



The Trillium

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Piedmont Chapter
North American Rock Garden Society
Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, NC

Different Worlds

By Tim Alderton

All photos by Tim Alderton

Meetings of the North American Rock Garden Society take you to different worlds. Plants, people, environments, climate, elevations and wildlife vary at each venue that NARGS chooses for meetings. The 2014 and 2015 meetings were no exception to this. Two more different locations, Santa Fe, New Mexico and Ann Arbor, Michigan could not be selected.

August 27, 2014 Bobby Ward and I traveled to Santa Fe. We flew into Albuquerque and met up with Nancy Doubrava, who had arrived the previous day and took some time to do sightseeing before picking us up at the airport. We had all planned to arrive early, Bobby to attend NARGS meetings, and Nancy and I to visit some of the geological and historical areas around Santa Fe.

Our afternoon free of plans gave us the opportunity to make an unscheduled stop on our drive to Santa Fe. Only a few minutes from the airport, Bobby noted the Sandia Crest as we drove north and suggested a side trip. The longest aerial tram in the United States runs up the north western face of the crest providing spectacular views and access to winter skiing on the south eastern side of the crest. This being late August instead provided beautiful wildflowers growing atop the more than 10,000' elevation land of rock pushed up from the surrounding steppes. The ride up allowed the viewing of major changes in flora from the near desert conditions at the base of *Yucca*, *Opuntia*, *Eriogonum*, *Nolina* and *Fallugia* to name a few, transitioning to conifers – *Juniperus*, *Picea*, *Pinus* and *Abies*, finally to montane and subalpine flora including *Penstemon*, *Erigeron*, *Mirabilis*, *Campanula* and *Heuchera*. We only spent about 45 minutes atop the crest, since we had not dressed for the breezy fifty-five degrees. A monsoon shower arrived just after we all got back to our car avoiding a bumpy tram ride only by a few minutes.

We traveled onto our hotel in Santa Fe, the Guadalupe Inn, a small family run business only ten minute walk from the conference location at the Eldorado Hotel & Spa. We had some time to settle into our rooms, a walk around town and some dinner out ended our day. David White joined us at the inn, completing our North Carolinian contingent.

The next day, August 28, Bobby and David spent their day in meetings, while Nancy and I traveled to prehistoric Native American sites and geological formations to the north and west of Santa Fe. Our first stop Bandelier National Monument provided both history and great views. The first of two locations, Tsankawi Prehistoric Site, provided an intimate opportunity to see the geology and remnants of a 600-year-old pueblo complex atop a mesa. Wandering around rough trails and up and down ladders provided up-close viewing of wildflowers, pottery shards, and ancient stonework. A folded pamphlet provided minimal interpretation of the site without taking away from the beauty and untouched history. Cliff sides also contained cavates (hollowed out areas on cliffs) and petroglyphs created centuries earlier. While spending nearly two hours walking the trails, we passed only half dozen other visitors. Tsankawi Prehistoric Site is truly underappreciated.



Bandelier National Monument

We drove only a mile or two farther to the main visitor center for Bandelier National Monument in White Rocks. There, we took a bus to Frijoles Canyon and the much more visited cliff dwellings associated with the Ban-



delier National Monument. This site was about 900 years old, but unlike Tsankawi Prehistoric Site had been extensively studied, rebuilt, and visited. Paved paths led away from a visitors' center and gift shop leading to the ancient ruins. Wildflowers lined the paths and surrounded the structures on the canyon floor. After lots of photos of the rock formations and the ruins, we headed back and continued to drive through the Valles Caldera National Preserve. The ride up to the rim, took us from the hot dry steppes to the cool of the conifer forest visibly scarred by fires in recent years. We made only a quick stop in the volcanic wonder, and drove on returning to Santa Fe via Jemez Spring and several pueblos north of Albuquerque.

That evening there were opening remarks about what to expect in the coming days of the meeting and tours. A question and answer time followed, focusing on the future of NARGS and how procedures might be changed to benefit the organization.

Friday, August 29 gave us an opportunity for a garden tour during the morning and early afternoon. Despite this, Nancy and I ventured off to another New Mexican wonder, the Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument.



**Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument,
New Mexico**

About an hour south and west of Santa Fe, the ride took us over the Rio Grande and through the Pueblo De Cochiti following a wildflower lined road. Several small parking lots hid among the low juniper forest at the base of the formation greeted us. We pulled into one of these lots and got out only to look at the next car over, a Prius from North Carolina. A young man, Lee Lampe, got out. On a three month adventure while moving cross country to Seattle to accept a job, Lee toured the country and just by chance came to the tent rocks at the same time we did. It turned out he grew up in Raleigh and visited the JC Raulston Arboretum many times. Along with our new acquaintance, Nancy and I started the hike.

A meandering trail brought us to the entrance of a box canyon that eroded over millions of years from the volcanic pumice and tuff that made up the plateau. The canyon cut by water and wind over the millennia, from a distance at

times appeared to end only to turn behind a wall of sculpted stone and continue on. Other places opened to wider areas highlighting the “hoodoo” rock formations with colonies of *Pinus ponderosa*, *Juniperus*, *Ipomopsis*, *Heterotheca villosa* and other shrubs and forbs scattered about. Arriving at the head of canyon, the trail continued up the steep wall zig-zagging to make the climb possible. Views of the “hoodoos” with the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the distance opened up as we neared the top of the climb. Atop the plateau, a panoramic view of the surroundings provided vistas of the varied geology of central New Mexico. Other plants eking out a life were more xeric, including *Echinocereus*, *Opuntia*, *Castilleja*, *Yucca glauca* and *Y. baccata*, *Mirabilis multiflora* to name only a few. We stayed at Tent Rocks until just about noon, when we were low on water and worn out. From there we headed back to Santa Fe.

That evening a dinner followed by speakers sustained and entertained the attendees to the national meeting. Founder of High Country Gardens and local Santa Fe plants man, David Salman provided the first talk of the night, “Xeric Rock Gardening; Techniques and Plants for Arid Climates”. He touched on methods of water harvesting and the use of rocks to create microclimates of both moisture and temperature to facilitate conditions to grow. He also spoke of variation of size in the plant used in rock gardens to both provide a more natural look as well as incorporating more plants into the additional niches in the garden. Following these conversations, he spoke specifically about the plants – including everything from cacti and ice-plants to more familiar herbaceous perennials in the garden. The curator of native plants at the Denver Botanic Gar-

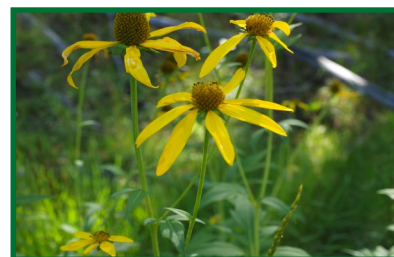


Castilleja at Kasha-Katuwe



den, Dan Johnson, provided the second presentation of the evening entitled “Steppe on the Rocks: Steppes of the World and their Similarities”. Dan took us on a visual tour of the steppe regions of the world which included the area around Santa Fe.

Saturday, August 30, the final day of the meeting, brought the opportunity to take a field trip for the morning into the Sangre de Cristo Mountains just outside of Santa Fe. Hikes were organized by a local outdoor touring company taking the participants to one of a few locations. Mine turned out to be trails around the Big Tesuque Campground at an elevation of about 9600’. The forested trails lead to open glades where late summer wildflowers blossomed in the much more mesic soils of the cool mountains, a great contrast to the steppe conditions at lower elevations. *Picea*, *Abies*, *Pinus*, and *Populus* made up the canopy along the trails with patches of *Juniperus communis* and *Lonicera involucrata* filling in gaps depending on the exposure. The glades contained everything from the creeping subshrub, *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, to *Rudbeckia laciniata*, *Galium mexicanum*, and *Ipomopsis aggregata*. In more dry shaded areas tiny *Androsace septentrionalis* blossomed with the patterned foliage of *Goodyera oblongifolia* nearby. Mountain stream banks provided homes for dark purple *Aconitum columbianum* and the nearly white *Sidalcea candida*. *Actaea rubra* hid in darker locations holding up bright red berries. After a few hours in the mountains, we returned to Santa Fe in time for lunch.



Rudbeckia laciniata

Nancy and I met back up after our field trips and headed to one of the open gardens. We went to Robin Magowan and Juliet Mattila’s spectacular garden. It was created only since they had relocated to Santa Fe from the northeast a few years prior. Their house and gardens built around a rock out crop that overlooked the city, provided niches for thousands of rock garden plants from all over the world. Native *Penstemons*, *Salvia*, and cacti meshed with ice plants, *Gazania*, and *Osteospermum* from South Africa. A short drive took us to the Santa Fe Botanical Garden. Opened only the year before, the gardens demonstrated plant material that will grow in the dry steppe area around central New Mexico. A garden art exhibit “Origami in the Garden” folded into the garden beds. It is a garden to keep an eye on as it continues to grow.

The evening again provided sustenance of both the body and mind. Dinner was served followed by the presentation of awards. The night and the meeting concluded with a presentation by Panayoti Kelaidis. His inspiring and visually spectacular talk entitled “Sky Islands in a Sea of Sage: the Paradox of the West” took us on a tour of the intermountain west highlighting the flora and the associated topography.



Santa Fe Botanical Garden

Moving East...

The 2015 meeting entitled “NARGS 2015 – Back to Alpines”, took place in a very contrasting place and season, Ann Arbor, MI in early May. From the dry of the southwest, we were now in a land of lakes and the heat of late summer to the moderation of mid spring. On May 6, Bobby Ward and I travelled to the meeting together and met up with Nancy Doubrava, but instead of Albuquerque, NM, we landed in Detroit, MI.

After checking into the conference hotel, Weber’s, in western Ann Arbor, the three of us were off to check out the Nichols Arboretum on the University of Michigan campus. The park-like arboretum followed the Huron River with large expanses of native forest and wildflowers highlighted by hardy exotics.

The *Syringa* were just in blossom, with the *Paeonia* collection a few weeks from flowering. After a quick stop back at the hotel, Nancy and I traveled to the northeast side of the city to tour the Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Also part of the University of Michigan, this garden highlighted native flora of Michigan. Gardens constructed to mimic different formations including a Great Lakes cobble beach and sand dunes provided habitats to grow some of the rare flora of the Great Lakes region. The cobble beach formation provided a home for *Iris lacustris*, a close cousin of *Iris cristata*, and *Tetranneuris herbacea*, which is endangered in most of the US range of this species. Other areas provide homes for a spe-

cies we would see throughout our time in Michigan, *Trillium grandiflorum*. Additional sections of the garden provided habitats both constructed and natural for wetland species. That evening our North Carolina group became complete with the arrival of Amelia and Richard Lane.

May 7 was a free day for Nancy and me, but Bobby, Amelia, and Richard all attended meetings. A drive southwest took us to Hidden Lakes Gardens, yet another garden part of the University of Michigan. The great expanse of the garden glistened with the colors of spring. Magnolias and cherries still flowered with the new emerging growth on nearly all of the trees. Wild flowers blossomed in the open forest along the twisting roads of the drive-thru arboretum. The jewel of the garden though, was the conifer collection. Both dwarf and standard conifers covered the hillside planting. Many of the cultivars would be perfect in a rock garden.

From Hidden Lakes Gardens we drove north to Gee Farms Nursery. This nursery established their own arboretum to display and trial many of the trees and shrubs that they offered. The extensive collection again highlighted many choice conifers. Row upon row held many gems. *Picea abies* cultivars with red new growth and a *Picea pungens* 'Straw' were both quite a surprise.

The evening brought the opening of the meeting with dinner followed by a short business meeting. An awards ceremony recognized several before the speakers for the night began. Tony Reznicek gave us an introduction to Michigan in his talk "The Michigan Landscape and Gardening in It", providing a glimpse of what we might see in the next two days. From the gardens to the natural areas and the post tour, he spoke of the challenges of the climate and the unique flora that make up the great lakes region. The second speaker, Ger van den Beuken brought the topic of "Back to Alpines" (the title of the meeting) into his presentation "Argentina and Chile in 50 Minutes". This showed us some of the gems that few have grown outside of their native habitats and only true alpine gardeners might succeed at. Highlighted in the talk were the rosulate violas and countless other South American alpine plants, many of which I had never even heard of.

May 8 took us on our first bus tour. Each bus stopped at six locations over the two days; four great gardens with demos at each and two very diverse and different natural areas. The first location for our bus was the garden of Tony and Susan Reznicek. Tony our speaker from the previous night created numerous habitats on his property and actually acquired the adjacent house and lot to expand his garden. Much of the garden emerged out of the hillside behind their home. A crevice garden, wall of tufa, shade garden, and bog garden were just a few of the areas. He even had a few palms squeezed in at the foundation of his house. Tony gave us a demonstration of how to plant into tufa before we left.

Our second location, Sharon Hollow-The Nan Weston Preserve of the Nature Conservancy, gave us a look at a



Reznicek Crevice Garden



Tetraneuris herbacea

beechno-maple forest, a rather uncommon thing in Michigan where most forests are dominated by oaks and hickories. The forest floor grew green with the diverse vernal wildflowers in the moist understory. Areas of *Trillium grandiflorum*, *Phlox divaricata*, and both *Dicentra canadensis* and *D. cucullaria* growing next to each other mixed with several species of *Viola*. Other areas provided homes for *Dirca palustris* and the diminutive *Panax trifolius*.

Our final stop for the day, Pickerel Lake Sand Barrens, provided an entirely different feel. The dry oak forest there opened into a glade of sand barren. The season just started, and few things blossoms yet. The exception to this, *Viola pedata*, covered the ground in a tapestry of purple shades. Other plants of note from the barrens were squat growing *Quercus prinoides* and the seldom seen *Celtis tenuifolia*.

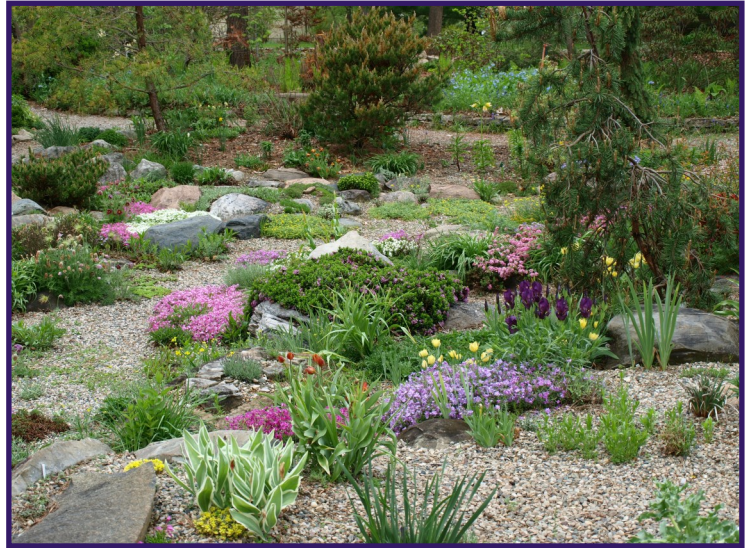
The evening again was filled with food and time to get to know those at the meeting. After the meal, our



second night was filled by another presentation by Ger van den Beuken. This night, no exception to the previous focused on true alpines. In his talk “Growing High Alpines at Sea Level or Below”, Ger’s spoke about his endless collection of alpines that he grows at his nursery, Van den Beuken Alpines in Holland (not Michigan). He focused on one of the hobbies holy grails, *Dionysia* giving hints on how to maybe keep this finicky genus happy, at least in Europe. All bet being off in the Southeast as they require low humidity, no water on the foliage and they are not fond of too much heat. Other genera of focus included *Daphne*, *Saxifraga*, and the European gesneriads, among a long list.

May 9, the final day of the meeting, took us on the second part of our bus tour. This day our tour began at the garden of Don and Mary LaFond. Don created his home and garden in a sand and gravel pit, so no drainage issues there. *Daphne* made up a large part of his garden. They grew lushly in all kind of crevices and raised beds Don created throughout the property. A woodland garden made up an area that once was slated to become a road, but the development never created. A new water and bog garden provided homes for *Primula* and *Sarracenia*. Troughs and other inventive containers provide homes for many small treasures that he displayed in groups around the garden. Before we left, Don demonstrated how to root *Daphne*.

From there we traveled to Jacques and Andrea Thompson’s garden. An expansive garden, that included areas of woodland, tufa, sand beds, and everything in between. Jacques created numerous stone troughs that were scattered throughout the landscape. He cuts them with a diamond blade masonry saw out of local stone. Plants of note in his garden included *Glaucidium palmatum*, *Pulsatilla*, *Anemone nemorosa* cultivars, *Trillium*, and *Podophyllum* along with the ever present *Daphne*. A tapestry of color took you through the garden. Jacques brought stone into his garden by the truck load for years, and the results cannot be described. A spectacular garden! Jacques finally showed us how he creates all of the stone roughs; very impressive.



Don and Mary LaFond’s Garden



Bev and Bob Walters Michigan Rock Garden

Bev and Bob Walters garden gave us the final taste of a Michigan rock garden. Their garden provided a view of a garden that most could actually fit into their own gardens. The garden included two water features circled by scree, crevice, shade and bog areas. Bev included hardy cacti, dwarf bearded Iris, and *Salix serpyllifolia*. An impressive clump of *Podophyllum hexandrum* grew at the side of the bog garden. Bev concluded our visit with a tutorial of how she created her water gardens and incorporated them in the garden as a way to deal with run off that might otherwise cause problems in the rock garden.

That evening the meeting concluded. We had our delicious dinner followed by the entertainment for the night. And I truly mean entertainment! For those of you who do not know, Malcom McGregor, he is the editor for the NARGS journal. A native of Scotland but lives in England, he is a rock star, or at least dresses like one. He gave us a lively presentation entitled “Rock Gardening-or

What’s a Heaven for”. Malcom visually took us around the world, from his own garden, Australia, Morocco, Italy, Spain, Slovenia, Canada, and many other locations to illustrate the different growing conditions we try to emulate in rock gardens to grow all the flora we can. A presentation by Matt Mattus, president of NARGS, gave us statistics of the status of NARGS, and the challenges we have ahead of us as an organization. As the evening came to a close, Panayoti Kelaidis provided a glimpse into 2016. He gave us a brief idea of what to expect at the 2016 NARGS annual meeting in Steamboat Springs, CO and invited us all to attend. - Steamboat Springs, CO our next “Different



Gardening in My Golden Years, My Forever Garden

by Helen Yoest

This is the year I turn 60, and five years ago, I put into action a five-year plan to renovate my garden, Helen's Haven, so I can continue to garden in my golden years. Because it is impossible to know what handicap I needed to renovate towards, I decided to start with the stuff I'm already tired of doing and looked around to see where tasks could be made more efficient. I wanted to make sure I planned well enough so that in my future, I'd be ready.

These last five years have been a whirlwind. Once I realized that I wanted to stay here as my forever house, I knew I needed a *Forever Garden*.

I wanted a garden that gave back, not just be pretty, and one that when need be, it would be uncomplicated enough, I could direct a mow, blow, & go team to work it. Even though I'm perfectly capable on continuing, I didn't want to be blindsided and then, not only having to worry about my health, but also my garden, which is my therapy, my cathedral, my exercise.

Some may say, when a catastrophe occurs, priorities change. This is true, but why can't I have both? With a little planning, the worry of who will care for the garden doesn't have to be. Moreover, I know I'll need my garden even more should my health fail; thus I've been making changes to address what I call a *Forever Garden*.

Helen's Haven is an urban wildlife habitat that is also organic, waterwise, sustainable, and never treated with fertilizer, herbicide, or pesticide. My garden receives a fresh application of composted leaf mulch annually. Weeds are suppressed, soil temperatures are moderated, it looks great, plus, as it breaks down, it adds nutrients to the soil.

I was surprised it took me so many years to renovate; I could only do a little at a time, and I took my time to make it right. The last two years were the most intense. Every single plant in the garden was evaluated. If there was a tree that was purely ornamental,

I replaced it with a productive tree...assuming it made since design-wise.

The maintenance has been reduced considerably. One thing I'm working on now, is

a list of the annual chores needed to keep my garden looking mighty fine. So many efficiencies have been put in place that my weekly maintenance is manageable and I'm now free to do other things, like travel, go to exhibits, and even visit more garden.

Going forward, I'll keep a detailed list of annual or monthly chores to better know what happens when in my garden. This way when I have to hire out, I can make good use of someone's time. In the meantime, I plan to do everything myself as long as I can. ☞



Photo by Juli Leonard

BBB bee bungalow



Photo by Juli Leonard

Path Cranberries



Photo by Juli Leonard

Out Buildings



Plant Profile by Elsa Liner

Botanical name: *Ranunculus ficaria* 'Brazen Hussy' recently renamed *Ficaria verna* 'Brazen Hussy'

Family: Ranunculaceae

Category: Spring ephemeral

Primary uses: Woodland, edge of border, rock garden

Dimensions: 4-6 in h x 12-18 in w

Culture: Average soil, moist well-drained, sun-pt shade, Zones 4a-9b

Bloom time: Feb. – late Mar.

Color: Yellow



General Attributes: Introduced and very appropriately named by Christopher Lloyd, this is truly a show-stopping plant. The bright yellow flowers with large bosses of yellow stamen are set off by the dark, almost black, shiny, heart-shaped leaves -- a remarkable combination. Its small size keeps it from ever being gaudy, but very cheery in the early spring when it is one of the first plants to bloom. I look forward to it every year to end the winter blahs. Unlike the species, it is not invasive at all. It looks beautiful in a woodland setting, a rock garden or at the edge of the border. But it goes dormant in May, so be prepared for that and don't dig it up thinking you have lost it. A common name for this plant is Lesser Celandine. It is quite tough, deer-resistant and poisonous/toxic. ❧

Plant Profile by Joann Currier

Botanical Name: *Daphne odora* 'Wild Winter'

Common Name: Winter Daphne

Primary Uses: Evergreen shrub for shade used as a specimen, in the mixed woodland garden, or in a container.

Dimensions: 3-4 feet tall and wide.

Culture: Needs shade to filtered sun, planted in a raised bed with very good drainage.

Blooms: Light rosy-pink buds open to very fragrant creamy flowers in winter to early spring.

General Attributes: This exciting new selection was found as a variegated sport on *Daphne odora* (green form) by local nurseryman Jason Stevens of Benson, NC. The foliage has a unique variegation with narrow green margins, a thin band of cream, and steely blue-gray and green centers. With its unusual coloration and denser foliage, this Daphne can be a great addition to your garden. ❧





NARGS Piedmont Chapter Meeting
JC Raulston Arboretum

March 19, 2016

Tim Alderton

“NARGS Trips: Santa Fe and Ann Arbor”

JC Raulston Arboretum
NC State University

Piedmont NARGS April 2016 Speaker

April 16, 2016

Helen Yoest

“Gardening for the Future: My Forever Garden”

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OTHER SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS:

Sept. Plant Sale Manager: Kirtley Cox
Refreshments: Gwen and Maurice Farrier

Bring Goodies to Share

If your last name begins with the letters below,
please consider bringing something to share.

For March T—Z
For April Any and All

Open Garden Event

Saturday, April 23, 2016. 9am-4pm.
4904 Hermitage Dr., Raleigh, NC 27612

15 artists offering jewelry, pottery, botanical art, metal
garden art, woodworking, mosaics, birdhouses,
hypertufa troughs, and concrete leaves.

Come Celebrate Spring in the Garden!

Message From the Chair

Charlie Kidder

After a hiatus of a few months, our plant auction is returning in March. If you have plants that you would like to share with others, please bring them to the Chapter meeting on the 19th. If your plants won't be ready by that date, they will also be welcome at our April meeting.

A word or two about our plant auctions. We appreciate your support of these auctions, as they provide important funding to the Piedmont Chapter. That said, I don't expect anyone to buy plants *solely* to boost our income. Tastes in plants vary, but I would hope that we could offer plants that are not only truly unusual, but also appealing to at least one person at a particular meeting. At the risk of offending our generous plant donors, if you have brought plants that have gone begging at past auctions, you might consider bringing them to another plant swap. And plants that may be readily available at local nurseries are not likely to be big sellers.

Finally, another reminder on our Spring Picnic: it will be on May 21 at Plant Delights Nursery/Juniper Level Botanic Garden, commonly known as “Tony’s”. Garden visit time will begin at 10:00AM that morning, with a pot-luck lunch at noon. We thank Tony Avent for his continuing support of our chapter, and I hope many of you will be there. ☺