



# Newsletter

North American Rock Garden Society  
Berkshire Chapter April-May 2007

## **BNARGS Next Two Meetings**

**Saturday, April 28, at 11:00 AM**

Stonecrop Gardens, 81 Stonecrop Lane,  
Cold Spring, NY

(845) 265-2000 \* [www.stonecrop.org](http://www.stonecrop.org)

We will be meeting at the Old Potting Shed at 11 AM, and then moving off to the plant sale and the garden tour. There will be a \$5.00 entrance fee to the Garden. **A more complete description of Stonecrop and the plant sale being held there is found on Page 10.**

## **AND**

**Saturday, May 5, at 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 The Expert, and any other relevant or irrelevant activities, as long as they are interesting.

## **Program**

**James Locklear, Curator of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum**, will present "On Fire for Phlox," which will be an overview of the genus based on his forthcoming book for Timber Press. Jim has been Director of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum since 1994. Prior to this he worked for five years as Director of the Dyck Arboretum of the Plains in Hesston, Kansas.

**Please go to Page 10 for more information about Jim and this outstanding program.**



## **Chairman's Message – 4/15/07**

*By Peter F. George*

Winter is over, but it's not yet spring. The weather has created a new season I call 'melancholy,' which is what best describes me these early April days. This has been a very difficult period for me, and I have struggled to get the newsletter out in a timely manner. I lost my mother two weeks ago after a long, lingering illness, but no preparation is capable of cushioning the blow, and there seems to be little that can replace the huge hole in my life that her death created.

While I went through the rituals of the Jewish funeral, I tried to focus on pleasant thoughts, and I kept returning to my gardens. The annual renewal that spring brings has always sustained me in the darkest times of January and February, but this highly anticipated renewal reminded me of the role my mother played in this very personal element of my life. Each year as I paced around the gardens, peering at the ground, almost willing the plants to show their heads above the soil, I was already planning the weekend I would bring up my mother (and my aunt and uncle who lived

with her in NY). They were the ones I wanted to impress with my skills as a grower and a garden designer. As much as I pretended that my obsession was really mine, it was actually theirs. Not much different than a child bringing home his gold star for some academic or athletic achievement, I sought their approval with my flowers and my rocks. Ironically, my mother didn't really pay much attention to the plants as much as she did to the aesthetic of the gardens, how neat and well tended they were. She focused on weeds when she visited, so I became an inveterate weeder, often sacrificing valuable and desirable seedlings in my haste to create a perfect palette for her to see.



But I will adjust, as we all seem to do, and this year I will be dedicating myself to keeping the gardens to her standards, but showing more tolerance for the desirable volunteers I've culled too often in the past. The newsletters she read with pride and some amazement will continue and I'll do my best to earn her gold star with each issue.

## NARGS Eastern Winter Study Weekend Summary

*By Elaine Chittenden*

I joined the Great Lakes chapter in the early 1990s when I began work as collections manager at the W.J. Beal Botanical Garden (<http://www.cpa.msu.edu/beal/>). I soon realized this group exemplified the plant collector "illness" in a most delightful way. Rock plant enthusiasts include some of the most curious people and consequently seem to be among the most learned gardeners I know. This was my first winter study weekend and overall, it was an excellent weekend for learning. The Genesee Valley Chapter really outdid themselves, especially since they are a new, (and now we know) very capable chapter. Overall the speakers

and workshops were excellent, the vendor room a great place to spend time and money, complete with NARGS book sales and time available for author/speakers to sign books. In addition to meeting some great people (members, vendors and speakers), the most valuable gifts for me are the lists of attendants with contact information and speaker's slide lists, portions of which are included here.

**Gwen Kelaidis** provided two evening slide presentations. The first was *Easy to Grow Alpines (The First 100)* and the second was *The Not So Easy (Next 100)*. I especially appreciated the comments on the plants that deer avoid (in Colorado), for example: *Penstemons* and *Digitalis obscura*. Her list of favorites from the first presentation -- "the ten I would grow if I could only grow ten"-- indicate that she is not able to grow ONLY ten. The second -- "for rock



gardeners with an increased sense of adventure"-- are included here as well. Professional photography, cultural notes (on humans and plants) and years of experience (NARGS member since 1976 and editor of the Bulletin for 11 years) made for a most inspiring presentation.

Here's the list from the first talk, **Easy to Grow "ten"**: *Androsace sarmentosa* 'Chumbyi' & 'Sheriffii', *Aquilegia flabellata* 'Cameo Mix' & 'Nana', *Daphne cneorum* 'Alba', 'Rosy Glow' & 'Grandiflorum', *Dianthus gratianopolitanus* type including 'Karlic', 'Minimounds', 'Rachel' 'Rose Dawn', 'Royal Midget' & 'Tiny Rubies', *Draba*

*rigida*, *Gentiana septemfida*, *Heuchera x brizoides* 'Bressingham Bronze' & 'Splendens', plus other *Heuchera* selections including 'Canyon' series, 'Dolce', 'Gold Strike', 'Chocolate Ruffles', 'Coral Bouquet', 'Petite Pearl Drops' & 'Regina', *Lewisia cotyledon* plus *L. x longipetala* 'Yellow Delight', 'Little Plum', 'Sunset Hybrids'; *Origanum rotundifolium* 'Kent Beauty', *Penstemon hirsutus* 'Pygmaeus', *Phlox subulata* types including 'Crackerjack', 'Coral Eye', 'Dolni Pena', 'McDaniel's Cushion', 'Millstream Jupiter', 'Millstream Daphne' & 'White Out', *Sempervivum* named selections, *Veronica pectinata* 'Rosea' & *Viola corsica*. **More challenging plants** from the second talk: *Adiantum venustum*, *Cyclamen coum*, *Cyclamen purpurascens*, *Daphne cneorum* var. *verlotii* x *arbuscula* ("has two bloom times"), *Dianthus alpinus* ("short lived, two years"), *Draba rigida*, *Epimedium grandiflorum* 'Nanum' & 'Purple Prince', *Erigeron leiomerus* (though Gwen claimed *E. caespitosum* "best for the east"), *Gentiana acaulis* 'Bielefelder', 'Caelestina' & 'Krebs', *Hacquetia epipactis*, *Jovibarba* cultivars 'Hot Lips', 'Sylvan Memory' & 'Cameo', *Omphalodes lojkae*, *Pellaea atropurpurea*, *Phlox kelseyi* 'Lemhi Midnight' & 'Lemhi Purple' and *Primula x julianae* 'Gina' & 'Wanda'.

Gwen is currently writing a book about hardy succulents, to be followed by a book on rock gardening for beginners.

Saturday morning began with **Emulating the East** by **Tim Gruner**, Curator of the Anderson Japanese Gardens in Rockford, IL (<http://www.andersongardens.org/>). Considered one of the most authentic Japanese gardens in the U.S., Anderson's admirable mission is "to open minds to a different culture while offering guests a place of peace and tranquility where they will find healing, renewal, inspiration and a re-energized soul". Tim first commented about his love of nature and the emotional impact instilled by his first encounter with the landscape of the Smoky Mountains. This same impact felt in

nature exists at the Anderson Japanese Gardens. Tim skillfully demonstrated how the Japanese Gardens at Anderson emulate gardens in Kyoto by contrasting construction and completed shots of the development of Anderson with existing gardens in Japan. Hoichi Kurisu, the designer of Anderson (<http://www.kurusu.com/>) brought in carpenters from Tokyo to assist with building construction. Like an art museum curator, Tim made obvious to us certain elements of design such as how geometric patterns of the buildings and hard surfaces are extended into the organic landscape and how plants "gesture" toward focal points. Anyone already familiar with Japanese landscape might conjure an image of trees leaning in a particular way, into a peninsula, toward water etc. It may look accidental but Tim explained how it is very intentional. The most amazing aspect of the design of these Japanese Gardens is that Kurisu used no involved computer drawings, rather, simple conceptual hand drawings. Examples shown were a watercolor of the streambed outline emphasizing natural patterns (wide on the outside or fast side of moving water, and narrower, slow inside of the curve) and footpaths with curves at irregular intervals. This was one of the most interesting design talks I have ever witnessed.

The morning continued with **Nicola Ripley** in **Bridging the Gap**. Nicola is an ecologist with 18 years experience in alpine ecology and now the



Director of Horticulture & Research at the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens at 8,200' in Vail, Colorado.

This was an introduction to the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens and a travel-log summary of her seed collecting trip through the Andes of Chile with Panyoti Kelaidis in 2001. She chronicled the places visited and plants seen emphasizing some

of the difficult to replicate conditions for the cultivation of Andean plants. Nicola showed stunning photography of stark rocky landscapes initially appearing devoid of plant life followed by high elevation gems like *Alstromeria pseudospathulata*, the stinging *Caiophora coronata*, rosulate violets or *Nassauvia revoluta*. She demonstrated the difficulty of bridging the gap between studying the ecology of plants growing their natural setting and replicating their growing conditions at home, the Holy Grail for rock gardeners intent on growing plant X. This trip, partially supported by NARGS, brought back seed intended for cultivation at Veil. Luckily all the seed has not yet been sown and the suggestions from the audience during the question and answer period will be applied.

The morning ended with one of three workshops that were repeated in the afternoon. I was sorry I did not attend Soil Mixtures with the Chair and MC of this weekend, **Michelle Jones Ham**. She was very capable and pleasant in her leadership roles and I heard many positive comments about her workshop. **Plant Selections for Oriental Gardening** by **Al Pfeiffer of Oriental Garden Supply** in Bloomfield, NY provided a relaxed “I really like this plant” presentation using slides from an earlier trip to Japan. Trough Planting with **Betsy Knapp**, owner of **Hypertufa Troughs** in Rochester and weekend vendor, was by far the most interesting as well as entertaining workshop for me. From start to finish, she prepared a trough using tufa and two 3” pots bought from Alpines Mont Echo in the Vendor Room. Her favored soil mix is named ‘Aquasoil’ (NOT to be confused with the soil moisteners that turn to evil jelly. You can find that particular one at anyplace that sells hydroponics planting supplies. She prefers it because of the weight issue)



seemed new to most folks (all of this was new to me) and she demonstrated just how much soil (and roots) one can pull off a *Saxifraga* to make 5 plants from one. The result was a finished, very mature-looking trough with two vertically placed pieces of tufa.

In the afternoon THE experienced gardener himself, **Rex Murfitt**, presented **The Experienced Gardener**. Rex is also an author, photographer, lecturer, is well traveled and trained as a nurseryman. What more could we ask for?! All of his background, especially the well-traveled aspect, made for a very enjoyable presentation. He showed well-tended private, public and commercial gardens, highlighting some of his favorite plants and cultural notes about them. The point here was the incredibly diverse methods of how people cultivate rock plants, including “melting tufa” (evidenced by a forty year old tufa planting), stacked troughs, concrete pots and crevice work to name a few. Having coauthored Creating and Planting Garden Troughs in 1999, Rex recently (2005) authored Creating and Planting Alpine Gardens. He now grows alpines at home in Victoria, B.C.

**Carl Heilman II**, a renowned photographer, who has lived in the Adirondacks for almost 30 years presented **Wild Vistas**. This dynamic computer driven multimedia image presentation (what used to be called simultaneous projectors with music) made for smooth digestion after the banquet dinner. His talents combined a life long respect and love of the Adirondacks with an acute photographic ability that touched us all.

The speaker who traveled the farthest distance to share two presentations with us was **Henrik**

**Zetterlund.** Saturday evening he provided an introduction to **Gothenburg Botanic Garden** (Sweden), his place of employment since 1974 and the last presentation on Sunday was on *Corydalis*. Henrik is a horticultural botanist whose work responsibilities have involved the care of alpine and bulbs in what has remained a public garden. Established in 1910, it was named for and administered by the City of Gothenburg. We saw that Gothenburg is well known for its rock gardens, which are divided into Asian, European and American sections. The most recent (2003) addition is Flora Hellenica where rock plants of Greece are grown. In addition to the rock gardens Gothenburg has a Japanese glade and about two hundred species and twice as many cultivars of rhododendrons on display. For more information see [http://w3.goteborg.se/botaniska/engelska/english\\_start.html](http://w3.goteborg.se/botaniska/engelska/english_start.html).

If you missed this weekend or Henrik's second talk on *Corydalis*, you might want to consider buying the book he coauthored with his taxonomist colleague Magnus Lidén: *Corydalis. A Gardeners Guide & Monograph Of The Tuberous Species* (1997). Considered a large genus (over 400 species), its center of origin is in China. Currently the most popular in cultivation appear to be the tuberous species, mostly from southwest Asia and the eastern Mediterranean. This talk was a great lesson on the diversity within the genus, with 7 sections and over 50 species with numerous subspecies and cultivars shown growing in the wild and under cultivation. Although I like these plants, I have to admit I had information overload by this time Sunday, and might retain more by having a look at the book. It is available for \$39.00 for NARGS members at their book service:



<http://www.nargs.org/libry/bookstore.html>. One review said "Perhaps it is the light-handed mix of science and friendly talk that makes the difference" and Henrik's talk definitely supports that comment. Magnus Lidén is a curator at the botanic garden of the University of Uppsala. He has published extensively on the Fumariaceae, the family including *Adlumia*, *Corydalis*, *Dicentra*, etc. He describes new species as well, evidenced by *Corydalis zetterlundii* named for Henrik, and undoubtedly contributed to placing *Dicentra spectabilis* (bleeding heart) into the genus *Lamprocapnos*. Don't you just love name changes? For a listing of Magnus Lidén's publications and links to the botanic garden at the University of Uppsala see [http://www.botan.uu.se/magnus\\_hemsida/publ.html](http://www.botan.uu.se/magnus_hemsida/publ.html).

**A Notable Achievement-Growing Hardy Orchids** was the first talk on the last day (Sunday) by **Bill Mathis Ph.D.** He started The Wild Orchid Company in 2001, focusing on the production and sales of North American, European and Asian terrestrial species, hardy in southeastern Pennsylvania. Like many other speakers at this event he has written a book as well: *The Gardener's Guide to Growing Hardy Perennial Orchids* (2005). An experienced observer and grower, Bill provided a well-organized presentation on 1) how to grow these plants successfully and 2) the incredible interspecies and intergeneric hybrids he is creating. Before covering cultural specifics on a per species basis, Bill shared that there are over 200 types of hardy orchids in North America and that the most important cultural factors are a well-drained soil and low nutrients. This is why all of the orchids he grows have

between 50 to 70% sand or perlite and leaf or wood chip compost in their soil mix, with the exception of *Bletilla*, the only one benefiting from composted manure. He then covered the orchids he grows by groups based on water need: upland (*Cypripedium acaule* and others), transitional damp (*Habenaria*) and wetland types (*Calopogon* and rose pogonia). Light exposure, pH, percent and type of sand and moisture requirements for a dozen species was provided in his handout. Although I knew orchid genera are successfully crossed “like fleas in a barrel”, I was impressed to see that Bill is crossing *Bletilla* with everything (*Calopogon*, *Aerethusa*, *Calanthe* and *Spathoglottis*). Anyone truly interested in cultivating these plants might strongly consider buying his book available at <http://www.wildorchidcompany.com>. Then you can ask others “do you *Habenaria*?”

**Tiny Treasures** was the talk voted (by me) most likely to change your view. Prior to this talk I was one to dismiss Hosta because there are just too many and those cultivar-crazed people get silly about them. I could well relate to Tony Avent’s Plant Delights catalog cover a few years back featuring “America Held Hosta”. But this



presentation was incredible! Who else would you want telling you about Hosta than Mike Shadrack, British horticultural speaker, photographer and co- author of The Encyclopedia of Hostas. He shared the charm of dwarf and

mini hostas, their special needs (slug control), container growing and selection. My favorite, of the reasons provided for growing small hosta, was that more types of small hosta can be grown in the same area as a few of the larger ones. The American Hosta society judges size by the leaf dimension: large is 15” x 12”, medium is the size of ‘Halcyon’ (one that I can remember) and small is 3” x 2”. Of the dozens of cultivars shown the ones noted on my handout were ‘Lemon Lime’ as it is “easiest to grow and divides regularly”, ‘Polecat’, ‘Apple Court’, ‘Cat’s Eyes’, ‘Tiny Tears’ which Mike says is the tiniest and ‘Tick Tock’ a thick leaved variety. There was much discussion about slugs (and slug pellets, not of the Purina type) with non-toxic controls such as nematodes, a mulch of coffee grounds, eggshells and grit; melon or citrus peels (they love the pith) and WD-40 sprayed on the outside of pots for those who grow them in pots. A number of small companion plants were suggested including: mosses, *Pulmonaria* ‘Majesty’, ginger (the European being the shinier, next to our native *Asarum canadense*), *Hepatica*, *Epimedium versicolor*, dwarf primulas, *Ajuga* and even lettuce. Spring bulbs such as dwarf *Narcissus*, *Crocus*, *Muscari*, *Anemone blanda* and *snowdrops* were suggested as well. According to Mike the largest retail collection of Hosta “in the world” is WadesGardens of Bellville, Ohio or <http://www.wadegardens.com>.

## The Alpine Look: Revising a Rock Garden – Part 2

By Robin Magowan

An art of garden miniatures tends ultimately toward plants so small as to be invisible to all but their acolytes. To some of us, these specks represent nothing less than the souls of the plant kingdom. The troughs where most of them reside, on a bench, or astride a waist-high wall, are our treasure chests, repositories of the sacred. Still, some gardeners may be right in viewing a

trough as a confession of failure, unintegrated as it is in the greater design.

That's where a crevice garden comes into play. Inserted in a gleaming crack, an *Asperula* makes not only a gorgeous display, but may even survive. By arresting the eye, it can bring the surrounding micro-culture into focus. Higher



still, in an inch of added soil atop a wall, even the tiniest *Draba* can add a staccato note to a medley of gleaming succulents.

Rock gardeners are internationalists. Our ideal resembles the political one of the Czech writer Milan Kundera, "the greatest diversity in the smallest of spaces." How I sustain such diversity without the garden becoming "itsy-bitsy," or worse, an over-run mess, is the challenge I constantly face. The facts of seasonal succession demand that each new surprise be layered on top of another. In an alpine lawn a single weed can throw the entire composition off-kilter. That's why scale is so paramount, for the possibilities of balance, and ultimately of order that it creates. Scale does not have to be consistent, or even continual, but the smaller I set it, the more alpine the illusion.

In nature's meadow, tallnesses overtop one another. In an alpine lawn, as I crawl about,

seedlings in hand, I may feel I'm stitching the threads of a carpet; only it's bulbs and plants rather than so many knots per square inch. Still, the principle remains: the tighter the weave, the more intricate the carpet. But diversity provides cover for a variety of weeds. How do I distinguish an out-of-blossom *Trifolium* from its invasive clover cousin?

For that matter, how do I feel about weeds? I can't help but admire the ingenuity with which they infiltrate, insinuate themselves. Without them would I ever get down on my knees? There, crawling about, I'm at one with a more visible flora. It's not working I'm doing so much as it is playing in an adult version of a sandbox. Rising to my feet, some moments later, I'm somewhere else, almost like a hawk hovering, wondering where to drop.

I have been talking about the planned alpine meadow. There is another kind of meadow, or mess if you want, that inevitably takes over as the garden matures. I can, to be sure, stand back and let my tap-rooted thugs battle it out, toe to toe. These collisions of form, of foliage, of blossom color, are what a good-sized meadow is about. But another sort of wind-rippled meadow can be brought about by adding a scattering of the two milk-white *Androsace lactea* and *lactifolia*, to the buns, cushions, domes and small hummocks. Their several-inch-tall plumes quickly populate a meadow, lovely enough dancing in late spring to create the illusion of something actually alpine. Since this *Androsace* grows on almost no soil, it can extend the garden space and make it seem more floriferous.

Though rocks have given their name to our vocation, we tend to accept them somewhat grudgingly, however essential they are to the alpinists we treasure. Tightly wedged in the parallel lines of a crevice garden, they provide the background warmth, the cool root run and sharp drainage that so many alpinists require. But the structure is one best concealed; I want to admire

plants, not minerals: the orange flames of a *Glaucium* exploding from a high crack among massed boulders; a mat spilling over stone in a waterfall of color.

In the mountains a bare patch of earth offers a relief to the flowering spectacle. In a garden, though, unfilled earth presents an accusation of deficient imagination. I prefer to think of the scattered rockwork as a species of punctuation: stopping, isolating, setting off, and lending color as contrast, or as subtle complement. Think of the silvery foliage of an *Artemisia* spilling over a black boulder; or white limestone in its starkness setting off the gray, green and pink of an *Asperula*, a *Lamium*, a flowering *Prunus* as the same rocks do on Mount Parnassus. Most useful in concealing stone are plants like *Erigeron scopulinus* and *Arenaria tetraquetra* that adhere so closely to a flat rock as to express their smallest ripples. Even the most convex of boulders will usually contain tiny clefts where I can stop the eye with a *Sempervivum*. A still more gorgeous transformation comes in the process of releasing a small battalion of saxifrages on a shaded moss-drenched outcropping. I plaster them on flat and somehow they stay rooted and, to my amazement, go on seeding themselves into what I had thought of as bare rock.

What is it about these tiny plants that make us their slaves? Much of it, I suspect, has to do with the mystery of the alpine world that they embody. In a rapidly shrinking world, mountains constitute one of the greatest refuges for diversity. That this refuge is under attack from a number of quarters, not least climate change, makes it all the more imperative that we integrate as many threads as



*Artemisia schmidtiana nana*

photo: Iza Goroff

possible of their being in our daily lives. In growing the plants it is their mountain world in all its remoteness and difficulty that we honor. If that puts us on the frontier of the gardening world, so much the better. Gardening, as we do it, is more about asking questions than finding solutions. However much we scheme with a design, a garden at its best has an accidental quality. The single plants form the colonies and let you know where they are happy. We learn by putting ourselves down on their level in that

extraordinarily different plant space they occupy and trying our best to listen to what they are telling us. A rock garden is where all this happens; a good enough reason to be out in it, taking it in, as much as I can be.

## Minutes of Board of Directors March 3, 2007

Peter George met with Board Members as well as interested members after lunch. Since the Berkshire Chapter will be hosting the Winter Study Weekend in 2008 there were many items to discuss. Whether to have it in the usual January time slot or to move it up to the later part of March involves many factors. The proposed theme will be “Rock Gardening with Undependable Snow Cover.” Initial work has been done to find hotel space in Hartford, and both January and March are still viable options. Peter discussed this with the National Board of Directors in Rochester and they have no problem with our changing the time of the meeting. National does request that we do not have the same speakers that have been engaged for meetings to be held after ours. Many speakers are available, so that should not be a problem.

Hartford should be available to drivers from many regions, and the close proximity of air and other transportation make it an easy destination. Hartford also offers many cultural opportunities. We are looking into letting people come for all of the weekend or just for portions of it and they will pay accordingly. Vendors will be available in late March and it will be convenient for people to buy plants and it will be easy to keep them for the short period until they can be planted outside.

It was agreed that publicity and advertising are very important to the success of this effort. Lori Chips thinks she can get an announcement in Oliver's newsletter and feels we need to make handouts available. It was thought to be a good idea to have vendors as speakers also.

The new color newsletter is not financially viable. There was not enough money made from plant sales last year to cover the printing and distribution of the newsletter by regular mail. The possibility of sending the newsletter by e-mail thereby saving postage and printing expense was discussed. Peter announced that the newsletter is posted online on our website about a week before it reaches the members. It was requested that this information be listed along with the website address in the next newsletter.

Various items were discussed as to how we could increase the income from plant sales. We will be having some meetings away from the Berkshire Botanical Garden and will not have the facilities to have our usual number of plant sales. Peter will appoint a small committee to help him look into a rare plant auction, or a sale in conjunction with the Berkshire Botanical Garden, and/or a seedling sale in autumn, etc.

Dues are still \$10 and \$12.50. A small increase was not thought to be sufficient to meet our rising newsletter costs.

Some positions have recently been filled. Carol Hanby is the new Secretary. Joe Berman has agreed to take care of the Audio Visual position

when he can make the meetings. Harold Peachy is the new Vice Chair and will make the arrangements for the annual dinner and fill in the absence of the President. Cliff Desch has volunteered to be Proof Reader. We still need a Meeting Recorder and Peter will appoint a Nominating Committee.

*Carol Hanby, Secretary*

## ***2007 BNARGS Program Schedule***

**June 2** – Jody Payne, Curator of the Rock Garden, NY Botanical Garden, will discuss her horticultural interests and the state of the Rock Garden.

**July 7** (Tentative Date) – Picnic and Program at Elizabeth and Rod Zander's gardens in Goshen, CT.

**August 12** – Ellen Hornig, owner of Seneca Hill Nursery, will present a program on *Cyclamen*. She will also bring a selection for sale.

**September 8** – Tom Clark, originally scheduled for this date, will be unable to attend due to work requirements. We will announce the new program and speaker at the May 5 meeting.

**October 6** – Janis Ruksans, world-renowned bulb propagator from Latvia, will present "Growing *Corydalis*" at the Berkshire South Regional Community Center.

**November 3** – Bill Mathis, owner of *The Wild Orchid Company*, will present a program on GROWABLE terrestrial orchids. In addition, he will have a supply for sale to our members. This meeting is our Annual Luncheon Meeting, and will be held at the Berkshire South Regional Community Center again.

## Stonecrop Gardens

Stonecrop Gardens is located in Cold Spring, NY and was originally the home of Anne and Frank Cabot; Stonecrop became a public garden in 1992 under the direction of Caroline Burgess.

At its windswept elevation of 1,100 feet in the Hudson Highlands, Stonecrop enjoys a Zone 5 climate. The display gardens cover an area of approximately 12 acres and incorporate a diverse collection of gardens and plants, including woodland and water gardens, a grass garden, raised alpine stone beds, cliff rock gardens, and an enclosed English-style flower garden. Additional features include a conservatory, display alpine house, pit house with an extensive



collection of choice dwarf bulbs, and systematic order beds representing over 50 plant families.

In addition to the garden tour, Maria Galletti of Alpines Mont Echo and Harvey Wrightman of Wrightman Alpines will have an extensive selection of their unparalleled inventory for sale.

## May 5 Program Notes

James Locklear will be presenting two programs on the 5<sup>th</sup>. The morning program will be titled "On Fire For Phlox," and will be followed by lunch (please bring some dessert items) and our first real plant sale of the year.

The afternoon program will be a brief taste of "Garden Treasures from the Great Plains." In this brief program he will show examples of some of the wonderful rock plants of this region, and talk about his work to bring these plants into cultivation.

Jim's professional interests center on horticulture and botany. As a horticulturist, he has introduced several Great Plains wildflowers into commercial nursery production. As a botanist, he has conducted studies of imperiled plants for The Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He is actively involved in the American Public Gardens Association.

Jim enjoys writing about plants, and has published articles in *American Gardener*,



*American Horticulturist*, *American Nurseryman*, *Horticulture*, *NEBRASKAland*, *Perennial Plants*, *Plant Conservation*, and *Wyoming Wildlife* magazines. He contributed two chapters to Rock Garden Plants of North America, published by Timber Press in 1996, and is currently writing a book on the genus *Phlox*, also for Timber Press. Jim grew up in Kansas City. He has a BS degree in biology from Central Missouri State University and a MS in Plant and Soil Science from Southern Illinois University. He and his wife Lynn live in Lincoln, Nebraska.

## **Two Rhododendrons To Consider**

*By Elliot Jessen*

*Rhododendron dauricum* and *R. mucronulatum* are closely related species that are widely grown on both coasts of the U.S. They are noted for their rosy purple early springtime flowers. In the wild *R. dauricum* is distributed across eastern Asia, through Siberia, Mongolia and Korea to

Hokkaido Island in northern Japan at various altitudes. As you might suspect, *R. dauricum* is a very hardy species, likely able to survive at least to -35 degrees F. In my garden it has only had to survive -26 degrees F. and then it flowered normally. *R. dauricum* can be distinguished from *R. mucronulatum* by its usually fragrant



evergreen to semi-evergreen foliage. The leaves on my plants tend to be 1 – 1 ¼ “ long and about ¾ “ wide. Plant height after 30-40 years is 3-4 feet in partial shade.

Flowers can be rosy purple to almost pink and normally arrive with the daffodils in late March to early April. There are doubles and semi-doubles plus white and pink forms in the trade. All of these have been used in hybridizing, particularly by Weston Nurseries and Dr. Gustav Mehlquist of the U. of CT. There are many hybrids, the best known of which is *R. PJM*, introduced by Weston in the 1950s.

*R. mucronulatum* has similar distribution to *R. dauricum* but extends further south in Japan and Korea but seems to have similar hardiness. It is fully deciduous, which erroneously led it to be referred to as ‘the Korean Azalea’ in the trade. *R. mucronulatum*’s leaves are somewhat longer and narrower than *R. dauricum* and are sharp at both ends. They usually attain a nice golden autumn color as well. I do have *R. mucronulatum* seedlings planted with my *R. dauricum* but the majority of my experience is with the *R. mucronulatum* selection ‘Cornelle Pink’ and its seedlings. This variety does best in an open situation grows 6-8 feet tall in 30+ years. It seems to be typical of mature *R. mucronulatum* in that it does best if pruned occasionally. White forms are also found in the trade. Warren Berg introduced a fine dwarf form from Cheju Island, Korea about 30 years ago. Much more slowly growing and very compact, it has done very well for me. There are several others, including *R. ‘Crater’s*

Edge,’ and *R. ‘Mahoganii’* the latter of which has not done particularly well for me.

Both of these species are well adapted to our northeastern climate and tolerate not only cold but also heat and drought once well established. They are good additions to almost any collections.



- Page 1, *The Vernal Pool*, Abigail Rorer  
<http://www.theloneoakpress.com/vernalpool.htm>  
 Page 2, *Androsace sarmentosa ‘Chumbyi’*  
[www.evermaynursery.com/store/rock-garden-plan...](http://www.evermaynursery.com/store/rock-garden-plan...)  
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<http://www.rmrp.com/>  
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<http://faculty.etsu.edu/mcdowelt/Pictures%20Use/Cypripedium%20acaule>  
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<http://www.hostahosta.com/images/OrangeMarmalade.jpg>  
 Page 7, *Androsace lactea*,  
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 Page 8, *Artemisia schmidtiana nana*  
[http://www.nargs.org/potm/potm\\_oct98.html](http://www.nargs.org/potm/potm_oct98.html)  
 Page 10, *Stonecrop Alpine house, early Feb.*  
[http://www.stonecrop.org/garden\\_highlights/alpines.php](http://www.stonecrop.org/garden_highlights/alpines.php)  
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[http://www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org/potd/2006/02/rhododendron\\_dauricum.php](http://www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org/potd/2006/02/rhododendron_dauricum.php)

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