



September 2019
PVC Bulletin

Potomac Valley Chapter
North American
ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

Sarracenia at Meadowview Botanical Research Station, Woodford, VA Photo by S. Strickler

Fall 2019 Events Calendar

Programs are Saturdays at 10am (coffee at 9:30 am), unless otherwise noted.

September 28, **Plant Exchange**, Home of Jim Hughes, 6909 Pineway, University Park, MD 20782
Details here: <https://nargs.org/sites/default/files/chapter-newsletters/2019%20fall%20plant%20exchange.pdf>

October 12, **Bradley Evans, US National Arboretum Horticulturist,**
“Spikey Plants (Agaves, Manfredas, and Dyckias) and sub-tropicals for Washington DC”
Brad is responsible for the gardens around the Arboretum’s administration building and other high visibility areas. He will share his passion for spiky, prickly plants and discuss his care and design of the Arboretum’s north terrace garden where he incorporates many sub-tropicals with other hardy plants. We will tour of his gardens after his talk. **Where:** US National Arboretum Classroom, 3501 New York Ave. NE, Wash DC 20002

October 16, **Don LaFond, member Great Lakes Chapter, MI, *“Rock Gardening in Michigan”***
Don will talk about how he creates spaces and environments--using wet tufa, rubber, and specific soil mixes-- to create bogs and streams and other special habitats. Using his own garden as an example, he’ll show us how to establish some of these areas in our own gardens. Don is the former vice-president of NARGS, and has served on the Board of Directors, as well as Chair of his local chapter. In 2015 Don received the NARGS Millstream Garden Award for his superior rock garden.
Where: Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallan Ave., Wheaton, MD 20902

October 19, **Trough Workshop led by member, Rob Gimpel** at Susanna Farms Nursery, 1770 White Ground Rd., Boyds, MD

November, DTBD, **Members’ Meeting/ ELECTION**

December 7, **PVC Helps with NARGS SEED-EX Packaging**, Green Spring Gardens (Details to come)

President's Message

Hope everyone had a great summer! Whereas the bog plants, xerophytes and tropicals partied in the heat, my rock garden suffered a bit, especially this 5-year-old Daphne, which died at a phenomenal rate (Fig 1). Most of the Saxifrages in my garden followed suit. Oh well, more room for new plants!



Now that fall is upon us, activities in PVC will begin to accelerate dramatically. On **September 28th**, we will have the fall plant

exchange at Jim Hughes' house (Fig 2). This is a garden that should not be missed! Jim has an amazing variety of plants that are well grown and expertly displayed despite the pressures from abundant wildlife in his neighborhood. Come see how he does battle! Jim also has an awesome bonsai collection on display.

Heading into October we have two speakers that should be great. On **Oct 12th**, Bradley Evans of the National Arboretum will talk about the gardens he constructs and maintains around the Visitor Center. These gardens are a combination of tropical plants and hardy plants that Bradley seems to mesh effortlessly and uniquely year after year. He will speak about these plants, including the Mangaves he has collected, and will give us a tour of the gardens. On **Oct 16th**, Don LaFond of the Michigan chapter will give us a lecture at Brookside Gardens on his growing techniques and gardening style that are quite unique. Don creates specialized microhabitats in his yard so he can grow a wide variety of plants. Don's a funny guy so I expect his talk will be quite entertaining!

During the weekend of **Oct 19-20th**, we will hold a trough workshop at Susanna Farms Nursery in Boyds, MD. PVC member Rob Gimpel will head the workshop as he has done before, making hypertufa troughs (Fig 3). Each participant will be expected to make 2 troughs, one for themselves and one to donate to PVC that will be sold to make money for the chapter. We are also looking for someone to oversee a group interested in making super lightweight troughs, either Styrofoam core or papercrete troughs. More on this to follow!



Sometime in November (date TBD), we will hold the Member's Meeting. This year we elect officers (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) to serve for the next 2 years. If you are interested in any of these positions (particularly President and Vice President), please contact Margot Ellis (4pvcctreas@gmail.com), the head of the Nominations Committee. Remember that this is your club and member participation is vital to its survival! After the elections part of the Member's Meeting is over, we will have a seed starting workshop to prepare for the NARGS seed exchange which takes place in January (Fig 4). Several members from our club will discuss how they germinate seeds. I am hoping that this workshop will encourage members to order seeds from



NARGS, germinate them and successfully grow the seedlings on for planting in their gardens or distribution to other club members. Just think what we can do as a chapter if a bunch of us germinate seed and distribute the seedlings at our chapter meetings!

To round out the year, on **Dec 7th**, we will help NARGS package seeds for the seed exchange. This involves taking the raw seed that members send in and cleaning it (if necessary) and packaging it for distribution to the NARGS membership. Last year we met at Green Spring to perform this exercise. With 15 volunteers, it took about 8 hours to package seed from 200 taxa. This year, we are hoping more people will volunteer so we can get it done in less time.

See you soon,

Kevin

Cyrtanthus as a mini-Amaryllis

by John Willis



Cyrtanthus elatus x montanus

Cyrtanthus (curved flower from the greek) is an easily grown pot plant in the mid-atlantic. It asks for little care and rewards with flowers on a regular basis at the beginning of every fall. It's an evergreen in its native South Africa and although it has a short dormant season you probably wouldn't notice the paused growth in practice.



Cyrtanthus brachysiphus

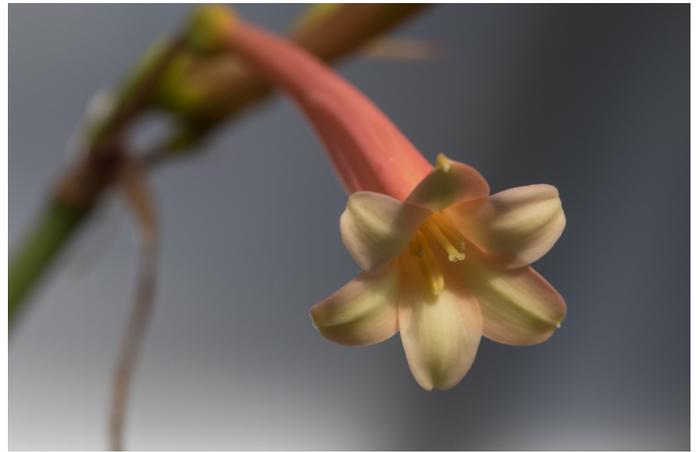
Though I'm able to keep mine in a greenhouse, I think they could be easily overwintered in a utility room.

Like Clivia and many other South African evergreens, it is perfectly happy to be overcrowded in a pot (which it begins to share with the bulblets that it offsets). I started growing Cyrtanthus courtesy of the bulb exchanges run by the Pacific Bulb Society.

At this point, I have 3 other species I am propagating--the one to the left and the 2 below.



Cyrtanthus sanguineus, John's all-time favorite.



Cyrtanthus mackenii

I mentioned they don't mind overcrowding. Below is what *C. elatus* x *montanus* looked like after 4 years of growing from a small bulb.



Very root-bound with many offsets

These have now been packaged up to share with others through the Pacific Bulb Society's wonderful bulb exchange process. In the past six years I've obtained over four hundred species (seeds and bulbs) from the PBS exchanges. I can't think of a better way to share horticultural abundance.



Bulblets after 4 yrs growth from one similar-sized bulb.

Saving Sarracenia: A Visit to Meadowview Biological Research Station

by Sarah Strickler (see link below)

<https://ofleafandlimb.blogspot.com/2019/09/saving-sarracenia-pitcher-plants-at.html>



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