



Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society
✧ Volume XLI ✧ Spring 2017 ✧ Number 3 ✧

Upcoming Programs

Annual Plant Sale!

At The Leonard J. Buck Garden

11 Layton Road, Far Hills, NJ 07931

Saturday, April 22, 2017, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Lecture at 1 p.m., Dorothy Smullen,
'Wildflowers and Weeds'

Guided Tour of the Garden at 2 p.m.

Sunday, April 23, noon - 5 p.m.

Lecture at 1 p.m., Frank Goodhart,
'Conifer Survey'

Guided Tour of the Garden at 2 p.m.

Annual Soiree, for Members Only

Saturday, May 6, 2017, 5 p.m.

Presby Iris Garden

474 Upper Mountain Ave.

Upper Montclair, NJ 07043

RSVP by April 28; see page 4

Bus Trip! Saturday, May 20, 2017

8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Visit David Culp's

Brandywine Cottage and Charles

Cresson's Hedgeleigh Spring.

Registration form on page 10.

Field Trip! Saturday, June 17, 2017

Walking Tour of the Pinelands with the

Delaware Valley Chapter, at Brendan

Byrne State Forest. There will not be

group transportation; other details to

follow.



Ray Waksmundzki, far right, brought some plant guests that attracted a good deal of attention! Photo by Albert Martin.



Ray's *Amorphophallus konjac*, the center of the attention. Photo by Albert Martin.

Ray Waksmundzki also brought plants for door prizes to the March 18 meeting. Below are photographs by Albert Martin of the lucky winners and their new plants.



Fred Knapp with *Erigeron compositus*



Mary Ann Ackerman and *Kalanchoe gastonis-bonneri*

NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

The Plant Sale is coming soon! Plants That I'm Excited About By Melissa Grossmann

I'm excited about helping people to find joy in their gardens! Our mission as a chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society is to encourage the art of rock gardening, and to support that goal, the plant sale will have some **easily grown rock garden plants**. If you're new to trough or rock gardening, our plant advisors will help you choose appropriate plants. Of course, there will be lots of other plants to light your fire:

Native Plants

Delphinium exaltatum is tall, blue, and comfortable in our climate.



Annette Tyler with *Albuca spiralis*

Helianthus helianthoides 'Prairie Sunset' is surprisingly refined in appearance and long-blooming.

Houstonia caerulea is hardly ever available for purchase, despite being happy in a variety of habitats.

Phlox glaberrima 'Forever Pink' is wonderfully floriferous.

Thermopsis caroliniana was recently featured in Horticulture magazine as a perennial to bridge the gap between the spring and summer flowers. *Penstemon digitalis* 'Pocahontas' also blooms at this time.

Veronicastrum virginicum 'Lavender Towers' is a delicious pale shade. *Viola walteri* 'Silver Gem' never has a dull moment with its silver-over-purple foliage.

Trees and Shrubs

Camellia: The new hybrids really are hardy. Mine endured the recent temperature swings without being damaged at all.

Magnolia 'Sun Sprite' is columnar, so you can create an interesting effect with its shape, or just squeeze in another flowering tree. Please look up the description of *Magnolia* 'Cotton Candy' – it's not just another pink magnolia.

Styrax japonicus 'Evening Light': has new foliage and petioles that are purple, providing good contrast with the fragrant white flowers.

Parrotia subaequalis has consistently good fall color and gorgeous bark.

Stachyurus praecox is valued for its late winter flowers and its graceful deportment.

Asimina triloba: Now you can have your native plants and eat them, too. Two cultivars are needed for good fruit set, so of course we will have two cultivars.

Other Fun Plants

Gentiana x 'True Blue' is a gentian that wants to live in your garden, unlike so many other gentians.

Lychnis x 'Rollie's Favorite' sets a new standard for *Lychnis*, thriving in heat and humidity, and blooming for many weeks.

Phlomis russeliana is worth trying for its architectural assertiveness (I plagiarized that phrase).

Sanguisorba officinalis 'Lemon Splash' has amazing yellow-variegated foliage.

In addition, there will be dwarf conifers, choice wildflowers and ferns, *Primulas*, the coolest *Sedums* and *Sempevivoums*, and troughs for purchase. Something for everyone, and every garden!

NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

The Plant Sale is coming up soon!

There are many ways that you can help! Plants donated by members greatly add to our profits. Potted, labeled divisions from your garden can be dropped off between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. from Saturday April 8 to Thursday, April 20 at The Leonard J. Buck Garden, 11 Layton Road, Far Hills, NJ, 07931.

Can you volunteer your time? Contact Volunteer coordinator Martha Podilchuk at marthapod@comcast.net or 908-507-6487.

The volunteer spots that still need to be filled are as follows:

Friday April 21

Plant sitting
morning shift 10-1
afternoon shift 1-4

Saturday April 22

12:00-2:30
1 cashier
1 holding pen person

Sunday April 23

11:45-2:30
1 holding pen person

2:30-5:00
1 holding pen person

Please consider printing a copy of the plant sale flyer on page 11 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: bring your own box to carry home your purchases!

This year's soiree will be held at the Presby Memorial Iris Garden, 474 Upper Mountain Ave, Montclair, New Jersey, 07043 on Saturday, May 6 at 5:00 p.m. Please contact Noel Schulz no later than April 28 at noelschulz@verizon.net or telephone [201-445-6445](tel:201-445-6445) to let him know if you plan to attend. Members are asked to

bring an appetizer or dessert, and a chair. There is a small parking lot on Upper Mountain Ave; additional parking is available at a second lot on Highland Ave., as well as on the street.

A walking tour of the Pine Barrens will be led by Delaware Valley Chapter Chair Janet Novak on Saturday, June 17, 2017. We'll meet at Brendan Byrne State Forest for a walk of several miles to see orchids and more. We will not be coordinating transportation to the park; take advantage of our upcoming activities to find friends to carpool.

Laurelwood Update: Another bed was prepped last fall at The South Rock Garden at Laurelwood Arboretum. Mike Wilson will be purchasing tufa for the new bed when weather conditions permit, and will set it to the prepared bed in a hands-on workshop day tentatively scheduled for June 24. Please contact Mike Wilson, miwilson@ramapo.edu, or 862-397-9339 if you're interested in participating.

Ray Waksmundzki brought a blooming *Amorphophallus konjac* to our meeting. Carole Stober has young *Amorphophallus* plants that she's happy to share with anyone interested in growing one. She'll be at the plant sale for Thursday set-up and Sunday afternoon; contact her at 908-797-9688 if you'd like her to bring one for you to grow, with printed growing instructions.

NEWS FROM NARGS

Wisconsin Spring Garden Gala in Madison, Wisconsin

NARGS Study Weekend, Friday, May
19 to Saturday, May 20, 2017

The Wisconsin Spring Garden Gala (and NARGS Study Weekend) will be May 19-20, 2017 in Madison, Wisconsin. Registration is filling up for an event with talks, garden tours, and buying trips to two great nurseries. It will make a great spring adventure for you and some of your gardening friends. Visit www.nargs.org to register.

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 with room
for three guest passengers;** if you're
also interested in attending, and can
take a turn as driver, contact her
roxanne.hiltz@gmail.com

Our March Speaker:

Mark Weathington, 'Making a
Mountain Out of a Molehill
Rock Garden'

By Albert Martin



Mark Weathington is the Director of
the J.C. Raulston Arboretum at North
Carolina State University. His career in
public horticulture has also included
the Norfolk Botanical Garden, where he
served as Director of Horticulture, and
the Atlanta Botanical Garden, where he
worked as a horticulturist.

J.C. Ralston came to N.C. State in 1975. Although the Arboretum didn't officially open until 1981, he started planting the garden pretty much upon his arrival in North Carolina. He was hired to teach and support the North Carolina green industry. At that time 90 percent of the available plant palette in any given region was made up of only about 40 plants. J. C. Raulston's aim was to diversify the American landscape, and so the arboretum planted "everything", and promoted those plants that performed well to the nursery industry. Rather than being set out in rows, the plants were set in a landscape to show how they might be used.

The J. C. Raulston Arboretum continues to be successful at its mission. A 2015 'snapshot' of the plants growing at the arboretum showed more than 7,000 distinct taxa growing on 10.5 acres, most of them woody. The arboretum goes through phases where one taxa is collected and evaluated. Currently they are trialing *Illicium*, and have over 50 different forms. They're of particular interest in that deer don't eat them, and they are hardy to U.S.D.A. zone 6.

In terms of their mission to grow, evaluate and get the plants "out there", the arboretum finds that rock gardens have a lot to offer the urban landscape. Study after study shows how much plants benefit the urban landscape. Rock garden plants are adapted to

many of the challenges of urban locales, such as bright light, and hot, dry conditions.

A few years ago the arboretum had such a site that was mostly empty space. The decision was made to turn it into a scree garden. Scree is the loose, broken down rock found on mountainsides which offers perfect drainage. To create such a garden, the sandy clay loam soil was amended with 30% PermaTill, an expanded slate product.

Within the scree garden, the arboretum continued its practice of planting small: a tree takes about a year per caliper inch to establish; a one-inch caliper tree will often surpass the growth of a larger transplant in just a few years, with a better root system and stronger growth. Given that all plants grow more quickly in North Carolina's climate, dwarf conifers aren't dwarf there for long, and so are not a focus of the garden.

Another rock garden form with potential for urban areas is the crevice garden. In a shared project with the local NARGS chapter, Kenton Seth from Colorado came to lecture and spent a few days directing the construction of a new crevice garden directly adjacent to a building.

Soil was mounded and covered with three feet of builders sand. The rocks were set upright into the sand, never more than an inch apart. Additional

sand was used to fill gaps between the rocks. Plants were set in the crevices and mulched with additional PermaTill.

In the crevice garden mountain top plants are sitting on top of rock, where they get the heat they want. The roots go all the way down to the soil, where there is moisture. Because they are sitting up on top of a mound, they also benefit from air movement, so no moisture lingers, and the plants thrive.

Mark concluded his talk by showing the potential for rock gardens where often there is just a container or a retaining wall. A crevice garden is a great way to deal with a steep slope. Filling raised bed with rock garden soils allows for the creation of a garden with much better longevity. He recommends spending money on the soil, and saving it by setting small plants, which will perform well in the good growing conditions offered.

We enjoyed his presentation, and ideas for keeping rock garden plants healthy in a humid climate.

Some of These Grew for Me: A Review of the Plant Sale Offerings

By Michael Wilson

Once again, Melissa has selected a terrific assortment of plants for our sale! There are plants for every type of garden and growing condition.

Zizia aurea, Golden Alexander, is an underutilized native perennial that makes an excellent choice for habitat restoration or use in wetland seed

mixes. According to Donald Leopold's *Native Plants of the Northeast*, *Zizia* will grow in part shade to full sun and requires a wet to moist soil. I have the plant in my native plant garden next to the barn and it certainly receives less than part shade. The area is also somewhat dry, and is only watered in times of severe drought. *Zizia* grows 12 to 36 inches tall, but my plants tend to be closer to 12 inches due to the limited growing conditions. It bears terminal flat clusters of bright yellow flowers in late spring. The umbels are about three inches wide and do make a statement when in bloom. If you have shade and are looking for a different plant for early summer/late spring, this may be a good choice for you. If you have any large trees where turf is difficult to establish, again *Zizia* may be a good alternative ground cover to consider. The plant is also deer resistant and, if happy, will self sow. In addition, this species is also the larval food plants for the black swallowtail butterfly. Now that is ecological horticulture to its fullest!

There are numerous plants among the selections for rock gardens or troughs that I have had good luck with, along with a few that have been a challenge for me. *Arabis sturii* has been a standard in my rock garden for years. It forms a nice tight mat that creeps in size and climbs over any rocks in its path as it matures, lending a nice natural alpine feeling in the rock garden. It is smothered consistently every spring with white flowers on

short stems that last for about two weeks, depending upon temperature conditions.

Achellia alpina is a plant that I have grown both at home and at the arboretum with marginal success, but I am eager to try it again. It is a native of both Asia and North America (Alaska). I have given it plenty of drainage and a dry gritty soil mix in full sun and it persisted for a few years in both gardens. This time I may add a little more compost with a little less drainage. However, the point is that I am willing to give the plant another try—we all should try something that may be a challenge. You may be the one gardener to be successful.

Another challenging plant that I am looking forward to trying again is *Gaultheria procumbens*, a plant native to our area that prefers acidic conditions in a shady woodland setting. The first time I saw this plant I was in my early 20's working as a ranger in the Ramapo Mountains. My supervisor's wife was a forager, and she showed me several large populations of *Gaultheria* in the wild where she picked the berries every year as a flavoring for jellies. It is a short evergreen plant of about 6 inches with red berries in the fall that taste like teaberry gum. The leaves turn to a burgundy color in the fall, giving some evergreen interest during the winter. It does need acidic woodland soils that may be difficult to imitate. I did find a way to get out of this dilemma that I am looking forward to trying. Last year I visited an organic vegetable garden in

Rockland County near the Hudson River in the flatlands and the owner had several large patches of *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* that they were growing to harvest the mountain cranberries. I commented that is a difficult plant to grow and I had lost it several times. The owner asked me if I had prepared the hole in advance. He said you can add all the peat moss you want but it will not be effective until after the soil chemistry has had a chance to break down some of the amendments. He prepares his planting area one year before he plants the *Vaccinium*. So, I am looking forward to trying this with *Gaultheria procumbens*.

I noticed *Primula japonica* on the list. This is a plant that I have had for over 20 years, since I first started working for the park commission. It grows along the stream at Willowwod Arboretum and is at home in that setting. However, it does not have to grow in a wet spot in the shade. My wife Pam has grown it successfully in her shade garden and it readily reseeds itself. It blooms reliability every year with colors ranging from white to pink to magenta. The garden had copious amounts of compost when originally planted and this, along with moss, may help to address the moisture conditions. If you have a wet spot in your garden this a gem to try.

The list is extensive and I could write about so many more plants but it is best you just come to the sale and be surprised. I like to browse and see what is available. There is a plethora of

unusual and difficult to find plants. Sometimes I come home with a plant that I did not intend to purchase but thought would be fun to try. In contrast to Internet shopping, I like to see live plants and enjoy the camaraderie of seeing all of you at the sale. Come and support the sale and remember that this is our only fundraiser. It is this sale that provides the chapter with the money to present the excellent programs that we have come to enjoy.

OUT AND ABOUT

Arbor Day Tree Giveaway

The Somerset County Park Foundation will sponsor a native tree give-away on Friday, April 28, 2017. Tree species available will include Paw-paw, Ironwood, Buttonbush, Witch-hazel, Redbud, Pussy Willow, Burr and Scrub Oak, and more. See the flyer on page 12 for more details.

Spring Plant Sale!

Cross Estate Gardens, 61c Jockey Hollow Road, Bernardsville, NJ 07924
Saturday, May 6, 2017 9 a.m.- 1 p.m.
"Come one - come all" to our Spring Plant Sale, held in the Cross Estate Gardens. This is a great opportunity to find new plants or replace your plants that didn't survive this past winter. 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 our website at www.CrossEstateGardens.org.

Garden Conservancy Open Day

The Hay, Honey Farm at 130 Stevens Lane, Far Hills, NJ will host an Open Day on Saturday, May 13, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Admission is \$7. For directions and additional information visit www.gardenconservancy.org

WATNONG CLASSIFIEDS

HYPERTUFA TROUGHS



If you would like to place an ad here, send copy to the Newsletter Editor, hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com. Ads are free to Watnong Chapter members. Deadline for inclusion in our Late Spring Newsletter is May 5, 2017.

2017 SPRING BUS TRIP

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

Tour two gardens: David Culp's Brandywine Cottage in Downingtown,
Pennsylvania and Charles Cresson's Hedgeleigh Spring in Swarthmore,
Pennsylvania

Date and Time: Saturday, May 20, 2017 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
(approximately)

Depart: 8:00 a.m. from Cedar Knolls Plaza, 235 Ridgedale Ave,
Cedar Knolls (park at the McDonald's end of the lot, near Ridgedale
Ave)

Cost: \$55 per member, \$65 per non-member (includes membership for
2017)

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

-

2017 Trip Registration Form

Members _____ x \$55, # Guests _____ x \$65 = Total \$ _____

Make check payable to Watnong NARGS

Names: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-mail (for confirmation): _____



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

April 22 & 23, 2017

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.



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.

Saturday 10am - 5pm

Sunday 12pm - 5pm

Garden Lectures begin at 1 PM

On Saturday, April 22, "Wildflowers and Weeds" by Dorothy Smullen, Naturalist and Teacher at New Jersey Audubon

On Sunday, April 23, "Conifer Survey" by Frank Goodhart, Past President of American Conifer Society

Guided Tours of Buck Garden 2 PM



Somerset County
Park Commission

SOMERSET COUNTY PARK COMMISSION LEONARD J. BUCK GARDEN

11 Layton Road, Far Hills, NJ 908 234-2677 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.



Somerset County
Park Commission



Arbor Day Native Tree Give-Away

Friday, April 28, 2017

9am – 4pm

at

Environmental Education Center

Lord Stirling Park ♦ 190 Lord Stirling Road ♦ Basking Ridge

For more info: 908 766-2489, Ext 336

Guided Walking Tour of the experimental American Chestnut Grove at 2pm

and

Rudolf W. van der Goot Rose Garden

Colonial Park Gardens ♦ 156 Mettlers Road ♦ Somerset
(Franklin Township)

For more info: 732 873-2459, Ext 21

Guided Arboretum Tours at Colonial Park Gardens at 10am and 1pm

Tours to start at Colonial Park Gardens tree give-away site

At each location:

One tree per person or two trees per family given

On-going planting demonstrations and horticultural advice

For all the details, visit www.somersetcountyparks.org

Sponsored by




Somerset County
Park Foundation



2017 WATNONG CHAPTER OFFICERS

Chair	Please Consider	Your Name Here!	
Vice Chair	Michael Wilson	862-397-9339	miwilson@ramapo.edu
Treasurer	Caroline Ford	973-993-9426	Carolineford7@gmail.com
Secretary	Debi Graf	201-919-0749	DGRAFatHome@aol.com

2017 WATNONG COMMITTEES

Membership	Sid Jones	973-366-7241	rsj40jr@icloud.com
Programs	Noel Schulz	201-445-6445	noelschulz@verizon.net
Program Committee	Brian Coleman	973-325-3453	bell.coleman@verizon.net
Program Committee	Lainie Bevin	908-537-4448	beavin@embarqmail.com
Digital Projector			
Publicity	Carolyn Iglesias	973-763-3275	mushroomhouse1@optonline.net
Plant Sale Co-Chair	Jim Avens	908-234-2677x 22	javens@scparcs.org
Plant Sale Co-Chair	Melissa Grossmann	908-604-8060	donmliss@msn.com
Mailing	Diane McNally	908-234-1170	dmc79@verizon.net
Newsletter Photography	Albert Martin	908-403-0029	AlbertMartin@ AlbertMartinPhotography.com
Newsletter	Hilary Clayton	908-781-2521	hilaryhclayton@gmail.com

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL