



ADIRONDACK
CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

www.acnargs.org

July/August 2005

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Last call for container planting workshop July 16

If you've been thinking about attending the container planting workshop Saturday, July 16, now's the time to act. The workshop with Dana Keiser will start at 10:30 a.m. at her Stony Hill Farm, 3801 Brady Hill Rd., Binghamton, N.Y. (Between Binghamton and the Pennsylvania state line. Directions below.)

Dana will demonstrate how and what to plant in a container whether it be a trough, pot or old shoe. She will concentrate on how she designs and plants trough gardens.

There is no set fee for the workshop. Participants receive a 10-percent discount on plants and potting soil purchased from Dana, and can either bring their own or buy one there. (Dana has a huge supply of containers, from a small terracotta pot for \$2.99 to a large cast iron urn for \$90.00.) Plant cost will vary widely depending on the size of the container. But you could put together a nice 10- to 12-inch container for \$15 to \$20.

Hopefully you saw our display about Stony Hill Farm at our April meeting or the May plant sale. Please contact me as soon as possible if you plan to attend: pogr@aol.com or 607-656-4237.

Directions to Stony Hill Farm:

From Owego and points west: Take NY-17 east. Take Exit 67S and follow NY-26 south 6.4 miles. Turn left onto State Line Rd. and travel 2.8 miles. Turn slight left onto County Road 117/Pennsylvania Ave. and travel 2.8 miles. Turn right onto County Road 125/Saddlemire Rd. and travel .4 mile. Turn slight right onto County Road 8/Brady Hill Rd. and travel .3 mile to Stony Hill Farm on the left.

From north of Binghamton: Take I-81 south. Stay on I-81 where it merges with NY-17 East. Just beyond where they merge, take Exit 4 South, Rt-7. (You'll need to move across traffic to the right quickly to make the exit.) After exiting, stay straight through first traffic light where roadway changes to Rt. 363. (Rt. 7 exits to right after the first traffic light. Do **not** follow Rt. 7.) Go about 1.5 miles on Rt. 363. Take exit on right for Rt. 434, Vestal. Cross Susquehanna River and into sweeping right curve. Go straight through traffic light, then exit to the right onto Pennsylvania Ave. Follow Pennsylvania Ave. south for 6 miles. Turn left on Saddlemire Rd., then right on Brady Hill Rd. Stony Hill Farm will be on your left. Follow red and white signs along the way. It's very well marked.

Peg Ross, garden trip/tours co-coordinator

Letter from the Chair

Greetings of the summer!

The Green Dragon is emerging after a bit of a hiatus from our monthly production. A lot of work goes into each issue and I want to thank all who have been regular contributors and especially Craig Cramer for being our "nudge," editor and all-around "organizing person" to make it all happen.

Meantime, Chapter activities have continued at quite a pace so there is a lot to report. Our annual "public" plant sale as one vendor among many at the Cooperative Extension's Garden Fair was a resounding success. This issue supplies the details from our plant sale written by coordinator David Mitchell. Many hands contributed to our financial success, most of all David's under whose leadership we were encouraged to participate. We also attracted several new members at the sale. Sometimes we forget that other important purposes of this sale are to raise our visibility and to educate.

While work at Cornell precluded my attending the day of garden touring in Greene, I did get away a week earlier for my own preview. I hope you were as impressed as I was with each garden, distinctly different and unique to its owner with a little whimsy and hard work thrown in. (See article below or visit www.acnargs.org for more pictures.) Peg Ross and Alice Davis, our tour

coordinators, estimate a total of 30 came to view the gardens – if you count family and friends. That's a very impressive number.

Yet to come, as I write this article, is the work session at the Wurster Memorial Rock Garden. (See update below.) I'm hoping we get a few willing hands and some cooperative weather that day. The Chapter is moving ahead with memorial plans for Toni and Bob Wilkinson. Remembering the Wilkinson's fondness for stone, we have purchased a bench of Georgia granite and plan, on our work day, to prepare an appropriate location for placing the bench so that visitors can pause to enjoy the garden. A tree, also be part of our memorial, will be strategically planted to provide the garden with some respite from the hot midday sun.

This issue also includes reminders and more information about our July workshop and opportunity to see Dana Kaiser's wonderful gardens and then our August meeting where we're combining a dish-to-pass picnic with our member-only sale at Debi Lampman's, where we'll be sure to enjoy her extensive gardens as well. You won't want to miss out on either event.

We are pleased to announce that Art Trimble has received a \$300 stipend from NARGS National to attend the National NARGS Conference in Newfoundland later this month. This stipend is in addition to the Chapter award which we announced earlier. If you might be interested in applying for this stipend from National for future conferences – either the National or either of the Winter Study Weekends – contact me. Certain restrictions apply. For example, you must have been a member of National for at least one year and are a first-time attendee at the conference. The Chapter may nominate only one individual each year and awards are granted on a first-come basis. National Conference next year will be in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Happy Gardening!

Carol Eichler, chair

Picnic & members-only plant sale Aug. 20, Bedlam Gardens, King Ferry, N.Y.

We've got a fun day planned for our annual picnic and members-only plant sale August 20. (Please mark your calendar now. With no August newsletter, this will be our only announcement.)

Debi Lampman is graciously hosting the picnic at Bedlam Gardens, her nursery and personal gardens featuring more than 2,000 species growing on the site. (1893 Rt. 34B, King Ferry, 13081, 315-364-8725. See below for directions.) Don't worry if it's rainy or hot, says Debi. Her barn will keep us cool or protect us from the elements.

Here's the schedule for the day:

- **10:00 a.m. – Arrive with plants** (labeled beforehand) to price and set up. David Mitchell, Plant Sale Coordinator, will be on hand to direct the action. The sale area will be situated in one of Debi's outbuildings. (Note: there will be no Board meeting.)
- **11:00 a.m. – Plant sale begins** in our usual orderly and democratic fashion (based on sign-up in our attendance book). There will be a bidders' table and time for anyone wishing to describe special plants of interest.
- **12:00-ish – Lunch begins** immediately following the sale. The Chapter will provide beverages but you should bring a dish to pass, your own table service and a lawn chair. If the weather is uncooperative, we will lunch under protective cover.
- **1:00 p.m. – Garden tour.** After lunch, Debi will give a walking tour through her extensive gardens. We'll also check progress on the rock garden she's building.

Remember the plant sale is for members only, though folks are welcome to join at this meeting for our 2005 membership year. It's a great opportunity to bring in rare and special plants or seedlings of limited quantity, knowing they'll be given a good new home. You need not contribute plants to participate. Come even if you're not in the market for more plants. Our members are good cooks and Debi's gardens are inspirational.

Directions: Bedlam Gardens is easy to find. It's on the west side of Rt. 34B at the bend in the road between King Ferry and Poplar Ridge. From the south, it's 3 mile north of the intersection of Rt. 34B and Rt. 90. From Auburn, it's about 10 miles south of the intersection of Rt. 34B and Rt. 34 in Fleming. If you're traveling from the Rochester area, you can follow Rt. 90 south to Poplar Ridge Rd. (south of Aurora) and turn left (east). Follow Poplar Ridge Rd. to first stop sign. Turn right onto Rt. 34B and go 2 miles to Bedlam Gardens.

Adirondack Chapter Nursery Members

The Adirondack Chapter is fortunate to have professional gardeners in our group. Our current nursery members include: Ellen Hornig, of Seneca Hill Perennials, Dana Keiser, of Stoney Hill Farm and Debi Lampman, of Bedlam Nursery. (Debi is hosting our August 20 picnic and plant sale. See above.) You're bound to find some interesting plants if you visit one of these nurseries.

Seneca Hill Perennials is at 3712 County Rt 57, Oswego, NY 13126.

www.senecahill.com/

Stoney Hill Farm is 3801 Brady Hill Rd., Binghamton, NY 13903.

Bedlam Nursery is 1897 Route 34B, King Ferry, NY 13081.

John Gilrein, membership coordinator

Thanks to Greene garden tour hosts

Hat's off to Peg Ross and Alice Davis for organizing a great tour of gardens in Greene, N.Y. And special thanks to the hosts who graciously welcomed us to their gardens. (See them below.) If you missed the tour and would like to see **more pictures**, visit our website at www.acnargs.org.



Right: Peg Ross poses beside a wall Alice Davis is building. Below (l. to r.) Shirley Halwig and clematis. Nancy Reynolds pauses on a Monet-inspired bridge built by her husband, Logan Hurst. The Girtons with a bed rescued from Mt. Airy Lodge turned into a garden structure. Sharon Davis stays cool in the shade.



Thanks to all for successful May plant sale

A big to **thank you** to all who donated and helped with the sale, especially LaGrace Benson, Craig Cramer, Carol Eichler, John Gilrein, Billie Jean Isbell, Marcia Meigs, Colette Menasian, and Rosemarie Parker! The Chapter made more than our budgeted goal of \$1,500, slightly above the 5-year average. We also gained a few new members!

We had lots of interesting plants to sell and most were snapped up by aggressive plant hunters. Shoppers who were not so knowledgeable were helped from behind the tables by friendly Chapter members. Hand-selling is a very important tool for this audience. I'd like to see more of our members help in this way next year. We also need more volunteers on Friday evening to help with setup. Labeling your donations before the sale makes setup and pricing easier.

It became clear that pictures are probably the most important selling tool. We did not have any and I think that hurt potential sales. This is another fun project for someone.

We had lots of plants that filled up the tables and floor space, however the selection of special rock garden plants was limited. This was due to the absence of some of our key donors. How can we get more interesting plants? Growing up seedlings from our April seedling sale is one way. Offering to bring in divisions to the April sale, to be potted up later or arranging a digging party at your garden are others we should explore. I'm interested to hear your thoughts and

suggestions. Contact me at dwm23@cornell.edu or (607) 342-3660. Again, thank you for making this year's sale a success.

David Mitchell, plant sales coordinator

Wurster garden looking good

We had only a few members attend the Wurster Garden work party June 25, but it was nonetheless a very successful day. The garden (located at Tompkins County Cooperative Extension) is in top shape with many plants filled out and growing beautifully. We weeded and dead headed, and when we left it looked superb.

We have made a real effort over the last few years to evaluate what we have planted there and eliminate plants that are nice plants except for being too aggressive or that seed too easily. What remains are many choice but growable alpines. What looks especially good right now are the mat formers, plants that grow tight but in a spreading mat. I've said it before but I'll mention it again, this garden is well worth visiting, open year-round, and easy to get to.

Besides routine maintenance like weeding and deadheading, our water expert (Bill Stark) got the pump working again (by plugging it in!!) and as soon as the water started to flow, birds started flying in to fuss around in it. Very gratifying.

We also worked on a special project, creating an area to put a bench that we are installing in memory of Bob and Toni Wilkinson. We cleared an area and created a small terraced spot where the bench will sit, providing a secluded and protected seat with a good view of the garden. This will be part of our tribute to Toni and Bob, dedicated members of our organization and both instrumental in the creation of the Wurster Rock Garden.

Anne Klingensmith, speaker coordinator

Daytrip to Hamilton College

If you'd like to make a daytrip next spring when the peonies are out, consider driving to Hamilton College in Clinton, N.Y., to see the Saunders tree peonies in bloom. While you're there, you can also see two raised alpine beds and some lovely perennial gardens and walk the Root Glen. I would suggest that you stop in the alumni building and pick up a brochure that gives a walking tour and information about the glen and gardens.



On Monday, June 13th, three of us from Greene drove to the college to enjoy all this. We were a couple of days late to see the peonies in all their glory but there was enough color left to see how spectacular the peonies must be in their prime. Now I have to have a tree peony!

The collection takes its name from Arthur P. Saunders, a chemistry professor. In the early part of the 20th century, Saunders was hybridizing some of the finest peonies and he is especially known for his work with tree peonies. He named 73 varieties and is most famous for hybridizing the yellow tree peony.

In 1996, the peony garden was renovated to become a display garden and the peony collection was sent to Dr. David Reath in Michigan. By then, some of the varieties had been lost, and some were even lost in the shipping process. Dr. Reath planted the peonies and is now the supplier. Of the 73 types, Hamilton College has recovered 44. The remaining will have to be donated from private gardens or from other sources.



The alpine beds are not extensive but very attractive and well marked. Being a novice, I found several plants I didn't know and now I have to have them!.

The Root Glen is the work of the Root family for three generations and is now owned and maintained by Hamilton College. It is a 7.5 wooded area with wonderful red-shale paths meandering through the glen and several bridges at the bottom that cross a creek. There are 65 species of trees and one of them, a Norway Spruce, is the largest specimen of its species in the United States as of 1994. It was a treat to walk through the glen on a hot muggy day.

Keep this tour in mind for next spring. It was a delightful morning. The only difficult part will be to pick the right day to see the peonies at their peak. If you are not interested in the peonies, go any time and see the alpine plants and walk the glen.

Peg Ross, garden trip/tours co-coordinator

New book: Adventurous Gardener – Where to Buy the Best Plants in New York and New Jersey

Ruah Donnelly's long-awaited book, *The Adventurous Gardener Where to Buy the Best Plants in New York and New Jersey*, is finally available. Those of you familiar with Ms Donnelly's first guide, *The Adventurous Gardener of New England*, will recognize the same information-packed format and candid style. For us, however, there are two added attractions: the proximity of many of the nurseries she chose to feature and the thrill of reading about some of our favorite plant people – especially the inclusion of our own Adirondack Chapter members Ellen Hornig, Dana Keiser and Debi Lampman. Congratulations to them and all NARGS member nursery owners in the NY/NJ area who feed our collective appetite for the unique and unusual as well as keeping old favorite cultivars on the market.

Copies of this book will be available at chapter meetings at a discounted price for members and at the aforementioned members' business locations.

The book is an entertaining read as well as a handy reference. I have visited enough of the nurseries she mentions in both New York and New England to respect the fairness of her impressions and evaluations.

In addition to logistical information including concise directions, hours, open dates, telephone, e-mail, and fax numbers, regular addresses, plant specialties, Donnelly spotlights strengths and gently points out weaknesses of the business and products, the latter lending credibility to her overall comments. Especially interesting to me is the listing of nearby attractions whether another area nursery, a recommendation for a good eatery, lodging or tourist attraction.

The "Greenie Contingent," veteran nursery hopping travelers all, have found the New England book an invaluable resource and look forward to using the new New York/New Jersey guide to explore new territory. Peg Ross and I would appreciate feedback on possible suggestions for planning future group trips to places featured in the book.

Alice Davis, trip/tours co-coordinator

Genesee Valley Chapter forms

Rochester area residents of the Adirondack Chapter recently got approval from the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) to form a Chapter in Western New York. When the Adirondack Chapter did outreach in the Rochester area several years ago, it was with an understanding that another chapter might be in the making. In May, the board members of NARGS approved a new chapter – the Genesee Valley Chapter.

Having served in several positions both on the local level and the national level, I was still unaware of what it would take to start a new chapter. After contacting Bill King, NARGS President, we learned that we would need to propose a territory for the new chapter that didn't overlap any of the current chapters. We felt that the Rochester/Buffalo areas were being under-served because the closest chapters were either 80 miles away in Ithaca or in another country, Ontario, Canada.

We proposed to serve the western end of the state. Geographically we outlined a territory from the western shore of Canandaigua Lake to the western border of New York State. We had several discussions insuring that we were not overlapping other Chapter's territories. Having decided on the territory we then had to choose a name. We decided on Genesee Valley, as it is the watershed area of western New York.

Then, with a territory and name approved by NARGS, we had to elect officers. NARGS requires that the Chair and Secretary be NARGS members. With the

officials elected, we set about putting together goals and a program schedule for the remainder of the year.

Our tentative program schedule (dates to be determined):

June

- Trough Planting Demonstration, Bristol Garden Center, Betsy Knapp
Presenter

August

- Tufa Planting & Care, Location TBD, Joan Hoeffel Speaker

October

- Minor Bulbs for the Rock Garden, Henrietta Public Library, Ros Bliss
Presenter

November

- Annual Meeting, Pass-A-Dish Luncheon, Rock Garden Construction,
Location TBD, Michelle Jones Ham Presenter

We believe that the Adirondack Chapter and the Genesee Valley Chapter can be symbiotic. As we grow we hope we can share speakers, possibly work together on plant sales or community outreach events. We see this as an opportunity to build a larger network of rock gardeners and NARGS members.

The Genesee Chapter is like so many of our cherished plants – a seedling that sprouted from the parent plant, the Adirondack Chapter. We thank you for the support you have given us.

Michelle Jones Ham, chair, Genesee Valley Chapter

Comment from Carol Eichler, Adirondack Chapter chair: My feelings about this new Chapter is that we have gained a new friend and ally. It opens opportunities for us to work collaboratively on speakers and programs to our mutual benefit. Michelle and Art, and perhaps others from the Genesee Valley "boundaries" have assured me they plan to maintain membership in both Chapters. I have to admit their upcoming programs sound wonderful so it may be hard to resist attending their meetings as well as ours. Hooray for the Genesee Chapter!

Programs at a glance

- **July 16:** Container planting workshop, Stony Hill Farm, Binghamton, N.Y.
- **Aug. 20:** Member Plant Sale/Picnic hosted by Debi Lampman, Bedlam Gardens, King Ferry.
- **Sept. 17:** Meeting speaker: Harry Jans from the Netherlands. Tompkins County Cooperative Extension, Ithaca.
- **Oct. 15:** Meeting speaker: TBA. Tompkins County Cooperative Extension, Ithaca.

- **Nov. 19:** Annual Meeting & Lunch. Members share tips on overwintering plants in pots. Art Trimble reports on national NARGS conference. Whetzel Room, Plant Science Building, Cornell.
 - Updates and more information: **www.acnargs.org**
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Other events

- **July 14-17:** North American Rock Garden Society Annual Meeting, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada <http://www.nargs.org/meet/meetings.html>
 - **Sept. 10:** Plants For Life Sale to support the Ithaca Breast Cancer Alliance. Ithaca. www.ibca.net/plantsforlife
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People

Questions? Want to find out how you can help the Chapter? Don't hesitate to contact one of the volunteers who help make everything happen:

- **Chair:** Carol Eichler, cme24@cornell.edu, 607-387-5823
 - **Treasurer:** Carolyn Yaeger, cao2@cornell.edu, 607-844-9462
 - **Speaker Coordinator:** Anne Klingensmith, aekling@lightlink.com, 607-256-9308
 - **Garden Trip/Tours:** Peg Ross and Alice Davis, pogr@aol.com, 607-656-4237 (Peg), 607-656-9931 (Alice)
 - **Picnic:** Debi Lampman, bedlam@bluefrognet.net, 315-364-8725
 - **Member participation:** George Erdman, gerdman@binghamton.edu, 607-748-3984
 - **Plant of the Month:** Billie Jean Isbell, bj1@cornell.edu, 607-539-6484
 - **Plant sales:** David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu, 607-342-3660
 - **Membership:** John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu, 315-492-0844
 - **Newsletter editor/Webmaster:** Craig Cramer, cdcramer@twcny.rr.com, 607-539-7233
 - **Rep. to National, and Ex-officio:** Robin Bell, rgb2@cornell.edu, 607-272-2074
 - **Newsletter production:** Susanne Lipari, sel3@cornell.edu, 607-387-9308
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The Green Dragon

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Note: The next issues of *The Green Dragon* will be in September.

