



## ADIRONDACK CHAPTER

*North American Rock Garden Society*

# Green Dragon Tales

Visit our blog: [acnargs.blogspot.com](http://acnargs.blogspot.com)

May-June 2015

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- Plant Sale May 16
- From the Chair
- How to start a rock garden
- Dividing Perennials
- Membership
- Chapter Garden Tour
- Ways to Contribute
- Upcoming ACNARGS Programs
- Calendar of Garden Events
- People

## MAY 16: COMING RIGHT UP - OUR BIG PLANT SALE!

*David Mitchell*

The May plant sale will return to the Ithaca High School on May 16. Sale hours are 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Set up is Friday beginning at 4 p.m. to around 7 p.m. and Saturday beginning at 8 a.m. Arrive early Saturday to drop off plants and help complete the setup. Our booth will be located in the gymnasium. New for this year will be a special display area to recruit new members. This year we're asking volunteers to sign up time slots before the sale. Though this is not a requirement to volunteer, it helps us spread the workload. Advance praise for the following members who have volunteered to help with the sale: Ellen Lane, Bill

Stark, Mary Stauble, Susanne Lipari, Marlene Kobre, John Gilrein, Harold Peachy, Terry Humphries, Carol Eichler, Nari Mistry, BZ, Michael Loos. Contact me if you're willing to volunteer an hour or two or drop-in to lend a hand. We need Friday set-up help, final Saturday set-up (8-9), sales people every hour (especially the 9-10 rush), and clean-up at 2. [*Editor's Note: Last year we sold out before 2, so clean-up was done by 2.*]



Perusing & getting ready to buy,



Pricing Plants

Remember to pot your plants in soilless mix and to label them in advance (Latin name preferred). We'll have labels on hand.

My driveway is available for drop-offs any time before the day of the sale if you can't make it to the high school Friday or Saturday morning. The driveway is on the Washington Street side of the corner of Washington and Esty Streets (402 Esty Street). My phone number is (607) 342-3660 should you have any questions about the sale. Tompkins County Cooperative Extension can be reached at [\(607\) 272-2292](tel:607-272-2292) or visit the plant sale website: <http://tinyurl.com/qz4rc8f>

Also remember, members receive a 25% discount on their purchases from our table. Since our membership runs the calendar year, you may not have renewed yet. An up-to-date membership list will be supplied at the sale and membership forms will be available so you may renew your membership at the time of your purchase. Anyone joining at the sale are eligible for the 25% discount.

## FROM THE CHAIR

*John Gilrein*

A lot of what gardening is about is hope and anticipation, just like what spring is about. Now that it's really spring (well technically it was last week, too, but it snowed at my home), we're looking forward to a lot of events. And looking forward to warm sunny weather and being outdoors without being clad in extra layers.

May 7 through 9 is the NARGS annual meeting in Ann Arbor Michigan, with several garden tours, interesting presentations from serious gardeners, plant sales, and camaraderie with fellow plant lovers. I know of several members from our Chapter, including myself, who are planning to attend.

May 16 from 9 AM – 2 PM is the annual Garden Fair and Plant Sale sponsored by Cooperative Extension, at the Ithaca High School. ACNARGS is one of the vendors; this is our largest source of revenue every year. It's always fun to see what our members bring, since we always have some unique plants not available from the other vendors. I always enjoy selling the plants, talking to our customers and fellow ACNARGS members. I hope you can donate some plants and shop at our table. ACNARGS members also get a discount at our table.

The Garden Fair is also a great place to begin your plant shopping for the 2015 season, with many local vendors selling everything from annuals and perennials, vegetable plants, to wildflowers, trees, and shrubs. Over 30 vendors will be selling plants this year.

June 20 is our annual garden tour event in the northern suburbs and rural area near Binghamton with 4 gardens. Complete information is included later in this issue of the newsletter (so be sure to read the whole newsletter).

August 15 is our annual picnic at Upper Buttermilk Falls State Park. The July/August newsletter will include details about that.

Our Plant of the Month (POM) is also about hope and anticipation. One of our goals is to expand the horizons of our members with interesting, and sometimes challenging plants. Even when I am the one to procure the plants, I enjoy seeing them arrive and then choosing my plant at the meeting. The hardest part about POM is finding a way to give everyone a fair shot at selecting their plant so at least some of the time you get to choose early in the selection process. We could make this easier by having only 1 plant species/variety per month, but I think that's less desirable than offering choice and variety. I understand wanting to get the first pick, and most of the time when we have several plant species for our POM, I want one of each! So your patience with choosing your POM is appreciated.

I consider myself an experienced and somewhat fanatical gardener, and I have killed several of my POM plants (if I kept better records maybe I would be able to say I've killed a dozen or 2). I don't think any one of us would have a perfect record with POM viability, except for someone who restricts themselves to predictably easy plants. So don't feel too bad if you have a mixed success rate. As I've walked through the garden in the last few weeks, I have enjoyed seeing

several of the POMs of the past that are still with us (including dwarf Heucheras, Primula auricula, and Crocus) so there's good news, too.

I hope you can join our upcoming spring and summer activities. And thank you to the diligent fellow board members and others who contribute labor to run our meetings, provide seedlings, provide plants and labor for our plant sale, and host our garden tour.

Hope your garden is bountiful and has pleasant surprises for 2015!

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

## SPRING – THE GREAT DIVIDE

*Diana Pooke*

*Reprinted by permission from April 2015 "Journal" of the Ontario Rock Garden and Hardy Plant Society, Chapter of NARGS; just-in-time-information for you to divide and contribute plants of all kinds to our plant sale!*

This is the time, in this part of the world, when gardeners, as soon as plants begin to show life amid the dross of early April, begin to assess their gardens and start writing humongous "to-do" lists.

So far we have survived the winter by pouring over seed catalogues and Seed Exchange listings and starting all those little "promises" and tending the resulting seedlings (or not depending on how reluctant or otherwise the seeds have been to germinate) and dreaming of getting out into the garden.

### Why do we divide?

One of the first jobs to tackle is dividing those old clumps of perennials that have gone past their "best before" date. Most perennials benefit from division every two to three years to maintain health and vigour. Dividing perennials regularly will ensure healthy, vigorous plants that will continue to perform year after year. It also offers the opportunity to multiply your plants. What to divide: As Anna Leggatt reminds us we should Divide when a plant looks good. Don't wait until the plant has run down to divide it! I always mean to do this but, somehow, hacking plants apart in their full magnificence doesn't make it to the top of my "to-do" list when so many others in the garden need salvaging. I invariably seem to wait until the signs of aging: when the centre of the plant has small leaves, few flowers, and weaker blooming stalks, becomes obvious! But it is not too late! I might end up with fewer really good divisions but dividing definitely gives the plant a new lease on life and leaves me with plenty of good divisions to donate to the ORG&HPS Super Plant Sale.

### What not to divide (or think twice before dividing)

There are some plants that are best left well alone. The Ranunculaceae family is famous for displaying deep resentment at being disturbed. Unfortunately this family contains some of our most ornamental perennials such as Hellebores, Delphiniums, Clematis, Aconitums, Pulsatilla, Troillus and Aquilegia. If you absolutely have to move or divide a mature plant from this family do it as early in spring as is possible, and make large divisions and be prepared to wait, and wait while they sulk and re-grow their root systems (sometimes for years). These plants are often best propagated from seed or moved while at the seedling stage.

Peonies (who used to belong in with the Ranunculaceae) are best divided in Fall. However, if push comes to shove, they can be divided in Spring but will sulk even longer than is usual.

Sub-shrubs such as Lavender, Perovskia, Iberis, Aethionema, Leontopodium, sage and thyme etc. are best propagated by cuttings or from seed. A few other Biennials and perennials that are best not divided are: Digitalis, Lathyrus latifolius, Eryngiums, Verbascums. Lupins and Delphiniums are best propagated by cuttings.

#### When to divide

Division is most successful when the plants are not in active growth. The best time to dig is in the spring just before peak daffodil season. This ensures that you divide in cooler weather. Digging on cloudy days is also a good idea but not essential early in the year.

The rule of thumb is to divide Spring and early-summer flowering plants in the Fall and late summer or Fall flowering plants in the Spring. However, our climate has something to say on that subject! For example; European sources will tell you to divide primulas after they have flowered, but in our climate where primulas flower later and sun intensity and heat can be severe, even in late Spring, dividing them in the cool weather of early spring, is probably a better bet.



Likewise, experts recommend that some Spring ephemerals such as trilliums be divided in the fall but as many of these plants go completely dormant and disappear by late spring, who remembers where exactly they are by September? General experience in our area seems to be that trilliums are just fine when divided in early spring just before or even during flowering.

#### How to divide

This is largely dependent on the structure of the plant – specifically what kind of root system it has.

There are basically five root types: roots that form clumps, surface roots, underground running roots, taproots, or woody roots.

**Offsets:** To divide a plant whose roots form offsets (small plants growing at the base of a larger one), snap the connection between any of the sections to obtain a piece with ample roots and three or more growing points. Some denser clumps may have to be cut apart. Examples: Echinaceas (purple cone flower) Hostas, and Coreopsis.

**Surface roots:** Some perennials have roots that run on or just below the surface of the soil. They form new crowns and roots when they reach open spaces or make contact with the soil. If you cut between any of the stems, as you would cut a piece of sod from a lawn, you will have a division with its own stems and roots. Examples: Monarda (Bee Balm), Rudbeckia (black-eyed susans), creeping sedums, creeping veronicas.

**Taproots:** Taproots can be divided by using a sharp knife to slice down the length of the root. Every piece that has at least one eye, some of the taproot, and a few side roots is a viable division. Examples: Platycodon (balloon flowers) Asclepias (butterfly weeds) Euphorbia polychrome (cushion spurge) Oriental poppies.

**Underground running roots:** Underground running roots can develop suckers as they grow beyond the shade of the mother clump. These suckers can be cut away from the main plant, or

you can dig up the main plant. Examples: Japanese anemones, Ostrich fern, Macleaya (plume poppies), Solidago, Helianthus (perennial sunflowers). Be kind to new gardeners and limit the number of these that you donate to the plant sale. There are some awful thugs among this group and if the plant is a problem in your garden, it's going to be a problem for somebody else!

Woody roots are best not divided. Use other means of propagation

Keep only the healthiest pieces of your divisions. If you wait until a perennial is declining, has a dead center, or has pest problems, be sure to replant only the healthiest pieces. Usually these are the outside sections.

### Aftercare

Plant divisions as soon as possible and water them in well. Alternatively pot up individually to build up size, overwintering pots in a frost-free environment.

Grasses: Spring is the time to divide and plant warm-season grasses such as Miscanthus, Sporobolus, Panicum, Pennisetum, Molinia, Schizachrium, Hakonechloa. Cut back around mid May to 6 – 8". Grasses can be very tough but fortunately they aren't particularly sensitive to being hacked to pieces. Pick axes do a good job in getting large clumps out the ground, and to sub-divide I find a pruning saw to be the best implement.

Cool-season grasses such as Helictotrochon, Calamagrostis, Chasmanthium and Millium, come into growth early in the season (sometimes very early). With these a sharp spade or knife is usually sufficient to divide the clump, discarding all the dead bits.

Snowdrops: After they have finished flowering and before the foliage disappears is the very best time to divide Snowdrops. They re-establish quickly and very successfully. The time for dividing Snowdrops "in the green" happens just in time for Spring Plant Sales! This is the best time to divide your snowdrops and the best time to buy snowdrops.

Rhizomatous Iris: The optimal time for dividing rhizomatous iris such as tall bearded, Intermediate and standard dwarf iris is when they enter dormancy about six weeks after they flower (around July). Dead roots are discarded and just the plump ones retained. If divided in summer they have time to re-establish their roots before fall. However, dividing in spring is a perfectly viable alternative.

References: Fine Gardening Issue 97, Dividing Perennial Plants; RHS Advice: Dividing Perennial Plants

## 2015 MEMBERSHIP: RENEWAL REMINDER

Have you renewed YET? Members enjoy a 25% discount on plant purchases at our sale table at Garden Fair. For only \$10 (\$15 for family membership) you can renew at the sale and receive the discount. What a deal! With the year barely over we still have a lot of great programs to come – garden tours, August member only sale, picnic, and 3 speaker programs – coming up.

## NEWS FROM NARGS

*Bobby Ward*

There are two recently posted Books of the Month on the NARGS Web site—one on botanical art and the other on hardy Cypripedium. You can find these reviews on the Web site under "Plants." Or click here: <https://www.nargs.org/book-of-the-month>

## MAKE A DAY OF IT: OUR JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup> GARDEN TOUR

John Gilrein



Save the Date! June 20, 2015 we will have garden tours of 4 private gardens in the Binghamton area. The gardens will all be close to Exits 6 & 7 off Interstate 81, and within a short drive of each other. Our 2015 garden tours promises to be an interesting day with diverse gardens.

Left: A snapshot from last year's tour to Cazenovia

Here's the info you will need about the Gardens on Tour:

### Schedule

**09:30 AM - Karen Anderson, 52 North Brotzman Road, Castle Creek, NY**  
 Karen and her husband have been the stewards of their hilltop since 1976. Landscaping and food gardening have been done organically, and designs have been made with the welfare of wildlife and the environment in mind. Unfortunately, Karen didn't learn until fairly recently of the environmental importance of planting natives, so there are plenty of mature exotics such as Japanese yews, Colorado blue spruce, Chinese euonymus, English holly, Asian buckthorn, and Vietnamese pear that were planted before her enlightenment. However, it has been exciting to incorporate gorgeous and underutilized natives to the gardens as replacements and additions. These include ninebark, shrubby St. John's Wort, milkweed, dogwoods, blueberries, sweetspire, sea oats, American dropmore honeysuckle, and cup plant. Karen was flattered and more than happy to share with interested folks what is growing at Toad Road: a small hosta garden, foundation shrubbery, 2 perennial flower islands, an herb garden, vegetable gardens, and a mown path through a 10-acre field of dogwood shrubs, Viburnum, wild strawberries, and nesting bluebirds.

### 10:45 AM - Mary Matwey, 7 Heights Court Binghamton NY

The Matwey garden is situated on approximately 1/2 acre of reclaimed swampland. The Matweys purchased the home in 1976 and after renovating the house to accommodate the family, they set about renovating the garden areas. The garden beds have been amended with yearly additions of compost, leaf mold and additional soil raising the planting level to facilitate drainage. Over the years Mary traveled throughout the New England and Mid-Atlantic states visiting gardens ever watchful for unique ideas that could be used to enhance her gardens. From a private garden tour in Westchester County, NY came the windowpane fence and gazebo panels. A tour of NY Botanical Garden provided the vision for her allee of *Betula nigra* "River Birch". The Plantations at Cornell University provided the idea for the pergola on the deck which supports a *Campsis x tagliabuana* while the pergola in the vegetable garden will support the climbing rose bushes as seen at Matterhorn Nursery in NY. A private garden in NH urged her to create the hypertufa planters in her rock garden, while the use of stone walls to create garden terraces came from The Fells in NH. She has a love/hate relationship with her heather gardens, but fortunately her Hemerocallis border is there

to soothe her soul. Many arbors and vertical supports are used to expand the growing area above ground level, which she feels is the key to making the most of a small garden.

11:45 AM – Lunch – bag lunch at Lee Nelson's, or fast food on Front Street

12:30 PM - Lee Nelson, 8 Peer St. Binghamton NY

Lee strives to create the gardens of her childhood in the south on England. This has led her to an impossible dream, but has provided a lifetime of joy. Lee's career in horticulture has allowed her to nurture her love of plants and teach others along the way. Having curated and designed gardens for others, she is now playing on her own plot, her only real claim to fame being "I have killed off more plants that most people knew existed." Her garden today reflects her many trials and experiments, hence an eclectic collection of alpiners, perennials, and trees and shrubs. The annuals and tender plants are confined to pots scattered around the garden. Her mantra is, and always has been, "you have to grow them to know them."

01:45 PM - Camilla MacLeod, 1163 Chenango St. Binghamton, NY

Camilla's garden began 70 years ago as a Broome County victory garden, with pigs and chickens during World War II; perennials, trees and shrubs were gradually added. Camilla's father's "obsession" with daylilies lasted many years until he hit his 80's and then it was her turn. She has a habit of acquiring "too much 'stuff" – antiques, cats and plants. When you see her garden, you will know what she means.

#### Garden Tour Etiquette etc.

Arrive and depart each garden on time. Don't bring pets or children. Rest rooms may be available, but consider finding rest rooms on the drive to the gardens and on the lunch break. Consider printing maps & directions unless you have a GPS.

#### DIRECTIONS

From Ithaca, the first stop is 40 miles and 56 minutes; from Syracuse, the first stop is 66 miles and 64 minutes, driving time is without traffic. Directions start from driving south on Interstate 81.

- 1) Karen Anderson, 52 North Brotzman Road, Castle Creek, NY 13744  
Get off Interstate 81 at Exit 7 Castle Creek and go LEFT. Go under 81 and make the first right on Hill Road and go 1.2 miles to Brotzman Road and go LEFT. Go 0.8 miles north on Brotzman Road to 52 N. Brotzman on the RIGHT.
- 2) Mary Matwey, 7 Heights Court, Binghamton  
Go back to the Castle Creek interchange on Interstate 81. Take 81 South to Exit 6 [Front Street]. Go LEFT on US 11, then go right at the light onto Front Street. Go 1.5 miles to the Comfort Inn and go RIGHT onto N Morningside Drive. Go LEFT at the fork onto Circle Drive, then immediate RIGHT onto Heights Court.
- 3) FAST FOOD etc.– there are ample fast food stops, gas stations, and grocery stores between Garden #2 and Garden #3 on Front Street.
- 4) Lee Nelson, 8 Peer Street, Binghamton  
Go back to Front Street and turn LEFT. Stay on Front Street for 2 miles and go

RIGHT on NY 12A for 0.8 miles to Kattellville Road. Go LEFT on Kattellville Road for 0.7 miles to Peer Street. Right on Peer Street.

- 5) Camilla MacLeod, 1163 Chenango Street, Binghamton  
Go back to Kattellville Road, go LEFT 0.7 miles to NY 12A. Go Left on NY 12 A across the Chenango River. Take first RIGHT after the river onto West Service Road (don't get on Interstate 88) and go 0.5 miles to Chenango Street. LEFT on Chenango Street 0.7 miles to 1163 Chenango Street. Park on side of road or in school lot across the street.

#### OPTIONAL EXTRA STOPS

Cutler Botanical Garden 840 Front Street, Binghamton. Small botanical garden

Chenango Valley State Park, NY Route 369, Chenango Forks

Stony Hill Greenhouses, 3801 Brady Hill Road, Binghamton (NOTE: this is the Town of Binghamton, not the city of Binghamton). Small private nursery run by a former ACNARGS member.

Tioga Gardens, NY 17 C, Owego, NY. Large nursery close to NY 17.

## **HOW TO START A ROCK GARDEN**

*John Gilrein*

**Climate:** Probably the first step is understanding your climate and your site. In our area of Central/Southern Tier New York, we get about 40 inches of precipitation annually, measured as rain. Perhaps a little more precipitation north of Syracuse due to lake effect, and less south and west. Our precipitation is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year, with no distinct dry season. We have a modified humid continental climate with warm to hot summers, cold winters, and frequently have moderate to high humidity. A perfect climate for growing trees and perennials, not so perfect for rock gardens. Compromises are necessary for having a rock garden, unless one is moving to 8,000 feet high in Colorado.

**Site selection:** for site selection, a few things to avoid are a basin where cold air settles, a site with heavy shade, a site with greedy tree roots, a wet site, and heavy clay soil. The latter two could be overcome by building a raised bed on top of the site. An ideal site would be an area with a slope facing east or north. South or west facing will mean more intense sun and faster drying. Generally, one wants little shade from trees, but early morning and later afternoon shade are fine. Sandy, rocky or loamy soil will require the least soil modification. Unless one is planning extreme modifications to the site (e.g. chopping down trees), one should choose plants suited to the site.

**Choosing plants:** for a hot, dry exposure, xeric-adapted plants would be best suited to the site like Mediterranean plants, cacti, plants from a steppe climate. This would include lavender (*Lavandula*), claret cup cactus (*Echinocereus triglochidiatus*), *Yucca*, *Santolina*, and *Euphorbia myrsinites*. Many rock garden plants would adapt to such a site with some irrigation. A northern exposure could accommodate Saxifrages and alpines susceptible to heat. Knowing a plant's provenance (place of origin) is most

helpful in siting a plant in the garden. If your rock garden is shady, you may need to plan for woodland plants and ferns rather than alpiners. If you don't want to modify the soil, you may need to settle for using short perennials, annuals, and bulbs rather than more alpine like plants. One could still create a rock garden effect without using alpine like plants.

**The Rocks:** we do live in a great area for rocks. Our native rocks (except perhaps for a few of us who live near the Adirondacks) are sedimentary rocks that are relatively flat and have bedding planes (layers). Limestone and sandstone (including bluestone) are easier to work with than igneous rocks like granite and gneiss. If you're ambitious, you can bargain with neighbors and pick rocks out of old rock piles in farm country, or make a deal with a farmer to mine rock piles on a farm. I made a deal with a local farm to borrow the beater pickup, mine the rock piles, and drive the rocks home for around \$75. Or have the quarry or hardware store drop off a pallet of rocks to save labor. Try to stick with one type of rock for a garden (i.e. don't mix granite and sandstone). Get the biggest rocks you can afford and manage. Moving rocks takes time, but large, heavy rocks can be moved using levers and rolling rocks on logs. A great deal of caution is necessary to avoid crushing fingers and rolling boulders onto garden treasures. It's good to have a helper and wear heavy gloves when moving rocks. My rock garden started as rows of retaining walls made by whatever rocks came out of the barn foundation, and I'm slowly replacing the rounder igneous rocks with limestone (trying to follow my own advice!).

**Rock Placement:** the rocks need to be placed with the layers (bedding planes) oriented the same way. You want the rock garden to look natural, not like Victorian garden bedding. The rocks can be oriented so they are flat, tipped slightly into the slope (ideal position), or positioned nearly vertically to create a crevice garden. Rocks need to be buried deep enough to be stable, especially those you might walk on while weeding and planting. You don't want wobbly ankle breakers. It's good to aim for burying rocks to about 2/3 of their depth to ensure stability. Rocks could be positioned to give the impression of layers of exposed bedrock, or placed more randomly.

**Soil Modification:** here I'm going to assume the plan is a standard rock garden, and not a shady woodland rock garden. A standard textbook rock garden soil mix is about 1/3 loam, 1/3 crushed stone (chippings)/gravel, and 1/3 organic matter. I would suggest substituting sand for the organic matter. Organic matter breaks down over time, and matter also supports fungi, which may be pathogenic and kill some of your plants. It's usually a bad idea to add sand to clay, so if you have clay soil, you may want to build a raised garden on top of it or replace the soil with loam or sand. Unless you want to grow ericaceous plants, alkaline sand and limestone chippings are fine. Mix the soil amendments into the soil thoroughly (this could also be done before rock placement). The chippings or gravel could also double as your rock garden mulch; the mulch should be compatible in appearance with the rocks (contrasting mulch is not advised unless you're going for shock value).

Fairly moisture retentive soils work well in either greenhouses (where it doesn't rain) or Colorado (where Penstemons grow in clay soil and it hardly rains) but don't work well here with our wet winters. The soil mix can be adjusted based on the needs of what you plan to grow. One could create a coarser scree mix at the top of the rock garden and a more moisture retentive mix at the bottom. Many rock garden plants need some air at the roots and can't abide compacted or saturated soils. The ideal is enough moisture retention to not require much irrigation, and plenty of drainage to keep the plants happy

and avoid saturation, and get the plants through the cold season. Many rock garden plants are happy with neutral to slightly alkaline soil, so this is a good pH goal.

**Planting:** I really like the idea of a layered and varied planting, incorporating bulbs, alpines, dwarf perennials, dwarf shrubs, dwarf conifers, and perhaps annuals for a longer season of interest. I can't imagine not having spring bulbs and dwarf conifers in my large rock garden; they really extend the season of interest. Planting should be done before hot weather (April to mid-May) or at the end of summer (September). After planting, mulch with an inch or two of chippings. Some (including me) like to remove most of the organic potting mix from potted plants before planting into the garden, with the idea of getting the roots into the native soil.

**Maintenance:** annual maintenance includes: Spring - removal of fallen leaves, dead plants, any plant outgrowing its site, top dressing with mulch; late Spring through late Summer- planting new plants, watering new plants, and watering during extended dry spells; early Autumn – planting bulbs, removal of fallen leaves, and top dressing with mulch; Winter – perusing the nursery catalogs and choosing new plants, and/or ordering NARGS seeds to start your own plants. Of course, one still needs to weed, but having stone mulch and very well drained soil limits weed growth and facilitates weeding. After years of amending the soil in my rock garden, the soil is now closer to ideal rock garden soil and a few plants are self-sowing. If you have open spots in the garden, you could sow seeds in the fall, let the rain wash the seeds into the mulch, then let them stratify over the winter and germinate in the Spring. And of course your annual routine should include potting up plants for our May plant sale!

## SPRING HAS ARRIVED IN THE ROCK GARDEN

Nari Mistry

Here are some cheerful pictures for spring. These were blooming on April 19, 2015 in my garden.

*Pulsatilla halleri* is a small version of the *Anemone pulsatilla* "Pasqueflower" (Easter flower) and is planted in my south facing rock garden in full sun in lean scree-like soil. After blooming, it displays attractive shiny silk-like tassels with the seeds.

The two Saxifrages are in a part-shade "rockery" in the backyard, at the base of a small north-facing slope. They get spring sun, but part sun to mostly shade in summer. For saxifrage aficionados here is what the book on Saxifrages says: both the Saxifrages are of the *Kabschia* type, belonging to the *Porphyron* Section.

*S. Caucasica* (yellow blossoms) is a pure *Porophyllum* species; *S. 'Allendale Charm'* (white blossoms) is a hybrid cultivar from Harvey Wrightman. *S. 'Allendale Charm'* is a very tight hard bun, that has slowly grown to about 9" diameter in over ~8 years. I got it from Harvey Wrightman in a small 2" tufa block and planted the block directly in the trough in 2007.



*Pulsatilla halleri*



*S. Caucasica* has much looser rosettes as you can see, planted in 2008, also slowly grown to about 8" diameter.

They were both planted in a trough mix of peat-moss/turface/gravel over a few inches of #1 stone, with surface top-mulch. No fertilizer added, annual dressing of cow-manure mixed with peat. These were both planted in my one-and-only hypertufa trough made at the first trough workshop at Billie Jean's years ago; the hypertufa mixture was faulty & began to fall apart, so the trough was buried in the scree long ago & never moved.



I have been lucky that these have done so well! I think water is the key and this year's snow-cover helped, although the bloom has always been good.

## WAYS YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO OUR CHAPTER

*Carol Eichler*

Would you consider getting more involved with ACNARGS? Contact John Gilrein, Chapter Chair. Here are some ways to contribute:

- host a speaker by providing overnight accommodations
- join outside speakers for dinner and conversation
- suggest topics and/or speakers for program meetings
- bring refreshments to our meetings
- offer to be a trip/tour coordinator
- write a newsletter article or send in garden photos
- prepare a slideshow or presentation for Members' Share
- donate plants for our plant sales
- submit regular posts to our Facebook page

## UPCOMING 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 Whetzel Room, 404 Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (see map on the last page).*

May 7-10: NARGS National Conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan (our Chapter's overnight trip for the year)

May 15: Set up for ACNARGS Plant Sale: help needed; contact David Mitchell

May 16: ACNARGS Plant Sale at annual CCETC Garden Fair and Plant Sale 9-2pm, Ithaca High School, 1401 North Cayuga Street, Ithaca, NY

June 20: Chapter day trip to visit Binghamton area gardens. Details to come.

August 15: Annual Picnic and Members' Only Plant Sale, at the Picnic Shelter at Upper Buttermilk Falls State Park, Ithaca

September 19: Krissy Boys & Rosemarie Parker: (Tentative Title) All about Seeds: collecting, cleaning, storing, stratification, etc. Plant-of-the-Month sale to current members. Note location is Ken Post Lab Classroom.

October 17: Speaker TBD. Plant-of-the-Month sale to current members. Location to be determined.

November 14: Sharee Solow, horticulturist, landscape designer and garden writer from Philadelphia; speaker preceded by dish-to-pass luncheon and brief annual meeting. Note 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday meeting date.

As we learn them, details of Chapter activities will be included in future newsletters, our blog, [acnargs.blogspot.com](http://acnargs.blogspot.com), and our Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/acnargs>.

## SELECT CALENDAR OF GARDEN EVENTS

*To have a garden event in your area listed send all pertinent information to Carol Eichler at [carolithaca@gmail.com](mailto:carolithaca@gmail.com)*

May 8-17: Lilac Festival, Rochester. [Rochester-lilac-festival](#)

May 20: William Stein, Binghamton U., Gilboa Fossil Forest. 7-8:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Church annex. Visit [FLNPS.org](http://FLNPS.org) for info

May 23 & 24: Garden Open House. 50 Years in the Garden at Bill and Jane Plummer's, 10 Fox Lane East, Painted Post, NY. 2-4 pm

June 20: Fall Creek Garden Collective's annual walking tour, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Maps available at Thompson Park, Ithaca.

June 22: Carol Eichler, Rock Garden Basics. Suburban Garden Club, Manlius Library in Manlius, NY; lunch followed by presentation, noon – 2:30 pm

August 1: Open Garden Days, Tompkins County through Garden Conservancy (5 open gardens so far)

August 14-16: Northeast Regional American Conifer Society Meeting, Wayne, PA; [ACS Northeast Regional Meeting](#)

Sept. 10-12: National American Conifer Society Meeting, Sonoma County CA. [Conifer Society 2015 National Meeting](#)

Sept. 12: Gathering of Gardeners. [Gatheringofgardeners.com](http://Gatheringofgardeners.com)

October 13: Carol Eichler, Making of the Wurster Memorial Garden. Liberty Hyde Bailey Garden Club, Ken Post Lab Classroom, Cornell University, Ithaca, 6:30 – 8:00 pm

## 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 \$10 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, and plant sale discounts and member only sales, including Plant-of-the-Month sales.

## 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 \$30 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 hear and visit with outstanding plants people from around the world who present talks and workshops.

## RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE/2014 BOARD MEMBERS

*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: Nari Mistry, [nbm2@cornell.edu](mailto:nbm2@cornell.edu)

Program Committee Members: Could this be you?

Secretary: Mary Stauble, [mes2@cornell.edu](mailto:mes2@cornell.edu)

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

Plant Sales Chair: David Mitchell, [dwm23@cornell.edu](mailto:dwm23@cornell.edu)

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

Plant of the Month: Colette Colby De Haan, [4kotobuki@gmail.com](mailto:4kotobuki@gmail.com) and Vashti De Haan, [vadkam@yahoo.com](mailto:vadkam@yahoo.com)

Membership: Mary Stauble, [mes2@cornell.edu](mailto:mes2@cornell.edu)

New Member Hospitality: Terry Humphries, [terryehumphries@gmail.com](mailto:terryehumphries@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: Carol Eichler [carolithaca@gmail.com](mailto:carolithaca@gmail.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 Carol Eichler, [carolithaca@gmail.com](mailto:carolithaca@gmail.com). Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be in July 2015.

Now for the Photo-of-the-Month (next page). Who can identify WHERE this is?

