



*Eranthis pinnatifida*  
photo Ian Young

# NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER of the North American Rock Garden Society MARCH 2014

## MARCH MEETING Ed Bowen owner of OPUS nursery

Tucked away in the rural seaside village of Little Compton, RI, is the deliberately small nursery called Opus, where the proprietor Ed Bowen focuses on propagation, growing and breeding unusual garden plants. Hydrangeas and salvia, among others, have profited from his attention. Dan Hinkley wrote, "At Opus, there is always a delicious assortment of plants that fellow plants men can immediately see as exceptional."

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In addition to gardening and garden design Ed is involved with *Sakonnet*, a leading private garden in RI and is on the horticultural steering committee at North Hill, VT. For many years Bowen taught in the Master Gardeners program. He has written for *Horticulture* magazine, and occasionally lectures so his visit with us is an exciting opportunity.

\* *Horticulture*, Nov/Dec, 2013: 73

### -2014 Calendar-

**March 29, 2014** - Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge,  
680 Hudson Rd, Sudbury, MA

**10:30 a.m.** Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies and set up.

**11:00 a.m.** *Ed Bowen – The Unusual*

**12:00 noon** Lunch (bring your own) and check out the plants on show & tell.

**1:00 p.m.** *Ed Bowen* – show and tell plants from his nursery.

**April 26, 2014** Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge,  
680 Hudson Rd, Sudbury, MA

**10:30 a.m.** Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies and set up.

**11:00 a.m.** **Mark Richardson,**  
**Horticulture Director, GITW**

*The Trillium Collection, & Sustainable Horticulture.*

**12:00 noon** Lunch (bring your own)

**1:00 p.m.** **Rare Plant Auction.** Even if you don't have plants to donate, please come and bid, bid, bid!

**May 31, 2014 – Garden Tours**

**Ellen Hornig Shrewsbury, MA**  
**John Trexler Boylston, MA**



Ed Bowen (left) with choice plants at Sakonnet Open Garden

**Note from the Editor:** Speaking of Little Compton, RI, before it became a destination trip to visit Opus Plants, the village was known for these two tombstones.



## Notes from the Co-Chairs

### *After a Long Winter*

For the last two months I've been saying to myself 'spring is just around the corner' but it's been a very long corner. At our meeting on February 22nd Ernie Flippo in Abington, MA reported that he had Snowdrops in bloom in his garden. It's now almost a month later and ours in Bolton, MA, which are in the most protected area, are just venturing forth. And we are a mere 40 miles straight distance apart!

Twenty members came to our meeting in February and were visually transported by Peggy Taylor's slides to the alpine meadows of Switzerland. It was a nostalgic trip for Helga Andrews, which made it immensely enjoyable for the audience as she and Rosemary Monahan discussed each flower or alpine view. Due to a last minute change of plans, our afternoon session was cancelled and another topic substituted. Ever resourceful, Ernie jumped into the void and led a discussion on the challenges to

hardiness given the recent weather patterns. Winters seem to be subject to more freezing and thawing when arctic conditions are interspersed with warm spells. Summers seem to be hotter and drier, except when they are hotter and more humid. The discussion expanded to include the effect of climate change being experienced worldwide - snow and cold here, flooding in England and excessive heat in Australia.

I was still searching for spring on March 14th at the Boston Flower Show but it wasn't there! The title of this year's Flower Show was *'Romance in the Garden'* so the horticultural displays emphasized that theme. There were small garden vignettes which creatively incorporated interesting plantings within the theme. There was a large display of hyacinths but I'm still looking around the corner for Spring.

**Rachel Ross**

### **Snowdrop Calendar Sudbury & Bolton, MA**

- 1. March 5, 2005**  
Shoots up 3"
- 2. March 8, 2009**  
Blossoms fully open
- 3. March 12, 2013**  
Blossoms fully open  
no photo
- 4. March 20, 2013**  
Drift in Bolton
- 5. & 6. March 17, 2014**  
First day after snow melt  
Sudbury



## ***Flower Show Rocks!***

Co-chair Rachel Ross and I have been visiting the Boston Flower Show regularly and I now have some mementos of those occasions in my garden. Luckily for my purse I did not see anything this year that stirred my acquisitive nature. But I remember 2007 well when there was a fabulous exhibit put on by **Earthworks Landscape Design**, in which owner Michael Mazur of Rattlesnake Gutter Road in Levrett, MA, featured huge rocks and beautifully placed horticulture. I realized that it was he who had previously exhibited a rock display at The Garden in the Woods.



Finding the Rock at the Mazur studio

So, lured by the fascinating name of Rattlesnake Gutter Road, Rachel and I decided to visit his home/show place later in October. There I found that he still had the self-same large rock I'd seen at GITW, so throwing all caution to the winds I bought it on the spot and arranged for him to place it in my garden. With the passing years it looks more and more at home on the edge of the woods, gathering moss and lichen. But had I not met him at the Flower Show I'm quite sure I would never have been motivated to act.

**Helen du Toit**



The Rock placed in my woods

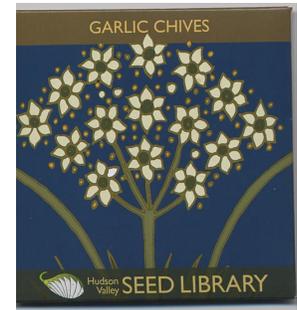
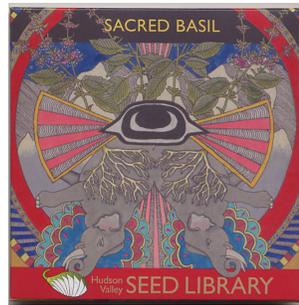
## **Hudson Valley Seed Library @ the Flower Show**

One of the most attractive booths at the Flower Show was the display set up by **The Hudson Valley Seed Library**. You may know their quality heirloom and open-pollinated seed offerings grown on their farm in Accord, NY. Seeds not grown “in house” are obtained from other reliable local farmers and wholesale distributors who all adhere to the Safe Seed Pledge. Hudson Valley is both a Certified Organic Farm and a Certified Organic Handler. At the show, Helen du Toit challenged their salesman with a request for *Physalis pruinosa*. Not only did he know that her request was for gooseberry seeds but he had right there on the shelf, 'Aunt Molly's Ground Cherry,' a Polish variety presumably hardier than the Cape Gooseberry she grew in Cape Town. It was a most welcome surprise. Helen claims all South Africans yearn for Cape Gooseberries when they move away.

What attracted me to the booth was their display of seed packets. The face of the packet was designed by very imaginative contemporary artists. I bought six of the most colorful (regardless of content), so I have *Brilliant blend beets*, *Garlic chives*, *Sacred basil* and *Benning's patty pan squash*. They bring a smile to my face every time I look at them. Once I have planted my seeds I intend to make a collage of the packets I bought!

**Marilyn Beaven**

More information at their website [www.seedlibrary.org](http://www.seedlibrary.org)



Seed Envelopes from Hudson Valley Seed Library



For Friends of Kenneth E. York late member NARGS Berkshire chapter

Obituary from the Albany Times Union March 2, 2014

Kenneth E. York, 86, East Nassau of Garfield Road died on Sunday, February 23, 2014 at his residence. Ken resided in East Nassau for 54 years where he honed his master gardener skills and belonged to many gardening clubs throughout the Capital District and Berkshire counties. People, both near and from afar, admired his beautifully landscaped yard filled with day lilies, hosta and begonias. He was a well-read, salt-of-the-earth kind of man who was a passionate advocate for education and clean water along the Kinderhook Creek watershed, as evidenced by his many contributions to the letters to the editor section in the Times Union. He believed in beautifying New York and recently made his final contribution to the Rensselaer Land Trust. His family would describe him as a visionary. He may have been raised in a past many don't remember, but he was always thinking about the future. His desire was to be an anatomical gift and then returned to the earth in keeping with his philosophy of recycling everything possible. He said, "I'll be everywhere and nowhere after I'm gone." The York family would like to thank everyone who treated him with respect and looked out for him. He would like people to be kind to one another, appreciate the taste of a fresh strawberry, the bloom on a flower, the smell of fresh soil and to take a moment to find and appreciate the beauty all around. He hoped one day there would be large clusters of daffodils planted in every community garden, sprouting beauty and heralding in the new spring.

**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 1495:* 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.

***Chapter Officers for 2014***

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