us seed lovers!

You don't have to go overboard like me . . . but you should realize that your weed may well be someone's treasure. There are so many common wildflowers across America that I never see on seed lists: *Dicentra cucullaria*, *Erythronium albidum*, *Lilium columbianum*. I could go on and on and on—some of these grow by the million.

Please make an effort to take a few pinches of these seeds that may grow near you, or some of the treasures I know grow in your garden and which you allow to languish, unharvested, underappreciated, and unsent to the NARGS Seed Exchange. Let's change that!

Remember the adage: Old gardeners never die. They just go to seed!

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: csetompkins.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

2024 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: Graham Egerton, Anne Redfern

Newsletter Editor: Susanne Lipari sel3@cornell.edu

Wurster Garden Coordinator: Carol Eichler

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 September 2024