



# Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society  
✧ Volume XL ✧ Winter 2016 ✧ Number 1 ✧

## Our February Speaker

Janet Schulz is a former teacher at the Ridgewood Community School, a featured garden commentator on Home Time Cable TV (2000); Director, District 1 New Jersey Garden Club (2009-2011); and President, Wyckoff Area Garden Club (2007-2009, 2011-2013). A Master Gardener, she retired after 40 years of working in the garden center industry as the wholesale manager of a local garden center. Her garden was listed in The Garden Conservancy's "Open Days" and has been visited by the Wyckoff and Ramsey Garden Clubs, and The Women Gardeners of Ridgewood, as well as other clubs and plant societies. The New York Times featured it in the New Jersey section, April 26, 2009. Janet is one of our own, a member of The Watnong Chapter for several years.

Janet will present 'A Collectors Point of View' - plants that are somewhat rare and unusual in that they are not likely available at the local nurseries. Janet has acquired many unusual plants in her gardens over the years, and her presentation will focus on some of her favorites.

## Upcoming Programs

**Saturday, February 13, 2016, 10 a.m.**

**Frelinghuysen Arboretum**

**Janet Schulz presents**

**'A Collectors Point of View'**

**Sunday, March 13, 2016, 10 a.m.**

**Frelinghuysen Arboretum**

**David Culp presents**

**'The Layered Garden'**

**Bring a friend, a little something in bloom, your favorite warm beverage, and a snack to share.**



Helleborus niger, photographed by Sid Jones in his Randolph, NJ garden on December 27, 2015

## NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER



A Primula, luncheon guest of Benjamin Fay

### **Our Annual Meeting, November 11, 2015**

Mike Wilson shared highlights of the Watnong Chapter's year: we enjoyed great programming, and continued in our mission for public education about rock gardens and alpine plants. At The Leonard J. Buck Gardens, we donated funds to improve the entrance garden; the wall of the old heather garden was replaced, new tufa rock was purchased, and there are plans to add alpines this spring. At the Laurelwood Arboretum, we have signed on for a five-year commitment to continue renovations to the South Rock Garden. In 2014-15 we renovated, added tufa, and replanted one bed, and the plantings from last spring are doing well. This year we hope to start the renovation of a second bed. Joyce Fingerhut, our October speaker, was impressed with our work in the local public gardens, and suggested that we apply for a grant. Mike will seek additional financial

support for our Laurelwood Arboretum project.

Caroline Ford gave the Treasurer's Report: Membership dues continue to decline because we are slowly losing members. Plant sale profits were down slightly from last year, due to a different mix of plants, but the sale was still very successful. On the expense side we donated \$8,000 to The Leonard J. Buck Gardens for the creation and development of an entrance rock garden. In 2015, we donated over \$2,000 in plant material to Laurelwood Arboretum towards the South Rock Garden renovation. Cash flow remains positive and bank balance is strong.

Sid Jones reported on Membership: At the time of the Annual Meeting, membership stands at 94. The Watnong Chapter has continued to lose members, but at a slower rate than in previous years, due mainly to members moving, losing interest, or 'aging out'. Sid encouraged all of us to try to recruit members, and reminded us that dues have not changed for 'eons' and are a real bargain.

We were pleased to welcome two new Board members: Noel Schulz is the new Program Chair, and Debi Graf is our new Secretary. Much gratitude was extended to Roxanne Hiltz, who arranged the luncheon, and arrived early to set it up, and to last year's Board, for support in all of our Chapter's endeavors.

Newsletter photographer Albert Martin was once again a first place winner in the NARGS photo contest. He donated his prize, a one-year membership to NARGS, for a raffle gift. Carolyn Iglesias was the winner.



Albert Martin and Diane McNally, recipients of the 2015 Watnong Chapter Service Awards, photographed here at our October meeting.

Two Watnong Chapter Service Awards were presented. The first was presented to Diane McNally, one of the original members of the Watnong Chapter. Diane has served the Chapter in virtually all capacities over the years, and currently prints and mails the newsletter to members without e-mail. She attended every board meeting this year, lending her experience to current deliberations.

The second Watnong Chapter Service Award was presented to Albert

Martin. Albert has brightened our newsletter with his pictures since the Fall 2011 issue, and his award winning entries to the NARGS photo contest have brought additional recognition for our Chapter.

**Save the Dates! Meetings for 2016:**

**2/13/16**, Janet Schulz, 'A Collector's Point of View'

**3/13/16**, David Culp, 'The Layered Garden'

**4/23 – 24/16** Annual Plant Sale at The Leonard J. Buck Garden

**5/7/16** \*Please Note Change of Date! Soiree at the Leonard J. Buck Garden. For members only!

**5/15/16** Bus trip to Oliver's Nursery and more. For members only!

**Annual Picnic, Date and Location to be announced. For members only!**

**9/10/16** Speaker to be announced

**10/16/16**, Elaine Fogerty

**11/12/16**, Annual Luncheon, speaker Matt Mattus

**Dues for 2016 are now payable!**

Sid Jones will be accepting payment at the February meeting, or you may mail checks to **Sid Jones, 123 Mountainside Drive, Randolph, NJ 07869**. Dues remain at \$10 per year for individuals, or \$15 for a family membership (more than one member sharing the same address). **Please make checks payable to Watnong Chapter NARGS.**

## Membership Report, 11/14/15

### 2013 Membership

111 Paid Memberships

42 Family

69 Individual

Dues: \$1320

### 2014 Membership

100 Paid Memberships

38 Family

62 Individual

Dues: \$1190

### 2015 Membership

94 Paid Memberships

36 Family

57 Individual

New members: 6

Inactive/resigned,etc. 12

Net membership: -6

Dues: \$1110

**2016 DUES ARE DUE JANUARY 31, 2016**, but Sid will accept them at the February meeting.

**Many thanks to the Watnong NARGS Seed Packing Team!** Between December 1 and December 15, Sid Jones, Melissa Grossmann, Mary Masilamani, Terrie Reid, and Hilary and Michael Clayton filled just over 1500 packets of seed for the NARGS seed exchange, from *Abeloschus* to *Allium 'Millenium'*. The NARGS Seed Exchange is currently in Stage III, Distribution; visit [NARGS.org](http://NARGS.org) to participate.



**Watnong Seed Packers in Action!**

Please submit any information for the Late Winter Newsletter to Hilary Clayton (contact information page 11) by February 18.

## NEWS FROM NARGS

### What Makes Northwest Colorado so Special?

By Mike Kintgen, Rocky Mountain Chapter- NARGS

Some people would say it's the Champagne powder that falls on the ski slopes in the winter, others would say it's the curse the Utes supposedly placed on the Yampa valley, but wildflower lovers would say it's the sheer magnitude of displays and the variety. Whatever the reason, Northwest Colorado has been drawing humans for millennia to partake in its natural beauty and restorative settings.

Northwest Colorado is special since it lies at the meeting point of several biomes: flora from the South Rockies

form the backbone of the flora, with a broad stroke of Great Basin flora brushing through the lower valleys and steppes, while the Great Plains flora sweep in from the Northeast and rub up against the Park Range. At higher elevations, flora from the Pacific Northwest and Northern Rockies can be found hundreds of miles south of their normal range. *Trillium ovatum*, *Rhododendron albiflorum* and *Mimulus lewisii* are a few of the flagship plants from the NW biome; mixed into the rest of the landscape is a cast of classic western flowers from bright blue penstemon, to scarlet paintbrush (*Castilleja*), to scarlet gilia (*Ipomopsis*) and yellow composites of infinite variety.

Steamboat Springs and Denver will be the locations of the 2016 NARGS Annual Meeting. The conference opens the afternoon of the 22<sup>nd</sup> in Denver with lectures by Kenton Seth and Mike Kintgen, two of NARGS's youngest members. On Thursday, participants have the option of driving on their own or taking a van trip to Steamboat Springs. The conference resumes in the evening with plant and book sales, and two lectures by internationally-known Johan Nilsson and Nick Courtens. National superstars Kelly Norris and Jim Lochlear will be speaking Friday night, followed by Saturday and Sunday hikes. The Sunday night lecture will be by the very special and heart-warming Marcela Ferreyra from Patagonia. This will be her first lecture

in the United States to an audience from outside of Colorado.

Garden tours and visits to Denver Botanic Garden's renowned alpine collection, along with the fabulous Yampa River Botanic Park and several wonderful private gardens in the Steamboat area will round out the conference.

For details and information visit the NARGS website

<https://www.nargs.org/2016-annual-general-meeting-steamboat-springs-colorado>

or the conference Facebook page

[www.facebook.com/2016NARGSmeeeting](http://www.facebook.com/2016NARGSmeeeting).

Direct any questions to

[kintgem@botanicgardens.org](mailto:kintgem@botanicgardens.org).

We hope to see you in Colorado in June 2016; it promises to be a wonderful and memorable conference.

## FROM THE WATNONG CHAIR

Dear All,

It has proven to be the warmest November and December in recorded weather history. November's average temperature was 52.8° which is 5.1° above the mean of 47.7°. December was the warmest in record history at 13.3° above normal in Central Park, New York. Although there has been some rain, the totals are still below average,

and if precipitation does not increase over the winter, there could be serious water shortages for the growing season of 2016. Now is the time to consider climate change along with the carbon footprint of your yard and consider ecological horticulture.

One of the more unusual questions at the lab recently was, "Why is my *Iris* blooming?" Similar questions concerning *Forsythia* and Cherries occurred shortly afterwards. "And will my plant be OK?" The easy answer is yes, your plant will survive. There are two reasons why plants are blooming early and out of sequence this year. One is a process called vernalization, which is a cold period that hardy plants must have in order to set buds for the following season and flower when spring arrives. The other is the false spring that has occurred due to our extremely warm weather. Earlier in the fall, there was a short cold period; temperatures as high as 40°F are still low enough to vernalize certain plants. The earliest blooming plants are most susceptible to false spring, especially those not native to our region, such as *Forsythia*, *Iris* and Cherries.

So, I am looking forward to seeing all of you at the next meeting in February and you can tell me about what is blooming in your yard. At home some of my alpinas are ready to burst, and some *Draba* has already bloomed. We have a busy year ahead of us, with good programming and a field

trip planned. I am grateful that we are an active society with so much to offer and I look forward to my final year as chair.

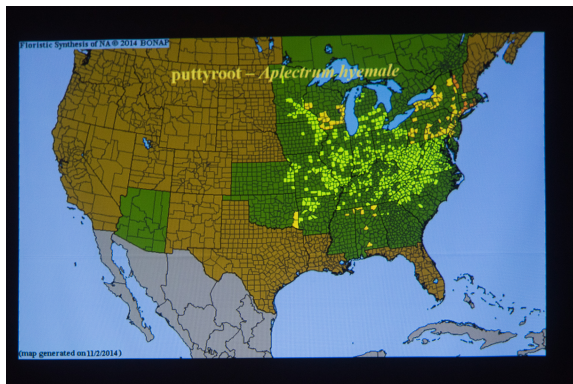
Regards,  
Mike Wilson

### **Our November Speaker: Terrestrial Orchids Of New York State**

By Albert Martin and Hilary Clayton  
Photographs of Dr. Leopold's slides by  
Albert Martin

Dr. Donald J. Leopold, distinguished teaching professor and chair of the Department of Environmental and Forest Biology at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, New York, presented 'Terrestrial Orchids of New York State'.

Dr. Leopold has been studying native plants for over 30 years, having earned his Ph.D. in Forest Ecology from Purdue University in 1984. At about the time of his doctoral thesis, he became captivated by the idea of terrestrial orchids, and soon realized that most states have some 70 to 80 native species. Dr. Leopold's presentation featured a picture and short discussion of some orchids found in both New York and New Jersey, arranged by the general types of habitats they prefer.



BONAP Map for Puttyroot

He also shared a range map for each orchid by state and county. The maps were from “Biota – The North American Project” or BONAP (<http://www.bonap.org/>), and are color-coded. Green means that the species is native to the state and is present; light green means that the species is present in that county. Yellow means that there is a recent record of that orchid in that county, but the species is rare. Orange is where the plant was known to once grow, but the site has been destroyed. As shown in these maps, New Jersey is incredibly rich in terrestrial orchids.

In addition to habitat destruction, several natural processes can cause an orchid to disappear from a site: they need to be in full sun, or in a sunny gap, and as a forest matures, these areas disappear. A larger natural threat is the deer population. Chicken wire cages can be used to keep the plants alive, even if deer nibble off the flowers. In general, orchids respond well to other natural disturbances, and studies have shown that if the deer population is

removed, orchids will even grow well near hiking trails.



Orchid seed

All orchids have capsules for fruit. The seed is very small, and each capsule can produce many, in some species over a million. The seeds lack endosperm, and must enter a symbiotic relationships with specific mycorrhizal fungi to provide them the necessary nutrients to germinate, one of the reasons Dr. Leopold finds orchids so interesting. After germination the plants rest below the surface for five to seven years as a “proto corm”, a tuberous root. Flowering takes even longer- most orchids take between 12 and 15 years from the time of germination until flowering.

Throughout the talk Dr. Leopold suggested specific places to view orchids. One site recommended for visits is Nelson’s Swamp, a New York State owned property near Syracuse, New York, where there are about fifteen different orchids. New Jersey’s Pine Barrens and nearby cedar swamps

should also have orchids in bloom from mid-May through the end of August.

The discussion of individual orchids began with upland woodland types.



Puttyroot, *Aplectrum hyemale*

Puttyroot, *Aplectrum hyemale*, named for its swollen root, can be seen at the Jenkins Arboretum in Devon, Pennsylvania. The flowers appear in June and the leaves emerge later. The Jenkins Arboretum has good signage, which makes it possible to find this plant, because the flower is smaller than a fingernail.



Rams' Head Lady's Slipper, *Cypripedium arietinum*

Rams' Head Lady's Slipper, *Cypripedium arietinum*, another upland species, is one of the more beautiful orchids. The pouch is the size of a thumbnail; the whole plant is no more than 6 inches high.



Yellow Fringed Orchid, *Platanthera ciliaris*

Yellow Fringed Orchid, *Platanthera ciliaris*, is actually orange colored. Dr. Leopold's introduction to this plant was in a field in Southern Appalachia with about 5,000 individual knee-high plants. It will likely bloom in the Pine Barrens from mid- to late- July.

Other species of orchids prefer peat lands, bogs and fens. Peat land is a wetland without forest cover, dominated by peat-forming plants, and dominated by peat to a depth of at least a foot. A bog is a domed-shaped land form, is higher than the surrounding landscape, and obtains most of its water from rainfall, while a fen is located on a slope, flat, or depression and gets its water from both rainfall and surface or ground water.

While a bog is always acidic and nutrient-poor, a fen may be slightly



acidic, neutral or alkaline, and either nutrient-poor or nutrient-rich. Open, nutrient-rich fens hold the richest plant communities.



The Grass-Pink, *Calopogon pulchellus*

The Grass-Pink, *Calopogon pulchellus*, is characteristic of orchids growing in acidic bogs, and can sometimes be found in roadside ditches. It is a very common plant, with both pink and white forms. The White Lady's Slipper, *Cypripedium candidum*, is considered to be one of the most beautiful of the orchids. It blooms in shades from light pink to pure white, and requires lots of sunshine.



The Dragon's Mouth Orchid, *Arethusa bulbosa*

The Dragon's Mouth Orchid, *Arethusa bulbosa*, is found in many fens

in Upstate New York, as well as in Wells Mill in the Pine Barrens. This picture was taken at the Rainbow Shores fen in Northern New York, where the population of Dragon's Mouth Orchids is estimated at tens of thousands.



Large Hooded Lady's Tresses, *Spiranthes romanzoffiana*

There are estimated to be a quarter million Large Hooded Lady's Tresses, *Spiranthes romanzoffiana*, in this photograph taken close to Star Lake in New York. Dr. Leopold did not get any more specific with his location! Bog Candles, *Platanthera dilatata*, also grows in this area. It is the only fragrant terrestrial orchid, with a very strong clove scent that can be detected many yards away.



Ragged Fringed Orchid, *Platanthera lacera*

Ragged Fringed Orchid, *Platanthera lacera*, is one of the more common orchids, with a fairly wide range of habitats. It prefers a wet site, not necessarily acidic or alkaline, but it never is found in shade. It grows over most of the Eastern United States.

There are terrestrial orchids suitable for our gardens. Dr. Leopold shared a picture of the Kentucky Lady's Slipper, *Cypripedium kentukiense*, growing in Dr. Leopold's back yard. The plant pictured here was purchased as two stems from the New England Wild Flower Society about ten years ago. It is expensive, and worth every penny. The flowers, which stand about knee-high, with a pouch bigger than an extra-large egg or small fist, last about two full weeks.

We were reminded that collecting and selling orchids from the wild is illegal, and we should look for reputable sources. White Flower Farm sells some that are seed propagated, as does Spangle Creek Labs. The Spangle Creek Labs web site, <http://www.spanglecreeklabs.com>, has a wealth of information about propagating orchid seeds. Our thanks to Dr. Leopold for a beautiful and inspiring lecture!



Kentucky Lady's Slipper, *Cypripedium kentukiense*

## WATNONG CLASSIFIEDS

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**THE WATNONG CHAPTER  
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