

The Trillium



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JANUARY—FEBRUARY 2006

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

The Past Decade of the Piedmont Chapter of NARGS

In the last issue of *The Trillium*, Sandra Ladendorf, provided an overview of the first decade of the Piedmont Chapter of NARGS. We continue here with the last ten years.

The activities of the Piedmont Chapter during the past decade (1996 to 2005) have been varied, including participation at the NARGS national level. We ran the NARGS seed exchange for two years, sending out some 2000 packets of rock garden seed across the U.S. and around the world. Some of our members contributed articles for NARGS publications, its *Rock Garden Quarterly* as well as two books (one on native bulbs of North America and the other on rock gardening in the Southeast). Members have served on the NARGS national board in various capacities, attended national meetings, and managed the seed exchange intake and the NARGS Book Service.

Our newsletter, *The Trillium*, currently in its 15th year, has attracted articles from national garden writers, as well as keen, local ones. We hold annual spring picnics, fall seedling sales, plant auctions at each meeting, and occasional field trips (the Green Swamp in 2005), workshops (trough making), and garden *Continued on page 2*

SPEAKER LINEUP

January 21, 2006
Chapter 20th Anniversary
Celebration

Tony Avent
Raleigh, N.C.

“Flora of Temperate Northern
Vietnam & Northern Thailand”

February 18, 2006

Thomas E. Clark
South Hadley, Mass.

“Mountain Plants of the
U.S. Northeast”

March 18, 2006

Ernie O'Bryne
Eugene, Oregon

“Hellebores in Our Garden”

April 15, 2006 (Easter Weekend)

John Lonsdale

Exton, Pennsylvania

“Pushing the limits: Growing
Challenging Plants in the
Open Garden”

May 6, 2006 (noon)

Spring Picnic

Garden of Suzanne Edney,
Apex, N.C.

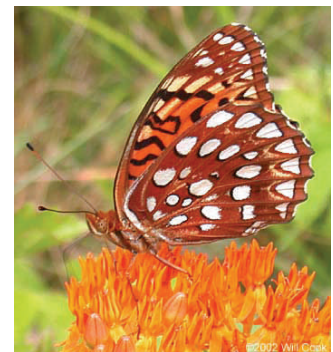
Mountain Plants of the Northeast

“Mom, Martha and Susan are picking on me”!

“Thomas, leave your sisters alone, sit back and look at the pretty leaves”!!

I think the above exchange pretty well characterizes my initial experiences in the mountains of the northeast. Each year my family would pile into the car for a day-long leaf-peeping excursion up to Vermont or New Hampshire to bask in the brilliance of the fall foliage. Although my two older sisters generally made these trips less than pleasurable, it was the beginning of a deep appreciation, love and interest for the mountains and forests of the northeast and the plants found there.

By the time I was old enough to venture off on my own, (apparently I tried to do so at a roadside viewpoint when I was six or seven but didn't make it too far!), I was an avid hiker and keen to learn about plants whenever and wherever I encountered them. The hikes close to home in western Massachusetts were wonderful, but I wanted more and my attention shifted to places I had skied for years – the Green Mountains of Vermont and the White Mountains of New Hampshire. I soon found that plants only found in the highest elevations or on cool north slopes near home were commonplace in the forests of northern New *Continued on page 2*



Aphrodite fritillaria
See page 5 for more.



The 10 Last Years, *Continued from Page 1*

tours.

One of the hallmarks of the Piedmont Chapter has been its ability to attract good speakers at our meetings. We have been lucky as we have good local connections such as fine nurseries, botanical gardens, and arboreta; gardeners want to visit the area where we snare them for a talk. Examples of some of the outside speakers includes Dan Hinkley, Judy Glattstein, John Elsley, John Fairey, Carl Schoenfeld, Sean Hogan, James Waddick, Darrell Probst, Cole Burrell, Panayoti and Gwen Kelaidis, Pam Harper, Ted Kipping, Don Jacobs, Dick Lighty, Fred Case, Ernie O'Byrne, Judith Jones, Brent Heath, and Frank Cabot.

We have been able to afford many out-of-state speakers because we have earned profits from two national meetings we have organized and hosted: the NARGS Winter Study Weekend in January 1999 and the NARGS Annual Meeting in May 2004. Both were well attended.

We also have had excellent local speakers to draw from and our January 21, 2006, is an example. We won't have the usual Saturday morning meeting; instead

we will celebrate twenty years of the founding of our chapter by having a dinner (see the form elsewhere in this newsletter) at night at the Hilton Inn with Tony Avent giving a talk on his recent trip to Northern Vietnam and Northern Thailand.

However, currently our membership is 160, down from a high of about 200 in the mid-1990s (we note that many horticultural societies in the U.S. and abroad have seen membership drop as its members find easy access to information about gardening from the Internet). Attendance at our meetings ranges from 60 to 80 members, including visitors and guests. Such an attendance is higher than attendance at most other NARGS chapters. Our members are active, and interested in gardening, and it shows by such strong meeting attendance.

We hope you will show your support for our Piedmont Chapter by continued participation in our meetings, plant sales, and by attending our 20th anniversary dinner on January 21, 2006.

Bobby Ward, Chair, Piedmont Chapter Chair ☞

Mountain Plants *Continued, from Page 1.*

England and the mountains of upstate New York, namely the Adirondacks.

Spread across the lower slopes of these mountainous regions is the Northern Hardwood Forest comprised largely of Sugar Maple (*Acer sacharum*), American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), Yellow and Paper Birch (*Betula allegheniensis* and *B. papyrifera*). The latter two, in places, form great stands of golden yellow and alabaster columns that appear to be the pillars of the canopy rising above a rich carpet of ferns, club mosses and woodland forbs. Some of the herbaceous plants here are true spring ephemerals that make but a fleeting appearance each year. Squirrel-corn and Dutchman's Breeches, our two native species of *Dicentra*, fall into this group, as do *Erythronium americanum*, the Trout-lily, and *Claytonia caroliniana*, Spring Beauty.

Other herbs in this rich forest include several from the Lily family. The Twisted-stalks lack overwhelming floral beauty, but make up for it with late-Summer crops of brilliant red fruits. The curious kink in each flower stalk is satisfying for those who might get close enough for a careful examination but raises questions as to the evolutionary purpose. *Streptopus roseus* is the more diminutive of our two species and tends to be



Erythronium americanum



Erythronium americanum foliage

more common. *S. amplexifolius* is more robust and is restricted to moister sites close to streams or along seeps. No eastern woodland would be complete without the presence of at least one species of *Trillium*. Fortunately, two are quite at home

in the northern forests and both are common. My mother always referred to *Trillium erectum* as Stinking Benjamin, but I have yet to detect any malodor from the typically three-parted, maroon flowers. Painted Trillium (*T. undulatum*) sports white flowers with a dramatic rosy-pink blotch in the center of each flower rising above wavy-edged leaves that have a slight bluish cast. One other from the Lily clan is *Clintonia borealis* or Bluebead-lily and in places forms large drifts of broad, strap-shaped leaves. The chartreuse flowers atop each naked stalk are attractive in large numbers, as they often grow, but the deep, navy blue fruits gleaming in early Autumn light are even more striking.

The orchid family is also well-represented but in mid-June the Pink Lady-slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*) steals the show. Throughout the forest it is readily encountered, but the roadside patches are even more spectacular, presumably due to the increased light levels. One peculiarity of this plant in the northern forests, particularly in the White Mountains of northern New Hampshire, is that a relatively high percentage have white flowers. On one memorable hike I counted a couple hundred blooms alongside the trail and calculated that roughly twenty percent were white.

As we gain elevation, the hardwoods yield to the conifers that comprise the boreal forest and forms a dark evergreen band up to approximately 4,000'. Little light penetrates this dark cloak, and little grows beneath the boughs save mosses, lichens Common Wood Sorrel

or Wood Shamrock (*Oxalis montana*). More often than not this plant forms dense carpets of three-leafed clover-like leaves with only a sparse scattering of the pink-veined white flowers, but any bright spot in this green realm is welcome.

Higher still, the spruce and fir yield to the harsh elements; at first seeming to merely brace themselves against the wind, but then huddling together in scattered groves and misshapen masses in the lee of boulders and anything else that offers shelter from the incessant wind. This zone of gnarled and dwarfed trees is known as the scrub forest or krummholz, which in German means “crooked wood”. Emerging from the krummholz, we find ourselves in the alpine zone. In the northeast few mountains are high enough to support true alpine vegetation. A small handful of peaks in New York and Vermont reach elevations sufficiently high to sustain an alpine ecosystem. Not until we get into



© 2002 Eleanor Saulys

Claytonia caroliniana

the White Mountains and the mountains of Maine do we find any truly significant expanses, the largest and most interesting from a floristic standpoint being that draped across the Presidential Range in the Whites.

The roughly eight square miles found here is almost laughable when compared with the thousands of square miles of alpine habitat found in many ranges in western North America. Nonetheless, our few pockets here in the east are unique islands; remnants of a post-glacial arctic flora that was once widespread but retreated both northward and up mountains as the climate warmed and the dwarf plants were overwhelmed by better adapted, more vigorous



and simply taller plants. The few “islands” that remain are refuges for at least one plant, *Potentilla rob-*



Streptopus roseus



Clintonia borealis

binsiana, found nowhere else on earth, and many plants found only hundreds of miles to the north.

Well, I guess the climb through the lower elevation forest has tired me out, so I'll have to tell you about the treasures to be found above treeline and more about the mountain plants of the northeast when I visit the Piedmont Chapter in February.

Tom Clark ☞



Trillium undulatum



Rock Gardening with Lepidoptera

Vanessa Virgini[a] Ensis (“American Lady”), as told to Judy Morgan-Davis

Since I’m addressing rock gardeners, I thought I should include Latin in the title of my article. So many of you are fluent in that archaic language that I hoped it would grab your attention. Lepidoptera is not a group of fussy alpine plants you’ve overlooked; it is the order of insects to which butterflies and moths belong. As a member of the Nymphalidae family and a typical brushfoot butterfly, I’ve taken it upon myself to make you aware of the fabulous opportunity you have as rock gardeners to enhance your environments by attracting butterflies.

You might be wondering why I am offering this special opportunity to you. After all, you are very busy sowing seeds from Siberia and traveling the world in search of the tiniest tulips. That’s just it – I believe you will make great advocates for us because of your unwavering passion for tiny, delicate things. Besides, since you are rock gardeners, you already have experience with altering the environment in your garden. In your rockeries or troughs you have created a habitat that is suitable for the special plants of interest. Butterfly gardening can be as simple as adding the amenities that make that habitat suitable for another organism of interest.

Our needs are relatively straightforward and not unlike most creatures’: food, water, and shelter. In addition to providing these basic needs, there are also certain gardening practices that are more or less inviting to butterflies. Incorporating the following elements and activities will transform your rock garden into a butterfly habitat.

It’s really quite easy to add water to your rock garden. Pumps, filters, and other electronic gadgets are unnecessary, since we really prefer still, shallow water sources. I’m sure you can find a spot to tuck a dish with stones and a bit of water. Even a low spot that stays muddy and occasionally holds water will attract butterflies that gather for puddling. Swallowtails, sulphurs, and whites are among the species that collect minerals at the edges of puddles. This puddling behavior is related to acquiring nutrients that are necessary for reproduction. By the way, please don’t use mosquito dunks in the butterfly garden; *Bacillus thuringiensis*, the active ingredient in the dunks, is a bacterium that will also kill my babies.

A well-organized wood pile makes a terrific shelter for sleeping and/or hibernating butterflies like the Mourning

Cloak. During windy or rainy days we value the protection of evergreen shrubs, and on fair days we will take cover there while we rest from feeding or mating. Please also keep in mind that we are poikilothermous (Greek, not Latin, for cold blooded); we are unable to control our body temperature internally, so we need sunny spots as well as a few shady spots in the garden to stay comfortable. Why not leave some of the rocks in your garden exposed? On clear days you’ll enjoy watching us sunning and basking on those warm rocks.

In addition to meeting our basic needs, please think about butterflies as you maintain your garden. I’m sure you are very sensitive about these types of issues already, but it’s very important for you to minimize use of pesticides or practices that might harm butterflies or caterpillars. Consider physical or biological controls for undesirable insects. If you must use a natural or synthetic insecticide, read the label carefully.



Vanessa Virginiensis “American Lady”

During your fall garden cleanup, be aware that many butterfly species survive the winter hiding out in leaf litter and brush. Preserve at least some dead plant material and carefully inspect anything discarded for camouflaged eggs, pupae, and adults. Last, but not least, inasmuch as you could possibly curtail your lust for exotic species, please do. Native species are so much more familiar to us.

Maybe now is a good time for a quick review of the butterfly life cycle and terminology. From an egg



hatches a larva or, more specifically, a caterpillar. The caterpillar is an eating machine, outgrowing as many as seven or eight skins in some species, until it suddenly stops. Hormonal directives induce a stationary form called the pupa. A pupa is also known as a chrysalis; more than one pupa are pupae, or chrysalids. (In case you are curious, moths pupate in a cocoon.) After a species-specific period of time (four days to two weeks for most species), a winged creature, an adult butterfly, emerges from the pupa. The adults of some species live only to reproduce and never eat, while other species can live up to ten months as adults, mating and eating and even migrating seasonally.

Speaking of eating, I haven't forgotten to cover food. I saved that discussion for the end because I wanted to keep your attention. I suspected you might lose your focus when I started mentioning plants. (I know how you rock gardeners are!) Before I get into specifics, there are a few general concepts to keep in mind. First, diversity begets diversity; the more variety you include in your plantings, the greater variety of butterflies will be attracted. Second, group plants that are similar food sources to minimize travel and exposure moving among them. Finally, provide food for both active phases of the butterfly's life cycle.

Many gardeners overlook the necessity of providing food for our larval forms. In my opinion, a garden lacking caterpillar food is not a butterfly habitat. Caterpillars are very picky eaters. Some species, such as the Pipevine Swallowtail, are so specific to a particular host that the common name reflects that affinity. Although many larvae feed on grasses, legumes, or on other plants that are considered to be weedy, I believe there are a few plants that you will consider including in your rock gardens. *Viola* species, for example, are larval hosts for a number of fritillaries. Foliage of the delicate cruciferous plants you collect (e.g. *Arabis*, *Draba*, *Cheiranthus*) are quite delectable to the larvae of the group of butterflies known as whites. Pussy-



Red Admiral

toes (*Antennaria* spp.) are among my larvae's favorites. This plant may look out of place in the lawn, but imagine it nestled instead among a special arrangement of rocks in your collection of silver-leaved plants.



Pipevine Swallowtail

Although adult butterflies are not as particular as our juvenile forms, nectaring species will select sources that are the appropriate size and height for our feeding tubes and habits. Large butterflies tend to choose tall plants with large flowers; small butterflies will be attracted to the nectar of

low-growing, small-flowered plants in your rock garden, especially the composites and crucifers. Remember to include plants that will flower across the entire butterfly season, from early spring until frost. That said, there are those of us who are not tempted by flowers. The Mourning Cloaks and my brother the Red Admiral will be happy to visit, if you don't mind leaving some rotting fruit about the garden. I've explained to them, however, that their request for



Mourning Cloak



Painted Lady



animal dung or carrion is over the top.

Thank you for your attention and for considering these garden enhancements. I hope you will find that attracting butterflies to your rock garden will raise your enjoyment to new heights. Don't forget to leave yourself a comfortable place to sit while you watch your garden take flight.

Plant List

The plants listed are suitable for southern gardens. Please consult [A Rock Garden in the South](#) (by Elizabeth Lawrence, edited by Nancy Goodwin with Allen Lacy, 1990) for guidance in selecting the most appropriate species or cultivar for the rock garden.

Achillea spp. (nectar source)
Aquilegia canadensis (nectar source)
Aster spp. (nectar source and larval host)
Callirhoe involucreta (nectar source)
Carex spp. (larval host)
Chamaecyparis thyoides (larval host)
Chamaedaphne calyculata (larval host)
Chrysogonum virginicum (nectar source)
Claytonia virginica (nectar source)
Dianthus spp. (nectar source)
Houstonia caerulea (nectar source)
Hypoxis hirsuta (nectar source)
Lavandula spp. (nectar source)
Leucothoe spp. (nectar source)
Myosotis spp. (larval host)
Phlox spp. (nectar source)
Rhododendron spp. (nectar source)
Silene virginica (nectar source)
Solidago caesia (nectar source)
Vaccinium spp. (nectar source and larval host)
Verbena spp. (nectar source)
Viola spp. (nectar source)

Resources

For obvious reasons, I'm not comfortable with the internet or the web, so the following resources are printed publications.

“Butterflies in Your Backyard” (AG-636-02), by North Carolina Cooperative Extension (2002)

[Butterflies of the East Coast: An Observer's Guide](#), by Rick Cech and Guy Tudor (2005)

[Butterflies through Binoculars: The East](#), by Jeffrey Glassberg (1999)

[Butterfly Gardening for the South](#), by Geyata Ajilvsgi (1991)

[Hostplants of Moth and Butterfly Caterpillars of America North of Mexico](#), by Gaden S. Robinson, et al. (2002)

“Landscaping for Wildlife with Native Plants” (AG-636-03), by North Carolina Cooperative Extension (2002).

Judy Morgan-Davis

The Trillium Is Going Electronic

In keeping with the trend occurring with many NARGS chapter newsletters, The Piedmont Chapter is initiating the distribution of its newsletter, **The Trillium**, by email. In addition to the savings to the club incurred due to reduced printing and postage costs, distribution by email will also allow individuals to receive photos published in the newsletter in color. In addition, in some issues, additional photos will be included in the email version that will not be in the printed version.

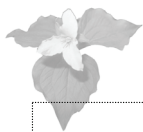
Distribution is being initiated to those individuals for whom we have email addresses. Any individuals who receive a copy of the newsletter by “snail mail” but who would prefer to receive the newsletter by email, please send your email address to David Duch (2bz2work@gmail.com). If you received the newsletter by email but would prefer to receive it by snail mail, respond to the same address.

The newsletter will be sent in PDF format and can be read using Adobe Acrobat Reader. If it is not already on your computer, a copy can be downloaded free of charge at www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readermain.html.

Seeking Material for Planned Biography of J.C. Raulston

Roy Dicks and I are doing research for a planned biography of J.C. Raulston, including the plants he promoted and introduced and the students and colleagues he influenced.

We would like to include reminiscences, anecdotes, and comments from persons who knew J.C. We have developed a questionnaire to aid in gathering your thoughts. If you'd like to receive a questionnaire, please send me an email request at biblio@nc.rr.com or at the address below. Bobby Ward, 930 Wimpleton Drive, Raleigh, NC 27609-4356.



**Piedmont Chapter Meeting
Special Evening Event
January 21**

Tony Avent

**“Flora of Temperate Northern
Vietnam and Northern Thailand”**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Bobby Ward, Chair
biblio@nc.rr.com
919-781-3291
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- Marian Stephenson, Past Chair
marian42836@yahoo.com
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BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE:

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919-467-0653
1422 Lake Pine Dr., Cary 27511
- Tom Harville tomhar@bellsouth.net
919-851-5369
104 Birklands Dr., Cary 27511
- Todd Lasseigne taxodium@mindspring.com
336-337-6919
523 S Bunker Hill Rd, Colfax. NC 27235
- Marlyn Miller marlynmiller@msn.com
919-467-3554
1107 Imperial Rd. Cary, NC 27511

Trillium Editors:

Dave Duch and Marian Stephenson

OTHER SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS:

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

REMINDER

We encourage you to bring goodies to share during the meetings this year. If your last name begins with the letters above, we hope you'll bring something to the appropriate monthly meeting. Thanks.

- Jan.—Dinner meeting** March R—U
Feb. N—Q April V—Z
May—Picnic

The Trillium, Newsletter of the Piedmont Chapter
The North American Rock Garden Society
1422 Lake Pine Drive, Cary, NC 27511

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**NARGS Piedmont Chapter 20th Anniversary
Celebration Dinner and Lecture
January 21, 2006 6:00 p.m.**

Chapter Member(s) @ \$20 each _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Guest (not a Chptr member) @ \$35 each _____

Where: Hilton RDU Airport at RTP (formerly Holiday Inn), exit 282 off I-40, 4810 Old Page Road

When: January 21,2006. Social Hour (cash bar) at 6:00 p.m. Dinner at 7:00 p.m.

Dinner: Tuscan Bistro Buffet (six entrees including chicken, pork, pastas, eggplant parmigiana and vegetarian). Plus soup, salad, breads, choiceof 3 desserts,& coffee, tea,, milk.

Price: \$20. Supplemented by the chapter; non-chapter guests \$35.00

Speaker at 8:30 p.m. Tony Avent on “Flora of Temperate Northern Vietnam and Northern Thailand.”

Mail this form and payment to Bob Wilder, 2317 Emsford Way, Raleigh, NC 27608. For information, call Bob at 919-755-0480.

Deadline for signup is Friday, January 13th, 2006. This substitutes for the January meeting. There will be NO morning meeting on January 21.