

The Trillium



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

Autumn Flowering Bulbs: *Late Season Delight*

by Steve Whitesell

When September comes, many gardeners are getting a little weary of the long, hot summer and ready for the gentians, asters, *Kirengeshoma palmata*, *Begonia grandis*, and the other flowers that populate the autumnal garden. Why not add flowering bulbs to the selection? There are a number of geophytes that start their bloom season late in the gardening year, and their appearance is no less wonderful and welcome than their spring flowering relatives. There are several species of *Crocus* available in late summer from bulb vendors like McClure and Zimmerman, Van Bourgondien, and Telos Bulbs, including *C. sativus*, the Saffron Crocus.

Saffron is so easy to grow and it's so much fun to harvest the stamens for rice or a home-grown paella, especially considering the cost of a tiny glass vial of the commercially harvested spice. Grow your own and imagine an endless vista of millions of bulbs in southern Spain. Other reliable and easily grown *Crocus* species include *C. goulimyi*, and several cultivars of *C. speciosus*, which has been very long-lived for me in open ground, returning for more than 25 years. The latter is widely



Photo from White Flower Farm website

***Crocus sativus*, Saffron Crocus**



***Crocus speciosus* 'Conqueror'**

Photo by Steve Whitesell

available, particularly in the blue flowered variety

'Conqueror. The stems of *C. speciosus* are rather weak, so it's a good idea to grow the bulbs through a groundcover like *Sedum sieboldii* to help prevent the flowers from flopping. Dense-growing roundcovers like *Vinca minor* are usually too vigorous to combine well with the bulbs, so consider the growing partners carefully.

Less reliable for me, but much coveted is *Leucojum autumnale*, the tiny autumn-flowering cousin of familiar *L. aestivum* and *L. vernalis*, the Spring Snowflake, which appears shortly after *Galanthus nivalis* and *G. elwesii* in the early spring garden. I've never been able to keep

L. autumnale over the winter in a trough, in spite of its purported Zone 7 hardiness rating, but will keep trying. Gene Scarborough had a beautiful specimen on display in the alpine house at Wave Hill in September, with delicate grassy foliage and tiny white bells perfectly in scale with the foliage.

There is also a late fall blooming *Galanthus reginae-olgae*, sometimes considered a variety of *G. nivalis*, that appears around Thanksgiving. I received a couple bulbs in a bag of *G. nivalis* about fifteen years ago that thrilled me for many years until they sadly disappeared, but also signaled the wildcollected status of the bulbs. Happily, most commercial growers have discontinued that practice, if only under pressure from gardeners.

Sternbergia lutea is a brilliant butter yellow crocus-like bulb that makes a brilliant and welcome appearance shortly after Labor Day and lasts about three or four weeks. There are other yellow and whiteflowering species, including *S. siculum*, but I've never grown them.

Another easily grown fall-blooming plant is *Cyclamen hederifolium*. Foliage arises from the dormant corm in late summer, with flower stems appearing about a



Photo by Steve Whitesell

Sternbergia lutea

month later. The flower colors range from white through a wide range of pinks to deep magenta. There is also a great deal of genetic variation in the leaves, and often silver margined seedlings develop. The corms continue to grow in size from year to year and can eventually achieve the size of a plate. Plants are well



Photo by L. Horwitz

Cyclamen hederifolium

adapted to drought and shade and are good candidates for planting under shallow rooted trees like maples.

One of the last fall bulbs to flower, and an excellent candidate for trough culture, is *Allium thunbergii* 'Ozawa'. Plants grow to about 6-7" in flower and the grassy foliage provides a nice textural contrast in troughs or the open rock garden. Flowers are lavender-violet, increase slowly, and usually last until hard frost. ❧

Steve Whitesell is a member of the Manhattan Chapter of NARGS and is the editor of its newsletter, "The Urban Rock Gardener."



Photo from Missouri Botanical Garden eWebsite

Allium thunbergii 'Ozawa'.

Autumn in the Garden - A Time for Troughs

October 12-14, 2012

NARGS 2012 Eastern Study Weekend

Allegheny Chapter

<http://home.comcast.net/~sylvialynch/Study%20Weekend%20Information.htm>

Bulbs That Contribute to the Summer Garden...

Zephyranthes and Habranthus

by Sue Lambiris

Once the massed displays of spring and early summer are past, there are not many bulbs to contribute to the summer garden. One of the exceptions is the family of rain lilies, a group of small Amaryllids now divided into two genera, *Zephyranthes* and *Habranthus*. An earlier genus, *Cooperia*, seems to have been absorbed into *Zephyranthes*. Divisions among these genera are based on minor botanical differences, and intergeneric hybrids are easily made. Rain lilies earned their common name because, instead of blooming heavily for a short time, most rain lilies send up a scattering of buds after every rain from mid-summer to frost. While seldom the focal point of a garden, they provide a sequence of delightful surprises to enliven the gardener's spirits.

Zephyranthes grandiflora is the largest of the commonly available rain lilies, and can be found in most bulb catalogs and gardening centers. It is reasonably hardy in North Carolina, but farther north should probably be lifted over the winter or grown in containers. From early June to mid-October (or even later in a mild autumn) this obliging plant produces showy, raspberry-pink trumpets that open into flat, 3" flowers. An individual bloom lasts only two days (and is noticeably paler on the second day) but the clump of bulbs will usually send up buds for up to a week after a heavy rain, making an eye-catching show. *Z. grandiflora* has long, strap-like, rather untidy leaves which will die down after a heavy frost but remain nearly evergreen in a mild winter. In my garden it has tolerated heavy soil, poor drainage, competition with weeds and partial shade.

Almost equally easy to find and to grow is the white swamp-lily, *Z. candida*. This is a neater and quieter plant in

every way, with tidy rush-like foliage and flowers that resemble a long-stemmed white crocus.

In my garden it has consistently come into bloom in mid-August and continued steadily until frost, although after a good rain there is an extra surge of bloom. This is probably the hardiest of the rain lilies, and is very tolerant of heavy soil. Mine continued to grow (though not to bloom) in heavy shade, but it prefers sun. Used in quantity it can be very attractive in the late summer border.

Zephyranthes citrina closely resembles *Z. candida* in form and habit, with yellow blooms on long stems, but it seems to be more difficult to please in this area (Elizabeth Lawrence wrote that it might need more lime). In any case, the best yellow rain lily is certainly *Z. flavissima*, which is available from several specialty nurseries and deserves a wider audience. It has golden flowers with recurving petals which glow brightly



Zephyranthes grandiflora

Photo from Plant Delights Nursery website.



Zephyranthes candida

Photo from Plant Delights Nursery website: plantdelights.com

(Continued from page 3)

against the same dark green, glossy, tufted foliage as *Z. candida*. In a good year this plant will bloom heavily from mid-May to September, with further scattered blooms until frost. It is a splendid source of color when used in long swaths, as in the perennial border at the NCSU Arboretum, but even a small clump makes an effective accent. Like *Z. candida*, it is easy to grow and seems to be perfectly hardy in North Carolina.

For those who prefer a less aggressive yellow, there is a delicate pastel cultivar, *Zephyranthes* 'Valles Yellow' (sold as a selection from *Z. reginae*, but sometimes said to be a form of *Z. citrina*). Although my single bulb does not make much of a show in the garden, it seems an easy if not a vigorous grower, and the isolated blooms it produced this summer after every shower had a crisp charm I found very appealing.

Other *Zephyranthes* species include *Z. atamasca* which is native to the Southeast (but died very quickly the only time I planted it in my garden - it may require a more moist and rich soil than I gave it) and *Z. minima* a delightful dwarf with tiny red buds which open into a star-shaped flower, white with a red stripe on the back of the petals. The effect when fully open is something like a blue-eyed grass, and very different from any other rain lily I have seen, although it shares the common habit of blooming only after rain. This summer my clump of *Z. minima* bloomed for the first time in late July and sent up flowers as late as mid-November. Yucca Do Nursery in Texas offers a good selection of uncommon Mexican species which I intend to try as soon as I can afford them.

The genus *Habranthus* (Amaryllidaceae) also has several garden-worthy species which can be found with only a little difficulty. *H. robustus* has foliage and flowers similar in size and shape to *Z. grandiflora*, but a softer pale pink shading to darker pink petal tips and a luminous green throat. I have grown the cultivar 'Russell Manning' and found it very similar to the species, but without so much green in the throat. *Habranthus brachyandrus* never opens its large flowers flat, but they are to my eye even more attractive, with a glossy dark-red base shading to near-white and then to a soft pink at the tip. The petals of all these flowers have a sheen which reminds me of the "diamond dusting" on certain modern daylilies, and on a hot, humid day (after rain, of course) they look as refreshing as a bowl of lemon ice. Bloom time is from midsummer to early fall; the plants are easy to grow and seem thoroughly hardy.

Habranthus texanus (now classified as *H. tubispathus*) or the copper lily, is a smaller plant with yellow blooms, marked with a bronzy orange on the outside of the petals. In the garden it produces an effect similar to the yellow *Zephyranthes*, although it does not bloom as heavily nor as steadily as *Z. flavissima*. On the other hand, the bronze markings help it to blend into a larger number of color schemes and make it more interesting when examined at close range. It grows willingly at the NCSU Arboretum, but died in my garden without blooming. Whether it is more sensitive than other rain lilies to heavy clay soil or simply less hardy, I am not sure.

In many ways my favorite rain lily is a hybrid of uncertain background, which I received as x *Cooperanthes hortensis*. [*Cooperanthes* is a listed name sometimes applied to hybrids of species formerly placed in *Cooperia* and *Zephyranthes*.] Its bloom closely resembles that of *Habranthus brachyandrus*, but with a lighter throat and a more subtle shading, as well as a somewhat broader spread of petal. In my garden in '93 it bloomed at intervals from mid-June to late September, but during the winter of '93-'94 all my blooming-sized bulbs died, leaving only a handful of tiny offsets. Fortunately these have grown on well, but I shall be sure to lift them for the winter in future. In my eyes, the quality and frequency of the bloom more than justifies this small labor.

There are a number of hybrid *Zephyranthes* cultivars described in books, but I have only been able to find one tentatively identified by Edith Eddleman as 'Capricorn'. Like most of its kin, it blooms after every rain, sending up shiny dark-red buds which open to a pale yellow flower, closely lined with red to give an orangish effect at a distance. This is a plant for those who appreciate subtle shadings rather than bold colors. It grows well in heavy soil, but I have never left it in the ground over the winter, so I do not know if it is hardy. ☞

[*Sue Lambiris gardens in Raleigh* She was a volunteer at the perennial border of the NCSU Arboretum and an avid iris grower and breeder. This article appeared originally in *The Trillium* in Feb. 1995.]



Photo from Niche Gardens website nichegardens.com

Zephyranthes flavissima



Photo from Yucca Do website: yuccado.com

Habranthus brachyandrus

Deer Deterrent Electric Fence

by Alan Finkle



Gardens can be protected from nibbling deer without killing them and without spending thousands of dollars to build unsightly fences. Here's a solution that has proven itself that is:

- Effective: Essentially no damage for many years to gardens otherwise ravaged by severe deer feeding.
- Inexpensive: About \$250 for supplies to protect ordinary home gardens.
- Easy to install: About several hours' work to install with ordinary household tools and modest mechanical skills. Most daunting task is driving ~ 1/2" diameter rod 6-8 feet into ground.
- Appearance: Unobtrusive; can be made to complement the décor depending upon the style posts used.
- Maintenance: Two hours per year, maybe.

Principle of Operation: Deer, like most animals, don't like electrical shocks, even non-injurious jolts. Upon contacting low-energy, high voltage pulses, deer leave the scene immediately, find new pathways, unlikely to return for months.

The System: The system comprises a single thin bare flexile wire strung about 16" off the ground on non-conducting 3/8" diameter or larger posts spaced about every 10 feet, a ground rod, and a high voltage power supply ('fence charger') connected to the wire and to the ground rod. Upon contacting the wire (usually by sniffing or licking), deer are jolted by high voltage low energy pulses and sent running away without injury to the animal. (Similarly, people and pets rarely get shocked more than once. The feeling is akin to the momentary sting of a bee but without the lingering discomfort thereafter. Like deer, they suffer no lasting affects except for the memory of the event.)

What it takes: A fence charger, about \$140; a roll of wire long enough to encircle the area to be protected, about \$25; plastic or wooden posts, about \$1.50 each; and a ground rod, about \$15, all available from a farm or other agricultural supply store and many hardware stores. A special wire is available that is a combination of fine wire and poly thread twisted into a single strand.

What to do:

1. Mount the fence charger near an electric outlet convenient to the garden. If line power is not available, battery powered and solar powered chargers are available.
2. Pound the ground rod into the earth 6'-8' near the charger location for convenience.
3. Push or hammer posts into the ground leaving about 16" above the ground. Space posts every 10 feet or less around the perimeter of the garden. Thirty-inch long posts are sufficient.
4. String the wire from post to post, wrapping one or two turns around each post, and knotting at the ends.
5. Connect the ground terminal of the charger to the ground rod and the high voltage terminal to the fence wire at any point.

Priming the System: Optional, but recommended, announce the fence to the deer by baiting with peanut butter or any fruit scented liquid*. One simple method is to cut strips of adhesive backed foam weather stripping into 2" lengths and fold over the wire at about 10' – 20' intervals. (The weather stripping used is the type intended for sealing around doors and is sold in hardware stores.) Bait the fence with a couple drops of scent liquid or dab a bit of peanut butter on the strips. With one sniff or lick the deer is trained instantly. Apply bait monthly or whenever deer are present, more often if the message hasn't gotten to all the would-be nibblers.

- For source of attractants: <http://www.electric-deer-fence.com/electricdeerfences/deerattractants/index.htm>

Alan Finkle and his wife Marty live and garden in Caswell County, NC. They hosted the Piedmont Chapter's 2012 May picnic



Chapter Annual Fall Plant Sale

Our September 15th meeting and plant sale will soon be upon us, so it's time to get your contributions divided and potted up. Good plants of all sizes, shapes and maturity are needed. We hope you have potted up your contributions early, so they will have some time to establish, rather than waiting until the day before.

Bring plants in clean pots and label each pot; we don't have time to do it that morning. **Remember to have the labels complete, accurate and legible. Please print.**

We will start setting up at 9:00 am, and will be eagerly accepting plants at any time between then and the start of the sale. The program starts at 10 am with the sale beginning immediately afterwards. Remember that contributors will have a few minutes head start at the beginning of the sale. Kirt Cox

For more information, contact me at 919-489-7892 (H) or by email (kirtley@ncrrbiz.com). ☞

NARGS Seed Exchange Report

By Joyce Fingerut, Director, NARGS Seed Exchange

[*The Trillium* Editor's note: the Piedmont Chapter of NARGS has agreed to participate again in seed repackaging at the Raulston Arboretum in early December 2012. Details in next issue of *The Trillium*.]

I hope you have all enjoyed a splendid gardening season: triumphs with new plants and the continued growth of old favorites. In order to add new friends to your gardens next year, or renew patches of long-time residents, you will want to take part in the wonderful world of the NARGS Seed Exchange. Here's how:



Donating seeds

If you haven't already sent in all of your seed donations, there is still a brief window open to **U.S.** donors for sending them to our Seed Intake Manager by **November 1st**. Mail the seeds to: Laura Serowicz, 15411 Woodring Street, Livonia, MI 48154-3029 U.S.A.

seedintake@mi.rr.com

We certainly hope that you will donate at least the minimum 5 packets of different kinds of seeds, which will enrich both the seedlist and you as well. As a donor you will receive the donor privileges of 10 extra packets of seed and priority in having your order filled. If the seeds of your fall-blooming plants (e.g., gentians and alliums) or late-ripening ones (e.g., arisaemas) are still not quite ripe, you may send a list of these seeds to Laura right now; but you must send the seeds themselves to her no later than **December 1st**.

New distribution chapters

We thank the following chapters for stepping up and volunteering to handle the all-important seed distributions for the next two years: Potomac Valley Chapter will fill orders for the main distribution; Siskiyou Chapter will handle the second round orders of surplus seed. We greatly appreciate their willingness to take on these responsibilities and keep our vibrant Seedex humming.

Ordering seeds

The Seedlist will appear on the NARGS website on **December 15th**, along with clear instructions about how to place your order. To use the online ordering system, be sure that Bobby Ward (nargs@nc.rr.com) has your most current email address, especially if you've changed email accounts lately or did not use the electronic ordering system last year. Your email address is your entrée to the ordering system. Once you enter your email address on the Seed Ordering webpage, your membership will be automatically verified and you will receive an email. Clicking on the link in the email will take you to the Seedlist and your personal ordering form. Then you just begin typing in seed numbers; it's that easy.

Seed must be ordered electronically from our website unless you request a printed seedlist and order form. Printed seedlists are no longer automatically mailed to members; thus, if you do not wish to order online, you must request a print copy of the Seedlist and order form by contacting me no later than **December 1st**: Joyce Fingerut, 537 Taugwonk Road, Stonington, CT 06378 U.S.A. alpinegarden@comcast.net

In the meantime, get your pots scrubbed and the potting medium mixed, so that you'll be ready for another round - or two - of seed delights. ☞



NARGS Piedmont Chapter Board Meeting, July 14, 2012 —Selected Notes

Decision: To open all NARGS meetings to Arboretum members following experimentation last year. Advantages were: some of the JCRA members became NARGS members, which provided an enlarged bidding audience for our plant sales. The Arboretum front desk handed out speakers' plant lists and collected from non-member attendees. No disadvantages noted.

Decision: To donate \$600 to the JCRA) plus a NARGS membership again this year.

Announcement: The Arboretum was the recipient this year of a \$2,500 NARGS grant from the Norman Singer Endowment for trough installation.

Announcement: Members of national NARGS will be able to cast a vote for Officers and Board members by e-mail now rather than having voting limited to members attending Annual Meeting. As a cost-saving measure, the Quarterly is in digital format on line in addition to the print copy distributed by mail.

Decision: A Nominating Committee was formed to assemble Piedmont Chapter leadership for Fall, 2013. Members of that Committee are Dave Duch, Charlie Kidder and David White.

A lists of Speakers for 2012-2013 was presented by Bobby Ward.

Decision: The annual plant sale will be held at the September 15 meeting.

Report: The 2013 Annual Meeting, May 2-5, to be held in Asheville is being organized by Piedmont Chapter. A post-conference field trip(s) is planned for May 6-8. Must be member of national NARGS to register for Annual Meeting, and this can be done on the reservation form on line. Website is up and open for reservations.

<http://www.nargs2013.org/index.php>

Decision: No Spring Picnic because of Annual Meeting in Asheville.

Piedmont Chapter Speakers' Program

Fall 2012—Spring 2013

9:30 am

“Bulbs for Piedmont Gardens”

September 15, 2012

Carl Van Staalduin

Terra Ceia Farms, Pantego, N.C.

“Rare Plants of the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program”

October 20, 2012

Misty Buchanan

Natural Areas Inventory Manager,
N.C. Natural Heritage Program, Raleigh, NC 27699

“The Flora of Argentina (with a Few Things to Try in Hot, Humid North Carolina)”

November 17, 2012

Mike Kintgen

Horticulturist, Denver Botanic Gardens
& Chair, Rocky Mountain Chapter of NARGS
Denver, Colorado

Great Gardens, Part I: “Rambling Roots---Inspiration for Your Landscape from Around the World”

January 19, 2013

Jared Barnes

Ph.D. horticulture student, NCSU, Raleigh, N.C.

” Mining the Balkans for Great Plants”

February 16, 2013

Tony Avent

Owner, Plant Delights Nursery
Raleigh, N.C.

“Lessons Learned from a Poet’s Garden”

March 16, 2013

Jane Baber White

Anne Spencer Garden
Lynchburg, Va.

Great Gardens, Part II: “South Africa, Italy, France, and Brazil”

April 20, 2013

David White

Chair, Piedmont Chapter NARGS

**Piedmont Chapter Meeting &
Plant Sale**
9:30 am



JC Raulston Arboretum
Ruby McSwain Education Building
“Bulbs for Piedmont Gardens”

September 15, 2012

Carl Van Staaldunen
Terra Ceia Farms
Pantego, N.C.

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

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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	April
Oct	D-G	Feb	N—So	Any and all are invited to bring for sharing.
Nov	H-K	March	Sop—Z	

LAST NOTICE

To the 19 members who have not yet renewed membership.
Your membership in the chapter expired June 30, 2012.
Single Membership is \$15/year, Family Membership is \$20/year.
You are encouraged to consider joining for multiple years.
Please send check immediately to:
Bobby G. Wilder 2317 Elmsford Way Raleigh NC 27608.
Do include any changes in phone numbers, email address, mailing address, etc.
If you do not plan to rejoin, please inform me at wilder@nc.rr.com.
Bobby G. Wilder, Raleigh, NC 919-755-0480

Online Debut of the *ROCK GARDEN QUARTERLY*

The *Rock Garden Quarterly* will be published in digital form as well as the traditional paper form--and members have free access. There is an introduction to some of the features in the Summer issue of the Quarterly, <<http://www.nxtbook.com/allen/roga/70-3>>, and you can try the Spring issue also on desktop, laptop, iPad, iPhone, etc. at <<http://www.nxtbook.com/allen/roga/70-2>>

In the future, the digital edition will be available around the same date that NARGS members receive their mailed copy. This is not a replacement for the printed *Quarterly* - this is a BONUS. From now on NARGS members will be able to access the *Quarterly* online and read it on their electronic device, as well as continuing to receive their printed issues as they do currently.

Malcolm McGregor, Editor, *NARGS Rock Garden Quarterly* ✍