



CURIOUS GARDENERS

the Newsletter of the New England Chapter of NARGS

2017 Calendar

Iris henryi 'Mini Treasure'

Saturday Programs this Spring

**February 25, 2016 - Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge,
680 Hudson Rd, Sudbury, MA**

10:30 am Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies. Members A-M please bring nibbles

11:00 am **Jan Sacks and Marty Schafer: *What's New in Irises for the Rock Garden and Beyond***

12:00 noon Lunch (bring your own), chat, check out our show & tell, Board Meeting

1:00 pm **Group Discussion: *Dealing with Garden Edges and Borders***

March 25, 2016 - Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA

11:00 am **Joseph Tychonievich: *Rock Gardening: Reimagining a Classic Style***

12:00 noon Lunch (bring your own), chat, check out our show & tell, Board Meeting

1:00 pm **Joseph Tychonievich: *Plants, Pollinators, and How to Support Them***

**April 22, 2016 Ames Hall, Memorial Congregational Church, 26 Church St.
Sudbury, MA (across the street from Goodnow Library)**

10:30 am Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies. Members N-Z please bring nibbles

11:00 am **John Trexler: *Downsizing: Going from an Acre to 700 Square Feet***

12:00 noon Lunch (bring your own), chat, Board Meeting

1:00 pm **Rare Plant Auction.** Donate what you can, bid early and often, and we will all have a great time!

May 20, 2016 – Tour: George Newman's garden in Bedford, NH

9:30 am – 12:30 pm further details to be announced

***N.B. Spring meetings will be held in three different places, Assabet Refuge, Tower Hill and Ames Hall, Memorial Church, Sudbury. ed.**

Note from the Chair

Welcome to a new year of growing and learning! I'm excited about the speakers we have planned for 2017 – and 2018 already – and hope to see everyone at our meetings frequently. I agreed, despite my lack of expertise as a rock gardener, to serve as the Chapter Chair just because our meetings are so great and I felt I needed to give some return to an organization that has given me so much. I have never left a Chapter meeting without acquiring a precious nugget or two of new information, and how many other meetings can you honestly say that about? Our gatherings have opened up new worlds to me, from learning about the plants of Patagonia or Mount Olympus to being given the opportunity to actually grow special and unusual plants that most North American gardeners have never heard of. Does that sound like I'm a plant snob? Well, maybe I am a little!

Actually, we are more curious than snobbish. We don't despise the commonplace, but we're in awe of the wonders that the botanical world holds, whether in alpine tundra, jungles, deserts, meadows, or temperate woods. If you have a need to know and a need to grow, you belong in our Chapter. Check out the calendar of upcoming meetings in this newsletter and add the dates to your calendars. In pen! (Is there a digital equivalent of writing in pen?) Everyone has something to add to the mix and our meetings are even more awesome when the membership shows up in force.

Contact information for the Board is in every newsletter. We appreciate people getting in touch with us with their questions and ideas. I in particular encourage you to email me any time, especially if you'd like to volunteer to be the Vice-Chair! We really need another person on the Board, whether or not that person eventually moves to the Chair position. Please let's have a friendly, informational, non-binding chat if you have ANY inkling at all that you might be interested. The Board is a great group and you'll love working with us.

Looking forward to Feb. 25 for Jan and Marty's talk and then the "edgy" discussion that will be relevant to everyone with a garden. See you then.

Vivien

Food for thought: One of the traditions of our Chapter is to have a "seedling" sale at the end of the summer. For the last couple years, most of the donations have been brought by a small subset of the membership, attendance hasn't been so hot, and arguably the funds raised haven't justified the effort. I personally adore the seedling sale and would hate to lose it. As it turns out, this year we will have a speaker (Marcia Tatroe) at our September 9 (note that it's earlier than usual) meeting who will probably give two talks, so there's a question as to whether we could also squeeze in our sale that day or whether we should find another day or whether we skip it. Please think about this and we'll talk about it at the February 25 meeting.



Christmas morning I found these lovely Narcissus bulbocodium ssp praecox (Archibald coll. Morocco) in bloom under the lights in my basement. What a treat! I got the bulbs from the last seedling sale, as a donation from Jim Jones. Thanks, Jim!

February 25, 2017 Morning Session 11:00 am

Jan Sacks and Marty Schafer: *What's New for the Rock Garden and Beyond?*

Welcome to our friends and colleagues Jan Sacks and Marty Schafer of Joe Pye Weed Gardens, who have agreed to give us a heads-up on the new directions in iris collecting and hybridizing especially those plants useful in a rock garden. Jan said, "We are going to cover a wide range of irises - species iris, especially the little ones - *I. cristata* and others; bearded iris, also the little ones; and then a bit about siberians and our siberian hybridizing. You can see on our website, 'Too Cute', which is a dwarf siberian that would fit in with other short plants quite nicely. We will certainly talk about the new species from China, *I. henryi*, and the new named form, 'Mini Treasure'. There will also be some irises not even on the web yet - still very new to America." If you check out the descriptions in the **Introductions** section of their web catalogue it's no surprise to see that Jan and Marty are offering plants that NARGS-NE member Darrell Probst brought back from his 2001 China explorations and others from Korea. Here are a few images to tempt you and insure that this is a presentation you won't want to miss.



Iris. Henryi 'Mini Treasure'



I. odaesanensis 'Firefly Shuffle'
clump character



I. odaesanensis 'Firefly Shuffle'
flower detail



I. odaesanensis 'Chuwangsan #3'
clump character



I. odaesanensis 'Chuwangsan #3'
flower detail

and Jan and Marty's dwarf *Iris siberica* 'Too Cute'



'Too Cute' flower detail



'Too Cute' clump detail

February 25, 2017 Afternoon Session 1:00 pm

Group Discussion: *Dealing with Garden Edges and Borders*

Our discussion will begin with remarks from Ellen Hornig, Ernie Flippo, and Rosemary Monahan about ways they have handled transitions that are internal and external to the garden.

They will comment on their experiences dealing with the interface from garden to path, with its opportunities for small spreading plants, larger arching ones, and other effects. They also will comment on how they have tried to address transitions (graceful or not) to the surrounding landscape, such as screening less attractive features outside the garden, and other related topics.

Then the conversation will open up to all attendees. We're sure everyone has a story to tell and advice to give. Please come prepared to join in.

March 25, 2016 - Tower Hill Botanic Garden, 11 French Drive, Boylston, MA

11:00 am Joseph Tychonievich: *Rock Gardening: Reimagining a Classic Style*

1:00 pm Joseph Tychonievich: *Plants, Pollinators, and How to Support Them*

Our Chapter and THBG are co-sponsoring these talks, so our members will be able to enter both the property and the lectures themselves for free. Because the general public will be charged fees both at the entrance to the property and the entrance to the lecture hall, THBG has asked that we supply them with a list of our members who will be attending. If you will be coming, please let Vivien Bouffard know. (We'll remind you about two weeks before.)



Joseph Tychonievich's talks combine horticultural science, a deep obsession with plants, and humor to create a presentation that is as informative as it is fun. He studied horticulture, plant breeding, and genetics at the Ohio State University and was the nursery manager at Arrowhead Alpines, a premier rock garden nursery in Fowlerville, Michigan. He spent a summer working at Shibamichi Honten Nursery in Japan and has been a repeat guest on public radio's food show *The Splendid Table*.

Starting from the age of five when he asked his parents for seeds for his birthday, Joseph has had a deep and abiding obsession with just about everything photosynthetic, from the vegetable garden to the rock garden. *Organic Gardening Magazine* called him one of "six young horticulturalists who

are helping to shape how America gardens.” Joseph is part of the team behind The Garden Professor's blog <http://gardenprofessors.com> and Facebook group working to provide solid, scientifically grounded gardening information. He also draws humorous gardening cartoons. The following is a copy of an article Joseph wrote last April for The Garden Professors that exhibits just those traits. NARGS-NE hopes you'll join us to hear him in person.

<http://gardenprofessors.com/Fight the tyranny of spring!>

Here in Michigan, spring is coming. Crocuses, snowdrops, and reticulata irises are in full bloom. Hepatica, forsythia, and daffodils will be coming on before long. Soon, garden centers and nurseries will be opening and gardeners driven mad by the long winter will rush out to buy every plant they can find with a flower on it. In the mad feed frenzy for flowers, we gardeners will sadly look over countless beautiful fall-flowering perennials and shrubs simply because they don't happen to be doing their thing when we are shopping.

And that, my friend, is the tyranny of spring. We Northern gardeners all too often let our spring fever skew our gardens to all spring bloomers, totally ignoring and missing a vast array of gorgeous plants that give color and interest the rest of the year.

So, don't give in. Try, for example, planting a bottle brush buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*) a shrub which will thrill and delight with elegant white sprays of flowers in August when all the spring bloomers are looking tired and sad.



Aesculus parviflora



Hosta clausa

Or plant the lovely *Hosta clausa* which won't impress with plain green leaves in the spring, but has a later summer flower display you won't forget. So this year, don't give in to the siren song of spring. Add some late bloomers to the garden. You won't regret it.

Joseph Tychonievich

Hint of Spring?

Ernie Flippo of Abington, MA sent us this photo of snow drops up and blooming in his yard on January 28th. Just as last year he is the first NARGS-NE gardener to post snow drop appearance. That must be some great location you have Ernie!



Ernie Flippo snowdrops
January 28, 2017

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, 264 Wales St., Abington, MA 02351. Payment may also be made in person at our meetings. 2017 dues are due now.

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 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 Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge **680 Hudson Road,** **Sudbury, MA.**

from Route 95/128 and the East: Take Route 20 (Boston Post Road) West through Weston. Turn right onto Rt. 27 and follow this into Sudbury. Stay straight on Hudson Rd. and go about 3 miles to Winterberry Lane on the right. The Parking/building is 0.4 miles in on the left.

from Route 1 495: Take Exit 26 to Rt. 62 for 6.5 miles as merges with Sudbury Rd and go another .5 miles on Hudson Rd. On the left is Winterberry Lane and the parking/building is .4 miles in on the left.

Directions to Tower Hill Botanic Gardens **11 French Drive, Boylston, MA**

from Boston: Find your most direct route to Route 495. On Route 495 take Exit 25B for Route 290 west. Once on Route 290 W, take Exit 24, Church Street, Northborough/Boylston. Follow to Boylston 3 miles. The entrance to Tower Hill is on right with a dark red sign. Tell the guard you are here for the Rock Garden Society joint program and you can get in free.

Chapter Officers for 2015

Chair: Vivien Bouffard: vbouffard55@msn.com

Vice-Chair: vacant

Past Chair Ellen Hornig: hornig@oswego.edu

Secretary: Rosemary Monahan: rosemonahan@comcast.net

Treasurer: Ernie Flippo: 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.