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CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

# Green Dragon Tales

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April 2008

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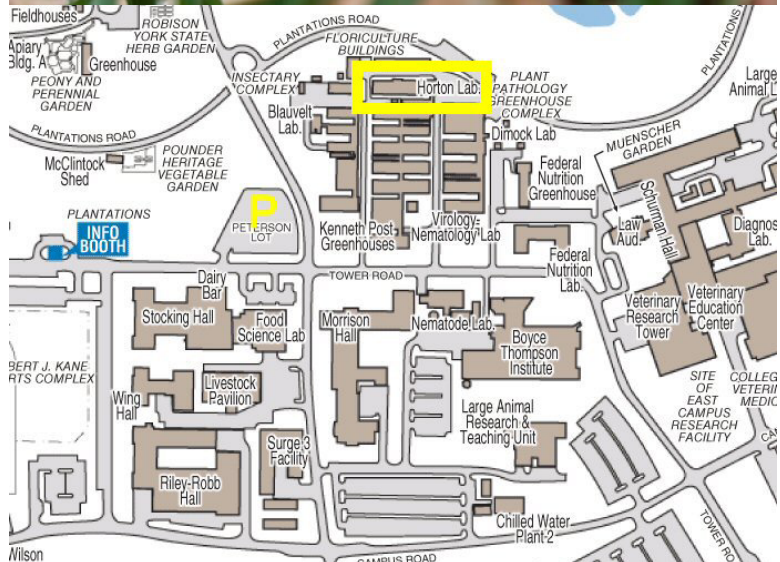
## Snowdrops topic of April 19 meeting

Our April 19 meeting will feature **Hitch Lyman**, Trumansburg, N.Y., speaking on Snowdrops. Hitch may be local, but he is one of the world's foremost authorities on snowdrops, with more than 400 varieties in his collection. He hosted a Garden Conservancy Open Day on April 5.

We will also have our annual April **seedling exchange**. (More information below.)

**Note the change in venue for this meeting:** Ken Post Greenhouse classroom (Horton Lab), Tower Rd., Cornell University. Brown bag lunch at noon. Program starts at 1 p.m.

Need help finding Horton Lab? See map detail right or larger campus map here: [www.cornell.edu/maps](http://www.cornell.edu/maps). There is limited parking behind the greenhouse. If that's full, your best bet is probably the Peterson Lot on the northwest corner of the intersection of Judd Falls Rd. and Tower Rd. The Horton Lab is the 'headhouse' at the north end of the Kenneth Post Greenhouses. Walk east from the Peterson Lot on Tower Rd. Go left on the second driveway and walk down it to the headhouse door at the end of the row of greenhouses.



## Seedling exchange at April meeting

From David Mitchell, plant sales coordinator:

Don't miss our seedling exchange at this year's April meeting. After a great lecture, we'll dig into our seedlings, divide them up, and hope to see them again in your garden and at one of our plant sales.

You may bring your seedlings in individual pots or one large pot. We'll have soil, pots, and labels on hand to help with the transfer to a good home. You do not have to bring seedlings to get seedlings. Oh, and did I mention that this exchange is free! free! free!?

Folks are also welcome to bring divisions of plants, labeled, and potted or not, to be reserved for the May plant sale. In the meantime, good luck with your seeds and may you be able to share your successes in April!

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## 2008 program plans

Here are the plans for 2008. More details coming as they are available:

**April 19:** Hitch Lyman, Trumansburg, N.Y., Snowdrops. Seedling exchange. Location TBD. Brown bag lunch at noon. Program starts at 1 p.m.

**May 17:** Plant Sale, Ithaca High School, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Summer** garden tours and workshops are still in the planning stages.

**Midsummer date TBD:** Picnic and Member Plant Sale, Judy Fogel's in Lansing.

**September 20:** Durand Van Doran, Trumansburg, N.Y. metal artist, Wrought Iron in the Garden. Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, Cornell University. Brown bag lunch at noon. Program starts at 1 p.m.

**October 18:** Jody Payne, rock garden curator, New York Botanical Garden, topic TBD. Brown bag lunch at noon. Program starts at 1 p.m. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca, N.Y. (where Dey St., Willow Ave. and Rte. 13 meet). If you need directions, visit: [counties.cce.cornell.edu/Tompkins](http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/Tompkins) or call the CCE office (during regular business hours): (607) 272-2292.

**November 15:** Annual meeting and dish-to-pass. Tony Reznicek, curator of the University of Michigan Herbarium will speak on a topic TBD. Location TBD.

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## On the ACNARGS blog

Don't forget to check out the blog for the latest event info and information and links you won't find in the newsletter. Plus you can comment and share information about your own garden and experiences. Go to: <http://acnargs.blogspot.com/>

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## From the Chair

Transplanting has been on my mind a lot the past two weeks. I've been trying to keep up with seedlings as they grow and need to be potted out of their starter flats. I confess the whole repotting thing is a bit of a project and messy – finding a block of time to set up and meticulously handle the delicate and tiny sprouts. It's an activity best held outdoors but of course it's been far too cold. For a brief moment I'm caught up until the next wave – my emerging vegetable seeds – demand more room. Already I'm out of space under my grow lights. Ah space. No matter how much allotted room we have, is this not a constant gardener's plight?

I, for one, will be very happy to see April 19 come, the day of our next meeting, because that means I'll be able to rid myself of lots of seedlings to share with you in my quest to gain more growing room.

I'm excited about some of my babies. Of the 3 alliums that have germinated, *Allium caeruleum* looks very interesting at 24 inches tall with blue flowers. I'm ecstatic to have a dozen young *Gentiana septemfida* plants. They were so tiny and difficult to transplant but look like they'll survive! Then there are still more small plants that show promise for the rock garden - *Ephedra minima*, *Erysimum nivale*, *Horminum pyrenaicum*, *Leontopodium alpinum*, and *Scutellaria alpina*, to name a few – nothing particularly rare, simply the thrill of seeing the miracle of their emergence.

To get the most out of our seedling exchange I hope you'll bring seedlings by your own hand or self-sown volunteers from your garden. Note the change of venue for this meeting. The head house at Ken Post Lab is the perfect place to handle our messy plant transactions. The plant exchange will follow our speaker presentation – the details of both are contained in this newsletter. It will be a full meeting to be sure and one I hope you have marked your calendar to attend.

Happy Gardening,

**Carol Eichler, chair**

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### **Genesee Valley Chapter display at GardenScape 2008**

The Genesee Valley Chapter constructed a large hypertufa display at the Greater Rochester Flower Show - GardenScape 2008. Photo credits go to Kathy Malta with special thanks to Bristol Nursery for the loan of tufa and plants and to Betsy Knapp who was the Chapter's master builder/designer.

More about the show from Carol Eichler:



Billing itself as "one of the top flower and garden shows in the country," Rochester's 17th annual garden show known as GardenScape carried the theme "It's a Garden Life" this year. I have gone a number of times and am never disappointed. How could you be disappointed with viewing colorful flowers and lush trees when outdoors we're still looking at a stark black and white landscape? Don't expect this to be the Philadelphia Flower Show but that can be a good thing. The crowds are smaller, it's closer, and much more achievable in a day's visit.

First, before I write more generally about this show, I want to highlight – or more accurately, rave – about the Genesee Valley NARGS display this year. This year I was wowed, inspired, swept off my feet – yes, all of the above – by their display! (See photo above.) I'm hoping to get more details about it. But for now all I can report (with some degree of confidence) is that Betsy Knapp was the chief designer/construction supervisor using tufa and plant material supplied by Bristol's Garden Center in Victor, New York (<http://www.bristolsgardencenter.com/>). They did a terrific job and had a prime location too. This Chapter has had a booth at the show each year since their founding (about 3 years ago now, a huge commitment for a Chapter with current membership around 30 I might add). Hopefully, this commitment and the exposure it gives them will be a big boost to their membership.

Now, on to the rest of the show. Each year there are certain commercial and not-for-profit exhibit/vendors that I look forward to with anticipation. Traditionally you could count on a handful of commercial landscape design firms, among the 20 or so constructed within the Dome Center, that offered, in my opinion, what stood out as truly original displays. However this year – and this speaks well to the quality of the show in general - there seemed to be less of a distinction as all the displays seemed to be elevated to a higher standard. A rooftop garden with Rochester nighttime skyline as a backdrop, and an oasis

complete with Turkish-style gazebo (if that's what they are called), and, always, the International Bonsai Arboretum display.

I look forward to some wonderful vendors too including a returning jewelry artisan whose work can be addictive, the orchid society's display and thankfully adjacent orchid vendor to satisfy one's compulsion for those "must have" plants, and the alluring begonia nursery to name a few. The Children's Garden is always fun and worth checking out their interactive activities as are the lectures by local and nationally-known experts – with topics this year ranging from edible and sustainable landscaping to floral design, hardscaping, and highlights of area public gardens.

I highly recommend attending this show. If you missed it this time, remember there's always next year. Read more here <http://www.rochesterflowershow.com/gardenscape/show-overview.php>

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### Getting to know two new members

From Carol Eichler, chair:

I recently received messages from two new members who joined this year:

**Nancy Adams** writes: I have a love of native plants and selections from natives - a lot of great ornamental plants come from them. I also like succulents, sedums and sempervivums a lot- funky and little and often able to deal with extremes in climate and living conditions. I have worked at Cornell Plantations for the better part of twenty years, and had the great good luck to work with a variety of really cool plants and some really good people. I think the rock garden folks get to work with some neat, unusual plants and there is always something interesting that is going on with their gardens. I like the variety of ways that people interpret and plant their rock gardens too.

**Kathy Purdy** writes: I garden on 15 acres of acid clay in the hamlet of Triangle, halfway between Greene and Whitney Point. I am a homeschooling mother of a large family and read (that's past tense) a lot of gardening books while breastfeeding, no formal horticultural training. When we moved here, there were colchicums already planted by a former owner, and I've gotten quite interested in them, wrote an article for *The American Gardener* last fall. I also love the genus *Narcissus* and am struggling to eliminate invasive plants and incorporate more native plants, especially spring ephemerals. (Let's face it, the goldenrod and asters don't need my help.) There are plenty of rocks here, but I can't say I'm a rock gardener, just interested in interesting plants.

In addition to writing for garden magazines, Kathy is also a pioneer in the world of garden blogging. You can read her blog posts at *Cold Climate Gardening: Hardy Plants for Hardy Souls* (<http://www.coldclimategardening.com>). If you're thinking of starting your own blog, you should also read her *Blogging Art and Practice* blog (<http://yourbloghelper.com>).

Welcome Nancy and Kathy!

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### Stonecrop Open House and Plant Sale April 26

Stonecrop Gardens Open House and Plant Sale, April 26, Cold Spring, N.Y., is looking more inviting all the time. Besides viewing the woodland and rock gardens at a choice time, the number of vendors participating in the plant sale has expanded and promises to be a virtual one-stop shop for the delectable and rare.

Here's a list of nurseries attending:

- Alpines Mont Echo - Specialist of choice Alpine and Rock Garden plants with an emphasis on Primulas, Saxifrages, Campanulas, Woodland Plants and Dwarf Shrubs.
- Carol's Collectibles - A small nursery in Northeast Connecticut specializing in unusual and hard to find rhododendrons, dwarf conifers, perennials and rock garden plants.
- Evermay Nursery - A micro nursery specializing in Alpine plants and Primula species, and hybrids hardy for the Northeast.

- Les Plantons A & P - A family-owned nursery specialising in dwarf and unusual conifers and shrubs, many suitable for troughs and small rock gardens and grown for northern gardens.
- Wrightman Alpines - Grower and Supplier of Alpine Plants

For more information go to <http://www.stonecrop.org>. A number of AC-NARGS members attended last year on an "official" day trip. If anyone wants to take the initiative to organize a trip this year, please don't be shy – let me know ASAP ([carol\\_eichler@excite.com](mailto:carol_eichler@excite.com)).

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### **Celebrate Trilliums!**

From Carol Eichler:

Mt. Cuba Center and its sponsoring partners invite you to the Trillium Symposium April 17-19. The setting for the symposium is the Brandywine Valley, an area in Northern Delaware known for its natural beauty, world-class museums, and magnificent gardens.

The purpose of this two-day conference (and optional third-day field trip) is to bring together academic and industry professionals as well as expert gardeners to address the science, conservation, and horticulture of trilliums of Eastern North America. Attendees will gain an understanding of the biology of trilliums, their ecology, conservation challenges, and issues impacting their propagation and production. Colleagues with a wide range of expertise share ideas and information to further our understanding of this intriguing genus. For details: [www.trilliumsymposium2008.org](http://www.trilliumsymposium2008.org).

From the symposium website. Note there is a fee to attend.

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### **News from National**

**Singing the Praises of our "Unsung Heroes"** A new feature has been introduced in the Winter 2008 NARGS Bulletin Board (supplement to the Rock Garden Quarterly). Writes NARGS President Dick Bartlett:

[NARGS] is a fantastic and interesting society with a wide collection of unique and dedicated gardeners. We like to think of ourselves as a special kind of gardeners who are interested in the difficult to grow and rare and unusual plants. But there is another aspect to our society, which we need to be aware of. Our society contains many individuals who are also dedicated to their particular chapters. Although sometimes recognized with chapter awards, they deserve special recognition by our entire society. Hence the creation of this new feature. Anyone is invited to profile and recognize individuals from their Chapter who deserve recognition for their dedication to the work they do to keep the local Chapter going and thriving. Submit your "unsung hero" story to Dick Bartlett at [abart111@aol.com](mailto:abart111@aol.com).

**NARGS Bulletin Board goes electronic** In an effort to provide more frequent communications, the NARGS Bulletin is now posted on the NARGS website and its paper-copy version is gradually being phased out. Visit "From the President" ([www.nargs.org/bulletin.html](http://www.nargs.org/bulletin.html)) to keep abreast of news from our parent organization.

**Why not join NARGS National?** Membership in the National NARGS may be one of the best \$30 bargains to be found! Membership gives you a subscription to the Rock Garden Quarterly, eligibility to participate in the rock garden Seed Exchange, and discount rates on plant books. Any titles published by Timber/Workman Press, whether they are listed on the NARGS website or not, are available to NARGS members through the Book Service at 20% off retail.

Of course, all of us in our local Chapter receive the benefit of the speaker tours which bring renown plantspeople from the world over to bring us programs - something we could never afford to do on our own. Lastly, with your membership you join a national and international network of gardeners and help secure this amazing organization for the future.

Membership is just a click away, so check it out: [www.nargs.org/info/smembership.html](http://www.nargs.org/info/smembership.html)

## Garden Conservancy Open Days in Tompkins County and Syracuse

Details are now available for Garden Conservancy Open Days. Of regional interest:

- June 14, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm: Four gardens in Ithaca including Fogel Garden, Barb's Little Acre, Sears Garden and Lion Garden.
- July 12, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm: Four more gardens in Ithaca including Gouldin Garden, Jim and Barrs Garden, Daniel W. Krall Garden, and David Watkins Jr. Garden.
- July 13, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm: Four Syracuse-area gardens.

For more information and maps visit the Garden Conservancy website: [www.gardenconservancy.org](http://www.gardenconservancy.org)

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## Other Events

Via Carol Eichler (with thanks to Maria Galetti for some of this information):

- April 26: Stonecrop Gardens Open House and Plant Sale, Cold Spring, NY; <http://www.stonecrop.org>
  - May 11 Rare and Unusual Plant Sale, sponsored by the Friends of the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, Canada; <http://www.friendsofthefarm.ca/events.htm>
  - May 17 -18: Trade Secrets - A Rare Plant and garden antiques sale and garden tours, Sharon, CT; <http://www.tradesecretsct.com>
  - June 12-15: NARGS National Conference and Meeting, Ottawa Canada, sponsored by the Ottawa Valley Chapter, NARGS (more information forthcoming)
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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. (This is the slate to be voted on at our Feb. meeting):

- **Chair/Membership:** Carol Eichler, [carol\\_eichler@excite.com](mailto:carol_eichler@excite.com), 607-387-5823
- **Vice Chair/Program:** Robin Bell, [rgb2@cornell.edu](mailto:rgb2@cornell.edu), 607-272-2074
- **Secretary:** Carolyn Yaeger, [cao2@cornell.edu](mailto:cao2@cornell.edu), 607-844-9462
- **Treasurer:** BZ Marranta, [mmm10@cornell.edu](mailto:mmm10@cornell.edu)
- **Program Assistants/Garden Trips and Tours:** Billie Jean Isbell, [bjj1@cornell.edu](mailto:bjj1@cornell.edu), 607-539-6484 and Donna Kraft, [dkaft@twcny.rr.com](mailto:dkaft@twcny.rr.com), 315 696-8626
- **Plant sales:** David Mitchell, [dwm23@cornell.edu](mailto:dwm23@cornell.edu), 607-342-3660 and BZ Marranta [mmm10@cornell.edu](mailto:mmm10@cornell.edu) 607-532-8813
- **Plant of the Month:** John Gilrein, [basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu](mailto:basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu), 315-492-0844
- **Wurster Garden Coordinator:** Tom Myers [tom@ithacanhs.org](mailto:tom@ithacanhs.org) 607-273-2865
- **Membership:** Susanne Lipari [sel3@cornell.edu](mailto:sel3@cornell.edu) 607-387-9308
- **Annual Picnic Host:** Judy Fogel [jfogel@twcny.rr.com](mailto:jfogel@twcny.rr.com) 607-275-3332
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## Green Dragon Tales

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