



Newsletter

North American Rock Garden Society
Berkshire Chapter June 2013



Epimedium (photo Dave Gehrs)

North American Rock Garden Society

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English Rock Gardens and the Mystery Plant

By Judy Brown, BNARGS Chairperson

Although I missed the May travel meeting, I was thrilled to be traveling in the Cotswolds with a group of twelve other gardeners. Unfortunately, southern England and Wales had experienced a cold, wet winter, and the gardens were three weeks behind their normal blooming. That meant that the gardens we were visiting were at the same point that ours were at home.

The two large gardens that we visited, Oxford Botanic Garden and Hidcote Manor, both had lovely rock gardens. Oxford has all of their plants labeled, so I was inspired to take photos of each plant. I will be checking on the hardiness of each to see what Ed and I can add to our rock garden.

On the other hand, the rock garden at Hidcote Manor was new and the plants unlabeled. One striking pink flower on a slender stalk really caught my fancy. However, none of the horticulturists or volunteer guides that I asked about it had any idea what it was. One volunteer did have a list of their rock garden plants arranged by season of bloom. I checked out the list for spring but found nothing that I didn't recognize. I then checked the books that our tour guide had brought along. Nothing even similar could be found.

My obsession to find the name of this lovely plant continued through our visits to many more gardens. Our tour ended with a visit to the Malvern Spring Gardening Show. This is the first Royal Horticulture Society's flower show of the year. None of us was prepared for the extent of this show. There were show gardens, school gardens, garden gadget vendors, and a huge tent containing the Floral Marquee, where I could escape the rains. There was also a huge array of trade stands. Although I was feeling very frustrated because I couldn't take any of the plants home, I did find a seller of rock garden plants. I showed a young man the photo of the mysterious pink plant, and he immediately identified it as *Lychnis flos-cuculi* 'Ragged Robin.'

After returning home, I discovered that it is hardy as far north as Canada. Unfortunately, I also learned that it is considered an invasive weed. I had spent a week trying to identify a weed, but I loved every minute of the tour.

Photos on page 6

Meeting Reminder
June 1, 2013
Speaker: Martha Oliver

The Berkshire Botanic Garden is in Stockbridge, MA at the intersection of routes 102 and 183. Please park in the main lot near the Gift Shop, leaving the parking area around the Exhibit Hall open for those who are delivering trays of plants for the plant sale.

10:00 - 10:30 Coffee, tea, conversation

10:30 Meeting starts with business items and Show & Tell. Bring your own lunch; tea and coffee provided; dessert contributions are welcome. Meetings generally end around 2 pm.

Martha Oliver's morning program will be "The Smaller Heucheras for the Rock Garden" and after lunch, she will present "Striving for Perfection: Plant Breeding in Herbaceous Plants."

Martha is a garden designer and writer with a special interest in the shade garden and butterfly prairies. She and her husband Charles own The Primrose Path, a nursery devoted to producing Charles' hybrids of Heuchera, Tiarella and Phlox. Most recently, she has designed a large butterfly prairie for Powdermill Nature Reserve, the field station of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh. Her writing includes stories on the shale barrens and native plants, three books, and articles in *Fine Gardening* and *The New York Times*. For photos, visit the nursery's web site, www.theprimrosepath.com.

Important Notes about the July 6 Meeting

This meeting will be hands on -- make your own hypertufa trough with Deb Pope! A signup sheet will be available at the June meeting or you can sign up by emailing Elisabeth Zander at canbya@gmail.com.

Participants must bring:

1. Dust filter mask.
2. Heavy latex/rubber gloves.

somehow release (like a spring form pan), as cured hypertufa is impossible to remove from a straight-sided, rigid mold. - *continue on next page*

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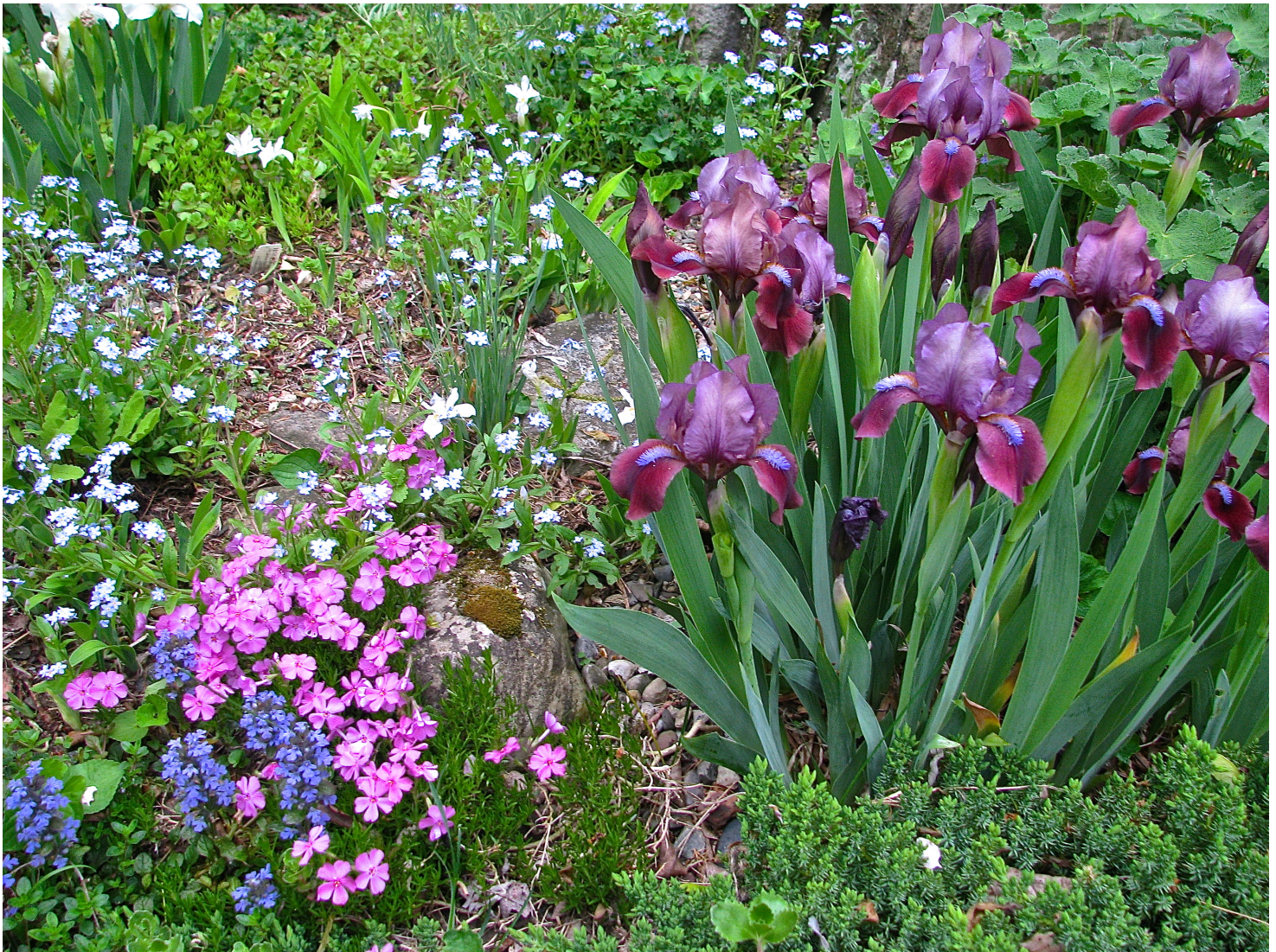
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3. Molds. A mold can be almost anything -- a large bowl, dishpan, plastic flowerpots, baskets (without metal "ribs"), or cardboard boxes. If cardboard boxes are used, the box should not be larger than approximately 10" x 18".

Also, a lightweight board or a tray will be needed to put under the box so that it can be transported home.

If the mold is straight-sided, it should not be rigid and the sides should somehow release (like a spring form pan), as cured hypertufa is impossible to remove from a straight-sided, rigid mold.

4. Lightweight plastic sheets or plastic garbage bags to line the molds.



Frog Hollow Garden, Burnt Hills NY (photo by Dave Gehrs)

Next Meeting:

Planned meetings for 2013

June 1st Martha Oliver
am: The New Heucheras
pm: Plant Breeding

July 6th

Debra Pope of Auburn, MA come for a hypertufa trough workshop. We should probably have a signup sheet so she knows how much to bring

August 3rd

am: Bill Brown
pm: Joyce Hemingson

Sept 7th

am: Abby Zabar - Gardens: In Spite of the Odds
pm: the Big Plant Sale

October 12th - Ian Young am & pm*

*Everyone please notice we have Ian Young of Scotland from the NARGS speaker tour coming in October. This is a special treat for us. it would be good to think of some publicity to share his visit, as well as our other speakers.

Nov 2nd tbd, following the November speaker in the morning is the luncheon at Red Lion Inn.

Berkshire Chapter -- 2013

Positions of Responsibility

Chairperson - Judith Brown
Vice-Chairperson - Dean Evans
Secretary - Carol Hanby
Treasurer - Pamela Johnson/Thomas Flanigan
Newsletter - David Gehrs
Program Chairperson - Elisabeth Zander
Independent Director - Erica Schumacher
Refreshments Chairperson - Joyce Hemingson

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Deadline for Next Newsletter is June 22, 2013

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Oxford Botanic Garden' rock garden (photo by Judy Brown)



Aubretia at High Glanau Manor (photo by Judy Brown)



(photo by Judy Brown)



Malvern Spring Gardening Show (photo by Judy Brown)

