



# Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society  
✧ Volume XL ✧ Late Fall 2016 ✧ Number 7 ✧

## Upcoming Programs

Saturday, November 12, 10 a.m.

Frelinghuysen Arboretum

For Members Only!

Speaker Matt Mattus, President of the North American Rock Garden Society presents 'Autumn and Winter Bulbs for the Serious Collector'

To be followed by the Annual Meeting & Luncheon: Please bring a ready to serve appetizer or dessert, and any necessary serving pieces. Friends are welcome to become members at the door! See page ??

Saturday, February 18, 2016

Frelinghuysen Arboretum

Speaker Dr. Randi Wilfert Eckel,

'The Role of Native Plants in Landscape Design:

Landscaping with a Purpose'



Floral guests of Brian Coleman and Ray Waksmundzki at the October meeting. Photo by Albert Martin.

## Our November Speaker

Matt Mattus is a life-long plant enthusiast. He has been an active member of NARGS for over ten years,

and currently serves as President. He gardens on two acres in central Massachusetts, sited between two local NARGS Chapters, New England

and Berkshire. He is a frequent speaker at both Chapters. Matt's blog, *Growing With Plants*, explores his favorite gardening travels and adventures, as well as his favorite plants, which include South African bulbs, camellias and alpines.

Matt keeps many troughs, containers and various alpine gardens on his property. As a designer, he often contributes to the NARGS website with banners, logos and other visual treatments. He is also very active in the American Primrose Society, and served as the editor of their quarterly.

Professionally, he works as the Imbedded Innovator-Futurist at Hasbro.

Please join us!

## NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

As we go to press, with our Annual Meeting just two weeks away, we are still in need of a new Chair! Mike Wilson's two consecutive terms are up, and according to our by-laws, a new Chair must take the lead:

"Article VII Officers and Committee Chairmen

Section 1:

Officers shall serve a term of two years beginning on January 1 of the year after their election. Chapter Chairmen and Vice Chairmen shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. Officers are defined as Chairmen, Vice

Chairmen, Secretary, and Treasurer. Committee chairmen are appointed by the Chapter Chair and shall serve a term of two years."

What are the official duties of the Chair? "Section 2: Duties of Officers and Chairmen:

The chapter Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Chapter and the Executive Committee shall appoint chairmen of ad hoc and standing committees who shall represent the Chapter at national meetings of the North American Rock Garden Society whenever possible. The Chapter Chair serves ex-officio on all committees of the Chapter except for the Nominating Committee."

Perhaps you are wondering, yes, but what does the Chair really do? The Chair...

- ✓ Conducts the general meetings of the chapter.
- ✓ Conducts board meetings at least once a year, at the Chair's discretion – currently we meet five times a year, an hour before our regular meetings.
- ✓ Oversees all the business and committees of the Chapter: Program, Newsletter, Membership, & Plant Sale.
- ✓ Acts as liaison with the Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum, for the purpose of booking meetings.
- ✓ Attends the annual Plant Sale.
- ✓ Attends other Chapter events when possible

- ✓ Represents the Chapter for all business conducted by the North American Rock Garden Society

Please consider stepping up to lead our Chapter!



Brian Coleman brought a beautiful trough to the October meeting. Photos by Albert Martin.



### Dues reminder!

Membership Chair Sid Jones will be on hand at the November meeting to collect dues for 2017. Watnong dues remain a bargain at \$10 individual or \$15 per household/ mailing address. Dues may be paid as cash or check, made payable to Watnong Chapter NARGS. This will be your last opportunity to save on postage!

### Treasurer's Report

News from our Treasurer, Caroline Ford: as of October 15, 2016, year to date we have generated revenues ahead of expenses by \$1,375, including the October speaker fee.

Our current Bank of America Balance is \$14,724 (less the \$200 October speaker fee).

Our annual donations have continued to increase:

2012: \$700

2013: 450

2014: \$1,676 to Laurelwood

2015: \$2474 to Laurelwood, \$8000 to The Leonard J. Buck Garden.

In addition The Watnong Chapter will be contribution funds to the Friends of Frelinghuysen's Blackburn Scholarship. Our donation would vary between \$500 and \$1000 each year, and we would be recognized as 'Contributing support from the Watnong Chapter'. Sid Jones has volunteered to represent us at meetings with the Friends in the selection process. For more details on



the Board decided to make this donation, see From The Chair , page ?? To see the Treasurer's full report, see page ??



Photo by Albert Martin.

Watnong Secretary Debi Graf and member Normadelle Swale were the door prize winners at the October meeting.

**Save the dates for 2017 meetings!**

Meetings at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum will be held 2/18, 3/19, 9/09, 10/08, AND 11/18. The Annual Plant Sale will be held at The Leonard J. Buck Garden 4/22 & 4/23. Dates for other events are yet to be determined.

**Update on The Laurelwood Arboretum South Rock Garden Project**



The South Rock Garden, photographed in July by Albert Martin

One more day of work remains at the Laurelwood Arboretum this fall to prepare the next bed at the South Rock Garden there for renovation. The project was started on September 17 by Mike Wilson, Brian Coleman, and Noel Schulz. Mike hopes to recruit some college students to help with the digging in the next phase. Laurelwood volunteers scheduled weeding dates to help maintain the garden there, which lightened the workload for our Chapter. If you'd like to participate in the next work day there, contact Mike Wilson (see page ??)

The next three photos by Albert Martin show the South Rock Garden on October 16, 2016.







**The new entry garden at The Leonard J. Buck Garden in Far Hills**, for which we donated funds in 2015, is now fully planted and growing well. Photographer Albert Martin visited October 15 and shares his visit in the following two pictures.



## NEWS FROM NARGS

Our Chapter will once again participate in the NARGS seed exchange, packing seeds for distribution. This year we will be working at the Jordan House at The Leonard J. Buck Garden in Far Hills, between December 1 & 16. Hilary Clayton will coordinate the effort. Helpers currently on her list are Sid Jones, Terrie Reid, Noel Schulz, Melissa Grossmann, Susan Deeks, Peggy Kremetz., and Mary Masilamani.. If you'd like to participate, please contact Hilary (see page 7). Seed packing volunteers will be contacted via e-mail in early November to determine days and times that are most convenient.

The NARGS Seed Exchange will be on-line December 15. Only members of NARGS may participate. Visit [www.NARGS.org](http://www.NARGS.org) for more information.

## FROM THE CHAIR

Dear All,

The peak of the leaf color season is waning and we are finally beginning to have some seasonal rainfall. Hopefully this winter will continue to reward us with sufficient snowfall to recharge the aquifers. We have been in a drought cycle for a couple of years now, but as I reflect on the past gardening season it was not a total loss; we had very seasonable temperatures and relatively few periods of extreme heat. Overall, our temperatures still remain above average.

It is also time for me to reflect on my past four years as chair of the Watnong Chapter. I became chair by default in 2012, and cheerfully accepted the position. It has been the second time that I served the Watnong Chapter as Chair; my wife Pam and I served as Co-Chairs a few years ago. However, as I am officially stepping back down to Vice Chair in a few weeks, I will continue to fulfill some of the duties of the Chair until a new one is found. We have now been asking for a year that a member step up to be Chair, and I have asked many of you personally to consider the position, to no avail. Therefore, we will do our best to continue 'leaderless', without a Chair, which leaves me very concerned about the future of our fine organization.

I have enjoyed being Chair and feel that I have been able to redirect the Chapter in terms of programming and activities. One of the first decisions I

made was unpopular and to this day still plagues me with complaints; the elimination of hospitality. Again, this was a position that we were unable to fill, and as such was beginning to cause tension within the membership. It seemed logical to me that Watnong NARGS must function as a plant society first, and a breakfast club second. Members who wish to do so are still able to bring refreshments to share if they choose. The loss of hospitality means that we are all responsible for our own warm beverages, and each must clean up after ourselves: you are on your own to provide your own refreshments. Four years later, the loss of hospitality has not significantly affected our meetings, and a steady percentage of the membership contribute each meeting with snacks. I want to thank all of you who do this, as I always eat a few cookies or something.

At the time that I suggested eliminating hospitality, the bigger concern was programming, and a growing bank balance. We had enjoyed several years of inexpensive speakers and local programming, and therefore saved money. I wanted to get our programming back on course with the mission of the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS), and at the same time provide programs on other forms of fine gardening, since many of you do not have formal rock gardens but do have extensive and diverse gardens. Therefore, I set a goal to have at least two programs per year about

rock gardening, and the rest focused on horticulture and ecology.

These would be supplemented with field or bus trips and the Chapter has been able to conduct a few in the past four years. I also wanted to provide one or two speakers each year who had authored a book, or was a recognized professional in their field.

This is why we had Donald Leopold, author of *Native Plants of the Northeast*, talk to us about terrestrial orchids of the northeast, and preservation of the existing populations. William Brumback, Director of Conservation for the New England Wildflower Society, spoke to us about endangered plant species of the northeast, with an emphasis on the restoration of *Potentilla robinsiana* in the alpine zone of the White Mountains in New Hampshire. Other notable speakers in the past four years include David Culp, a Hellebore breeder and author, who gave us ecological reasons for the layered garden, and Vincent Simeone, Director of Planting Fields, who spoke to us about sustainable methods of gardening.

Fortunately, we did have a volunteer step forward to take on programming last year, and I am confident that our offerings will continue to improve due to the efforts of Noel Schulz.

Obtaining quality speakers did raise the cost of our programming, due to larger honorariums and traveling expenses, but was not enough to sufficiently reduce our balance. Because of our non-profit status and

accounting, our balance needed to be adjusted and lowered, and we developed two ideas to do so. One was to consider a scholarship, which would give us an annual method of disposing income, and the other was to find a garden that we could support, in addition to The Leonard J. Buck Garden, because we already split our plant sale profits with them, since they host and provide assistance for the sale. We give financial support to The Leonard J. Buck Gardens for special projects as well; last year, they contacted me for plant suggestions for the new entrance bed they were renovating. I suggested that they consider purchasing Tufa rock, and request a donation from the Watnong Chapter to achieve their goals. This resulted in an \$8,000 donation, and now a new entrance that advertises the Watnong Chapter's support.

While I was Vice Chair I was asked if I could locate a garden that could use our support and stay within the mission of the society. I suggested Laurelwood Arboretum in Wayne, New Jersey, because the property was once owned by John and Dorothy Knippenberg. Dorothy was a lifetime member of NARGS, and the arboretum had a neglected rock garden, called the South Rock Garden. It was decided that the Watnong Chapter would commit to a five year to restoration of the garden, and aid in its maintenance. This achieved several goals for the chapter: we have a garden that we can support and fulfill our mission, and, equally

important, we have a venue for the hands on workshops and live action education programs on rock garden installation and follow up maintenance that had been requested by our membership. To date one bed has been restored and continues to be maintained. We started the restoration process of a second bed in September, and hope to achieve completion of that bed by fall 2017. If anyone is interested in helping with the next restoration, feel free to contact me at [miwilson@ramapo.edu](mailto:miwilson@ramapo.edu) . Please note this address: I do not receive e-mails sent to [watnongnargs@gmail.com](mailto:watnongnargs@gmail.com).

The idea of a scholarship was a bigger challenge since it presented administrative duties, such as advertising, compiling applications, and selection of the recipient. This seemed impossible to accomplish without the formation of a new committee, but member Frank Goodhart suggested that we donate to the Friends of The Frelinghuysen Arboretum's Blackburn Scholarship. This was a good idea , and informed the Friends that we would like to add \$500 to \$1,000 per year to award. Recognition for our Chapter was discussed, along with an invitation to sit in on their committee. We decided to call it 'Contributing support from the Watnong Chapter', and Sid Jones has volunteered to sit in on the committee. We plan to give the scholarship fund \$500 for the first year, and subsequent contributions will be determined annually, depending upon both our

bank balance and the amount that the Friends of Frelinghuysen decide to award that year. Hopefully, this will further our relationship with the Horticulture students at the County College of Morris and encourage some younger members.

My most important achievement for the Chapter is the assembly of the current board, the best we've had in many years, with members that not only do an excellent job but also are highly qualified. Every member of the board plays a critical role in the Chapter, and without them, none of the above would have occurred. They are responsible for keeping us informed, obtaining good programming, providing income and keeping our books in order. Melissa Grossman has been the Plant Sale Chair for many years now, and she desires to continue. Hillary Clayton has excelled at editing our newsletter and is dedicated. The newsletter is complimented with quality photographs due to the efforts of Albert Martin, and he is the winner of several NARGS photographic contests. Sid Jones has been indispensable as Vice Chair, and besides being a great advisor to me, has taken on several duties for the Chapter, such as Membership Chair and Blackburn Scholarship representative. Diane McNally assures that all of our members who do not have Internet access receive a copy of *Growing Interest* by printing and mailing the newsletter. Carolyn Iglesias handles our publicity, and makes sure that our plant sale and



meetings are advertised in several local newspapers, gardening magazines, and local garden clubs. Noel Schulz took on programming a little more than a year ago, and has provided us with excellent speakers. He has our 2017 planned and is looking ahead for the following years. Brian Coleman helps with programming and has been a valuable helper with the Laurelwood project. Caroline Ford serves as treasurer, and keeps our books in order and provides impeccable advice on our financial status. Our newest member of the board, secretary Debi Graf, keeps a record of the board meetings and our Chapter activities. Without this board, none of the achievements of the Watnong Chapter could have occurred, and I thank them for their support and initiative.

So, I hope one of you will consider becoming the next Chair of the Watnong Chapter. You might receive a phone call from me to ask you personally. You would have an excellent board that will do most of the work for you. I will be stepping down to Vice Chair and will be concentrating on the Laurelwood Project. Your role is to direct and contribute. I know many members feel under qualified, and that you could not possibly do all that has occurred in the past four years. I do not believe that. I know many of you are capable, and plant knowledge is not necessary. Business skills are helpful, but again not critical with such a good board to seek advice from. Dedication

and a desire to bring the Chapter into a healthy future is all that is needed.

In closing, I want you to know that this is the last letter From The Chair that I will be writing. I have enjoyed my second run as Chair, and found it rewarding to serve the Chapter once again. I want to thank all of our members for your support, and look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting in November.

Regards,  
Mike Wilson

### **OUR OCTOBER SPEAKER:**

**Elaine Fogerty presented  
'Wildlife Control for the Home  
Gardener'**

**Text and Photos by Albert Martin**

Elaine Fogerty is a retired Rutgers Cooperative Extension County Agricultural Agent and County Agricultural Assistant with expertise in Ornamental Horticulture. She has also taught Ecology classes at William Paterson University, inspected farms for the North Jersey Farmers' Market Council, and owned and managed a farm in Warren County.

Elaine earned her Master of Science degree in Horticulture from Rutgers University and is a New Jersey Certified Tree Expert. Currently, she serves as the Executive Director of Laurelwood Arboretum, a 30-acre public garden in Wayne, New Jersey,

familiar to many of our members from our recent work on the South Rock Garden there.

Elaine lives in Columbia, New Jersey, within view of the Delaware Water Gap. She started her talk with slides on deer management for homeowners, and later discussed management of groundhogs, rabbits, and squirrels.

Deer, though not very large at 100 to 160 pounds, create major damage in gardens and, as most Watnong members know, are very hard to keep out of gardens. Deer consume some 6 to 10 pounds of green plants per day, which creates substantial damage to gardens. Their fur provides good camouflage, and they can sprint up to 35 miles per hour. They have a keen sense of smell, superior hearing and an almost complete circle of vision. They will also “taste” plants as they feed, so even “deer-resistant” plants may be nibbled on. They quickly become accustomed to noise and people, which means that a control measure may work for only for a few days before the deer become comfortable with it.

In 2013, New Jersey estimated that there were about 105,535 deer in the State, but that count may be higher since it was done only in the counties in which deer hunting is permitted.

Elaine then discussed key deterrent strategies. First, be prepared to use several strategies, because deer adapt fairly quickly. Strategies should be rotated throughout the season, and before the deer become used to them.

Finally, take advantage of all of the deer’s senses to employ strategies to repel them.

Use the deer’s well-developed senses of smell and taste to drive the deer away from the garden. Foul smells, such as soap, chicken feathers, ammonia and fabric softener sheets work as repellants. Bad tasting applications such as hot pepper, soap sprays, and certain bitter chemicals, such as Ro-Pel and the systemic Bitrex also work. Most are not weatherproof, and so need to be applied frequently. They also should be changed often, before the deer become accustomed to that specific repellant.

Sights and sounds can become repellants. New or strange sights make deer instantly suspicious. Mechanical gizmos, white plastic grocery bags, and floodlights that turn on with motion will motivate deer to keep moving. But if it does not actively chase the deer, they will not run away from it. Dogs are very effective deterrents because they bark (loud noise), will chase the deer (movement), and will continue to chase the deer.



Deer reduction efforts have been mostly trapping and relocating, hunting, and fertility control. The last is costly and not 100% effective.

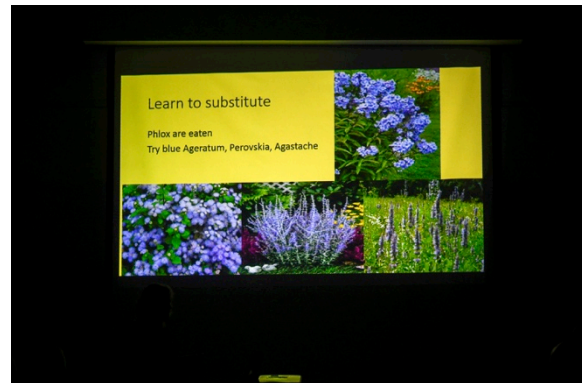
Construction of the home garden can include an anti-deer design. Exclude plants that deer love. Create uninviting entrances. Clean up all dropped fruit. Deer will not climb terraces, so create a terraced garden. Deer do not like gravel. Elaine pointed to the entrance to Frelinghuysen Arboretum where a metal cattle grid stretches from fence to fence. Deer will not walk over that type of entrance.

An effective deer fence will be at least 8 feet tall with 12 feet posts, which are dug 4 feet deep. The fence can be either electric or non-electric.

Many plants are “deer-resistant”, although Elaine pointed out that not all “deer resistant” plants actually resist deer. A very hungry deer will eat them. Deer also taste plants as they feed, and even a so-called resistant plant will be tasted. Most of the plants that deer dislike have a bitter taste, or a dry and unpleasant texture. Leaves that are tough and leathery or fuzzy and plants that have prickles and thorns often resist deer browse. Resistant plants may have a purgative effect, or be poisonous in nature. Herbs that over-stimulate the sense of smell may also resist deer.

Elaine suggested that the home gardener learn to substitute garden plants that are less desirable to deer for those that they favor. Since Phlox are

eaten, try blue Ageratum, Perovskia, and/or Agastache.



Her slides then showed us some suggested deer resistant plants. For annuals, try Cleome, Nicotiana, Ipomoeas- Morning Glories and Moonflowers, and Marigolds. For deer resistant bulbs, try Allium, Chionodoxa, Eranthis, Fritillaria, Galanthus, Leucojum, and Narcissus. Resistant herbaceous perennials include Aconitum, Alchemilla, Amsonia, Artemisia, Ferns, Nepetas, Perovskia, and Pulmonaria. Some deer resistant evergreens are Buxus, Cedrus, Ilex opaca, Juniperus, Leucothoe, Mahonia, Microbiota, Spruces, and Pieris.

She then turned to other pesky home garden pests, such as groundhogs, rabbits, and tree squirrels. Woodchucks can be deterred with a fence three feet tall, buried one foot deep around the garden. Ammonia or fouled cat litter placed in their burrows may also discourage them.

A fence two feet high with a one-inch grid should keep rabbits out. Trees and shrubs may be wrapped with hardware



cloth one to two inches from the trunk to prevent gnawing. Encourage predators, such as hawks and foxes; a pet dog should also help keep rabbits away. Try red pepper flakes in the bird feeder to keep squirrels away. They may also be repelled with moth balls, Ro-pel, or capsaicin.

Elaine's pesky animal is the skunk. In efforts to exclude the skunk from your garden fail, Elaine offered one last bit of advice: to remove the musk odor from a skunk spray, she recommends a mixture of one quart of hydrogen peroxide, one quarter cup baking soda, one teaspoon of liquid soap, and one quart of warm water.

We thank Elaine for her interesting and informative talk, and for providing hope to gardeners without a fence.

## IT GREW FOR ME!

### *Saxifraga x apiculata*

By Michael Wilson

When we consider growing alpine saxifrage, we often think of the terms difficult or impossible in New Jersey. Fortunately for me, while I worked at Frelinghuysen Arboretum, I was able to try several different species and cultivars of Saxifrage along with other alpiners. Of all the encrusted and alpine Saxifrages that I tried, the one I had the most success with is *Saxifraga x apiculata*. I grew several different cultivars of this hybrid in the Tufa Bed (Alpine Garden). I have also grown it in troughs, both at work and at home. I

even grew it for a few years in an open rock garden, in the ground. It usually blooms in mid-April.

*Saxifraga x apiculata* does prefer to grow in a trough or container among rocks, and does best when planted directly into a piece of tufa. It can be grown in the rock garden if it is planted in and amongst the rocks in a very well drained soil. I usually use a very lean mixture that includes aquarium sand, a little compost, and some turface, along with a scree mix of equal parts compost or peat moss, pea gravel, coarse sand, and soil. The plants that look the best get some shade during the hottest part of the day, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., and I have learned that several alpine species that abhor heat can be grown this way. As with most plants, I try to water alpine plants in the morning. During periods of extreme heat, above 90°F, I may water every day, and on occasion again later in the day, a few hours before sunset, to cool the plant off. I find that with good drainage, Saxifrage will take more water than thought.



*Saxifraga x apiculata* 'Gregor Mendel' .

Photo by Michael Wilson

## WATNONG CLASSIFIEDS



*Saxifraga x apiculata* 'Gregor Mendel'.

Photo by Andrei Dezzo,,

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