

# The Urban Rock Gardener



Volume 34, Issue 1

January/February 2021

## JANUARY VIRTUAL MEETING

Monday, January 25 at 6 p.m. via Zoom

A Zoom link will be sent to members prior to this event

## THE ALPINE COLLECTION AT DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS

Speaker:

**Mike Kintgen**

Curator of Alpine Collections, Denver Botanic Gardens

**D**enver Botanic Gardens' Alpine Collection is one of the largest in North America, with close to 500 true alpine species found above the tree line from around the globe. The living collection is spread across three sites: the Rock Alpine Garden at DBG's main campus in central Denver, Chatfield Farms in Littleton, and DBG's unique site at Mt. Goliath – 11,500 feet above sea level. The international alpine collection is also the only collection in North America with official designation by the American Public Gardens Association. More information can be found at <https://www.publicgardens.org/programs/plant-collections-network/collections-showcase/alpines-world>.

DBG staff are currently working in concert with Betty Ford Alpine Gardens on the North American Botanic Garden Strategy for Alpine Plant Conservation to conserve not only alpine plants in Colorado but throughout North America. In addition to being an important scientific collection, the colorful and interesting plants bring joy throughout the year to DBG's visitors. Mike will cover the beautiful and unique aspects of the collection as well as its history and impact on research and conservation.



Crevice Garden in the Rock Alpine Garden, home to true alpine plants



*Androsace chamaejasme* at Mt. Goliath



One of the north-facing slopes in the Rock Alpine Garden, with corydalis in bloom



**MIKE KINTGEN** is a native of Colorado and has worked at Denver Botanic Gardens in an official capacity since 2004. He had volunteered in the Rock Alpine Garden and at DBG plant sales since he was eleven years old. He holds a B.S. in Landscape Horticulture from Colorado State University and an M.S. in Ecology from Regis University. He has spent

the better part of his life studying plants in the wilds of North America, Argentina, Europe and Morocco.

## FEBRUARY VIRTUAL MEETING

Monday, February 22 at 6 p.m. via Zoom

A Zoom link will be sent to members prior to this event

### THE EVOLUTION OF MY GARDEN – FROM OLD GARDEN TO NEW

Speaker:

**Elisabeth Zander**

President, North American  
Rock Garden Society

I will be presenting a brief history of my garden here in Goshen, Connecticut, and will highlight the last few years of building tufa walls, tufa towers, troughs, and crevice and sand gardens. A video of the actual tufa wall and one of the tufa tower building processes will end my presentation.

E.Z.



*Physoplexis comosa*



*Edraianthus serpyllifolius alba*



*Eriogonum umbellatum porteri*

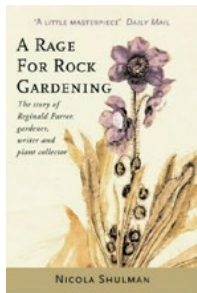


**ELISABETH ZANDER** recently retired from her work as a backend database programmer and is currently serving as president and webmaster of NARGS. Over the years, she has served in many capacities for NARGS, starting at the chapter level. As the 1994-96 NARGS Seed Exchange Director, she oversaw the complete operation, with the help of the Connecticut and Berkshire chapters. Before leaving this position, she split it into the three-part operation now in use. For many years, she has arranged NARGS Speakers Tours for its chapters.

An avid seed grower since joining NARGS, she was sowing well over 1,400 packets of seed yearly by the late 90s. She built raised berms, hill pocket, and shade gardens to house all the plants and kept over 2,500 species thriving. At the turn of the millennium, Elisabeth moved her gardening to a "blank slate" of property in the hills of northwest Connecticut. Since then, she and her husband Rod have built a greenhouse, stone walls, plunge beds, troughs, raised beds, sand beds, and extensive crevice gardens. In 2018 they received the Linc and Timmy Foster Millstream Garden Award from NARGS for creating a superior garden that reflects the standards of the Millstream Garden. Still sowing seed, she has tapered down to a couple of hundred packets a year, and is still constructing additional outlays to her crevice gardens.

## DISTANCE(ING) LEARNING

There are so many upsides to the past season of social distancing! No guilt for declining social events you didn't really want to attend and an easily accepted reason to withdraw from another obligation too many. As one or more additional seasons of pandemic wariness loom, why not use your newly freed-up extra time for improving the garden, catching up on deferred projects, reading or all the above? Winter reading season is upon us and while many of the titles suggested for rock garden-related titles may be familiar, I hope some will catch your interest and provide a few quiet hours of pleasure. In no particular order, I recommend the following:

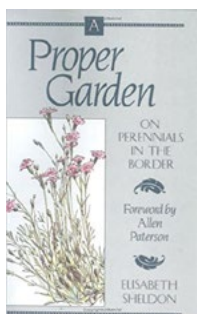
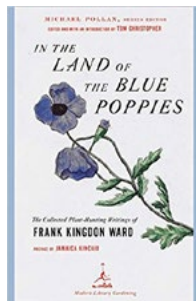


***A Rage for Rock Gardening* by Nicola Shulman.** A brief biography of the colorful and opinionated Reginald Farrer, a Yorkshire man who died on a plant hunting expedition to Burma one hundred years ago last month. You might also find time for a more ambitious, but rewarding project tackling some of Farrer's own books like the encyclopedic ***The English Rock-Garden***, a two volume text published in 1919 describing alpine plants and their

culture in deliriously rhapsodic bursts of enthusiasm interspersed with practical first hand experienced advice on culture and propagation. You can pick it up, swim in it and put it aside when it starts to overwhelm.

***Natural Rock Gardening* by Bertram Symons-Jeune.** This is the most clearly stated and illustrated guide to proper rock placement in a large rock garden I've come across, but lessons are also applicable to smaller spaces. Simple diagrams help clarify the written descriptions.

***In the Land of the Blue Poppies* by Frank Kingdon-Ward.** Another vicarious journey with a twentieth century East Asian plant hunter who made twenty-four arduous, dangerous and successful plant collecting expeditions until his death in 1958, so you don't have to. Follow him through treacherous and magical valleys and up steep flower-strewn mountains. The collection of essays was edited by Tom Christopher.



***A Proper Garden* by Elisabeth Sheldon.** One of my strongest and most lasting garden memories is visiting the Lansing, New York garden of the late Elisabeth Sheldon in the early 90s. This collection of observations on perennial gardening clearly describes the art and practice of gardening, gently explained in eloquent and personal terms. She is the garden mentor you always hoped for.

STEVE WHITESELL

*Again, the garden is under snow  
Always, the garden is looking forward to something*

– FROM "THE GARDEN POEMS" BY JOE DiMATTIO

## THE WAY OF MULCH



Can mulch express the duality of nature? John Tweddle seems to have applied a philosophical as well as an artistic eye to the patch of bare ground under these sassafras, black cherry and Norway maple trees at his Reynolds Hills community in Peekskill.

The area has been partially mulched with wood chips, the bare ground remaining to be covered with ground leaves, creating a yin-yang effect. John reports that his neighbors have noticed. One commented, "It doesn't look like Reynolds Hills," which, he says, was meant as a compliment.

**PLEASE NOTE: Per a decision made by the MCNARGS Board of Directors in September, all memberships have been extended by one year.**

### MANHATTAN CHAPTER NARGS MEMBERSHIP & RENEWAL FORM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to join MCNARGS or if your membership dues were not current as of 2020, please complete this form and mail it with your payment (check payable to MCNARGS) to Membership Secretary Nancy Crumley at:

324 Seventh Avenue #4R  
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Check one:

- 1-year Membership \$30  
 3-year Membership \$75

PLEASE PRINT NEATLY:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Check all that apply:

- I am renewing my membership  I am a new member  
 I would like to receive a paper copy of the newsletter  
 I would like my newsletter via email only

We are a volunteer organization and would like your participation in our activities. How can you help?

- Help with Plant Sale  Help increase our presence on Social Media  
 Serve as Webmaster  Contribute articles to the newsletter  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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THE MANHATTAN CHAPTER of the North American Rock Garden Society, founded in 1987, is a group of gardening enthusiasts who are dedicated to the propagation and promotion of an eclectic range of plants, with emphasis on alpine and rock gardening selections. Our Chapter programs, designed for a sophisticated mix of professionals and amateurs, cover a broad spectrum of special interests such as rock and alpine, woodland, bog, raised bed and planted walls, as well as trough and container gardening.

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Our gratitude to Michael Riley for donating the printing and mailing of the *Urban Rock Gardener*.

## UPCOMING VIRTUAL MEETINGS

**Monday, March 15 – via Zoom**

**Botanizing in the Himalaya — Yunnan, Shangri-La and the Borderlands of Tibet**

**MATT MATTUS**

*Horticulturist, Gardener, Plantsman, Author*

**Monday, April 19 – via Zoom**

**Pollinator Ecology**

**REBECCA McMACKIN**

*Director of Horticulture*

*Brooklyn Bridge Park*

*Links to Zoom meetings will be sent to the membership prior to the event*

## THE NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY



**JOIN TODAY.** NARGS is for gardening enthusiasts interested in alpine, saxatile, and low-growing perennials and woody plants. Annual dues in the U.S. and Canada are \$40, payable in U.S. funds. VISA/Mastercard accepted.

Benefits of membership include: *Rock Garden Quarterly* with articles on alpines and North American wildflowers; annual Seed Exchange with thousands of plant species; study weekends and annual meetings in either U.S. or Canada; and book service.

Join online at [www.nargs.org](http://www.nargs.org). Or write: Bobby J. Ward, Executive Secretary NARGS, P.O. Box 18604, Raleigh, NC 27619-8604.

The NARGS *Quarterly* is now online and members have free access at [www.nargs.org/rock-garden-quarterly](http://www.nargs.org/rock-garden-quarterly).

## WE HOPE TO "SEE" YOU AT ALL OUR UPCOMING VIRTUAL MEETINGS

*Submission deadline for March/April issue: February 20*

### MANHATTAN CHAPTER OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

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