



Newsletter

North American Rock Garden Society
Connecticut Chapter September/October 2016



SEPTEMBER MEETING

Friday, September 30th and Saturday, October 1st
Garden of Paul Waterman
163 S. Canterbury Rd. (Rte. 169)
Canterbury, CT 06331

Take a leisurely walk through Paul's late summer garden between 10am and 2pm on either of the above days for this informal meeting. Paul has been working hard striking many cuttings and has lots to offer in his sales area.



TRI-STATE MEETING

Sunday, October 16, 10am-2pm
The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY
Speaker: Liberto Dario

The tri-state meeting will be held on Sunday, October 16, at the New York Botanic Garden. Our speaker is Liberto Dario, a botanist and horticulturist from Athens.

Liberto received his Master of Science in Plant Biology from UC Davis and a Master of Science in Horticulture from the U of Reading, England. Since 2009 he has worked as a Plant Biologist/Botanist for the Municipality of Papagos-Xolargos; he additionally conducts botanical tours of Greece as well as maintaining a web business selling seed collected both from his private garden and in the wild. He has botanized extensively through Greece, has a strong interest in Xeriscaping and naturalistic gardening, and is particularly fond of bulbs.

See <https://www.facebook.com/liberto.dario>

Liberto will be giving two presentations: *The Botanical Paradises of Greece* and *Olympus: the Mythical Mountain and Its Mythical Plants*. These talks will explore the various ecosystems of a country with the largest number of native species in Europe, many of which are endemic.

Admission and parking is free for attendees. Use the Mosholu Parkway entrance, to the west of the main entrance, and parking is on the left. Just tell the guard at the gate that you will be attending the rock garden meeting. The lot is adjacent to the entrance of Ross Hall where the meeting will be held. Maryanne Gryboski will help arrange carpools; please contact her if you are interested in driving or are in need of a ride.

Meeting Report: July 16, 2016

Words: Barbara van Achterberg; Photos: Nancy Johnson, Karen Krohn, Jeanna Richo, and Barbara van Achterberg



Nancy talks plants with Regina Cirilli.

Nancy and Gary Johnson of Gales Ferry volunteered their garden for our annual picnic meeting. Their garden is chock full of amazing plants including a star magnolia that blooms two or three times a year and was in bloom on that hot summer day, and a large pot of *Papyrus* 'King Tut', as symmetrical and stylized as an Egyptian relief. There is also an enormous gardenia which Nancy's mother grew when Nancy was in high school a half century or so ago! It takes three people to wrestle it into the house in the fall and back onto the deck in late spring.



Hydrangea arborescens 'Hayes Starburst' has domes of fully double white star-like flowers.



A rare *Paris polyphylla* graces a path through the shady garden.

One of Nancy's specialties is hosta and there were many to be seen, most in cages of chicken wire to prevent deer from eating them to the ground. Obviously a devoted husband, Gary explained to those of us going on the late tour that Nancy is the shopper and he is the digger. To prevent deer depredations, he planted one bed of choice hostas inside a heart shaped fence as an anniversary gift for Nancy. But the bed kept getting bigger and bigger and has long out-grown its tidy area.



Hostas are fenced for protection and many are now kept in pots for ease of watering

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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.

As always with this group the pot luck picnic was outstanding. Salads, protein and side dishes followed by desserts were presented in the shady gazebo with plenty of cold drinks all kept chilled in coolers. Despite the heat, 22 people turned out including one new member. Over lunch we all enjoyed animated conversation about plants.



The business meeting followed with election of officers. Ginny Gingras agreed to continue as President temporarily until a new President steps forward. We also need a Vice President who will chair a Program Committee as well as members for the Program Committee. Barbara van Achterberg will continue as Secretary, Sally Katkaveck as Treasurer and Maryanne Gryboski as Newsletter Editor. Joyce Fingerut volunteered to do all the planning, publicity and organizing for one program, a trip to Coastal Maine Botanic Garden. She did not want to serve on the Program Committee, but Chris Dominijanni said that she will. We have only one program planned as yet for the coming year - Kevin Wilcock who will do a pruning demo.

Other suggestions included: make a link from our brochure to our Chapter website (since we don't have an active Chapter website, maybe we could make a link to our Chapter newsletter instead, which has pictures in color, meeting reports, responsible people and most importantly upcoming events); invite everyone you meet at garden events to Connecticut Chapter events as well as invite them to join National; urge people to get closer to the land.



Joan Mencil, Jeanna Richo, Barbara van Achterberg and Ginny Gingras consider plants on the sales table.

NARGS Annual Meeting 2016 – Part I

By Maryanne Gryboski

The 2016 Annual Meeting began under cloudy skies on June 22nd at the Denver Botanic Garden. Mike Kintgen, head of DBG's alpine collection and the prime mover of this affair, led attendees on a tour of the alpine garden where he described the history of the beds and his experimentation with various "soil" mixes, most recently a 1 to 1 mix of sand and expanded shale.



One of the older partly-shaded rock gardens at DBG.

It was a large group on the paths, with Mike somewhere at the mid-point, and often difficult to hear his words so, part way through, folks spread out to wander and simply enjoy the plantings and gather ideas for their home gardens.



The unusual *Physoplexis comosa* grown to perfection in a trough at DBG.

Sempervivum montanum ssp. carpathicum would do nicely in an east coast plot but the highlights for me were a beautifully grown *Physoplexis comosa* in a trough and a *Campanula aucheri* in the crevice garden. That very *Campanula* species is something I started from seed last



The white flowers and pink buds of *Campanula aucheri*.

year and it was quite exciting to see it in bloom and imagine how it would grace my future rock garden. *Convolvulus lineatus*, speaking to my personal attraction for silver foliage, wasn't too shabby either!



The soft grey foliage of *Convolvulus lineatus* is attractive even when not in flower.

There was some concern over possible T-storms, but we managed to dine under the canvas of a huge tent without weather interruptions and then headed into the auditorium for first night presentations.

Mike opened the talks, explaining that northwestern Colorado is largely steppe – areas of semi-arid conditions with hot summers and cold winters – where cycles of drought, pine beetle kill-off, blowdowns and forest fires give way to nature's recovery with an astounding array of plant life. Slides of wildflowers danced across the screen and whet our appetites for the forthcoming hikes.

The second speaker was Kenton Seth, principal of the design/build firm Paintbrush Gardens and creator of the Community Heroes Crevice Garden, one of the largest crevice gardens in the world. Kenton spoke about the Colorado garden scene and his growing interest to increase the plant palette for unirrigated landscapes.

From home gardens to green roofs to crevice gardens, from small domestic landscapes to botanic and community gardens, he explored the current gardening trends in Colorado.



One of the newer crevice gardens at DBG.

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20 Best Rock Garden Plants for Beginners

Joyce Fingerut, NARGS Website Committee and Membership Recruitment, writes:

It's so enjoyable to make lists; and so many people find them to be helpful – for their clarity and conciseness.

Prospective and beginning rock gardeners visit our NARGS website for inspiration and information. It would be very helpful to them if your Chapter would post a list of 20 plants that are easily found and easily grown in your particular area.

Include the following basics in the summary of your growing conditions, where appropriate:

- Temperature: maximum in summer, minimum in winter; daily extremes; seasonal oddities (false springs, wide swings from day to day)
- Soil: composition: mineral, organic; sandy, clayey; pH
- Precipitation: annual amount, seasonal patterns

Compile a list of 20 rock garden plants (herbaceous, woody, bulbous... whatever) that you consider to be readily available and happily thriving in your gardens. These would be the foundation plants of a new rock garden for a (relatively) new rock gardener. It would be helpful to divide the plants into those requiring sun or shade. Any additional advice you can offer would certainly be welcome. Do give the botanic names, with common names optional as they can vary with the region.

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Judy King has volunteered to compile suggestions that you, our members, send in. So look around your gardens and send your suggestions to: jdrakeking@comcast.net.