



Newsletter

North American Rock Garden Society
Connecticut Chapter November/December 2016

JANUARY MEETING

Pruning Demo: Opening a Tree Canopy **Kevin Wilcox**

Sunday January 8, 2017 1pm
In the garden of Leslie Shields
25 Johnson Ave., Plainville, 06062.

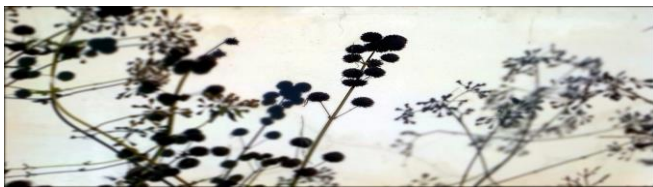
Kevin Wilcox will demonstrate thinning a small tree's canopy as well as expounding on other pruning topics of interest.

Dress for the weather. Snow postpones to a later date.

Directions: from I-84, take Rte.72 west toward Bristol. Take exit 1 Rte.177/N. Washington St. and turn right at end of exit. In about .6 mile, turn right onto Johnson Ave.

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SEED PACKAGING



The Chapter will once again be packaging seeds for the NARGS seedex at the home of Maryanne Gryboski in Franklin. Tentative date is Tuesday, **December 6th**. Anyone willing to spend a few hours helping is welcome and those who help are eligible to order an additional 10 packets of seed. Lunch is provided. Please contact Maryanne after Thanksgiving to verify date.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I look back over the past year's activities in the gardening world, a number of things stand out for me.

- Membership in numerous gardening clubs and organizations continues to diminish worldwide. We need to attract more and especially younger members to the "gardening fold". My concern is to bring them closer to the natural world so they delight in it and become stewards of it.
- The Tri-State meeting held October 16th at the NY Botanical Garden showed the glories of plants that beautify Greece in the wild.
- Nancy DuBrule Clemente gave a presentation to members of the Hardy Plant Society of her visit to several of England's public and private gardens. It was phenomenal! She will give a repeat showing (somewhere, sometime) so **do not miss it!** Her photos and talk gave a sense of the love the English have for gardens and the care they give them. She also touched on Britain's concern for pollinators with its movement to establish pollinator gardens across the country. Contrast that to the U.S. and the disregard for pollinators pushed by the likes of Monsanto, et al. Much of England remains agrarian, with the number of sheep and people nearly equal. (In the Netherlands, pigs outnumber people!) This talk prompted me to consider the way land is used for living within the U.S, e.g., our infrastructure and very minimal mass transit.
- With regard to my own gardens, the year has been strangely beneficial to them. A number of cardinal flowers have seeded in several areas of the yard, in gravel and in soil, not in standing water; and as I write this, a Julia Child rose still blooms as does my yellow alstroemeria and *Aster tataricus*.

~Ginny

PAUL WATERMAN GARDEN

By Maryanne Gryboski



Tsuga canadensis 'Abbot's Pygmy'.

September 30th and October 1st were overcast and threatening rain, but members and friends dropped in to tour Paul Waterman's garden and peruse his sales rows.

Angela Fichter and my sister, Barbara, who

was visiting

from Illinois joined me on 'day two', Saturday morning.

Paul took us around the gardens, pointing out plants of interest and answering questions. Besides the more established conifer garden bounded by the semi-circular drive, the lawn to the northwest of the house was dotted with wee little needled evergreens that I didn't remember



We fell in love with *Pinus mugo* 'Mitsch Mini'.

seeing there in spring of the previous year and I needed to watch my step as I walked about. Then we headed to the sales area, over a half dozen rows of needled and broadleaf evergreens as well as some deciduous woodies. Like kids in a candy store, I thought, picking out the oddly cute *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Habari'.



A perfectly inverted emerald bowl, *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Abbot's Pygmy'.

Although it's his hobby, Paul expressed interest in selling wholesale; should that venture take off, opportunities like this day may become a rarity. (And as if Paul's skill for rooting cuttings isn't enough, he continues to charm seeds into growth as evidenced by a full pot of *Soldanella alpina*. Sigh.)



There was a nice assortment of woodies to unload back home.

NARGS CT CHAPTER OFFICERS

CHAIR: Ginny Gingras / 21 Timber Ln. / Vernon, CT 06066 / 860.875.9865 / ginnygingras2013@gmail.com

VICE-CHAIR: Position open

SECRETARY: Barbara van Achterberg / 359 Silver Hill Rd. / Easton, CT 06612 / 203.261.2156 / bvanachterberg@yahoo.com

TREASURER: Sally Katkaveck / 82 Ashford Rd. / Ashford, CT 06278 / 860.974.2563 / sallybillkat@charter.net

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Maryanne Gryboski / 88 Eager Rd. / Franklin, CT 06254 / 860.822.6589 / strollgarden@aol.com

PROGRAMS: Please talk to one of the officers if you are interested in the Programs Chair position.

TRI-STATE MEETING October 16, 2016

By Barbara van Achterberg



The new crevice garden at NYBG. (Photos M Gryboski)

Held at the New York Botanical Garden for the third year in a row with free admission for members of the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut NARGS chapters, the Tri-state meeting was impressively organized by members of the Hudson Valley Chapter, notably Don Dembowski and Steve Whitesell, who made sure that we all had adhesive first-name labels that did not make holes in our sweaters. This paragon actually remembered my name, and I heard him greet several others by name also. This year there was a room in Ross Hall for sales tables and a room right across the hall for raffle donations and auction plants. Alex and Lynn Kenner, from the Hudson Valley Chapter, sold tickets and managed the raffle. The doors to these rooms were closed during the lectures, so none of the vendors had to stay outside in the chilly air to supervise their plants as in previous years.

The meeting was scheduled for 10:00 and fortunately my companion and I got there early because the plants for sale were already being snapped up. We got the last two pots of *Gentiana scabra*, the low-growing form with bright blue flowers.

Liberto Dario, whose full Greek name is Eleftherios Darios, gave his talks in the Ross Hall auditorium. This is an impressive large room itself with great acoustics and comfortable seats sloping downward. Liberto is a Greek with an American and British postgraduate education, and fluency in both languages. He works as a plant biologist/botanist, conducts botanical tours of Greece and sells seed online. He has botanized extensively throughout Greece.

His morning talk was *The Botanical Paradises of Greece*.

Greece has extreme variation in landscape and climate with the highest plant diversity in Europe. Some of the 6000 islands have almost a tropical climate. There is very high endemism (a new word in my vocabulary, the noun for endemic). Some plants grow only on one island. The beautiful *Campanula topaliana* grows only on a monastery wall in Peloponnese, the land of rocks. The mountains of central Greece include numerous examples of Dario's favorite genus, *Salvia*. *Stachys* is another genus that will grow from sea level to 8000 feet. In the higher elevations are numerous orchids. Mount Parnassus hosts *Paenonia parnassica*, deep red in color and very rare. The protected red deer can sometimes be spotted in these mountains. Along the northern borders are *Picea abies* and many alpine flowers. *Thymus capitatus* is the source of the famous Greek honey. *Paenonia clusii* smells of cinnamon. These were just a few of the hundreds of species Liberto showed us. When the lecture was over, we really needed to rest.

After a lunch break Liberto gave his second much shorter talk: *Olympus: the Mythical Mountain and Its Mythical Plants*. We learned that there are dozens of Mount Olympus peaks in Greece but the tallest and most famous is the mythical home of the gods. It is a round mountain with many, many peaks which was not conquered until 1931. Its rising levels are: Mediterranean maquis - like chaparral in our Southwest; fir tree and deciduous woodlands; meadows and slopes at montane levels; ravines and upper montane and subalpine levels; black pine forest; Olympus pine forest; alpine areas; and Plateau of the Muses.

Just a few of the plants found on Mt. Olympus are:

- *Lilium chalcedonicum*, a choice red lily from the fir tree and deciduous woodland area;
- *Viola delphinantha*, a rare, beautiful violet from the upper montane and subalpine levels;
- *Cerastium theophrastii*, the most famous alpine in Olympus, with very pretty white flowers, from the alpine screes.

You can stay overnight at the Plateau of the Muses, sleeping among the *Gentiana verna*, *Myosotis suaveolens*, and *Trifolium pallescens*.

The raffle and auction came next. There were enough raffle prizes that at the end everyone who didn't win at least one item got to take a book or plant. My driving

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FROM OUR MEMBERS



Photo by Steve Gryc

Judy King writes: You ran a photo of my 'North Hill' creeping phlox (see Newsletter, July/August 2016), a variety discovered by Joe Eck and Wayne Winterrowd growing wild in an old cemetery in Vermont.

This May, Steve and I spent a few days in southern Vermont and I was thrilled to notice in several old cemeteries carpets of creeping phlox creating a mosaic in shades of pink and white. Its native range is eastern and central United States, so maybe they are there naturally. It is a beautiful sight.

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Each year our chapter receives a portion of the seed which is left from the NARGS seed exchange. It is brought to meetings and members look through the leftovers and choose some; but there are always many packets that remain and they somehow end up at the back of a refrigerator drawer. This year was clean-out time and Jeana Richo agreed to take them. She recently reported that she opened all of the envelopes – and there were many – and sprinkled the seed throughout her gravel garden. It remains to be seen how this tactic will work but we'll certainly be interested in hearing about the results.

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IN MEMORIAM

Former CT NARGS Chapter member Dee Curry of Glastonbury passed away on October 6th. She was 94.

YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED

We have an opportunity to have Marcia Tatroe, from Colorado, as a speaker in September. We are wondering how large a turnout we might expect if she was scheduled for the Sunday of Labor Day weekend. Please contact Maryanne asap with your opinion on this scheduling.

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20 EASY ROCK GARDEN PLANTS FOR CT

Last August, Joyce Fingerut tasked local NARGS Chapters to compile a list of 20 easy to grow and easy to find rock garden plants for sun and shade. The following is an initial list drawn from suggestions from a very few of our members. Take the time to look it over; you may find many that you agree with and you may also wonder why your favorite isn't included. Either way, compile your own list of "easies", one plant or 20, and send your choices to Judy King, jdrakeking@comcast.net.

Alyssum saxatile (full sun, although it will bloom well with just morning sun)

Allium thunbergii 'Ozawa' (tolerates shade) or *A. cyathophorum* v. *farreri*

Anemone nemorosa (for the shade garden; summer dormant)

Arisaema sikokianum (though rather tall, very popular with Society members)

Crocus: species Crocus, esp. *C. tommasinianus* (self-seeds; tolerates summer shade)

Dianthus, esp. *D. simulans*, 'Edgehog,' *D. freynii*

Galanthus nivalis or *G. elwesii* (both tolerate summer shade)

Gentiana septemfida or *G. andrewsii* (both appreciate some shade)

Geranium sanguineum 'Nanum'

Heuchera cvs (there are sooo many color forms these days; 'Georgia Peach' is beautiful when backlit)

Iris, dwarf bearded

Jeffersonia diphylla (native) or *J. dubia* (Asian)

Narcissus 'Hawera'

Orostachys iwarenge

Phlox subulata (best in sun) or *P. stolonifera* (shade)

Primula acaulis or *P. kisoana* (spring sun; summer shade)

Sanguinaria canadensis (shade; sometimes goes summer dormant)

Saxifraga x urbium 'Variegata' (tolerates shade) or *S. paniculata*

Sempervivum, esp. *S. arachnoideum*

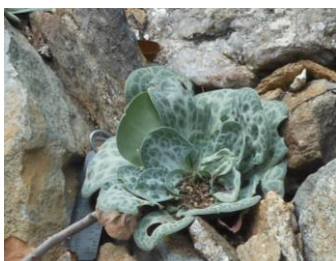
Tulipa: species tulips (sun; many tolerate summer shade)

companion gave me her prize which I had admired - *Chaenorhinum origanifolium*, a tiny snapdragon relative. (Thanks to Michael Hagen, the NYBG rock garden curator, for the correct ID.)

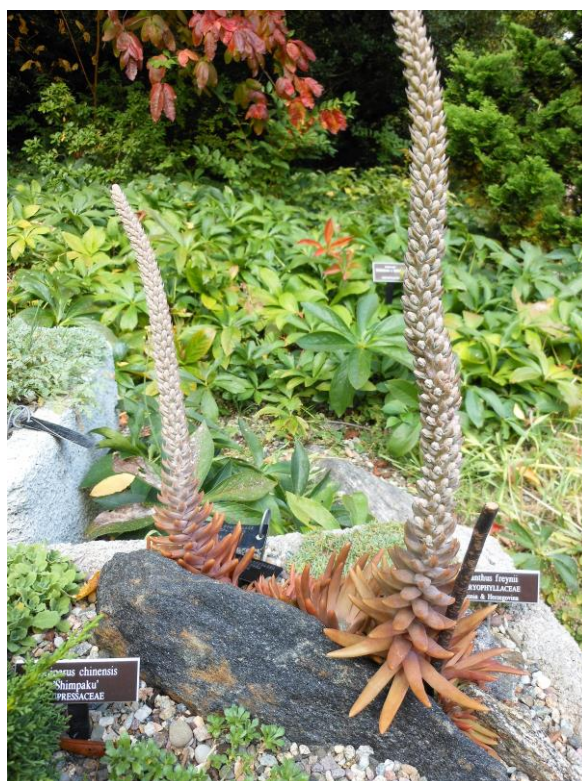
By the time the meeting ended, it was well after 2 pm, so Nancy and I decided to wait until the end of April or May to visit the rock garden, and instead drove back to Connecticut.



Phyllis Milano, Ginny Gingras and Marjorie Bingham view the troughs at the entrance to the NYBG rock Garden.



The mottled foliage of *Bukiniczia cabulica* caught everyone's attention; unfortunately, it is monocarpic.



A weirdly beautiful but unidentified *Orostachys* species in a trough at the NYBG Rock Garden. Keep an eye open for this one!



The exquisite fronds of three ferns in the rock garden. The center photo is Tagawa's holly fern, *Polystichum togawanum*; no tags could be found for those on each end and so their identification remains a mystery.