



Sempervivums, new hybrids

CURIOUS GARDENERS

The Newsletter of the New England Chapter of NARGS

September 2018

-2018 Calendar- Fall Programs

**September 15, 2018 -Saturday Memorial Congregational Church
26 Concord Road Sudbury, MA**

- 10:30 am** Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies. *Members A-M please bring cookies*
11:00 am *Club discussion: How strange were your spring and summer?
Is climate change coming to your rock garden?*
12:00 noon Lunch (bring your own), chat, check out our show & tell.
1:00 pm **ANNUAL SALE of SEEDLINGS and PLANTS**

**October 20, 2018 - Saturday Goodnow Library
21 Concord Road Sudbury, MA**

- 11:00 am** Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies. ***please note late start time***
Members N-Z please bring cookies
12:00 noon Lunch (bring your own) chat, check out our show & tell.
1:00 pm *Mark McDonough, The New Sempervivums:
plants will be offered for sale and everyone takes one home for free*

**November 17, 2018 - Saturday First Presbyterian Church
360 Concord Road Sudbury, MA**

- 10:30 am** Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies. *Members A-M please bring cookies*
11:00 am **ANNUAL MEETING**
12:00 noon Buffet sandwiches or byo lunch. Board Meeting
1:00 pm *Matt Mattus: My tour with NARGS in China*

Note from the Chair

Welcome to Fall! It feels like Memorial Day was the day before yesterday, but here we are. We are looking forward to seeing everyone again and have an exciting fall season of NARGS-NE programs planned.

Fall meetings: On September 15, we will meet in Ames Hall of the Congregational church for our annual Seedling Sale, my personal favorite event. Please come and please bring lots of your spare seedlings, bulbs, volunteers, and divisions! And bring a friend if you can. This can be a great introduction to the Chapter and it's the perfect time to become a member as we start the 2018-19 season.

On October 20, we will meet at the Goodnow Library at 11 a.m., as that is the earliest we can access the room. We'll meet and greet and ogle the exciting sempervivums that Mark McDonough is going to bring for sale, have lunch, and then hear from Mark about New Sempervivum Cultivars.

On November 17, we will meet at the Presbyterian Church, have our Annual Meeting and lunch, and then sit back and be regaled with a presentation from Matt Mattus on his recent trip to China.

Leadership: Speaking of the Annual Meeting, it's time to nominate and elect new officers. Leslie Milde, Rosemary Monahan, and Ernie Flippo have very graciously agreed to continue their roles as Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer, so we just need a Chair. The current Chair definitely needs to step down after her two years, but will be involved and fully supportive of the new Chair.

We also need a newsletter editor to replace Marilyn Beaven, who has been filling that role and much more. An arrangement to share the work between two people can be imagined. One person could take the lead in lining up articles and gathering information, and the other could do the layout and

distribution. Other members are happy to proofread.

Finally, we need a lead or a team to run hospitality for our meetings.

Please do consider taking on a role. With only seven or so meetings a year, none is a full-time job, but certain things need to be done. Your Chapter thanks you.

Seed Exchange Follies: In the past I have grown a very cute miniature sunflower called 'Teddy Bear' which is very double and maxes out at less than two feet tall. I saw a listing for it on the NARGS list and thought I would save myself a couple bucks by requesting it there. Well, as everyone knows who often orders from seed exchanges, seeds are not always "as advertised." Behold my mini-sunflower in my community garden plot. It's not fuzzy, either! See you on the 15th.



Vivien Bouffard

Helianthus 'Teddy Bear' (not)

Note from the Vice-Chair: writing from Fremont, NH

This has not been a good year for my garden. Wildlife has been thriving in our southeast NH area and, in order to thrive, they must eat. We have lost 2 roosters one of which was caught 3 times before succumbing to a fox. The neighborhood foxes are large, glistening red and very active. Deer have munched most of the perennials, but maybe because I placed an active balloon among the *Uvularia grandiflora*, it was not touched. We might have blossoms in 2018. There are deer paths all through the property. *Picea* 'Silberlocke' has been decimated. It was situated on a slightly elevated slope next to a good alpine planting area. The red saxifrage has also been cut down. Our neighborhood community page has reported sightings of moose, bobcat and bear. The most damaging creature of all has been the local groundhog. He too looks healthy with luxurious, shiny fur. He lives under the chicken coop, has been known to forage

organic layer pellets inside the coop and now is decimating the herb garden. Nasturtiums were the first to go, the small tomato seedlings next. I planted out horseradish and within 12 hours it was gone. *Malva* 'Mystic Merlin' and all the transplanted seedlings disappeared. Fortunately, the primroses and miniature hosta remained. I hear that groundhogs are very sensitive to smell. So, I have lots of catnip, which is supposed to deter them. At this time the crabapple is bearing fruit and I will now have to plan wisely to keep certain blossoms away from the deer. Luckily since we stopped raising turkeys several years ago, wild hares no longer march through the gardens. In large groups they can be very destructive and I have not found a good scare tactic against them. *Primula* and *aquilegia* have done well even in the sweltering greenhouse. *Digitalis*, *epidemium* and *allium* probably do not taste palatable and have thrived. Hopefully, the list of unpalatable plants from NARGS can be expanded next year!

Leslie Milde

SEPTEMBER MEETING Saturday 9/15/2018

**Memorial Congregational Church
26 Concord Road Sudbury, MA**

Morning Session 11:00 am: *Group Discussion: Is climate change coming to your rock garden?*

We will hold an open discussion to share to how odd weather affected the NARGS-NE area. For a starting comparison, here in Sudbury the weather in the first 6 months of 2018 was really strange. January and February was consistently cold without any relief from a thaw. On March 8th we had a big snow storm which blew over entire trees and caused extensive power outages. Even by March 30th, there were still deep patches of snow on the ground. The feeling was that our usual bloom cycle was two weeks behind schedule. April turned very wet. The Marathon runners competed in a miserable downpour and 52° temperatures. Despite all this the blossoms on azaleas and rhododendron in May were outstanding. Do you keep a garden diary? Bring your notes and share how the weather affected your part of New England.

Afternoon Session 1:00 pm: **ANNUAL SALE of SEEDLINGS and PLANTS**

Every September our Chapter holds a seedlings and plant sale for the benefit of our treasury, which pays for speakers, room rentals, and other expenses. Members contribute seedlings they have saved from their spring and summer bounty. Because the seedlings are small they are favorably priced and it is a great opportunity to fill in the blank spots of your garden. This year we may be able to offer a few larger plants available at auction.

How to Prepare your Seedlings for the Plant Sale

Plants for the seedling and plant sale should be potted and individually labeled with the plant's botanical name and variety or cultivar, if applicable. A short length of slat from vinyl window blinds works well as labels, if you have them available. At the top of each label, **please write the first letter of the genus** name; this makes it much easier to sort plants into alphabetical groupings. Please try to make your labels legible.

You might like to arrive earlier than 10:30AM if you're donating plants to the sale. This will help us get everything set up before our meeting begins.

Rules for purchasing seedlings

When our plant sale begins, donors will get first choice (one plant per ten donated). We will then open the sale to all other members. Most plants will be priced at \$1 each; when sales slow to a crawl at that price, we'll go to \$.50, then to \$.25, and finally to \$0. This year we may auction off a few special things, such as some larger or rarer plants depending upon the donations.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS TO HELP SET UP. If you're able to help with this, please e-mail Vivien @ vbouffard55@msn.com

OCTOBER MEETING Saturday 10/20/2018

Goodnow Library
21 Concord Road Sudbury, MA
Please note late starting time

Morning Session 11:00 am

Welcome, coffee tea and chat. Bring your own lunch

Afternoon Session 1:00 pm *Mark McDonough: The Secret World of Gourmet Sempervivum (Hens & Chicks)*

This will be an all-in-one themed presentation, plant giveaway, and rare plant sale to benefit New England Chapter of NARGS. The presentation should open your eyes to thousands of hardy, mind-boggling, intensely colored sempervivum that are mostly held within specialty collector nurseries. These are **NOT** your mere dozen or two drab sempervivum varieties common in retail nurseries and garden centers. All attendees will be able to select a free "collector" sempervivum to take home, and opportunity to buy additional "at cost" rare Hens & Chicks varieties only available from specialty growers in USA, England, and Germany. Sale proceeds go to New England Chapter NARGS chapter. Mark has worked all summer propagating choice sempervivum and other hardy succulents just for this meeting; the comprehensive selection of plants brought to the meeting is a rare opportunity to get a free plant and buy additional choice plants at low cost, and financially support our chapter. Yay!

The Swedish Sandman

About three years ago, Peter Korn talked to us about his garden in Sweden, near Gothenburg, telling us how he grows all of his plants in 30cm of clean sand. And what plants! How could such species be hardy in cold, cold Sweden? So could that approach work as well here in my garden in Lexington, MA which gets mighty cold itself? I was ready to try to answer that question with one specific plant: *Crocosmia paniculata*. Actually, I knew it had some degree of hardiness (perhaps a bit more than *C. masoniorum*) because it had survived here for quite a while -- but there was a problem; despite a period of efflorescence in the early days, it has then done nothing but survive.

My plant, received from Avon Bulbs in 1989, had gone on to bloom in July 1991. Soon it was sturdy enough to offer divisions, to the extent that, over the years, I was able to test it in other parts of the garden (though nowhere did it succeed gloriously). But then, sometime after July 20, 2012, it stopped blooming anywhere, and gradually relinquished all but one site. Did we miss some sort of climate change in 2012?

I was certainly ready for any technique that might offer hope! That meeting was in mid-summer, which seemed as good a time as any to launch into action. I promptly dug a foot-deep trench just outside the greenhouse, filled it with sand (as a proper rock gardener I naturally had a pile ready for action), and in went the remnant of plant still left to me. In addition to the sand there was lots going for the poor thing in that location; an extra bit of warmth conducted through the greenhouse wall, and extra rainwater cascading down the pane. So, with an extra bit of fertilizer I sent it on its way.

Results? Last year there was an encouraging amount of new growth; this year, just three weeks ago a bit of orange shone out through the foliage! That came along nicely (serendipitously paired with the *Platycodon grandiflorus*) and is now a fine showy panicle, with more on the way. Thank you, Peter.

James L. Jones



Crococsmia paniculata and
Platycoden grandiflorus

Joseph Tyconievich Returns to New England

One of our favorite rock gardeners will be speaking at the Massachusetts Master Gardener Association's 2018 MA Gardening Symposium, Saturday, September 29, 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM in Westford, MA, just off I-495. I won't be going this year because I'll be out of the country, but the MMGA symposia the past two years have been excellent. Great chance to attend an educational event without having to travel!

Other Symposium speakers are Peter J. Hatch (Director of Gardens and Grounds Emeritus for the Thomas Jefferson Foundation); Kelly D. Norris (award-winning author and Director of Horticulture & Education at the Greater Des Moines, Iowa, Botanical Garden); and Jessica Walliser (author of the acclaimed book *Good Bug, Bad Bug*).

The Symposium's Garden Marketplace will include Garden Vision Epimediums (btw, Karen Perkins will be receiving a Silver Medal from Mass Hort. in October – see their website for details) and Cochato Nursery in Holbrook – both will be offering many of the plants Joseph recommends. Breaks will include a book signing.

Registration – which is \$90 pp and includes lunch – closes Saturday, September 22. Credit/debit cards and PayPal are accepted at <http://massmastergardeners.org/2018-symposium/>.

Vivien Bouffard

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 the first meeting of the year.

Local Chapters: –There are thirty-eight NARGS affiliated chapters active in North America. Chapter events include lectures, an email 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), publishes a newsletter in email format, and organizes garden tours in May and June.

National Organization: We encourage you to join the national NARGS organization. www.nargs.org Dues are \$30.00 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 Memorial Congregational Church, 26 Concord Road, Sudbury, MA

from Route 95/128 and the East: Take Route 20 West through Weston and Wayland into Sudbury. At the first light in Sudbury turn right onto Concord Road. The church is 2 houses on the right. Turn onto Church St, parking is just up the hill in front of Ames Hall.

from Route 27 and the North: Follow Route 27 south into Sudbury. At the traffic light in Old Sudbury Center turn right (south) onto Concord Road. Follow Concord Road approximately 1 mile and turn left onto Church Street. Parking and the entrance to Ames Hall is up the hill on the left.

Directions to Goodnow Library, 21 Concord Road, Sudbury, MA

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Chapter Officers for 2018

Chair: Vivien Bouffard: vbouffard55@msn.com

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The Newsletter of the New England Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society is published 3-4 times a year. In 2016 expect February-March, April-May, September-October, November issues and occasional notices of special events.



GLORIOUS SEMPERVIVUMS

