



Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society
✧ Volume XLI ✧ Summer 2017 ✧ Number 5 ✧

Upcoming Programs

Saturday, September 9, 2017, 10 a.m.

Frelinghuysen Arboretum

Speaker Bill Kolvek presents

'Ornamental Grasses'

Sunday October 8, 2017, 10 a.m.

Frelinghuysen Arboretum

Speaker Kim Eierman presents

**'Ecobeneficial Gardening 101:
Boosting the Ecosystem in Your Own
Yard'**

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

Our September Speaker

Bill Kolvek has been gardening in some form for over 50 years. He started a perennial plant nursery back in 1987 selling wholesale to the green industry trade. Years later the nursery opened its doors to the general public as well.

Through the years the nursery has produced perennials, ornamental grasses, ferns, vines and some woody plants. There has been a constant array of all kinds of plants coming around for

plant lovers to try, assess and savor. This is Bill's passion.

He offers presentations to garden clubs, landscape contractor associations and other horticultural groups. Bill instructs a course on Ornamental Grasses at the New York Botanical Garden.

Please join us, and bring a friend!



Liam Coleman and a dwarf pine near the Warren Grove Bombing Range on our June 17 field trip, photo by Brian Coleman. More photos and a summary of the hike begin on page 3.



Touring the grounds of The Cross Estate at our annual picnic, photo by Michael Clayton. More photos begin on page 5.

NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

The renovations to the Laurelwood Arboretum's South Rock Garden will continue on Sunday, September 10, when Mike Wilson hopes to have a planting day. To join in the fun, contact him at miwilson@ramapo.edu, or 862-397-9339.

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! We need a Party Planner to coordinate our Chapter's 2018 Soiree, Picnic, and Luncheon. If you enjoy hosting garden parties, this position is for you! Contact Program Chair Noel Schulz at noelschulz@verizon.net or 201-445-6445 to volunteer.

NEWS FROM NARGS

**2017 NARGS Annual General Meeting
Rock Gardening in the South-eastern
U.S. – Past, Present, and Future
November 17-19, 2017**

The 2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of NARGS will be held in Durham, North Carolina, and is being hosted by the Piedmont Chapter. The AGM will explore the past, present, and future of rock gardening in the southeastern and mid-Atlantic regions of the U.S.

The AGM will include a welcome reception and presentation on Friday evening, November 17; a full day of presentations on Saturday, November 18; and tours to three gardens in the Triangle area on Sunday, November 19. Additional activities include an optional pre-conference, two-day

guided tour of botanically interesting natural areas in North Carolina's Coastal Plain on November 15 and 16, and visits to several gardens in the Triangle area on November 17. Details about the meeting, as well as an on-line registration form, are available at www.piedmontnargs.org.

2018 Seed Exchange

It's time to donate seeds to the annual NARGS seed exchange! All donated seed must be **received** by November 1.

There are benefits to being a seed donor, defined as a NARGS member who contributes at least five different taxa of seed appropriate for the seed exchange. Donors are allowed 35 packets of seed, while non-donors receive only 25 in the main round. In addition, orders from donors are filled before those from non-donors. Finally, donors receive the recognition and gratitude of their colleagues!

Information on seed donation can be found at <https://nargs.org/seed-donation-instructions>

The Pine Barrens Hike

Text by Brian Coleman

Photos by Brian Coleman & Noel Schulz

About a dozen members of the Watnong and Delaware Valley NARGS chapters met on Saturday, June 17th, at

the Brendan Byrne State Forest for a walking tour of four Pine Barrens sites, organized by the Delaware Valley NARGS chapter and led by the amazing Janet Novak. Throughout the day, Janet proved a patient, calm, and thorough guide with deep knowledge of the plants in the area.



Janet Novak and Bill Smith, hosts of our Pinelands Tour June 17. Photo by Noel Schulz.

We started at Pakim Pond in Brendan Byrne State Forest. The site was a great introduction to the plants that grow in this area of acidic, sandy soil and high water table, including various Ericaceous shrubs, Pitch Pine, *Pinus rigida*, Blackjack Oak, *Quercus marilandica*, Pitcher Plants, *Sarracenia*, Sundews, *Drosera*, Atlantic White Cedar, *Chamaecyparis thyoides*, and Swamp Azalea, *Rhododendron viscosum*.

Munching on blueberries, we made a slow circuit of the pond. A first for me was finally seeing the rare and tiny Curlygrass Fern, *Schizaea pusilla*.



Pakim Pond, photo by Brian Coleman



Webb's Mill, photo by Brian Coleman

Our next stop was Webb's Mill, in Manchester Township. Webb's Mill is a bog filled with an amazing collection of plants growing on hummocks, with slowly running water flowing through. A boardwalk over the site allows for closer study of the plants, as well as dry feet. Pitcher Plants,

Sarracenia purpurea, were in abundance, as well as Rose Pogonia, *Pogonia ophioglossoides*, Bog Asphodel, *Narthecium americanum*, Grass Pink *Calopogon tuberosus*, Bladderworts, *Utricularia spp*, and more Sundews, *Drosera filiformis* and *D. spatulata*. The site was almost overwhelming in its variety and abundance of bloom and color.

The third site that we visited was the dwarf pine grove just outside the Warren Grove Bombing Range. Pitch pines struggle to reach 6-feet in height at this sandy, exposed location.



Bill Smith's Bog Garden, photo by Brian Coleman.

Lastly, we visited the bog garden of plantsman Bill Smith in Warren Grove. A few years ago Bill built a raised bed 30-feet long, 10-feet wide,

and 2-feet high, then filled it with bales and bales of peat moss. The bed is practically filled with *Sarracenias*, along with a few Ericaceous shrubs and other denizens of the Pine Barrens swamps. The sheer variety of the Pitcher Plants, ranging from yellow to red to green, was overwhelming. Bill proved an entertaining host, regaling us with pitcher plant stories. Standing in front of Bill's bog, I had that feeling that I have in front of a masterpiece in a museum: overwhelmed by the combination of beauty and skill. I'm already planning the bog planters for my own garden!



Sundews at Bill Smith's Bog Garden, photo by Noel Schulz.



Red and yellow Pitcher Plants at Bill Smith's Bog Garden, photo by Brian Coleman

ANNUAL PICNIC

Our annual picnic was held Saturday, August 5, at the Cross Estate in Bernardsville, and was well attended by members of the Watnong Chapter. Many thanks to Chapter Program Chair Noel Schulz for arranging *all* the details! Following are some photos of the event, by Michael Clayton.



The buffet table



Watnong co-chair and Laurelwood coordinator Mike Wilson, left, with Program Chair Noel Schulz.



Secretary Debi Graf, at center, and friends enjoy a rest in the shade of the Wisteria arbor



Carole Stober and Noel Schulz work to identify the butterflies on the *Clethra* blossoms.



The walled garden



View through the Wisteria arbor



Strolling the grounds

Watnong member and garden blogger Judy Glattstein also photographed the event, and the garden, that day. To see Judy's photos visit <http://bellewood-gardens.com>, go to Garden Diary and then Picnic at The Cross Estate.

IT GREW FOR ME:

Mukdenia rossii 'Crimson Fan',

By Hilary Clayton

There are lots of great plant choices for those blessed with moist shade, and there are many members of the Saxifrage family to grow there. Here's another to try: *Mukdenia rossii* 'Karasuba' or 'Crimson Fan'. A native of the woodlands of China and Japan, *Mukdenia* stands about 12 inches tall, and politely expands to two or three feet wide. It divides easily early spring or fall.

The palmate, lobed leaves are about six inches across, and heavy enough to withstand slug damage. I find they offer a nice texture contrast to *Hosta* and ferns of all types. Starry white flowers appear in late April or early May, set on branched panicles held a few inches above the leaves. In a dry year, or a dry location, the plants may become summer dormant, but when there's adequate moisture they are retained well into the fall, and turn a brilliant shade of red.



Mukdenia rossii 'Crimson Fans', photo by Hilary Clayton

OUT AND ABOUT

Two member gardens will be featured in the Garden Conservancy's Open Days program on Saturday, September 9, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Visit Membership Chair Sid Jones' Garden at 123 Mountainside Drive, Randolph, New Jersey, 07869. As described by Sid: "Our garden includes about one half of our one-acre property. Sunny borders by the pool are inspired by the Long Border and the Exotic Garden of Christopher Lloyd and Fergus Garrett at Great Dixter. The late season display includes tropical salvias, foliage plants, sunflowers, asters, dahlias, cannas and annuals. The shade garden features many plants with interesting foliage: variegation, color, texture, and structure; as well as typical woodland plants. In the front a 'deer resistant' garden tries to stay one step ahead of the increasingly eclectic tastes of the local deer herd."

Also open will be The Hay Honey Farm, 130 Stevens Lane in Far Hills, managed by members Hilary & Michael Clayton. An additional three local gardens will also be open: Stone House, Jardin de Buis, and Bird Haven. Admission is \$7 per person for each garden. For directions and more, visit <https://www.gardenconservancy.org/open-days/open-days-schedule/northern-new-jersey-open-day> .

WATNONG CLASSIFIEDS

HYPERTUFA TROUGHS



Plant Swap Wanted! I'm looking for Aloe 'Christmas Carol', & will exchange Aloe 'White Fox' or another interesting succulent. Contact Hilary at hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com.

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

Deadline for inclusion in our Fall Newsletter is October 8, 2017

2017 WATNONG CHAPTER OFFICERS

Chair	Please Consider	Your Name Here!	
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**THE WATNONG CHAPTER
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