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Visit our blog: acnargs.blogspot.com

April 2018

APRIL 21: 2 TALKS! WITH ANNA LEGGATT

Terry Humphries, Program Chair

Note: there are 2 talks at our April meeting: 11am Favorite Plants from Around the World and Can We Grow Them? AND #2 at 1pm: Rock Gardening, Troughs, Screens and Sand Beds



About the talks Anna writes: "My favorite plants talk includes many plants I have seen and loved from every continent, though the Antarctic plants are unlovable horticulturally! There are so many plants: these are a varied selection. Many are impossible in our climate. Some are houseplants and some surprise us in our gardens.

"The rock garden talk is basics, showing plants in their wild habitats and how we can provide for them in our various types of rock gardens."

Anna has a BSc. in Botany from London University, a Diploma in Nature Interpretation from Humber College and a Diploma in Horticulture from Guelph University. She is currently employed as a part time Nature Interpreter at the Kortright Centre for Conservation.

Anna teaches occasionally at the Toronto Botanical Garden covering topics such as general gardening and more specialized courses such as water and rock gardening. Anna offers lectures to Horticultural Societies and writes for several magazines including *NARGS Quarterly* on topics, which include her travels abroad, and subjects that reflect her vast interest and passion for gardening. She received a 2017 silver medal from GWA

(the Association for Garden Communicators) for her article "Anna's Plant Pick: *Taraxacum Officinale* Dandelion - Is It a Weed?"

Anna is a past chair of the Ontario Rock Garden Society, former editor of the ORGS newsletter, serves as a Director of North American Rock Garden Society and much, much more. She is basically a mad gardener, gardening in a comparatively large garden in Toronto with lots of shade and mink, deer, rabbits, and groundhogs. Anna loves shrubs, bulbs, rock gardening, wildflowers, Japanese effects, working with stone and changing her garden design. She says she wants to grow vegetables. However, the deer and groundhog would like them as well.

Our meeting will be held in the Whetzel Room, Room 404, at 236 Tower Road, Cornell University. Map at the end of this newsletter. Bring your own bag lunch at noon for socializing before the meeting. Refreshments to share are appreciated.

APRIL SEED & SEEDLING EXCHANGE; MAY PLANT SALE

David Mitchell, Plant Sale Coordinator

At our April meeting we invite our members to bring in extra seeds and seedlings they would like to share. We are expanding the exchange this year to include a seed exchange – so if you have surplus seed, please consider sharing. Potting mix, labels, and small pots will be supplied. This could be the year you try your hand at starting some rock garden plants from seed. We'll make it easy!

As for the seedlings, we'll provide plastic bags and labels. Seedlings are free for members with a nominal charge for non-members (bring quarters or better yet join the Chapter!). Potted divisions will also be accepted and priced for sale or held for the May plant sale. There may even be a bidding table if we get something special!

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 how to grow plants on from seeds.

It is also time to pot up your divisions for the May plant sale. Please note and **SAVE THE DATE NOW** for our big plant sale fundraiser at the annual Cooperative Extension Garden Fair. The sale is now scheduled for Sunday, May 20 – the Sunday following Mother's Day Sunday - at the Ithaca High School. We expect to set up at our usual indoor location. More information on potting up plants and this event will be published in the May newsletter.

FROM THE CHAIR

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

A few weeks ago I was beginning to think winter was over, alas it is not so! Everything blooming here is now buried under a half a foot or more of snow. But I look to the sky

for hope: I see robins, blackbirds (only the males so far), turkey vultures, and flocks of migrating snow geese.

The main event with the Adirondack Chapter outside of the meetings lately has been research into whether ACNARGS could host an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of our parent organization, NARGS. An AGM is normally a weekend gathering of NARGS members from the US and Canada (possibly a few international) with speakers, garden tours, and visits to natural areas. The tentative date for this event would be June 2020, two years away.

A small group of involved members have done research on some of the critical needs for the AGM like lodging, meals, charter buses, and speakers and their associated costs. We needed to start with some research to determine whether a meeting was feasible in Ithaca, NY. Should the Adirondack Chapter pursue hosting the AGM, holding the event would remain subject to the review, expertise, and approval of NARGS, including the financial aspects. If you have questions about the AGM, please contact a board member (contact information is at the end of the newsletter).

Should the board opt to proceed in their planning to host the AGM, we certainly hope that many of our local members would register and attend the event. We also realize that our members have a diverse array of interests and time commitments; not everyone is as crazy about rock garden plants as me for example, and some of our members will elect not to participate. That's fine. Ithaca is rich in beautiful areas interesting for their natural history and plant life, so we believe others would benefit from a trip to Ithaca.

If you are not currently a member of NARGS, or have never been a member, you may wonder how our chapter members benefit from NARGS. *[Editor's Note: See past Green Dragon newsletters containing testimonials from other NARGS members about the ways they have benefited from NARGS]* A number of our chapter members are NARGS members, and as a result we have more exposure to information about a wide variety of plants and growing techniques.

I think for me the biggest benefit is the greater variety of plants that I have to share and/or sell at plant sales. Just speaking for two of us, I know Harold and I brought many interesting (and impossible to obtain locally) plants to plant sales that were grown from NARGS seed (from the Seed Exchange) or divisions of plants purchased at a NARGS event. The seeds offered in the NARGS Seed Exchange include many plants including plants that are more easily cultivated than rock garden plants, including hardy perennials and trees.

Hope to see you at our very busy April meeting!

John Gilrein, Chair

PLANTS-OF-THE-MONTH: ANEMONE & EPIMEDIUMS

Marlene Kobre, POM Coordinator



Anemone multifida

For our April POM offering I've chosen three plants from Edelweiss Perennials in Canby, Oregon: *Anemone multifida*, which was featured in Bella's and Barb's slide show at the last meeting, and two from the Epimedium genus, *E. grandiflorum* 'Dark Beauty' and *E. x rubrum* 'Sweetheart.' The photos are provided by Edelweiss Perennials and are used by permission.

Anemone multifida (Family Ranunculaceae)

This species, commonly known as the cutleaf windflower, Pacific anemone, or globe anemone, was originally native to northern North America from Alaska to New York and also as far south as Arizona and New Mexico. The New England Wildflower Society reports, sadly, that it has become increasingly rare, and in the northeast is now documented only in Maine and Vermont, where it appears in shady,

woodland, north-facing settings, often in cracks and ledges with moist, alkaline soil. In such settings the flowers and leaves are said to be delicate, but to grow more vigorously in less harsh conditions.

The silver-green, fern-like foliage forms a mound, from which grow upright stalks bearing many butter yellow flowers that can last for several weeks. The flowers are followed by wooly seed heads later in the summer. Edelweiss says that it prefers a rich, well-drained soil but that once established it can also tolerate drought. It is also tolerant of a wide range of soil conditions from alkaline to acidic. Among its other virtues, it can be divided in spring or fall, it is long lived, and it is deer and rabbit resistant.

Flowers: Butter yellow

Leaves: Silver-green, fern-like, basal

Height: 8-12"

Zone: 5

Light: Shade-part shade

Soil: Rich, moist, well drained, alkaline, neutral, or acidic

Bloom Time: May and June, perhaps even July

EPIMEDIUM (Family Berberidaceae)

Among its common names including barrenwort, bishop's hat, and fairy wings, all of which refer to either its habitat or its appearance, I am most intrigued by horny goat weed and rowdy lamb herb. I have not yet discovered an explanation of their origins or meanings, but it is tempting to imagine the possibilities.

Endemic to China and other parts of Asia, this genus has recently undergone an explosive proliferation of new species and cultivars, which vary greatly and many of which have not yet been fully tested for hardiness and reliability. Despite the variability in growth habit, leaf shape, and the form and number of the flowers, they are all rhizomatous and display flowers with a complex four-part form that includes outer sepals and larger inner sepals that are petal-like. These inner sepals surround four true

petals that often project a “spur” longer than the sepals. The appearance once reminded someone of a bishop’s hat.

They can be vigorous and attractive groundcovers with a long season of interest. In spring the handsome, dense leaves are often dramatically tinted red, copper, or bronze, and they combine with exciting flower colors and forms. The foliage persists into autumn, often turning intense shades of purple and red. Though the foliage on some cultivars may be semi- evergreen, it is best to cut back the old foliage in spring before the new leaves emerge so as not to detract from their beauty.

Epimedium x rubrum ‘Sweetheart’

Tony Avent, owner of Plant Delights Nursery, in his customarily exuberant style, lavishes praise on this hybrid, finding it much superior to *E. x rubrum* because of its larger, darker, semi-evergreen foliage. In the spring the leaves are edged and even flushed with red, putting on a “stunning show,” and the clusters of bright pink flowers are “scrumptious.” Avent predicts “this is sure to become the new industry standard.” With somewhat more restraint, Edelweiss recommends it as a “great bold groundcover for shade.”



E. x rubrum ‘Sweetheart’

Flower Color: Dark rose-pink sepals and creamy white cups with spurs.

Leaves: Large, heart shaped, with red edges in spring—turning green.

Height: Flowers 12-18”; leaves 18-24.”

Zone: 4

Light: Half shade, but will tolerate both more sun and full shade.

Soil and Moisture: Humus-rich with good drainage. Drought tolerant, but Edelweiss advises watering regularly the first year.

Bloom Time: April-May



Epimedium grandiflorum
‘Dark Beauty’

Epimedium grandiflorum ‘Dark Beauty’

For me, the contrast between the chocolate/purple foliage and the bicolor flowers is reason enough to invite this plant into the shade garden. Since it is commercially relatively rare (hence the higher price), Avent urges us to “get ‘em while you can.”

Flowers: Large and bi-color, with purple sepals and white outer spurs and petals.

Leaves: Emerge purple/chocolate in spring, to make a striking contrast with the flowers, then turning green.

Height: 12”

Zone: 5

Light: Part sun to light shade

Soil and Moisture: Humus-rich, moist, free-draining.

Bloom Time: April-May

SPRING RENEWAL...YOUR 2018 MEMBERSHIP THAT IS!

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

If you have not renewed for 2018, you should do it now so you'll be eligible to purchase the plant-of-the-month and get free seedlings at the seedling exchange! The renewal form is at <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf>. Your membership status is reported to you in the email with the newsletter link. Contact Mary Stauble at mes2@cornell.edu if you have any questions.

To our Chapter members: A membership directory is published electronically every year in September and accompanies the September newsletter as an attachment. For those who receive a paper copy of the Green Dragon, you will be mailed a printed directory. To respect our members' privacy we do not post the directory online.

HORTICULTURE TOUR OF IRELAND

Chrys Gardener, CCE Horticulture Educator



Dactylorhiza fuchsii, Common Spotted Orchid in the Burren. Photo by Chrys Gardener

Ireland is renowned for spectacular scenery and a fantastic climate for plants, both native and exotic. Join CCE Horticulture Educator Chrys Gardener on a 10-day trip to the west of Ireland from June 24 to July 2, 2019. Chrys lived and worked in County Clare, Ireland as a horticulturist from 2008-2012 and has an intimate knowledge of the most amazing gardens and natural areas to visit, including some that are not normally featured on the usual tourist itineraries.

The tour will feature visits to unique botanical gardens and castles, coastal cliff top walks, a two-night stay on the Aran Islands, and a special highlight of the trip, a guided walk in the Burren National Park. The Burren is a unique geologic area, made up of limestone 'pavements' and crevices, and is home to many rare species of orchids as well as wildflowers originally from Mediterranean and Arctic regions growing side by side.

For more information, including a detailed itinerary with links to destinations and accommodation, contact Chrys Gardener at chrysgardener@gmail.com or call 607-379-8287. Don't delay! Space is limited to 24 people, with half of those already reserved.

CYCLAMENS : CRACKING THE CODE

Betty Ann Addison. Reprinted by permission from Minnesota Rock Plant Notes, March 2018 issue

Turning the corner in a woodland path at the Denver Botanic Garden many years ago, I was blown away by hundreds of blooming cyclamen like a Persian carpet thrown down under the trees! An array of leaf patterns made each individual plant glow like an article

of carved jade. From that moment, it became an obsession to find out the secret for such rich abundance in a cold climate.

Who hasn't admired cyclamen as a potted plant that must be wintered indoors? Its wild relatives still live in the mountains of Persia (Iran) and many species are widespread in Europe and Asia growing in woodlands. Chasing a Minnesota hardy species has led down many a dead end, and I won't bore you with the details of the species I tried which wasted time, money and emotion.

The elusive plant was right under my nose all the time. *Cyclamen purpurescens* is the sole cyclamen that I have found reliably hardy without winter cover [in zone 3-4 Minnesota]. In addition, it grows its beautiful leaves and flowers all summer, not going dormant like most others. But, just like a lot of desirable plants, *C. purpurescens* must be "happy in the summer to be hardy in the winter". I had tried this species before, putting it in rich soil in shade. It dwindled and finally expired. Imagine my delight the next spring when I was tidying up a patch of Epimedium across the yard, as I found a couple of cyclamen seedlings hidden beneath. Ants must have carried them away. They were tucked in among the roots, certainly dry. That was my first hint, that just like rhododendrons, the first rule of cyclamen growing is drainage.

Luckily, three years ago in fall, I was given a generous amount of seed. Planted in humus rich, gravelly soil in pots in the greenhouse they rested until spring and then started to germinate, more and more. There were literally hundreds of them by May! What to do with them? A few were planted around my home in garden soil, but the bulk of them went in the rhododendron garden across the street.

When we purchased that property, 5 years ago, it was pure sand under a forest of White Oaks. We covered the gardens-to-be one to two feet deep with wood chips, watered and fertilized them and let them decay. Now the soil is like chocolate cake and plants can be dug up with your hand. Rhododendrons on trial take up the center of the beds, but the edges, next to the logs marking the paths, seemed like the perfect place to line the cyclamen out. Each plant was only as big as my thumbnail, but in expectation, they were placed 6" apart.

That first summer, it was clear that something was going on. By August the plants were as big as my palm, and a few were blooming! Meanwhile, the plants in rich garden soil with clay, were merely surviving. They were only novelties to be pointed out, whereas those growing in the woodland soil attracted attention on their own for their lush leaves and flowers.

Last spring, after a hard winter with little snow, I watched them with trepidation, hoping to find a few hardy ones. However, every single one of the plants in the woodland soil survived and soon started blooming! Individual plants bloomed from May to November, and many rebloomed. Seedlings from the previous year emerged and were transplanted to expand the beds. Best of all, the leaf patterns varied from highly marbled, to "Christmas Tree"—with the image like a tree or maple leaf in the center--to solid silver, with all manner of individual variation. Flower color varied from pink to ruby and the plants brought enough variety to satisfy most any collector.

If you plan to try these special plants, it is worthwhile to prepare a spot in part shade—morning sun is ideal—and collect leaf mold to make a bed at least a foot deep. Especially if your soil is clay based, make a raised berm, edged with logs, which allows excess water to drain away.

One of the fascinating things about cyclamen is the cunning way they plant their own seeds. Really. Once the flower is pollinated, the stem begins to curve downward, ending up in a tight coil surrounding the seed, tucked at the base of the leaves. There, the seed is safe from birds, but ants often carry it far away for its nectar. That is how cyclamen disperse. In May, as the spring uncoils and the stem straightens, it drives the seed into the ground near the parent plant, thus creating one of those wonderful carpets I first saw in Denver!

Various leaf patterns of *Cyclamen purpurescens*



UPCOMING 2018 ACNARGS PROGRAMS

Mark your calendars! Unless otherwise specified, all local events start with a brown bag lunch at noon with the program following at 1 pm, and take place at the renovated Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, 236 Tower Road, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

April 21: Anna Leggatt: 2 talks at 11am and 1pm. #1 at 11am: Favorite Plants from Around the World and Can We Grow Them? AND #2 at 1pm: Rock Gardening, Troughs, Screens and Sand Beds

May 20: Plant Sale fundraiser as part of CCETC's Garden Fair. NOTE the change of date! This is the Sunday following Mother's Day week-end.

June 13-29: NARGS-sponsored botanical tour to Yunnan China. Info [here](#).

July 6-8: "Where Alpines Meet the Sea," NARGS Annual Meeting in St. John's Newfoundland, Optional post-conference trip: July 9 – 15. Info here: [Newfoundland Meeting & Post-Conference Tour](#).

August 18: Members' Only Plant Sale and Annual Picnic, Cass Park Picnic Pavilion, Route 89, adjacent to the Ithaca Children's Garden, across from the Cayuga Inlet and Waterfront Trail and site of the trailhead to the Black Diamond Trail

May 3-5, 2019: "Rooted in Diversity," NARGS Study Weekend in the Philadelphia area, sponsored by Delaware Valley Chapter NARGS. More details to follow.

May 8-11, 2021: International Rock Gardening Conference, Perth Scotland. Start saving your pennies.

As we learn more details of these meetings they will be included in future newsletters, our blog, acnargs.blogspot.com, and our Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/acnargs>.

HAVE SOME/WANT SOME

We're introducing a new monthly feature – a classified section – to facilitate your gardening wants and needs. Do you have too many large pots? Do you want some small pots? Do you have too many divisions (that will otherwise go into the compost)? Are you seeking a certain plant? The idea is to use this newsletter to express your "haves" to give away and "wants" for any items you are seeking. To post a request contact Carol Eichler at carolithaca@gmail.com. And I'll start it off.

HAVE:

Fine vermiculite for soil mix. Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com

Clay pots of various small-ish sizes, in storage at Tompkins Cooperative Extension greenhouse, 615 Willow Avenue. Help yourself.

Staghorn Fern offsets. My original was from our member-only sale and it is getting huge. Very easy and rewarding houseplant that gets hung outside in a tree in summer. I'll probably bring my "babies" to the April meeting. Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com

WANT:

Sturdy Styrofoam boxes. Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF SELECT GARDEN EVENTS

To have a garden event in your area listed send all pertinent information to Carol Eichler at carolithaca@gmail.com

April 14 & 15: VaVa Bloom, Dickamn Farms Greenhouses & Garden Center.
<https://www.dickmanfarms.com/about-us/events/show/va-va-bloom-garden-show-95>

April 14 & 15: Celebration of the Senses, Carol Watson Greenhouse, LaFayette, NY
<https://www.carolwatsongreenhouse.com/special-events>

April 28: Stonecrop's Alpine Plant Sale, Cold Spring, NY. Info about this and other events at stonecrop.org

April 28: Gathering of Gardeners, Rochester NY. Info here
<http://www.gatheringofgardeners.com/event-summary.php>

May 11-20: Rochester Lilac Festival. <https://www.rochesterevents.com/lilac-festival/>

May 19: All About Alpines workshop, Stonecrop. Info at [Stonecrop Calendar](#).

May 19, 20, 26, 27: Linwood Gardens Tree Peony Festival. Also June 2, 3.
<http://www.linwoodgardens.org/>

June 10: Southern Cayuga Garden Club Tour, Union Springs area. More info here
<http://www.socayugagardenclub.org/home/mission-statement/calendar>
when available.

July 7: Open Days in Tompkins County. Four gardens open 10-4. Admission charged. Fundraiser for Tompkins County Community Beautification Program. More info when available at <https://www.gardenconservancy.org/open-days/open-days-schedule>

July 14: Dryden Garden and Art Tour. Info when available
<http://drydenbeautification.weebly.com/>

Cooperative Extension Horticulture Programs, located at 615 Willow Av., Ithaca. 607-272-2292. Unless otherwise stated, classes require pre-registration and have a self-determining sliding fee scale. More info at www.ccetompkins.org

Finger Lakes Native Plant Society Meetings from 7-8:30pm at the Ithaca Unitarian Church annex (corner of Buffalo & Aurora, enter side door on Buffalo St. & up the stairs). More info at www.FLNPS.org. Plus FLNPS Walks meeting at different times and locations.

Cornell Botanic Gardens (formerly Cornell Plantations) calendar of events visit: [CBG Calendar](#).

ABOUT US - ACNARGS

We are an all-volunteer organization and one of thirty-eight NARGS affiliated chapters active in North America. Our annual Chapter activities include 6 program-speaker meetings, the *Green Dragon* newsletter, web and Facebook pages, garden visits, overnight garden trips, hands-on workshops, and 3 plant sales a year. Our meetings are informal, friendly gatherings that provide a wealth of information and offer a source for unusual plants, plus the opportunity to be inspired by other gardeners. The public is always welcome.

Chapter membership starts at \$15 a year based on the calendar year. Membership includes these benefits: newsletter sent to you electronically (or option by mail for an extra fee), opportunity to travel on our planned overnight garden trips, annual membership directory, and plant sale discounts and member only sales, including Plant-of-the-Month sales. Download a membership form here: <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf>).

ABOUT NARGS NATIONAL

NARGS National is our parent organization: We encourage you to join (online at www.nargs.org) for only \$40 a year. Benefits include a seed exchange, a quarterly publication, and an on-line web site featuring an archive of past publications, a chat forum and a horticultural encyclopedia. NARGS National also conducts winter study weekends and holds its Annual Meeting in interesting places where attendees have the opportunity to visit gardens, and take field trips, often to alpine areas, as well as hear talks by outstanding plants people from around the world. More recently, NARGS is offering botanical tours each year, both within the US and abroad.

2018 BOARD MEMBERS AND CONTACTS

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

Chair: John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu

Program: Terry Humphries, terryehumphries@gmail.com

Program Committee Members: Could this be you?

Secretary: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu

Treasurer: BZ Marranca, mmm10@cornell.edu

Plant Sales Chair: David Mitchell, dwm23@cornell.edu. Seeking a Co-Chair for 2018 to work alongside David...Why not you?

Plant Sales Committee Members: Michael Loos, BZ Marranca, Carol Eichler

Plant of the Month: Marlene Kobre, mkobre@ithaca.edu

Membership: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu

New Member Hospitality: Nari Mistry, nbm2@cornell.edu

Newsletter Editor: Carol Eichler carolithaca@gmail.com

Calendar: Pat Curran, pc21@cornell.edu

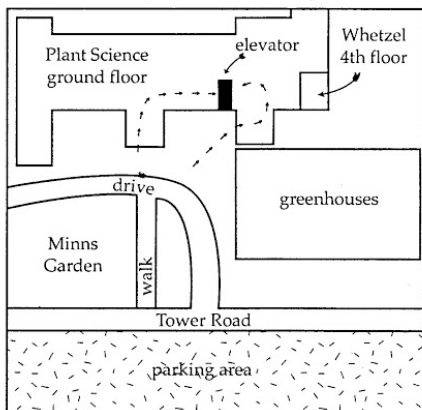
Webmaster, Program Tech: Craig Cramer, cdcramer@gmail.com

GREEN DRAGON TALES

Published eight times a year (Jan/Feb., March, April, May/June, July/Aug., Sept., Oct. Nov./Dec.). Submit articles by the fourth Friday of the month preceding publication to Carol Eichler, carolithaca@gmail.com. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be our

May/June 2018 issue. The newsletter is always posted and printable each month on our website:

www.acnargs.org



Map: Whetzel Room, Room 404 Plant Science Building, 236 Tower Rd., Cornell campus

PHOTOS OF THE MONTH: THE MANY FACES OF CYCLAMEN

Photos provided by Minnesota Rock Plant Notes

Cyclamen purpureascens



Marbled Form



Silber Leaved Form



Seed and Rebloom



Christmas Tree Form



Cyclamen Habitat