

# Newsletter

**North American Rock Garden Society**  
**Berkshire Chapter April 2011**

## Next Meeting:

**Saturday, May 14, @ 10:30 AM**

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

**AM: Chris Chadwell:**

*Paradise on Earth - The Beautiful  
Alpines of Kashmir*



Lunch – BYO

We welcome dessert contributions. Lunch  
will be followed by Show & Tell, a plant  
sale and an auction

**PM: Chris Chadwell:**

*Growing Himalayan Rock Garden Plants*



More about Chris Chadwell on P. 8



## MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

The first couple of months of this year are off to a good start for both NARGS and BNARGS. As the newly appointed chairperson of the Berkshire Chapter, I was asked if I were willing to participate in a "think tank" on how to increase membership in NARGS. While some of the easier suggestions have already been implemented, others will be discussed and voted upon by the board of NARGS, to determine the ones that are most important to implement. If you are wondering what this has to do with you, the answer is plenty. First, if you have any additional suggestions that would help membership at the chapter or national level, this is your chance to speak up and let me know. Secondly, the more NARGS meets the needs of its members, the more membership enriches our gardening lives.

For me personally, one of the benefits is being able to contact and visit other rock gardens around the country. As I wrote this article, I was in a hotel in Santa Fe, NM. Prior to my trip I contacted a couple of NARGS members in the area to find out if many of the deserts are in bloom this time of year (most are not, but I have

a picture of one to identify later). Sam Hitt, of *The Succulent Garden*, was kind enough also to let me know that if I were expecting warm and temperate weather, I should be more prepared for cool and windy this time of year. It is warmer and sunnier than Ballston Spa. I am enjoying it out here. I have been taking in local sites such as the Santa Fe Farmers Market in addition to visiting the more touristy places. Ironically, I stopped by one booth where I saw a trough nicely planted with semps in addition to more standard market. It turns out that that the guy behind the booth was Sam from *The Succulent Garden*. I will be visiting his nursery and probably a few others before I fly home.

Erica Schumacher

## MOUNTAIN PLANTS OF THE NORTHEAST - PART 2

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM CLARK

Higher still, the spruce and fir yield to the harsh elements, at first seeming merely to brace themselves against the wind, then huddling together in scattered groves and misshapen masses in sheltered depressions, in the lee of boulders, and in anything else that offers shelter from the savage wind. This zone of dwarfed trees is the scrub forest or krummholz, German for “crooked wood”, and reaches its limit of more or less continuous coverage between 4,800 ft. and 5,200 ft. The gnarled trunks of balsam fir and black spruce (*Picea mariana*) and the occasional more adventurous paper birch dominate the vegetation, often bare on the windward side with live growth extending leeward like banners or windswept waves, frequently much lower than knee high. In this transition zone a few woodlanders from the lower slopes find shelter enough to eke out a living, and a handful of plants from higher elevations provide a tantalizing tease of what is just ahead along the trail.

Emerging from these elfin forest remnants we find ourselves in the alpine zone. Few mountains in the northeast are high enough to support true alpine vegetation but a small handful of peaks in New York and Vermont reach such elevations. However, it isn't until we get into the White Mountains and the highest peaks of Maine (Katahdin in particular) do we find any truly significant expanses of alpine habitat. The largest parcel and the most interesting, from a floristic standpoint, is the roughly eight square mile swath draped across the Presidential Range in the Whites. Almost laughable compared with the thousands of square miles of alpine habitat found in the Rockies, Cascades and Sierras, our scattered scraps are, nonetheless, unique floristic islands, relicts of a post-glacial arctic-alpine flora. It is tempting to think that many of the plants that populate these scattered outposts are unique and found nowhere else. To be sure, a few enter into this category; many, however, are common in the tundra, hundreds of miles to the north, where the harsh elements force the boreal forest to relinquish its arboreal aspirations yielding a very similar environment supporting a similar flora. How plants came to populate these mountaintops and how the species that exist there today came to be marooned lies in the relatively recent geological past and the most recent glaciation.

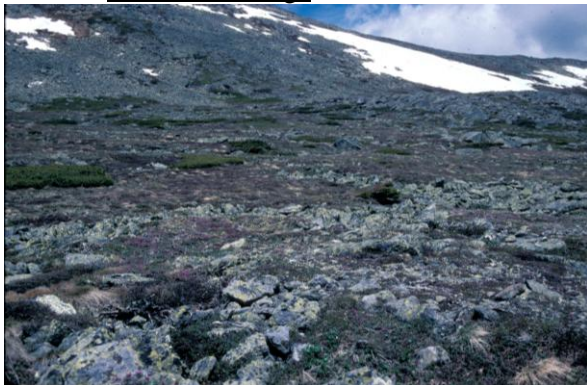


Mt. Monroe, NH

Broadly simplifying a process that has been active for many millennia, and continuing today, (as the climate warmed and the retreating Laurentide ice sheet exposed bare ground), plants began their inevitable colonization northward and westward from refugia to the



south and east of the ice sheet. Many of the arctic-alpine species found atop our higher peaks today closely followed the glaciers (effectively remaining one step behind them, but at the same time staying one step ahead of the forests) which were also colonizing northward. As the climate moderated further, trees progressively colonized more northerly latitudes and higher elevations, slowly but surely displacing the arctic-alpine species similarly northward and upward. Eventually forests filled in the lowlands between the mountain populations and the northerly populations, resulting in the physical and genetic isolation of the former, leaving the disjunct “islands” that remain today. As global climate change causes further atmospheric warming, the plants existing on these arctic-alpine islands are in a precarious predicament: unable to move northward or upward to access suitable habitat, this is their last stand. For a comprehensive and accessible discussion of post-glacial life in North America I highly recommend E.C. Pielou’s After the Ice Age.



Alpine Zone – Presidentials

Few other alpine areas in North America have likely been studied for a greater length of time, or more comprehensively, than that of the Presidentials. For nearly two centuries a steady stream of botanists and naturalists have been drawn to this range capped by 6,288’ Mt. Washington. The NARGS group visiting this June is part of that continuum. Cutler, Tuckerman, Huntington, Oakes, Boott, Bigelow, Peck and many others are amongst those who have scoured the mountains collecting and documenting their discoveries. Peppered across maps and throughout botanical texts, their names are commemorated in several mountain place

names, as well as in more than a few plant names.

The most common sedge in the alpine zone, Bigelow sedge (*Carex bigelowii*), is named for Jacob Bigelow, a nineteenth century medical doctor and botanist. Also named for Dr. Bigelow is a prominent “grassy” terrace on the southerly flanks of Mt. Washington called Bigelow Lawn, the most expansive of the so-called lawns in the Range. These lawns, at first glance, seem to be all there is growing amongst the shattered chunks of mica schist and gneiss. Of the roughly 110 species of higher plants in the alpine zone, approximately one third of them are sedges, grasses or rushes. Even when visited around the summer solstice, peak season for viewing many of the choicest plants, the alpine zone appears to be decidedly grassy and remarkably devoid of colors other than shades of primarily green and gray, and if we’re blessed, ethereal blue overhead. Looking closer we find much more.



*Diaspensia lapponica*

Nearly another third of the plants in the alpine zone are woody. The ferocious conditions dictate that all are dwarf, prostrate shrubs or creeping mats. Most prominent are members of the Ericaceae. The dainty five-parted pink flowers of alpine azalea (*Kalmia procumbens* syn. *Loiseleuria procumbens*) stand erect but scarcely above the dense evergreen mat which may only rise to one half inch. It remains unperturbed by the hurricane force winds that regularly sweep across the exposed sites in which it thrives. Another that shares much the same habitat is Lapland rosebay (*Rhododendron lapponicum*), a diminutive evergreen bearing pinkish-purple flowers that are at once recognizable as those of a rhododendron. This, too, is a circumpolar arctic-alpine species that extends south to our highest peaks and to a curiously disjunct population in the Wisconsin Dells.



*Harrimanella hypnoides*

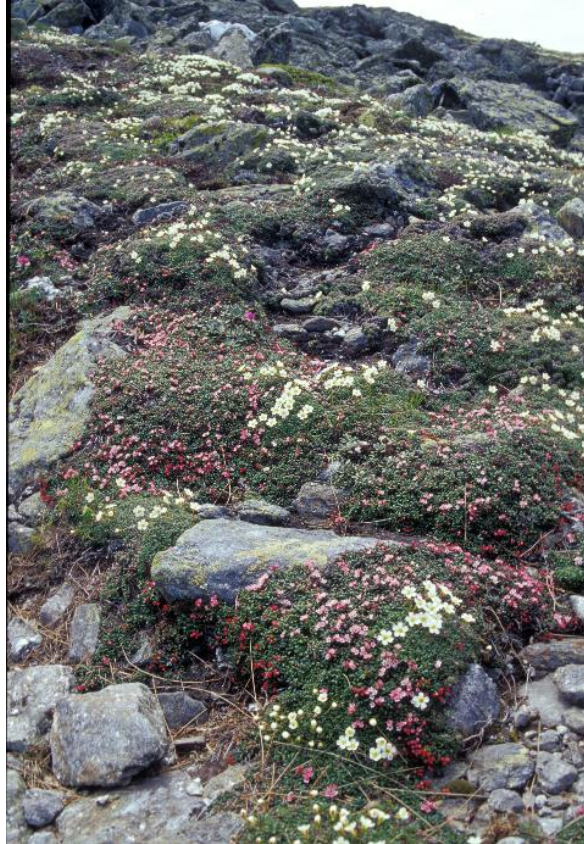
Names derived from classical mythology are marbled throughout botanical Latin. The heath family claims at least three genera with such a derivation – Andromeda, Cassiope and Phyllodoce, each represented by a single species in some of our alpine areas. Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda glaucophylla*) is a bog plant rather than a true alpine, but it is occasionally found in high elevation bogs and open, damp, peaty pockets. The glaucous rosemary-like leaves whitened below are quite distinct, and combined with the small, delicate pink, urn-shaped flowers make this plant unmistakable. It seems somewhat incongruous that a genus of sub-shrubby ericads (restricted to circumpolar regions and mountainous areas of the north

temperate region) is named for Cassiopeia, the mythological queen of Ethiopia. At least she was the mother of Andromeda, so that makes sense...sort of! Upon cursory inspection, when not in bloom, moss plant (*Cassiope hypnoides*) lives up to its common name, but when in bloom (the dainty white bells clasped by a red five-parted calyx borne on slender red pedicels) reveals its true affinities. Only once have I seen this plant in bloom, nestled on a steep bank amidst sedges above one of the small tarns collectively known as the Lakes of the Clouds. In the March 1987 Quarterly Bulletin of the AGS, Mr. Ray Welch (in his article *Among the Alpines of New England*) writes of a rare double form of this charming plant. In June 2008 a co-worker at Polly Hill Arboretum excitedly returned with pictures of this same plant (or another more or less identical form). I am amazed that it still exists in the wild, having survived the harsh environment and, more astoundingly, the collector's trowel! On a side-note, the forthcoming *Flora Novae Angliae* by Arthur Haines (the text I'm largely following for nomenclature throughout this article) correctly offers this species as *Harrimanella hypnoides*, but it is nowhere near as poetic as Cassiope. The next in this trio is mountain heath, *Phyllodoce caerulea*, which frequents areas long-protected by deep snow banks. As the snow melts in late spring this dwarf shrub, named for a Greek sea nymph, produces its lavender, urn-shaped flowers. Although bearing no connection to mythology, pale or bog laurel (*Kalmia polifolia*) can rather comfortably join this group. This narrow leaved species inhabits moist peaty ground, where it displays pink flowers that share with other members of this genus a unique mechanism: the ten stamens are reflexed and held under tension in pockets in the side of the corolla; when a large insect alights on the flower the activity triggers the release of a pollen-laden anther ensuring pollen transfer to another flower.

Few terrestrial habitats in New England are devoid of at least one species of *Vaccinium*. There are six species that find their way to the higher mountains. Mountain cranberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea* var. *minus*) is, perhaps, my favorite. This evergreen creeper rises four to



six inches above the ground, though it can be much shorter in more exposed sites. The urn-shaped flowers are pink and found nestled amongst the shiny, rich green leaves, a fine foil for the plump, pea-sized, glistening red fruits that ripen by late summer. The common



*Kalmia procumbens* and *Diapensia lapponica*

low-bush blueberry (*V. angustifolium*) finds its way from nearly sea level on my island home, to above treeline on our highest peak, but a real arctic-alpine specialist is the bog bilberry (*V. uliginosum*). This deciduous circumpolar species seems to be the most common ericaceous plant in the alpine zone. The roundish leaves turn a lovely bluish purple in the fall, but not before bearing a crop of flavorful fruits, a welcome treat for the late summer hiker after a long slog up from the lowlands. Another ericaceous genus found above treeline is Empetrum. Black crowberry (*E. nigrum*) is a frequently encountered sub-shrub with needle-like leaves and ¼ in. black fruit. A less common species on the highest peaks is the reddish-purple fruited purple crowberry (*E. atropurpureum*).

Beyond the Ericaceae, several other woody genera are represented in the alpine zone, and the genus *Salix* is next on the list of prominence. At least four species of willows can be found here: two are true dwarfs only an inch or two tall and two are upright species that can reach a couple feet tall. It is the former two that are the most exciting, and of them, bearberry willow (*S. uva-ursi*) is by far the most easily found. It creeps along and is an attractive plant at all times, but especially lovely when bearing its not-quite-ripe blood red seed capsules above small glossy leaves. Herb-like, or snowbed willow, bears orbicular leaves scarcely a half inch across and is decidedly harder to locate, but a successful hunt is all the more rewarding. Birches are another common genus that appear above treeline. Of course, paper birch can sometimes be found as tortured dwarf shrub into the alpine zone, but two others known as dwarf birch are truly at home there, if not altogether common. *Betula glandulosa* and *B. minor* both are prostrate to low sprawling shrubs. The former is the more distinguished of the two bearing roundish, rather thick unbirch-like leaves that add a glorious splash of purplish-red to the fall scene, particularly handsome when rimmed with frost. Amongst all the shrubs and sedges that dominate the landscape are many fine herbaceous plants including the federally endangered Robbins cinquefoil, but it and its companions will be waiting to be discovered in the final part of our exploration.

*Tom is a long-time member of the Berkshire Chapter of NARGS, and is currently the Collection and Grounds Manager of The Polly Hill Arboretum on Martha's Vineyard, MA. This is Part 2 of 3.*



## Daphne and Apollo

TEXT BY HARVEY WRIGHTMAN & PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
ESTHER WRIGHTMAN

Of all the shrubs that can be put in a rock garden, Daphnes are at the top of everyone's list. It helps to have the image of the nymph who escaped the lust-filled Apollo by turning into the

laurel - now *Daphne laureola*. But plants must have more than mystique; gardeners are practical, earthy types, and their plants must perform. Two of my favorites are *Daphne velenovskyi* and *Daphne arbuscula*, and the derivative hybrids and cultivars.



*Daphne arbuscula* 'Muran Castle'

Of the smaller Daphnes, *D. velenovskyi* is one of the best to grow. First described by Josef Halda in 1981, it grows on stony limestone soils covered with grasses and scattered *Pinus mugo* in the Pirin Mountains of Bulgaria, where the slopes are warm and dry. In the garden, I have found that it will tolerate both full, direct sun and less sun on a north facing, lightly shaded slope. The main caveat is that it sits high and receives benefit of air movement. Not as slow-growing as *D. petraea*, it sends forth a thick tangle of thin branches – the wood has a beautiful mahogany tone which compliments the pale, glaucous leaves. The flower buds emerge in late April, darkly colored red; and, burst out into a mass of bloom that enshrouds the whole surface. Flower color is basically pink, though it will vary in intensity. There is a white form that Jurasek found, but I have never seen it here. The fragrance is intense, and will draw the attention of the early insects and humanoids. It also, like many Daphnes, will rebloom in the autumn – for us it will bloom in November and the hard frost doesn't damage the flowers. Best of all, it is one of the easiest Daphnes for anyone to grow. It transplants very well. However, *D. velenovskyi* does not thrive on tufa. It may grow in stony soil, but is not as saxatile as one might expect.

*Daphne arbuscula*, endemic to the limestone cliffs of the Muran River valley in Slovakia is

comfortable on tufa. We grow 4 forms of it that Josef Halda collected many years ago. The best attribute of *D. arbuscula* is its ability to withstand extreme cold and retain its dark green color - as dark as any yew. Growing on those cold cliffs in the Muranskya, without any snow cover, it is often exposed to -30 C or worse. Flowers are lavender/pink with long corolla tubes and are sweetly scented.



*Daphne velenovskyi* 'Rubicon'

Both of these Daphnes are in the same group as *D. cneorum*, which are commonly grown in the nursery trade as a field grown specimen, pushed with fertilizer, potted into a container and quickly moved to a garden centre. The failure rate is high ~30% and a source of irritation for the gardener and the retailer. Container growing them would help, but they would never have the "full" appearance that the garden centers want. So, you won't find many Daphnes offered in the regular trade, but they are far more growable than industry folk-lore would have you believe.



*Daphne x Hendersonii*

Especially delightful and of easier culture are the hybrids developed in the last 20 years. *D.*



*petraea* and its selections are quite beautiful, but very slow to grow. The hybrids of *D. petraea* maintain a compact habit, but are quicker to establish. In particular, *D. x hendersonii* (*D. cneorum* x *D. petraea*) has produced several good cultivars, some from Robin White's Blackthorn Nursery. Leaves are typically small, glossy and dark green. Cultivars to look for are 'Ernst Hauser', 'Aymon Correvon', 'Appleblossom', 'Kath Dryden', and 'Rosebud'. Cultivar 'Ernst Hauser' is larger than the others. Flower colour varies from shell pink 'Ernst Hauser' to the purplish red of 'Rosebud'. *D. x whiteorum* is another cushion shrublet based on crosses of *D. petraea* and *D. jasminea*. Cultivar 'Beauworth' looks more like *D. petraea* with reddish pink flowers of good size and dark green leaves. *D. x 'Kilmeston'*, a reverse cross of the same parents is more like *D. jasminea* with the grayish leaves and purple tint to the whole plant that cold weather imparts. Given a warm site, it blooms prolifically over an extended period.

Rick Lupp has produced 2 new hybrids that he felt were worth naming – in this case after his 2 granddaughters. *D. x 'Kelsey Ann'*, a cross of *D. velenovskyi* and *D. petraea* 'Grandiflora', is a small, densely branched shrublet that will follow the contour of a rock or spill over the edge of a trough. Leaves are ovate like *D. velenovskyi*, but



*Daphne* 'Leila Haines'

smaller. The blooms are pink and white with a heavy fragrance. *D. 'Maisey Larae'* is the offspring of the Caucasian *D. circassica* and *D. arbuscula*. More dome-shaped, it has narrow leaves and the darker colored flowers of *D. circassica* – with fragrance of course.

According to Rick, it is still small enough for a trough.

*Daphne* 'Leila Haines', although it is an older selection, has such vivid coloration (dark red/purple) that it always attracts attention. Described by Halda as a hybrid of *D. striata* and *D. cneorum*, and by others as merely a variation of *D. cneorum*, it is a lovely and distinctive plant whatever its origin may be. The overall habit resembles *D. cneorum* with a dense mat of spreading branches thickly cloaked with narrow, dark green leaves. This effectively sets off the rich red color of the flowers – and it is intensely fragrant.



*Daphne* x 'Lawrence Crocker'

Lastly, *D. x 'Lawrence Crocker'* is what could be called the "everyman's daphne" as it is of such easy culture. A moderate-sized dome develops quickly – with its dense root system it transplants easily. With these 2 qualities being recognized by the horticultural industry, it is rapidly turning up on wholesale lists. It also is a reliable bloomer that will present a good display of flowers through the seasons until winter comes.

If you look at the 2 most recent monographs on the genus, one by Robin White and a more detailed treatment by Josef Halda, you will wonder why more of these wonderful plants are unavailable. Commerce is more concerned with mass marketability. As a result, internet based commerce is helping to open the market.

The electronic version is **still** less costly than paper. To change from print to electronic, please contact Pam Johnson. Thank you!

## OUR MAY PROGRAM

Chris Chadwell is a freelance lecturer, plant hunter, botanist and 'Himalayan' consultant. Among his many enterprises, he is the proprietor of Chadwell Seeds & Shawls, is the Curator of The Maharajah's Himalayan Garden, and is the founder and Editor of the Sino-Himalayan Plant Association.

### **AM: Paradise on Earth**

Known as the 'Switzerland of the Himalaya', Kashmir was considered by conquering Mogul Emperors to be a 'Paradise on Earth', boasting as it does, fabulous mountain flowers, turquoise glacial lakes, luxuriant pine forests, all set amongst snowy peaks.

### **PM: Growing Himalayan Rock Garden Plants**

Chris draws upon his own experience along with 30 years observing and recording the efforts of growers all over the UK, Europe and North America as they enjoy the challenge of cultivating species from the world's highest mountain range. He challenges 'conventional wisdoms' which can hinder both beginners and knowledgeable connoisseurs.



## **April 2 Meeting Notes**

The business part of the meeting was very brief but included several important announcements and urgent requests. Printing and mailing the newsletter is very expensive, almost prohibitively so. Producing and e-mailing an electronic copy costs nothing. Several members have already told us that they enjoy the electronic version very much so much, if only for the quality of the photograph, ease of filing and storing, early and timely delivery, etc, that they do not want to receive a printed copy. Would all the members who would be satisfied with receiving only the electronic version of the newsletter send their names and e-mail addresses to Pam Johnson, please?

Peter George told us that the NARGS Nominating Committee will present his name for the position of NARGS President. Elections will be held next June at the NARGS Annual Meeting. If he is elected -and it is most likely- Peter will have so many new responsibilities that he will not have time to be full time Editor of our newsletter. Therefore it is important and urgent that someone step forward and take on the task of editing our newsletter.

Many people had things to tell or show. Dean Evans told how he grows lots of *Primula japonica* from seeds originally given by Dick Redfield. Cliff Desch had brought two rhododendrons: *Rh. laetum* and *Rh. retusum*. Native from New Guinea, they are good house or greenhouse plants. Elliott Jessen had brought a charming but unidentified *Viola* and demonstrated his newest pruning tool. Lori Chips had brought nice Hellebores, Erysimum in bloom and a superb *Draba oligosperma* that she had grown from seeds from Ron Ratko. If she had not said so, one would have believed that she had just smuggled a blue ribbon plant from one of the best shows in the the UK. It was picture perfect. Nancy Chute brought several big clumps of rare snowdrops in bloom. They were yellows, doubles; no Home Depot snowdrops! She had received bulbs from one of the British galanthophiles and clearly they were doing very well in her garden. Generously Nancy gave the plants to the Chapter to be auctioned off. The ensuing bidding was brisk and spirited.

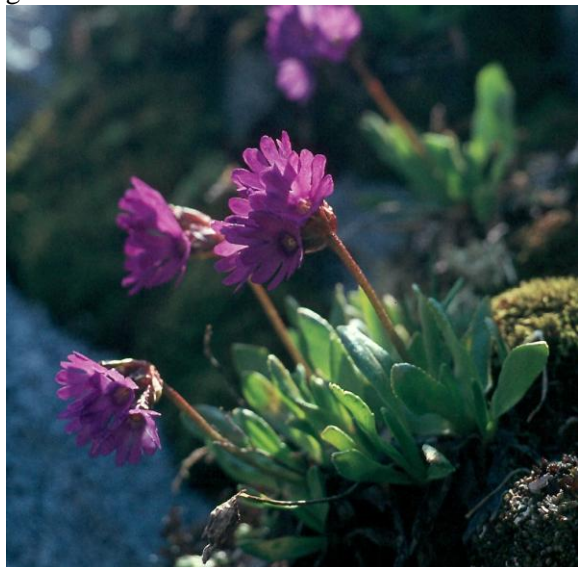
At the end of June, last year, Matt Mattus had spent time in the Alps, hiking and botanizing in



*Draba oligosperma* – photo by Rebecca Day-Skowron



the Bernese Alps and also close to the Italian border. Matt relived with us some of the highlights of his trip. I deliberately choose the word 'relive' because Matt doesn't show, he doesn't teach, he has that rare ability to involve his audience so that we have been there, that we are there. We hit the trail with him, take in the magnificent scenery. The weather is not perfect? Never mind, on we go. Not a tourist in sight. The mountain is ours. Dream plants everywhere. Oh! Stop! here is \*\*\*. The joy of discovery. We look closely, take pictures. But this one 3 feet away is even better. More pictures. And have you seen this one? Then, regretfully we move away there are more miles to travel and more treasures to see. The plants? Oh! We were not necessarily interested in botanical rarities. We saw many old friends. It is such a joy to see them again: *Paris quadrifolia*, *Anemone narcissiflora*, *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, *Saxifraga bryoides*, *Androsace helvetica*, *Ranunculus glacialis*, Soldanelles. We were especially interested in Primulas. The Alps are rich in Primulas from the auricula section and we found many of them. *Pr. auricula* of course, and *Pr. glutinosa*, *Pr. integrifolia*, *Pr. minima*. These primulas are exquisite beyond what he can imagine, he who has only seen primulas in garden centers.



*Primula glutinosa*

<http://www.stridvall.se/la/galleries.php>

Matt had titled his presentation "Tweeting the Alps". He had written in the preview that "he

does his botanizing completely wired" and that he would show "how he rediscovers ... by using Facebook, texting, iPad and laptop". Certainly, new technology allows him to take and store thousands of photos and to have instant access to references and documentation. But he is too modest. He gives too much credit to the technology. Would a great chef hide behind a new stove or new knives? Matt's exhilarating presentation was the work of a person who has strong legs and lungs (all that hiking) but foremost the eyes, the sensitivity and the mind of the true artist.



*Saxifraga* 'Tromse' – photo by Elisabeth Zander

"Vertical Gardening" was the title of the presentation Elisabeth Zander gave in the afternoon. It was not so much about how Art imitates Nature, but how artists learn from nature and grow alpines. The 'vertical' in the title doesn't refer so much to cliffs and the general aspect of a garden as to the often invisible space allowed to the plants to develop their roots. First we saw the gardens made by various contemporary masters, many gardens in the Czech Republic. Then some in the Netherlands. In particular we had good views of the amazing tufa wall (at least 7 feet tall; THAT is vertical!) built between concrete pillars by Harry Jans.

Then we moved to the more familiar East Coast of the USA, and had detailed views of three gardens: Robin Magowan (CT), Anne Spiegel (NY) and Elisabeth's own (CT). We saw these 'crevices gardens' at various stage of construction and learned about the many so called difficult plants that grow happily in the special environments these gardeners created for them. Anne has great success with *Oxytropis*,

Astragalus, *Phlox condensata* and the beautiful *Penstemon utahensis*, just to name a few. Elisabeth is justly proud of her collection of saxes but also of the uncommon *Erodium reichardii* (very few *Erodiums* are hardy in Connecticut). It was very instructive and exciting to see these techniques applied in large scale gardens. But we should keep in mind that they could be used for trough gardens. To these who wish to learn and read more about the subject Elisabeth indicated the 'International Rock Gardener,' a monthly publication that can be found on the SRGC's WEB site: [www.srgc.org.uk](http://www.srgc.org.uk). (Ed: the February 2011 issue in particular).



## EDITOR'S NOTES:

Each month I receive one photograph from Sally Cummings, and each month it seems that her photograph ends up in the newsletter. This month she offers up a very attractive Hellebore, *Helleborus orientalis* 'Yellow Spot,' taken on April 12. This seems to have been a good year for Hellebores, with every garden I've visited simply loaded with an amazing variety of blooms!

Some of you were at the Stonecrop Plant Sale on the Saturday before Easter, and if you were there, you experienced some foul weather. I was helping out Harvey Wrightman, since Irene was unable to attend due to impending surgery, and by noon I was soaked to the skin and virtually

numb from the cold. The vendors couldn't possibly have had a terrific sales day, since the crowd was much smaller than in past years. I did get some nice plants from Richard May, Harvey and Don Dembowski, but I simply couldn't give the other vendors the time and focus they deserved, and I left right after noon for my 3-hour drive home. Harvey and Don will be at the National Meeting, but at this time I'm not sure about whether Richard May will be there. If you have some plant needs check out his website at: <http://www.evermaynursery.com/>

Last weekend was the American Primrose Society's national conference, sponsored by the New England Chapter and held at the Tower Hill Botanical Garden in Boylston, MA. As part of their three days of shows, programs and social events, many of the participants visited three gardens here in Petersham, MA. The weather on Friday and Sunday was perfect, and the visits were enormously enjoyable to all. I got to Tower Hill on Saturday, and as always, the Primulas defy description, and the venue provided a perfect setting to view the plants and chat with the growers. The meeting and the garden visitors included quite a few of our Chapter members, which made the weekend even more enjoyable to me. Judy Sellars and Amy Olmstead (BNARGS members!) won a number of ribbons for their beautiful plants, several of which I intend to acquire in the VERY near future. Here is one of Judy's winners, a show Auricula, photographed by Matt Mattus.



'Moonglow' x 'Twiggy'



Again, I'd like to mention the NARGS 2011 Annual Conference, which will be held in and around New London, NH on June 17-19<sup>th</sup>. There will be several garden visits in the area, a visit to The Fells, and an opportunity to visit Mt. Washington, which has an ecology so beautifully described by Tom Clark in his series of articles appearing in 3 parts in this newsletter. Registration closes in two weeks, so please make an effort to register for what I'm sure will be an entertaining and informative three days.

<http://fellschapter.wordpress.com/registration/>

Finally, I wanted to add a choice, desirable and eminently growable *Daphne* to the impressive list provided by Harvey Wrightman in his article found on Pages 5-7. Several years ago I bought a quarter-sized plant that Harvey calls *Daphne cneorum* 'Porteous'. He told me that it was a cutting from the garden of Barrie Porteous in Ontario, and was a totally prostrate form of *D. cneorum*. I planted it in full sun on a flat open area surrounded by relatively flat pieces of native granite in a fast draining area, facing south and west. Today it's over a foot in diameter, and is covered in blooms, which look and smell wonderful. It's my favorite *Daphne*, and although Harvey has not hired me yet (although he should!) I strongly recommend it to anyone who loves *Daphnes* and has the right amount of sun. Here's a photo of it today, in my



garden. A few flowers have opened, but in a week it will be solid pink, with almost no leaves showing.

See you on the 14<sup>th</sup>!

PFG

## BNARGS 2011 Program

**May 14** - **Chris Chadwell** - *Alpines of Kashmir & Growing Himalayan Rock Garden Plants*

**June 4** - **Robin Magowan and Juliet Mattila** - *Colorado*

**Anne Speigel** - *Alpine Plants Growing in their Homes and Yours*

**July 2** - **Lori Chips** - *Planting and Growing in Troughs & Trough Planting Workshop*

**August 13** - **Ron Rabideau** - *Alpine Plants of China*

**Steve Whitesell** - *Rock Garden Design*

**September 3** - **Member's Potpourri**

**October 8** - **Cliff Desch** - *Gardening in Conway, MA*

**Joyce Hemingson** - *Rock Garden Bulbs*

**November 5** - **William Cullina** - *Woodland Gardening*

## WEBSITES WORTH VISITING

<http://www.growingwithplants.com/>  
<http://popespots.blogspot.com/>  
<http://www.americanprimrosesociety.org/>  
<http://www.plantbuzz.com/>  
<http://nargs.org/smf/index.php>  
<http://www.wrightmanalpines.com/>  
<http://www.obrienhosta.com/>  
<http://bsnursery.com/>  
<http://prairiebreak.blogspot.com/>  
<http://www.sunscapes.net/>  
<http://www.alplains.com/>  
[http://www.intermountaincactus.com/Intermountain\\_Cactus/Home.html](http://www.intermountaincactus.com/Intermountain_Cactus/Home.html)  
<http://www.hiddenspringsflowerfarm.com/species-peonies.html>  
<http://olivenurseries.com/>  
<http://www.srgc.org.uk/index.html>

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