



Newsletter

North American Rock Garden Society
Connecticut Chapter June/July 2011

JULY MEETING

Sunday, 10 July 2011, 10:30 AM
The garden of Joan Mancell
75 Longmeadow Rd.
Shelton, CT

Annual Meeting and Potluck Picnic
Book and plant auction.
Bring a chair and a dish to share.

Directions: from the Merritt Parkway, take exit 52, Rt. 8 North. From Rt. 8, take exit 11, Huntington St./Huntington Rd. At top of exit, take left onto Huntington St. Follow about 3 miles to Huntington Center (Huntington St. ends at the Green). At the light, turn left (Green is on left) and bear right up Ripton Rd. Take 1st right onto Longmeadow Rd.

September Meeting: Sunday, 18 September

John Grimshaw, NARGS speaker tour.
John will be giving two presentations. Probable topics are: "Snowdrops and other early spring bulbs" and "In a botanist's garden - an eclectic sampling of the world's flora".

Lily Leaf Beetle Alert

Lily Leaf Beetles are out in force. I first noticed the adult this year on fritillaria, which they also feast on. Adults have bright scarlet bodies and black legs, heads and antennae. Adults and older larvae, resembling slugs and often hidden in the excrement they secrete, feed on leaves, stems, buds and flowers. Eggs, laid on the underside of leaves, are orange. Hand-pick and destroy them at all life stages – wear gloves for the larvae; they're squishy and rather unpleasant. See www.uri.edu/cr/factsheets/sheets/lilyleafbeetle.html for more info.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The **NARGS Annual Conference**, "The Flora of New England", held June 17-19 in New London, NH, featured speakers as well as garden and bog tours. Eight of the 128 attendees were members from CT. Thelma Hewitt, Conference Chairperson, formed the Fells Chapter two years ago. The Fells, on Lake Sunapee, is one of New England's finest examples of an early 20th century estate and is the site of one of the largest privately developed rock gardens on the East Coast. I will give more information on the Fells in future newsletters because it is an example of volunteers who are constantly working to maintain and renovate the gardens. The history of the Fells can be found at www.thefells.org.

The gardens visited included Thelma's, which is on a northeast facing slope, home to a rockery with dwarf and miniature conifers, dwarf northern mountain Rhododendron, five species of low-growing willows and other rock garden plants. There are many showy native woodland species naturally occurring which were the inspiration for this outstanding garden with its winding paths and distinctive habitats.

Due to a previous commitment as Awards Chair of the CT Horticultural Society, I was unable to arrive in NH until Friday and missed the outstanding Indian Tree Hill (Highberg Garden), which received rave reviews. But at the CHS meeting, I heard Kirk Brown who became John Bartram in full costume. He was not to be missed but more on him in another newsletter.

A brief report of the **Annual Business meeting**:

- **Financial Report:** NARGS is doing well, in the "black". Donations received by NARGS: \$5,560. The Book Service was eliminated. Membership in NARGS is increasing....
- **Election of Officers:** President: Peter George; Vice-President: Harvey Wrightman. Complete info will be in the Rock Garden Quarterly.

The 37th Annual Western Study Weekend and Annual Mtg. will be held in Everett, WA, March 9 -11, 2012.

~ Ginny

Meeting Report: 15 May 2011

By Barbara van Achterberg



Anne Spiegel's rock garden in Wappingers Falls, New York, is of the old school - extensive, hilly and rocky. Anne and her husband have spent years developing the rock garden and are still actively renovating it. Clambering up and down its paths put them in very good physical shape for their annual trip to the Dolomites and Anne often gives talks to garden groups on both these trips and her gardens. They are busy, hardworking people.

The Spiegel house is of rock, like a Cotswald cottage in its alpine setting. The native stone is greywacke, a dark sandstone mix. Most of the garden is above the house and is sunny. She has had much success with scree plants, some in the rock garden proper and others in troughs built into the garden for even better drainage.



Her scree mix is 35 parts quarter inch gravel, 7 parts limey soil, and 12 parts very coarse sand.

In bloom on May 15 was *Trifolium owyheense*, Owyhee clover, light pink, from chalky soil in the West, and almost endangered. *Globularia cordifolia nana* was a mass of low blue flowers. *Arenaria hookeri*, Anne's favorite arenaria, has many white flowers. *Anthyllis vulneraria* var. *rubra* is a brilliant red, easy to grow in the sun, and it blooms for weeks. *Potentilla dahurica manchuria* blooms from June until frost, and is low growing with very sharp white flowers. The straight *Potentilla dahurica* is yellow. These two cross and you get nice coppery ones, all of which we saw.



Preferring a bit of shade but standing some sun were *Helleborus 'Phoebe'*, a lovely double pink, now faded, and *Asarina procumbens*, "creeping snapdragon," a great pale yellow perennial. *Lewisia*s like deep rich soil in their planting hole, which of course should be in a very well drained spot. They need light without hot sun, northern banks being perfect. Anne also has over 30 kinds of daphne, and finds that they like neutral soil.

Anne gave us the following tips for planting in a tight space in a trough. Shake most of the dirt off the young plant. Put a paper cone into the crevice, throw in a mix of coarse sand and gravel with some fertilizer of the Osmocote type and, always holding the plant by the top, take a shish kabob stick and firm it into the planting crevice.

Most of us drove through rain on the way to Anne's garden, and the minute we got into our cars the rain came back. But we had not a drop during the whole time there. What luck, as this was a garden not to be missed.

NARGS CT CHAPTER OFFICERS

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PROGRAMS: Please talk to one of the officers if you are interested in the Programs Chair position.