



October/November 2024

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OCTOBER 26 AND NOVEMBER 9, 2024

Terry Humphries, Program Chair

Note: There will be no additional Green Dragon in November!

Chris Gardner will give 2 Presentations in the Whetzel Room at Cornell at 10:30 AM and 1 PM

Many of our members enjoyed the fantastic journey through Flora of the Silk Road we had the opportunity to enjoy over Zoom during the pandemic, and now we have the chance to hear him in person, as part of the NARGS Speakers Tour.



Chris is a horticulturist, naturalist, semi-professional photographer and tour leader through his company Vira Natura Tours. A lifelong plant enthusiast, originally from Essex, England, Chris gained his BSc in Horticulture from Reading University and spent fifteen years as a professional horticulturalist and garden designer. His fascination with travel brought him in contact with the flora, wildlife and cultures of many exotic countries, inspiring him to begin guiding botanical, wildlife and photographic tours throughout the world. He had led over 200 botanical tours throughout Turkiye, Central Asia, China, Morocco, Borneo, Australia, the Mediterranean and Europe. Chris will give two presentations at our October meeting. His morning talk will be Flora of the Mediterranean, while the afternoon will cover Flora of South Africa.

Flora of the Mediterranean

The world's five Mediterranean climate regions each developed in isolation, resulting in some of the most varied and beguiling flora on Earth. Moving through the Mediterranean Basin to California, Chile, SW Australia and South Africa, this talk will showcase many of the most beautiful flowers in each region and looks at what links exist between them, as well as discussing the various aspects of the climate, geography, geology and fire that have shaped the flora over the last three million years.

Flora of South Africa

One of the botanically richest places on Earth, South Africa is a land of contrasts. Chris will focus on two very diverse areas: the Western Cape and the Drakensberg, with their opposing climates and thus very different habitats, that share commonalities in geology, flora and fire. The flora of the Western Cape will feature a dazzling array of bulbous plants, proteas and heaths that comprise the rich fynbos and renosterveld shrublands. Drakensberg is a beautiful region but the landscapes and sweeping majesty endure unpredictable temperature extremes. Beneath a constant backdrop of razor-toothed ridges swathed in grasslands, a different suite of geophytes and striking herbaceous plants take center stage. Home to a great diversity of orchids, gladioli, beautiful everlasting daisies and exotic proteas, Chris will take us through the flora of the spectacularly scenic Drakensberg esarpment.



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Elizabeth Lawson will speak at 1 PM on November 9, 2024, at Cooperative Extension

Elizabeth Lawson has recently written a fascinating guide to the natural and cultural significance of mosses and lichens. Her book is a celebration of the extraordinary biology, beauty and resilience of two unassuming organisms with unique abilities. These unsung heroes of the natural world are endowed with special superpowers, from enduring desiccation to the ability to thrive in extreme habitats. They defy easy categorization and are integral to the plant kingdom. Neglected in the



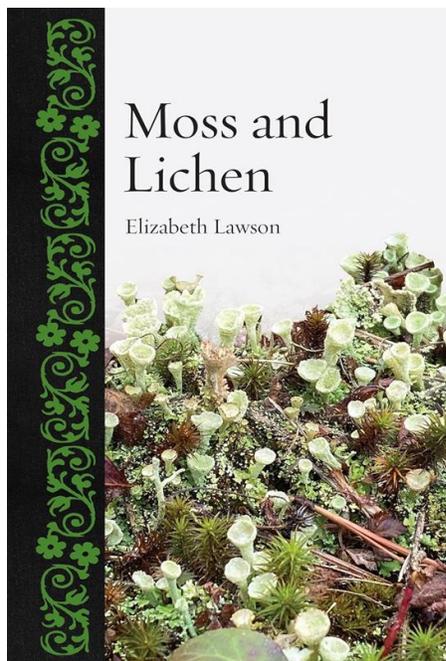
past for their lack of flowers, these organisms now garner recognition for their significant role in maintaining the health of our world's ecosystem.

Elizabeth Lawson's will show us how they shape landscapes, prevent erosion and sequester carbon, while surveying the biologists, artists and writers who celebrate their importance. She will give us a newfound appreciation for mosses and lichen as she shares her research and gives us a preview of her new book, which will be available early in 2025.



Elizabeth Lawson resides locally and has a background in horticulture, including Kew Royal Botanic Gardens, and Brooklyn Botanic Garden, academic study (BA in English Literature from Bryn Mawr College, MA in Botany from University of Texas-Austin), PhD in Plant Biology from Cornell University, MFA in Nonfiction from Southern New Hampshire University), editing (*American Journal of Botany, Ecology*), and teaching (Writing Department, Ithaca College).

She writes "as a naturalist" at www.elizabethwinpennylawson.com and has published *Primrose* and *Moss and Lichen* for Reaktion Books, book reviews for the *Plant Science Bulletin* of the Botanical Society of America, as well as an essay on Margaret E. Murie, "grandmother of conservation," in an anthology titled *Green Voices*.



FROM THE CHAIR

John Gilrein, Chair

A hearty thanks to all of you who make our chapter work! The year started with many volunteer hours filling the NARGS seed orders (I'm thrilled we're only assuming a minor role this year!). These are the many tasks that make the chapter work: arranging speakers, managing our funds, being in charge of the Plant of the Month, managing the semiannual plant sales, working at the plant sales, providing food and refreshments for meetings, managing membership, running the newsletter, and helping with the AV setup at meetings. Also donating and purchasing those plant sale plants and keeping our interest by asking challenging plant questions and sharing cultural information. It takes a village – for this too – to quote a famous person.



I tried an annual plant that was new to me this year, *Salvia guaranitica* 'Black and Blue'. It's very alluring with gorgeous and large blue flowers, which the hummingbirds also appreciate. It did well in a large pot on a sunny porch. I learned from my neighbor, who's very fond of gardens, but not so fond of working in them a lot, that this plant did much better in the ground than in a pot. And then I learned from a Wisconsin horticulture website that this plant makes tubers that can be overwintered. I'll have to try that. This variety has nice deep blue flowers, but there are other varieties with flowers in sky blue or rich purple.

The NARGS Seed Exchange is looming on the horizon. I communicated with Joyce Fingerut recently on email, and I understand that seed donations have been fewer than in the past. If you have seed to donate, you can find information in the current Quarterly (I just received mine the week of September 30). Seeds should be sent to Laura Serowicz by November 1. I've tried to collect a lot of seeds this year, so I've upped my seed donation from the past. I volunteered our chapter to package seeds, the task that we routinely do in December at KPL. We'll send information about that in the future, as details are in the planning stage. We learned by the hard work on doing the order fulfillment that it's better for the person ordering seeds to request substitutes of their choosing, rather than letting the order filler decide for them. A few people surprisingly filled out very few choices leaving pretty much to chance what seeds they received this year – not a good plan if you want plants that you will like and can grow!

Hope to see you at our fall meetings!



MEMBERSHIP

Mary Stauble, Membership Coordinator

Don't miss out on the plant of the month and all of our other benefits! If you still need to renew for 2024 the renewal form is at <http://www.acnargs.org/join.pdf> or join at a meeting. Check my email announcement of the newsletter link for your membership status. Contact Mary Stauble at mes2@cornell.edu if you have any questions.

PLANT OF THE MONTH :

Marlene Kobre, POM Coordinator

October is a tricky month for finding good candidates for our POM. So I'm grateful for the amazing range of beautiful fall planted bulbs. I wasn't intending to select a tulip—until, that is, I stumbled upon an email from Bluestone Nursery featuring a gorgeous photograph of the equally gorgeous Tulip Norah, which I had not previously seen offered in the major fall bulb catalogues. Here is the Bluestone description:

“The soft raspberry-pink flowers of Tulip Norah open wide with the sun to reveal plum purple centers encircled by a ring of misty white. Flowers nestle throughout the foliage blades for a stunning carpet of stars.”

The beauty of the flowers is not its only virtue. It is a short species tulip that blooms early, just when we are desperate for some reassurance that “spring is not far behind,” and its diminutive stature makes it perfect for growing in rock gardens, troughs, or other containers. The smaller species tulips are also more likely to be overlooked by foraging deer, and they are much more inclined than the hybrid tulips to naturalize and increase their numbers.

Following are the cultivation requirements:

Zones: 3-8

Bloom Time: Early spring (April- early May)

Height: 4-6”

Light and Soil: Full sun but will tolerate “mostly” sunny; needs well-drained soil.

Planting Depth and Spacing: Bluestone says at least 3” deep and 5” apart, but other sources advise a depth of 4”-5”.

I hope it performs well enough in your garden to lift your spirits, even on a cloudy day.

TUFA HUNT

Bill Stark, Tufa God

On 9/23 George Fearon, John Gilrein, Mary Stauble, and Bill Stark drove to the Iliion quarry to load up on tufa. Max Guardri has reshaped the dangerous to walk on tufa berm into a series of low rows separated by alleys that made it much easier and safer to find and load the tufa. We used a hand truck to move the tufa to our vehicles and this prevented any stress or injuries.

George brought an open trailer that was normally used for moving large lawn mowers, John loaded up the trunk of his car, and we rented a 24' Penske truck with a loading ramp. George had the best approach with his low easy-to-load trailer. The truck ended up costing us \$237 and we only used ½ of it, so I'll use a trailer next time. Max charged \$.50/lb for utility grade tufa and \$1/lb for nice pieces. Since we had all spent hours hand selecting our tufa, it was hard to argue that most of it was utility grade. We ended up paying \$1/lb for about ¾ of our stone. We bought 1,400lbs of tufa, enough for 5 or 6 towers. Everyone drove away pleased with the hunt.

John was a great companion to have on a tufa hunt. He helped everyone find tufa, he pushed while I pulled 300lb pieces up the loading ramp of the truck, and he prevented George from hurting his back when loading heavy pieces into the trailer.



CHAPTER SERVICE AWARD

Carol Eichler

2024 Chapter Service Award for John Gilrein Nominated by Carol Eichler on behalf of the ACNARGS Board. Do you have a “go to” person when you are stumped with a plant identification? I rely on our Chapter Chair John Gilrein. He is certainly one of the most knowledgeable plant persons in the Adirondack Chapter, not just for identifying rock garden plants but for just about everything else from native plants to a wide range of perennials and trees and

shrubs too. Nature walks with John become great learning experiences because he is able to identify many of the plants that we pass. John is a long-time member of both the Adirondack Chapter and National and has been serving as our Chair for longer than I can remember. (He didn't realize this position could be a lifetime appointment!) Our Chapter has thrived in his capable hands. I suspect he can't stand composting any pop-up seedlings because he's always bringing them to give away at our meetings. His generosity extends to sharing extras from his seedlings or mail order plants. He even contributes plants to the Heasley Rock Garden at Cornell Botanic Gardens. John's ambitious rock garden is always a work in progress, with new acquisitions every year. He's always willing to open his garden to visitors, as he has done on numerous occasions for our day trips. Of course, a visit requires a walk around his rural property to enjoy other plant delights, including my favorites - a growing collection of troughs and a shaded area ideal for thriving colonies of cyclamen. John's sharing of knowledge, plants, and leadership would be reason enough to nominate him for a Chapter Service Award but it's for the task he took on this year (2024) on behalf of the Chapter to fulfill the NARGS Seed Exchange, Phase 1 order fulfillment, that merits not just this Award but maybe even a gold medal. As he was to discover, there certainly were a myriad of challenges including finding a venue where the trays of seeds could be set up for a period of weeks, scheduling and lining up volunteers, the paperwork of recording, the mailing of over 600 orders, and many other details that needed to be tended to. In John's case, it also involved a total of over 1,000 miles of driving from his home in Syracuse to the base camp/work space in the Ithaca area. It was a huge commitment of time and energy on his part to see this project to completion and I'm proud to say his marriage is still intact! Thank you, John, for your leadership. So many of us take for granted all that's involved in keeping a Chapter going strong.

For all that you do, you are more than worthy to receive a Chapter Service Award.

NARGS & ACNARGS UPCOMING 2024 PROGRAMS

Just as the garden season ends, NARGS is offering several winter activities to keep your garden spirit going. The NARGS website (NARGS.org) is a great place to get details and the most up-to-date information.

First, now is your last chance to be gathering seeds for the seed exchange and to send to Laura Serowicz by October 26th. The much-anticipated online ordering begins December 15 with a preview available before then. And of course, our Chapter will gather to package seed sometime in early December, always accompanied by good food and good conversation.

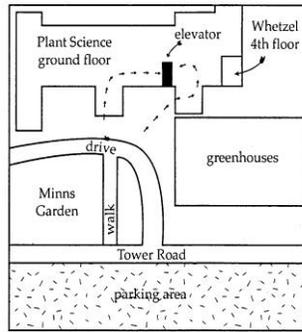
The dormant season also signals the time for NARGS Rocks!, 2 study days via zoom with four expert presenters. Be sure to mark these dates: November 16: The Ecological Rock Garden: Plant Preservation & Exotics; and January 25: Plant Propagation: from Top to Bottom. Each program begins at noon and is recorded so you have the option to watch live or at your leisure. The presenters are in the process of being finalized so you will definitely want to check the NARGS website for details. A fee is charged.

Lastly, there are the NARGS botanical tours. As of this printing there is still limited space available for [Spring Flowers of Tajikistan & Uzbekistan](#), a 12-day tour from April 2 – 13, 2025 and the promise of more tours to come. Tours are being explored to the Western Cape of South Africa in September 2025 and to the Drakenburgs Mountains in eastern South Africa in January 2026. NARGS botanical tours have proved very popular and they book quickly. Terry

Humphries has gone on several of them and can testify to the unique opportunity they offer to be guided through wonderful wildflowers in their native and often remote habitats.

All of these offerings are a benefit of being a NARGS (as opposed to a Chapter) member.

NOTE: As of now, we are meeting in-person at Cornell in the Whetzel Room and not recording the sessions. Note change of venue in the meeting announcement



During construction of the Plant Science Building, please use the entrance by the greenhouse, take the elevator to the 4th floor and turn right. The Whetzel Room is at the end of the long hallway.

CALENDAR OF SELECT AREA GARDEN EVENTS

For the latest information, visit the websites of these gardening organizations.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. Online class information:
ccetompkins.org

Finger Lakes Native Plant Society monthly meetings – a hybrid of in-person and zoom:
<https://flnps.org/> Recordings of past programs are available to view online.

Cornell Botanic Gardens: <https://cornellbotanicgardens.org/explore/events/>

Habitat Gardening in CNY, local Wild Ones Chapter: <https://www.hgcnny.org/>

Liberty Hyde Bailey Garden Club: <http://www.hort.cornell.edu/LHBGC/>

To have your garden event listed send all pertinent information to Susanne Lipari
sel3@cornell.edu

2024 ACNARGS BOARD MEMBERS AND CONTACTS

If you want to volunteer, we'd love to hear from you!

Chair (aka head honcho): John Gilrein, basecamp@alum.syracuse.edu

Program Coordinator: Terry Humphries, terryhumphries@gmail.com

Program Committee Members: Would you like to help? Share your speaker suggestions!

Secretary: Currently rotating amongst "Responsible People"

Treasurer (aka CFO): **Marlene Kobre**

Plant Sales Chair: Carol Eichler carolithaca@gmail.com

Plant of the Month: Marlene Kobre, mkobre@ithaca.edu

Membership: Mary Stauble, mes2@cornell.edu

New Member Hospitality: vacant

Newsletter Editor: Susanne Lipari sel3@cornell.edu

Wurster Garden Coordinator: Carol Eichler

Wurster Volunteers: Elaine Caso, Ellen Lane, Sheila Stone; Others always welcome! Contact Carol Eichler if you wish to be added to the email list.

Book Order Manager: New NARGS program to offer NARGS' members select books at deeply discounted prices. New Chapter position. Looking for a volunteer!

Webmaster, Program Tech: Craig Cramer, cdcramer@gmail.com

ABOUT US – ADIRONDACK CHAPTER NARGS

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, occasional 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), invitations to our garden day trips, 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.

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 a wealth of information including current and archived of Quarterly's, recordings of past study days and more. NARGS National also 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.

GREEN DRAGON TALES

Published eight times a year (Jan./Feb., March, April, May/June, July/Aug., Sept., Oct. Nov./Dec. Submit articles no later than the fourth Friday of the month preceding the monthly publication to Susanne Lipari, sel3@cornell.edu. Note: The next issue of *The Green Dragon* will be February/March 2025