



ADIRONDACK  
CHAPTER

*North American Rock Garden Society*

# Green Dragon Tales

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## September 21: Cate Crawford

*Terry Humphries, Program*

Our September 21 meeting (1:00 PM, Whetzel Room, Cornell Plant Science Bldg.) will feature Cate Crawford, whose family operates Lyndaker Farms in Salisbury Center, New York located in 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.

Jason and Cate Crawford, along with their children Catherine, Zachery and Naomi, own and operate Lyndaker Farms, located in upstate New York's beautiful Mohawk Valley.

Lyndaker Farms specialize in peonies growing traditional herbaceous peonies, tree peonies and intersectional (aka "Itoh") peonies. Lyndaker Farms also has a collection of trial tree peonies under observation for registration and introduction to the market.



Jason was born and raised in Guyana and is from a large farming family. Prior to farming, Jason worked as a software engineer in the New York Metro Area.

Cate is from the Croghan, NY Amish Mennonite community. From early childhood, Cate weeded, shucked peas and canned peaches. Prior to farming, Cate worked as a Technology Risk Manager in Manhattan's Financial Services industry.

The farm is named for Cate's grandfather's 700-acre dairy farm and sawmill that shut down when he retired.

## From the Chair

*John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair*

The August plant sale/picnic was a bit of work, but it was a most enjoyable event. We always seem to have a nice selection of interesting plants at this sale, and if you missed it I hope you can participate next year. Many thanks to the crew that contributed to the event: plant donors, set up personnel, announcer, food donors, barbecue cook, and clean up people. There was a bit of a mess with paying the parking fee; in the past we were able to park free before 10 AM. This year between 9:30 and 10 AM or so, the parking lot attendant inconsistently charged people the parking fee (I don't think anyone was charged before 9 or 9:15 though). So I'm sorry for the unclear and inconsistent parking charge; next year we won't expect free parking for the early arrivals, we just hope for it.

Be sure to note for the October meeting we have an international speaker, Cliff Booker, and our meeting is on Sunday October 6 starting at 11 AM, and those attending both talks should bring a lunch.

I was working on my rock garden in the last few days. One of the plants (admittedly not really a rock garden plant) in this garden is *Ruellia humilis* (wild petunia), which I think is a nice plant and I had been appreciating how well it does cope with lots of sun and droughty conditions (also does well in part shade). Seeing how big it can get (even when not very pampered) and how much it spreads by seed, I'm reassessing whether I want it in the rock garden. Keeping it down to one or a few plants might be my next step, so there won't be so many volunteers to pull.

Enjoy our last few weeks of summer!

## Plant of the Month

*Marlene Kobre, Plant of the Month Coordinator*

For our September POMs we're offering four plants from Wrightman Alpines:

*Gypsophila aretioides* 'Caucasia'

*Hypericum auriculariifolium*

*Hypericum olympicum*

*Silene acaulis* 'Anne Spiegel'

I filled the shopping cart the day after the fall plant list went online, but the *Hypericum auriculariifolium* and *Silene* were already in limited supply, so I added *H. olympicum* to make up the difference. These are all choice rock garden plants that some of us have grown. Following is a fuller description of each plant and its cultural requirements. (*All photos are from the Wrightman Alpines website.*)



### **Gypsophila aretiodes 'Caucasia'**

Esther Wrightman describes this alpine as a “very hardy amazing hummock” that spreads into a dense carpet and extends the bloom into summer. Terry Humphries advises that it appreciates a gritty alkaline mix and protection from winter wet.

**Flowers and Foliage:** small, almost stemless white flowers; leaves turning bronze in winter.

**Light:** sun to part sun

**Boom time:** June and July

**Height:** under 10 cm

**Habit:** cushion

**Soil:** scree or trough with gritty alkaline mix

**Origin:** Caucasus



### **Hypericum auriculariifolium ssp. uniflorum**

This is the more dwarf form of the two hypericums, and it has larger single flowers than olympicum. For three years in our garden olympicum has been a reliable, heavy blooming, and trouble-free plant growing in scree conditions, and Esther Wrightman says auriculariifolium is just as accommodating.

**Flowers:** large single golden-yellow flowers with impressive stamens.

**Light:** sun to part sun

**Bloom time:** July-Aug

**Height:** under 10 cm

**Habit:** dwarf woody

**Soil:** scree or trough

**Origin:** Eurasia



### **Hypericum olympicum**

**Foliage and flowers:** gray leaves on woody stems with yellow flowers and a bold display of stamens.

**Light:** Sun to part sun

**Bloom time:** July and August

**Height:** 10-30 cm

**Habit:** shrubby

**Soil:** scree (gritty and well-drained)

**Origin:** Turkey



### **Silene acaulis 'Anne Spiegel'**

Terry Humphries says this plant has "thrived" in her part-sun scree and is much more floriferous than in Wrightman's photo.

Terry also reports that when she bought it at Stone Crop, Anne Spiegel said that "Harvey Wrightman had admired it in her trough." She offered him a piece, "but he sheepishly confessed he had already helped himself to a pinch."

**Flowers:** pink

**Light:** sun to part sun

**Bloom time:** May, June, July

**Height:** under 10 cm

**Habit:** mat

**Soil:** scree or trough

**Origin:** North America

## **Thank you, Members Picnic and Plant Sale**

*Carol Eichler, Plant Sales*

ACNARGS annual member only plant sale is always a well-anticipated event and this year's was no exception. Plants, food, socializing with friends...what's not to love! Our "tropical" summer cooperated, offering plenty of sunshine too.

Many thanks to all who donated and/or bought plants. A special shout-out goes to Michael Loos for taking command of the sale and auction, those who donated such fantastic plants for the auction, and to Nigel Dyson-Hudson for being our barbecue chef!

This sale provides important revenue for the Chapter but also it plays a big role in improving our own gardens with new (to us) and, in many cases, unusual plants at bargain prices.



*Plants are filling up the tables. Photo by Carol Eichler.*

## **Membership**

*Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator*

The 2018 ACNARGS Membership Directory is attached to the newsletter announcement email or to your paper copy of the newsletter. If you have corrections please contact Mary Stauble, [mes2@cornell.edu](mailto:mes2@cornell.edu).

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 meeting. Contact Mary Stauble at [mes2@cornell.edu](mailto: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.*

## Extreme Rock Gardening, Part II

*Bill Stark*

Last month, I described how to use air pressure to split apart a 20' long rock. After moving the 35,000 lb top piece into the garden, the larger bottom piece remained. Moving the bottom whole was not an option - moving the top had been an expensive nightmare of broken equipment and endless jacking. So I looked for ways to break the bottom into easier to move pieces and discovered a product called Dexpan expansive demolition grout that is sold by Amazon and Home Depot.

In the photo, I'm drilling a line of holes 24" from the edge of the remainder of the bottom limestone. The holes are 1" in diameter, 16" deep, and 12" apart. After adding water to the grout, you have 10 minutes to pour the milkshake like mix into the holes. Within 24 hours, cracks will develop between the drilled holes. For this stone, the cracks went down 37" until they reached a weak horizontal seam. The crack then moved along the horizontal seam, forming 24" wide and 37" high blocks. These blocks were perfect for building 72' of stone wall along the edge of our 9' deep limestone ledge. In the photo, the wall is between my head and the excavator we used to quickly move the blocks. The wall allows you to safely walk along the edge of the ledge, it eliminates a dangerous maintenance area, it matches the ledge stone below and it cost far less than a hand built stone wall.



## Trough Planting Report

*Carol Eichler, Plant Sales*

Four of us who attended the ACNARGS trough workshop got together to plant the new troughs, thinking we might get inspiration from each other. These photos show the results along with a look of accomplishment from each gardener. For some of us this was a first trough ever!



Kathy Purdy



Conifer



The Buttons

## NARGS Seed Exchange

*Carol Eichler, Plant Sales*

As we approach fall it's time to think about gathering in the harvest...of seeds that is. NARGS welcomes your donations for seeds for its world renown seed exchange. The deadline to send in your seeds is October 25.

Whether or not you choose to participate, this just might be the year for you to try collecting seed from some of your favorite plants and trying your hand at sowing them later in the year and growing them out. It's so rewarding to be able to say, "See that flowering plant over there? I grew it from seed!"

The NARGS website has lots of information about how to collect and preserve seed. They also offer guidelines for what seed is not acceptable (for example invasives and annuals). Check it out here: <https://www.nargs.org/seed-donation-instructions>.

Our own Chapter has traditionally held a seedling exchange at our April meeting. It has now expanded to include a seed exchange too. For our seed exchange we welcome seed from perennials but also any of your surplus annual flower and vegetable seeds - especially heirlooms. Perhaps this is where you may choose to begin your foray into seed saving. Warning: it can become addictive!

## Bulb Sale

*Pat Curran, Calendar*

I have been busy weeding and also 'harvesting' excess bulbs from my first flower bed planted nearly 30 years ago. I'd like to sell these bulbs as a fundraiser for the horticulture program at Tompkins Cooperative Extension.

I have lots of Camassia. They grow 2 to 3 feet tall with dark lavender-blue spikes blooming in late May, early June. One bulb planted maybe 15 years ago has multiplied into 20 or 30. Unlike most spring-flowering bulbs, Camassia is very tolerant of damp and heavy clay soils. Native to the Northwest, perfectly hardy for us. You wouldn't believe the dense pottery-style clay that I extracted these bulbs from! I have about 2 gallons of bulbs left and will sell them at the price of 4 bulbs for \$1. Proceeds will go to the CCE MG program.

Here's a link: <https://www.vanengelen.com/flower-bulbs-index/camassia/camassia-leichtlinii-caerulea.html>

### [Camassia leichtlinii Caerulea - Camassia - Flower Bulb Index](https://www.vanengelen.com/flower-bulbs-index/camassia/camassia-leichtlinii-caerulea.html)

A Pacific Northwest U.S. native that's been cultivated commercially in the Netherlands for a long time, *C. leichtlinii* Caerulea is best grown in moist, fertile soil in full sun to partial sunlight.  
www.vanengelen.com

I will also have some July blooming tall lavender alliums (these go dormant after blooming); some yellow trumpet daffodils, and the drumstick allium that blooms in July, *Allium sphaerocephalon*.

Last but not least, I have a bucket full of *Allium cernuum*, pinky-lavender flowers in July and early August. This allium has persistent foliage, and is not usually sold as a dry bulb. Instead, it has a little swollen bulb similar to chives. While this is a native, I do not remember where I got mine so I don't know its provenance. However, it forms nice colonies in sun or light shade, and the bees love it!

Here's a link:

<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=z580#AllImages>

### [Allium cernuum - Plant Finder](https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=z580#AllImages)

Noteworthy Characteristics. *Allium cernuum*, commonly called nodding wild onion, is a Missouri native plant which occurs primarily in rocky soils on glades, bluff edges, open woods and slopes in the Ozark region of the State. Plants typically grow 12-18" (less frequently to 24") tall. Features clumps of flat, narrow, grass-like leaves (to 12" tall) and tiny bell-shaped, pink to lilac pink.  
www.missouribotanicalgarden.org

Although the Missouri Botanic Garden says it prefers sandy loam, guess what!! it's growing in moist clay soil at my house and thriving. It has even spread onto the path, which is solid clay with about an inch of rotten woodchips on top. If you deadhead it better than I've been doing, it will not spread more than you want.

I will bring plastic bags and I will be open to bargaining the prices of these plants, with all money going to the MG program.

## 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.*

**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

**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](mailto: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](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](http://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](mailto:basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu)

Program: **Terry Humphries**, [terryhumphries@gmail.com](mailto:terryhumphries@gmail.com)

Program Committee Members: ***Could this be you?***

Secretary: Currently rotating amongst "Responsible People"

Treasurer: **BZ Marranca**, [mmm10@cornell.edu](mailto:mmm10@cornell.edu)

Plant Sales Chair: **Carol Eichler** [carolithaca@gmail.com](mailto:carolithaca@gmail.com)

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

Plant of the Month: **Marlene Kobre**, [mkobre@ithaca.edu](mailto: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](mailto:dwm23@cornell.edu). **Looking for a new editor!**

Calendar: **Pat Curran**, [pc21@cornell.edu](mailto:pc21@cornell.edu)

Webmaster, Program Tech: **Craig Cramer**, [cdcramer@gmail.com](mailto: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 David Mitchell,

[david\\_mitchell\\_14850@yahoo.com](mailto: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](http://www.acnargs.org)

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

