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April 2011

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April 16 Program: The Tame and Wild Alpine Flora of Colorado

Our April 16 program will feature chapter member and former chair Carol Eichler speaking on "The Wild and Tame Alpine Flora of Colorado: Donna and Carol's Excellent Adventure."

Carol will share her plant adventures last July both within and outside of the national NARGS annual meeting in Salida, Colo. She and Donna Kraft visited conference-led tours to alpine regions above 12,000 feet, visited the Denver Botanic Garden and breath-taking private gardens, and did some additional exploration on her own post-conference. You saw previews of her pictures in newsletters last fall. Come on out and see and hear more about her experience.

Our Plant of the Month will feature some Colorado favorites from Laporte Avenue Nursery in Fort Collins. And we'll have our annual seedling exchange. See articles below for details.

The meeting will be held at the Tompkins County Office of Cornell Cooperative Extension, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca, N.Y. Brown bag lunch at noon. Program begins at 1:00 p.m.



The view from Denver Botanic Gardens rock garden on Mount Goliath.



One of nature's rock gardens, a nice grouping - and that's just along the roadside!

2011 program plans

Our **tentative** program line up for 2011. Details in future newsletters or acnargs.blogspot.com:

- April 16: Carol Eichler – **The Tame and Wild Alpine Flora of Colorado**. Cornell Cooperative Extension, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca. Plant of the Month will be plants growable in the East from Laporte Avenue Nursery, Fort Collins, Colorado.
- May 14: **Ithaca Plant Sale**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., NYS Armory off Rt. 13 N at 1765 Hanshaw Rd. Pot your plants early! See article below.
- June 18-20 – Working trip to **White Pine Camp**. See details in March newsletter or contact Carol Eichler for details ceichler@twcny.rr.com
- July 10 – **Member garden tour**, Syracuse area. Featured gardens include Michael Brennan's, in Pompey, and John Gilrein's and Harold Peachey's, both in South Onondaga. Details and directions coming in future newsletters.
- August (date to be announced) – **Member plant sale** and picnic.
- September (tentative, date to be announced) – Working trip to **White Pine Camp**.
- **Fall programs** to be announced: September 17, October 15, November 12 (note November meeting is on the second Saturday).

April Plant of the Month: Colorado favorites

From John Gilrein, Program/Plant of the Month coordinator.

Our April 2011 Plant of the Month will be alpine plants from the Laporte Avenue Nursery in Fort Collins, Colorado (www.laporteavenuenuresery.com). Their website is worth viewing just to see some great plants, even if you don't plant to purchase some.

Laporte Avenue Nursery comes highly recommended by Carol Eichler, who met the nursery owners during her trip to Colorado last summer. The order has not been confirmed yet, so plant availability isn't certain. I tried to obtain a nice selection of rock garden plants from across the globe, and many are native to Colorado. The plants should be hardy to at least zone 5, given sufficient drainage.

Cultural suggestions:

Colorado is much dryer than Central New York, so it's almost always necessary to compensate for our much wetter climate by providing better drainage than Colorado plants would have in their native habitat. Penstemons growing in clay in Fort Collins might be very content to grow in sand in Ithaca.

All these plants want good drainage. If you don't have a suitable rock garden/alpine planting area, the starred plants * are recommended, as they would be more tolerant of moisture, especially the Dodecatheon.

To increase drainage mix sand, gravel, or both into the soil, plant on a slope, and/or mulch with gravel. Drainage is very easy to control in a trough where you create the soil to match the needs of your plants.

Many alpine plants prefer soils with moderate to low fertility, and can be more susceptible to fungal attacks in soils enriched with organic matter. Plant information is listed in the table on the next page.

Plant	Size H x W	Flower Color	Exposure S=sun PS=part sun	Native to	
Androsace minima	1 x 2 "	Pink	S, PS	Pyrenees	Trough plant
Aquilegia saximontana	8 x 12 "	Blue and white	PS	Colorado	
Campanula chamissonis *	4 x 12"	Lavender blue	S	Far East	
Clematis scottii	12 x 18"	Purple blue bells	S	Colorado & Wyoming	
Dodecatheon pulchellum *	12 x 6"	Bright pink	PS	Colorado	Moist in Spring
Gentiana parryi	8 x 12"	Blue	S	Colorado	
Hymenoxys grandiflora	6 x 4 "	Yellow	S	Colorado	
Oxytropis Lambertii	8 x 8"	Ruby purple	S	Colorado	
Papaver miyabeianum *	5 x 5"	Pale yellow	S, PS	Japan	
Penstemon X (rupicola x cardwellii)	10 x 12"	Rose pink	S	Western US	

April Seedling Exchange, and new location for May Plant Sale

From David Mitchell, plant sale coordinator:

In addition to Carol Eichler's talk on Colorado alpiners, we'll have our annual seedling exchange at our April meeting. Bring in your seedlings to share. I'll have some pots and potting soil on hand. Potted divisions will also be accepted and priced for sale or held for the May plant sale. I'm hoping the seedlings will find good homes and that some will show up on our tables at the May and August plant sales. The seedling exchange is a great way to learn about what plants are easy to grow from seed and to learn from other's experiences in growing them on.

The annual Spring Garden Fair and Plant Sale will take place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. May 14 at the New York State Armory, 1765 Hanshaw Road, Ithaca (off Route 13 east of the airport). Setup is Friday, May 13 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. We will have an indoor location as usual.

Plants should be potted up in soil-less mix at least two weeks before the sale. This will ensure our display will be full of healthy looking plants. Those who have plants to donate but can't make the setup or morning of sale, feel free to drop plants in my driveway at 402 Esty Street (driveway is on Washington Street side). Please remember to have all plants labelled. Let me know if you need help digging special plants.

Keep in mind that people flock to our table for the unique plants we have that can't be found from other vendors. If you have something different or special that needs dividing, you can be sure that your donation will make some gardener's day and find a new home where it will be appreciated.

Volunteering for the sale is casual. We do not have a sign up sheet for time slots. Members are free to come and go as they please. The sale is fun, friendly, and a great learning experience. Contact me if you have questions: (607) 342-3660 or dwm23@cornell.edu.

Visit to the Philadelphia Flower Show

From chapter member Carol Eichler

The usual poor lighting exacerbated by excruciatingly huge crowds on the day I visited made the Philadelphia Flower Show hard to enjoy this year. However, the competitive class section is definitely the road less travelled and one of my favorite places to linger. I always try to capture photos of the trough entries. The judges preferred one entry as you can tell by the ribbons (top right), while I liked another for the way it positioned stones to capture nature in miniature.

The Delaware Valley Chapter of NARGS is always there with an impressive exhibit. This year in accordance with the theme "Springtime in Paris," they paid homage to the Centre Pompidou, with a representation of a rooftop public garden. From their website they describe the exhibit this way. "The space was shaped by exposed mechanical systems evocative of the iconic Centre Pompidou features and included current "green roof" technology along with compatible but more traditional rock garden construction and ornamental horticultural treatment." And let's not forget the plants, chosen for their compatibility with a rooftop environment. I loved it!

The vendors are fun to visit too. My favorite is Dragon Agro Products owned by Perla and Tito Wee. They offer plants for collectors and I've gotten some nice ones within my budget (and drool over those that aren't). I always look for what I call the "Hawaiian" booth too. Whether they're really from Hawaii or not, they offer tropical flowers to grow. This year I finally succumbed and bought three dormant plumeria. If I can get them to bloom, how exotic is that?

Thanks to surplus seed exchange volunteers

As of March 24, volunteers had filled 237 of 263 orders and were coming down the home stretch. Thank you volunteers!



Other events

- **Night Jewels and Day Marauders: An Insight Into the Exotic Life Styles of Moths on Native Plants** - Meena Haribal, naturalist & chemical ecologist, presented by Finger Lakes Native Plant Society. April 20, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca.
 - **Garden Conservancy Open Days** - Tompkins County: June 11. Onondaga County: July 31, September 18. More info at: <http://gardenconservancy.org/opendays>
 - **American Primrose Society 2011 National Show** - Tower Hill Botanic Garden, Boylston, MA April 29-May 1. More info: www.americanprimrosesociety.org
 - **Open Garden at Bill and Jane Plummers**, May 21, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 10 Fox Lane East Gang Mills (Painted Post). Details coming in May newsletter.
 - **NARGS 2011 Annual Meeting: Discovering the Flora of New England** - June 17-19, Colby-Sawyer College, New London, N.H. Hosted by The Fells Chapter-NARGS with post conference trip options June 20. More info: fellschapter.wordpress.com/about/
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News from National

New phlox book. Phlox is one of those backbone plants of the rock garden. Now there is a new book to help rock gardeners make even better use of this versatile genus. Timber press has just published James H. Locklear's *Phlox: A Natural History and Gardener's Guide*. Mr. Locklear received two grants from NARGS through the Norman Singer Endowment Fund to help finance his research for the book. A detailed review will appear on the NARGS Book of the Month feature later this year (www.nargs.org).

Time to renew

If you haven't done so already, it's time to renew your membership for 2011. You can do so at the next meeting, or download a membership form at our website: www.acnargs.org/join.pdf

People

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 - Vice chair/program: Open
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