



# Newsletter

North American Rock Garden Society  
Berkshire Chapter

May 2005

## Next Meeting

**May 14, 2005\*, Saturday 10:30 am**

Berkshire Botanical Garden Exhibit Hall  
BBG is located 2 miles west of Stockbridge MA  
at the junction of Routes 102 & 183

**Chapter Business:** Show & Tell & Ask

**AM – Primulas**

**Richard May**

Owner of EverMay Nursery in Bangor, Maine, Richard will present primulas in the pot for our edification. His nursery specializes in primula species and hybrids hardy in New England. He overwinters them outdoors. He will have plants for sale at the meeting.

**Lunch** (BYO) We welcome dessert contributions.

**Seedling Sale!** –Please bring a few seedlings to share. Remember donors get first pick.

**PM – Special Garden Visits**

**Geoffrey Charlesworth, Georgeane Rousseau,  
Robin Magowan, Pam Johnson**

Directions and times will be given at the meeting.

Geoffrey Charlesworth is interested in plants. He grows them for the difference in species. He grows them for the difference in plants. Here is a rare opportunity to visit a great plantsman's garden- the consummate gardener obsessed.

We have seen Robin Magowan's garden later in the season. Now comes a chance to see it during alpine time. His garden will be flush with all manner of interesting specimens, set amid massive stoneworks.

Georgeane Rousseau will have a limited number of entries to her garden, which is also on tour for the Garden Conservancy that day. There is a wonderful rock garden (designed by Liz Toffee) that is coming along quite nicely (a la Tamsin Goggin).

Pam Johnson's wooded hillside features masses of daffodils, flowering trees & shrubs, a koi pond bordered by rock/ alpine gardens, small conifers and Japanese maples, beds of native and Asian woodland plants.

\*Note this is the second Saturday. The BBG is holding its big Mother's Day Plant Sale on the first. Please help support its efforts.

**Saturday, April 23** (note correction) CT NARGS Annual Chapter Tailgate Sale, 10 am. Presentations by John Bieber on *The Wonderful World of Daphnes* and Peter George on *Tuffa*.

**April 28-May1, 2005** American Primrose Society National Show at Boylston, MA (west of Boston). Angela Bradford, Paul Held, Ed Buyarski, Joanne & Fred Knapp. For further information contact: [Elaine Malloy](mailto:Elaine.Malloy@verizon.net) (914) 533-2661

**Friday and Saturday, May 6-7, 2005** Berkshire Botanical Garden Plant Sale - perennials, annuals, herbs, organic & heirloom vegetables, choice trees and shrubs, rare and unusual plants and more. <http://www.berkshirebotanical.org/>

**July 14-17, 2005** NARGS Annual Meeting *Newfoundland and Labrador Rock Garden of the North Atlantic* St. John's, Newfoundland <http://nflrockgardensociety.homestead.com/Introduction.html>

Upcoming BNARGS June 4\*

**Clifford Desch Bog Gardening**

**Container Bog Gardening Workshop**

Free but registration required-see last page



**Monthly Coffee/Tea Setup Coordinator:**

May John Spain

## Chairman's Message 4/13/2005

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**Elisabeth Zander**

"April is the cruelest month, breeding lilacs out of the dead land, mixing memory and desire, stirring dull roots with spring rain." T.S Eliot

What a surprise was that April weekend of 70 degree days after months of freezing raw! And the dirt cooperatively dried enough to start working a bit, here and there. The sandbed was perfect for planting out, as was the raised bed. And containers were also very easy subjects for digging. Next all the cleanup with rakes, and hoes and shovels made short work of time.

But my body felt it. That Monday and Tuesday I moved very slowly. My newfound zest from the warmth had obscured all reason and remembrance of sunblock. (Remember the sun – it not only lights your spirit, it burns your tender winter white skin.) And I worked until dark, which in this case happened around half past seven. By nine, I stiffened up harder than an epsom salt bath could melt. Note to the enterpriser: make a video for after- gardening- stretches to compensate for the big first day!

This year I am fascinated by *Eunomia oppositifolia*. That is the name as I learned it, but others file it under *Aethionema*. Of course I do see the resemblance. However, this seems to be the aristocrat of the genus. So I guess I will continue to set it apart by the name.

Usually the rock garden is full drabas reigning. Not so when this beauty is included. Think of Mme de

Pampadour in a sea green silk dress, added purple pearls, and blush alabaster headdress with lemony feathers. Well, ok, maybe just think Boucher's palette. Or take the more technical description- a dense cushion of glaucous obovate leaves; pinkish flowers in small terminal racemes. Whatever words one chooses to attach, it's a stunner. And not only is it early blooming, but adds intoxicating scent to the air.

Even when not in flower, the mat has interest in the leaves. Coin shaped, they open in opposite pairs (hence the species name *oppositifolia*), rotating 90 degrees from the last set. With some varieties, one may notice a slight pencil thin margining in purple. As a novice and before bloom, I thought at first they had some relation to sedums or anacampseros. However, their obvious inclusion in the Crucifer (Brassicaceae: mustard) family dismisses all other thoughts once the flowers open. The word *Aethionema* comes from aitho (to scorch), and nema (filament).

Place it in a well drained setting, and this Turkish delight will always bring a smile to spring. At my previous residence, the mat got upwards of 10 inches in diameter before it began to break. (This was many years in the growing.) At that point I divided and replanted. Cuttings may also be taken in summer, though it is very easy from seed. Hardiness has never been an issue. It tolerates heat and mugs as well as zone 4 cold. A fitting companion for *Androsaces* and *Douglasia nivalis* v. *nivalis*, be sure to give it a try if you have not already.

## Meeting Minutes April 2, 2005

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**By Norma Abel**

Thirty people were present on this rainy Saturday as Elisabeth opened our meeting. There was a large **Show and Tell**. Lori Chips had *Androsace sempervivoides* (which she donated to auction), a "Betty" *phlox* (from Dick Redfield), *Aleurites arizonica* and a lime/purple *phlox* that will probably be for sale next year at Oliver's Nursery. Tom Clark brought in a variety of double primroses that had been grown inside (although Jacques Mommens said he has them growing outside) for us to enjoy the fragrance. Elliot Jessen brought in *Daphne genkwa* and a primrose and a double trillium for auction. Elisabeth Zander showed *Erodium pleniflora* that has been blooming for an entire year. Dean Evans suggested the old lug nut wrenches

used in pairs, make for effective and efficient plant root ball dividers and demonstrated how this would work.

After a lively plant auction led by Peter George, Orlan Gaeddert entertained and delighted us as an auctioneer (claiming it was the first time he ever did such a thing, but many of us are sure he is a pro) for some books from his library.

Elisabeth announced: the USDA has granted another year's grace on requiring licensing stickers on plants and seeds imported from outside the country. This make is easier for individuals and small nurseries to import seeds. She was able to obtain some copies of Bobby Ward's "The Plant Hunter's Guide" for sale to members for \$32.00. Bobby was our afternoon speaker.

Our morning speaker was member Joe Strauch, who gave us a plant tour of Newfoundland alpenes

in bloom. Both he and his wife Betsy supplied the exquisite slides. In the afternoon Bobby Ward presented some modern plant explorers whose travels have found and introduced a wide variety of plants into our daily lives.

During the lunch break Elisabeth convened the Executive Board (Elisabeth Zander, Barbara Glastris, Robin Magowan, Tom Clark and Norma Abel; Pam Johnson was not present) to discuss several issues.

- Should we continue to require that members of BNARGS join NARGS? The conclusion after discussion was yes. We also decided to offer sponsorships for the NARGS membership fee (currently \$30) if it is a financial hardship for members wishing to join. Application for sponsorship should be made to the Board.
- How can we effectively attract additional new members? Several ideas were tossed around. We decided to try to participate in the Berkshire Botanical Garden Show and Sale during the first weekend in May. This requires the new brochure to be complete by then and some staffing for a table, perhaps with a couple of small planted troughs. The idea of doing a show was discussed. It is a very effective for the CT Cactus and Succulent Society to attract new members. Perhaps we could effectively use our September plant sale as a 'show' to attract new members. We would make the show open to the public and hope to get BBG to do some of the advertising of it in their publications to their members. Details of how/where to advertise, etc., are to be worked out.
- How can we help Elisabeth more? She is doing many things for the organization. With spring coming and the garden beckoning, it is not feasible for her to continue doing all of these things herself. Several suggestions were made and Norma volunteered to help with the newsletter. Unfortunately due to confusion and vacation, this won't start until the newsletter published late in June for the July meeting.

Prior to the plant sale each person who was contributing plants to the sale gave a brief description of the plants he/she had brought. Many of us thought this an excellent addition to the sale, as it provided further education in the treasures that

we could so reasonably obtain. Plant sale and auction netted \$197. Thanks and appreciation go to all our generous donors.

## Garden Etiquette Comes First

- Pets and children are not always appreciated. Ask permission beforehand.
- Gifts, particularly plants are always appreciated.
- Stay on paths. Look at everything.
- Question the authenticity of only two plants per visit. Always suggest rather than state.
- Do not weed. Ask permission before destroying (in your eyes) pests.
- If you praise a plant sufficiently your host may offer to propagate it for you. Do not take cuttings yourself.
- Leave the label inserted. Bend down and read it.
- Do not talk about your garden.
- Do not ask to use the restroom, prepare ahead.
- Taking photographs is a compliment to the garden, but be careful where you stand.
- Thank you notes are always appropriate, even more than emails.

### Please Welcome New Members

Kris Cottum  
Harvey Pessin  
Matt Olmsted  
George Moore and Joyce Nereaux  
Jacqueline Lee Connell  
Matt Mattus  
Valerie Harris

**Wanted:** Here we are again. The backlog of articles for the newsletter is slim. What can you do to help? Surely there is one plant that has charmed you, or perhaps enraged you. Let us hear about it. Or have you news of any magic tool garden helper? How about a hot new source for seeds or plants. Did you grow anything new this year? What

