



# Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society  
✧ Volume XLII ✧ Late Winter 2018 ✧ Number 2 ✧

## Upcoming Programs

**Sunday, March 18, 2018, 10 a.m.**

**Frelinghuysen Arboretum**

**Marta McDowell presents**

**'All the Presidents' Gardens'**

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

**Annual Plant Sale at**

**The Leonard J. Buck Garden**

**Saturday, April 21, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.**

**Sunday, April 22, Noon – 5 p.m.**

**Lectures each day at 1 p.m.**

**Guided tours each day at 2 p.m.**

*Presidents' Gardens* (2016), and *Beatrix Potter's Gardening Life* (2013) which has been translated into Japanese. Marta is working on a revision of her first book, *Emily Dickinson's Gardens*, due out in a full color edition by Timber Press in 2019.

## Our March Speaker

Marta McDowell lives, writes, and gardens in Chatham, New Jersey, along with her husband, Kirke Bent, and their crest cockatiel, Sydney. Except for the bird, they are long time members of Watnong. Marta teaches landscape history and horticulture at the New York Botanical Garden and consults for private clients and public gardens (when she isn't on the road giving a talk). Timber Press published her recent books including *The World of Laura Ingalls Wilder: The Frontier Landscapes that Inspired the Little House Books* (September 2017), *All the*



A *Lewisia cotyledon* hybrid grown & shown by Ray Waksmundzki. See more of Ray's plants on page 3. Photo by Hilary Clayton

## NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

**HELP WANTED! We are still a NARGS Chapter without a Chair!** Please consider if you would be willing and able to:

- Conduct the general meetings of the chapter.
- Conduct board meeting- at least once a year, at the Chair's discretion – currently we meet five times a year, an hour before our regular meetings.
- Oversee the committees of the Chapter: Program, Membership, Newsletter, & Plant Sale.
- Act as liaison to the Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum, to schedule our meetings.
- Attend the annual Plant Sale and other Chapter events, if possible.
- Represent the Chapter for all business conducted by the North American Rock Garden Society.

Your Chapter needs you! Please consider stepping up to lead.

### **MORE HELP WANTED!**

Anyone interested in working on the next phases of the **Laurelwood Rock Garden Project**- developing a plant list and ordering material- should contact Mike Wilson at [miwilson@ramapo.edu](mailto:miwilson@ramapo.edu) or call 862-397-9339. We will also need a volunteer(s) to receive the plant deliveries and care for them until they can be planted later in the spring.

### **The Plant Sale is coming soon!**

There are many ways that you can help! Plants donated by members greatly add to our profits. As you start your spring gardening, **please consider potting and labeling your extra seedlings or divisions.** If you need pots, contact Hilary (see page 10). Donated plants may be dropped off at The Leonard J. Buck Garden Saturday, April 7 until Thursday, April 19, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

### **Can you volunteer your time?**

**We need members to:**

**Set Up the sale on Thursday, April 19 at the Buck Garden, 9:30 a.m.:** Insert price labels into all of the pots, and arrange the pots on tables. This process takes several hours. Lunch is provided.

**“Babysit” the sale tables on Friday, April 20. 10-12, 12-2 or 2-4:** Inform visitors to the Buck Garden that the sale does not open until 10 a.m. on Saturday.

**Saturday April 21:** We need cashiers, plant advisors, and managers for the holding area (where shoppers may temporarily leave their plants). The shifts are 9:45-12, 12-2:30 or 2:30 -5.

**Sunday April 22:** The shifts are 12-2:30 and 2:30-5.

**Please contact Martha Podilchuk, plant sale volunteer coordinator, at [marthpod@comcast.net](mailto:marthpod@comcast.net) or 908-507-6487.**

Please consider printing a copy of the plant sale flyer on page 9 and posting it at your favorite local business, or on the window of your parked car.

Lastly, here's the easiest way to help us swell our profits: set aside a few boxes and bring your own to carry home your purchases!



Chilean Blue Crocus, *Tecophilaea cyanocrocus*, grown by Ray Waksmundzki

### Save the dates!

Thanks to Program Chair Noel Schulz, here is the 2018 Watnong Chapter Speaker list:

- 3/18/18, Marta McDowell, Garden Writer, 'All the Presidents' Gardens'
- 4/21 & 4/22, Annual Plant Sale
- 9/15/18, Jessica Walliser, Radio Host, 'Attracting Beneficial Bugs to Your Garden'
- 10/21/18, John Lonsdale, Edgewood Gardens, 'Fall Bulbs- Untapped Treasures'
- 11/17/18, Hubert Ling, Native Plant Society, 'Shade Gardening: Native Wildflowers & Ferns'



Speaker Lisa Roper and Watnong member Peggy Kremetz admire the selection of blooming plants Ray Waksmundzki brought to the February meeting. Ray's plants appear below, from left: a Rosemary in bloom, Cyclamen persicum, Chilean Blue Crocus, Hellebore 'Midnight Ruffles', and forced hardy bulbs.



**Our February Speaker:  
Lisa Roper, 'Evolution of the  
Gravel Garden: Design  
Utilizing Photography and  
Ruthless Editing'  
Summarized by Hilary Clayton**

Our speaker Lisa Roper is the Ruin and Gravel Horticulturist at Chanticleer, a 35 acre 'pleasure garden' in Wayne, Pennsylvania, U.S.D.A. zone 7A. A graduate of the Professional Gardener Training Program at Longwood Gardens, she also holds a BFA from The Cooper Union in New York City, where she studied photography and fine art. Previously she gardened in Chanticleer's Asian Woods Garden.

Here's the history of the garden, from the Chanticleer website: "The Chanticleer estate dates from the early 20th-century, when land along the Main Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad was developed for summer homes to escape the heat of Philadelphia. Adolph Rosengarten, Sr., and his wife Christine chose the Wayne-St. Davids area to build their country retreat. The family's pharmaceutical firm would become part of Merck & Company in the 1920s. The Rosengartens hired architect and former classmate Charles L. Borie to design the house, which was completed in 1913. Landscape architect Thomas Sears designed the terraces as extensions of the house. A 1924 addition converted the summer home

into a year-round residence and the family moved here permanently.

Mr. Rosengarten's humor is evident in naming his home after the estate "Chanticleer" in Thackeray's 1855 novel *The Newcomes*. The fictional Chanticleer was "mortgaged up to the very castle windows" but "still the show of the county." Playing on the word, which is synonymous with "rooster," the Rosengartens used rooster motifs throughout the estate.

Adolph and Christine gave their two children homes as wedding presents. They purchased a neighboring property for son Adolph, Jr. and his bride Janet Newlin in 1933. It is now the site of the Ruin. Daughter Emily's house, located at today's visitor entrance, was built for her in 1935. It is presently used for offices and classrooms.

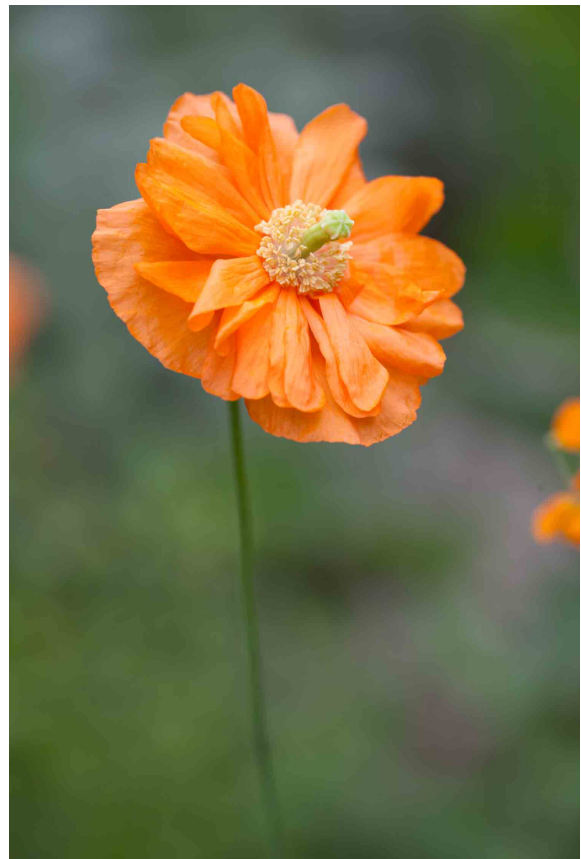
Adolph, Jr., bought his sister's portion of the estate following her death in the 1980s. He didn't move into the main house, but used it for entertaining and kept it as it was when the family lived there. The house is open for tours by reservation. Adolph, Jr., left the entire property for the enjoyment and education of the public following his death in 1990. A nine member Board of Directors, six of whom are Rosengarten relatives, oversees The Chanticleer Foundation. The garden opened to the public in 1993. There are 20 full-time staff, of whom two manage facilities and 14 are gardeners and groundskeepers."

The gravel garden faces south on a gentle slope. The soil is amended with pea gravel and, more recently, with expanded shale to improve drainage, but it isn't a rock garden. In her first year as the Ruin and Gravel Horticulturist, Lisa chose to observe the strengths and weaknesses of the garden, and frequently photographed it, sometimes viewing the scenes in black and white to study the texture of the garden. She found there wasn't enough contrast in the foliage forms and textures. Much of the foliage was fine textured, so she worked to add bold textures with the broad leaves of suitable perennials, such as *Verbascum* and *Salvia argentea*, hardy succulents, such as *Yucca rostrata* and *Opuntia*, and tender succulents, too- set in the pot to hold their size, or directly in the ground to add a season of growth. There are greenhouses on site, so the tender plants can be held through the winter.

Working in a garden that provides such a great seedbed can be a challenge. Many plants germinate well here, so seedling identification is an important skill, especially in the spring. The garden features some aggressively self-seeding plants, such as the perennial *Echinacea tennesseensis*, *Aster oblongifolius*, and *Callirhoe involucrata*, biennials like *Aquilegia vulgaris* and the poppies *Papaver rupifragum* and *P. trifolium*, and annuals, including *Papaver dubium*, *Orlaya grandiflora* and Larkspur, *Consolida spp.*

Some ruthless editing also occurs at the opposite end of the growth cycle. To

keep the plant palette in balance, Lisa has mastered the timing of plant removals- balancing the value of continued bloom versus excessive seeding. By considering the self-seeders as a matrix, she can edit out spent blooms, set others into the openings, and create an informal, naturalistic design. She reminded us that negative space is not a bad thing: when plants are pulled, she rakes the soil and adds a little more gravel, creating space to enhance the next wave of blooms.



*Papaver rupifragum*, photo by Lisa Roper, courtesy of Chanticleer Garden.

Beautiful seed heads present another challenge: those such as *Asclepias*, which are attractive and not invasive,

can be left to enhance the autumn garden. In the case of plants that seed aggressively in the conditions the garden provides, such as *Echinacea tennesseensis*, only the most perfect and well-placed seed heads remain into the fall.

Grasses have proven valuable to add movement and capture late day light- the garden is open Friday evenings from May through Labor Day. Some favorites include Feather Reed Grasses *Calimagrostis* 'Karl Foerster' and *C. brachytricha*, *Schizachyrium spp*, Big Sacaton, *Sporobolis wrightii*, Mexican Hair Grass, *Nassella tenuissima*, and the annual Ruby Grass, *Melinus nerviglumis*, from South Africa, featured in the photo below.



Photo by Lisa Roper, courtesy of Chanticleer Garden.

Bulbs enhance the garden in the spring. *Iris reticulata*, *Muscari* and *Narcissus* all have a place here. Lisa likes to pair perennials with the bulbs, such as the Cushion Spurge *Euphorbia myrsinites* and *E. polychroma*, and to plant complementary blooms together, such as Tulips and *Muscari*.

Lisa frequently considers color while gardening. For subtle color harmony, she uses monochromatic combinations that repeat a single color in various hints and shades, such as the Yellow Horned Poppy, *Glaucium flavum*'s, color match to the yellow centers of *Anthemis* blossoms.

She also enjoys combining complementary colors- those opposite on the color wheel- for example, orange and blue, and working with analogous colors- any three next to each other on the color wheel, such as red, yellow, and orange, allowing one to be dominant.

Rhythm in the garden is important as well- a strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement, for example, alliums 'flowing' down a hillside, or grasses guiding the eye along the path. In addition, she frequently considers the balance of color and form in the garden.

Lisa uses photography to inform her design decisions, and photographs the garden in either the early morning or evening about once a week. Black and white photos show the shapes and form of the garden most clearly. Sketching over printed photos refines the design to plan for the future, by marking locations for plantings of bulbs or removals.

For the past six years, Lisa has been photographing Chanticleer weekly for the 'What's in Bloom' page on Chanticleer's website, <http://www.chanticleergarden.org>, a

great spot for some inspiration. Lisa was also a contributor to *The Art of Gardening: Design Inspiration and Innovative Planting Techniques from Chanticleer*, by R. William Thomas and the Gardeners of Chanticleer, published in 2015 by Timber Press. If you purchase through Amazon Smile you can chose the North American Rock Garden Society as your charity!

We greatly enjoyed Lisa's talk, a perfect tonic for a damp winter's day, complete with new ways to look at our gardens and fresh ideas of new plants to grow.

## NEWS FROM NARGS



### Where Alpines Meet the Sea

**NARGS Annual Meeting, St. John's, Newfoundland, July 6-8, 2018**

**Hosted by the Newfoundland Chapter**

Welcome to Newfoundland, the far east of North America! Eastern Newfoundland is a land of botanical

extremes: boreal forest of balsam fir, black and white spruce with associated northern woodland plants; a multitude of bogs and fens were grow a multitude of orchids and insectivorous plants; and rocky barrens of the coast which house wind-swept contorted trees and plants of an alpine nature more in common with high elevations of the New England Appalachians. We have the largest population of North Atlantic summering humpback whales, some of the largest seabird colonies of eastern North America, and are along the passing route of icebergs calving off glaciers in Greenland. This NARGS venue provides participants with a chance to visit one of the most hauntingly beautiful regions of North America. Newfoundland is truly where alpines meet the sea.

The summer 2018 NARGS meeting will take advantage of the Memorial University of Newfoundland Conference Facility. Accommodations will be available in Macpherson College, opened in 2013, whose private rooms offer modern and comfortable accommodations. Dining areas and lecture theatres are within a couple of minutes' walk from the College. One of the main highlights from this meeting will be a visit to the Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Garden, an informal garden with 13 themed gardens including rock gardens, crevice garden, alpine trough display, and alpine house.

Our guest speakers hail from the coasts of eastern and western Canada as

well as Scotland. The plants discussed will be alpine that can tolerate months of snow and overall wetter climates, with examples from the wild and how they perform in the garden. Day trips will introduce participants to the plants of the eastern Newfoundland coastal barrens and peatlands. Book sales and author signing for the field guides "The Trees and Shrubs of Newfoundland and Labrador" and "Wildflowers and Ferns of Newfoundland" will be available. Before the conference there will be open gardens. Consult the Winter issue of NARGS Rock Garden Quarterly for more details. To register visit the NARGS website at <https://nargs.org/news/2017-12-11/registration-open-newfoundland-meeting-and-post-conference-tour>

The conference registration fee is **CAD \$495.00 Canadian or USD \$415**. Registration for the conference will close as of June 1, 2018. The price of the conference fee includes access to the speakers' presentations, field trips, and the following meals: opening dinner banquet on Friday July 6; breakfast and box lunch on Saturday July 7 and breakfast, box lunch and closing dinner banquet on Sunday July 8.

**For any questions contact Todd Boland at [todd.boland@warp.nfld.net](mailto:todd.boland@warp.nfld.net)**

## Out & About

The 2018 Friends of the Frelinghuysen Plant sale will be held May 4 – 6, 2018. ([www.arboretumfriends.org/plantsale](http://www.arboretumfriends.org/plantsale)). The weekend of the sale, we'll again offer exclusive shopping to our members from 4:00 – 7:00 pm on Friday, May 4th. The plant sale will be open to the public that weekend between 9:00 am – 3:00 pm on both Saturday and Sunday, with plant advisors on hand throughout to help with recommendations of what will work best in your garden.

## WATNONG CLASSIFIEDS

### HYPERTUFA TROUGHS



**If you would like to place an ad here, send copy to the Newsletter Editor, [hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com](mailto:hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com).**

**Deadline for inclusion in our Spring Newsletter is March 25, 2018.**



# Leonard J. Buck Garden Spring Plant Sale and Earth Day Celebration

*April 21 & April 22, 2018*

*Enhance your garden with some spectacular new plant treasures, and help us celebrate Earth Day. Weekend highlights include a plant sale featuring many choice selections of perennials, ferns, alpines, woody plants and troughs, as well as garden lectures.*



**Saturday 10am-5pm and Sunday 12pm-5pm**

**Garden Lectures begin at 1 pm**

***Guided Garden Tours at 2 pm following lectures***

This event is co-sponsored by the Watnong Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society. Buck Garden staff and Rock Garden Society members will be on hand to advise visitors about plants and gardening.



SOMERSET COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

LEONARD J. BUCK GARDEN

11 LAYTON ROAD, FAR HILLS, NJ 07931

[www.somersetcountyparks.org](http://www.somersetcountyparks.org) 908 722-1200, ext. 5621

[www.facebook.com/LJBuckGarden](https://www.facebook.com/LJBuckGarden)



*For individuals with hearing/speech impairments, use the NJ Relay Service @ 711. If you have individualized needs due to a disability, please call the Therapeutic Recreation Department at 908 526-5650 and we will be happy to arrange reasonable accommodations. Three weeks notice is required to ensure that appropriate accommodations can be provided.*

## 2018 WATNONG CHAPTER OFFICERS

Chair	Please Consider	Your Name Here!	
Vice Chair	Michael Wilson	862-397-9339	miwilson@ramapo.edu
Treasurer	Don Grossmann	908-604-8060	<a href="mailto:donmliss@msn.com">donmliss@msn.com</a>
Secretary	Debi Graf	201-919-0749	DGRAFatHome@aol.com

## 2018 WATNONG COMMITTEES

Membership & Distribution	Sid Jones	973-366-7241	rsj40jr@icloud.com
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Program Committee	Brian Coleman	973-325-3453	bell.coleman@verizon.net
Program Committee	Lainie Beavin	908-537-4448	beavin@embarqmail.com
Digital Projector	Michael Wilson	862-397-9339	miwilson@ramapo.edu
Publicity	Carolyn Iglesias	973-763-3275	mushroomhouse1@optonline.net
Plant Sale Co-Chair	Jim Avens	908-234-2677x 22	javens@scparks.org
Plant Sale Co-Chair	Melissa Grossmann	908-604-8060	donmliss@msn.com
Newsletter	Hilary Clayton	908-781-2521	hilaryhclayton@gmail.com

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**THE WATNONG CHAPTER  
NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY  
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