



ADIRONDACK  
CHAPTER

*North American Rock Garden Society*

# Green Dragon Tales

---

[www.acnargs.org](http://www.acnargs.org)

February 2006

**In this issue:**

- February 18 'Members Share' meeting:  
Plants from China, overwintering tips, seed starting and more
  - March 19 program preview: Latvian bulb expert Janis Ruksans
  - Mark your calendar: 2006 Programs at a glance
  - Time to renew your membership
  - Principles of Seed Starting
  - Letter from the chair
  - Chair's Report for 2005
  - Other events
  - Chapter Finances for 2005
  - People
  - Membership form
- 

**February 18 'Members Share' meeting:**

**Plants from China, overwintering tips, seed starting and more**

February's kick-off for our 2006 program year is our traditional "Members' Share" meeting – and your chance to take the podium! Have you visited a wonderful garden and want to share your photos? Or, better yet, do you want to share pictures of your own garden! A prized plant in flower? A natural stone formation that inspired thoughts of imitation in your backyard? You are welcome to bring photos or scrapbooks. Carol Eichler will be coordinating any photos that require technical aids such as a slide projector or PowerPoint projection. Simply email her at [cme24@cornell.edu](mailto:cme24@cornell.edu) or call 607-387-5823 so that she can . . . well, "coordinate" things.

Also on the docket for this meeting will be a showing of Harry Jans' CD of plants from the Sichuan and Qinghai provinces of China. You'll remember Harry as our speaker from the September meeting. From his various excursions to China he really knows where to scope out wonderful alpines so this is your chance to enjoy them second-hand.

The agenda for our annual meeting in November was so full that we never had time to share over-wintering tips, so we want to open the floor for your suggestions – if you have them. We'll also have lots of seeds leftover from the 2005 NARGS seed exchange to offer as well as soil, pots, and labels to get you started. If you have special tricks for successful germination, we want to hear about that too. (David Mitchell's article on seed starting in this issue should be a good conversation-starter.)

All in all, look for an informal, participatory meeting. Our Greene members have promised to supply goodies – that alone is something to look forward to. So time to come out of hibernation and join us!

The meeting will be held in the Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, on the Cornell University campus. Bring a bag lunch and socialize starting at noon. The program will begin at 1 p.m.

***Carol Eichler, Chair***

---

### **March 19 program preview: Latvian bulb expert Janis Ruksans**

You won't want to miss our March 19 program where world-renowned Latvian bulb expert Janis Ruksans will be making two presentations as part of his North American tour. Mark your calendars now and note that **this meeting will be on a Sunday**. Look for more details in our March newsletter.

***Anne Klingensmith, Speaker Coordinator***

---

### **Mark your calendar: 2006 Programs at a glance**

- Feb. 18 - Member's Share Meeting.
- March 19 - Janis Ruksans, Central Asian bulb expert from Latvia. (Note this meeting is on a **Sunday**.)
- April 22 - Program TBA. Seedling sale.
- May 20 - Plant Sale, Ithaca High School.
- Spring/Summer activities - TBA. Plans and possibilities include early spring garden tour, Wurster Garden work party, annual picnic and members-only plant sale, workshops (rock wall building, trough construction, propagation), garden/nursery tours and more. Look for details in future issues of *The Green Dragon*. We welcome additional ideas. (Contact a board member.)
- Sept. 16 - Maria Galetti of Alpines Mont Echo, expert grower of extraordinary alpine and rock garden plants from Quebec.
- Oct. 21 - Program TBA.
- Nov. 11 - Annual Meeting and dish-to-pass.

Look for more details on these events in future issues of *The Green Dragon* and on our website: **[www.acnargs.org](http://www.acnargs.org)**

## **Time to renew your membership**

If you haven't already renewed your membership, please fill out and return the 2006 membership form included with this newsletter. (It's a separate attachment with the emailed version.) As of January 26, **the only members who have joined** for 2006 are:

BENSON, LEGRACE; CANADAY, SARA BETH; CURRAN, PATRICIA; EICHLER, CAROL; ERDMAN, GEORGE; GILREIN, JOHN; GIRTON, SHIRLEY; HILL, CORNELIA; HOEFFEL, JOAN; ISBELL, BILLIE JEAN; JOBMANN, JUDITH & HENRY; KLINGENSMITH, ANNE; LAMPMAN, DEBI; MARRANCA, BZ; MCLAFFERTY, ELIZABETH; MISTRY, NARI; MITCHELL, BRADLEY; MITCHELL, DAVID; MOTHERAL, SUZANNE; MYERS, TOM & CAIL, KRYS; NEFF, ERIC; PARKER, ROSEMARIE; PLUMMER, BILL; REED, ELIZABETH; REEVE, PAMALEE; ROSS, MARGARET; SAYLES, VAUGHN; SHANAHAN, DEBBY; SIKORA, ALEX & PHYLLIS; TRIMBLE, ART & BINDER, BARB; UHLL, LINDA; WILLIAMS, BARBARA; YAEGER, JERRY & CAROLYN;

Questions about your membership status? Contact: Carolyn Yaeger, Treasurer, cao2@cornell.edu 607-844-9462.

***Carolyn Yaeger, Treasurer***

---

## **Principles of Seed Starting**

A great place to begin learning about germinating seeds is the book titled, "Seed Germination Theory and Practice" by Norman C. Deno. The book is available through the NARGS bookstore ([www.nargs.org/libry/bookstore.html](http://www.nargs.org/libry/bookstore.html)) and is on the shelf at Cornell's Mann Library. One of the basic themes is that every species of plant has one or more mechanisms for delaying germination until the seed is dispersed. To get seeds to germinate, we use treatments to overcome these delay mechanisms. The delay mechanisms are chemical in nature and can be changed by drying of the seed (or not), exposing to light, and varying temperature cycles.

Some key points I picked up from Deno's book include:

- 1.) Deno found the two optimum temperatures to be 40° F and 70° F for a period of three months for each, then moved to the opposite temperature under germination occurs.
- 2.) Members of the same Family, Genus, and even closely related species may have different mechanisms for delaying germination.
- 3.) Fungal products of the Gibberellin type help speed germination for at least 25% of all species.
- 4.) Many temperate zone plants require a dry storage period. Some require being sown fresh.

- 5.) Most species have at least two delay mechanisms, one being a "chemical time clock". Instead of a gradual onset of germination, it was found that most germinated suddenly, being more typical of a chemical time clock.
- 6.) Shifting temperatures between 40° F and 70° F destroyed a delay mechanism.
- 7.) Some species have several delay mechanisms that must be destroyed under different conditions of temperature, time, and sequence.
- 8.) Some species germinate under oscillating temperatures such as occurs outdoors in fall and spring. Some seeds do better sown outdoors.
- 9.) Light may or may not be a requirement to germinate.
- 10.) Flesh or fruit around seeds must be removed by washing.
- 11.) Some species are two-step germinators. In the first step, the radicle emerges, and a small corm with a root is formed. In the second step, a leaf forms.
- 12.) Seeds of species originating from cold areas generally germinate at low temperatures.
- 13.) Parasitic plants may require exogenous chemicals from the host to germinate, but usually they do not. Exogenous chemicals may be required for later development, but not to germinate the seed.

Having pointed out these principles, one can begin to understand the many factors and variables used in germinating seeds. It is no wonder people like Deno have spent a lifetime looking at what makes a seed germinate.

As for the home gardener, I think it is safe to say we will try anything to increase our stock of plants. I put lily seeds in damp paper towels in ziplock bags in the refrigerator for four weeks. Then the baggies went on top of the fridge. Watched closely, the seeds began to sprout within a week. The seeds were potted up and put under lights on a heating mat. I have had great success with this method on *Lilium henryi*, *L. pumilum*, *L. regale*, and *Gladiolus italicus*. *Lilium martagon* was not as quick as the others, so they went back in the fridge for another cold period. They are out again now under lights and are showing just beginning to germinate.

My fears have diminished since reading Deno's book. I'm excited to see what happens with the seeds I got from the NARGS seed exchange. I hope you are too and will have lots to share at our April seedling sale!

**David Mitchell, Plant Sale Coordinator**

## **Letter from the chair**

Greetings AC-NARG-ers,

While Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> is by no means spring yet, it is the first meeting of the Adirondack Chapter year and to me it signifies we've turned the corner on winter. For us "green beings" it means a time for optimism and the quiet before the rush-rush of the growing season. So we begin slowly to resume our garden activities – seed starting and seedling tending, planning improvements and envisioning the garden ahead.

For the Chapter we have been envisioning some wonderful programs, workshops, and garden tours for this year. We start the program year with our traditional time for members to share – experiences, photographs, gems of wisdom. Plus I hope you will share your best over-wintering tips. Our November meeting was so filled with annual reports that we never did get a chance to present these ideas. (No it's not too late, since it seems that what kills plants more than winter is the freeze-thaw season ahead of us). Look further in this issue for more information about our February meeting and let's hope the weather cooperates.

At this meeting we will provide seed-starting mix, small pots, labels, and plenty of seeds left over from the 2005 NARGS seed exchange. I encourage all of you to enjoy the rewards of seed-starting. Of course, we hope we'll see some of you return with thriving little seedlings to share at our Seedling Sale in April. Be sure to take plenty of varieties to increase your chance for success since some plants can be challenging to germinate. David Mitchell, our Plant Sale Coordinator, is available to offer suggestions for technique and to answer your seed-starting questions. Should you seek his advice his contact information is located elsewhere in the newsletter.

This issue of the *Green Dragon* is going to press just days after our Board's annual planning meeting. We've kicked around a lot of ideas that our newsletter deadline doesn't allow us to include in this issue. But you will be learning more about our plans for the year. Til next time . . .

Happy gardening!

**Carol Eichler, Chair**

## **Garden Tour Suggestions Wanted**

We would like to have some input on whether an overnight trip to a special garden and/or nursery is something that the membership is interested in doing. One of the places that has been suggested is the Wildflower Garden in Framingham, Massachusetts, with a stop also at Weston's Nursery. Please let us know if there is some other place that you would like to visit or if this particular trip is of interest. You can reach us at: [pogr@aol.com](mailto:pogr@aol.com) 607-656-4237 (Peg) 607-656-9931 (Alice).

***Peg Ross and Alice Davis, Garden Tour Coordinators***

---

## **Chair's Report for 2005**

*Editor's note: This is the text of Carol Eichler's report delivered at our November 19, 2005 meeting.*

With this meeting we conclude our program year and my first year as Chair of the Chapter. My brief review will be followed by reports from our treasurer, and our speaker, membership, and plant sales coordinators.

Our primary goal is to come together to learn about plants, particularly those suitable for the rock garden. We accomplish this by listening – to knowledgeable presentations, by seeing – visiting gardens, by doing – opportunities for growing, and by sharing – our questions and our knowledge. In all these areas our Chapter certainly provided ample opportunities - with five speaker meetings, three plant sales, plant-of-the-month sales, two daytrips to gardens, a work session at the Wurster Memorial Garden, and two workshops.

One of our goals specific to this year was to attract new attendees and new members by expanding the outlets for publicizing our meetings. Our sign-in book is testament to the fact that our programs were among the best-attended in several years. Special thanks should go to Craig Cramer for his timely press releases and to BZ Marranca whose gardeners' listserve helps spread the word about our meetings.

I feel especially good about our newsletters. We made an extra effort to send them out well in advance of our monthly meetings and tried not just to give you the pertinent information about upcoming activities but also to make them worthwhile to read. To accomplish this each month is truly a group effort and I want to thank those who've contributed articles and, more than that, that you adhered to our deadlines. How this all gets done on a monthly basis is a bit mysterious to me but I do want to acknowledge the efforts of three people in particular. First, Craig Cramer who helps keep us all disciplined, makes sure we stay on deadline, and edits our articles. Thanks also to Susanne Lipari who until May (and the previous year or two) was our newsletter designer and Art Trimble

who continues to send out a limited number paper copies. Beginning with the May issue we decided to dispense with the 3-column, "designer" lay-out. This decision made the newsletter much less labor-intensive and cut a week out of our production time. Now in addition to his other duties Craig Cramer has been assembling and sending the email copies of the newsletter – and somehow makes our monthly production appear seamless.

This year as the result of the suggestion and leadership of George Erdman we offered pictorial display boards each meeting. The displays are meant to inspire, share ideas, and offer yet another way to become more involved with the Chapter. Everyone has pictures they can share and we hope that more of our members will get involved in this way. It has been a great addition to our meetings. Thanks George for this great idea.

In 2005 the Chapter awarded its first grant from funds that we have set aside for this purpose. This was exciting not just because it was the first awarded but it was the first year in which we had received any requests for a grant. Art Trimble was our first recipient and he received \$300 to defray the costs of attending the NARGS National Conference in Newfoundland. One stipulation of the award was that Art present a program about his experience, which he is doing for us today. The Chapter has funds set aside and will continue to accept grant requests from its members on an on-going basis. Selection is made by the Board based upon recommendations made by a review committee, this year comprised of Jerry Yaeger and Robin Bell.

One of the challenges we faced this year was filling more than-the-average number of Board vacancies. This meant finding people willing to serve and give their time to assume leadership roles – the people that make everything happen. Filling new positions also meant learning new roles so there were some challenges there too. For the first time we split of the Program Chair into several volunteer positions including Speaker Coordinator, Trips and Tours, and Picnic. I feel that as Chair I have been blessed by a truly devoted group of volunteers on the Board and in key roles so I want to identify and thank them now: Carolyn Yaeger, Treasurer, Speaker Coordinator Anne Klingensmith, Trips/Tours Coordinators Peg Ross and Alice Davis, Picnic Host Debi Lampman, Member Participation George Erdman, Plant of the Month Billie Jean Isbell, Plant Sales David Mitchell, Membership John Gilrein, National NARGS representative Robin Bell, and Newsletter Editor/Webmaster Craig Cramer. I'm pleased to report that all have agreed to continue in these roles for next year.

Two key Board positions were unfilled this year - secretary and the newly-created Program Coordinator. We are still looking to fill these positions. The truth is we can always use more people to help out. We didn't accomplish all we had planned this year and that's OK. Like gardening, it seems there's always next year to look forward to. I'm optimistic that the Chapter has had a strong, productive year and promises to remain strong for the immediate future.

***Carol Eichler, Chair***

## **Other events**

**Feb. 12: Garden Travel Slide Show** – “Bulbs of the Netherlands, or Tip-Toeing Through the Tulips.” Chad Miller, graduate student, Department of Horticulture Department, Cornell University, on how the Dutch became the bulb growers of the world. Sunday, Feb. 12, 2:00 - 3:30 pm, at the Cooperative Extension Education Center, 615 Willow Avenue, Ithaca. Refreshments and time to socialize will follow the talk. Free and open to the public, but donations are appreciated to help support the Tompkins County CCE Horticulture Program. Please call Pat Curran at 272-2292 for more information.

---

## **Chapter Finances for 2005**

The Adirondack Chapter had a good year – financially (as well as in other ways). We estimated our Chapter revenues would be just short of \$4000 and based our expenses on that figure. We actually received \$700 more - \$4687.

To break that down: we estimated (all estimates were based on past experience) plant sales at \$3025 and actually raised only \$75 less. The May sale was just above target as were the Plant of the Month sales. The seedling sale (at \$422) and the August members' sale (at \$318) reversed place from previous years. Since we use approximately 75% of plant sale revenue to fund programs for next year – we will be able to budget \$2200 for 2006 (\$100 above 2005). All other revenue categories came in above the budget estimates.

We had carried forward funds in checking and savings. We did not need to use the funds in checking and used only a small amount of the reserve savings to fund a member's grant request. We used some of the Wilkinson Memorial account to purchase and place a bench with engraving at the Al Wurster Memorial Garden located at Tompkins County Cooperative Extension in Ithaca.

Reviewing expenses: All major categories came in at less than the budget estimate. The notable exceptions were in Member Benefits and Supplies. Members were provided with 2 opportunities for free plants (instead of the 1 budgeted) and books were purchased for resale to members (an expense we expect to recover). Supplies category is over budget because of a one-time purchase of software to better manage the membership records.

I am pleased to report that we have ended 2005 with an additional \$800 to carry forward and that the funds invested in the Community Foundation have remained stable.

***Carolyn Yaeger, Treasurer***



**Adirondack Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society Finances for 2005**

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
Plant Sales:			
Plant Of the Month	\$600.00	\$642.00	
Seedling/April	\$175.00	\$422.00	
Garden Fair/May	\$1,500.00	\$1,568.03	
Members/August	\$750.00	\$318.00	
Sub Total for Plant Sales	\$3,025.00	\$2,950.03	75-80% for Program
Membership	\$800.00	\$1,250.00	
Donations	\$0.00	\$202.00	
Other Sales (books, labels, etc.)	\$50.00	\$57.00	
Workshops	\$100.00	\$200.00	
Interest	\$10.00	\$28.32	
<b>SubTotal Revenue</b>	\$3,985.00	\$4,687.35	
Carried Forward (Checking)	\$608.57		
Carried Forward (Reserve) (Savings 2)	\$2,117.05		
Carried Forward (Wilkinson) (Savings 1)	\$853.46		
FUNDS USED FROM SAVINGS		\$850.00	#1 \$550; #2 \$300
<b>TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE</b>	\$7,564.08	\$5,537.35	
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>PROPOSED</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
Communications: Newsletter, Web	\$175.00	\$53.56	
Program/Speakers	\$2,000.00	\$1,131.21	
Program/Workshops	\$100.00	\$410.00	Keiser, Trough Wkshp
Program/Tours		\$50.00	honorarium to gardens visited
SubTotal for Programs	\$2,100.00	\$1,591.21	
Wurster Garden	\$200.00	\$150.00	
Wilkinson Memorial	\$850.00	\$550.00	Etching & Bench
Other Projects	\$100.00	\$15.11	
SubTotal for Garden Projects	\$1,150.00	\$715.11	
Plant Sales:			
Plant of the Month	\$800.00	\$695.84	sell at cost, no shipping added
Seedling/April	\$50.00	\$15.00	potting mix
Garden Fair/May	\$150.00	\$75.00	Coop Ext.
Members/August			
SubTotal for Plant Sales	\$1,000.00	\$785.84	
Supplies	\$100.00	\$184.97	filemaker software \$166
Hospitality Supplies	\$100.00		
Insurance	\$150.00	\$148.13	Due in December
Member Benefits:			
Premiums (Gifts, Free Plants)	\$150.00	\$282.99	
Awards (Gift Certificates)	\$250.00	\$250.00	
Grants (Attend Conference)	\$2,000.00	\$300.00	
Other (Handbook)	\$25.00	\$227.05	books \$155, videos \$46
Other	\$100.00		
Transfer to Savings		\$150.00	
<b>TOTAL Expenses</b>	\$7,300.00	\$4,688.86	
<b>NET FUNDS AVAILABLE AFTER EXPENSES</b>	\$264.08	\$848.49	

ASSETS [FUNDS AVAILABLE]	JAN. 2005	DEC. 2005
Checking	\$608.57	\$1,431.32
Savings 1 (Wilkinson Memorial)	\$853.46	\$460.04
Savings 2 (Reserves)	\$2,117.05	\$1,834.54
TOTAL AVAILABLE TO CARRY FORWARD	\$3,579.08	\$3,875.90
Community Foundation	\$17,272.05	\$17,272.05

---

## 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, bji1@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

---

## The Green Dragon

Published eight times a year (Feb., March, April, May/June, July/Aug., Sept., Oct. Nov/Dec.). Submit articles by the fourth Friday of the month preceding publication to Craig Cramer: cdcramer@twcny.rr.com. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be in **March**.

