



Iris X norrisii 'Butterfly Magic'

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER of the North American Rock Garden Society September-October 2014

-2014 Fall Calendar-

September 7, 2014 – Sunday 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. **Todd Boland: Research Horticulturist, MUN Botanical Garden**
*Flora of the Limestone Barrens of Newfoundland...Where Alpines
Meet the Sea*

12:00 noon Lunch (bring your own) and check out the seedlings and plants for sale

1:00 p.m. *Seedling and Plant Sale* held at ARNWR

October 18, 2014 – Saturday Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge,
680 Hudson Rd, Sudbury, MA

11:00 a.m. *Favorite Plants for Fall Color (foliage or flower)* member photos
Discussion moderated by Rosemary Monahan.

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

1:00 p.m. *Elisabeth Zander –gardenista & NARGS member Berkshire Chapter*
Vertical Gardening around the World

November 15, 2014 – Saturday ANNUAL MEETING

Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge,
680 Hudson Rd, Sudbury, MA

11:00 a.m. Schmooze

11:30 a.m. Brief Business Meeting

12:00 noon Catered Lunch or bring your own. Reservations accepted in October.

1:00 p.m. **Bobby J. Ward, Executive Secretary of NARGS**
Modern Day Plant Hunters

Notes from the Co-chair We anticipate summer and it seems that this year nature has reprieved us from long spells of hot and humid weather. Perhaps it's compensation for the harshness of the last winter!

Since our last newsletter many events have occurred to members of our Chapter - we send condolences to Rosemary Monahan on the loss of her sister and to Matt Mattus on the loss of his Father. We congratulate Matt on his nomination to become the next President of NARGS. He will ably wear 'the boots' of previous Presidents and will make a significant contribution to our Society.



In May we had trip to the UK and went Chelsea Flower Show - it was an incredible experience and many of the display gardens reflected themes based upon World War 1. While in London we took a trip to Sissinghurst Castle in Kent and marveled at the beauty of the gardens from the top of the tower. The design of the gardens and planting were spectacular.

After London we went to the Cotswolds and visited the gardens at Hidcote, Kiftsgate, Batsford Arboretum and Rousham. It was a memorable trip which I hope we will be able to repeat as there are so many beautiful gardens to visit.

We have an exciting calendar of events this fall starting with the Seedling and Plant Sale in September and we look forward to seeing you there. **Rachel Ross**

Notes from the Tandem

Hasn't it been a wonderful summer (finally!) with warm days, cool nights and every plant seemingly just covered in flowers? And it was a perfect way to start off the season with visits to the gardens of John Trexler and Ellen Hornig at the end of May. (And then Rosemary and Stef's garden was open the next day, always a great treat). I loved

the formal side of John's garden on the cemetery side of his property, but quite understood why he said that the woodland garden was closest to his heart. It is such a beautiful spot and the gazebo really does invite one to stop and look around. I thought that the hawkweed with the mottled foliage looked stunning in that setting. I'm sure we wish John and his partner every happiness

when they move into their new home, to which end John has already potted up many of his favorite plants to take along.

Ellen's garden was amazing in the depth and variety of rare and unusual plants, and it was hard to believe that she has been there for only two years. Everything seemed to

be flourishing exceedingly, and we were particularly struck by the peucedanums flourishing both in front and in the rear garden. I look forward most eagerly to visiting her garden regularly in the future to see how it takes shape as the trees and shrubs mature.

Our next event is the **Annual Seedling Sale**, which I would urge everyone to attend, particularly if you are new to the Chapter. The seedlings and plants offered are not by any means all dwarf alpine plants. In my garden I have *Eryngium giganteum*, 'Miss Willmott's Ghost', one of my all time favorite plants which I originally bought at a seedling sale. Since then it has seeded itself in my garden faithfully, although some years it will not re-appear and I think I've lost it, only to have it pop up the next year. I also planted next to *Physocarpus* 'Diablo' (simply because there was space there), something whose name now eludes me, possibly some form of *Lespedeza*. It has ferny leaves and pink flowers that rise up from the stems and looks wonderful against the dark foliage of the Ninebark. And talking of things seeding themselves, although Christopher Lloyd is my garden hero and most of my garden is full of big plants, I do have a couple of self-sown small plants growing on the rock wall separating the house from the back lawn. When I moved here in 2002 the previous owner had snapdragons planted on top of the self-same wall. Since then they have re-appeared regularly, although not last year, but this year three once again germinated, two right on the rock face, where they are happily blooming. So through no effort on my part I can claim to be a "rock gardener". **Helen duToit**

September 7, 2014 morning session Todd Boland

Flora of the Limestone Barrens of Newfoundland... where Alpines meet the Sea

Todd Boland may be the speaker coming to us from the most northerly chapter of NARGS, Newfoundland. There he is currently chair of the chapter. In addition to local participation, Todd is a past director of our national organization and contributed to the development of the NARGS website working on the Plant of the Month feature and administering the NARGS image gallery.

On the botany side, Todd is a research horticulturalist with the Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Garden. Part of his work is caring for their ex situ collection of three endangered, endemic, Newfoundland plants. He also breeds ornamentals, mainly beardless iris, Primula and Dianthus. He is currently the Newfoundland representative for the Canadian National Invasive Alien Plants Council. This background will make his lecture on the Newfoundland limestone barrens a uniquely informed presentation.



September 7, 2014 afternoon session Seedling and Plant Sale

Hello, New England Chapter members! Our much-anticipated annual seedling sale is on our doorstep, so quick look around and see what you can contribute.

Knowing that not everyone grows from seed, but assuming everyone gardens, we're renaming this the **Seedling and Plant Sale** and encouraging you to pot up spare bits of good and choice plants to share with your fellow members and help us boost revenues. We'll price established plants somewhat higher than seedlings (this will depend upon what you bring). Choice items will be auctioned off in an impromptu sale, but anything that you're comfortable seeing sold for a few dollars is fair game. Don't wait, pot them up now and they'll look fine by September 7. And don't forget: donors get first dibs!

We would also like to use this sale as an opportunity to recruit new members, so if you have a friend who's thinking of joining, bring them along to the meeting and sale. As an incentive, we'll let guest nonmembers choose one plant once we open the sale to all members (i.e. after the donors have made their initial selections). Of course, they're free to join the chapter before the sale begins and participate fully in the sale on the same basis as everyone.

Important reminder: include a **LEGIBLE tag** with each plant, **and at the top of the tag, please write the first letter of the plant genus**. This will make it much easier to sort plants alphabetically before the sale. **Ellen Hornig**

October 18, 2017 morning session

An Invitation: Members photos of Favorite Plants for Fall Color discussion lead by Rosemary Monahan, past NARGS-NE Chair

The morning session of our October meeting is an invitation for members to share their favorite pictures of fall color in a late blooming plant or one that has an outstanding fall foliage display. Search through your photo archive for your top 3-5 **digital images** and email them to Ellen Hornig at hornig@oswego.edu by October 11th. Please include the plant name with the photo or post a list in your email. Ellen will link them together in one folder for easier showing. We hope all members will participate and talk briefly about their favorites, whether it be for the color of their flowers, seeds, or foliage. We know you have a treasure that shows its best character in September or October and to show it off you won't have to do a weeks worth of weeding..much easier than holding a Open Garden Day!

October 18, 2017 afternoon session Elisabeth Zander

Vertical Gardening around the World

Elisabeth Zander has been fortunate to live in the Berkshire area of Connecticut allowing her to become a member of both the Connecticut Chapter and the Berkshire Chapter of NARGS. There people like Linc Foster, Ed Leimsider and Dick Redfield taught her good rock gardening skills. In the Berkshire Chapter she was the newsletter editor at the urging of Norman Singer. During her tenure members such as Goeffrey Chatsworth, Anne Spiegel, Cliff Desch submitted articles for publication. Elisabeth's skills are not only as a literary gardener but also an active grower and designer of gardens. Her talk on vertical gardens will share her knowledge of the various forms of the crevice garden as created by Czech, Dutch, and American experts. This talk will show the constructions around the world and highlight three great gardens in the Northeast.

N.B. Elisabeth is currently the program coordinator for BNARGS and has scheduled **Panayoti Kelaidis** to be speaking in October. If anyone is interested you are certainly welcome to join us for this presentation. E.Z.

2014 Garden tours

The Alpha and Omega of Gardens and Gardeners.

I imagine that members of our NARGS Chapter rarely consider the beginnings or the endings of gardens as we are so busy responding to the immediate demands of our mature gardens. And yet the two gardens open on our 2014 May tours present just that contrast; Ellen Hornig's is a garden only two years old and John Trexler's, the polished achievement of twenty-eight years. But, from time to time, life interferes and plans change. This is a tale of two gardens and their gardeners.

A Field of Dreams

Supposing after half-a-lifetime of perfecting the skills of good gardening you moved 300 miles away and were faced with a suburban lot in Shrewsbury devoid of humus and without any plants except the few yews along the front of the house. Many people would simply hang up their trowels, but not if you are Ellen Hornig. Instead, you would rent a truck and fill it with as many treasures from your old garden and embark on a truly heroic campaign to revitalize that suburban



H. 'Thunderbolt'

yard. Ellen's plan for the first season was to hire a tree removal firm to take down old maples and trash trees in order to clear a way for new design. All the chips were used to set out paths and truck loads of leaves were rototilled into the lawns. The lawns became gardens and the gardens filled with treasures from the old property. When we visited in May new trees were starting to emerge as accent points. A fastigate ginkgo was settling into the front yard and a dwarf fastigate Cornus anchored a bed in the back yard. There was an assortment of Hostas including my favorite Mildred Seaver hybrid, 'Spilt Milk'. Sadly, I have forgotten many plants, the wealth of specimens was so overwhelming, except for one at the edge of a shady bed, an *Aquilegia alpina*, in a truly stunning shade of azure. On the front path, I carefully stepped over discarded *Baptisia*, each a generous three feet tall. When I asked about them, Ellen replied, "The flower stems hadn't grown far enough above the foliage so I will replace them with better plants. One has to be selective, you know." I realized Ellen's professional experience as the owner of Seneca Hill Perennials was speaking. Lesson number one, if there is only room for a small selection then there is no space for plants that don't measure up. Please invite us back in three years so we may see how the plants have matured.

Fortunately, Helga Andrews took better notice of the plants: "The very first plant I encountered in Ellen Hornig's garden was a variegated foliage plant she called peucedanum. I'd never seen it before and I wanted it immediately. But that was only the beginning of my lustful wishes.

Once around to the back area and I found so many unfamiliar plants that I finally stopped asking their names; I wanted them all of course. Still lingering in memory are the many different podophyllums, one I seem to think had a red flower. There were variegated hepatica leaves everywhere, a pink Jacob's ladder, a really blue



Aquilegia alpina photo does not due justice to the azure blue!

Diphyllea cyamosa, and that's only a small beginning. Next time I shall get serious and come prepared with pencil and paper and dare to keep asking for more identifications. In such a short time Ellen has managed to create a wondrous garden and still keeps growing more plants in true nurserywoman fashion. Be prepared to hit the seedling sale in September.”

A Room with a View

John Trexler's calling card lists his profession as Garden Design Consultant, and there can be no better demonstration of this talent than his own garden. Coming up John's driveway, the visitor is immediately enticed into a miniature entrance patio that appeals to all the senses; a tiny water feature burbles softly, a small azalea fills the air with spring fragrance, an arbor against the wall provides height and a small table and chair complete this oasis. There is no doubt the visitor has arrived and left the clamorous world behind. From the patio an enclosed passageway conceals a transit to the formal side yard. The route evokes drama as one's view expands from a cool, shadowed passageway to fly outward to the expanse of the garden. John's design of this space, which is generous but less than an acre, is organized on an axis of three allées running perpendicular to the house and best viewed from the kitchen windows. Three rows of *Thuja occidentalis* 'Holmstrup' perhaps 20' tall provide the green wall separating one allée from another. They are the perfect choice of evergreen, narrow and compact. They appear to be beautifully trimmed but on the contrary John says that this is 'Holmstrup's' natural habit. In horticultural design circles such use of trees might be called, "creating garden rooms." But when I walked down the allées the trees were set wide enough apart that they provided "look-through" frames rather than isolating walls. The sum of each little view implied that there was much more garden around the corner. The plant material that John chose relies on small trees and shrubs rather than on extensive perennial borders. Among the trees there were at least six different magnolias some already getting quite tall. My favorite shrubs were the *Calycanthus* hybrids, 'Hartliage Wine' and 'Venus.' The plants were flowering at the time of our visits and one, 'Venus' still had a seed pod containing ripe seeds. John broke it off for me and I am happy to say one of the seeds has germinated. As I was making my last circuit of the garden I saw a tree peony in full bloom outside the shed. How could I have missed it? It was smothered in deep purple flowers. In such a shady area of the garden I can't imagine how John encouraged such bloom, just love I suppose.

It is obvious that the gardens at John's home, *Maple Grove*, have profited from his 28 year nurturing, each year something added or something improved. Now they are mature plantings needing great care to prevent them from slipping from a generous maturity to a jungle. Gardens can become demanding mistresses if not outright tyrants. So John has chosen to close this chapter of his garden life and return to a more diminutive scale, perhaps like his entry way oasis.



Trexler front entry



Trexler allée window view



Trexler tree peony

John Trexler is Founder and Director Emeritus of Tower Hill Botanic Gardens.

Marilyn Beaven and Helga Andrews

A Note from My Garden Helen du Toit

The other innovation I tried this year was feeding my potted agapanthus with Potash, following the advice given in an article in the RHS Journal, *The Garden*. As recommended I gave the tub one teaspoon of fertilizer, followed by a good watering, and was rewarded by nine flower heads, each with way more florets than ever before. I was beyond thrilled as my daughter was visiting from London, where she also grows agapanthus in a tub, and this year she had no flowers at all ... so chalk one up to Mom! Actually the real reason I was so thrilled is that the hummingbirds in my garden just love the agapanthus flowers, and as I have the tub outside my dining-room window, next to a glorious *Buddleia* named 'Miss Molly', which is touted as being the reddest of buddleias I can watch the hummingbirds, as well as a hummingbird moth and butterflies, while I eat breakfast, lunch and dinner!



Black swallow-wort flower

A description and photos can be found below. Check out your yard and make quite sure that you have none popping up in your garden.

Common name: Black swallow-wort, Dog strangle vine

Scientific name: *Cynanchum louiseae*

Description: Black swallow-wort is an herbaceous perennial in the milkweed family. It is a vine with twining stems up to 6 feet long with dark green, glossy foliage. The lance-shaped leaves are opposite with smooth edges. Flowers are 1/8 inch, purple with a yellow center, star shaped, and borne in clusters at leaf axils. Fruit is a typical milkweed-like pod, 2-2 1/2 inches in length, 3/8 inch in diameter and smooth skinned. Like native milkweeds the seed is readily spread by the wind. Roots are fleshy with a thickly budded rhizomatous crown just below the soil surface.

Impacts: Black swallow-wort is difficult to control and has been noted to invade prairie areas. Stands can eventually cover several acres of land and exclude native vegetation.



Black swallow-wort

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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