



ADIRONDACK
CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

April 2026

IN THIS ISSUE :

- April 18, 2026: Michael Hagen from New York Botanical Garden
- From the Chair
- Membership
- POM
- ACNARGS: Looking Back
- Winter Protection for Plants
- Plant Sale Preview
- News from NARGS National
- 2026 NARGS & ACNARGS Calendar
- Calendar of select area Garden Events
- Contacts

APRIL 18, 2026: Michael Hagen, New York Botanical Garden

Terry Humphries, Program Chair

404 Plant Science, Tower Road at 1 PM, Brownbag Lunch at Noon

Michael Hagen is Curator of the Native Plant Garden and the Rock Garden at New York Botanical Garden. He brings applied knowledge of botanical principles, supported by a Bachelor of Arts degree from Oxford University.



Michael previously served for almost 13 years as Staff Horticulturist for Stonecrop Gardens in Cold Spring, New York, and was Garden Manager at Rocky Hills, in Mt. Kisco, a preservation project of the Garden Conservancy. He lives in Somers, New York. He is also an adjunct professor at Westchester Community College where he lectures on sustainability, native plant propagation, and gardening with native plants.

At the New York Botanical Garden, Michael oversees garden maintenance and manages plant collections, contributing to the organization's conservation and exhibition efforts. He has been an excellent steward, developer, and creative director of the Rock Garden.

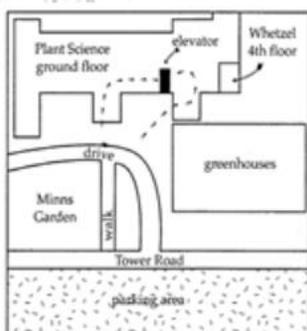
Many of us have been thinking of adding more native plants, which provide food and habitat for pollinators and for the insects that become nourishment for baby birds. Natives are also often more stress-adapted species that can thrive despite weather extremes.

When people think about native plants, they often think about larger areas, like putting in a meadow or big woodland garden or even a border. People often don't have that kind of space available. His talk for ACNARGS will focus on how we can add ecological services in a relatively small garden space and even in rock garden conditions.

Michael Hagen will share suggestions for more compact native plants that offer us an opportunity to turn containers, rockeries and patches into pollinator havens that surround us with beauty.



Our regular meetings are held in Room 404 Plant Science, 236 Tower Road on the Cornell Campus.



Currently, the west wing of the Plant Sciences Building has been shut down for renovations. 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

Happy spring! There's a lot blooming here, which I should be able to see in March after the snow melts. Seeing the blooming bulbs is making me think of Stinzenplanten, creating a naturalized "meadow" of spring flowering bulbs in a lawn. Stinzen, is Dutch and means country houses, some of which have beautiful flowery lawns in the spring. Netherlands – bulbs – probably not a surprise. I'm planning to plant geophytes (which I'll call bulbs) in part of my lawn in the fall and try this out.

Stinzenplanten isn't for everyone. If you're fastidious about your lawn, then it's not for you. It won't challenge conventional lawn maintenance ideals too much though if you do Stinzenplanten in a discreet part or two of your lawn, maybe a corner or a plot behind the house. One great feature about Stinzenplanten is that it's meant to be a low maintenance garden where you have minimal care after planting (other than some lawn mowing, of course). A good site for this is a spot with full sun to partial shade (shade of deciduous trees & shrubs is ideal). The site should have good drainage and soil that's not too acidic or alkaline. I like the idea of doing this in a low mow (or reducing mowing) fescue lawn, but any grassy lawn would work. You won't want to create a Stinzenplanten lawn in a high traffic area. One advantage of planting bulbs in grass is that the turf discourages chipmunks from digging up the bulbs and eating them, if the turf is thick and healthy. Most of our soils are reasonable fertile, and bulbs are not fussy about fertility. If you plant the earliest blooming bulbs in your Stinzenplanten, then you can even stick to your normal mowing schedule. Doing No Mow May is even better (in some areas of my lawn No Mow May

would turn into June haying though). Generally, you'd want to plant low growing plants with fairly small/thin foliage that will blend to a degree with the grass, i.e. monocots; dicots have broader foliage that could be seen as weeds. The less fussy you are about your lawn, the broader the palate of plants you can include in your Stinzenplanten. Beware of planting bulbs with large foliage that is slow to die back, like large daffodils and colchicum, unless you're happy with this area having a wild look. It's up to you to plan a color scheme or go multicolored. Flowering bulbs looks best planted in numbers, so be generous in your planting. Your Stinzenplanten could be such a cheerful patch of color on a chilly spring day!

Here are some good candidates for bulbs in a Stinzenplanten:

- Early bloomers – *Eranthis hyemalis*, Crocus species, *Galanthus nivalis* and other species, *Iris reticulata*
- Mid-season bloomers – *Scilla siberica*, *Chionodoxa lucilae*, *Pushkinia libanotica*, *Anemone blanda*, *Fritillaria meleagris*
- Late season bloomers – dwarf narcissi (there are plenty that are 6" high or less), species tulips (pick the short ones like *Tulipa batalinii* (unless you don't mind some taller flowers), *Corydalis solida*

For planting methods, a method economical of your time is ideal. A dibble would work great, just stab a hole in the turf and insert the bulb. You could just use a trowel to make holes and drop the bulb in. For a large area, pulling up the turf, planting the bulbs, and replacing the turf would work well. For photos of Stinzenplanten, type that into your browser and you'll see plenty of photos. For more information, you can also look at these websites: Fedco, John Scheepers, or Van Engelen. Hope to see you and the sun this spring!

MEMBERSHIP

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

If you have not renewed for 2026, you should do it now, so you'll be eligible for our many membership benefits. You can renew at the April meeting or by mail. Your membership will allow you to purchase the April Plant-of-the-Month, which we sell at a discounted price. The renewal form is at <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf>. Your membership status is reported to you in the email with the newsletter link. Contact Mary Stauble at mes2@cornell.edu if you have any questions.

PLANT OF THE MONTH :

Marlene Kobre, POM Coordinator

As the POM for March, I've selected two offerings: *Hepatica acutiloba*, an early spring bloomer suited to shade, and *Lewisia longipetala*, a late spring-early summer bloomer suited to sun. Both are sourced from Arrowhead Alpines in Michigan.

HEPATICA ACUTILOBA

The genus *Hepatica*, also known as Liverleaf or Liverwort, is a member of the buttercup family (Ranunculaceae). Formerly classified as *Anemone hepatica*, it was promoted to a genus of its own that now includes 10-12 species. Brigitta Stewart, the owner of Arrowhead, reports that H.

acutiloba, one of two that are native to Eastern North America, is the easiest to grow. The other species are native to Europe or Asia.

The flowers, often white in the wild but also sometimes ranging from pink to blue to purple, emerge with the crocuses in early spring to bloom before the new leaves unfurl. Each flower arises on its own stem, which is several inches tall and covered in fine hairs. Mature plants, if they are happily located, are long-lived and can sport large clumps of 20-30 flowers. The flower petals are actually sepals (as many as 6-20 per bloom), each surrounded by three bracts. The flowers are open most fully on sunny days, and they can last for weeks. Because the old leaves that last through the winter can look bedraggled, sources recommend removing them so as not to conceal the new flowers with unsightly foliage. The flowers are followed by three-lobed, pointed leaves (hence the name acutiloba) that are heart-shaped at the base and unfold from neatly furled scrolls to bright shiny green, growing darker as they mature.

Cultivation Requirements

- **Light:** Although they prefer shade, especially in summer to protect the young leaves from burning, they will appreciate some sun to encourage the fullest flowers. Planting them under deciduous trees provides the best of both worlds by allowing for sun in early spring to keep the flowers happy, with shade to follow as the trees leave out.
- **Soil:** In the wild hepatica are often endemic to areas with alkaline conditions, so Arrowhead recommends a neutral to alkaline soil, moist but not wet and rich in organic matter. Native Wildflowers Nursery notes that flower color may depend in part on soil type. Other sources describe it as adaptable to a wide range of soil types.
- **Caring for Bare Root Plants:** The Hepaticas from Arrowhead will be shipped bare-rooted, so here are some tips about caring for them. If the ground is still frozen when they arrive, you can mist the packing medium and store the bag for a few days in a cold but not freezing basement, garage, or fridge. You can also get a head start by potting the plants in a container and growing them in a bright window (unless you're lucky enough to have a greenhouse). Before transplanting outside, preferably when the temperature has reached the 40's, gently rinse the potting medium from the roots and soak them for 30 minutes or so in a bucket of tepid water to plump them up.

YouTube has lots of videos demonstrating the exact techniques for digging the hole and planting a bare root specimen. Most of them recommend creating a mounded cone of soil in the center of the hole and sitting the crown on top of the cone, with the roots spreading down its sides. With the crown ever-so-slightly above ground level, backfill the hole with soil and water thoroughly.

Dormant plants that have only been stored a few days in a cold place should tolerate early spring temperature fluctuations, but if the plants have sprouted, as they probably will if you've potted them, you might need to harden them off gradually while still in pots and protect them from mid-late spring freezes after planting them out in the garden.

A Note on Names

As its common names Liverleaf and Liverwort suggest, Hepatica comes from the Greek word for liver, reminding us that many plant names are metaphorical. In this case some saw in the three-lobed leaf an image of the human liver and based on the early belief in the Doctrine of Signatures, the plants were used medicinally to treat liver ailments. But beware: one source says in large doses the leaves can be toxic. Even so, we can be grateful that the plants are far more attractive than the human organ they are said to resemble.

LEWISIA LONGIPETALA ‘TUTTI FRUTTI’

The gardening community has been excited by this new *Lewisia* hybrid—a cross between *Lewisia cotyledon* and *L. longipetala* that is said to be easier to grow.

Having been an abject failure trying to grow *Lewisia cotyledon*, there does seem to be something masochistic about choosing it as a POM. But I do trust Brigitta Stewart, who agrees that this hybrid is an “easy-to-grow” plant with beautiful flowers—if you meet a few of its specific needs.

That it’s sometimes classified as a succulent tells us a lot about its cultivation requirements. Provide it with enough bright sun, protect it from over watering and winter wet, and grow it in extremely well-drained, humus rich soil with a high gritty/sandy component, and you will be rewarded with a gorgeous display of deliciously colored flowers, including red, orange, pink, apricot, mango, and salmon.

- **HZ:** Hardy to Z 4
- **Bloom time:** May to June, with some rebloom in autumn.
- **Foliage and Flowers:** Succulent leaves form an attractive rosette, said to be evergreen. As the species name implies, flowers are long-petaled, and ‘Tutti Frutti’
- does justice to the range of colors.
- **Height & Spread:** 6”-8”
- **Soil:** Gritty/sandy, humus-rich, extremely well-drained. Whether planting in the rock garden or a pot, elevate the crown a bit and mulch around it with pea gravel or some other inorganic medium to prevent crown rot.
- **Light:** Some difference of opinion here, probably based mostly on location. Some say at least 6 hours of sun, while others say a range from full sun to part shade, especially in late afternoon.

Now that it seems Spring has Sprung, I wish you all Happy Gardening,

ACNARGS : LOOKING BACK

Carol Eichler

Memories from before my time with ACNARGS

Thanks to people before me, among them Anne Klingensmith, ACNARGS has files on the early days of our Chapter beginning in 1990. Those meeting sign-in sheets? We have attendance records dating back to 1990. With the Chapter only 15 years old then, our speaker meetings were often drawing 20 – 25 people. On quick perusal, the record attendee list numbered 48 in April 1999. I wonder what the draw for that meeting was?!

I saw some familiar names from the early 1990’s in the register who attended regularly: the Wilkinson’s and Lambert’s who continued to be active into the 2000’s along with Robin Bell, Lee Nelson, Marcia Meigs, Eric Neff, Ronda Roaring, Bill Plummer, Debby Shanahan, and Bill Dress. Some of the best gardeners in our area were members: Jackie Baker who owned Baker’s Acres, Marion Toby, owner of Tobytown Nursery, Elizabeth Sheldon, and Al Wurster.

By 2000 our records started recording these members: Rick Lowenstein, Roseanne Moresco, Carolyn and Jerry Yaeger, Anne Klingensmith, Tom Myers, Michelle Jones Ham, and George Erdman as well as some who are still active attendees today: Pat Curran, Bill Stark, Mary Stauble, Rosemarie Parker, John Gilrein, Susanne Lipari, David Mitchell, and yours truly.

For now, here are a few remembrances.

Bill Hamilton: I never saw his name on any attendance sheets so he may not have been a member. However, he was awarded NARGS' Marcel LePiniec Award in 1985, for his work as a propagator and hybridizer (and it's very likely that ACNARGS nominated him. Can anyone substantiate this?). He specialized in dwarf conifers, rock garden plants, and hybridizing lilies. Gardening and horticulture were a consuming avocation and became essentially a full-time occupation after he retired as a professor at Cornell. The Cornell Botanic Gardens endowed a lecture series in his name, the "William J. Hamilton Jr." lecture series (to which ACNARGS no doubt contributed – can anyone substantiate this?). His extensive home garden was said to have rivaled a botanic garden.

Ludwig and Dorothy Schiessl: Their names started appearing in our attendance lists in 1991. They were primrose specialists and so were able to bring lots of primroses in flower to the May Cooperative Extension annual plant sale. Of course, they were eye-catching and sold like hotcakes. I never met them at that time but years later, the Schiessl's approached me at our sale booth, and asked if we would accept as a gift his collection of primrose books. Because we maintained a lending library at the time, I naturally said yes. I think it may have comprised 4 boxes of books.

Irma and Norbert Markert: Their names were already legendary in 2000 when I became an active member. It's likely the Markert's were among our Chapter founders. They assumed leadership roles within the Chapter but also with our parent NARGS. One of their significant contributions was to secure not-for-profit status for the Chapter.

The Markerts lived in Ogdensburg, NY, which meant to attend a meeting at Cornell was a 3-hour one-way drive for them. In their younger days they willingly made the trip.

I don't recall ever seeing them at meetings, but I do remember visiting their gardens. In 2009, several of us visited their garden in Ogdensburg "on the way" to White Pine Camp in the Adirondacks. Norbert had recently passed away, but Irma graciously welcomed us "because that's what Norbert would have wanted." Even though that visit was 17 years ago, I have some clear memories of the gardens. One was that many perennials that would normally bloom in succession in Ithaca were blooming at the same time – peonies and bearded iris, for example. Perhaps that was because of the shortened growing season. Their property included waterfront on the St. Lawrence, where they had constructed a boardwalk along a boggy area grew beautiful candelabra primroses.

As I search through old records, I realize I've taken on a big project. I could use your help. Please, if you have a memory, write up a few words and share them with me for a future article. As I mentioned last month, new names keep surfacing in my memory and maybe yours too.

Winter Protection for Plants

Carol Eichler



Last winter for the first time I covered my troughs with what I think of as a heavy-duty row cover, the spun-bonded, reusable polyester material (found under different brand names such as Remay) that is typically placed over row crops to raise the temperature underneath. It is used both to get an early jump or extend the season when temperatures hover near freezing. The material allows the passage of light, air, moisture, and to provide protection from wind and destructive insects. A thicker type is sold specifically to provide

winter protection (the one I purchased was 1.5 ounce fabric). It's a little pricey but is reusable and with proper care should last several seasons. Mine overwintered beautifully.

In my case, my goal was to increase my success rate for overwintering the plants in my troughs. Typically, I suffer a fair amount of winter loss for a variety of potential reasons – sudden fluctuations in day/night temperatures or winter wet due in part to snow or rain melt that accumulates on top of frozen soil medium. I concede, some loss may be due to growing plants that are tender for our hardiness zone. Another advantage I just thought of is the cover will foil any attempt for deer to eat them. Oh, there are so many ways to kill our beloved rock garden plants!

Today (March 26th) I cautiously removed the blankets. I'm happy to report what I uncovered were a bunch of happy plants. I hope this is good timing. We are getting the usual yo-yo's in spring weather – warm to cold, sunny to wet. Today happens to be warm but the temperatures will return into the low 20's tonight. Maybe I should have waited another couple days? Time will tell.



PLANT SALE PREVIEW

Carol Eichler, *Plant Sale Coordinator*

As I write this article on the first full day of spring, it feels anything but spring outside. Despite some encouraging warm days, lately the weather has been cold and mixed with snow. Some of you may still be buried in it. Not what we want to see this late in March!

Anyway, we must remain hopeful that spring will arrive, and our gardens will take off. Please do think about some interesting plants you may offer to share at our annual spring sale on May 16th. While you never know what wonderful plants to expect, other aspects of the sale remain similar year after year.

We're returning to Myers Park in Lansing with set-up starting at 9AM, sale no earlier than 10, dish-to-pass lunch at noon. I need volunteers to help with set-up AND clean-up. Contact carolithaca@gmail.com

Here are some reminders as you dig and divide:

- remove as much soil as you can and repot into soilless mix
- regarding jumping worms, it's buyer beware; most of us already have them
- label your pots in advance preferably by Latin name

More details about the sale at Myers Park in Lansing will be forthcoming in our May newsletter.

NOTES FROM OUR MEMBERS

Tompkins County Public Library has some funds for purchasing books this year, money that was not distributed earlier in the pandemic. I have offered to contact garden and nature groups about this and compile a list of titles that we would like them to acquire. I already put a request in for "Plant This, Not That" but I'm sure some of you have other titles to suggest.

Please send your ideas to Pat Curran at pc21@cornell.edu

NEWS FROM NARGS NATIONAL

By Carol Eichler, *Recording Secretary, NARGS*

Lately, I've been wondering, "What does our NARGS membership look like?" I'm kind of a facts and figures person. So, I decided to take a look at the membership at the start of this new year. The answers are at the end of this article.

1. Let's start with the easy question. How many people belong to NARGS National?
2. What is the percentage of Canadian members?
3. What is the percentage of international members outside of North America. How many countries are represented?
4. Our members come from 49 states. Which state has no members? Is every Canadian province represented?
5. We don't necessarily know which Chapters our NARGS members affiliate with. Some have no affiliation. Instead, which US state has the most members?
6. What region of the US hails the most members? Which Canadian province?
7. Which state(s) and province(s) have more than one chapter?
8. When did ARGs become NARGS?
9. Which Chapter is the oldest?
10. How many followers do the NARGS Facebook pages have?

Answers:

1. At this snapshot in time there were 1,705. This number fluctuates. We do not know how many Chapter members there are, but that number should be significantly higher.
2. 9%. 9 of the 10 provinces are represented.
3. 23% from 19 countries
4. Hawaii has no NARGS members.
5. Colorado at 227 followed by New York at 168 (not even close), California with 155 and Washington, Oregon and Pennsylvania trailing. North Carolina is the last state to top 100 members to round out the top 7. Forget trying to calculate which state averages the most members per total population, though I suspect that would be Alaska. It is the most sparsely populated of our 50 states, and it seems to be holding its own with 26 members.
6. I was surprised by this one. Granted I defined region somewhat arbitrarily, the west only narrowly outnumbered members from the midwestern heart of our country. In Canada, Ontario province has the most.
7. 6: California, Massachusetts, New York, Ontario, Oregon, Pennsylvania
8. January 1994
9. According to the timeline in the NARGS publication, "A History of the American Rock Garden Society (later renamed to NARGS), the oldest chapter is in British Columbia. The

Rock Garden Society of Ohio was founded in 1929, 5 years before the official founding of the American Rock Garden Society in 1935. Initially, ARGs was organized by geographic regions rather than chapters. Over time more regions were created, so in May 1972 ARGs approved a by-law change to redesignate the regions as chapters.

10. The NARGs FB Organization page currently has 6,300 followers. The NARGs FB Group has 9,600 members. Why aren't all these people members?

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.hgeny.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
selj3@cornell.edu

2026 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: vacant

Newsletter Editor: Susanne Lipari selj3@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 \$45 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 Quarterlies, 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 May 2026.