



Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society
✧ Volume XLI ✧ Late Spring 2017 ✧ Number 4 ✧

Upcoming Programs

Field Trip!

Saturday, June 17, 2017, 10 a.m.
**'Plants of the New Jersey Pinelands,
Wild and Tame'; details at right.**

Sunday, June 25, 2017, 9 a.m.
**Setting Tufa at the
Laurelwood Arboretum
725 Pines Lake Drive West,
Wayne, New Jersey, 07470
See page 4 for more details.**

Annual Picnic, for members only!
Saturday, August 5, 2017, at noon
**The Cross Estate Gardens,
61 Jockey Hollow Road,
Bernardsville, New Jersey 07924.**
RSVP to Noel Schulz by July 28.
See page 2 for more details.

Saturday, September 9, 10 a.m.
Frelinghuysen Arboretum
Bill Kolvek presents
'Ornamental Grasses'

**Bring a friend, your favorite warm
beverage, and a snack to share!**



Pogonia ophioglossoides, Rose Pogonia. Photo
by Janet Novak.

Plants of the New Jersey Pinelands, Wild and Tame

Saturday, June 17 at 10 a.m.

Trip led by Janet Novak, Delaware
Valley Chapter NARGS

Southern New Jersey's pinelands region
deserves more attention from
gardeners, because it harbors many
garden-worthy plants. You can think of
the region as a giant sand bed dotted
with bog gardens. We will start by
visiting bogs at Pakim Pond and Webbs

Mills. There we will see the orchids *Pogonia ophioglossoides* and *Calopogon tuberosus*; the trip is timed for peak bloom. We'll also see Sundews, Pitcher Plants, an oddball fern (Curlygrass Fern, *Schizaea pusilla*), and many more interesting plants. Then, we will visit the pygmy pine forest at Warren Grove. This "wild" part of the trip will be easy walking on good trails and boardwalks, for a total of **no more than 2 miles**. For the "tame" part, we will visit the private garden of Bill Smith of Rare Find Nursery. Bill has a stunning collection of bog plants from eastern North America: orchids, every species of pitcher plant, and some rare and little-known beauties such as Plymouth Rose Gentian (*Sabatia kennedyana*) and Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium americanum*). Bring lunch, water, and bug spray to ward off ticks. This is a joint trip with the Delaware Valley Chapter.

Directions: Meet at 10 a.m. in the parking lot of the Brendan Byrne State Forest park office.

From Route 206 south: Cross North Pemberton road, then, after another 1.9 miles, turn left onto South Pemberton Road. This road will change names to West Hampton Street, then to Pemberton Bypass, but follow it for a total of 2.8 miles, then turn right onto Magnolia Road. After 6.8 miles, you'll be at a traffic circle. Take the third exit onto Route 70 east. After 1.1 miles, turn right onto Four Mile Road/Deep Hollow Road as it enters the Brendan

Byrne Forest. After 0.7 miles, the park office will be on the right.

From Garden State Parkway: GSP exit 88 to Route 70 west. Take Route 70 west for 25 miles. Pass the blinking yellow light for Lebanon Lakes and Presidential Lakes. Take a left for the park entrance. After about 0.7 miles, the park headquarters is on the right.

The Annual Picnic

When: Saturday, August 5, 2017 Noon

Where: Cross Estate Gardens

61 Jockey Hollow Road,
Bernardsville, New Jersey

Please bring a chair and an appetizer or dessert. Your dish should be ready to serve, and accompanied by any necessary serving utensils.

RSVP to Noel Schulz by Friday, July 28 at noelschulz@verizon.net or 201-445-6445, so we can get an accurate count for food.

Directions:

From the North: Take I-287 southbound to Harter Road (exit 33); turn left at the Stop sign onto Harter Road. Follow Harter Road to the end and turn left at the traffic light onto U.S. 202 southbound (Mt. Kemble Avenue). Continue for 2 miles and turn right at the traffic light onto Tempe Wick Road. Continue 2.0 miles (past the entrance to Jockey Hollow) and turn left onto Leddell Road at a waterfall. Continue for 1.1 miles and turn left onto the long

driveway at the sign for “New Jersey Brigade Area — Cross Estate Gardens.”

From the South: Take I-287 northbound to 202 — Bernardsville (Jockey Hollow, exit 30B). Turn right at the traffic light onto U.S. 202 northbound (Mt. Kemble Avenue) for 1.7 miles. Turn left at the traffic light onto Tempe Wick Road. Continue 2.0 miles (past the entrance to Jockey Hollow) and turn left onto Leddell Road at a waterfall. Continue for 1.1 miles and turn left onto the long driveway at the sign for “New Jersey Brigade Area — Cross Estate Gardens.” The Gardens can also be reached from exit 30B by way of Hardscrabble Road, a winding and narrow country lane that takes you past the New Jersey Audubon Sanctuary. Stay right on Hardscrabble Road until you see the sign for “New Jersey Brigade Area” and follow the road uphill to the entrance driveway.

About The Gardens

The Cross Estate Gardens, a project of the New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation, in cooperation with the National Park Service, are located on the Cross Estate, site of the New Jersey Brigade Unit of [Morristown National Historical Park](#), at 61 Jockey Hollow Road, Bernardsville, New Jersey, 07924.

The Cross Estate is open year-round and free to the public from dawn to dusk. Volunteers, who meet every Wednesday morning from April through November, maintain the gardens.

The Cross Estate Gardens date back to the early years of the twentieth century when wealthy people built grand country mansions as summer retreats in the “Mountain Colony” located in Bernardsville, New Jersey. Its gardens and buildings provide a glimpse of a lifestyle that is now all but a memory.

The original house, built by John A. Bensel in 1905, formed the centerpiece of his “Queen Anne Farm.” The estate included a carriage house, a five-story stone water tower, and a gatehouse.

In 1929, W. Redmond Cross purchased the property and renamed it “Hardscrabble House.” His wife, Julia Appleton Newbold Cross, was a member of the Royal Horticultural Society for eight years. Mrs. Cross made extensive improvements in the garden with the help of Clarence Fowler, a noted landscape architect. Together they cultivated an unusual assortment of plants throughout the garden. The house was extensively remodeled in 1940, after the death of Mr. Cross.

In 1975, 162 acres of the property, including the primary buildings, were added to the Morristown National Historical Park. This addition provided assured protection for the adjacent 18th century New Jersey Brigade Revolutionary War encampment area and a preservation corridor for the Jockey Hollow unit of the park. Funds were not available to maintain the gardens, which soon fell into disrepair. In 1977, Jean Pope, a former Chester resident, began a volunteer project to

bring the nearly obscured gardens back to life. Paths and walkways were uncovered and runaway vegetation removed, pruned, or replaced. This continued effort has preserved a fine example of an English country garden for others to enjoy.

In 1987, the New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation was formed under the auspices of James Spiniello to preserve the volunteer effort already established at the Cross Estate Gardens. The Foundation works with the Morristown National Historical Park to maintain the development of the Cross Estate Gardens.

The Gardens are comprised of formal and natural areas, and include large specimen trees such as Silver Maple and Dawn Redwood. A walled garden is set on two levels, and a pergola which features 19 stoned columns supporting blue and white Wisteria and male Kiwi vines. Other areas of interest include the lawn garden, with native Rhododendrons, Primroses, and other spring flowering perennials; the fern garden, site of a Dawn Redwood grown from a seedling originally planted by Mrs. Cross, the Pachysandra beds, and a Mountain Laurel allée, which runs alongside the driveway.

We look forward to seeing you there!

NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

Laurelwood: We have Tufa!

By Michael Wilson

On the weekend of May 20th, I acquired another truckload of tufa from our good friend Joe Ferdula in Ilion Gorge, New York. We have four nice big pieces measuring about 2' x 3', as well as an abundance of smaller, easy to handle rocks. Since the truck that I used to purchase the stone was smaller than my old truck, we may not have quite enough tufa to fill in the bed that we are restoring. We will have a better idea of how much more we need once the bed restoration is underway, and we can make that decision as we work.



A piece of freshly dug Tufa. Photo by M.Wilson

We have a small team of volunteers ready to work on the Laurelwood project, but we still need some additional help. We will follow the same process we used for the last bed we renovated at Laurelwood. We will have to excavate the area to remove the rich organic soil and existing plants and bulbs. We will set the pieces of tufa into place as we backfill the area with a scree mix. It is best to bury a portion of the tufa to allow for good water uptake through the highly porous rock. More scree will be placed into any crevices

that we create. Then the bed will be laid to rest and settle for fall planting. We hope to have this bed (or a section of it) built and ready for planting this September. There may be an additional planting directly into the tufa in spring 2018, which is an exciting process.



The same piece was selected and loaded onto the truck. Photo by M. Wilson.

The bed that we restored a few years ago still looks good but could use some weeding and regular maintenance. At some point, we may have to add some plants to fill in the gaps. Weeding on a regular schedule is a primary concern.

The scheduled dates for the project are June 25, July 8, and July 22 & 23. We usually start working between 9 and 10 a.m.

So, if you are interested in learning about building, restoring, and/ or planting a rock garden, this is a prime opportunity for a hands-on workshop. Help is also needed to select and order

plants, which is a fun way to learn new ones. Please also contact me if you would prefer to volunteer to help with maintenance and weeding. Contact me directly by calling or texting 862-397-9339, or send an email to miwilson@ramapo.edu.



Now that piece is resting at Laurelwood waiting to be planted. Photo by M. Wilson

The Annual Plant Sale was held April 22 & 23 at The Leonard J. Buck Garden. Here is the Plant Sale Report, by Melissa Grossmann, plant sale co-chair.

To the many volunteers: you don't just make the plant sale possible, you make it wonderful! Stuff always happens – this year it was rain on Saturday – but the Watnong members are absolutely rock- solid. Thank you, and may your gardens bring you joy. Our sales this year were lower than usual, as a result of the rain, but we still made a total profit of \$6,107.36, which was split evenly with the Leonard J. Buck Garden. I hope that the plant sale met your expectations, and I am full of enthusiasm for next year's sale.



Lorette Cheswick, in chartreuse, helps some customers with plant decisions. Photo by Albert Martin.



Plant Advisors Carole Stober and Leonard J. Buck Gardener Trish Scibilia. Photo by Albert Martin.

The plant sale summary, from Treasurer Caroline Ford:

PLANT SALE	2017
Plant Sales	
Retail	\$16,592.15
to Buck	
to Golf Course	
+ lecture fee	
- cash box	-\$300.00
Gross Sales	\$16,292.15
Expenses	
Supplies/Advert	\$200.00
Plants	\$9,884.79
Lectures	\$100.00
Dept Ag/MCPC	
Profit	\$6,107.36
Watnong Profit	\$3,053.68
Buck Share	\$3,053.68
Plants @ cost	
Golf Course	
lecture fee	
Cash to Buck	\$3,053.68

The Soiree!

Photos by Hilary Clayton



Watnong members mingle on the porch of the Walther House at The Presby Memorial Iris Gardens: from left, Adine and Ken Johnson, Roxanne Hiltz, Noel Schulz, and Renate Gudat.

Our annual soiree was held Saturday, May 6, at The Presby Memorial Iris Gardens in Montclair, also known as 'The Rainbow on The Hill'. The gardens are located at the base of the seven and a half acre Mountainside Park, and are celebrating their 90th anniversary this year. There are over 10,000 irises of approximately 1,500 varieties. Twenty-six beds contain Bearded Irises, and the collection also

includes non-bearded Spuria, Siberian, Japanese and Louisiana Irises in beds that run along a dry creek. Each Iris has a marker that lists the cultivar name, the hybridizer, and the year it was registered with the American Iris Society. The Dwarf Bearded Irises bloom first, and the season was just beginning the night of our visit. Following dinner, we had a talk by the collection's curator, and then took a walk to see the early blooms.

The gardens were started as a memorial to Frank H. Presby, a leading citizen of Montclair and an Iris hybridizer, and one of the founders of the American Iris Society. Although it was his expressed wish to give a collection of his favorite flower to Montclair's newly acquired Mountainside Park, he died in 1924, before he could carry out his plan.



Dwarf Bearded Iris 'Dash Away'

Three years later in 1927, Miss Katherine Inness, the first curator of the Montclair Art Museum, acted on behalf of the Montclair Museum Board and presented the project of establishing an Iris garden as a memorial to Mr. Presby to the Montclair government. The

proposed Iris gardens would act not only as place of remembrance, but would also draw in visitors and encourage educational projects such as teaching the care, history, and hybridization of Irises. The Presby Memorial Iris Gardens are the result of the collaborative efforts of the Town Council, Parks Commission, the Garden Club of Montclair, and the American Iris Society (A.I.S) under the supervision of the then newly formed Citizens Committee led by its Chairperson, Barbara Walther.

Barbara Walther was a graduate from the University of Chicago with a Botany degree. In 1918, she and her husband Fred purchased the Upper Mountain property next to Mountainside Park. She was a charter member of the Montclair Women's Club and the Garden Club of Montclair where she gave lectures and wrote a variety of articles. Mr. and Mrs. Walther were also instrumental in preserving the land for Mountainside Park and establishing the Presby Memorial Iris Gardens. She remained a fixture there well into her nineties and passed away at ninety-four in 1977, the fiftieth anniversary of The Gardens' inception.

Some of the first plants came from Mr. Presby's own garden as a gift from his children; others were donated by the American Iris Society, the Kellogg Gardens, and from countrymen of Great Britain, Germany, and Japan who were international admirers of the work being done in Montclair. Local contributors included Joseph Van Vleck

who donated his Siberica Iris to the Gardens, and A. I. S. President John Wister, who laid out the garden design and helped supervise the planting with Barbara Walther. The town supplied labor and materials for The Gardens and the Citizens Committee became responsible for its management. The Garden Club of Montclair of Montclair also helped, donating funds to secure new Irises each year from the beginning. Early supporter Jennie Bonsal organized the Iris collection into card catalogs, which became the basis for the bed books and database that today contain information about each Iris variety and its location.



The Citizens Committee was formally incorporated in March of 1963 and purchased the Walther property in 1977. The house then became the official headquarters for The Citizens Committee of Presby Memorial Iris Gardens of Montclair, Inc. In 2009, Essex County purchased the Walther House and Grounds from the Citizens Committee, saving the gardens from an uncertain future. The Citizens Committee leases the house and

grounds and continues to fundraise to cover the gardens' operating costs.

The Gardens are always being improved. There is a sprinkler system to care for newly planted beds and lawns. Specimen trees were planted west of the creek bed as well as various grasses around the creek. In 2007, a patio with memorial benches was installed at the entrance to the gardens. Pesticide use has been eliminated; instead strict IPM methods are used to control problems common to a monoculture iris garden. For example, a beneficial nematode program has eliminated iris borers. Lost Iris cultivars of educational and historic value are replaced through collaboration with both private collectors and the Historic Iris Preservation Society. This dedicated group also helps ensure that every single iris in the collection is correctly named and recorded in the database for accurate tracking of the cultivar.



The curator's lecture in the living room of the Walther House.

For more photos of the Irises in bloom at the soiree, visit Judy Glattstein's post,

www.bellewood-gardens.com/diaries and scroll down to May 2017. For more information on the Presby Memorial Iris Gardens, visit www.presbyirisgardens.org. Iris bloom is anticipated to extend into early June, and in celebration of the 90th Anniversary, lemonade will be served on the porch to weekend visitors. A donation of \$8 per visitor is suggested.

May 20 Garden Tour/ Bus Trip



Watnong members at David Culp's Brandywine Cottage on our May 20 garden tour. Photo by Noel Schulz.



Watnong members at Hedgeleigh Spring, Charles Cresson's garden in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, on our May 20 garden visit. Photo by Noel Schulz.

On Saturday, May 20, Watnong members visited two Pennsylvania

gardens on a bus trip organized by Program Chair Noel Schulz. Hedgeleigh Spring is the Swarthmore, Pennsylvania home of Charles Cresson, a formally trained horticulturist and the third generation of his family to garden the two-acre site. Over the last thirty years, Charles has added a complex layer of herbaceous perennials and annuals to the garden.

Brandywine Cottage is the home of David Culp, most recently the author of *The Layered Garden*. David has spent the past 25 years perfecting the art of layered planting for continuous bloom in his two acre garden in Downingtown, Pennsylvania.

Congratulations to Watnong member Marta McDowell, awarded the American Horticultural Society Book Award for *All The Presidents Gardens*, published by Timber Press in 2016.

In Memoriam: Irma Leone

By Michael Wilson

On occasion, I would get a phone call with a question similar to, "Wilson, why isn't my dogwood blooming?" If Irma didn't have a plant question for me, she wanted to tell me what was blooming in her yard. In time, I learned why she was so concerned about and proud of her trees.

In 1956, when Irma and Roc bought their home, it was new construction and the lot was devoid of trees. As Irma described, it was a sand pit with no organic matter. She began planting

young trees and composting, so she could amend the soil. As years passed, the trees grew and matured. But Irma did not stop with planting trees. She developed several perennial gardens, two water gardens, and landscaped the once barren front yard. The garden developed enough that it was opened for several garden club tours. Irma also had an interest in orchids and eventually built a small greenhouse for her collection. She joined the Orchid Society and became a regular shopper at Morris County Farms. Due to her diverse interest in plants, she was also a longtime member of the Watnong Chapter.

Irma and I spoke on the phone regularly, often a couple of times a month. Usually when I called her we would talk for nearly an hour and she would tell me fascinating stories. Unfortunately, Irma Leone passed away peacefully at home this spring. I will always miss those phone calls.

NEWS FROM NARGS

**Annual General Meeting,
Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina
"Southern Rock Gardening:
Past & Present"**

November 17-19, 2017

Speakers:

Tim Alderton, J.C. Raulston Arboretum
Tony Avent & Jeremy Schmidt, Plant
Delights Nursery and Juniper Level
Botanic Gardens

John Grimshaw, Author: *Snowdrops: A
Monograph of Cultivated Galanthus*

Larry Mellichamp, North Carolina
Native Plant Society

Andrea Sprott, Elizabeth Lawrence
Garden

Joseph Tychonievich, author of *Rock
Gardening: Reimagining a Classic Style*)

Bobby Ward, author of *Chlorophyll in
His Veins*

Tours: Plant Delights Nursery &
Juniper Level Botanic Garden,
Montrose Gardens, and the J. C.
Raulston Arboretum

Optional: Pre-conference, two-day tour
highlighting unique flora of North
Carolina's Coastal Plain led by Larry
Mellichamp

Optional: Open private gardens &
public gardens

Visit www.nargs.org to register. A
special note to Watnong Chapter
members: Roxanne Hiltz is interested in
attending, and has a van that can seat
eight; if you're also interested in
attending, and can take a turn as driver,
contact her at roxanne.hiltz@gmail.com.

OUT AND ABOUT

Mark your calendar! Membership
Chair Sid Jones will be hosting an Open
Garden Day to benefit The Garden
Conservancy on Saturday, September 9.
An additional five area gardens will
also be open, including The Hay, Honey
Farm, Stone House, Jardin de Buis, Bird
Haven and Pickle Farm. Admission is
\$7 per person for each garden. Visit
gardenconservancy.org for more
information.

WATNONG CLASSIFIEDS

HYPERTUFA TROUGHS



If you would like to place an ad here,
send copy to the Newsletter Editor,
hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com.

Deadline for inclusion in our Late
Summer Newsletter is
August 16, 2017

2017 WATNONG CHAPTER OFFICERS

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**THE WATNONG CHAPTER
NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY
c/o The Leonard J. Buck Garden
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