



*Hepatica nobilis*

# **CURIOUS GARDENERS**

## **the Newsletter of the New England Chapter of NARGS**

### **April 2017**

### April 22, 2017 Meeting

#### Presbyterian Church in Sudbury

#### 330 Concord Road, Sudbury, MA

The Presbyterian Church in Sudbury is located in the town center of at the intersection of Route 27 and Concord Road next to the Town Hall. There is ample parking in the rear. The entrance to the lower meeting room is in the rear with easy access from the parking lot to bring in your plants for the Rare Plant Auction.

**Welcome 10:30 AM: *coffee, tea & goodies* – Members with last names beginning N-Z, please bring food item**

**Morning Session 11:00 AM: *John Trexler: Going from an Acre to 700 Square Feet***

**BYO Lunch 12:00-1:00 PM** – check out the plants

**Afternoon Session 1:00 pm: *Rare Plant Auction: Be here and find a treasure to fill that bare spot in your garden with something special.***

### May 20, 2017 Meeting

#### Tour of George Newman's Garden

#### 60 Carriage Lane, Bedford NH 03110

#### 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Save the date for a visit to George's extraordinary garden and an optional side trip to nearby Ponemah Bog in Amherst, NH, where *Rhodora* should be in bloom. Look for a separate newsletter issue with all the details at the beginning of May.

## Notes from the Chair

The last snow has barely melted, but already I'm seeing tangible reminders of why I love our NARGS chapter. I'm enjoying the sweet little pink corydalis that Roy Herold brought to a seedling sale one year, the sky-blue *Hepatica nobilis* flowers peeking out from the dried leaves, and the rooted cutting of *Pieris* that is finally starting to strut its stuff after years of quietly minding its own business; and there's lots more to come.

We're all enjoying this annual awakening of not only our lovely plants but of the memories they arouse, memories of gardeners past and present, memories of our excitement over learning/growing something new. Okay, so maybe some of those new plants turned out to be too much of a good thing or otherwise not quite as great as they first appeared. It's all part of the fun and part of the learning and we wouldn't have missed it. Remember that little variegated *Viola* that started turning up as an extra in pots and ended up everywhere because everyone thought that it just might be something awesome? It was just a nursery thug all right, but I don't think anyone suffered any permanent damage. It eventually died out in my garden, anyway. I kind of miss it.

As you're enjoying your garden this week, please find a few spare divisions of your best things to pot up and bring to the auction on April 22. If you can, bring a friend or two as well, it's a great introduction to our Chapter. Keep the memories coming, and thanks for your generosity.

Vivien

## NARGS National News

The result of a December appeal put our parent organization into the black for 2016 and even resulted in a bit of a surplus. The price of solvency is eternal vigilance, of course, so we're slacking in our efforts to make sure we stay afloat, as dues alone don't cover all the expenses. As a chapter and as individuals, there are a couple ways we can help.

First, if you shop on Amazon, you can have a percentage of your purchase (4-18%) donated to NARGS when you access Amazon through [www.NARGS.org](http://www.NARGS.org). Just go to the NARGS site and click on the Amazon banner at the bottom of the page. There is no cost to the shopper.

Second, the Rocky Mountain Chapter will match any donations made by other chapters this year up to \$10,000. This would be a great time for New England to make a donation, as it will be worth double. Perhaps donate all or part of the proceeds from the Seedling Sale in September? Any thoughts about this?

## BONUS SEEDS

### Leftover Seed-Ex Seeds

We have a huge envelope of seeds sent to us by NARGS. I've done some preliminary sorting and there are plenty of interesting seeds, even after both rounds of purchasing. The seeds will be brought to the April meeting and people can feel free to go through. Enjoy.

## Morning Session 11:00AM John Trexler: Going from an Acre to 700 square feet.

Three years ago we visited John Trexler's garden in Boylston just as he was faced with the certainty that he had to move to a smaller house and garden. For 28 years John developed his property around specialty niches, he imported hybrid shrubs, and he catered to some demanding perennials. Now the question was, "what treasures could be moved to the new site, or would the new garden need to be considered a *tabula rasa* from the ground up?" Come hear how John tackled these challenges and how John addressed the necessary changes which are common to the renovations all our gardens need. John will show pictures of his new garden and talk about those favorite flowers that he moved and the addition of new plants better suited to the smaller site.

## Afternoon Session 1:00PM Rare Plant Auction

The auction is the major source of funds for paying speakers' fees. Please contribute generously (you always do), and bid early and often. If you don't have "rare," "nice" is always welcome! - there will be takers. The more plants we have, the more fun we have, and the more money we make. It's that simple. Ernie Flippo will be the auctioneer.

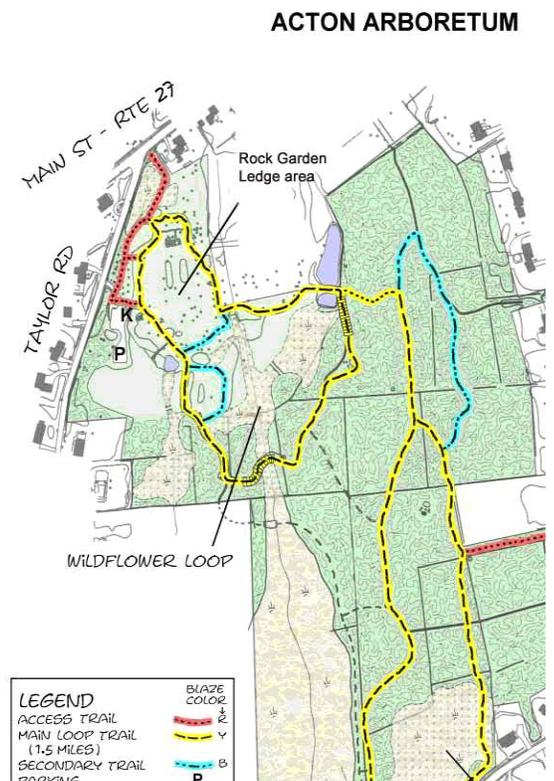
Please bring in your plant donations between 10 -11 AM to so that we can get everything set up in advance. We will start the auction at 1:00pm.

We would be very grateful if 2 people would volunteer to help set the room up for the auction (lay plastic sheeting on the tables and arrange the plants) and also be available to help other members carry in their donations if needed. If you can arrive by 9:45, please let the chair know ([vbouffard55@msn.com](mailto:vbouffard55@msn.com)).

## A Rock Garden Planted in Memory of Helga Andrews and Verna Pratt at the Acton Arboretum, Acton, MA

Sue Whitcomb from our NARGS Chapter was a good friend of Helga Andrews. They met years ago when they both were supervising the perennial plant section at the Arrowhead Nursery on Route 20 in Wayland (present day Mahoney's Nursery). Their shared love of gardening formed the basis of a long friendship. Verna Pratt was Sue's sister, an active gardener well-known in NARGS circles for her expertise in Alaska native plants, so a rock garden in their memory seemed like a wonderful addition to the Arboretum's plantings.

The Arboretum was the logical place for the memorial rock garden as Sue is an Acton resident and a member of the Arboretum board. She is also a long time volunteer contributing to the design and implementation of the specialty niches as the Arboretum grew and matured.



Recently Sue recognized a rock outcropping in the main lawn that that looked as if it had potential to become a rock garden. Last fall arboretum volunteers and the Lennox Nursery staff excavated the area and exposed a beautiful, natural ledge that could be the perfect base for a selection of rock garden plants. They scooped out a half-moon shape rising about four feet on the back edge with numerous cracks and pockets for plants. Sue is asking the chapter for suitable plant donations to begin planting the garden this spring. Such things suitable for the full sun area could include but are not limited to: dianthus, low sedums, sempervivums, phlox, and a variety of thymes. Sue said saxifrages could be successful too because they would amend the soil in a pocket with lime just for those plants. Sue can be reached at: [suewhitcomb@gmail.com](mailto:suewhitcomb@gmail.com).



*Acton Arboretum boardwalk*

Acton Arboretum is well worth an afternoon's visit. The land is a 65 acre conservation parcel in the center of town. The terrain is a varied stretch of open meadows, woodlands, a glacial esker, brooks, numerous small ponds, and a bog; in fact an excellent example of early New England

landscape in miniature. There is an extensive trail system throughout the Arboretum enhanced by boardwalks with railings running through muddy areas and across brooks. Visitors on the boardwalk can get a good view of the wildflowers without trampling the planted zones. A handicapped-accessible trail provides access to the herb garden, butterfly garden, hosta garden, daylily garden, rhododendron garden, lilac fragrance garden, and a pond planting. The Wildflower Trail provides access to a wide range of woodland habitats. Parking is available at the

Arboretum's main entrance as well as at the nearby Town Hall and Library. Much of the area adjacent to the parking lot is handicapped-accessible and is open, with gravel paths, gardens, bridges, and picnic tables. Trails and paths crisscross the entire area. The Arboretum is free and open to the public. More information at <http://actonarboratum.org/>



*Sue on rock garden site*



*Rock garden site at the Acton Arboretum*

## Reminder: BE GREEN Bring Your Own Mug

### NARGS-New England Chapter Membership and Dues

**Membership** in NARGS-NE is \$10.00 a year payable January 1 to Ernie Flippo, 264Wales St., Abington, MA 02351. Payment may also be made in person at our meetings. 2017 dues are due.

**Local Chapters:** –There are thirty-eight NARGS affiliated chapters active in North America. Chapter events include lectures, an on-line Newsletter, garden visits, field trips, demonstrations, and plant sales. These friendly gatherings provide a wealth of information; offer a source for unusual plants, plus the opportunity to be inspired by other gardeners in your region.

Our Chapter meets 6 times a year, February, March, April, September, October and November, and organizes garden tours in May and June.

**National Organization:** We encourage you to join the national NARGS organization.

[www.nargs.org](http://www.nargs.org) Dues are \$40.00 a year. Benefits include a seed exchange, a quarterly publication, and an on-line web site featuring an archive of past publications, a chat forum and a horticultural encyclopedia. NARGS national also conducts winter study weekends and holds their Annual Meeting in interesting places.

**Directions to Presbyterian Church in Sudbury, 330 Concord Road Sudbury, MA**

If you are traveling east or west on Route 27 drive to the intersection with Concord Road. The church is in the town center next to the Town Hall. Parking is in the rear of the Town hall.

**Directions to George Newman's house. 60 Carriage Lane, Bedford NH 03110**

ph. 603-472-3416.....

George's house is in Bedford NH, approximately 8 miles southwest of Manchester NH and one half mile from the Amherst NH line. Take one of the following routes to 101 West - routes 93, 3, Everett turnpike, or 293. Follow route 101 west to Bedford. At the intersection of routes 101 and 114 turn left at the traffic light. Continue on route 101 west 5 miles to Joppa Hill Road. This is exactly ½ mile past a Mobil gas station on the left. Turn right onto Joppa Hill Road and take the third right onto Carriage Lane. My house is the second on the right with a deer fence in front.

{Note; The second turn is also Carriage Lane but you will have to proceed around the loop to my house if you take this way by mistake.} **(more details to come in early May newsletter)**

#### *Chapter Officers for 2017*

Chair: Vivien Bouffard: [vbouffard55@msn.com](mailto:vbouffard55@msn.com)

Vice-Chair: vacant

Past Chair Ellen Hornig: [hornig@oswego.edu](mailto:hornig@oswego.edu)

Secretary: Rosemary Monahan: [rosemonahan@comcast.net](mailto:rosemonahan@comcast.net)

Treasurer: Ernie Flippo: [fortknox4rocks@gmail.com](mailto:fortknox4rocks@gmail.com)

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The Newsletter of the New England Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society is published 4-5 times a year, February, March, April, September, and November, as the spirit moves.