



ADIRONDACK
CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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July/August 2012

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August 18 : Member Plant Sale and Picnic

David Mitchell, Plant Sales and Steve Dell'Orto/Carol Eichler, hosts

I hope you've been enjoying the summer. Please think about potting up plants now for the sale later this month. The sale is an important fundraiser for the Chapter and a way for us all to acquire special plants at reasonable prices.

Plans are set for this year's members' plant sale to be held at Steve Dell'Orto's and Carol Eichler's house, **1562 Taughannock Blvd. (Route 89), Ithaca, NY**. Here's the breakdown of our agenda:

- 10:00 a.m. Arrive, get your plant sale number and help with sale set-up.
- 11:00 a.m. Plant sale begins.
- 12:00 noon Lunch, dish-to-pass. Refrigerator space is limited so if need be, pack your dish in a cooler. Please bring a lawn chair. In case of rain, we'll move indoors for all our activities.
- Optional tour of Carol's gardens (or what survived the drought)

As in past years, we'll very democratically allow those who arrive first to get "first dibs" at purchases. So it pays to arrive early and sign in. For treasured plants, we will have a silent auction table. Note this is our only members-only sale and we should have some real gems. You may join for 2012 at the meeting for \$10 (\$15 for families). It's still a great value since we have half of our program year ahead of us.

Directions to 1562 Taughannock Boulevard. Take NYS Route 89 where it junctions with NYS Route 13 "on the flats" at the west end of the City of Ithaca. [**Note** Rts. 96 and 89 merge for 1 or 2 blocks (depending which direction you are coming from) before 89 diverges to follow the Inlet north through Cass Park and along Cayuga Lake. (If you miss this bridge and take the Rt. 96 bridge instead, the easiest thing to correct course is to turn around)] From the Ithaca City line drive approximately 7 miles. You will pass Glenwood Pines, continue up and down the 1 big hill,

past Cayuga Nature Center another 1.5 miles. When you drive past the Kraft/Willow Creek Pt. Road intersection you are getting close. 1562 Taughannock will be on the left/west side of the road, the 6th house (I think). House numbers are well marked but the driveway may sneak up on you as it and the house are obscured by trees. Just past the driveway on the right is a big blue Adopt-a-Highway sign and beyond that a private road - a good place to turn around to make a 2nd pass. As of this writing there is roadwork in progress through this section between Kraft and Agard Roads with "Bump" signs. Watch for 1562 after the 4th bump. (If you arrive at Taughannock State Park, you have gone 1.5 miles too far) Someone will direct you to parking behind the house.

From the Chair

Carol Eichler

As I wander about my gardens I see and enjoy many special, treasured plants and realize that most of them have come from my ACNARGS friends. More specifically they have come to me – primarily - from our plant sale in the spring and our member-only August sale.

Our August sale is coming soon and I encourage you to look around and consider bringing a division or 2 of some of your favorite plants.

I admit this year has been a big challenge with the combination of heat and drought. It has been a struggle for us gardeners to try to keep our plants alive. Personally my plants have to show wilt before I can justify watering them with all-too-precious well water. But miss a couple days of watering and my troughs could be burned crisp.

Still, I have some pampered and choice plants to pot and bring to the sale, which by the way, is located at my house (more information elsewhere in this newsletter include directions and details). Now is the time to dig and divide your plants so that they will have a chance to establish in pots. Yes, that means even more diligence to stay on top of watering.

Our member only sale is 2nd only to the May sale for raising Chapter operating funds. Please come prepared to contribute and to purchase plants. And of course, your contributions need not be limited to rock garden plants. Labeling in advance will make set-up go more quickly.

I'm always amazed at how quickly the actual sale process proceeds. Maybe it's in anticipation of our dish-to-pass lunch that follows immediately afterward. In any case it's a meeting to anticipate after our Chapter's summer hiatus.

I look forward to seeing all of you, my companions in gardening, once again.

Carol

3-Day Garden Getaway

Carol Eichler

Wanted: Travelers to venture to downstate metro New York area for a 2-night trip to visit several public gardens. Departing early on Thursday, August 30th plans as they stand now are to stop at [Wave Hill](#) in the Bronx overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades on Thursday afternoon. Besides their alpine house, which should be of special interest to our group, their broad selection of grasses make their gardens particularly attractive in late summer.

We will stay overnight both nights in Elmsford just a short drive away. After an expanded continental breakfast included with the room, we will depart the next morning (Friday, August 31st) for [NY Botanical Garden](#), approximately a 30-minute drive.

We are scheduled to work with Jody Payne, Curator, in the NYBG Rock Garden for four hours leaving some free time to explore the gardens on our own. Saturday morning we will visit [Innisfree Cup Garden](#), a man-made naturalistic landscape garden in the Chinese tradition. Before heading back home on Saturday, September 1st, there may be time for a quick visit to the [Storm King Art Center](#) or a nearby nursery, depending on the group's preferences.



2 *Speirantha convallarioides*



1 *Cypripedium parviflorum*

Above are two treasures from the spring trip to the NYBG. Who knows what we will see this fall?

Interested in joining this trip? Please contact Carol Eichler, 607-269-7070, carolithaca@gmail.com for full details including hotel arrangements and costs. Deadline date to sign-up for this trip is August 18th (our August meeting). We will encourage carpooling.

A Too-Brief Visit at the New York Botanic Garden

Donna Gibson

Carol Eichler, Pat Fisher, and I took the opportunity to visit the [New York Botanic Garden](#) following our spring trip to the Stonecrop Garden plant sale. Thanks to Suzanne Lipari's travel planning for the last overnight trip to NYC gardens, we used the same hotel and driving directions to easily plan our trip. We were fortunate to see some of the orchid vertical towers still remaining after the Orchid Show (photo, right). And we had the opportunity to see the Antique Garden Furniture show during our visit. The highlights of the visit were the Rock Garden and the Azalea Garden. Although many spring bulbs were already in decline, there was lots of late spring/early summer color.



After viewing the troughs at Stonecrop and NYBG, we came back with lots of ideas for our new troughs (photo, left). With such a large rock garden area to maintain, our help will be needed this fall for sprucing up the site. (See previous article for details.) Let's hope that some of the more rambunctious plants might need good homes!





4Yellow azalea underplanted in blue



3Pink azaleas with tiarella and blue fescue

The Azalea and Rhododendron gardens were in full bloom with some wonderful combinations.



5Almost artificial looking jade flowervine



6Lovely moss and ferns in the rainforest house

We also toured the various habitat sections of the conservatory.

Troughs Part 3: Plants for Troughs

Carol Eichler



There's no shortage of information on suggested plants for troughs and no shortage of opinions either. I'm hardly an expert on the subject so I defer primarily to two NARGS resources: *Handbook on Troughs*, edited by Gwen Kalaidis (now Moore) and Joyce Fingerut; and *Creating and Planting Garden Troughs* by Joyce Fingerut and Rex Murfitt.

7Long shallow trough holds *Ephedra sp.*, *aquilegia discolor*, *Buxus sp. (miniature)*, *erigeron*, *phlox*, and a mystery plant out-of-scale and due to be moved.

Before planting a trough I suggest thinking first about these issues.

1. Where will you place the trough and how will it be incorporated into your existing garden? Often one sees troughs grouped together in an attractive display.
2. What about sun exposure? Group shade-loving plants together, with sun-lovers in another trough. Some plants may require protection from intense sun achieved either by siting the trough to avoid full sun or by incorporating stones to provide some shade. Morning sun is more desirable.
3. What about rainfall? In a particularly wet year (summer or winter) you may have to consider moving the trough under the protection of a roof to avoid killing your plants. On hot days and/or dry periods your trough will most likely need to be watered (and placed where you can easily be reminded to do so).
4. Group “like-minded” plants together, for example shade plants in a shade trough, sun-lovers for a sunny trough, etc. Ericaceous plants, succulents, and true alpine are other potential groupings.
5. Plan to the scale of your trough. Larger troughs – both in depth and area – can accommodate larger plants and rocks and may be more suitable for incorporating dwarf trees.
6. Rocks among the plants serve several functions. They create height, provide shade for plants, offer root protection, and help create a more naturalistic look (this is an art in itself).
7. There is no such thing as a trough plant, merely plants deemed to do well in troughs, plants that are naturally dwarf and slow-growing. Nurseries often denote plants that they consider suitable. Troughs are ideal for showcasing the tiniest of alpine selections.
8. A top dressing is highly recommended to conserve moisture, keep roots cool, and plants happier. It also can be an attractive way to unify the planting.
9. As in any garden, plants can be moved. Sometimes a plant grows out of scale with the others (e.g. a dwarf conifer). Or maybe you want to group together those plants that tend to bloom at the same time, information you acquire over time.
10. Have fun. Don’t be afraid to just “do it.” Experience is the best teacher. Develop your own preferences and your own style.

Now for a basic and generic list of plants with no intention of being comprehensive (compiled from *Creating and Planting Garden Troughs* by Fingerut and Murfitt):

Acantholimon: *A. ulicinus*, *A. araxanum*, *A. glumaceum*

Androcace: *A. pyrenaica*, *A. carnea* (and varieties)

Aquilegia: *A. discolor*, *A. saximontana*, *A. scopulorum*

Arenaria: *A. obtusiloba*

Armeria: *A. caespitosa*

Campanula: *C. cochlearifolia* (and varieties), *C. garganica* (and varieties)

Dianthus: *D. alpinus* variations, *D. ‘La Bourbouille’*, *D.* hybrids (watch out for over-vigorous varieties)

Draba: *D. rigida*, *D. polytricha*, *D. dedeana*

Erigerons

Gentiana (acid soil): *G. acaulis*, *G. verna*

Penstemon: *P. hirsutis ‘Pygmaeus’*, *P. rupicola*

Phlox: *P. x dougliassii* hybrids

Potentilla: *P. nitica*, *P. verna*

Primula: *P. marginata*, *P x pubescens* hybrids, *P. auricular*, *P. minima*, *P. hirsuta*, and more

Ptilotrichum: *P. spinosum*

Saxifraga: Cushion types, Silver or encrusted types, Mossy types

Sedums and Succulents including Sempervivums

Silene: *S. acaulis* (and varieties)

Townsendias

Dwarf woody trees and shrubs including conifers (pines, junipers, spruce, chamaecyparis), rhododendrons, and deciduous (short list of elms, willows, *Betula nana*, *Sorbus reducta*)



8A old, deteriorating trough containing an assortment of woodies: *Daphne arbuscula*, *Juniperis procumbens* 'Nana', *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Nana Gracilis', and a prostrate picea perhaps

Eastern Study Weekend: 3 more reasons to attend

Carol Eichler

Not only does this year's Eastern Study Week-end focus on troughs, it also addresses the garden in fall – blooming natives, bulbs, fall color, rock garden interest, and more– with some by some terrific speakers. Here I mention only 3 of a line-up of gardening and botanical experts.

Since I've personally heard Gwen Moore present, I can say there's no speaker more knowledgeable or entertaining. Her focus on the rock garden in autumn is sure to be as thorough as will be inspirational. Martha Oliver's talk "Heuchera, Heucherellas and Tiarellas - Bold Leaf and Color for the Fall Garden," promises to be an captivating since, as co-owner of The Primrose Path Nursery with husband Charles, they have introduced several award-winning plants of this group. Another speaker is one of the guru's of trough gardening, Rex Murfitt, and he will be speaking about one of his areas of expertise, saxifrages in troughs.

Eastern Study Weekend runs October 12 -14 hosted by the Allegheny Chapter in Mars, Pennsylvania (near Pittsburgh). Registration is still open. For more information visit the conference website at

<http://home.comcast.net/~sylvialynch/Study%20Weekend%20Information.htm>.

For further information on the study weekend, contact Len Lehman, chair of the meeting: Llehman1@verizon.net.

NARGS Annual Meeting

On-line registration is now open for next year's NARGS annual meeting in Asheville, North Carolina, on May 2 - 5, 2013. Information on how to register for the meeting, "Exploring the Flora of the Blue Ridge," as well as pre-conference and post-conference tours, is available here:

<http://www.nargs2013.org/index.php>. For further information on the 2013 meeting, contact David White, chair of the meeting: administrator@nargs2013.org.

Colchicums

Kathy Purdy

Colchicums are corms whose leaves emerge in spring and completely die down during the summer. The flowers, which are either in the pink/lavender/purple range or pure white, bloom in the fall. Seeds, if there are any, are visible in the whorl of leaves in spring, leading to the



9These colchicums will be offered at the plant sale.

common name "Sons-before-the-father."

Colchicums are commonly known as autumn crocus or meadow saffron because of their superficial resemblance to crocuses, but since there are also true crocuses that bloom in the fall, I prefer not to use those common names.

The most difficult part of growing colchicums is deciding where to put them. Colchicum foliage emerges in very early spring, as early as the crocuses, and depending on the variety, it can be up to six inches wide and a foot tall. Although some people like the spring foliage, it definitely gets ragged looking as the plants move towards dormancy. And then, all summer

long, the colchicums aren't there, but you still have to leave room for the flowers that will emerge in fall. I know you are up to the challenge!

Many varieties will multiply rapidly, especially when lifted and divided regularly. I divide and replant them during their summer dormant period, when the leaves are brown and flopped over, but some people move them while they are in bloom.

I will be bringing a selection of colchicums to the plant sale. Most of them will be an unidentified large blooming variety with faint tessellation (checkering) on the petals, but I plan to have a few named cultivars as well.

Launch of Rock Garden Quarterly online

Malcolm McGregor

Editor, NARGS Rock Garden Quarterly

The world of publishing is undergoing the most dramatic changes since Gutenberg invented the printing press over 500 years ago. The Board of Directors of NARGS has recognized that we need to embrace this change, in line with our President's commitments at the last two Annual General Meetings.

The *Rock Garden Quarterly* is now into its 70th year and for all that time it's been changing to reflect the times, and to use new printing technology as it has become available.

So, now the *Rock Garden Quarterly* will be published in digital form as well as the traditional paper form--and members have access free. There will be an introduction to some of the features in the Summer issue of the *Quarterly*, but you can try the Spring issue right now on desktop, laptop, iPad, iPhone, etc: <<http://www.nxtbook.com/allen/roga/70-2>>

In the future, the digital edition will be available around the same date that NARGS members receive their mailed copy.

This is not a replacement for the printed *Quarterly* - this is a BONUS. From now on NARGS members will be able to access the *Quarterly* online and read it on their electronic device, as well as continuing to receive their printed issues as they do currently.

The launch of the *Rock Garden Quarterly* online is a great development for NARGS, and we really hope you'll enjoy it in this new extra format.

Remember the electronic version is a free extra - have your cake and eat it too!

And to give those who aren't NARGS members a view of what we're doing, the same link works for non-members too.

Gardening in the 21st Century: Digital Magazines

Kathy Purdy

So what does it mean that the [Rock Garden Quarterly](#) is now published online? It means you can flip its virtual pages on your desktop computer, or your laptop, or your iPad or other tablet. You can even read it on your smartphone--but if your eyesight is like mine, that won't be your first choice. The magazine looks exactly like the print edition, same photos and typeface.

Digital magazines can make generous use of color without raising their price. The photography is spectacular. Gardeners who travel frequently find it convenient to bring one device on which they can read many different books and publications. They have more variety in their reading material and less weight in their luggage.

Some publications can be downloaded to your device, while others are only viewable online. These won't be available to you unless you have internet access. And, of course, they don't have the same feel as a quality magazine.

The low overhead associated with an online magazine is encouraging people who might otherwise not be able to afford such a venture to try their hand at digital publishing. Traditional publishers are also experimenting with this new medium. Here is a selection of garden-related digital magazines that I was able to find:

[Upstate Gardeners' Journal](#) publishes an exact replica of their print publication, free of charge. For those of us who don't live near a distribution point, this is a real boon. You can even request to be notified by email when a new issue is online.

[Living Green Magazine](#), according to their website, "is an online publication that informs and educates readers on a range of environmental and lifestyle issues. We balance news stories with articles that highlight nonprofit causes and provide sustainable solutions for individuals, families, businesses, and communities." A subscription is free, but the link to each issue arrives via email.

[Plant Society Magazine](#): "Grow your passion with award winning horticulturist, artist and designer Matt Mattus as he invites you on a uniquely fresh and inspiring journey of discovery through the world of plants. . . . Learn how to grow rare and unusual plants that you will never find at a garden center, and experience all of this wrapped in beautiful design." Digital issues are \$2.99 each, print plus digital ranges from \$15.20 to \$19.95.

[Leaf](#) is a magazine of outdoor style and design. The first two digital issues were free; the summer issue is \$3.10 digital or \$23.40 for print and digital.

Lecture in Honor of Bill Dress

Bill Dress was a long-time member of ACNARGS, honored with a Chapter Service Award in 1998. Read more about him in the [February issue](#).

Earth's Beautiful Ancient Forests: Can there be a happy ending?

[William J. Hamilton Lecture in honor of William Dress](#)

(funded in part by the Adirondack Chapter NARGS)

Location: Statler Hall Auditorium

Date: 9/12/2012 - 7:30pm

Speaker: **Dr. Joan Maloof, Ecologist and Author**



What is the state of the planet's forests? [Dr. Joan Maloof](#), author, ecologist and environmental advocate will summarize the condition of our forests from global and national perspectives. She will focus particularly on forests that have never been logged -- "old-growth forests." How many of these forests are left? Where are they? And why do they matter? Maloof has traveled the nation inspecting the remaining old-growth forests; in her book, *Among the Ancients: Adventures in the Eastern Old-Growth Forests*, she includes reflections on these questions as well as detailed directions to one old-growth forest in each of the twenty-six states east of the Mississippi River. Going beyond mere documentation, in this lecture Maloof will describe her vision of an Old Growth Forest Network -- a nationwide attempt to reverse past destruction and reconnect average families with the beauty and biological abundance found only in the ancient forests.

On Thursday, September 13 from 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. Dr. Maloof will lead a tour along with Plantations staff of Cornell Plantations' [Fischer Old Growth Forest](#). [Click here to register](#).

National Nominations

Lola Horowitz

As chairperson of the NARGS Nominating Committee, I am reminding you that nominations are open for seven positions in NARGS: President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer, and three board positions; the nominations will close on September 1st.

Details of both the nominating procedure (with provision for 'from the floor' nominations) and voting schedule are published in the Summer 2012 issue of the NARGS Rock Garden Quarterly (pages 213 and 250-251). An electronic copy of the RGQ is available at: <http://www.nxtbook.com/allen/roga/70-3/>

Please share this information with fellow NARGS members. A member may nominate him/herself, understanding that a primary prerequisite is an interest in serving NARGS. All qualified nominations will appear on the ballot along with the slate recommended by the Nominating Committee. All members of NARGS will be able to vote electronically (or by mail) in 2013 for the new board members and officers for the first time in NARGS history.

In addition, names of candidates will be posted on the website as they are submitted. Go to 'News' on the NARGS home page: www.nargs.org.

Colchicums are sort of like the nuts in my cookies... I don't think about them a lot, but I'd certainly miss them if they weren't there. ~Don Bolin, [An Iowa Garden](#)

Book of the Month

Every month, the [NARGS wiki](#) reviews a book of interest to rock gardeners. If you order the book from Amazon by clicking on the book's link in the review, NARGS gets a small commission. Recent books reviewed include *Alpines: An Essential Guide*, *Tomorrow's Garden: Design and Inspiration for a New Age of Sustainable Gardening*, and *Waterwise Plants for Sustainable Gardens: 200 Drought-Tolerant Choices for All Climates*.

2012 Program Plans

Aug. 18: Member Plant Sale and Dish-to-Pass Picnic at Carol Eichler & Steve Dell'Orto's home, 1562 Taughannock Blvd., Ithaca (details, above)

August 30-Sept. 1: 2-night overnight trip including working trip to New York Botanical Garden Rock Garden (See article, this issue)

Sept. 16: [Nick Turland](#), NARGS Speaker, Associate Curator in the Division of Science and Conservation at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri since 1993, Co-Director of the Flora of China Project; he will give 2 talks "Alpine plants of the Austrian Alps" and "Plant Hunting in South-Western Turkey"

October 12-14: Autumn in the Garden: A Time for Troughs, NARGS Eastern Study Weekend in Pittsburgh, PA, hosted by the Allegheny Chapter. See article or visit the website for more info (<http://home.comcast.net/~sylvialynch/Study%20Weekend%20Information.htm>)

October 20: **David Fernandez**, owner of Cayuga Landscape in Ithaca: gardening with deer

November 10: **Jerry Kral**, Rochester gardener *extraordinaire*

Details as we learn them will be included in future newsletters and acnargs.blogspot.com. When in question, visit our blog.

Calendar of Garden Events

Sat. Aug. 4, 10-4, **Tompkins County Open Garden Day**, sponsored by Tompkins County Community Beautification Program, details at <http://ccetompkins.org/garden/open-days-garden-tours>

Tues. Aug. 7, 6:30-dark, **Kitchen Garden Tour**, Slaterville Rd. and Brooktondale, \$5 fee, call Pat Curran at 272-2292 for details.

Thurs. Aug. 16, 6:30-8:30 pm, class on **Plant Diseases of Veggies**, by Dr. Tom Zitter of Cornell's Plant Pathology Department

Tues. Aug. 21, 6:30-8:30 pm, class on **Insects** by Carolyn Klass of Cornell's Entomology Department

Still to be scheduled, call Pat Curran at 272-2292: tour of **Ithaca Children's Garden** and **Linderman Creek Community Gardens**, later in August

But along the way we really do learn that marigolds gain enormously in impact when used as sparingly as ultimatums. ~Henry Mitchell

Responsible People/2012 Board Members

- Chair: Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com
- Program: John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu
- Program Committee Members: Nari Mistry, nbm2@cornell.edu
- Secretary: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu
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- Plant Sales Chair: David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu
- Plant Sales Committee Members: Michael Loos, BZ Marranca
- Plant of the Month: John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu, [Karen Hansen](#)
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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 Kathy Purdy, kopurdy@gmail.com. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be in September 2012.



11 *Colchicum* seed pods in the spring foliage



12 *Colchicums*-these will be at the plant sale

10 *Colchicum autumnale* 'Album' will also be at the plant sale.

