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CHAPTER

*North American Rock Garden Society*

# Green Dragon Tales

Visit our blog: [acnargs.blogspot.com](http://acnargs.blogspot.com)

May 2008

## In this issue:

- Plants needed for May 17 plant sale
- June 21 day trip to 3 Syracuse-area gardens
- 2008 program plans
- August 16 Annual Picnic and Member-Only Plant Sale
- From the Chair
- Warm April brings a Cool May in the Rock Garden
- News From National: Ottawa Conference & National Meeting
- Want to share a ride to Ottawa?
- Need pavers?
- Garden Conservancy Open Days
- May 17 Spring Garden Fair and Plant Sale
- Other events
- People

## Plants needed for May 17 plant sale

Your plants and help are needed at the May 17 plant sale at Ithaca High School, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.!

Please bring your plants potted in soiless mix and labeled to my house (402 Esty Street, Ithaca) or to the high school at setup on Friday, May 16 from 4 to 8 p.m. and Saturday 7 to 8:30 a.m. Late entries will be accepted, but please label each plant.

We'll probably have enough volunteers, but it doesn't hurt to ask! We'll need people to identify plants, label, price, organize the display, answer questions, take money, talk about the Chapter, greet and meet.

If you have questions, contact me: [dwm23@cornell.edu](mailto:dwm23@cornell.edu) 607-342-3660

Read more about the plant sale in this newsletter.

**David Mitchell, plant sales coordinator**

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## June 21 day trip to 3 Syracuse-area gardens

Prepare for a full day and an eyeful of inspiring gardens in the Syracuse area starting bright and early on Saturday, June 21 with the gardens of Louise Lutz and Joe Zader located on Tully Lake. These folks really know how to build with stone!

Then on to Donna Kraft's garden on the other side of Tully Lake where you'll see some rare treasures in a magnificent setting and pause for bring-your-own lunch.

Lastly, guided by designer Diana Smith, owner of Topiary Gardens (<http://www.topiary-gardens.com> - note the garden pictured on her home page is a portion of the

Donna Kraft's garden



garden we will see) we will visit the showplace gardens of Doc Mengel. Diana's specialty is Japanese maples and she will bring some choice potted specimens available for purchase.

A side trip to Watson's Greenhouse in LaFayette before heading to our respective homes is highly recommended, if time allows. They carry lots of rock garden plants and display inspiring sculptural hypertufa pieces created by Art Friedl.

If you plan to join us, please contact Donna Kraft (dkraft@twcny.rr.com or 315-696-8626) for the itinerary and directions as well as to arrange carpooling. As a courtesy we also need to let our hosts know how many guests to expect.



Lutz-Zader garden

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## 2008 program plans

Here are the plans for the rest of 2008. See ACNARGS blog for more info: [acnargs.blogspot.com](http://acnargs.blogspot.com)

- **May 17:** Plant Sale, Ithaca High School, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- **June 21:** Day trip to 3 Syracuse-area gardens. More info and itinerary, contact Donna Kraft: dkraft@twcny.rr.com or 315-696-8626
- **August 16:** Picnic and Member Plant Sale, Judy Fogel's in Lansing. More info and directions in this newsletter.
- **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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## Come Visit the Wurster Garden

From Billie Jean Isbell, trips/tours coordinator:

Carol Eichler, David Mitchell and I worked in the Wurster Garden on Sat. May 3, and it is now in beautiful shape.

If you haven't visited the garden now is the time to do so. A good way to learn about the plants is to work in the demonstration garden.

My favorite plant in bloom right now is the small *Daphne midiordensis* 'Lawrence Crocker'.

Craig promises he'll add more pictures of our day to the blog soon. (<http://acnargs.blogspot.com>)



## August 16 Annual Picnic and Member-Only Plant Sale

Judy Fogel has graciously offered to host our August 16 meeting, which includes as the top order of the day, our very special member-only plant sale, followed by a dish-to-pass and guided garden tour. Mark your calendar now. Our July-August newsletter will have full details. Judy lives in Cayuga Heights and her home offers magnificent views of Cayuga Lake.

You'll have a chance to view Judy's garden earlier in the season since her garden is among those offered by the Garden Conservancy Ithaca Open Days on June 14. Here's what their website (<http://gardenconservancy.org/opendays/index.pl>) says about her garden:

This is a nine-year-old garden overlooking and sloping toward Cayuga Lake. Conifers, ornamental trees, nut trees and shrubs (many started as saplings), and meadows border the two-acre property. Next to the house are a thyme and flagstone patio, roses and clematis on trellises, shrubs, and flowering trees in the front of the house and flowering plants in containers on the rear patio. An herb garden backs up to a rugosa rose garden which is situated adjacent to a cutting garden. A pergola draped with hops and clematis borders the enclosed potager for vegetables and flowers. The long, mixed-border cottage garden is filled with flowering shrubs, perennials, and annuals. A waterfall behind the mixed border leads to the pond and a burning pit/sitting area which is planted with small trees, grasses, and shrubs. A small wooded area is the site of a future shade garden. Completing the gardens are a small grape arbor and a rock garden.

**Directions:** From Ithaca, go north on Route 13. Take exit for Route 34/East Shore Drive and drive north on Route 34 for 4.4 miles, then turn left onto East Shore Circle. Stay on East Shore Circle for 0.2 mile then turn left onto Teeter Road. After 0.2 mile turn right onto Waterview Circle Road. Number 12 is on left. Please park on street.

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## From the Chair

[Right: Carol Eichler, John Gilrein and Billie Jean Isbell at hypertufa workshop.]

Our April 19 meeting day dawned as one of the first of the spring that was both warm enough and dry enough to work out in the garden – the sort of day this rock garden chair dreads. Why? I feared your garden and its alluring demands would be far more attractive than attending our talk.

So it was with great surprise (a good thing) that I saw so many people turn up for Hitch Lyman's presentation on snowdrops. It was a near record crowd with many unfamiliar faces, attributed in part to the current snowdrop "craze" that Hitch mentioned. Of course, the great publicity provided by both the Ithaca Journal and Elmira Star Gazette and other informal word-of-mouth avenues helped to quickly spread the word that we were offering a program by a foremost galanthus grower.

My day proceeded to get even better. Our seedling exchange – and somewhat impromptu ephemerals sale (because technically, they weren't seedling and besides they wouldn't hold until our May sale) offered plants, plants, and more plants galore. Had I realized beforehand the extent of what had been brought in, I probably would have had difficulty focusing on the talk. Thanks to the generosity of our members there were many precious "finds" that will now become part of our envisioned gardens. Yes! It was a great way to kick off the growing season.

Coming soon is the May 17th Garden Fair and Plant Sale at the Ithaca High School. It is our biggest fundraiser of the year and provides the critical funding for speakers. Look for our booth, always situated indoors against the far wall. Set-up begins Friday afternoon and we welcome your plant donations, help with set-up and day-of-sale assistance, and of course, your purchases. Please encourage your garden friends to stop by . . . and to become a member. Remember members receive a 25% discount.



Need I remind you that we will not hold another speaker meeting until September 18th, followed by speaker programs in October and November? Besides tending to our own gardens during this apparent hiatus we have scheduled a June 21 day trip to tour gardens in the Syracuse area. Donna Kraft, whose own garden is on the roster, is coordinating this event and this issue contains more information about this fabulous inspirational trip. (See above if you're reading the blog.)

Another activity that the Chapter will be engaged in throughout the summer is the on-going tending of the Wurster Garden. As of this writing there is no scheduled work date so I expect we'll be sending out an email alert when we do. Tom Myers is this year's coordinator. The garden, located at Cooperative Extension's offices at 615 Willow Avenue, should be nearing peak bloom about the time you receive this newsletter so do make a point of stopping by (pulling a few weeds while you're there would be welcomed too).

This will also be your last newsletter until our July-August issue, arriving in time to remind you of our annual picnic and member-only sale on August 16th. Mark your calendar now to save the date because, thanks to you, our members bring such special and unique plants to share. It's a not-to-be-missed event. More information is contained in this newsletter. (Or see above if you're reading the blog.)

So, despite the fact we won't meet for awhile, there's still lots going on. Enjoy the gardening season everyone.

**Carol Eichler, chair**

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### Warm April brings a Cool May in the Rock Garden

From member Nari Mistry: In March I wondered whether we could have garden visits in April and I was hoping to lure ACNARGS members with some pictures of early blooms in my rock garden. April started out cold and I gave up the idea.

But then we had those very warm dry sunny days! Plants woke up and many of my little alpiners leaped into bloom and were rapidly setting seed, while I worked madly to move and transplant all the mis-sited (non-alpine) plants on my list before they grew too big. Meanwhile, several little draba cushions flowered and faded in a few days. *Pulsatilla haleri* bloomed and went to seed.



*Saxifraga 'Allendale'*

Now with the rain finally helping the season along, there are more flowers coming every day. So I have revived my hope to invite members to stop by any time and look at what's showing.

All the *Primulas* are blooming well of course, starting with *P. Juliae* species which started in March and ending with the few named specimens.

We have yellow *Draba siberica* and *Potentilla nana* blooming with blue-flowered *Veronica armena* mats in the background, *Aubrieta* & *Arabis* blooms in purple, red and pink, and *Armeria* cushions are poised to be covered completely in pink. Although the double-flowered *Sanguinum* has come and gone, there are swaths of double white *Anemone nemorosa* and a few delicate violet colored *A. 'Ginny'* and a lot of *A. blanda* still blooming in the shade as well as a *Corydalis flexuosa* (violet-purple). Also a brilliant yellow *Hylomecon japonica*.

Please stop by anytime at 1159 Ellis Hollow Rd., Ithaca. The sunny rock garden is in the side yard on the left (East), the shady garden behind the house. Feel free to walk around. If you want to call, it's 272-7496.

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## **News From National: Ottawa Conference and National Meeting**

From Carol Eichler, chair:

With both Eastern and Western Study Weekends now history, NARGS is looking ahead to its 2008 International Rock Garden Plant Conference and National Meeting on June 12-15 in Ottawa carrying the theme One Valley: Five Habitats. The days are filled with field trips to varied habitats from forest to bog to meadow, and by night with lectures. But wait there's more: Enjoy the opportunity to explore many attractions of interest close by, within walking distance of the AGM meeting site at the University of Ottawa in fact.

The conference promises to be stimulating and intense. Among the featured speakers are:

- Allan Donaldson, retired professor of geology, Carleton University, speaking about the geological history of the Ottawa Region.
- Daniel F. Brunton, ecological consultant and field naturalist, whose topic is "Special Ottawa Valley Landscapes: An Armchair Overview."
- On Friday, June 13, Michael Runtz, on the biology faculty of Carleton University, will talk about "Floating Fens and Arid Alvars: Rare and Unusual Habitats of the Ottawa Valley."
- And on Saturday, June 14, Marilyn Light presents a talk titled "An Orchid for Every Habitat: Orchids of Canada's Capital Region."

More information is available on the Ottawa Valley Chapter's website [www.ovrghs.ca](http://www.ovrghs.ca).

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### **Want to share a ride to Ottawa?**

Member Bill Plummer is looking for folks to share the road to the NARGS national conference June 12-15 in Ottawa:

"I will be driving to the Ottawa meeting passing through Ithaca on the way. Would anyone like to drive with me? There are no single or double dormitory rooms available. However, there is a 2 bedroom suite that goes for \$99. Is there someone who would like the second bedroom and share the cost? Bill Plummer, Painted Post, New York, [remmulp@stny.rr.com](mailto:remmulp@stny.rr.com), 607-962-2640"

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### **Need pavers?**

Billie Jean Isbell has more than 500 pavers looking for a home. They are brick-colored, 'key shaped' (6-inch hexagons with 2-inch square attached), and make an intricate interlocking pattern when installed. Contact Billie Jean if you're interested: [bjj1@cornell.edu](mailto:bjj1@cornell.edu) or 607-539-6484.

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### **Plant of the Month Program**

From John Gilrein, plant of the month coordinator:

Through our plant of the month program we hope to expand the horizons of our members, as well as provide appealing plants. We like to coordinate the plant of the month with our speaker's talk when this is possible. When we can't coordinate the plant of the month with the speaker, like last month when our speaker's topic was snowdrops, I try to get something else with appeal. If you have any suggestions about future plants of month, let me know: [base\\_camp@verizon.net](mailto:base_camp@verizon.net) 315-492-0844

Plant of the month will start up again at our September meeting.

## **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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## **May 17 Spring Garden Fair and Plant Sale**

From ACNARGS member and Tompkins County CCE horticulture educator Pat Curran, here's an overview of the Spring Garden Fair and Plant Sale at Ithaca High School where we have our own table. If you haven't attended before, you really should check it out.

April's flowers are giving way to May showers. Though the summer-like weather in April has made planting tender plants very tempting, the seasonal weather is back and reminds us that the average date of our last spring frost is May 14. One sure sign that spring is really here is the Annual Spring Garden Fair and Plant Sale taking place this year on Saturday, May 17 from 9 am - 1 pm at Ithaca High School. Mark your calendar and plan to attend!

This event is the largest plant sale in central NY and will feature over 50 area plant growers and prominent gardening groups with a huge plant selection. Garden groups include the Tompkins County Master Gardeners, Adirondack Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society, Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, and Auraca Herbarists. Plants to be featured include flowering annuals, herbs, perennials--many choice selections, rock garden plants, native plants, small flowering shrubs and trees, vegetable transplants, asparagus and raspberries. Everything any gardener could want and more! By coming to the Plant Sale, you are supporting local family greenhouse businesses and garden groups. Local plants, local experts, local color!

Plan to arrive before 9 am if you can, in order to park closer to the action. Sales start promptly at 9 am, and choice plants sometimes sell out fast. Free pH testing by the Master Gardeners (two samples per person limit, please). Consider bringing your wagon so you can pull your purchases around comfortably.

For information about the event, call 607-272-2292.

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## **Other events**

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

- 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)

## 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, 607-387-5823
- **Vice Chair/Program:** Robin Bell, rgb2@cornell.edu, 607-272-2074
- **Secretary:** Carolyn Yaeger, cao2@cornell.edu, 607-844-9462
- **Treasurer:** BZ Marranca, mmm10@cornell.edu
- **Program Assistants/Garden Trips and Tours:** Billie Jean Isbell, bji1@cornell.edu, 607-539-6484 and Donna Kraft, dkaft@twcny.rr.com, 315 696-8626
- **Plant sales:** David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu, 607-342-3660 and BZ Marranca mmm10@cornell.edu 607-532-8813
- **Plant of the Month:** John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu, 315-492-0844
- **Wurster Garden Coordinator:** Tom Myers tom@ithacanhs.org 607-273-2865
- **Membership:** Susanne Lipari sel3@cornell.edu 607-387-9308
- **Annual Picnic Host:** Judy Fogel jfogel@twcny.rr.com 607-275-3332
- **Newsletter editor/Webmaster:** Craig Cramer, cdramer@twcny.rr.com, 607-539-7233 and Nari Mistry nbm2@cornell.edu, 607-272-7496

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## Green Dragon Tales

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