

North American Rock Garden Society

# Green Dragon Tales

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October 2021

# **Claire Cockcroft is October Speaker**



Trekking and Learning about Asiatic Primulas Clues to growing primulas after seeing them in the wild

Claire Cockcroft, Bellevue, Washington

**SUNDAY OCTOBER 17, 1:00 PM via ZOOM**. Look for the link in your email Wednesday EVENING 10/13/21. Be Sure to download the Slide and Plant List

If you are charmed by Primulas (and who isn't?!), then the Sunday October 17 program is for you! After Claire presented a fabulous program for us last spring on the Himalayas, members asked when she could present for us again. So Clare is back with us by popular demand and for her encore she has selected her most-treasured plant, Primulas.

Claire's extensive botanical travels have afforded her the opportunity to discover and learn from primulas thriving in their native habitats. She will cover territory in Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, China, the states of Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim, India and Turkey where she has traveled over the past ten years in search of her favorite plant.

Claire will emphasize favored habitat, elevation, and companion plants. We can follow a detailed handout that describes the niche conditions, the range, and the plants she found growing alongside the primulas. Taking into account what she learned on her treks, Claire has successfully grown a wide range of Primula species. She is amazed that she has been able to grow so many Asiatic primroses that naturally grow at an elevation of 7,000 to 16,000 feet.

Claire has been an active member of NARGS for many years and has presented widely and volunteered in many capacities. She is a current member of the Northwestern Chapter which meets in Seattle and Bellevue, WA.

### **Letter from the Chair**

John Gilrein, ACNARGS Chair

Now it's officially autumn, and it feels like it outside. It's a great time to plant perennials, bulbs, and trees (though some trees that are borderline hardy prefer spring planting). There's less stress on newly planted perennials now, as opposed to say May, as the sun is less intense, the days are shorter, and the air is generally cooler. I took this opportunity to order a dozen plants from Wrightman Alpines, which I hope to have all planted by the end of next week. The heat loving vegetables like tomatoes and squash are really winding down production now, if they hadn't done this earlier. My tomato plants weren't too happy about all the rain this summer. Garden chores are shifting from planting and watering to mulching and cleanup.



Impatiens walleriana

For activities coming up, please note that we moved our October meeting to the 3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY (originally scheduled on the normal Saturday), so it's on **Sunday October 17**. I agreed that we would package seeds again for NARGS, like we do every year. We'll have to see how things are going pandemic-wise before we can determine whether to do this in person (like a few years ago), or whether we will have to do it remotely/separately like last year. We may be able to use the KPL classroom. Seed packaging will be in December as usual and we will post plans for this in the future. If you are a NARGS member, please contribute seeds to the NARGS annual Seed Exchange (SeedEx). If you do contribute a minimum amount of seeds, you will qualify for an extra 10 packets of seeds in the SeedEx.



Lobelia erinus

Here's my review of some annuals which I grew in 2021: Some annuals are tireless performers and bloom well all summer. Other annuals bloom for a while and then produce no more flowers the rest of the summer. I gotta love those really floriferous ones. Here are some excellent performers: *Impatiens* walleriana (the standard old impatiens for shady sites), Lobelia erinus (trailing lobelia), Tagetes patula (French marigold), *Ipomoea quamoclit* (cypress vine). Impatiens does well either in a pot or in the ground in a bright shady spot and it did some light reseeding from last year's plants. The lobelias I buy in bloom and they bloom continuously until frost. Marigolds are really easy, but the slugs here are merciless to them, so I planted them in pots and they're in a sunny spot. These would have needed a lot of watering had it not been for a wet summer. Cypress vine, which is a morning glory, is easy from seed and grows fairly quickly like other morning glories. It took a little while to get big enough to bloom, but once it started it has been blooming

continuously. It's much more delicate than standard morning glories and the frilly foliage is one of its charms. Castor bean 'Carmencita' (*Ricinus communis*) is another good performer, but for its red leaves and seed pods; it's also really easy to start from seed. Some of the not so impressive annuals were *Consolida ajacis* (larkspur), which bloomed well then went to seed and dried up in mid summer; *Asperula orientalis* (blue woodruff),

which reseeded itself and performed like the larkspur; *Nigella* sp. (Persian jewels), which always seems to have a short cycle. All the high performing annuals mentioned are still looking good as of September 30. They are all tender though, so their show will end with the first serious frost

To continue a theme from some of our *Green Dragon* of autumn 2020, here are some additional late season bloomers: *Cyclamen hederifolium* (ivy leaved cyclamen), this may bloom continuously for 2 months; *Begonia grandis* (hardy begonia); *Aster tartaricus* (Tartarian aster) which has not even started to bloom as of September 30. And the whole suite of fall native asters: *Symphotrichum* (formerly *Aster*) *cordifolia, divaricata, laeve, novae-angliae,* and *shortii* (respectively heart leaved, white wood, smooth, New England, and



Begonia grandis with Symphotrichum divaricata

short. The first two asters are rhizomatous spreaders; the last three are clumpers.

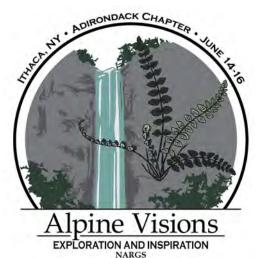
Hope to see you soon on Zoom!

### **NARGS Annual General Meeting 2022**

Carol Eichler, Plant Sales Chair

Save the Dates: June 14-16, 2022 is coming!

We're going to try again! We're hosting 2022 NARGS Annual General Meeting to be held June 14-16, 2022. The theme is similar to last time but with minor modifications: **Alpine Visions: Exploration and Inspiration.** Cornell Botanic Gardens will again co-host with us. To quote Yogi Berra, if our program feels like "déja-vu all over again"...well, in a way it is! The enthusiasm for the 2020 AGM that we were forced to cancel was so overwhelming that we're willing to give it another shot and we've tried to retain much of the original itinerary. That's why you may see some resemblances, yet with some important differences too.



All rock gardens start with a vision, often one inspired by what we've seen in nature. Therefore, we are emphasizing the "exploration" side of our theme. The experience of seeing plants growing in their native habitat can be revelatory, even inspirational. So you will see us welcoming a new line-up of plant explorers as our speakers and we hope you'll be as excited about them as we are.

The 3-day meeting will be based on the north campus of Cornell University, voted one of the most beautiful U.S. college campuses. Many of our activities will occur in the Robert Purcell Community Center or nearby. Residence hall lodging, if you want to stay close to the action, is offered literally steps away from this building.

Unofficially this AGM, like those of the past, provides a great way for NARGS members (enthusiastic gardeners all) with an annual opportunity to share our gardening experiences, to renew friendships, and to form new ones. Together we will share our own plant explorations, inspirations, and visions.

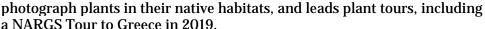
**What to Expect:** daytime field trips, evening talks (line-up below), plant sales by choice vendors, plus an optional pre-AGM tour to visit three exceptional private gardens in the Syracuse area.

#### **Speakers**

**F. Robert Wesley**, botanist at the Cornell Botanic Gardens, is one of our area's foremost experts on native plants of New York State. He spoke at Taproot 2020, a NARGS virtual conference, on the native plants of the Finger Lakes gorges and the flora of the Chaumont Barrens alvar preserve. This time he will speak about the rich diversity of native orchids in New York State.



**Eleftherios Dariotis** (aka Liberto Dario, the moniker he gave himself for use on his Facebook page) is a horticulturist, botanist, and plant explorer from Athens, Greece. He owns a small nursery and bulb business, travels extensively around the world to study and





collector's paradise. They are also founding directors of Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy, a non-profit whose mission is the acquisition and conservation of vulnerable plants of wild and cultivated origin that are new or rare in North America. They travel the distant corners of the world to acquire and conserve horticulturally and botanically important rare plants, learn about them, and teach what they know.





#### **Field Trips**

While these field trips will probably have less relevance to our members, we are planning a field trip on Wednesday, to include a guided walk to one of our renown gorges — either Upper Treman gorge or Upper Buttermilk Falls gorge, visits to two choice private gardens (the Stark/Stauble garden and Kobre/Denson garden), and a lakeside lunch on the shores of Cayuga Lake (Myers Park).

On Thursday, we visit the Cornell Botanic Gardens plant collections with their docents on hand to answer questions. Free time in the afternoon allows our registrants to further explore the Gardens and Arboretum, or to venture to other on- or off-campus attractions.

#### **Additional Activities**

NARGS awards, election of officers, and annual report. Plant sales, book sales and signings. Thursday evening banquet and open bar. Post-AGM on-your-own tours of ACNARGS members' gardens.

#### Schedule

The meeting schedule will be posted on the NARGS website (www.nargs.org) in the forthcoming Winter 2021/22 *Quarterly*. We will also publish it in our newsletter and our own website.

#### Registration

As a registrant, you will have the advantage of full access to ALL the AGM activities. You are required to be a member of NARGS to register (still a bargain at \$40). Ready to sign up? Online registration will open about mid-January 2022. At that time, further information and the registration link will be posted on the NARGS.org Home Page under Events, listed as Annual Meeting and Tours 2022. The registration fee of \$450 payable by credit card will be due at registration. We are limited to a maximum of 150 registrants and we know, from the last time (when covid lockdown and Cornell shut down forced the June 2020 cancelation) that those spaces had already filled by mid-March.

There are good reasons to register. First, we are again offering a generous \$300 stipend to ACNARGS members (see more below). This will allow you to fully participate in all activities and immerse yourself in the 3-day event. That's the secret to getting the most out the AGM.

We understand that "as a local," you will probably not be so interested in the field trips, because you have seen the gardens and walked the gorges...probably many times. But the AGM offers so much more. Our line-up of outstanding speakers who our Chapter would not otherwise be able to bring to Ithaca is one. Likewise, the plant sale will bring vendors from far and wide. — a one-stop shop!

#### **Stipends**

Details about the application and process for the Chapter member will be published in our November Green Dragon newsletter. There will be an expectation that you make a significant volunteer contribution too.

#### **Volunteers**

Wait! Don't look the other way. I'm talking to you! Whether you decide to register or not, we will need lots of volunteers during the AGM. So many of you volunteered in our first go-round and our expectation is that we will get an equally enthusiastic response this time. Most commitments are in the 2–4 hour range (more for stipend recipients). Carol is the volunteer coordinator and will be reaching out to you starting in January 2022. Our needs are not particularly demanding, but they are important for welcoming our guests in our roles as host.

Save the dates on your calendar now — June 14-16. We hope to offer some attractive benefits for your time — to be announced later.

#### Lodging

If you register, there's no need to commute each day. You can book lodging nearby. There will be a block of rooms set aside in the new Toni Morrison Residence Hall, literally steps away from the AGM lecture hall in the Robert Purcell Community Center. A block of rooms at special NARGS rates are also being held until May 14 at two nearby hotels, subject to room availability - the Homewood Suites by Hilton and Best Western University. Both offer limited shuttle service to the airport and campus for their patrons. Or of course, you can make your own lodging arrangements.

#### **Parking**

I hesitate to write too much about parking at this time other than to say it will not be free. However, we will reimburse any volunteer for the cost of their out-of-pocket parking permit.

#### **Pre-AGM Day Trip to Syracuse-area gardens**

Tuesday, June 14, 8 am - 3:30 pm

For an additional fee you can join us to visit the three too-good-to-miss private gardens that were scheduled in 2020 (Kraft, Bordoni, Brennan/Moss). Registration is limited and will open simultaneously with AGM registration in January 2022.

#### **Questions?**

Of course, there are many more details about the 2022 AGM that we will share with you later. This article is a good start at covering the basics. More information will be published in the Winter 2021/22 Rock Garden Quarterly and on the NARGS.org website. We will also post Frequently Asked Questions on the NARGS website in early 2022. In the meantime, any burning questions can be addressed by contacting John Gilrein, registration coordinator, at <a href="mailto:agmithaca2022@twcny.rr.com">agmithaca2022@twcny.rr.com</a>. Or contact any of us on the planning committee: Terry Humphries, Marlene Kobre, or myself, Carol Eichler. Note that John has set up a special email address specific to the AGM.

I believe this is going to be a terrific AGM! We'll be busy until then with much to-do but I truly can't wait to show off our "gorge-ous" community!



Bill Stark and Mary Stauble Garden

## A Delightful and Durable Woodlander: Himalayan Mayapple

By Panayoti Kelaidis, Denver Botanic Gardens Outreach

Believe it or not, these two images of Himalayan mayapple\* were taken a few days apart of the same species (albeit two different plants) in my garden. I think these pictures speak volumes about the enormous impact of light, and especially shade not just on our photography, but on the plants in our garden. The intense sunlight and dry air of Colorado (where I garden) amplifies these contrasts: there are canyons in our foothills where you can find yellow ladyslippers, wood lilies and oak fern\*\* on cool north slopes, and on the sunny slopes opposite there may be ball cacti (*Pediocactus simpsonii*) and yuccas!

I have grown Himalayan mayapple for thirty years or more: few plants are so varied in their form from the time they emerge (often blooming) out of the ground to their bat-like phase unfurling their wing like leaves, and expanding them like an umbrella until the larg



wing like leaves, and expanding them like an umbrella until the large, oblong red fruit ripens in early summer: more like a ballet than a mere flowering process!



It is a plant that has accrued a lot of lore: it is widely used in Traditional Chinese Medicine and possesses alkaloids utilized in Western Medicine to combat breast cancer. It seems to thrive most anywhere in a garden where you might grow classic woodlanders like wild ginger, dutchman's britches\*\*\* or most ferns.

We have found its many East Asian cousins (*P. pleianthum, P. versipelle, P. delavayi:* all of them also split into microgenera by busy body botanists!) less dependable—often succumbing to our late spring frosts.

I've found this pretty easily grown from seed—which is almost always available on the N.A.R.G.S. seed exchange (it will be this year for sure—I'm donating lots of seed from my plants!). It's also sold by better rare plant nurseries on the two coasts (my plants came from Far Reaches Farm, for instance).

This is but one of innumerable woodland treasures that are enriching our shady rock gardens: **do keep a lookout on the NARGS website for three Webinars this winter: the first will focus on <b>shade loving plants-- organized by Bridget Wosczyna-Briddes** (who gardens in eastern Pennsylvania). It will feature cutting edge gardeners from across North America.

Do check out this blog, which features a photo gallery of Himalayan mayapples in the wild and in cultivation: <a href="http://prairiebreak.blogspot.com/2020/09/sinopodophyllum-hexandrum-var-yunnanense.html">http://prairiebreak.blogspot.com/2020/09/sinopodophyllum-hexandrum-var-yunnanense.html</a>

I have annotated some of the Latin names for plants I've referred to with common names above. I find cluttering text with too many scientific names distracting, especially when there are charming and widely recognized common names we can use. One can be too pedantic, you know!

## **News from NARGS: Annual Awardees**

Carol Eichler, Plant Sales Chair

As promised, here is a run down of awards presented and awardees honored at the Durango annual general meeting in August.

The Award of Merit to honor individual's outstanding contributions to rock and alpine rock gardening was presented to:

- Gayle Lehman, head gardener for many years at Yampa River Botanic Gardens and one of the key organizers for the 2016 AGM in Steamboat Springs.
- Nick Courtens, curator at the Betty Ford Botanic Gardens in Vail.
- Mariel Tribby, senior horticulturist at the Missouri Botanical Gardens, member of the NARGS board, and a leader in building NARGS' social media presence.

The Betty Ford Botanic Garden also received the Francis Cabot Award for public gardens. Put a visit to this garden on your bucket list.

<sup>\*</sup> I prefer to stick to *Podophyllum hexandrum* to the "*Sinopodophyllum hexandrum*". I'm sure the botanist who split the genus had good reasons. Around 300 B.C. the Chinese Philospher Gongsun Lung observed 白馬非馬: can one legitimately assert "a white horse is not a horse": I believe white horses ARE horses, and mayapples are mayapples, even if one grows in China and one in Ohio.
\*\* *Cypripedium pubescens, Lilium philadelphicum* var. *andinum* and *Gymnocarpium disjunctum* for the rock gardeners who eschew common names.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Asarum spp., Dicentra cucullaria

The Geoffrey Charlesworth Writing Prize for the "best" Rock Garden Quarterly (as deemed by the review committee) went to Mike Smedley who wrote "Battling Clay on Garage Hill (Summer 2020 issue). I think most of us can relate.

Brian Bixley received the Charleton R. Worth Award – another writing prize – for his book *Minding the Garden, Lilac Tree Farm.* This slide accompanied the announcement. Brian was pictured with none other than our Chapter member, **Kathy Purdy!** Kathy also reviewed his book on her blog, click <a href="here">here</a>.

On the theme of it's never too late, Bill Adams received the Marcel LaPinice Award for enriching and extending the range of plants available to rock gardens. Bill operated Sunscape Rare Plants Nursery until his recent retirement.

Perhaps you've come across the internet site which is all about wildflowers of the southwest (<a href="swcoloradowildflowers.com">swcoloradowildflowers.com</a>). I



Kathy Purdy with Brian Bixley

know it has popped up for me when researching a plant. The collaboration on this website between Al Schneider and the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory earned them the Edgar T. Wherry Award for their efforts to disseminate information about North American plants, especially of the Four Corners area.

For the Linc and Timmy Foster Millstream Garden Award, Tony Stireman received recognition for creating a "superior alpine garden." I'd sure like to see that garden!

Last but not least, Elisabeth Zander was honored with the Marvin Black Award given to an individual who excels at promoting the goals of NARGS at the Chapter and National/International levels. Elisabeth has given her heart and soul to NARGS over many years with her leadership in the Berkshire Chapter, NARGS board membership and leadership, including position of immediate past president, and her current position as webmaster. She previously received the Millstream Award for her outstanding rock garden, another garden to visit and much closer.

Congratulations to all the awardees!

### **Membership**

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

Please welcome new members  $\mathbf{Mary}$   $\mathbf{Clifford}$  and  $\mathbf{Nils}$   $\mathbf{Knutzen}$  — they joined via mail. They live in Bolton Landing in the Adirondacks.

If you still need to renew for 2021 the renewal form is at <a href="http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf">http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf</a>. Check my email announcement of the newsletter link for your membership status. Contact Mary Stauble at <a href="mes2@cornell.edu">mes2@cornell.edu</a> if you have any questions.

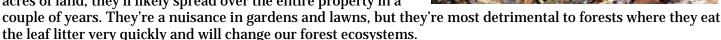
While it's true that our meetings are free and open to everyone, there are advantages to becoming a member: Our members-only plants-of-the-month at discounted prices, 25% discount on May plant sale purchases, Participation in the members-only plant sale in August, and Participation in the April members-only seedling exchange to name four — any one of which can easily recoup the cost of your dues. Hopefully we will have many more of these activities in 2021 than we did in 2020. Print and complete the 2021 Membership form here: http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf Questions? Contact Mary at <a href="mess2@cornell.edu">mess2@cornell.edu</a>.

## **Invasive Jumping Worm Update**

Carol Eichler, Plant Sales Chair

It's been a stellar year for the invasive jumping worms and their population is at peak right now. Tompkins County is one of the epicenters of their penetration into New York State. Unfortunately, there currently isn't a way to get rid of them.

If you see them on one part of your property and you have a few acres of land, they'll likely spread over the entire property in a couple of years. They're a puisance in gardens and lawns, but the





Or check out this excellent YouTube program from the Maryland Native Plant Society which gives a much broader perspective: Non-native Earthwoms and their effect on soils.

The only advice researchers can offer at this time is to try to reduce their spread. You can capture and kill worms in your garden (solarize or freeze them), if only for your personal gratification. The worms will soon die with winter coming on, but they've already done their damage by depositing many eggs that will survive the winter and start the cycle into adulthood into the next growing season.

If you have them in your garden, we've been cautioning you through this newsletter, to triple-wash the roots of any plants that you dig up and share. This applies throughout the growing season. The worms' eggs, called cocoons are as small as a poppy seed and can travel on bits of dirt. Triple washing down to bare roots has shown to be an effective intervention.

The "good" news (?) is that once you have jumping worms on your property, you don't need to worry about getting them. Common sources for getting the worms are from compost, mulch, soil deliveries, or from plants that you get from others.

The wet summer we had this year might have led to a population boom, and you might have fewer worms in drier years. Let's hope so!

# **Upcoming 2021 ACNARGS Programs**

**NOTE:** Due to covid our meetings will take on a different format for the foreseeable future. We will hold live meetings via Zoom for now. For those of you unfamiliar with Zoom, contact Terry Humphries terryehumphres@gmail.com for assistance.

**October 17: Note change of date to Sunday**. Clare Cockcroft, "Trekking and Learning about Asiatic Primulas: clues to growing primulas after seeing them in the wild". She will show us primulas in Sichuan, Yunnan, Turkey, Himachal Pradesh, and Sikkim and discuss their habitats and growing requirements; 1pm via Zoom

**November 1:** Seed contributions to NARGS Seed Exchange are due

**November 13:** NARGS Virtual Study Day, *In the Shadow of Stone* 

**November 20:** Jenny Wainright- Klein, curator of the Schachen garden coming to us from Bavaria. Note we are meeting on the third Saturday this month.

**December TBD:** Our Chapter packages seed for the NARGS Seed Exchange. We will likely Zoom together.

## **Calendar of Select Events & Programs**

**Cornell Cooperative Extension** gardening resources and information

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 <u>david\_mitchell\_14850@yahoo.com</u>

### **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 <a href="www.acnargs.org/join.pdf">www.acnargs.org/join.pdf</a>.

### **About NARGS National**

NARGS National is our parent organization: We encourage you to join (online at <a href="www.nargs.org">www.nargs.org</a>) 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.

### **2021 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**

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, <a href="mailto:david mitchell 14850@yahoo.com">david mitchell 14850@yahoo.com</a>. The newsletter is always posted and printable each month on our website <a href="mailto:www.acnargs.org">www.acnargs.org</a>



Colchicum autumnale Photo by John Gilrein