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CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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November/December 2012

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NOVEMBER 10 : ROCKING WITH ROCKS & DISH TO PASS

As is our tradition, we'll kick-off our last meeting of the year with a **dish-to-pass lunch** starting at 12 noon before convening for the regular program meeting. If you can arrive early – say 11 a.m., we can use help setting up tables. Please bring your own table service as well. Beverages will be provided.

Our guest speaker is Jerry Kral speaking on “Rocking with Rocks”. Jerry began ornamental gardening upon retirement after thirty years of teaching high school science. That was twenty years ago.



Jerry's city garden encompasses almost an acre of city property in a single lot, half of which he acquired six years ago. He turned this new garden into a 12,000 square foot walk-through rockery. It seemed a perfect solution for him to display his tiny conifer treasures in an aesthetic manner. He currently grows over 1,000 taxa of plants. Conifers are his specialty of which he grows over 300 different varieties.



Jerry explains, " I am designing and building my 'new' garden using the skills and learning from the mistakes made in my 'old' garden. "

His presentation will cover many different types of rock displays that he has created as well as those he has visited throughout the USA and Europe.

Jerry has been a Master Gardener for Cornell Cooperative Extension for eighteen years. Over four hundred local, regional, national, and international tour groups have visited his garden during this time. He is president of the Greater Rochester Perennial Society and a past director of the American Conifer Society (ACS). Jerry has written several articles for the *Conifer Quarterly* (an international publication of the ACS). His garden has been featured on the WXXI show, "The Secret Gardens of

Rochester," in *Upstate Gardeners Journal* and the D&C newspaper. Parts of his garden appeared in the Better Homes & Gardens Special Media Publication *Garden Ideas & Outdoor Living*, a national magazine. An article, "Conifers for Shade" appeared in an issue of *Fine Gardening* four years ago. Jerry is a primary organizer of the "Gathering of Gardeners" symposium now entering its 16th year.



The November meeting will be held at the Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (see map on the last page). Brown bag lunch from noon on. Program begins at 1:00 p.m. There will also be a Plant of the Month for sale--see article later this issue.

Thanks to Carol Eichler for photos of Jerry's garden.

This morning the sun and warmth have gone, a sleety rain is making it difficult to be outside, so I have made a list of the fall jobs. . . . The list that I gradually compile is long, but in order to give myself a sense of accomplishment, I include one or two jobs that I have already done.

~ Brian Bixley, *Essays on Gardening in a Cold Climate*

FROM THE CHAIR

Carol Eichler

As you receive this newsletter I'll be somewhere in Central Europe – Prague or Salzburg perhaps or cruising the Danube River to Linz, Bratislava and Budapest. (Ahhh, retirement!) That means I'll be missing the last ACNARGS meeting of 2012 – and a good one it promises to be – as well as inspirational! Maybe you'll be inspired to build a new rock garden in 2013.

Remember, we meet a week early – the 2nd Saturday in November – so as to avoid bumping into Thanksgiving preparations and travel as much as possible. It does get to be a busy time of year! Besides the regular speaker program format, as is our tradition we'll hold a dish-to-pass lunch beginning at noon so plan to arrive a little early for set-up and socializing.

Another successful Chapter year is coming to a close. We'll take a short hiatus before resuming our monthly meetings in February (note: as has become our tradition this is a **member-share program**, so you might start thinking about any photos you'd like to share with the group). Look for the next newsletter to come out as a reminder of our next meeting date and location. That newsletter will also include our "2012 Year in Review" otherwise known as our "annual report."

Last, but not least, please don't forget to extend a big thank you to those who served on the ACNARGS Board this year. They are the "engine" that drives our Chapter: Craig Cramer, Pat Curran, Judy Fogel, John Gilrein, Billie Jean Isbell, BZ Marranca, Nari Mistry, David Mitchell, Mary Stauble, Kathy Purdy, and yours truly.

Have a happy holiday season, everyone. 'Til next year,

Carol

GIVE A MEMBERSHIP

Looking for a holiday gift for a gardening friend? An ACNARGS membership – at only \$10 – is a gift that keeps on giving all year long.

PLANT OF THE MONTH: 'SILVER SPRING' ALLIUM



Our November POM is *Allium* 'Silver Spring' from Van Engelen. 'Silver Spring' is a 1999 selection of *A. multibulbosum* discovered in Israel. The straight species is plain jane compared to 'Silver Spring'; the species has a solid ivory inflorescence; the catalog describes 'Silver Spring' as having a 4 inch inflorescence dotted with raspberry starbursts with a "licorice bon bon" fragrance. Hard to resist!

A. 'Silver Spring' is hardy to zone 4, flowers in early June, height is 2 to 3 feet, and like all alliums it is deer resistant. We'll package bulbs in bags of 3 for \$5, discounted from our cost. Alliums grow best in rich, well drained soil in a sunny location. Plant 6 to 8 inches deep and 8 to 10 inches apart.

Plant of the Month is a member benefit, partially subsidized by your dues, to provide additional encouragement to attend meetings and expand the horizons of our members. The goal is to coordinate the

plant of the month to the meeting topic, though sometimes that is not possible. Please send suggestions for Plant of the Month to John Gilrein.

GARDENING IN THE 21ST CENTURY: DIGITAL BOUQUETS

Kathy Purdy and Craig Cramer



Chapter member Craig Cramer, our webmaster, former newsletter editor and AV guy, has been creating digital scans of his plants since 2007, and posting them on his blog Ellis Hollow (ellishollow.remarc.com). I asked him to tell us more about his hobby.

KP: What's your basic method?

CC: It couldn't be simpler. I gather up flowers and foliage from my garden and arrange them face down on an old office scanner. I play around with the composition a little, and then scan them with the cover up using the same settings you would for color photographs.

You can drape material over the composition to give different background effects. But I like a basic black background, which you can get either by draping black material over the scanner or scanning in a dark room. The results remind me of 17th century Dutch still lifes.

KP: What's the attraction?

CC: What I like most about scanning is it allows me to concentrate the best from plants scattered all over my garden into an 8 1/2 x 11-inch scan. It's like creating a digital bouquet.

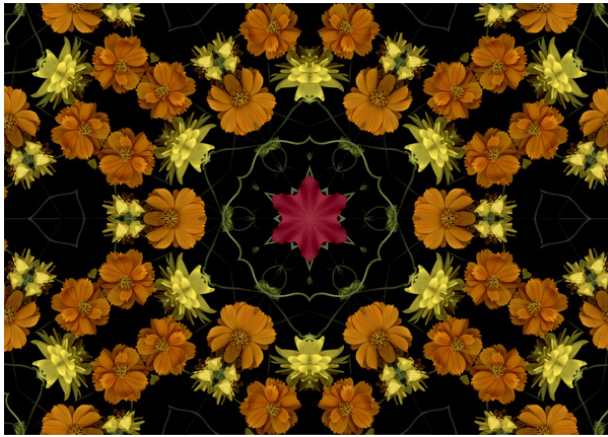
I also do at least one a month for the Garden Bloggers Bloom Day hosted by the May Dreams Garden blog. On the 15th of every month, hundreds of bloggers from around the world post pictures of what's blooming in their gardens on their own blogs, and then submit a link to their post on the May Dreams site. The monthly scans I create for bloom day give me a visual record of sorts about what's blooming when in my own garden. [Ed. note: We talked about Bloom Day in the last issue of Green Dragon.]

KP: How did you get started?

CC: I first read about scanning plants in an article by garden writer Ken Druse in the New York Times about scanner artist Ellen Hoverkamp. Before I even finished reading the article, I grabbed some fuschia, pelargonium and violet flowers off the windowsill, ran to the scanner and gave it a try. I couldn't believe it worked. (More on Craig's initial attempts here:

<http://www.remarc.com/craig/?p=97>)

But it's one of those techniques that takes a minute to learn, but a lifetime to master. And my artistic skills are limited. If you want to see how a real artist does this, check out the book Druse and Hoverkamp collaborated on, *Natural Companions _ The Garden Lover's Guide to Plant Combinations* (Stewart, Tabori & Chang, March 1, 2012). It's gorgeous. You'll learn a lot about Ellen's art and Ken's skill in pairing plants. I have to admit that I'm really jealous of Hoverkamp's scanner, which has a much larger surface than mine. But for my limited skills, the beat up old scanner I have works just fine.



KP: You've also started doing all kinds of visual manipulations of your scans.

CC: I like fiddling around with PhotoShop. I started out just taking the scans and making mirror images of them horizontally and vertically and piecing them together. Then I found directions about how to make kaleidoscopic images and started playing with them. The next step was piecing together the kaleidoscopic images into a honeycomb mosaic. I've been told I should license those for ceramic tile or fabric designs.

KP: Do you have any favorites?

CC: Usually it's the last one I did. What I like about the digital manipulations is that the final result is almost always a total surprise. (To see all of Craig's scans, visit: <http://www.remarc.com/craig/?cat=55>)

KP: You've published calendars for sale the last few years. Are you going to have a new one available this year?

CC: The calendars are a mix of photos and scans most years. I don't even think about pulling it together until Thanksgiving. I publish through zazzle.com, and haven't sold many. But they make great gifts for my family and friends. If you're interested, visit ellishollow.remarc.com sometime after Thanksgiving.

NEW BLOOD WANTED

Carol Eichler

Are you ready to step up for ACNARGS?

Our Chapter is able to accomplish a lot in a year: programs with guest speakers, subsidized plant-of-the-month sales, a seedling exchange and 2 plant sales, planting and maintenance at our public rock garden, workshops, garden trips and tours, and more. What makes all this happen? No magic is involved. Rather, you can thank a small, dedicated group of ACNARGS members who comprise the Board (otherwise known as "Responsible People" listed at the end of each newsletter).

Most of them have served for several years. We welcome anyone who wants to join us and become more involved in the workings of the Chapter. Judy Fogel is resigning from the Board and her position as **New Member Hospitality**. So we currently have an immediate need for someone to fill this role of welcoming new members.

What does Board membership involve? They hold an annual planning retreat in January and then meet prior to the general program meetings as needed. Each Board member agrees to take on an area of responsibility as well and is given a fair amount of latitude to do so. If that feels a bit unsettling, our experienced Board members can offer assistance and guidance. (We like to think of ourselves as nice, friendly people). New blood brings fresh energy and new ideas!

Please consider becoming more involved by joining the ACNARGS Board. Contact Chapter Chair, Carol Eichler (carolithaca@gmail.com) to indicate your interest and for more information.

OH, DEER! DID YOU MISS THE LAST MEETING?

You know, the one on deer-resistant plants? Well, you are in luck. John Gilrein has a list of deer-resistant plants that he will send you if you ask him nicely at basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu. And Pat Curran has a handout on deer fencing that she will send you if you request it politely from pc21@cornell.edu.

2012 PROGRAM PLANS

Mark your calendars! All local events take place at the Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (see map on the last page).

November 10: Jerry Kral, Rochester gardener *extraordinaire*. Details on page 1.

February 16, 2013: Members Share

March 16, 2013: John Gaunt of Greenleaf Garden Supply on soils

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

Vote for Worms: Sat. Nov. 3, 10am-12noon, \$10 per family, TCCE

Escaping the Deer's Mouth Wed. Nov. 21, 7 pm, Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, Unitarian Church annex, second floor

Evergreen Wreath-Making Workshop Fri. Nov. 30, 6:30-8:30 pm Ann Rider and MG volunteers (this session will be oriented towards those who have participated before). \$9 for Master Gardeners (half-price).

Evergreen Wreath-Making Workshop Sat. Dec. 1, 10am-12 noon Ann Rider and MG volunteers (this session will include how-to instructions by Master Gardener volunteers). \$9 for Master Gardeners (half-price)

Finger Lakes Native Plant Society Solstice Celebration Wed. Dec. 19, 7 pm, Ken Post Laboratory Classroom at Cornell (music, slide show, snacks of native foods, native seed giveaway, plant ID contest, etc.)

RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE/2012 BOARD MEMBERS

If you want to volunteer, we'd love to hear from you!

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

Treasurer: BZ Marranta, mmm10@cornell.edu

Plant Sales Chair: David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu

Plant Sales Committee Members: Michael Loos, BZ Marranta

Plant of the Month: John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu, Karen Hansen

Membership: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu

New Member Hospitality: **maybe you?**

Newsletter Editor: Kathy Purdy, kopurdy@gmail.com

Newsletter Assistant: Pat Curran, pc21@cornell.edu

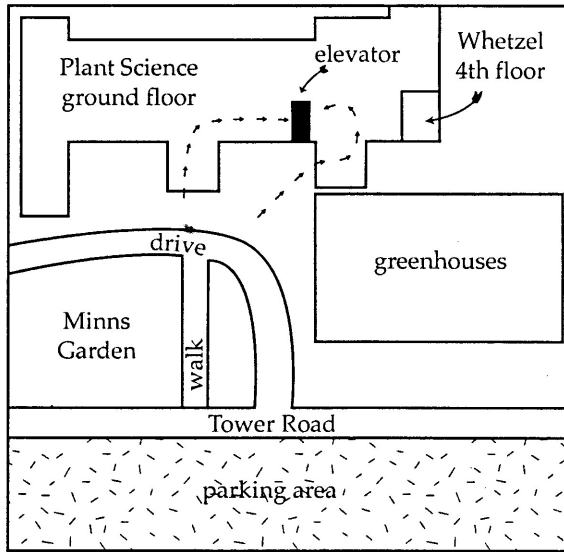
Webmaster, Program Tech: Craig Cramer, cdcramer@gmail.com

This is the essence of gardening. Looking forward, planning ahead, feeling as if you are wresting the garden from the grasp of its fatigue. It seems trite to mention it, but fall bed work bestows an enormous amount of pride and sense of accomplishment. It lifts the blues of a brutal year and fills a long winter with the joys of a new spring.

~Adrian Higgins, 14 Oct 2010 Washington Post

HOW TO GET THERE: MEETING ROOM MAP

This is on the Cornell University Campus.



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 February 2013.