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CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

Green Dragon Tales

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September 2012

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SEPTEMBER 16 (NOTE SUNDAY DATE): NICK TURLAND PRESENTS TWO TALKS

Horticulturist and plant explorer extraordinaire Nick Turland will present two talks, *Alpine*



Plants of the Austrian Alps and *Plant Hunting in Southwestern Turkey*, with a short refreshment break in between. Please think about bringing something sweet or savory to share. These programs should be a real treat so bring a friend and encourage others to attend.

Nick Turland is an Associate Curator in the Division of Science and Conservation at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri. He joined the staff there in 1997 to work on the Flora of China Project, moving from his native England where he had worked since 1993 in the Botany Department of the Natural History Museum, London. Nick is now Co-Director of the Flora of China Project, which is coordinated from St. Louis and involves 11 partner institutions in China, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. This 50-volume flora is now more than two-thirds complete, with all the information freely available online. Nick has traveled to China seven times for field work, workshops, and Flora of China editorial meetings. Since 1984, Nick has also had a deep interest in the flora of the eastern Mediterranean region, especially Greece, where he has made over 30 visits, mainly for field work. He has published several books and articles on the region, including *Flowers of Crete* (with John Fielding, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 2005). Nick is also a specialist in botanical nomenclature, and is an editor of the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature*—the rules for the formal scientific naming of plants.

This 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 at noon. Program begins at 1:00 p.m. with the 2nd talk beginning approximately 2:30 p.m.

FROM THE CHAIR

Carol Eichler

What a great response we had to our August meeting! The weather was beautiful, the plant selection varied, the food fantastic, and attendance was outstanding. We had 39 people sign-in and almost as many cars! If you were there, you'll recall what a challenge it was to find parking for everyone but we did. Plus I'll venture a guess that everyone left looking forward to planting the new plants they had just purchased. BZ tells me we raised \$708.50 altogether. I always have this fear that 1) no one will show up; and 2) no one will bring plants. Fortunately you proved me wrong on both counts.

We continue to add new members to our Chapter and that's fabulous news because we would be nothing without our membership. Speaking for myself I'm having trouble keeping up with all the new faces. So to everyone I urge, please feel free to mingle and introduce yourself around at our meetings.

We have a fantastic line up of programs for the next 3 months so mark your calendars now (our calendar is listed elsewhere in the newsletter) and plan to attend. We start off our speaker programs with Nick Turland, an Associate Curator with the Missouri Botanical Gardens with many thanks to National NARGS for paying the travel expenses to make this possible. Until I can visit the Alps and Turkey, I'll have to live vicariously through the slides in his presentations.

Lastly, I want to remind you about the Sept. 12th Cornell Plantations Lecture by Dr. Joan Maloof on "Earth's Beautiful Ancient Forests: Can there be a happy ending?" (see calendar listing). Our Chapter is sponsoring this lecture in honor of long-time Chapter member Bill Dress who passed away earlier this year. We considered this topic a particularly fitting tribute to Bill because of his commitment to preservation. Through his efforts, the Town of Ithaca acquired Dress Woods, a 10-acre site of mature forest bordering Culver Road on the town's west side that was long cared for by Bill.

As you can see we have several months of gardening and gardening events to look forward to. Enjoy!

Carol

LECTURE IN HONOR OF BILL DRESS

Bill Dress was a long-time member of ACNARGS, honored with a Chapter Service Award in 1998. Read more about him in the [February issue](#).

Earth's Beautiful Ancient Forests: Can There Be a Happy Ending?

Dr. Joan Maloof, ecologist and author

September 12. William J. Hamilton Lecture in honor of William Dress

7:30 p.m. Statler Hall Auditorium, Statler Hall, Cornell University

What is the state of the planet's forests? Dr. Joan Maloof, author, ecologist and environmental advocate will summarize the condition of our forests from global and national perspectives. She will focus particularly on forests that have never been logged -- "old-growth forests." How many of these forests are left? Where are they? And why do they matter? Maloof has traveled the nation inspecting the remaining old-growth forests; in her book, *Among the Ancients: Adventures in the Eastern Old-Growth Forests*, she includes reflections on these questions as well as detailed directions to one old-growth forest in each of the twenty-six states east of the Mississippi River. Going beyond mere documentation, in this lecture Maloof will describe her vision of an Old-Growth Forest Network -- a nationwide attempt to reverse past destruction and

reconnect average families with the beauty and biological abundance found only in the ancient forests.

FISCHER OLD GROWTH FOREST HIKE

GPS Coordinates for Fischer are: 42.383, -76.57

Thursday, September 13; 10:00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

Join Dr. Joan Maloof, author, ecologist and founder of the Old-Growth Forest Network and Plantations' staff for a guided hike through Plantations' Fischer Old Growth Forest and celebrate its induction into the Network. Majestic, magical, inspirational, with trees over 150 feet tall, this site is a sanctuary in every sense of the word,—the best example of pre-European settlement forest in the region. The 1.25 mile hike is moderately strenuous, with some steep slope climbing, and will take place rain or shine. Pre-registration is required and the group will be limited to the first 25 people to register.

Instructor: Dr. Joan Maloof, Todd Bittner, Robert Wesley

Fee: Free **Location:** Park and meet at Stella's Barn Country Comfort Restaurant and Gift Shop, on Route 13 in Newfield. A carpool will also depart from Plantations Horticulture Center on Caldwell Road promptly at 9:30 a.m.

SEPTEMBER 2012 PLANT OF THE MONTH

John Gilrein, POM Coordinator

Our September 2012 POMs are *Artemisia versicolor* 'Seafoam' and *Delosperma* 'Lavender Ice' from High Country Gardens. *Artemisia versicolor* 'Seafoam' has silver foliage, is hardy to zone 4, and growing conditions should be very well drained soil and sun. It will spread to 8 inches high and 23 inches wide and seldom flowers. *Delosperma* 'Lavender Ice' (ice plant) is a succulent with light pink flowers. It should only be a few inches high, and needs the same growing conditions as the Artemisia. I am thinking about experimenting with the ice plant in a trough.

NARGS SEED EXCHANGE

Joyce Fingerut, Director, NARGS Seed Exchange

I hope you have all enjoyed a splendid gardening season: triumphs with new plants and the continued growth of old favorites. In order to add new friends to your gardens next year, or renew patches of long-time residents, you will want to take part in the wonderful world of the NARGS Seed Exchange. Here's how:

DONATING SEEDS

If you haven't already sent in all of your seed donations, there is still a brief window open to U.S. donors for sending them to our Seed Intake Manager by November 1st. Mail the seeds

to: Laura Serowicz
15411 Woodring Street
Livonia, MI 48154-3029
U.S.A.
seedintake@mi.rr.com

We certainly hope that you will donate at least the minimum 5 packets of different kinds of seeds, which will enrich both the seedlist and you as well. As a donor you will receive the donor privileges of 10 extra packets of seed and priority in having your order filled. If the seeds of your fall-blooming plants (e.g., gentians and alliums) or late-ripening ones (e.g., arisaemas) are still not quite ripe, you may send a list of these seeds to Laura right now; but you must send the seeds themselves to her no later than December 1st.

NEW DISTRIBUTION CHAPTERS

We thank the following chapters for stepping up and volunteering to handle the all-important seed distributions for the next two years: Potomac Valley Chapter will fill orders for the main distribution; Siskiyou Chapter will handle the second round orders of surplus seed. We greatly appreciate their willingness to take on these responsibilities and keep our vibrant Seedex humming.

ORDERING SEEDS

The Seedlist will appear on the NARGS website on December 15th, along with clear instructions about how to place your order. To use the online ordering system, be sure that Bobby Ward (nargs@nc.rr.com) has your most current email address, especially if you've changed email accounts lately or did not use the electronic ordering system last year. Your email address is your entrée to the ordering system. Once you enter your email address on the Seed Ordering webpage, your membership will be automatically verified and you will receive an email. Clicking on the link in the email will take you to the Seedlist and your personal ordering form. Then you just begin typing in seed numbers; it's that easy.

Seed must be ordered electronically from our website unless you request a printed seedlist and order form. Printed seedlists are no longer automatically mailed to members; thus, if you do not wish to order online, you must request a print copy of the Seedlist and order form by contacting me no later than December 1st:

Joyce Fingerut
537 Taugwonk Road
Stonington, CT 06378
U.S.A.
alpinegarden@comcast.net

In the meantime, get your pots scrubbed and the potting medium mixed, so that you'll be ready for another round - or two - of seed delights.

[This article appears in the fall 2012 issue of the Rock Garden Quarterly's Bulletin Board.]

MORE ABOUT COLCHICUMS

Kathy Purdy

Oops. I forgot to mention on my membership application that I am a Colchicum Evangelist. All of you who purchased colchicum corms at the sale are now proselytes. Soon, I hope, you will be converts: colchicophiles.

For those of you who bought a dozen in the egg carton or put ten small ones in a bag, here's an explanation of their provenance. In 1997 I purchased *Colchicum speciosum* and *Colchicum* 'The Giant' from McClure & Zimmerman. I could not see any difference between the two plants. In 1999 I purchased *C. byzantinum* 'Album' from the same place. It was not white at all, and didn't look like a *C. byzantinum*, either. It looked like the *C. speciosum* and 'The Giant' I had gotten previously. I decided they were all impostors.

However, they are vigorous and large-flowered, perfect for growing "in rough grass," as the Brits like to say. In 2004 I dug all three up--they had multiplied well--and planted them in front of the lilac hedge. Last year I dug some up to plant at my new home. In early August I dug more, saved the biggest to plant at my new house, and brought the rest to the plant sale. They may all be *C. 'The Giant,'* or they may be some rogue hybrid that got into the supplier's stock.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE

- *A Handbook of Crocus and Colchicum for Gardeners* by E. A. Bowles - this is supposed to be the definitive reference, but it's well over fifty years old.
- *Autumn Bulbs* by Rod Leeds - only one chapter on colchicums, but lots of pictures.
- "Colchicums by the Yard" by Joe Eck in *Horticulture* September/October 2003.
- "Colchicums: Autumn's Best-Kept Secret" by Kathy Purdy in *The American Gardener*, October 2007.
- The Pacific Bulb Society wiki:
<http://www.pacificbulbsociety.org/pbswiki/index.php/Colchicum>

WHERE TO GET MORE

Brent and Becky's Bulbs

Daffodils and More

Odyssey Bulbs

There are other sources, but these are the only ones I have experience with. Unless someone has a clearance sale, it's already too late to order colchicums online this year.

NARGS BOOK OF THE MONTH: CALOCHORTUS

Betty Spar

It's time for another Book of the Month on your NARGS Wiki. The September selection is *Calochortus: Mariposa Lilies & Their Relatives* by Mary E. Gerritsen and Ron Parsons (Timber Press, 2007).

This month's review by Frances Burr gets right to the point: "I can remember the excitement I felt in seeing my first Mariposa lily..." I bet all of us remember where and when we saw our first Calochortus. I even remember who I was with. The review highlights the partnership of the two writers and other contributors. The photos are wonderful. Frances even offers a web site for more taxonomic information not provided in the book. The review alone is worth reading and as Frances emphasizes, there are also seed and bulbs sources provided. Although Frances quibbles, they are minor, and she notes that she does own a "cherished copy."

The review will appear, by September 1, on the NARGS Web site home page <www.nargs.org> and then click on "Book of the Month," on the left-hand side. Be sure to look for this book. Enjoy.

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).

Sept. 16: Nick Turland, NARGS Speaker, Associate Curator in the Division of Science and Conservation at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri since 1993, Co-Director of the Flora of China Project; he will give 2 talks "Alpine plants of the Austrian Alps" and "Plant Hunting in South-Western Turkey"

October 12-14: Autumn in the Garden: A Time for Troughs, NARGS Eastern Study Weekend in Pittsburgh, PA, hosted by the Allegheny Chapter. See article or visit the website for more info (<http://home.comcast.net/~sylvialynch/Study%20Weekend%20Information.htm>)

October 20: David Fernandez, owner of Cayuga Landscape in Ithaca: gardening with deer

November 10: Jerry Kral, Rochester gardener extraordinaire

Details as we learn them will be included in future newsletters and acnargs.blogspot.com. When in question, visit our blog.

MEMBERS-ONLY PLANT SALE: WHAT YOU MISSED

Kathy Purdy

So sorry to hear you missed the plant sale; you would have loved it.

The first thing to do when you arrive is sign in. Your placement on the sign-in sheet determines how soon you get your first shot at buying plants. The first ten people got to go first. (I made a strategic mistake by taking my plants out of the car before signing in. I think I could have been in the first ten if I'd made signing in my top priority.) When you bring your plants, you assign them a price by sticking a colored plastic stick in the pot. Michael Loos helpfully suggested a price if you were perplexed. At left, a member is getting ready to price his plants. After pricing



your plants, you then place your plants on the appropriate table. You can see on the right there were quite a few plants on the table for sun. There was also a shade table and a rock garden table. Let me tell you, before the actual buying began, members were cruising around the tables,



reading plant labels, and prioritizing their needs-- I mean, wants. There was a lot of calculation going on. When the first ten signees were permitted to make their first acquisition, most folks made a beeline to their chosen target. After they had picked out their heart's desire, the next group of ten got their chance, and so on, until each group had picked one plant. For each successive round, more plants could be chosen, until they were all gone. Then they were all paid for and loaded up.



Then the food was put on the table, and the same process was followed to distribute the food. No! Just kidding! But I think a lot of calculations were made around the dessert table, if you ask me.

Gardening is not some sort of game by which one proves his superiority over others, nor is it a marketplace for the display of elegant things that others cannot afford. It is, on the contrary, a growing work of creation, endless in its changing elements. It is not a monument or an achievement, but a sort of traveling, a kind of pilgrimage you might say, often a bit grubby and sweaty though true pilgrims do not mind that. A garden is not a picture, but a language, which is of course the major art of life. ~ Henry Mitchell

GARDENING IN THE 21ST CENTURY: WIKIS

Kathy Purdy

If you think wiki means Wikipedia, are you in for a surprise! Wikipedia *is* a wiki, but it is not the *only* wiki. A wiki is a website using software that makes it easy for people to collaboratively assemble a body of information. That means, yes, you can register with Wikipedia and edit any of the articles, or create a new article. There are several software programs out there that "run" wikis, and there are wikis for all sorts of information, everything from computer game strategy to genealogy to--gardening. Two wikis are mentioned in this newsletter. Did you notice that? Or did your eyes just glaze over that unfamiliar word? One is the Pacific Bulb Society wiki which has a section on colchicums.

The NARGS also has its own wiki at <http://nargs.org/nargswiki/tiki-index.php>. On that page it explains, "Everyone is familiar with Wikipedia; it contains a staggering amount of information on just about every subject, but is often surprisingly deficient when it comes to plants, and alpine plants especially.

Our goal is to remedy that deficiency by assembling in our Wiki a compendium of the horticultural knowledge possessed by you, the members of NARGS, some of the most experienced and knowledgeable growers of rock garden plants in the world.

Please feel free to contribute entire articles, a few paragraphs, single sentences, minor edits, some photographs, whatever you feel will add to this resource. . . . Share what you know, and learn from others!" So a wiki can be an excellent reference tool, but it is only as good as its contributors have knowledge and writing ability. They are not without error. But, if you see an error, you can correct it.

If you want to learn more about wikis in general, you can go to Wikipedia and read their article on wikis. If you just want to learn more about alpine plants, the NARGS wiki has introductory material and tutorials to help you learn to edit their wiki as well as browse through it.

CALENDAR OF GARDEN EVENTS

There is a lot of gardening-related activity going on at Cornell. Big surprise! Space doesn't permit listing all their events, but here are a few highlights:

Fall Plant Sale - Saturday, September 22; 9:00 am to 4:00pm. #Take home some of Plantations gardeners' top picks for your own home landscape! : Cornell Plantations Plant Production Facility, 397 Forest Home Drive, Ithaca.

The Art of Stonemasonry - Saturday, September 29: 10:00am to 4:00pm. Have you been thinking about building or repairing a stone wall, but didn't know where to begin? This hands-on class will get you started. The morning session will cover the basics—types of walls, foundations, general rules, tools and materials. We'll also inspect a variety of stonework at Cornell Plantations. In the afternoon we'll practice constructing an actual dry-laid stone wall. You'll learn basic construction techniques, including how to put up batter boards, make a foundation, chip and cut stone, and lay quarried stone. Please wear outdoor work clothes and sturdy shoes, and bring a bag lunch, leather gloves and safety glasses if you have them. Pre-registration is required.\$36 fee. Instructor: John Dawson, Stonemason

For more classes, go to <http://www.cornellplantations.org/learning> and click on the calendar or the sidebars. Photography, painting, hiking, beer, chocolate--check it out!

Also check out the fall lecture series: <http://www.cornellplantations.org/learning/2012lectures>

Of course, if you become a member of Cornell Plantations you will hear about these events a lot sooner!

"Gardening Symposium" featuring **Dr. Allan Armitage**, Saturday, September 29 10 am to 4:30 pm at the Carriage House, Sonnenberg Gardens, 151 Charlotte Street, Canandaigua, NY. Cost is \$60 per person, \$50 for Sonnenberg Members, and includes lunch. Pre-registration required. Info at <http://www.sonnenberg.org> or 585-394-4922. Topics for discussion will include "Tales from the Garden" and "Crazy Plants for Crazy Gardeners."

Seeing a plant that you have known only in catalogues is like recognizing a celebrity in a crowd. ~ Elizabeth Lawrence

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: Judy Fogel, jfogel@twcny.rr.com

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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 October 2012.

HOW TO GET TO THE MEETING ROOM

Get on the Cornell Campus, and then follow this map.

