



ADIRONDACK CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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December 2020

“Tour” to Newfoundland and the Czech Republic

Terry Humphries, Program

January 16, 2021 1:00 PM, ACNARGS via Zoom

First, **Todd Boland** will take us on a botanical tour through the “MUN” gardens of St. John’s, Newfoundland. Research Horticulturalist at the Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Garden, Todd is also an active member of NARGS, and has served in leadership roles throughout the years. He holds a Masters in plant ecology and is an avid photographer, a prolific author, and a frequent tour guide.



Cultivated features of the MUN include Cottage, Heritage, and Pollinator Gardens, a Rhododendron Dell, a Peat Garden, Rhododendron Border, Sorbus Collection, and more. Perhaps our group will be most enamored by the Limestone Rock Garden, the Rock Channel and Boardwalk, the Trough Garden, and the Alpine House. The program will culminate with a look at Potted Alpines, a Crevice Garden and an Asian Garden.

You will see *so many* spectacular plants in this tour that you’ll want to refer to the plant list, which will be sent via email along with the Zoom invitation in January.



Then we will get a brief glimpse of spring by indulging with **Vojtech Holubec** as he shares horticultural highlights of Spring in Czechia.

Like many members of the Rock Garden Club of Prague, Voj is obsessed with crevice rock garden construction. He draws his inspiration from natural outcrops found in the hinterlands and he collects seeds in the wild. He will share some of his favorites in this twenty-minute video featuring galanthus, hepatica, leucojum, pulsatilla, daphne and more growing in the hinterlands of his native country.

Treat yourself to experiencing the natural beauty of spring in the hills of Central Europe! It will act as the perfect early harbinger of spring.



Letter from the Chair

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

I received the seeds from NARGS on Sunday that were sorting, and they were sent out today. We're going to do a seed sorting Zoom meeting on Saturday December 12 at 9:30 AM for instructions and 10 AM for sorting and meeting. For those in Tompkins County picking up seeds, you can pick them up from David Mitchell in downtown Ithaca. If you are new to the process, the meeting would be most helpful, even if you just participate in the instruction phase.

With the pandemic situation deteriorating in many areas and people getting COVID fatigue, it wouldn't hurt to stock up on things to do at home in the next month or 2. That could be gardening books, knitting supplies, video DVDs, trough building supplies, potting mix to repot your houseplants. I feel like I have a least a 2 month supply of books to read, and I know I could make troughs too. With vaccines coming out in the near future, there's a least hope for the future/light at the end of the tunnel. We still need to exercise caution for the time being though. I hope the Adirondack chapter may be able to meet in person by September 2021!



Aster tartaricus

*Crocus speciosus*

I had an interesting discovery early in November. After all the garden basil was zapped by frost, I bought a bunch of basil at the farmer's market. I stuck the stems in a glass of water, and I didn't use the basil quickly enough; it lasted in the glass for about 2 weeks (I wouldn't recommend keeping it that long though). At the end of that time, many of the stems had rooted. I did not realize basil rooted that easily. This basil was not identified with a variety name or anything like that, but it was the standard large leaf basil. So, if you need some more basil plants next summer, here's an easy way to start some.

One of my fall projects this year was to make a tufa garden. I've been collecting tufa chunks for years from various sources (some purchased from former member Robin Bell, remember him?). I knew I wanted to use it in the garden, but I didn't know where I wanted to install it. I had a terraced garden on a slope north of the house that needed to be redone, and I decided that would be the site. I pulled the remaining plants out (some had already expired), built a new set of stone steps on one side, did some rock moving and regrading, installed the tufa chunks, and filled in between them with tube sand (tube sand is a gritty sand sold in 70 pound bags in hardware stores). The tufa and sand are held in place on the downhill side by a mini igneous boulder

(removed from the rock garden). This is a bit of an experiment, being partly above grade, and it could get some frost heaving. Since it's on the north side of the house in an area which holds snow pretty well (also gets some snow/ice falling off the metal roof and snow shoveled off the back porch). And the drainage should be excellent, which will help it resist heaving.

The tufa garden gets bright light but direct sun only in early morning and evening, so I expect will be a good site for saxifrages. I've only gotten a few saxifrages planted thus far, and hope to add more plants in 2021. Will I be able to procure some plants at Stonecrop? I sure hope so.

Hope your upcoming holidays are happy and safe!

*Tufa garden*

Stretching Out Fall Foliage Colors (Other than Yellow)

Pat Curran

Pink, Orange, Red, Purple, Maroon Shades as observed in a cold zone 5A location.

The time frame below is approximate because I just started recording my observations midway through the season. I have not included invasives such as barberry, burning bush, and Callery pear. Scientific names, hardiness zones, etc. were checked in Michael Dirr's *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*. All plants listed are hardy to zone 5 (at least) unless otherwise noted.

Early fall color:

Cornus racemosa, gray dogwood shrub, native
Itea virginica, Virginia sweetspire, native further south
Parthenocissus quinquefolia, Virginia creeper vine, native

Early/mid fall color:

Acer ginnala, Amur maple – may be invasive in some areas
Acer rubrum, red or swamp maple, native

Midseason fall color:

Acer saccharum, sugar maple, native
Amelanchier species, Juneberry, aka shadbush or serviceberry, native
Aronia species, chokeberry (NOT chokecherry), native
Carpinus caroliniana, American hornbeam, aka muscledwood, blue beech, or ironwood, native, fall color variable
Cornus florida, flowering dogwood, native
Cornus species, redbud dogwood shrubs, variable
Deutzia cv 'Yuki Cherry Blossom' and some others
Nyssa sylvatica, aka black tupelo, black gum, or sourgum, native
Oxydendrum arboreum, aka sourwood or lily of the valley tree, native further south
Quercus alba, white oak, native, some individuals have red fall foliage
Quercus rubra, red oak, native, some individuals have red fall foliage (Most of the native oaks seem to have variable fall color. In an ideal world, the plants would be selected in the fall.)
Rhododendron species, many deciduous azaleas, some native
Spiraea species, some native, some potentially invasive, color variable

Syringa 'Miss Kim', the only common lilac with fall color

Late season fall color:

Acer griseum, paperbark maple
Acer japonicum and *A. palmatum*, Japanese maples
Cornus kousa, Kousa dogwood
Cornus mas, Cornelian-cherry dogwood, cv. Red Star a cv. chosen for its fruit quality
Cotinus coggygria, smokebush
Cotinus obovatus, American smoke tree, native further south
Cotoneaster apiculatus, cranberry cotoneaster
Enkianthus campanulatus, redvein enkianthus, some cvs.
Forsythia ovata cv. 'Meadowlark', flower buds hardy to 30 below
Fothergilla species, native further south
Franklinia alatamaha, Franklin tree
Hamamelis hybrids, hybrid witchhazel, some cvs.
Hydrangea quercifolia, oakleaf hydrangea, native further south
Lindera glauca v. *salicifolia*, gray-blue spicebush, may be marginally hardy
Liquidambar styraciflua, American sweetgum, some have good red fall color, may be marginally hardy, native further south
Prunus sargentii, Sargent cherry
Quercus coccinea, scarlet oak, native (some individuals have red fall foliage)
Quercus palustris, pin oak, native
Rhus species, sumacs, native, *R. aromatica* 'Gro-Lo' is a good groundcover
Sassafras albidum, native
Stewartia pseudocamellia, Japanese stewartia
Vaccinium, blueberries, native
Viburnum, many species, some native

End of Season Bloomers

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

Though I often think that it's good that the gardening season has an end every year, I hate to see the last of the flowers of autumn and the end of picking produce from the vegetable garden. This year, the last of the season bloomers include the following, which were still in bloom and looked good as of November 15 (before the temperature dropped here into the low 20s):

Aster tartaricus, Tartarian aster. Perhaps the best plant for late autumn bouquets. I'd recommend the cultivar 'Jindai' which is shorter than the species; 'Jindai' is around 3-4 feet tall, the species is taller. The plant spreads but is controllable.

Cyclamen hederifolium, ivy leaved cyclamen. This is a long blooming plant with fragrant flowers in pink or white and beautiful leaves. It is very easy in well drained soil in partial shade/shade of deciduous trees/shrubs. Foliage is always nice and lasts until mid to late spring.

Campanula rotundifolia, harebells, also called bluebells of Scotland. An easy plant that blooms on and off all summer. It is tolerant of varying amounts of sun and soil from full sun and dryish to part shade and moist.

Solidago sempervirens, seaside goldenrod. This is one of the well-behaved goldenrods, a clump forming native to the coast, salt tolerant, tall at 3-4 feet, likes well drained soil and tolerates dryness. Great plants for native pollinators, one just has to be cautious about planting the aggressive spreading ones, like *S. canadensis*.

Extraordinary Hypertufa Planter



Bill Stark and Mary Stauble's latest creation, a stucco trough, won the NARGS trough contest for "Best Trough Design".

The details: 36"L x24"W, weighs 19 lb empty & 157 lb planted. Tufa drilled for drip irrigation. 12 internal foam crevice planks reduce weight. Fitted with Platon aeration and water reservoir mat. 26 plants including *Salix boydii*, *Daphne x whiteorum* 'Kilmerston', *Daphne x hendersonii* 'Rosebud.'

Congratulations, Bill and Mary!

Favorite Mail Order Nurseries

Carol Eichler, Plant Sales Chair

From the ACNARGS Member Google Forum

Winter is the time for dreaming and planning. So it seems appropriate to share some favorite nurseries from our members to feed our desires and visions for the coming garden season.

From John Gilrein

Forest Farm, OR: one of the best sources for woody plants, very wide selection, you can save on shipping by air if you order for April delivery

Far Reaches Farm, WA: this nursery offers exotic plants that other nurseries do not sell, and some are new to the nursery trade

***Wrightman Alpines**, NB, Canada: good selection of alpine plants, many sold only by this firm

Arrowhead Alpines, MI: large selection of alpines, perennials, and shrubs, some rare in the nursery trade

Chief River Nursery, WI: inexpensive, small, bare-root trees and shrubs

Fancy Fronds, WA: ferns

Plant Delights, NC: rare and unusual plants, not inexpensive

Brent and Becky's, VA: good selection of bulbs, including species tulips and dwarf narcissi

***Garden Visions**, MA: largest selection of epimediums of any nursery, some are recent introductions from Asia, not inexpensive

***Pinetree Garden Seeds**, ME: good vegetable seeds

*These nurseries are at the Stonecrop spring plant sale in April (when not cancelled due to COVID)

From Rosemarie Parker:

I agree with John on Forest Farm, Arrowhead Alpines, and Plant Delights. I love reading the catalogue descriptions for the last two.

Other nurseries I have used recently are:

Edelweiss Perennials, OR: cyclamens, dodecatheons, primulas, anemones, gentians, erythroniums are some of their specialties, and they have a lovely option of yellow, red, or orange *Lilium canadense*

Brushwood Nursery, GA: Clematis – nice selection of small flowered cultivars and species, good service, healthy plants. I had no problem with acclimation from such a southern source

From Bill Plummer:

Many of my favorite mail order nurseries have ceased operation. I have used many of those listed, In addition the following are still extant.

Carlsons Gardens
Appalachian Gardens Nursery

From Marlene Kobre:

The only previously unmentioned source I would recommend is **Sunscapes Nursery** in Pueblo CO. Bill Adams, the owner, is a passionate rock gardener, a “waterwise gardening expert,” and a keen collector of native plants from the southwest as well as exotics from around the world.

He propagates most of his stock from seed, and the seedlings I have ordered arrive in thriving condition--good sized, well grown, and beautifully packed for shipping. Reasonably priced, given the quality of the seedlings.

Couldn't live without Wrightman Alpines [and I] shop regularly at Arrowhead

I'm a devoted customer at Edelweiss. Urs, the owner, is an excellent grower, his prices are reasonable, his plants are vigorous, and they arrive lovingly packaged for their trip cross country. I think he's the best source for daphnes--great selection of good-sized, well-grown plants. The four I've bought so far have all done well, even blooming in their first year planted here! One of them is reblooming now. He's also a very generous person.

Oliver Nursery in Fairfield CT (not mail-order) also has a good selection of alpine plants, as they should since Lori Chips manages that dept. In contrast with many of their other offerings, the alpines are also reasonably priced. I'm not sure how their inventory has been affected by the loss of Sunny Border, which supplied many of their alpine offerings.

From Terry Humphries:

I echo praise for Far reached Farm, Sunscapes Rare Plants Nursery and Edelweiss but also would add :

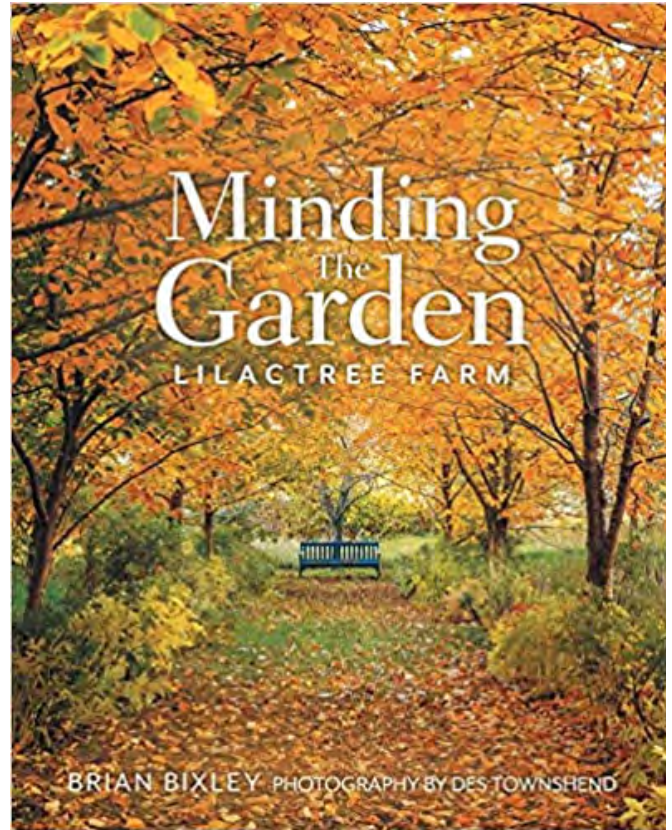
Heritage Flower Farm where they have a nice selection of hardy perennials and **Hillside Nursery** in Ashfield, MA, offering select woodland wildflowers

Minding the Garden Book Review

Kathy Purdy

My favorite gardening books to read in winter make me pause and think about what I just read, or bring back memories of my own garden with their vivid descriptions, or trace the development of the author's garden, complete with maps. ***Minding the Garden: Lilactree Farm*** by Brian Bixley does all three, with a dash of wit thrown in for good measure. Garden books that focus on the writing—as opposed to the pictures—are getting harder to find. In the past, they were often collections of essays (Katherine White, Eleanor Perenyi), or newspaper columns (Henry Mitchell, Anne Raver, Allen Lacey), but in *Minding the Garden*, they are the best sections from the email newsletter, *Lilactree Farm Garden Notes*, that Brian has sent out six or seven times a year, often just before opening his garden to the public.

Full disclosure: I have been the recipient of those *Notes* for several years, and I liked them so much I asked permission to reprint some of them. (You can read them [here](#).) I've also [visited his garden](#), and in addition to receiving a review copy of *Minding the Garden*, one of the blurbs on the back cover is an excerpt of [my review of his previous book](#), *Essays on Gardening in a Cold Climate*.



I don't think there's ever been a gardening book quite like this in structure. The notes are organized in seasonal order without regard to the year they were written. The maps of the garden are interspersed throughout so you see the garden grow and change through time. The individual passages are merely numbered; there is no clue as to the topic, so it's always a surprise. The length varies from a paragraph or two up to a few pages. This is a terrific book for all those places where you have to wait, but don't know for how long: doctors' waiting rooms, car repair shops, airports. You can dip into it as you have time.

Brian considers gardening “the most demanding of the arts” and he sees parallels between gardening and, for example, poetry, novels, concertos, and paintings. His musings on the relationship between gardening and other arts certainly make me think. Am I trying to tell a story with my garden? Do I design my garden to elicit a response from its “readers”—those who visit it? Does employing a garden designer obscure the gardener's voice? To what extent is a garden natural? How do I find the right balance between serendipity and control? How satisfying to ponder these things while the wind is howling and the snow is swirling!

But what if you're not a deep thinker? No worries, Brian still has plenty for you. Like any true hands-in-the-dirt gardener, he agonizes over the lack of rain, anxiously awaits the reappearance of a transplanted lily, grows trees from seed—trees that may not be quite hardy where he gardens, and wages war against lily beetles. He enjoys the garden on an emotional level—“In this spring it was beyond bliss to be alive”—as well as the intellectual level. His writing is vivid-- “Martagon lilies . . . wander like an invading army that has lost its maps”—as well as heartfelt.

Brian gardens in Canadian hardiness zone 4b, which roughly translates to USDA hardiness zone 3. If you're a cold climate gardener, you'll want to keep a pen and paper handy to jot down the many plants he grows that aren't supposed to be hardy there, most notably seed-grown trees and clematis. I hadn't realized before that the peonies lining the Blue Bench Walk were all grown from self-sown seedlings. Imagine finding species peony seedlings showing up in your garden beds! Imagine having enough to line both sides of a 30m (98ft) path! I



Photo by Kathy Purdy

should add that Brian's garden has sandy soil, the opposite of my heavy clay, which is probably why martagon lilies aren't "borderline invasive" here as they are at Lilactree Farm. The excellent drainage may contribute to the ability of his marginally hardy plants to pull through the winter.

If you're lucky, a gardening book will give you *one* map of the garden. *Minding the Garden* supplies *eleven*. (Yes, I counted.) Brian believes "the art of garden design is at least partially the process of undoing earlier errors" and views the evolution of his own garden as "a history of setbacks and failures as much as it is of successes." I don't know what I'm doing in my garden, either, and it comforts me to know that a beautiful, pleasurable garden can come out of ignorance and passion. The important thing is, you have to care. You have to mind what you're doing. Oh! *Minding the Garden*: caring about it, tending it, thinking about it. It's all in the book.

This is one book you should order directly from the publisher, Friesen Press. It's much cheaper that way.

Longtime ACNARGS members may be interested to know that Brian corresponded with Nina Lambert and attempted to write a book with Elisabeth Sheldon. Nina is mentioned in Notes 25 and 89. Elisabeth Sheldon is the anonymous American author in Note 123. (Personal conversation with Brian.)

Membership

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

This is a reminder that our membership year runs the calendar year. So starting January 1, everyone's membership will have expired and we all will need to renew. Rates are \$15 a year for an individual/\$20 for a household. Hopefully we will be able to hold our plant sales and exchanges and members-only Plant-of-the-Month subsidized sales in 2021. I will send out an email reminder in January and there will be an announcement in the February newsletter. If you have questions please contact me at mes2@cornell.edu.

Upcoming 2020 ACNARGS Programs

NOTE: Due to Covid our meetings will take on a different format. We do plan to hold live meetings via Zoom and are currently in the process of booking speakers, hopefully on our "usual" meeting dates. For those of you unfamiliar with Zoom, we will be sending out information about how to connect and can offer assistance to anyone who requests it. We hope to have our meeting calendar finalized - as much as anyone can plan ahead these days - for publication in our next newsletter.

January 16, 2021 1:00 PM, ACNARGS via Zoom, "Tour" to Newfoundland and the Czech Republic, Todd Boland and Vojtech Holubec.

Calendar of Select Events & Programs

Practical Earthkeeper, Home Gardening Program, [Cornell Cooperative Extension](#)

[Finger Lakes Native Plant Society](#) monthly meetings

[Cornell Botanic Gardens](#) events

[Liberty Hyde Bailey Garden Club](#)

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

About 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, two 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 online website 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.

2020 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**, **David Mitchell**

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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Rose Glos's Rock Garden

