



ADIRONDACK
CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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July/August 2019

From the Chair

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

I hope you'll join us at our August event this year, pot luck picnic and plant sale at **UPPER Buttermilk Falls State Park in Ithaca**. This is a change in venue from the last few years, and we have been at this venue in the past. Normally, the attendant in the parking lot goes on duty at 10 AM, so there's no one to collect parking fees if you arrive earlier. And please bring plants to contribute to the sale. We always have a nice array of hardy plants, houseplants, and sometimes other plant products (garlic) to offer. Our date is **Saturday August 17, 2019** and try to arrive by 10 if you have plants to contribute.

I'll keep my article short. One of my trials and tribulations of the year is renovating some of the lower part of my rock garden. Quackgrass (*Agropyron repens*), one sort of Cancer of the Garden, moved in and it has been quite a lot of work to eradicate it. I didn't get rid of all of it yet, but the renovated section is free of it and I'm determined to continue eradicating the remainder. I added more limestone rocks, brought in sand for the top layer of soil, and planted quite a few new plants. Some of these new plants were plants I grew from seeds obtained via the NARGS seed exchange, and it was great to have quite a few plants paid for only with my labor. I'm trying some new plants in the rock garden, which is fun, and they seem to be surviving the summer heat (lots of watering helps). June/July is not the best time to plant, but it seems to be working here. I'm bringing some of the remaining seedlings to the picnic and hope others can enjoy them as well!

Stay cool and see you soon.

Members Picnic and Plant Sale

Carol Eichler, Plant Sales

Our member sale and picnic is coming right up on August 17th to be held at the picnic shelter at Upper Buttermilk State Park. Keep in mind there is admission charged after 10a.m. Please think about donating rock garden plants, perennials, or any other special plants. All will be most welcome – even if you have only one. You can be sure they'll be appreciated and hopefully thrive. Most importantly please come! You are welcome whether you have plants to donate or not – we need buyers as well as contributors!

Please remember to label your plants in advance, as this will facilitate set-up.

Here's the schedule

- 10:00 a.m. Arrive, get your plant sale number and help with sale set-up; bring a dish-to-pass., serving utensils, and table service. Beverages will be supplied.
- 11:00 a.m. (approximately, as soon as everything is set up and priced) Plant sale begins
- 12:00 noon Lunch and optional cook-out. We'll fire up the grill for those who want to bring grillables.
- Afterwards, clean-up with options to hike the beautiful Buttermilk Falls gorge trail.

As a departure from past years, we will allow donors to get first “dibs,” followed by those who are first to sign-in. So it pays to arrive early and help with set-up.

This sale has become an important revenue stream for the Chapter and helps subsidize our plant-of-the-month sales offerings as well as our speaker programs. You can expect to see very reasonable prices on our plants.

For the treasured and rare plants, as usual we will have a silent auction table. Note this is our only members-only sale and we should have some real gems.

If you haven't already done so, you may become a 2019 member at the meeting for \$15 (\$20 for a household). It's still a great value since we have half of our program year ahead of us.

We have a great set-up for the sale with options to contend with whatever weather mother nature throws at us – tables inside for the food, tables under a roof for eating, and outside tables for the sale (as long as we have dry weather!).

All in all, look forward to a good time with plenty of plants and food for everyone! Don't forget to bring a dish to pass and your own service and serving utensils.

Membership

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

Please welcome 3 new members! They learned about us at the May Plant Sale. Cerise Foster and Lori Bauer are both from Ithaca and Annemarie Ramirez is from Cazenovia.

You must be renewed for 2019 to participate in the members' only plant sale at our August picnic. Dues are \$15 for individuals, \$20 for a household and you may join or renew at the August meeting. Check my email announcement of the newsletter link for your membership status. The renewal form is at <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf> and can be printed out and completed or there will be forms at the picnic. 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.

Trough Workshop Report

Carol Eichler, Plant Sales

The spring rains took a break on Saturday June 8 for the Chapter's trough-making workshop. A small but adventurous group under the tutelage of Bill Stark built troughs using the "bonding cement and hypertufa over styrofoam box" method.

At first the process was slow-going as the preparations are labor intensive - at least in comparison to building the more conventional hypertufa trough with mix and mold. Bill, our vigilant workshop leader, assured us not only will our new trough be lightweight (at least unplanted), it will also outlive the conventional trough because of its increased strength.

After a lunch break the fun really began - while we played with mud i.e. the surface bonding material that resembled brownie dough consistency but not in color - to cover our prepared boxes. Lastly, we applied a thin finishing layer of traditional hypertufa mix. While our creations were setting a bit, we enjoyed a toast to our day's accomplishments.

We each hauled off our new planter, carefully wrapped in plastic to begin the curing process. Thank you Bill and Mary for hosting us and teaching us this technique. The beautiful day at lakeside and garden tour were additional treats. All in all it was a very satisfying and rewarding day.

Note: Kathy Purdy took many photos and videos to document this technique.



Extreme Rock Gardening

Bill Stark

We're rebuilding our driveway and found a 20' long 70,000 lb rock in our way. Our contractor suggested jack hammering the rock into gravel, but I decided it would look great in our garden. We couldn't move the entire rock, but we thought that we could move half if we could get rollers underneath it. Luckily, there was a natural fault halfway down the rock. I spent 3 days on my knees cleaning out the fault so that I could slide a flat discharge hose (red in the photo) into the crack. Pressurizing the hose to 90 psi generated nearly 100,000 lb of force and split the rock. I jammed spacers into the crack while the hose was inflated, then deflated the hose and inserted wood strips under the hose so that the next time the hose was inflated, the crack would open wider. The hose only exploded once - 90 psi was well beyond its pressure rating. Slowly, about 3/4" per step, the crack widened until I could slide a hydraulic jack into the crack and then fit rollers under the rock. The rock is now 75% of the way to its new home.



June 15 Garden Tour Pictures

Thank you to our garden tour hosts: Bill Stark and Mary Stauble, Cindy and Len Lion, George Fearon, Debi Lampman, and Maryann Turek!



Bill Stark and Mary Stauble garden



Cindy and Len Lion garden



George Fearon garden



Debi Lampman garden



Maryann Turek garden

Save the Date

Terry Humphries, Program

Our September 21 meeting (1:00 PM, Whetzel Hall, Cornell Plant Science Bldg.) will feature Cate Crawford, whose family operates Lyndaker Farms in Salisbury Center New York (Herkimer County, Zone 4a)

Cate will share cultivation information and lessons her family has learned developing stunning peony forms at Lyndaker Farms, where they raise hardy Herbaceous, Itoh, and Tree Peonies for mail order. Lyndaker's specializes in Itoh peonies, which are a cross between an herbaceous peony and a tree peony. Although they are challenging to hybridize, Itohs result in some of the finest flowers, with strong woody stems, in a broad range of colors. Cate will offer recommendations on site selection, soil amendments and plant maintenance that apply to rock garden, fernleaf, intersectional and tree peonies.

Foresight 2020: Exploration and Inspiration

Foresight 2020: Exploration and Inspiration is the theme of the 2020 NARGS Annual General Meeting and Conference held June 18-20, hosted by the Adirondack Chapter and co-hosted by Cornell Botanic Gardens. Why this theme? **FORESIGHT** because after attending this conference, we hope attendees will be armed with

knowledge to become better gardeners moving forward. How many times have we all said “I wish I knew THEN what I know NOW?!”

Throughout the Conference we’ll have a chance to **EXPLORE** gardening possibilities together.... whether it’s the opportunity to view alpine plants of the world in their native habitat or salivate over cultivated beauties in public or private gardens. We’ll learn from the experience of others and share our own successes and experimentations. In any case we will all seek to be **INSPIRED** in **2020** to try new plants, new techniques, and new challenges in our own gardens!

Packed into 3 days will be daytime field trips to private gardens and Cornell Botanic Gardens, optional “night owl” mini-talks, plant sales by choice vendors, door prizes, book signings, and an optional pre-conference tour to visit three exceptional private gardens in the Syracuse area.* We are especially excited to be able to bring two international speakers - Kaj Andersen and Harry Jans. And of course we’ve planned naturalist-led hikes to showcase the beauty of our gorges and waterfalls and the flora to be found there. Our logo designed by Cornell graduate Patty Chan features a little native fern found in our gorges, *Asplenium trichomanes*, Maidenhair Spleenwort.

Cornell’s north campus and Robert Purcell Community Center will be “Conference Central.” We are expecting over 100 people to attend from all over the U.S. and perhaps a few international attendees too. We hope a good number of our Chapter members will also attend. Registration is set at \$425 and includes all meals (with the exception of Saturday dinner), beginning with dinner Thursday through breakfast Sunday. To defray the cost to our members our Chapter is offering \$300 stipends to anyone who has not previously received a stipend to attend a national NARGS meeting. (A previous Green Dragon announced this news. More information will be forthcoming at our fall meetings and through fall newsletters)

We also hope our members will join in the fun by volunteering to help during the conference – whether you are registered or not. We’ve identified a number of opportunities from serving as bus monitor, to helping vendors with plant sales, to greeting and orienting out-of-town registrants, and the list goes on. Most of the volunteer needs require a minimal amount of time ranging from 2-8 hours. You will be hearing more about the needs we’ve identified as the months progress.

June 2020 might seem a long way off but for five of our members comprising the Planning Committee – John Gilrein, Terry Humphries, Marlene Kobre, Steve Whitesell, and Carol Eichler, these dates have been on their minds for some months already. We’re off to a good start. So mark your calendar, save the date, and plan to attend.

*This tour includes the gardens of Dianne Bordoni, Michael Brennan, and Donna Kraft – three of the gardens we toured last summer.

Upcoming 2019 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.

August 17: Annual Dish-to-Pass Picnic and Members-Only Plant Sale. Upper Buttermilk Falls Picnic Shelter.

September 15: Garden Conservancy Open Days: The gardens of Donna Kraft, Dianne Bordoni and Michael Brennan. Details forthcoming on the Garden Conservancy website.

September 21: Cate Crawford, Lyndaker Farms: “From Rock Peonies to Hardy Tree Peonies”.

Oct. 6: Note 1st Sunday. Two presentations by Cliff Booker, from the United Kingdom. Part of NARGS Speaker Tour.

November 16: Lori Chips Hypertufa Troughs book signing and presentation.

June 18-20, 2020: Foresight 2020: Exploration and Inspiration, NARGS Annual General Meeting, hosted by ACNARGS in Ithaca, NY

As we learn more details of these meetings they will be included in future newsletters, our blog, acnargs.blogspot.com, and our Facebook page, [facebook.com/acnargs](https://www.facebook.com/acnargs).

Calendar of Select Garden Events & Programs

August 3: Ridenour Lotus Pond and Garden Tour. Located at 346 Warren Road, Saturday, August 3, from 10am to 2pm. Admission is \$5 and will benefit the Community Beautification and Horticulture Programs at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. This tour is drop in and will take place rain or shine.

October 28 – November 8: NARGS Tour to Greece. This tour is now full and a wait list has been created.

[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.

[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). Also look for FLNPS Walks meeting at different times and locations.

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

To have a garden event in your area listed send all pertinent information to David Mitchell at david_mitchell_14850@yahoo.com

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 5 program-speaker meetings, the *Green Dragon* newsletter, web and Facebook pages, garden visits, overnight garden trips, hands-on workshops, 2 plant sales a year, and frequent plant giveaways. 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 at 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 focused on rock gardening, 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.

2019 ACNARGS 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: Currently rotating amongst "Responsible People"

Treasurer: **BZ Marranca**, mmm10@cornell.edu

Plant Sales Chair: **Carol Eichler**, carolithaca@gmail.com

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

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

Membership: Seeking someone to do this. **Could this be you?**

New Member Hospitality: **Graham Egerton**

Newsletter Editor: **David Mitchell**, dwm23@cornell.edu. **Looking for a new editor!**

Calendar: **Pat Curran**, pc21@cornell.edu

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

Green Dragon Tales

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Submit articles by the fourth Friday of the month preceding publication to David Mitchell,

david_mitchell_14850@yahoo.com. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be our September 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



Ridenour Lotus Pond and Garden Tour, Sat., Aug. 3,
10am-2pm

