



# Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society  
✧ Volume XL ✧ Spring 2016 ✧ Number 3 ✧

## Upcoming Programs

### Annual Plant Sale

Saturday, April 23, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Sunday April 24, 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.  
At The Leonard J. Buck Garden,  
11 Layton Road, Far Hills, NJ 07931  
Please print & share the flyer, page 13!

### Annual Soiree- Members Only!

Saturday, May 7, 5 p.m.  
At The Leonard J. Buck Gardens  
RSVP by April 28  
Details on page 3

### Bus Trip to Oliver Nurseries & Gilberties Herb Gardens

Sunday May 15, 2016  
8 a.m. until 6 p.m.  
Members and their guests MUST  
RSVP by April 20, or the trip may be  
cancelled! See page 12 for more details  
& registration form

### Annual Picnic- Members Only!

Saturday, August 13, 2016  
Watnong Gardens  
2387 Watnong Terrace  
Morris Plains, NJ 07950

## Plant Sale Report:

### Plant Donations Needed

By Melissa Grossmann, Plant Sale Co-Chair

Divisions from your garden are greatly needed for the plant sale. Your donations are important to the profit margin of the sale, and are a source for plants that we won't otherwise have for sale. Common plants are as welcome as rarities; please label all plant donations. It's best to pot them up well in advance of the sale, so they have time to recover from the shock. **Plant donations may be dropped off at The Leonard J. Buck Garden April 9 – 21, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please ask a staff member where to leave the plants.**

By now, you should have received an e-mail asking for volunteers to work the few shifts remaining open in our schedule. To volunteer, or to ask questions about your shift, please contact volunteer coordinator Martha Podilchuk at [marthapod@comcast.net](mailto:marthapod@comcast.net) or 908-507-6487. Due to the small size of the parking lots at the Buck Garden, volunteers are asked to park on Belcher Lane, which is a side street off Layton Road, alongside route 287.

For directions, call The Leonard J. Buck Garden at 908-234-2677, or visit [www.somersetcountyparks.org](http://www.somersetcountyparks.org).

## Plants That I'm Excited About

By Melissa Grossmann

Seriously, I didn't order anything that I'm not excited about, but I know you want me to name names.

**Primroses:** We hope to have eight different *Primulas*.

**Camellias:** They'll need a little winter protection until they're established, and then they will be hardy in zone 6.

**Hellebores:** We've ordered several different cultivars, but 'Blushing Bridesmaid' and 'Peppermint Ice' particularly entrance me.

**Magnolias:** Try to find room for *M. macrophylla* subsp. *ashei*, *M. x 'Coral Lake'* or *M. x Judy Zuk'* There will also be many other flowering trees.

**Native Rhododendrons:** We are expecting *R. periclymenoides* and *R. arborescens*.

**Heuchera x 'Paris':** Plant Delights Nursery calls this "the best flowering coral bells that we've ever trialed", and I can confirm that in my garden, it blooms for nearly the entire growing season.

**Dwarf Conifers:** This year we have ordered only miniature and dwarf conifers that will not quickly outgrow your trough or rock garden.

**Eryngium planum 'Tiny Jackpot':** This is a rock garden plant with uniquely shaped blue flowers. There will be a

wide selection of diminutive flowering plants suitable for our climate, for your rock garden or trough.

**Ruellia humilis:** This east coast native blooms for most of the growing season, and is the larval food of several butterfly species. David Culp mentioned it favorably in his lecture on March 13. As usual, we will have many, many wildflower species.



David Culp provided a signed copy of *The Layered Garden* as a door prize at our March 13 meeting. John Huebner was the lucky winner. Photo by Albert Martin.

## **Our Annual Soiree- For members only!**

By Noel Schulz

When: Saturday, May 7, 2016, 5:00 p.m.  
Where: Leonard J. Buck Garden, 11  
Layton Road, Far Hills, NJ

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 Thursday, April 28 at [noelschulz@verizon.net](mailto:noelschulz@verizon.net) or 201-445-6445, so we can get an accurate count for food.**

The Leonard J. Buck Garden is one of the premier rock gardens in the eastern United States. Begun in the late 1930's, the garden has reached a breathtaking point of maturity. It consists of a series of alpine and woodland gardens situated in a 33-acre wooded stream valley. Named for Mr. Leonard J. Buck, who developed the garden as part of his estate, it was donated to the Somerset County Park Commission by Mrs. Helen Buck in 1976.

Mr. Buck worked with Mr. Zenon Schreiber, a well-known landscape architect, to develop a naturalistic garden that incorporated several large rock outcroppings found on the property. Their aim was to create a garden that would be ecologically

correct and not recognizable as being man-made. Each outcropping is slightly different, creating varying exposures and microclimates, which enable different plant associations to thrive.

One of the greatest delights in visiting the Leonard J. Buck Garden is discovering its variety of plants. Tucked among the rocks are rare and exotic rock garden plants. The wooded trails connecting the outcroppings are lined with beautiful wild flowers that have flourished and multiplied through the years. Throughout the gardens grow various ferns. At the base of the valley walls, Azaleas and *Rhododendrons* produce a colorful display in May and early June. The Buck Garden's peak bloom is in spring, when favorite wildflowers, diminutive alpiners, and delicate azaleas all compete for attention, but there is something interesting in bloom almost every week of the year.

Directions to The Leonard J. Buck Garden:

From the north: Route 287 south to exit 18. Take Rt. 202/206 north, staying right to continue on 202. Follow signs to Morristown and Far Hills. At the Far Hills train station, turn right just before the railroad tracks onto Liberty Corner - - Far Hills Rd. Go .9 of a mile to Layton Rd. and turn right. The garden is on the left.



Ray Waksmundzki brought a beautiful selection of flowering plants to the March 13 meeting. Photo by Albert Martin.

## NEWSFROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

On March 6, 2016, our membership Chair, Sid Jones, sent the following message to all members via e-mail: "Our parent organization, North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) wishes to increase their interaction with local chapter members who are not members of the national group. Within Watnong, only a minority of members also belongs to NARGS. To support the request of NARGS, Watnong Chapter is surveying our membership to identify those members who are willing to provide information to NARGS. It is entirely up to our individual members as to whether or not they wish to provide NARGS with information.

It is the chapter's policy to only pass along information released by individual members.

**You can grant permission for us to list any, all or none of the following:**

1. Your Name
2. Your Postal Address
3. Your Email Address

If you are currently a member of NARGS, indicate that in your response. You are already in the NARGS database, but NARGS wants to be certain you are associated with the correct and current chapter.

Please respond promptly to this request. Our deadline is April 15, 2016. If you do not respond by then **none** of your personal information will be sent to NARGS.

Watnong Chapter will provide NARGS with our current number of members (total paid membership for 2016).

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

You may recall that the Watnong Chapter has helped with Phase 2 of the NARGS seed exchange for the past few years, packing seeds. As one of the larger Chapters in the country, we've been asked to manage Phase 3, the seed distribution phase, of the Seed Exchange for 2017 and 2018. The Somerset County Park Commission has graciously allowed us use of the Jordan House at The Leonard J. Buck Garden for the month of January 2017. Since other Chapters have also been asked to host Phase 3, it's not yet known whether or not we'll actually be the seed distribution Chapter. Should we be chosen as the Phase 3 Coordinators,



we will need many hands to make this light work; members may recall fulfilling orders at Peggy Kremetz's home several years ago. At our March 13 meeting Mike Wilson noted that the volunteers get their seed orders filled first, and that it's a really fun way to get to know other members. Hilary adds that you'll learn a great many Latin names, too! If you'd like more information on what's involved, contact Hilary Clayton (see page 11).



Debi Graf won the second door prize at the March 13 meeting, an *Aloe 'Christmas Carol'*. Photo by Albert Martin.

Please send any information to be included in the Summer Newsletter to Hilary Clayton by July 16, 2016.

## FROM THE CHAIR

Dear All,

Spring is here! In my yard the Witch-hazels are in bloom. The Winter Aconites have come and gone, but many of the Snowdrops are still hanging in there with some bloom. I can predict the sea of blue that will soon arrive by the amount of *Scilla* foliage that has appeared. It was planted long before I purchased the property and is a spectacular statement each April.

I also can see the spots in my yard and rock garden that need a little help. I anticipate the annual plant sale and look forward to getting some new, unplanned additions to my gardens. If you find yourself in the same position and need to fill some gaps, remember that the sale is a good place to find unusual plants. In addition, members are present to help with those decisions and offer advice on growing. This is how I learned a good many of the plants that I am familiar with today. If you have the time to volunteer and help with the sale, it is a great way to meet members and develop relationships that may go beyond the horticultural world. Please come and support the sale in a role that suits your needs and remember that this is our only fundraiser of the year.

We use this funding to support many things besides the operation of the Watnong Chapter. We are fortunate to provide wonderful programs, open to the public. We also support local public gardens, and will continue to do so at The Leonard J. Buck Garden, and the Laurelwood Arboretum.

In April, I will be going to Laurelwood Arboretum's South Rock Garden to assess the work that we did over the past two years. Shortly thereafter, I will notify the membership to set up a maintenance group that I would like to have meet once a month to weed and keep the garden presentable. Plans will be made for the restoration of another bed and members that would rather work on that part, rather than maintenance, are also welcome. The restoration will begin in the fall and follow the same pattern as the previous bed. We will excavate, add tufa, add new soil, and then plant. Planting will occur in the spring of 2017.

I look forward to seeing you at the plant sale, as often it is a social event for me.

Regards,  
Mike

## **Our March Speaker: David Culp**

### **The Layered Garden**

**Text and Photos by Albert Martin**

David Culp started his lecture by noting that he loves plants, he is addicted to them, and the only thing better than looking at plants is looking at them with a friend. Plants in his garden also keep a special connection between him and the friends who introduced him to that specific plant.

David also loves living in the pastoral, rolling hillsides of the mid-Atlantic. He also loves Brandywine, his home, which was a much-neglected property when he acquired it 26 years ago. Like falling in love, one does not always see the faults of the object of one's attraction, and the house had many. That included an introduction to Poison Ivy. But David saw in that property a cottage garden. He saw in particular the grade changes of the land and the historic nature of the house.



This garden was to be a co-operative venture with Mother Nature. He did

not change the topography of the land at all, nor clear-cut what already existed on the property. He also wanted to garden "within his means." For David, that means that if the 360-foot well becomes dry during the summer, then the garden is not irrigated. As a result, he works with a palette of plants that can handle dry conditions.

David uses many native plants because they are already adapted to the temperature and climatic changes of the mid-Atlantic region. His definition of "native" is rather large, taking in all of the lower 48 states. His criteria for plant selection is "sustainability": how little water does it take to sustain that plant or that portion of the garden, how little fertilizer, how little pest control or chemicals, even how few man-hours are needed in its care are all included in "sustainability."

Insecticides are not used. David tells the story of planting roses in their own bed: it looked like "a rose leper garden." Now he plants his roses in mixed borders; the rose leaves harmed by pests and diseases are hidden by the healthy growth of the other plants. This is what he considers "gardening within your means".

The garden is not deer fenced. David uses every kind of deer repellent, which "forces" him to walk around the garden, with the very happy result that he is "forced" to look at the garden. At tulip time David is spraying about

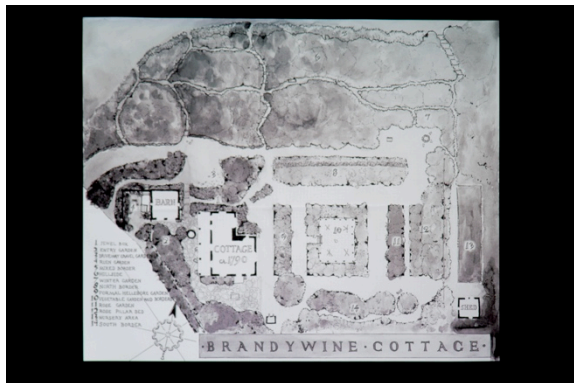
every other day. The aim is to keep the deer away from the property.

His first "layer" in the garden is the passage of time, not just the four seasons, but the years. With time, and years, decisions get better. "How much pleasure you can wring out of one spot" is part of the passage of time. At this layer, maximizing the entire life cycle of the plant is very important. All aspects of a plant's life should be used in the combinations, including how a plant looks in the fall. How a plant dies back is fair game in making combinations of plants. This is celebrating all aspects of the plant's life.

David can, and does, go away. When he returns home, the plants and the look of the garden have changed. Here it helps to be "a garden nerd". Only by working the garden on a day-to-day basis can you see and appreciate the changes that take place. This daily work is where all of us gardeners get the simple joy of watching something grow. As he said: "You have to be 'in it' to enjoy it." To emphasize this point, David went through a series of slides that concentrated on only one portion of the garden as that portion evolved over the summer. He calls it "succession planning," timing the spring emergence of various plants so that the garden always has something happening over time. David started out planting only the early varieties of plants that he loves. As he said, he needed his chlorophyll withdrawal

satisfied early. Seven years ago he started planting both early and late varieties, so the garden stays satisfying over a longer period of time. Slow down. Love the moment. When fall arrives, again have the beauty of the various plants appear in succession.

David then turned to the design of his garden. He discussed the various areas of his garden and some of the reasons behind the layout. He planned the straight lines of the garden to lead the eye through the garden. Section 14, the south border, hides the housing developments to the south of his property. Section 8, the north border, is planted with plants of various sizes, thus connecting the lower portion of the property to the uphill slope, section 6.



The layered garden is also about relationships between the areas of the garden. The Hellebore garden, section 9, relates to the north border (section 8) which relates to the hillside (section 6), which relates to the wild garden.

The top priority in his garden is "texture." A long blooming perennial lasts for, at best, only about three

weeks. If the garden is based on texture, not color, the texture generates more interest over a longer period of time. How do you know if you have the texture right? Those who practice photography know if you edit out the color and the picture remains interesting, you probably have your texture right. Garden magic happens when planes and lines intersect.

As for color, David's advice is to "do what you like." This guarantees at least one person has been pleased. His advice is to do all you can to learn. Before making a garden of your own, visit public gardens, go on tours, come to plant sales, read books—"even a copy of *The Layered Garden*"- then have fun with what you've learned. You are the garden artist. It is your job to play with the colors and make them work.

The natural levels of the woodland are "tree, understory, and shrub". David considers anything under about 40 feet to be "understory". Again, make combinations on all these levels. As for texture, he wants "vertical, furry and bold". If the garden has all three, it is "pretty much good to go". His hillside has no flowers; interest there is based on leaf color and texture.

If you are a plant "collector", you need unity in the garden. This is unity of color and shape. Because his woodland garden is vertical, much of the rest of the garden is also composed of plants that are vertical.



His woodland garden has also become a habitat garden. There are twenty-seven birdhouses located in the garden, and owls inhabit it as well. Acting responsibly toward the other creatures that inhabit his garden is also part of why David is a very light user of chemicals in the garden.

The lecture closed with a quick tour of the various sections of his garden. He reminded us of the importance of resting in the garden; allow the garden to give back to you what you have given to it. The strength of any garden is its ability to “take you away”. We enjoyed being away for a virtual visit on a cold March afternoon!



David Culp signs copies of his book, *The Layered Garden*, following his lecture March 13.

## OUT AND ABOUT

The Somerset County Park Commission will be celebrating Arbor Day with a **Native Tree Give-Away event on Friday, April 29 and Saturday, April 30**. A wide-ranging selection of native trees will be available

from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Environmental Education Center (EEC) in Lord Stirling Park, and at the Rudolf W. van der Goot Rose Garden in Colonial Park Gardens. Eighteen different tree species native to the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States will be offered free of charge while supplies last, and planting demonstrations and instructions on applying the proper cultural care will be presented. One tree per person or two trees per family will be given away at each location. Many of these native trees are beneficial for native pollinators, birds, and other wildlife. The Go-Green Committee coordinates the event and trees are funded by the Somerset County Park Foundation, a non-profit 501c(3) created to preserve, support, and promote Somerset County Park Commission programs, facilities, and open space through advocacy and fundraising.

**Open Gardens May 7!** While our Soiree will allow us to enjoy the beauty of The Leonard J. Buck Gardens during the evening of May 7, two Watnong member gardens will be open for afternoon visits nearby through the Garden Conservancy Open Days Program: **Woodlove, the Glen Gardener home of John & Lainie Beavin, will be open from noon until 4 p.m., and The Hay, Honey Farm, in Far Hills, will be open from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Admission to each garden is \$7.** Directions are on the web at [www.GardenConservancy.org](http://www.GardenConservancy.org).

Also on Saturday, May 7, 2016: The Cross Estate Spring Plant Sale, 61c Jockey Hollow Road Bernardsville, NJ 07924, 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. "Our Plant Sale will be filled with divisions from our shady native plant garden and from our sunny walled garden, plus donated plants from our volunteers' and members' gardens. In addition to perennials, we will have a selection of small trees and shrubs. All funds raised at this sale will help the volunteers of the NJHGF care for the Cross Estate Gardens. Your support of our Plant Sale is greatly appreciated!" For information call Joan at 201-240-5898, or visit the website: [www.CrossEstateGardens.org](http://www.CrossEstateGardens.org).

Come one, come all (and bring your friends and family) to a book launch event for Marta McDowell's newest release, *All the Presidents' Gardens*, Sunday, June 5, 2016, from 2 p.m. until 3 p.m. at the Short Stories Community Book Hub, 32 Main Street, Madison, NJ 07928. There's plenty of parking on the street and in a lot behind that block of stores. Marta will give a short talk, to be followed by light refreshments, lots of socializing, and, of course, books. All are welcome, the more the merrier, and no RSVP necessary.

## WATNONG CLASSIFIEDS

GARDEN ORNAMENTS & ACCESSORIES FOR SALE: Metal plant stands and hanging baskets, cast stone planters, display pots, garden lanterns, Wardian-style display case and stand—and more! Please contact [MushroomHouse1@optonline.net](mailto:MushroomHouse1@optonline.net) for more information.

## HYPERTUFA TROUGHS



**BUNNY FERN FARM**  
16 Acken Rd, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920  
120+ Species of Native & Tropical  
Ferns raised from spores or divisions  
Visits by appointment only.  
908-903-1441

### 2016 WATNONG CHAPTER OFFICERS

Chair	Michael Wilson	973-328-3723	miwilson@ramapo.edu
Vice Chair	Sid Jones	973-366-7241	sidjones@verizon.net
Treasurer	Caroline Ford	973-993-9426	Carolineford7@gmail.com
Secretary	Debi Graf	201-919-0749	DGRAFat Home@aol.com

### 2016 WATNONG COMMITTEES

Membership	Sid Jones	973-366-7241	sidjones@verizon.net
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Newsletter Photography	Albert Martin	908-403-0029	AlbertMartin@ AlbertMartinPhotography.co m
Newsletter	Hilary Clayton	908-781-2521	hilaryhclayton@gmail.com

## 2016 SPRING BUS TRIP

Organized by the Watnong Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society

**Oliver Nurseries** in Fairfield, Connecticut ([www.olivernurseries.com](http://www.olivernurseries.com)) Lori Chips, Alpine Manager of Oliver Nurseries, will provide a demonstration on trough planting of alpines, followed by a question and answer period. There will be time to shop at Oliver and a break for lunch (bring your own lunch).

**Glibertie's Herb Gardens** in Westport, Connecticut ([www.gilbertiesherbs.com](http://www.gilbertiesherbs.com)) Tour display gardens, and we will have time to shop.

Date and Time: Sunday, May 15, 2016, 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM (approximately)

Depart: 8:00 AM from Cedar Knolls Plaza, 235 Ridgedale Ave, Cedar Knolls (park at the McDonalds end of the lot, near Ridgedale Ave)

Depart: 8:30 AM from Walgreens/Starbucks parking lot, 409 Ramapo Valley Road, Oakland, NJ (park behind Walgreens, furthest from the buildings)

Cost: \$35 per member, \$45 per non-member (includes membership for year)

Note: Bring your own lunch, but water will be provided on the bus.

Please keep purchases small enough to carry on the bus.

To reserve your seat, please complete the form below and return it with your check payable to Watnong NARGS, to: Watnong NARGS, c/o Noel Schulz, 108 Lincoln Place, Waldwick, NJ 07463. Any questions? Contact Noel at 201-445-6445 or [noelschulz@verizon.net](mailto:noelschulz@verizon.net).

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### 2016 Trip Registration Form

# Members \_\_\_\_\_ x \$35, # Guests \_\_\_\_\_ x \$45 = Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to Watnong NARGS

Pick up Location (circle choice): Cedar Knolls or Oakland

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (for confirmation): \_\_\_\_\_



Leonard J. Buck Garden and  
Watnong Chapter North American Rock Garden Society

# Spring 2016 Plant Sale & Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 23 10am – 5pm

Sunday, April 24 12 – 5pm



- 🌸 Plant sale will feature choice perennials, ferns, wild-flowers, rock garden plants, shrubs & trees, and handcrafted hypertufa troughs
- 🌸 Free inspiring garden talk each day at 1 p.m.
- 🌸 Free guided tour of Buck Garden each day at 2 p.m.

**Somerset County Park Commission**

**Leonard J. Buck Garden**

**11 Layton Road**

**Far Hills, NJ**

**908 234-2677**

**[www.somersetcountyparks.org](http://www.somersetcountyparks.org)**



If you have individualized needs due to a disability, please call 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.

If you print this newsletter, please recycle it when you're finished.

**THE WATNONG CHAPTER  
NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY  
c/o The Leonard J. Buck Garden  
11 Layton Road  
Far Hills, NJ 07931**

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