



Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society

✂ Volume XLIV ✂ Summer 2020 ✂ Number 3 ✂

Upcoming Programs

Saturday, August 15, 2020 10 a.m.

**A guided tour of Paul Sisko's Garden
Via Zoom**

Saturday, September 19, 10:15 a.m.

**Lisa Roper, Chanticleer Horticulturist,
'Bulbs'**

Via Zoom

We're back, in a brand-new way!

Since Frelinghuysen Arboretum will remain closed for meetings through the end of the year, we are going to have a garden tour and our three scheduled fall meetings via Zoom.

Paul Sisko, who had planned to host the annual picnic, will give a guided video tour of his garden Saturday, August 15, at 10:00 a.m. Don Grossmann, our treasurer, will be the meeting administrator and Roxanne Hiltz, our chair, will be the overall moderator and chat channel watcher.

An invitation to join the session and the password will be emailed to all members. The first 15 minutes will get everybody 'on board' and greeted. At about 10:30, Roxanne will call on Noel Schulz, program chair, to introduce



Raimonda myconii, grown & photographed by Ray Waksmundzki

the speaker, followed by Paul's tour. Following the tour, Roxanne will moderate a question and answer session of 15-20 minutes using selected questions from text chat.

For members unfamiliar with Zoom, the chapter will hold an optional training session on Monday, August 10 at 7:30 p.m. During this training session, members can become familiar with Zoom and address any technical concerns, so that everyone can enjoy the August 15 chapter meeting. Specific details about the training will be sent to you in the near future via e-mail, which

will also include a separate training video that can be viewed at any time.

If our virtual meeting works well, we may add breakout groups for virtual coffee hour after upcoming meetings.

Our first fall meeting will be Saturday, September 19 at 10:15 a.m. We will follow the same sign in as for the August 15 tour. Lisa Roper's illustrated lecture will last approximately 45 minutes, and then Roxanne will moderate a question and answer session of 15-20 minutes using selected questions from text chat.

Our August Speaker:

Paul Sisko will narrate a tour of his garden in Mahwah, New Jersey, where he has garden for over 30 years, as filmed by Joseph Cooper. The 3.5-acre garden features a fishpond and pool area, surrounded by terraced gardens built with stone relocated from farm walls on the property. There are perennial, annual, and vegetable gardens, and numerous contemporary metal sculptures created by Paul throughout the property.

Our September Speaker:

Lisa Roper is the Gravel Garden and Ruin horticulturist at Chanticleer, a public garden in Wayne, Pennsylvania, where she has gardened in various sections for the past 30 years. Lisa also photographs Chanticleer Garden

weekly for What's in Bloom on the Chanticleer website.

Lisa has a BFA in fine art from The Cooper Union in NYC where she studied fine art and photography, and is a graduate of the Longwood Gardens Professional Gardener Training Program. Lisa has been a guest gardener at Stellenbosch University Garden in South Africa and Great Dixter in West Sussex, UK. She is also a contributor to *The Art of Gardening, Design Inspiration and Innovative Planting Techniques from Chanticleer*.

In her spare time, she gardens at home with her husband, Allan Summers, and a flock of chickens who nibble the insects as she weeds.

Lisa will speak on spring blooming bulbs, including unusual ones. She will discuss the different cultural requirements for bulbs to thrive, and how to combine bulbs with perennials, annuals, grasses and other bulbs for optimal effect. She will also cover planting techniques, perennializing bulbs, and how to try to ward off critters.

NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

"MY PANDEMIC GARDEN"

From Melissa Grossmann:

I ordered from two online plant sources for the first time this year, and I can recommend:

Perennial Pleasures

(www.perennialpleasures.net)

specializes in Phlox, and their selection includes many gorgeous cultivars that I have never before encountered.

Mr. Maple (www.mrmaple.net) is widely known for their Japanese maples, but they also have a good selection of unusual conifers, some of which are dwarf.

From Sid Jones:

A lesson learned so far: when you spend more time gardening you get better results. Because we are sheltering at home, I have kept up with tasks that usually get pushed lower down the priority list: weeding, staking and tying up, slug control, etc. So far this year's flower and veg gardens are excellent. I have one new to me flower: *Oenothera glazioviana*, Large-flowered Evening Primrose. There is some controversy about this Evening Primrose. Some think it a distinct species, others think it is a naturally occurring hybrid of unknown parentage.

I grew it from seed: only one seed germinated from the packet I had. It is described as a biennial that self-sows. In my case I started seed in January, potted up the only seedling and put it in the border in May. It is now four feet tall and growing. It has numerous side branches and forms a nice symmetrical cone shaped plant. The 3-4" diameter flowers are now on the side branches as well as the central stem. As an evening primrose, flowers open late in the day (about 8:30 pm currently) and close midmorning.



Oenothera glazioviana, Large-flowered Evening Primrose, photo by Sid Jones.

From Ray Waksmundzki:

You Should Have Seen It Last Year! My Pandemic Garden.

It is frequently the bane of social gardeners that when it comes time for a club meeting, society event, or garden tour the prize plant or particularly attractive vignette in the garden is passed prime or lagging behind peak display and just about to burst into glorious bloom. "You should have seen it ...yesterday, last week, last month", is a phrase guaranteed to be heard at some point from proud gardeners guiding visitors through their domain.

The long stretch of cool moist weather this year made for ideal growing

conditions for a plethora of specimens both challenging and easy in my garden this year. They had done so well even the recent heat wave hasn't yet taken a toll on their vigor. Many residents of troughs and containers that had been slowly getting established have hit their stride, producing beautiful displays. Yet all these little successes and triumphs largely pass unseen except by me.

The prudence of social distancing and shelter in place as well as cancellation of gatherings has made gardening unusually more private. We look forward to the time we can once again meet and share our accomplishments and the beauty of our treasures. And if the next growing season isn't quite as propitious as this one has been, we'll say and hear, "You should have seen it last year!"



Several quintessential alpines, Edelweiss and Gentians, from Edelweiss Perennials, planted as a mini crevice gardens in terra cotta. The rock and scree mulch are native red sandstone, aka brownstone. Photo by Ray Waksmundzki.



Houstonia 'Millard's Variety', grown & photographed by Ray Waksmundzki.

Debi Graf's Hummingbird Haven:



Monarda 'Raspberry Wine', *Stokesia* 'Kraus Jelitto', *Zinnia* 'Royal Purple' and *Campsis* x 'Madam Galen'. Photo by Debi Graf.



Eastern Beardtongue, *Penstemon laevigatus*.
Photo by Debi Graf.

NEWS FROM NARGS

A message from NARGS President Elisabeth Zander:

Hello fellow NARGS members, On July 15, we successfully held our first virtual Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Zoom. It was quite entertaining. A bit different from an "in-person" event, it provided a look at the gardens and interests of those receiving awards. What great breadth! Each was wonderful. Of course, now I have more plants on my wish list. And more ideas for garden construction. We began the AGM with a report on the status of our society. TAPROOT 2020 was a wonderful success, and we thank all of

you for your support. Donations from our members have been very generous, and we appreciate it. Awards then followed with a slide show of the recipients (the summary list of this year's awards are shown on the NARGS home page under "Latest News"). Next came a discussion about our 2020/21 Seedex (see more below). To top it off, we had a slideshow preview of our exciting next AGM: Durango 2021, hosted by the Rocky Mountain Chapter. The good news is about all the outdoor hikes in the Four Corners area. Even if COVID-19 continues to darken our doors, one may drive there, stay in an RV, and attend the outdoor hikes. There may be open tents for outdoor gatherings! Of course, the usual lodging and services on the beautiful campus at Ft Lewis College will be available, too. The best part about a Zoom conference is the recording. If you missed the live broadcast of the AGM, **you may watch the AGM now on nargs.org**. Note that you will need to log into our website with your username and password.

Click the banner image in the lower right corner on our home page. This takes you to the page where the video resides. Click on the video to play it and adjust for full screen or not. It's about a 90-minute presentation, so you might return at different times to browse various items. Get ready; it's just like being in a lecture hall.

One thing we learned at the AGM is that our NARGS Seedex may be one of the few international plant societies' seed exchanges this year. Our NARGS Small Lot Seed Permit has been in place for quite some time now. Many of the wrinkles have already been ironed out and distribution networks formed. Thus, we expect many orders worldwide this year. And since you are spending more time in your gardens, please collect seed to send to the exchange. What kind of seed is wanted? The top choice when averaged over the past nine years was *Arisaema sikokianum*. Do you grow it? Then please send in seed. Varieties of cyclamen were also favorite garden seed requests. And my personal favorite, *Edraianthus pumilio*, was another top choice. This past year *Petunia patagonica* was the top garden cultivated seed requested. What an easy seeder it is. Don't be afraid of sending moist-packed ephemerals like last year's top requested *Eranthis pinnatifida* or *Anemonella thalictroides* or *Glaucidium palmatum*. Simply put a little moist horticultural vermiculite in a small plastic baggy and seal. Keep it at room temperature; no refrigeration is needed. Please do send seed. The summer issue of the Rock Garden Quarterly included seed donation forms and instructions. So right now, take a stroll with some baggies, and collect seed! Thank you,

Elisabeth Zander ,President, NARGS

2020 seems the summer of the staycation, so we feature two book reviews this issue!

***The Lifelong Gardener: Garden with Ease and Joy at Any Age*
By Toni Gattone**

Reviewed by Mary Masilamani

True confessions here ... I've been the muscles for my garden for a long time. I get to schlep bags of potting soil and birdseed. I'm the one who digs the holes and collects and bundles branches after a storm. When it's time to put in new paths I'm the one who designs and sometimes installs them, too. Also, like all of us, I'm finally growing up. Gardening is more challenging. Luckily, I have a copy of Toni Gattone's *The Lifelong Gardener: Garden with Ease and Joy at Any Age* to help me adjust my gardening habits. Lest you think this sort of book is meant for the "aging" gardener, think again. Universal design is key when designing any space, indoors or out, especially if we expect to continue gardening and living in a place for many years to come.

The author is a passionate gardener with a bad back, so she knows many of the issues we gardeners face. *Lifelong Gardener* grew out of a Master Gardener talk Toni developed for Marin County, California, where one in four residents is 60 years old or older. Toni teaches us to think ahead, pay attention to our bodies, and to find adaptations that help us to function better in our personal gardens.

Many of her tips are basics– use texture or color to signal edges of steps, insist on secure railings installed by professionals, create smooth, sufficiently wide pathways through the garden, learn to let go and accept new standards based on what we’re now able to do, warm up before starting to dig, and many other helpful suggestions.

She also recommends tools and equipment by name. I was sold on her recommendations after I purchased the six wheeled folding, stair climbing hand cart that she recommends. I’ve used it to successfully move everything from 50-pound bags of birdseed to an empty rain barrel up and down stairs by myself. Plus, I can carry it up and down stairs with one hand when it’s folded. Now I’m curious about the knee pads that she says have the straps in the right places so that they don’t cut off circulation in the backs of your knees. Some of her tips can be pricey – her favorite watering cans are the English Haws plastic cans. These are my favorites too – lightweight when empty, perfectly balanced when full – and I still have many of the rejected watering cans to prove it. Other tips are clever, like using Dollar Store tube socks with the toes cut off to protect your arms from the sun, or a length of small diameter pvc pipe to plant rows of large seeds without bending over.

Like any book of recommendations, you will use some of them, ignore others, and revisit it in the future as your gardening abilities change. Her tips will help you plan a garden that

accommodates your needs today and in the future.

The Lifelong Gardener: Garden with Ease and Joy at Any Age, Timber Press, 2019, \$19.95, ISBN 9781604698534

***The Complete Book of Ferns:
Indoors / Outdoors / Growing /
Crafting / History & Lore
By Mobee Weinstein***

Reviewed by Judy Glattstein

There are ferns that are deciduous, others that are evergreen, even in cold winter climates, ferns that politely grow in neat and tidy clumps and others that run, spreading rampantly. Many grow on the ground, but some are epiphytic,

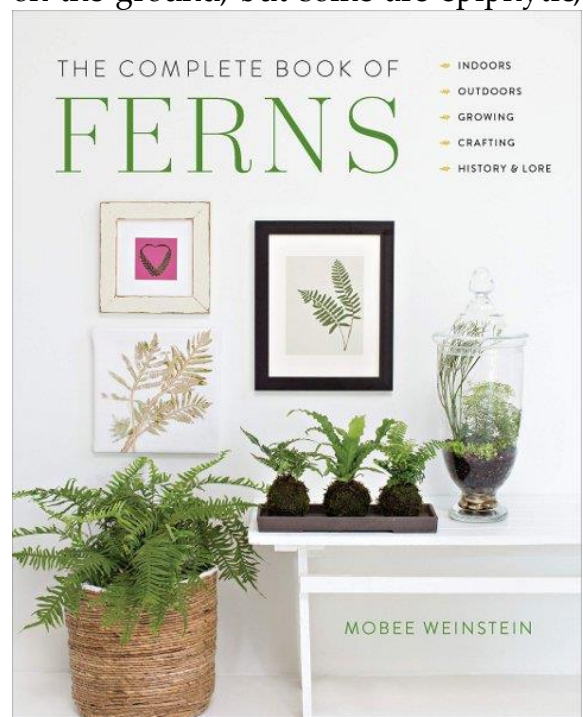


Image courtesy of Cool Springs Press, an imprint of Quarto Publishing Group.

growing perched on tropical trees; so many options and possibilities. Ferns have magical properties, or so it was once thought: To quote Shakespeare, Henry IV Part I, Act 2, scene 1, "We have the receipt of fern seed: we walk invisible". Fern seed? Ferns have neither flowers nor seeds, and that is why if you could gather the invisible seeds, it was thought that you would become invisible, too.

If you'd like to find useful information about the diversity of ferns look no further than *The Complete Book of Ferns*, by Mobee Weinstein. The book begins with a thorough explanation of the history, lore, and uses of ferns. Here you will find interesting explanations of subjects ranging from how ferns are able to grow in woodland shade to the Victorian fern craze and the invention of the Wardian case, to other-than-garden uses for ferns.

Mobee presents an easy to understand explanation of the botany of ferns, discussing both the parts of a fern - roots, leaves, stems- and their diversity: forms, life- styles and climates where found. Since they have not flowers, their two-stage reproduction from spores is given a lucid explanation and full- page illustration of the stages of this intriguing life cycle.

Gardeners grow plants from seed - some seeds are easy-peasy, others more problematic. Ferns are an entirely different story. I've propagated ferns from spores, so clearly it is an option, if attention to detail is carefully observed. Thorough step by step directions,

accompanied by photographs, walk the novice through the stages from collecting, storing, and sowing spores to raising a new fern. Still intimidated? There is another option - asexual propagation by division and root cuttings. This chapter concludes with an explanation of botanical names and their meanings. If you have been disheartened by Latin names, fear not. Read through these few pages and you'll understand why common names can be problematic and what you can learn from their more formal names.

Gardeners might feel that this is all very good but irrelevant to getting into the dirt and growing ferns. Be assured, that information is well discussed, with options for *Greening Your Environment* through the cultivation of ferns both indoors and out. The basics of light exposure, temperature, growing medium, watering, and humidity are discussed. Ferns grown indoors are, for the most part, from tropical regions. Conditions relate to each other - if light levels are lower in winter when temperatures are also lower the ferns will be growing more slowly and require less water. Makes sense, does it not? Three "recipes" for potting mixes are given, specific to different types of ferns. Another technique to increase humidity includes double potting with clay pots, or self-watering wicks.

There is useful information on topics ranging from choosing pots to going on vacation (up to a week or ten days), to troubleshooting issues of light, water, or

temperature extremes that even includes a symptom guide, probable cause, and solutions. Mobee lists a lovely selection of ferns for indoors, some readily available, others more uncommon. Information provided includes both common name and Latin name, a paragraph of general information, culture, propagation, and notes. Each fern has an image. It may be overall of the plant, or a single fern frond.

Moving from inside to outdoors, *Greening Your Environment with Ferns Outdoors*. This section discusses what ferns need - the basics of light, soil, water, and how to plant, whether potted, transplanted, or a division. Seasonal care from spring through summer into fall is also covered. A thorough selection of ferns from small to tall to add beauty in the shade is presented.

There's ample information on ferns indoors, ferns for the outside woodland or shady garden, the botany of ferns and their history, lore, and more. You might think that all bases have now been covered. Almost, but there is one more chapter and *Do-It-Yourself Crafting with Ferns* could be the most playful. Remember the Victorians, their *pteridomania* (fern mania) and the Wardian case? A simple way to increase humidity for small ferns is with a cloche - or a terrarium. DIY projects such as establishing a terrarium, well-illustrated with an an image of what you'll need in the way of tools and materials through four pages of step by step text and pictures to the finished project.



Copyright Shutterstock, image provided courtesy of Cool Springs Press, an imprint of Quarto Publishing Group.

Perhaps a vertical garden might fascinate you. Instructions for a moss basket, a *kokedama* free form hanging moss ball and more. Craft ideas include fern prints from pressed fern fronds to hammer dyeing (making fern prints on fabric) to cyanotypes.

Ferns are mystical and magical. They are locally native and tropical exotics. Embellish your home and garden with ferns, ably assisted with this book.

*The Complete Book of Ferns:
Indoors / Outdoors / Growing / Crafting /
History & Lore* by Mobee Weinstein.

Published by Cool Springs Press,
an imprint of Quarto Publishing Group.
Hard cover, color images throughout,
\$30.00, 2020

ISBN 978-0-7603-2

A review copy of this book was
provided by the publisher.

From the editor: Many of us grow unusual plants from seed. I know I sometimes place seed orders early in the year, with approval for delivery in the fall, and then forget about them until they arrive. In case you do the same, it seems we'd better check the sender carefully this year. If you've missed the notice from the USDA, I share it here.



Unsolicited Seeds From Foreign Sources

 plant-pest-advisory.rutgers.edu/unsolicited-seeds-from-foreign-sources

July 28, 2020

Several states are now reporting and you may have read or heard news reports of packets of seeds arriving in the mail from foreign shipping addresses that were not ordered. If you receive such a packet, DO NOT open or discard them. Rather, follow these directions from the NJ Dept of Agriculture:

UPDATED NJDA ALERT (<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/news/hottopics/topics200727.html>)

We have been receiving reports of people receiving seeds in the mail from China that they did not order. Sometimes the seeds are sent in packages stating that the contents are jewelry. Unsolicited seeds could be invasive, introduce diseases to local plants, or be harmful to livestock.

Here's what to do if you receive unsolicited seeds from another country:

This is known as agricultural smuggling. Report it to the USDA!

1. **DO NOT plant them and if they are in sealed packaging don't open the sealed package.**
2. Take a photo of the package and seeds and send the photos to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture Joseph.zoltowski@ag.nj.gov and USDA SITC at SITC.Mail@aphis.usda.gov
3. **Maintain the seeds and packaging and send to the USDA Office located at 1500 Lower Rd, Linden NJ 07036 for evidence.**

If individuals are aware of the potential smuggling of prohibited exotic fruits, vegetables, or meat products into or through the USA, they can help APHIS by contacting the confidential Anti-smuggling Hotline number at **800-877-3835** or by sending an Email to SITC.Mail@aphis.usda.gov. USDA will make every attempt to protect the confidentiality of any information sources during an investigation within the extent of the law.

July 28, 2020 Rick VanVranken





within the extent of the law

WATNONG CLASSIFIEDS

HYPERTUFA TROUGHS



Coopers Hollow Farm specializes in native plants with people-pleasing qualities; pollinator friendly and ecologically beneficial. We offer selections of flowering perennials and shrubs, understory trees, shade grasses for dry to wet areas, ferns, and ground covers. Smaller sizes are available for mass plantings. Coopers Hollow is a NJ registered nursery located in Bernardsville, using only organic practices (not certified).

We are open by appointment only. For requests and availability, contact CoopersHollowFarm@yahoo.com

PLANT SWAPS AVAILABLE!

Some of our members find themselves caring for extra plants they grew for the (cancelled!) plant sale and held for the (cancelled!) picnic. If you are interested in any of these plants, please contact the grower directly and arrange a private meeting for exchanges.

Sid Jones (rsj40jr@icloud.com) has *Dianthus alpinus* available for trade.

Hilary Clayton (hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com) has *Hibiscus schizopetalum*, *Ardesia japonica*, *Corylopsis goteana*, *Pelargonium sidoides*, *Agapanthus* 'Elaine' and 'Midnight Blue', *Albuca spiralis* (currently dormant) and a wide assortment of succulents available, and would like to swap for other interesting *Pelargoniums*, hardy woodland plants, or houseplants.

If you would like to place an ad here, send copy to the Newsletter Editor, hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com. The deadline for our Fall 2020 edition is September 20, 2020.

2020 WATNONG CHAPTER OFFICERS

Chair	Roxanne Hiltz	973-361-6680	roxanne.hiltz@gmail.com
Vice Chair	Brian Coleman	973-325-3453	bell.coleman@verizon.net
Treasurer	Don Grossmann	908-604-8060	donmliss@msn.com
Secretary	Debi Graf	201-919-0749	DGRAFatHome@aol.com

2020 WATNONG COMMITTEES

Membership & Distribution	Sid Jones	973-366-7241	rsj40jr@icloud.com
Programs	Noel Schulz	201-445-6445	noelschulz@verizon.net
Program Committee	Debby Zweig	201-230-7725	zweig@hotmail.com
Digital Projector	Michael Wilson	862-397-9339	miwilson@ramapo.edu
Publicity	Martha Podilchuk	908-507-6487	marthapod@comcast.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
Newsletter	Hilary Clayton	908-781-2521	hilaryhclayton@gmail.com

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**

FIRST CLASS MAIL