



ADIRONDACK  
CHAPTER

*North American Rock Garden Society*

# Green Dragon Tales

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

November 2006

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## November 11 meeting: Dish-to-pass, annual meeting, plant-of-the-month and presentation by Billie Jean Isbell

Our final program for 2006 will be a real treat. Note that it's **November 11 – a week earlier than our usual 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the Month.**

The meeting will feature a presentation by board member Billie Jean Isbell, ***Conversations with Mother Nature: How belonging to NARGS has changed my gardening.*** “Over the years my gardening has changed considerably, largely due to the influence of belonging to the Adirondack Chapter of NARGS,” says Billie Jean. “I have transformed my landscape and the way I look at gardens. My presentation will give the highlights (and lows) of those transformations.”

All members will also receive a member appreciation gift – species tulip bulbs selected by Billie Jean, who has ably served as our plant-of-the-month coordinator. We will also have a short annual meeting with brief reports and election of officers.

The meeting will be held in the Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, on the Cornell University campus. **Bring a dish to pass and a table setting.** Set up will begin

around 11 a.m., we'll eat around noon and the meeting and program will follow immediately after.

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### **Mark your calendar: Sneak preview of 2007 programs**

Robin Bell has agreed to coordinate speakers for 2007, and he's already lined up some great programs. Tentative plans include:

**March 17 - Harvey Wrightman**, of Wrightman Alpines, will speak on growing and planting in tufa and also offer a hands-on workshop. He will provide everything for the workshop. Members who choose to attend the workshop can expect to pay about \$30 to \$40 to cover material costs. More details to come in our February newsletter.

**April 21 - Liz Knowles**, a gardener and tour organizer from Toronto will talk about her garden and some of her recent trips, probably to Namaqualand.

**September 15 - Ellen Hornig**, proprietor of Seneca Hill perennials and well known to many chapter members, will talk on woodland plants & other treasures from her garden/nursery. We should anticipate some sort of plant sale when Ellen comes.

**October 21 - Janis Ruksans**, owner of Ruksans bulbs nursery in Latvia, a world renowned bulb grower and author of five books on bulbs will speak. **Note this meeting will be on a Sunday** due to Ruksans' tight speaking schedule.

The board will also be planning other activities for 2007 at their January meeting. If you have ideas, please contact a board member. (See People at the end of the newsletter.) Look for information about 2007 events in the future issues of *The Green Dragon* and on our website: [www.acnargs.org](http://www.acnargs.org)

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### **Letter from the Chair**

We are about to conclude another program year for the Adirondack Chapter with our traditional dish-to-pass luncheon and annual meeting. We have scheduled a special program as well. Billie Jean Isbell, whose gardens we visited in August, will be presenting *Conversations with Mother Nature: How belonging to NARGS has changed my gardening*. Because of this presentation, we will limit our annual meeting to a few very brief reports and election of officers. (See slate below).

As has been our tradition, we are also honoring our members two ways. First, we will announce membership awards to those in our Chapter who have served "above and beyond" the call. Secondly all paid-up 2006 members (yes, you can still join at this meeting) will receive a membership appreciation gift. Billie Jean, our plant-of-the-month coordinator, is ordering an array of sweet little species tulips just in time to get them planted for a spring display. If you remember receiving a free plant last spring, you are absolutely correct. Thanks to a very successful year financially we are able to offer a second gift to our members. The board's decision to offer this is frankly not altogether altruistic. Rather, it's our way of encouraging you to grow more rock garden-type plants.

Unfortunately I will miss the meeting as I have unavoidable work travel on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday. We are hoping that by holding our November meeting one week earlier that it is less likely to conflict with Thanksgiving plans and that more of you can attend (although it is certainly not true in my case). In my absence John Gilrein has agreed to run the meeting. Thank you, John.

So now I must dash to beat the rain and get to work putting my garden to bed. I hope to see you all again next year.

Happy gardening,

***Carol Eichler, chair***

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### **Officer Elections**

According to our by-laws, the Chapter is governed by a Board of Directors who are elected by the general membership. Officers serve 2-year terms and other members-at-large serve staggered 3-year terms. The Board presents the following slate for 2007 through 2008:

- **Chair:** Carol Eichler - She has completed a 2-year term and has agreed to serve as Chair for a second 2-year term.
- **Vice Chair/Program:** Robin Bell - Long-time member Robin Bell has agreed to serve as Program Chair in charge of speaker programs for a 2-year term. In fact, he has already begun his responsibilities.
- **Treasurer:** Carolyn Yaeger - She has completed a 2-year term and has agreed to serve for one additional year.
- **Secretary:** Carolyn Yaeger - This position has been vacant for the past year and Board members have filled this on a monthly rotating basis. Carolyn has agreed to serve as Secretary, concurrent with the Treasurer's position for one year.
- **Members-at-large (renewal tems):** David Mitchell – (2-year term) and Billie Jean Isbell (3-year term)

Do you know who the other Board members are? They are listed as the contacts in each issue of the newsletter and are the people overseeing the Chapter activities such as our programs, newsletters, plant sales, workshops, garden tours and behind-the-scene organization such as financial and membership recording. They do a remarkable job. So please, when you see them, let them know how much you appreciate their dedication and hard work.

For 2007 you will see some Board members shifting responsibilities. We will be announcing these changes early next year. We hope more of you will choose to get involved in the day-to-day running of the Chapter. The more you give to the Chapter, the more you will get out of it. And we can always use more help – no experience necessary.

***Carol Eichler, chair***

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## Time to renew! FAQs about 2007 AC-NARGS Membership

It's that time of year, as our 2006 program year closes, when we hope our members are looking ahead with enthusiasm to our new program year which starts in February, **and** to renewing their Chapter membership. (See 2007 Membership Form at the end of this newsletter.) Below are answers to frequently asked questions about membership:

**How much does it cost to join?** Individual Memberships are offered at \$10 per year, Family Memberships at \$15, and Business Memberships at \$25, which entitle the business to an additional business listing in the member directory. We also offer an Individual Lifetime Membership for \$150, and Family Lifetime Membership for \$225. (You'll never again have to ask, "Am I paid up?")

**When I join, do I get the newsletter mailed to me?** Note that in 2007, any member who requests to receive a hard copy of the newsletter through the mail will pay an additional \$5 per year to cover printing and postage costs. Otherwise, you will receive the newsletter via email attachment.

**How long is a membership good for?** Memberships follow the calendar year from January 1 through December 31. The membership cost remains the same regardless of when during the calendar you pay your dues. We generally begin our membership renewal drive in November.

**What are the benefits of membership?** While our meetings have always been "open to the public" at no cost, there are member-only benefits. Among them: receiving the *Green Dragon* newsletter electronically or by mail, a 25% discount on plant purchases at our May sale, purchasing plants at our August members-only plant sale, and eligibility for annual appreciation gifts, grants, and awards.

**What is the difference between AC-NARGS and NARGS National?** The Adirondack Chapter is one of 36 Chapters affiliated with NARGS-National, the parent organization.

**What is the relationship between the Chapter and National?** The Chapter receives certain benefits from the affiliation in return for a few expectations. National provides its Chapters with speakers of national and international repute that we otherwise would not be able to afford on our own. When a new chapter is proposed – as was the case with the Genesee Valley Chapter recently – National must grant approval. Otherwise, we operate fairly autonomously with our own board, budget, and program each year. The Chapter does not pay anything for this affiliation.

**Why should I join NARGS National?** Your membership connects you to thousands of gardeners worldwide who have similar interests and collectively represent a wealth of rock gardening and more general gardening knowledge. Your membership also supports the mission of NARGS, which is to promote knowledge and appreciation of rock gardening. Besides these reasons there are some fabulous benefits, among them eligibility to participate in the annual seed exchange (with over 5,000 species, many of which are not commercially available), subscriptions to the *Rock Garden Quarterly* (beautifully and intelligently executed) and *Bulletin*, invitations to the NARGS Annual Conference and two study weekends, discounts on books through Timber Press, and more. Visit their website at [www.nargs.org](http://www.nargs.org) to learn more about them.

**How do I join NARGS National?** For those who have joined, you are automatically sent annual renewal notices. For first-time members, our Chapter membership form now allows you to join National as well. It's as easy as checking the box indicating that you wish to join and enclosing the additional membership cost of \$30. We'll forward this to the national organization. Their membership, unlike ours, runs a full 12-month cycle. In other words, if you join in November, you will need to renew in November. Once a member, they automatically send you renewal notices.

**Carol Eichler, chair/membership coordinator**

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## Membership directory

After a long hiatus the Adirondack Chapter has printed and sent out 2006 Membership Directories to all our 2006 members. Please check your personal listing and report any updated information to Carol

Eichler (cme24@cornell.edu or by mail to 1562 Taughannock Blvd., Ithaca, NY 14850), the new membership coordinator for 2007. We will make these corrections in future directories.

It's a huge task to keep all contact information up-to-date which is one reason why, when you renew each year, we ask you to fill in all the requested information on the membership form. It gives us your current contact information and serves as a check against our records.

Next year we intend to publish a 2007 directory and have them available at our April meeting. A supplement will be issued in the fall to include any changes as well as additional members joining after April.

**Carol Eichler, chair/membership coordinator**

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### **New chapter study group forming**

Take your rock gardening knowledge to the next level. Join with fellow Chapter members to form a study group. Proposed by the Board, the study group is viewed as a way to increase our individual and collective knowledge and maybe inspire us to build more rock gardens. The group will set their own agenda. We can offer the mornings prior to our Chapter programs as a time to meet (the Board, who has traditionally met then, will re-schedule their meetings). Already several people signed up at the October meeting. Everyone is welcome to join at any time and we will make sure the newsletter publishes this information.

The Wurster Garden at Tompkins County Cooperative Extension offers an excellent "classroom" with many thriving plants that require maintenance and provides a very hands-on learning experience. Besides the usual weeding, planting, and maintenance, there's labeling and a database that needs to be maintained. It would be great to enhance the database with notes on each plant such as flower size and color, time of bloom, and other cultural observations and even photographs.

With winter approaching, a logical first project would be to coordinate a seed order through the NARGS seed exchange. We will aim to call our first meeting shortly after the seed exchange list has been sent in December. If you are interested, please contact Carol Eichler, cme24@cornell.edu or 607-387-5823.

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### ***Pinellia* follow-up: Check plants from chapter picnic/plant sale**

In our October 2006 issue, Rosemarie Parker pointed out the potential for confusion between the native green dragon (*Arisaema dracontium*) and similar-looking but aggressive species of the genus *Pinellia* from Asia.

Chapter member Susanne Lipari writes, "At the Chapter plant sale this summer, I donated some plants that I acquired as *Arisaema draconitum*. According to Rosemary Parker's recent article, that may be a misidentification. I just got back from a trip and have not had a chance to go out to the garden and make sure that what I have is not the invasive Asian *Pinellia*. If you picked up a plant labeled *Arisaema draconitum* at the Chapter picnic/plant sale, please check the plant. In my garden it was a lovely plant, but since it seems to be a prolific self-seeder, I want to warn those of you who bought one of the seedlings to make sure you want to keep them."

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### **Eastern Winter Study Weekend in Rochester: The Evolution of a Rock Gardener**

January 19-21, 2007, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Rochester, N.Y.

Sponsored by: Genesee Valley Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society.

This dynamic, fun-filled, educational weekend will feature fabulous speakers, interactive breakout sessions, premier vendors, alpine exhibits, raffle & silent auction, memorable gifts, book sales & signings, tasty food, fun social hours, & more! The program also features breakout sessions (Plant Selections for Oriental Gardening, Trough Planting, Soil Mixtures) and early-bird tours.

Registration fee: \$255 per person, Includes two continental breakfasts, Saturday lunch buffet and Saturday night banquet. Optional Friday Dinner: \$35. Full program details and registration information are available at: [www.gvcnargs.org](http://www.gvcnargs.org), or phone: 585-924-1739.

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### Trough culture of Sedums

Sedums are described by Lincoln Foster as utility plants that will flourish in the most difficult of sites and the most meager of soils. The low, spreading species of Sedum have an aggressive way of spreading around in sunny sites, like my rock garden. These spreading Sedums are perfect for trough culture, as their growth will be more restrained and they won't overrun other plants that have more restrained growth habits.



They can also be placed in troughs closer to eye level on benches or walls. The lowest growing Sedums will only need an inch or two of soil, though 3 or 4 inches would yield better results.

Most Sedums will do best in full to part sun, though there are exceptions.

For planting, I'd suggest mixing sand in with garden soil or potting soil to create a well-drained planting medium. Sedums need well drained soil, but not scree conditions. Tall upright Sedums like 'Autumn Joy' would not do well in a shallow container, so I'd stick to the low species.

Sedums will survive, and probably thrive, on just natural precipitation, so one doesn't need to be concerned with watering detail while away on vacation. Some attention to watering during summer droughts will maintain the foliage in attractive condition. For overwintering the troughs, spending the winter on the ground rather than exposed in an elevated location would be beneficial.

Below are some good Sedums for troughs; all but the last two keep their leaves in the winter:

- *S. acre* – (golden moss) yellow flowers, very hardy;
- *S. album* – white flowers, leaves turn red in winter, very hardy;
- *S. dasyphyllum* – powder blue leaves, pink flowers;
- *S. spurium* – flowers white, pink or red;
- *S. ternatum* - white flowers, plant in part shade, native to Eastern US;
- *S. kamtchaticum* – yellow flowers, deciduous, taller than most species;
- *S. spathulifolium* – blue green leaves, yellow flowers, deciduous, native to West Coast of US, this species is the least hardy of the list.

**John Gilrein, plant-of-the-month coordinator**

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### Other events: Heather workshop, Cornell Plantations lecture

The final **Cornell Plantations lecture** for 2007 is **November 8** and features **Rick Darke**, photographer, landscape designer and author of *The American Woodland Garden* and *Timber Press Pocket Guide to Ornamental Grasses* speaking on "The Livable Landscape." The lecture starts at 7:30 p.m. in Statler Auditorium on the Cornell University campus. Ample free parking is available after 5 p.m. in the parking garage on Hoy Road, just a short walk away.

The Northeast Heather Society is holding a **heather propagation workshop, November 16**, 6:30 p.m. at the Town of Chenango Community Hall, 1529 NY Rt. 12, Binghamton, N.Y. The \$15 fee includes cuttings, materials, and membership in the society. Registration limited to 20. For more information, contact Mary Matwey [mmatwey@stny.rr.com](mailto:mmatwey@stny.rr.com) or 607-723-1418.

## People

Questions? Want to find out how you can help the Chapter? Don't hesitate to contact one of the volunteers (pending approval at Nov. 11 annual meeting) who help make everything happen:

- **Chair/Membership:** Carol Eichler, cme24@cornell.edu, 607-387-5823
- **Vice Chair/Program:** Robin Bell, rgb2@cornell.edu, 607-272-2074
- **Treasurer/Secretary:** Carolyn Yaeger, cao2@cornell.edu, 607-844-9462
- **Garden trips/tours:** Billie Jean Isbell, bji1@cornell.edu, 607-539-6484
- **Plant sales:** David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu, 607-342-3660
- **Plant of the Month:** John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu, 315-492-0844
- **Newsletter editor/Webmaster:** Craig Cramer, cdcramer@twcnny.rr.com, 607-539-7233

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## Green Dragon Tales

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@twcnny.rr.com. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be in **February**.



# Don't forget to renew your membership for 2007!

## See membership form below ...



# Adirondack Chapter North American Rock Garden Society 2007 Membership Form

1. **► Become a member today in 6 easy steps** Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Address 2 \_\_\_\_\_

City : \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

2.  new member (\$10)  renewal (\$10)  household (\$15)  nursery (\$25)  
 Individual lifetime (\$150)  household lifetime (\$225)

3.  Please sign-me up for NARGS-National membership (Additional \$30 enclosed)

I am already a member of NARGS-National.  My garden is open to visitors.

4. I'd like to receive the Green Dragon (our newsletter)

by mail (enclose additional \$5 per year)  by email with both pdf file attachment & web link

Please remember that you can always print out the electronic version of the newsletter if you prefer not to read it while sitting at your computer. Sending it electronically is easier and cheaper for the Chapter and makes it possible to include color photos and links to great garden sites, which will not be available in the paper version.

5. We are an all-volunteer organization and invite you to get involved! Here are some ways:

- Host a picnic  Host a speaker  Make phone calls  Write an article  
 Review other Chapter newsletters  Help with plant sales  Make a display board  
 suggest a speaker or program: \_\_\_\_\_

6. **Calculate your total and mail this completed form with a check payable to AC-NARGS to:  
Carolyn Yaeger, 400 Irish Settlement Road, Freeville NY 13068**

Chapter membership (see rates above)..... \_\_\_\_\_

+\$5 if you want to receive paper copy of newsletter..... \_\_\_\_\_

National NARGS membership \$30 (Optional)..... \_\_\_\_\_

**Total:** ..... \_\_\_\_\_