



# Saximontana

Rocky Mountain Chapter  
North American Rock Garden Society  
Newsletter

Volume 37, Numbers 5-6  
May-June 2014

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## Martin Walsh: Two Presentations

By Linda Meyer

**Friday, May 16**, "High and Low in the Himalayas." 6:30 p.m. Social, 7:00 p.m. Presentation. Gates Hall, Denver Botanic Gardens.

**Refreshments, last names M to Q, please**

**Saturday, May 17**, "Chinese and Himalayan Plants for the Garden: A selection of the most growable plants from this region." 2:00 p.m. Social, 2:30 p.m. Presentation. Mitchell Hall, DBG.

**Refreshments, last names R to S, please**

Every year our parent organization, the North American Rock Garden Society, offers an international plant person to speak to member chapters. This year the speaker is Martin Walsh, who has roots in Denver. Note, Mr. Walsh is visiting 8 chapters on his trip to the West, so we had to schedule at his convenience rather than our normal dates.

Martin Walsh is an Irish garden designer and consultant and a modern-day plant hunter who lives and works in Dublin. His interest in alpines came about as a result of studying the alpine flora at Pike's Peak in the high Rockies while working as a student in Fort Collins, Colorado.



Martin Walsh  
Photo courtesy [NARGS.org](http://NARGS.org)

**Martin Walsh**

May 16, 17

**Garden Tour**

May 31

**Sunset Unhike**

June 14

## Garden Tour

Saturday, May 31. Please see pp. 3-5 for text and map.

*This is a combined May-June issue.*

# From the President

By Mary Jenson

Spring is budding all around us as I write this column. I've been wondering what spring has in store for us this year. Remember last year when we had that terrible killing frost in mid-April? We were all concerned about the long-term effects on many of our most vulnerable plants. I recently asked Mike Kintgen about how plants damaged by last spring's late freeze fared over the rest of the year. Mike reports that among the worst losses were Asiatic woody plants like *Pinus parviflora*, *Pinus wallichiana* and several Asiatic spruce varieties. He also noted that perennials such as *Corydalis schanginii* v. *aniane* and certain *Fritillaria* and *Lomatium columbianum* did not survive. Despite these losses, the majority of plants endured the unseasonable weather and suffered no significant losses.

**North American Rock Garden Society** [www.rmcnargs.org](http://www.rmcnargs.org)  
**Rocky Mountain Chapter** **Since 1977**

## 2014 Chapter Board

President	Mary Jenson
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Refreshment Chair	Loretta Koehler
NARGS Representative	Ann Bartlett
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<i>Saximontana</i> Editor	Sally Boyson

## Objectives of the Rocky Mountain Chapter

To support the goals, purposes and activities of the North American Rock Garden Society; to promote the appreciation and cultivation of rock and alpine plants and wildflowers; to assemble and make available information on the culture of rock and alpine plants and their evaluations as garden materials; to secure and distribute species of rock plants not already in cultivation; to encourage protection of endangered species by preservation of native populations; to encourage rock gardeners to share knowledge, enthusiasm and friendship.

*Saximontana* is published 10 times per year. Newsletter material is due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication. Copy, artwork and suggestions may be sent to the editor by email

While this is being written before the Spring Plant Sale, thanks to all the devoted RMC members for making the spring plant sale a great success (I know it was!). Special thanks to everyone who volunteered and to everyone who purchased those irresistible little alpines!

With the plant sale behind us, it's time to start thinking about our fabulous garden tours. This year's tour will take place in the Fort Collins area and affords a unique opportunity to tour both public and private gardens. You can find details about the tour in this issue. Also, be sure to see Martin Walsh (from the NARGS speaker series) when he comes for a special two-day speaking engagement with our chapter. The dates are May 16 & 17. Happy Spring, everyone!



*Lewisia cotyledon*  
Photo by Sally Boyson

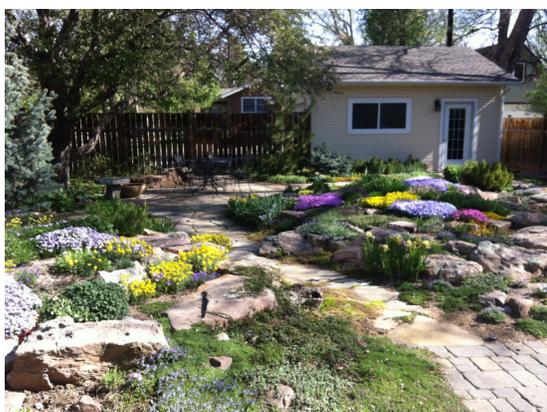
# Garden Tour in Fort Collins, Saturday, May 31

By Linda Meyer and the Gardeners

The Rock Garden Society annual garden tour is May 31 this year in Fort Collins. In addition to the beautiful gardens of Maddy Weisz, Jan DeVore and Carol Shinn, the Gardens at Spring Creek and LaPorte Avenue Nursery will be open. All of these are gardens not to be missed and are all **open 10 am to 4 pm**. See you there. Directions follow descriptions. Photos by the gardeners.

## Garden #1 Maddy Weisz

You'll be surprised to find many tender alpine gems in this Zone 4 rock garden. Sheltered by house, garage, conifers and fence, our rock garden was planted in 2008 and has thrived. It delights us with veronicas, drabas, lewisias, saxes, phlox, and much more. Please enter our garden through the side gate on McKinley Street, where you'll find ample space for parking.



Probably one of the most unique features of my garden is its large size, being located in the middle of the city. My first experience with using hypertufa was in 1975, in Michigan, when I made my first bonsai pot. Many years later, my interest in rock gardening began; I used hypertufa for making raised beds and troughs. That interest continues to the present day.

## Garden #2 Jan DeVore



Probably one of the most unique features of my garden is its large size, being located in the middle of the city. My first experience with using hypertufa was in 1975, in Michigan, when I made my first bonsai pot. Many years later, my interest in rock gardening began; I used hypertufa for making raised beds and troughs. That interest continues to the present day.

## Garden #3 Carol Shinn

Carol and Randy Shinn have a new, large, vertical crevice garden created by Kenton Seth. It is just getting planted this spring, but the rock structure is incredible. The Shinns also have a horizontal crevice bed and several other rock garden beds, perennials and veggies. Open 10 (or earlier) to 3 or 4.

## Garden #4 Gardens at Spring Creek



Carol Shinn & Kenton Seth build a crevice garden.

The Rock Garden is a half-acre garden designed



by Kirk Fieseler and Maddy Weisz. It's the largest

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*(Continued from page 3)*

rock garden in Northern Colorado. It was built with a collaboration of efforts by the designers, Gardens on Spring Creek staff, The City of Fort Collins Forestry department and a local landscaping company. The garden features a large variety of alpine and adapted plants suitable for rock gardens. There are a large number of plant labels currently placed with hopes of having the majority of plants labeled within the next year. Open 9-4.

#### **Garden Plants #5 LaPorte Avenue Nursery**

Laporte Avenue Nursery grows over 350 species of plants, including some new to cultivation but well adapted to the rock garden situation. We take pride in providing a choice and unusual plant selection of hardy species which are unavailable in most parts of the country. Most of our plants are hardy from zones 4-9, but we believe plants respond as much to the moisture content of the soil, wind and the intensity of

Personal information has been removed.



the winter sun as to temperature. We heartily endorse finding out as much as possible about the conditions that prevail where a particular plant grows in the wild. Our greenhouses will be open for exploration and plant purchase. *(This is a wholesale nursery, usually not open to the public, with a large display garden.—Ed.)*

Directions to the gardens; see map on page 6.

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Personal information has been removed.

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## Sunset Safari Wagon Ride (Unhike)

By Dawn Mitchell

Saturday, June 14, 2014, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm.

Location: Plains Conservation Center – (21901 E. Hampden Ave, Aurora). Check-in at the visitor's center. See <http://www.plainscenter.org>.

\*Reservations required by June 1 with Dawn Mitchell (\$10/non-member.)

Details: Experience the prairie at sunset and witness the diversity of wildlife (and wildflowers) that lives here. Discover the beauty - seen and unseen - of the high plains of Colorado. You are invited to join us

around the campfire and roast marshmallows after the wagon ride.

We will **carpool** from the home of Gesa Robeson, and plan to leave at 5:30 p.m. sharp. Please call her for directions at . This unhike is listed as a Colorado Mountain Club hike; monoculars (which allow a seated or standing person to see objects near the ground magnified 8x) will be provided. You will be asked to sign their release of liability.

## NARGS Annual Meeting, August 28-30

By Ann Bartlett and John Brink

An Annual Meeting of the North American Rock Garden Society is a great opportunity to meet rock gardening enthusiasts from across the world, visit local gardens and botanical sites, and hear presentations by expert botanists and renowned horticulturalists. This year's lineup of speakers is no exception. *Eriogonum* and intermountain flora scholar Dr. James Reveal (L. H. Bailey Hortorium, Cornell University), David Salman (Founder & Chief Horticulturist at High Country Gardens) and Dan Johnson (Curator of Native Plant Collections, Denver Botanic Gardens) will all be speaking at the meeting. For the latest details on the meeting see: <http://www.nargs.org/santa-fe-annual-general-meeting>.

Tips: The conference fee is reasonable and includes 3 speaker presentations, 2 dinners and an all-day field trip to the Taos ski area to view native plants. The conference hotel is pricey. An alternative would be to book a room at half the price at one of the many accommodations on Cerrillos Rd., a short drive from the hotel. Most include breakfast and free parking. Go to Trip Advisor on the web to see the options. There is paid public parking across from the hotel.

### *Stipends for NARGS Annual Meeting*

This year, the Rocky Mountain Chapter is offering up to two \$300 stipends so Chapter members who have not yet attended a NARGS Annual Meeting can attend.

In order to be eligible for a stipend, applicants must be members of both NARGS and the Rocky Mountain Chapter. Applicants must submit a paragraph describing what they propose to do for the Chapter as a result of their participation in the Annual Meeting. The member's contribution to the Chapter could take the form of a presentation at a Chapter meeting, an article for *Saximontana*, or some other effort that benefits the Chapter and its members.

If you are interested in applying, please submit your one paragraph proposal via email to Board Member-At-Large, John Brink ) no later than June 1, 2014. The Chapter's Board of Directors will choose recipients during the June Board meeting and inform the successful applicant(s) of their selection in time for them to make plans.

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## South African Exploration

By Ann Newman

On March 18, Guillermo Rivera presented "Exploring South Africa: From Cape Town to Richtersveld" to an audience that included members of our chapter and the Colorado Cactus and Succulent Society.

Guillermo's presentation and slideshow focused on many beautiful and unusual plants that can be found in the area on the western side of South Africa, starting in Cape Town and ending near Namibia to the north. Many of the slides in the presentation were taken during a tour that Guillermo had organized and led in a previous year. Near the end of the presentation, Guillermo showed us some slides of African wildlife he had taken on one of his tours in Kruger National Park.

The Cape Floristic Region is very small and yet is one of the six floristic kingdoms in the world. It is known as a biodiversity hotspot, as it contains a vast number of plants that are unique to the region; many of these plants are threatened by human activity.

The Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden in Cape Town contains many plants native to the Cape region, and it also has a conservatory that contains many plants from other nearby regions such as fynbos and karoo. Guillermo said that he gave his tour group about 4 hours to stroll the Botanical Garden; it provided a brief introduction to the plants everyone on the tour would be seeing in the days to come.

Part of the Western Cape of South Africa is made up of fynbos, a natural shrub land containing many plants, especially protea and heath plants. The king protea (*Protea cynaroides*) is one of the shrubs found in the fynbos region; it has large green glossy leaves and large beautiful pink flowers. Guillermo had slides of many other beautiful plants that grow near Cape Town: *Crassula falcata* is a succulent that is also called the propeller plant, *Aloe falcata* is another succulent with spikes of coral colored blossoms and *Euphorbia caput-medusae* (Medusa's head) is a succulent with many serpent-like stems.

Many—if not most—of the plants that Guillermo showed us are succulents. Early in his presentation, Guillermo told us that 40% of succulent plants that exist in the world are native just to South Africa. Most of the South African succulents thrive in a Mediterranean climate, one that has a distinct dry season and a wet season. Most are not frost-tolerant, so they would not survive year-round in a Denver garden. (The South African plaza at Denver Botanic Gardens, however, contains many Denver-hardy plants from South Africa.)

Guillermo had many slides from the land north of Cape Town. Sometimes Guillermo took his group into areas not generally accessible to the public. He had obtained permission from private owners of the land; he also had a guide with the tour who was able to get the group into other wild areas filled with choice plants. There were slides of *Oophytum nanum*, a succulent which looked like jade-colored eggs, and *Argyrodema fissum*, another low-lying succulent with bright magenta flowers.

The Namaqua National Park is located about 300 miles north of Cape Town; the park was created to protect the plants that grow there. The Park is located within the succulent karoo desert ecoregion of South Africa and is known for having the world's richest flora of succulent plants. During the South African spring (in August and September), wildflowers put on a spectacular show. Guillermo had many slides of wild landscapes filled with flowering plants as far as the eye could see. Guillermo captured a sunbird visiting a yellow flowered *Conicosia elongata*. A few of the other plants from this area are *Aloe dichotoma*, also called quiver tree, and *Cotyledon orbiculata*, a typical karoo succulent with grey-green leaves and bell-shaped, red-orange flowers.

Near Springbok, there are some *Pachypodium namaquanum* plants, 6-8 foot succulents that have a long trunk and a tuft of leaves at the top. Guillermo had

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(Continued from page 7)

photos of this plant when it was in bloom and noted that the flowers attracted many insects, especially flies.

When they arrived at the area close to Namibia and the ocean, the tour group was accompanied by guards; rough diamonds could be on the ground in this area, and the guards were there to make sure no diamonds left with the tourists! There were succulents *Lithops marmorata*, *Fenestraria rhopolophylla* (Baby's Toes), and *Cheiridopsis pillansii*, a small cushion succulent there. While none of the plants looked like diamonds, some of the succulents looked like living stones.

Some of Guillermo's slides of large areas carpeted in flowers featured members of the *Ruschia* genus, a type of succulent. Members of *Ruschia* are very floriferous, with white, pink or purple flowers covering the entire plant. *Ruschia* is a large genus and has members that are 4 foot shrubs, and others that are dwarf and

tufted, and even some that are mat-forming ground cover plants. The flowers are often sweet-scented and bloom for a long season. They can be found in many plant regions in South Africa, including the Cape Floristic Region, fynbos, Namaqualand karoo and succulent karoo regions. If I lived in South Africa, I would have lots of plants from the *Ruschia* genus in my garden!s (*There is a Ruschia that can be grown in certain microclimates in Denver.—Ed.*)

Guillermo owns South America Nature Tours ([www.southamericanaturetours.com](http://www.southamericanaturetours.com)) and leads tours in South Africa, South America, Baja California and Madagascar. He is a Ph.D. botanist who knows and loves plants and enjoys showing others spectacular places in the world. He has two tours to South Africa scheduled in the next year: South Africa and Kruger National Park in August-September, 2014, and East South Africa and Lesotho in January, 2015. Please check his web site for more details. You can also sign up for his newsletters on the website.

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## Welcome New Members

Hastings, Bob

Hughes, Kristina

Steiner, Mary

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## *Oxytropis oreophila* v. *juniperina*

I've grown this gemling for longer than almost any rock garden plant only because it has actually survived me this long—through two events of moving house and the general daze of negligence around here. John Stireman in Sandy, UT, gave me the original seed he collected in the mountains over there, if I'm not mistaken.

It's an overly fuzzy thing, like the barbershop floor after a pink and white teddy bear has been in the chair. It might be one of the easiest things to grow from seed and it generously rewards the grower in its



*Oxytropis oreophila* v. *juniperina*  
Photo by Kenton Seth

second little year of life with a stupidly permanent presence of flowers, even if they don't cover the whole plant. They open pink and dry to blue, like many *Oxytropis*, but this one keeps giving. My plant starts in March and gives up in November. I scoop up lots of seed, forget to gather even more, and therefore really have no excuse whatsoever not to have a swath of these plants in my rockery rather than one stalwart furry-firecracker-mound in a styro-foam box. Somewhere lost in my apartment must be a brown paper bag full of seed. Sometimes we just don't deserve the plants we have.—Kenton Seth

## Membership Form: Rocky Mountain Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society

All renewals are due in JANUARY, regardless of date of joining.

Rocky Mountain Chapter Options (circle one; see [www.rmcnargs.org](http://www.rmcnargs.org) for benefits): paper Saximontana now \$5 added.

Individual =\$15; Household =\$20; Supporting =\$55; Patron =\$105; Life =\$305. PAPER SAX +\$5 = \$\_\_\_\_\_

(North American Rock Garden Society dues are now paid separately and dues have changed. See [www.nargs.org](http://www.nargs.org).)

Check One:  New  Renewing Today's Date\_\_\_\_\_

Names and contact information are published in the annual Roster, distributed only with the *Saximontana* to members (password-protected online). The Roster is labeled for members' use only.

Please choose \_\_\_\_\_EMAIL (PDF in color) OR \_\_\_\_\_PAPER (B/W) newsletter, *Saximontana* (add \$5 above for paper).

Name(s) as you wish them to appear in listing:\_\_\_\_\_

Address:\_\_\_\_\_ City:\_\_\_\_\_ State:\_\_\_\_\_ Zip:\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone:\_\_\_\_\_ E-mail (please!):\_\_\_\_\_

This is NEW INFORMATION: \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. This is a CORRECTION for current Roster/ mailing: \_\_\_Yes.

Make check payable to RMC-NARGS. Mail to Gesa Robeson, 1648 Yosemite St., Denver, CO 80220.

### *A Plant I Regret Putting in My Rock Garden: Corydalis lutea*

In March, 2014, John Brink wrote about *Corydalis solida* 'George Baker,' a very attractive plant that is well-behaved (in my garden, too).

*Corydalis lutea* is a different story, although it is just as beautiful as 'George Baker.' It has delicate, dissected, ferny, slightly glaucous foliage and is about 1' tall, depending on conditions. It has lovely, true yellow, scrolled-tubular flowers about 1" long, in clusters that bloom from Spring to Fall. It likes sunny to part-shade locations.



*Corydalis lutea*

Photo courtesy [NARGS.org](http://NARGS.org)

I like *Corydalis* in general, for all the reasons given above. The blue-flowered ones that are so lovely are especially hard to keep in Denver.

However, *Corydalis lutea* seeds around so prolifically that it is hard to keep up with. I find such thick growths of seedlings in my sandstone patio (stones are widely-spaced for plants in between) that it can be hard to preserve the plants they are growing around when pulling seedlings.

So, I would just say to beware of this beautiful temptress. I know that others may disagree with me.—Sally Boyson.

### *Calendar, continued from page 10*

September 13  
Saturday

Members' Plant Sale, Marcia and Randy Tatroe, hosts

# Rocky Mountain Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society

## Calendar ~ Spring 2014

Most meetings are held on the third Wednesday of many months at Denver Botanic Gardens, with Social at 6:00 p.m. and Program at 7:00 p.m. Please always check current issue or [www.rmcnargs.org](http://www.rmcnargs.org) for changes. Major updates are also sent by email, so please be sure Lori Giesecke (p. 2) has your current email address. **Login to [www.rmcnargs.org](http://www.rmcnargs.org) is individual for *Saximontana* and Membership Roster only.**

May 23 to May 27	Kathleen Stewart, Trip to Badlands. (Full, call Kathleen.)
May 31 Saturday	Garden Tour, see pp. 3-5.
June 14 Saturday	Sunset Unhike. Dawn Mitchell. All welcome. See p. 6.
July 12 Saturday	Hike, Mike Kintgen, Horseshoe Mountain.
July 26 Saturday	Hike, Jane Hendrix, McCullough Gulch.

*Calendar continued on p. 9*



*Heuchera pulchella* (Sandia coralbells), a Plant Select Petite, left,  
and *Iberis taurica* (white)  
Photo by Sally Boyson