

# The Trillium

Piedmont Chapter  
North American Rock Garden Society  
Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, NC

## Spring Picnic in South Carolina – reported by Roy C. Dicks



Photo by Roy Dicks

**Swan Lake Iris Gardens**

went on a walking tour of the gardens, full of many varieties of blooming irises on the shore of the cypress-filled lake on which eight different kinds of swans majestically glided.

Then it was a short ride to Bishopville to spend an hour and a half with 71 year-old Pearl Fryar, who was our personal guide around his home with its now-famous topiaries. Fryar started his work in the early 1980s with no prior experience in gardening or design, using trees and shrubs rescued from compost heaps. His imaginative creations soon caught the attention of newspapers and magazines, leading to a documentary film in 2006 and the umbrella of the Garden Conservancy in 2007. Now the garden gets up to 500 visitors a day.

The house sits on a quiet street, but while the others' yards look typically Southern, Fryar's is like a psyche-

The Piedmont Chapter of NARGS had its first out-of-state spring picnic on May 14, 2011, with a trip to South Carolina to visit two very different gardens.

Forty-one members and guests left the Raulston Arboretum at 8:30 a.m. on a bus heading for Sumter, SC, where the group stopped at Swan Lake Iris Gardens, a city-owned site with 120 acres of flowers and wildlife. The group had a catered lunch on the screened-in porch of the Iris Market Café, a wonderful treat of fruit, sandwich squares, and chicken salad, with fresh strawberries and real whipped cream for dessert. The group then

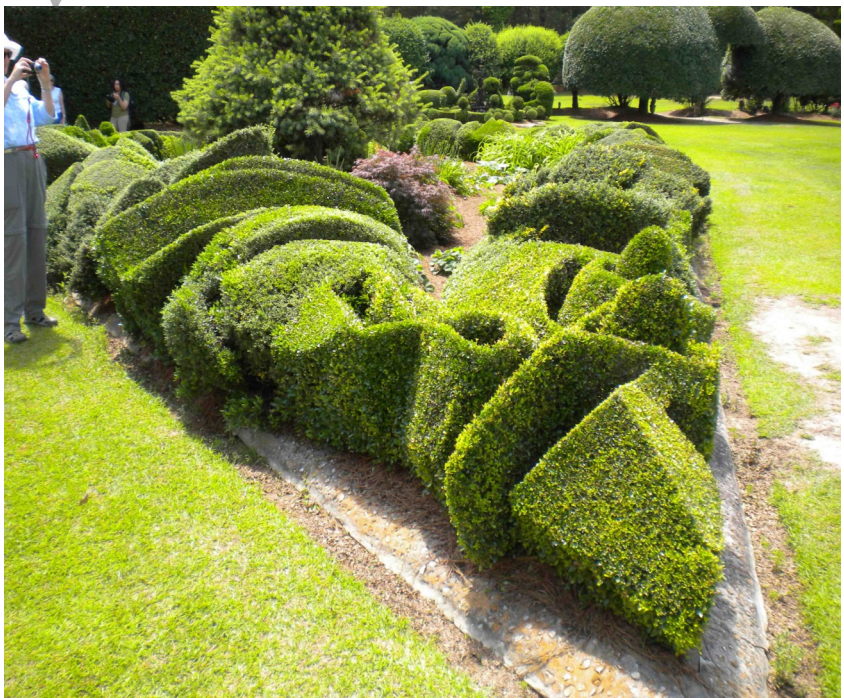


Photo by Roy Dicks

**Pearl Fryar**



delic dream and a carnival funhouse combined. His chainsaw-trimmed pieces can loom like giant amoebas or snake along a path in miniature clusters. No animals or recognizable objects are found in his garden, only geometric shapes and lyrical edifices that fascinate in their freewheeling design.



**Sculpture by Pearl Fryar**

Photo by Roy Dicks

As much as his handiwork creates awe and delight, listening to his philosophy of gardening and life is even more rewarding. His comments take in everything from self-reliance to respect for nature. These "wisdoms of Pearl" should be gathered into a book for everyone to read and ponder. Fryar's funding of scholarships to encourage creative talent in disadvantaged youth is another of his inspiring endeavors.

Fryar's generous 90-minute tour came to an end as final photos with him were taken and our group reluctantly boarded the bus for the trip back to Raleigh. Credit goes to all the organizers for a problem-free event.

For those who did not go on the trip, here are the URL's for the websites of Swan Lake Iris Gardens and Pearl Fryar's Garden: ∞

- <http://www.sumtersc.gov/VisitingUs/SwanLake.aspx>
- <http://pearlfryar.com>



Photo by Marian Stephenson

**A Garden of Sculptures**



**John Grimshaw**

## NARGS Speaker, John Grimshaw

John Grimshaw has been interested in plants all his life, as both gardener and botanist. He holds a first class degree in botany and doctorate in African forest ecology from Oxford University. African plants remain his principal botanical interest. He is however fascinated by all plants and will attempt to grow anything in the garden. The origins of garden plants are a particular fascination and he has travelled widely to see plants growing in habitat. His first book was *The Gardener's Atlas* (1998), recounting the journeys plants have made from their source to our gardens.

Having worked in the Netherlands for the seed company K. Sahin, Zaden. B.V., where he was responsible for developing perennials for the seed trade, he is currently Gardens Manager at Colesbourne Park, Gloucestershire. There he is responsible for maintaining and developing the historic Elwes family garden, especially the snowdrop collection. He is co-author of the monograph *Snowdrops* (2002) by Matt Bishop, Aaron Davis and John Grimshaw, published by his own publishing company, Griffin Press. Between 2004-2009 he was principal author of a major book on trees introduced in the past 35 years, entitled *New Trees, Recent Introductions to Cultivation*, sponsored by the International Dendrology Society. It was published by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in May 2009.

He is a member of the Royal Horticultural Society's Advisory Committee on Nomenclature and Taxonomy, and Woody Plant Committee. John is particularly proud to be an honorary elder of the Masai community of Lerang'wa, Tanzania. ☞

### JCRA Symposium

September 23—24, 2011 (Friday and Saturday)

## "Horticultural Madness"

Nursery tours, excellent speakers from across the US and Wales, plant sales, auctions and more.

For complete symposium information, go to [www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum/calendar/2011/09-september/symposium/symposium](http://www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum/calendar/2011/09-september/symposium/symposium)

**Registration Form:** Registration is now open. Please use the registration form available in the [downloadable brochure](#) or call (919) 513-7005.

# A Look Back...

## Autumn Blooming Bulbs for Carolina Gardens



By Edith Eddleman

Planting a bulb (corm, tuber, or the geophyte of your choice) is an act of faith in the future of an uncertain world. Enduring and surprising, its cycles of flower, leaf, and dormancy signal the changing of the seasons. For me, no change is as welcome as when summer slips into the cooler nights and shorter days of autumn, and it is safe to garden once again between the hours of eight and five.



**Leucojum autumnale**

Photo from Brent and Becky's Nursery catalog

*Leucojum autumnale* and *Scilla autumnalis* carry the season's promise in their names. Though both bloom here in July and August, their yearly appearance is a joyful reminder that autumn is not far away. *Leucojum autumnale* is a native of the western Mediterranean region. Its dainty white bell-shaped flowers dangle like tiny snowflakes suspended just three inches above earth's surface. Threadlike green leaves accompany the flower. Planted in patches of sandy humus on the south edge of my stone terrace, these bulbs feel right at home. At Montrose, Doug Ruhren has planted a tiny blizzard of them among cyclamen at the base of a limbed-up *Cedrus deodara*.

Many years ago, I brought *Scilla autumnalis* home from England, and lost it in short order. It is native to Britain, areas of Southern Europe, and the Mediterranean region. Its eight-inch stems bear airy sprays of starry-lilac flowers which open in August. These are followed shortly by narrow grassy-green leaves. Thanks to Montrose Nursery, I have it once again in my garden, and now I find it easy to keep track of, planted against a background of chartreuse *Lysimachia nummularia* 'Aurea'.

*Scilla scilloides* grown from seed collected in Korea in 1986 by J.C. Raulston produces eighteen-inch wands of tiny mauve-pink flowers in July and August. Plant height and flower color are highly variable in this wide-



**Scilla hyacinthoides**

Photo from Brent and Becky's Nursery catalog

ranging East Asian native; some forms flower at a height of just six inches. A prolific seeder, it naturalizes well in the garden.

The broad arrow-head-shaped leaves of *Arum italicum* ssp. *italicum* have fascinated me since the first Thanksgiving when I discovered them growing in a raised bed of ivy (*Hedera helix*) beneath a giant maple tree in my Great-Aunt Edith's garden. The form often sold as 'Pictum' has dark green leaves broadly veined with cream, which unfurl fresh and crisp when wakened by autumn rains, remaining beautiful throughout winter. A trick observed in Pam Harper's garden: interplant the summer-dormant arum with summer-flowering, winter-dormant *Begonia grandis*. In winter the dried begonia flowers look splendid with the fresh foliage of the arum.



**Lycoris radiata**

Photo from Brent and Becky's Nursery catalog

In September *Lycoris radiata*, the fiery red Japanese spider lily, looks as superb as my grandmother grew it, rising out of a bed of periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) at the foot of red-berried, bronze-foliaged *Nandina domestica*. Doug Ruhren and I have planted it at the NCSU Arboretum through a swath of Japanese bloodgrass (*Imperata* 'Red Baron'). In the Arboretum's Elizabeth Lawrence Border, the red *Lycoris* flowers are paired with the dark metallic bronze leaves of *Ajuga reptans* 'Atropurpurea' under the red-bracted blossoms of *Polygonum cuspidatum* 'Crimson Beauty' [now *Polygonum japonicum*]. Echoes, echoes everywhere.

The oxblood lily, *Rhodophiala advena*, brought to Texas from Chile by German settlers, is now naturalized there. When August or September rains (or the sprinkler) wake it from its summer sleep, it produces deep red, green-throated drooping trumpets on 15-18" stems. Blooming continues for a period of two to three weeks. The flowers last best if grown in partial shade. Oxblood lilies are dramatic against bronze *Ajuga*, black-foliaged *Ophiopogon* 'Ebony Knight', or green-foliaged ferns and Hostas. In my garden, they are equally beautiful with the hot colors of scarlet *Dahlia coccinea*, red *Salvia coccinea*, and orange *Zinnia linearis*, tempered by the narrow copper-bronze leaves of *Carex comans*.

Flowering onions add not only foliage fragrance but color and texture to the richness of the autumn garden. *Allium stellatum* flowers in August and September. This North American native has globe-shaped heads of starchy pink flowers on 15" stems. In my garden their color repeats that of the Tennessee coneflower (*Echinacea tennesseensis*) planted nearby. Another allium in my garden, *Allium thunbergii* 'Ozawas' from Japan, flowers in October and November. It grows 8" tall, with narrow dark green foliage, and its numerous heads of red-violet flowers are beautiful when seen against the chartreuse, lime, and cream foliage of *Hypericum* 'Hidcote Variegated'.

*Allium virgunculae*, also native to Japan, is tiny---only 5" tall with grassy foliage. Its small nodding, red-violet bell-like flowers appear throughout October. A background underplanting of woolly gray-leaved 'Longwood' thyme shows off this small jewel without overwhelming it.

*Oxalis bowiei* from Cape Province, South Africa produces thick-substanced, bright green, clover-like leaves in autumn. Its blooms, 1-1/2" across, are a brilliant hot pink. It is an excellent companion to *Crocus speciosus*. Frost can interrupt its flowering, but when warm days return, new leaves and flowers continue to bring color to Indian summer's days. I first met this plant growing out of the ruined foundation of an old greenhouse in Durham, North Carolina, where its contractile roots had pulled the bulbs deep into the soil. Obviously, deep planting suits the cultural needs of this bulb.

x *Amarcrinum memoria-corsii* is also sold as x *Amarcrinum howardii* (Amaryllidaceae). It is a hybrid of *Amaryllis belladonna* and *Crinum moorei*.



**Amarcrinum**

Photo from Brent and Becky's Nursery catalog



**Oxalis depressa**

Photo from Brent and Becky's Nursery catalog

When Allen Lacy was reading Elizabeth Lawrence's manuscript for *A Rock Garden in the South*, he asked me if I thought there should be a section on crinums for the rock garden. I replied that their inclusion or exclusion depended upon the size of the rocks involved. Joking aside, for gardens which lack the space for the magnificent display of a five-foot-wide clump of crinums, x *Amarcrinum* offers a relatively dainty alternative. Two-foot-long, slightly pleated green leaves rise from its fist-sized bulb, and pink fragrant trumpet shaped flowers are produced throughout autumn. My clump was in bloom Thanksgiving week. This bold plant is a perfect foil in the autumn garden for shrubby lespedezas, asters, patrinias, *Liatris*, or *Eupatorium coelestinum*.

Crocus are my favorite autumn bulbs. Their flowers look like little spun-glass goblets set out by tiny garden spirits for a special party. In full sun or light shade, several autumn crocuses have persisted in my garden, growing in sandy acid soil.

*Crocus speciosus*, native from Eastern Europe to the Caucasus and Iran, is usually the first to bloom, with lavender blue flowers. They look



## Piedmont Chapter NARGS 2011 Program—through April, 2012

Piedmont NARGS Speakers Program  
Fall 2011-Spring 2012

All Meetings at the JC Raulston Arboretum  
All programs are on a Saturday begin at 9:30  
a.m,  
except as noted.

“In a Botanist’s Garden: an Eclectic View of  
the World’s Flora”

Thursday, September 8, 2011, 7:30 p.m.

**Note special date and time**

NARGS Traveling Speaker,  
John M. Grimshaw, United Kingdom

“New Plants Coming into Our Gardens”  
& chapter fall plant sale  
October 15, 2011

Bryce H. Lane, Raleigh, N.C.

“Geo Whiz: Lesser Known Small Geophytes  
(tubers, bulbs, and corms) for the Southern  
Garden”

November 19, 2011

Tony Avent, Raleigh, N.C.

“Wildflowers Go Wild”

January 21, 2012

Betsy Pringle, Chapel Hill, N.C.

“Woodland Garden Plants—Part 2”

February 18, 2012

Suzanne Edney, Apex, N.C.

“One Writer's Garden: Eudora Welty's Home  
Place”

March 17, 2012

Susan Haltom, Ridgeland, Miss.

“Extra Dry, On the Rocks”

April 21, 2012

Charlie Kidder, Cary, N.C.

best grown through a ground cover to support their long flower tubes. The delicate flowers are especially vulnerable to heavy autumn rains. But, since flowers are produced over a long period in September and October, they can always be counted upon for a good show.

October-blooming *Crocus goulimyi* from Southern Greece produces clusters of rounded lilac-pink flowers which when closed remind me of lollipops. I enjoy seeing these growing on a north-facing slope against a background of varied-leaved ivies, *Arum*, and *Robdea*. *Crocus longiflorus* from Southern Italy and Sicily has lilac, fragrant (worth kneeling for) flowers with brilliant red branching stigmas. When grown through a carpet of narrow, black-leaved *Ophiopogon* ‘Ebony Knight’ beneath pink-flowered *Prunus subhirtella* ‘Autumnalis’, the crocus effect is lovely.

A native of Lebanon, *Crocus ochroleucus* flowers in November. Creamy white buds resembling glistening pearls rise through a carpet of red, orange and yellow fallen leaves from my crepe myrtle. *Crocus laevigatus* ‘Fontenayi’ has a lilac interior with deep violet stripes on the outside, It usually blooms by Thanksgiving, and continues to flower in the weeks approaching Christmas.

*Crocus imperati* from Western Italy is my Christmas crocus, given to me by Betty Wilson. Its flowers feature a tawny buff exterior feathered with violet, with a bright lilac interior. This crocus begins to bloom around the third week of December, just prior to winter’s arrival. In my garden, early forms of a snowdrop (*Galanthus caucasicus*) bloom with it. Both are planted in front of a clump of *Arum italicum*.

By the first week of December, *Narcissus* ‘Nylon’, ‘Taffeta’, ‘Tiffany’ and ‘Tarleton’ are shaking out their hooped skirts in anticipation of a wintery garden ball. These small-hooped-petticoat narcissi (all Douglas Blanchard hybrids from crosses between *Narcissus romieuxii* and *N. cantabricus*) have thin green foliage, which appears at the same time as the flowers. Their flowers open a soft buttery-yellow, and fade to cream. They grow well in my sandy soil in sunny beds. Some are interplanted with small-flowered violet, yellow, cream, and blue-violet violas.

These last flowers of autumn are also the first flowers of winter. Soon they will be joined by the classic winter bloomers — crocus, snowdrops, and winter aconite — which sweep the Southern gardener into the new calendar year. ❧

[*Edith Eddleman gardens in Durham, NC. She is the designer and head curator of the NCSU Arboretum’s world class perennial border in Raleigh, NC.*]

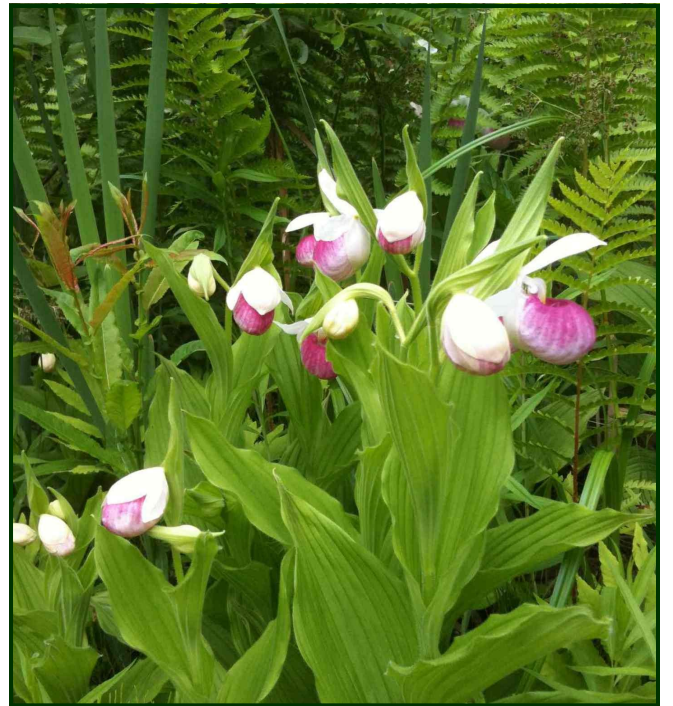
*Footnote: This article by Edith originally appeared in The Trillium in February 1995 in a special bulbs issue. After leaving the area to care for ailing parents, Edith is now back in the Triangle area*

# Photos from the June NARGS Annual Meeting in New Hampshire

by Bobby Ward



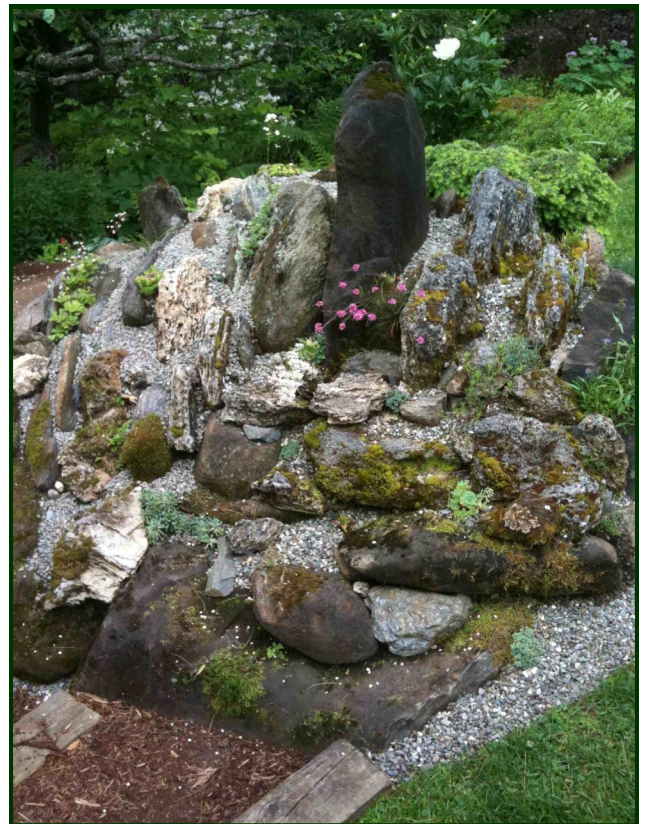
Bill Noble's Garden



*Cypripedium reginae*



The Fells



Patsy Highberg's Garden



## Piedmont Chapter Meeting

JC Raulston Arboretum  
Ruby McSwain Education Building

### NOTE: CHANGE IN MEETING DATE

Thursday, September 8, 2011, 7:30 p.m.

### “In a Botanist’s Garden: an Eclectic View of the World’s Flora”

**John M. Grimshaw,**  
NARGS Traveling Speaker,  
United Kingdom

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### OTHER SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS:

Sept. Plant Sale Manager: Kirtley Cox  
Refreshments: Gwen and Maurice Farrier

### Food Goodies to Share

If your last name begins with the letter below, please consider bringing something to share.

Sept A-C	Jan L-M
Oct D-G	Feb N-So
Nov H-K	March Sp-Z
April	Any and all

## New Feature — My Current Favorite Plant

This is the space for your photo and comments on a favorite plant of the month or the season. Maybe you have one you want folks to appreciate and know more about.. I thought I'd kick this off by sharing a photo of *Hypericum moserianum* 'Tri-color', a small mounding shrub whose leaves have shades of green, cream and pink. Although a slow grower, it's tough and persistent, semi-evergreen and likes full sun to part shade.

It appreciates a protected location and winter mulch. I've grown it in two gardens in the past 12 years and enjoy its modest, not showy contribution to a mixed bed. Looks great with crinum, *pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum', a potted cordyline (annual)



and red stemmed euphorbias. This fall, I'll move some of my pink oxalis near it too.

✂ Marian Stephenson

This is your space. Please send your plant of the month photo, with comments, or favorite one of the year and comments to:

marian42836@yahoo.com