~ MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT ~

MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2010

MEETING LOCATION: THE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, 148 WEST 37TH STREET, 13TH FL.
Our new meeting place is conveniently located in midtown Manhattan, between 7th Avenue and Broadway, near the 7th Avenue #1/2/3 lines and the 6th Avenue B/D/F subway lines. It is located three blocks north of Macy’s and not far from Grand Central, Penn Station and the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

6 – 8 PM

COLTA IVES

ON

THE IMPRESSIONIST IN THE GARDEN

Colta Ives is Curator Emerita at the Metropolitan Museum of Art where, after retiring last Spring, she now serves as a part-time consultant. An art historian specializing in nineteenth century drawings, prints, and illustrated books, she has prepared museum exhibitions (and their accompanying catalogues) on the art of Goya, Manet, Degas, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard, and Japanese woodcut artists of the Ukiyo-e school. Her 2005 exhibition, “Vincent van Gogh: The Drawings,” received “best show” awards from the Association of Art Museum Curators and the International Association of Art Critics/USA.

To fulfill a lifelong wish, Colta recently returned to her alma mater, Columbia University, to earn an M.S. in Landscape Design. She had been planting and pruning, building stonewalls, terraces, and pathways at her country home in the Berkshires for thirty years and decided it was time to get professional. Mostly a woodland gardener, she is happy working among ferns, foxglove, Solomon Seals, primulas, and rocks (lots). Ever alert to the floral in art, Colta has taken account of the varied and picturesque ways Impressionist painters reflected the gardening enthusiasms of the late nineteenth century. She will share her observations in a lecture illustrated mostly with paintings.
~ MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT ~

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2010

6 – 8 PM

GELENE SCARBOROUGH

WILL SPEAK

ON GARDENING AT WAVE HILL

Gelene Scarborough has worked at Wave Hill for twelve years, where she is now Curator of the Alpine House and the Wild Garden. During the time spent working at Wave Hill she has previously been responsible for the Shade Border, the dry garden, the Herb garden, and as an intern and early on as a full-time gardener, spent time helping out in the other gardens and throughout the grounds as needed. On her roof garden in Manhattan, she also grows a myriad of plants.

Please join us for our February meeting to hear this very special speaker, and remember our new meeting place at THE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, 148 WEST 37th STREET, 13th FLOOR, between 7th Avenue and Broadway, near the 7th Avenue #1/2/3 lines and the 6th Avenue B/D/F subway lines. It is three blocks north of Macy’s and not far from Grand Central, Penn Station and the Port Authority Bus Terminal.
Ugh – it’s not Winter that I dislike, it is the cold and improvisations that we humans (me) find necessary to tolerate the cold. I won’t generalize that feeling to all humans because I’m sure there are some (somewhere?) who are actually much more tolerant than me. Perhaps it was my Mid-western rearing, where, as children we got stuck in snowdrifts five or six feet high or perhaps it was the adolescent who had to get up at 4am each morning to distribute newspapers, on a bicycle, in subzero temperatures. Blame is not the issue here, the result is that crackly feeling of my skin when I finally begin to feel warm enough to function, and the lethargy in my bones (age?). Now, is when I begin to notice the disparate humidity levels in my apartment, from 100% in the “jungle end” to 15% in the “non-jungle end” (and without humidifiers, this would be 5% or less). OK, I should stop complaining about me, but what I do not comprehend is how my plants deal with these fluctuations. The “indoor”, tropical and sub-tropical plants have mechanisms that I observe, and that helps me in meeting their needs all year long, but what about those plants from temperate climates that are in the tree pits, or on the fire-escapes or six stories up on the wind-swept roof? What chaos in their life am I neglecting and totally failing to understand. Yikes – this is more difficult than children and goldfish! Yes, I’m sure this is a simple (total) lack of my understanding of plant physiology, but ... I’m not “getting it”. Hardiness seems to be more of an exercise in trial and error, but I surely wish that I understood more about the mechanisms that enable the situation. OK, now that I have vented my seasonal frustrations (and good cheer) – what’s on your mind for the New Year?

I recently had the pleasure of serving on a NARGS Editor Search Committee with Chair, Maria Galletti and Anne Spiegel. We worked diligently to reexamine the process of publishing the journal, in an attempt to replace current Editor Jane McGary and all that she does. However, we had such good candidates that it was more of an exercise in how to make the best use of such a plethora of talent. President, Grazyna Grauer recently announced our choice of the new Editor of the Rock Garden Quarterly as Malcolm McGregor. Malcolm has wonderful ideas and aspirations, and we are excitedly anticipating his first issue.

While our economy is recovering and most CEO’s are pleading for their seven or eight figure bonuses ... YOUR Chairman, is only in need of a little help! Actually, our Chapter membership would appreciate your help in filling some of the roles in our ongoing activities. One of the most important services to our membership is that of Newsletter Editor. Steve Whitesell has graciously agreed to edit this issue, but who will be next (you?). We need to communicate to and between our members, the newsletter is our way of achieving that. Another form of communication would be to have a Chapter Website on the Internet. NARGS could host this and it could be as simple or complex as we wished it to be, however we would need a Chapter Webmaster to keep it up to date (there is nothing worse than an out-of-date website). Other tasks that we need are a couple of people to set-up meetings at the HSNY. A pretty simple task of moving tables and chairs before the meeting, and restacking the chairs afterwards, but it takes someone to do it. We need a Hospitality Coordinator to insure that we have some liquids at meetings to soothe our dry throats. Members are very good about contributing snacks, but we need a coordinator. The chapter will have a table at Metro-Hort’s Plant-O-Rama on the 26th of February. We need a few volunteers to staff our small table at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden during that day (see me for sign-up, please). Last, but certainly not least ... we are planning for our Annual Plant Sale and need EVERYONE to help during this event. This is a one-day event that requires some pre-planning, and then a lot of on-site help during the course of the morning in pricing, bagging, cashingier, schlepping, publicity, etc.

Volunteering is mostly pleasurable and mostly short-term, but you are guaranteed an appreciative audience and a chance to learn from each other. So, looking ahead to the year of 2010, or at least the first half of it ... let us know how you would like to participate in the events of our chapter. Let’s grow together.

Directors were elected at our Annual Meeting in November and the Board subsequently elected officers at a meeting prior to our December meeting. The results are listed on the last page of this newsletter. You will see that many of us are continuing in previous roles with some fresh new faces to help out. Noticeably missing from the roster is Larry Thomas who has previously held every position possible over the past 25 years or so. We thank Larry for his many contributions and are delighted that he will continue his support of the chapter and our activities. John Jacobus has also stepped down after many years as our Treasurer and financial advisor and lawyer and many other hats along the way. Thanks guys and please stick around because we need you. Thanks also to Mary Buchen who is no longer a Director but will remain actively helping Lola with programming. Judith Dumont, Gelene Scarborough and Zabel Meshijian are new directors with a variety of duties and new ideas – welcome! On behalf of Gelene our new Membership Secretary – please help make her life easier by renewing your dues.
Troughs or sinks might be seen as little more than a large pot, but they are rarely treated in the same way. A pot usually contains only one plant, but it is rare for a trough to only have one plant growing in it – to start with, at least. Like any other form of gardening, a single plant can take over. A trough filled with phlox, invaded by campanula (or Welsh poppies or hairy bittercress or...), or overgrown by a dwarf juniper is too often possible. Troughs don’t look after themselves, but sensible planning and simple maintenance will help. Try and stop weeds as soon as they appear (it can be difficult getting a persistent weed out once established) and try to use plants that grow at compatible rates.

Anyway, as Mrs. Beeton might have said – first get your trough. Others have and will deal with the material of which the trough is made. It does not matter as long as your trough is strong enough and durable enough to carry the things you put on it. If, like me, your trough is going to be solid with rock, then strength may be an issue.

How big? You can get (or make) troughs in an enormous range of sizes – large stone troughs can be the size of coffins (if you can find somewhere to put the bones), but for most of us a trough is unlikely to be much bigger than 24” x 18”. How deep it is will vary, although my preference is for the shallower types of buff or brown glazed sinks, often no more than 7” deep outside and 6” deep inside. For saxifrages and the way I put a sink together, this depth seems to be quite adequate.

There are ways in which a trough can be used, but at heart there are two fundamentally irreconcilable approaches. One, very popular, is to treat the trough as a miniature garden or landscape. The rocks in the trough are miniature mountains or cliffs. Dwarf conifers or the cushions with small flowers and miniature narcissus, crocus, fritillaries, and leucojum complete the scene. This dolls’ house gardening has great charm, but it’s not for me. In an echo of Father Ted’s discussion on perspective (“This is a small cow close up that’s a large cow a long way away.” “Now, you’ve got me there, Ted!”), the miniaturized trough is like a large landscape a long way away. What I like is a small landscape close up.

What natural habitat can you put in a trough? Essentially what you have is a small piece of an alpine pavement such as is found on the top of a pass or in an alpine valley. You do not have to have a cliff or scree; they need height and unless you are going to do something pretty dramatic, they’re not what a trough is good for. Plant cliff-dwellers in a wall – tufa or other. A trough is first-class for plants that grow on level ground.

A question that is worth considering is whether you are going to stick to plants that are happy with your conditions (whatever they are) or are you going to adapt them. If your soil is acid, you can have a trough full of limey soil; if your soil is alkaline, you can use a trough to nurture lime-haters: tiny rhododendrons, gaultherias, or cassiope. Soil can be well-drained or damp. How much drainage? Like everything else, it depends partly on rainfall and partly on the plants you grow.

In general terms, it is a problem for saxifrages if they are exposed to full sun, particularly in summer unless there is an adequate water supply. If plants are continually wetted, then they will cope with very full exposure to the sun. One trough I have, spends summer partly shaded by rose bushes in a bed immediately to the south, but has plenty of light in winter when the roses are pruned hard back. Tufa is very popular for troughs – pieces can be easily acquired which fit in a trough – and although it weathers (softer pieces can be hopeless) it provides an excellent medium in which to grow saxifrages. It’s porous and can provide a reservoir of moisture rather like a bathroom sponge. Unfortunately tufa is also like a bathroom sponge from an aesthetic point of view. There are of course exceptions with dramatically figured pieces of tufa. Tufa I saw in Calgary, Alberta was nicely stratified, but in general the amorphous plasticity is a drawback. Water-worn limestone is not, and should not be an option, unless you can liberate a piece from an old rockery.

Rock is not added to a trough to provide some sort of dramatic highlight (as it might be in a doll’s house landscape). The rock is the structure of the landscape providing the habitat into which your plants will fit. For me and my sort of plants, I find that a large amount of rock gives a structure to the landscape of a trough that is too often absent. I use the rock to provide planting niches. For small plants such as dwarf cushion (Porphyron) saxifrages, this works very well. For aesthetic reasons, if no other, rock and grit should be of the same material as the large pieces; then it integrates the whole.

I don’t cover troughs, but if you need to protect plants from overhead winter wet – if you grow things like cushion androsaces or eritrichiums, for example – then covering is vital. It may not be the whole trough that needs to be covered. A small piece of glass propped against a rock may be enough to protect some specialty, and this may be necessary if you grow some primulas or androsaces. For saxifrages, in general, it is not.

(MALCOLM McGregor spoke on Saxifrages to the Manhattan Chapter in June 2009. This article is reprinted with the author’s permission and previously appeared in the Emerald Chapter newsletter. Malcolm has recently been appointed the new Editor of the Rock Garden Quarterly and previously served as Editor of The Rock Garden, the publication of the Scottish Rock Garden Club)
~ WHY DON'T YOU? ~

~Prune out undesirable woody plants this winter, while most branches are bare of leaves? It’s also the perfect time to prune woody shrubs, since you can more easily detect crossed branches or other structural defects you’ll want to remove. Rub the cut stumps of removed shrubs or trees with a paste of salt and vinegar to prevent regrowth.

~Scour the back pages of The Rock Garden Quarterly for mail order vendors of choice rock garden plants? You’ll want to grow as many as you can from seed, of course, but those vegetatively propagated cultivars or agonizingly slow plants you’re willing to let others start for you can be found there. These sources include such estimable nurseries as Mt. Tahoma, Laporte Avenue, Rocky Mountain Rare Plants, Siskiyou Rare Plants, Telos Rare Bulbs, and Wrightman Alpines. Take time to look at their online catalogs or order hard copies, read the informative descriptions, and order plants for trial and years of satisfaction.

~Shred fallen leaves and cut back perennial foliage in a gas, electric, or hand-powered shredder and spread the fibrous material in 3-5” layers on your garden beds? Eberhard Nursery in Franklin Square, New York shreds mountains of fallen leaves every autumn that are available free at the nursery. A few bags full, reapplied every winter prevents frost-heaving of herbaceous plant crowns and provides drastic and near-immediate improvement to soil texture, moisture-holding capacity, and fertility. Ruth Stout was right! This amount of organic matter won’t be beneficial to those alpines thriving in starved scree environments, but will be manna to most woodland plants.

~Experiment with different gravel sources to topdress troughs, container plantings, and rock garden beds? Different degrees of naturalism can be obtained with stream bed gravel, chicken grit, stone screenings, aquarium gravel, or even tumbled glass.

[STEVE WHITESELL is thinking about what he’ll grow this season and imagines you’re thinking the same thing.]

~ A TRIBUTE TO JOHN BIEBER ~

The Long Island Chapter of NARGS held a holiday party on December 6th at Planting Fields Arboretum. It was a well-attended event; in fact at 1:30pm the room adjacent to the main greenhouse was getting full. Packed might be a better description. Vincent Simeone, Director of Planting Fields, Peter Atkins, many staff, and volunteers appeared, along with several Daphne Society members from out of town. All of these people for the holidays? Concerned member John Bieber had a look of panic on his face because he was certain there was not enough seating and food for everyone. Thanks to the chapter members, there was plenty of food, so some of us went outside the room to bring in more seating. Ken Provenzano and I carried in a long (and very heavy) teak bench, dedicated to:

JOHN BIEBER
Plantsman, Propagator, Volunteer

... all to the tune of “For He’s A Jolly Good Fellow”. It was a moment that John will never forget. He is still “talking it out”, trying to figure out what, where, and when it all happened.

For those of you who do not know John as well - here are a few bits and pieces. John has been involved with the NARGS LI Chapter for over 40 years and has always been a driving force behind the Chapter. In early January of 1999 John formed the Daphne Society because he felt that there was a real need to collect and disseminate information about the culture of Daphne species and hybrids. The organization rapidly grew and drew members from the US, Canada, and the UK as well as many others countries. For seven years John served as the dynamic force behind the organization until family health problems made it no longer possible for him to continue. For years he has propagated rock garden plants, dwarf conifers and Daphnes; his sale table is always eagerly visited at rock garden functions in the Northeast. In 2005 the Daphne Garden was constructed at Planting Fields Arboretum in Oyster Bay, NY. John was not only involved in the planning, but oversaw the formation of this wonderful collection, perhaps the only one of its kind in the United States.
He regularly supplied cuttings to local nurseries and exchanged plants with fellow enthusiasts worldwide. His on-going devotion to Daphnes and the Daphne Society were evidence of a labor of love from which many of us benefited. Today many formerly unknown cultivars are being grown as a result. He is loved by the volunteers who maintain the garden with him and by all of us, his friends.

John has been to Planting Fields several times since the presentation, to make sure that the bench is well placed in the Daphne/Rock Garden.

When the Long Island Chapter voiced its intention to honor John in this manner, the response was overwhelming, so it was clear there would be more funds than necessary to purchase the bench. The remaining funds will be used for additions to this wonderful garden in honor of John. We thank the generous donation of the Manhattan Chapter of NARGS for their participation in this dedication.

{**DON OHL is the current President of the Long Island Chapter of NARGS.**}

{Chairman’s Note: **MCNARGS members will recall voting on this donation at the Annual Meeting of the Chapter in November 2009. John has been a member of our Manhattan Chapter for many years and has frequently presented programs to us, and has made donations to, and participated in, our annual plant sales. We are happy to join in this worthy recognition.**}

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~ **NUTTY FOR SEEDS** ~

Six days before Christmas I felt really good to be delivering well over 2,000 little packets of seed to UPS in the same box as the seeds had arrived on my doorstep about a month earlier. The difference is that when they arrived they were in their manila sleeves according to species, 150 of them, from *Gypsophila cerastiodes* to *Iberis sempervirens*. The task of our chapter’s volunteers was to process each species into glassines according to a target number. Those ‘target’ numbers varied from 10 to 65! Some ‘old-hand’ volunteers preferred the quiet of their own homes, some the conviviality of working with others. All I can say is thank you to each and all of you!

It was easier this year for various reasons, the main one being 100 fewer species to process, but another was that we started out in Michael’s Riley’s apartment where we had strong coffee, delicious homemade cookies and the help of uptown members who weren’t likely to come to Brooklyn.

What is special for me is to realize that there are lots of different ways to learn about plants. My learning is mostly by trial and error, but two volunteers, Ellen Borker and Jack Kaplan, know a great deal about plant families, and early botanists and plant collectors because they are garden guides at BBG. And since they were steady “seeders” I picked up more knowledge about plants I thought I knew very well. And that’s why I keep signing up to help with Stage 2 of the NARGS Seed Exchange. It’s an exchange of more than seeds, plus a friendly start to winter. Thank you Byron Lloyd, David Kuck, Ellen Borker, Gelene Scarborough, Jack Kaplan, Joyce Jed, Judi Dumont, Kean Teck Eng, Mary Buchen, Michael Riley, Francisco Correa and Steve Whitesell!

{**LOLA LLOYD HORWITZ is former Chapter Chair and current Program Co-Chair**}

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~ **REMEMINDER – NARGS SEED EXCHANGE** ~

For all NARGS members, please be reminded that the Seed Exchange Seedlist is online at:  

The 2009-2010 Current Seed List can be viewed by clicking on article #2.

Seed order fulfillment will begin on January 23rd, and will end February 10th.

{**JOYCE FINGERUT is Director, NARGS Seed Exchange**}
Join today. NARGS is for gardening enthusiasts interested in alpine, saxatile, and low-growing perennials. Annual dues in the U.S. and Canada are $30, payable in U.S. funds. VISA/Mastercard accepted.

Benefits of membership include: Rock Garden Quarterly with articles on alpines and North American wildflowers, illustrated in color photographs and pen and ink drawings; annual seed exchange with thousands of plant species; study weekends and annual meetings in either U.S. or Canada; and book service to members.

Join on-line at www.nargs.org Or write: Bobby J. Ward, Executive Secretary NARGS, P.O. Box 18604, Raleigh, NC 27619-8604, USA

Join us March 19-21, 2010 in Devens, Massachusetts to hear about terrific new plants for your garden; learn design principles you can use to make your garden more interesting and pleasing; buy great plants; enter a plant show; and mingle with other obsessed gardeners. Devens, Massachusetts is the new town on the site of the former Fort Devens, 30 miles west of Boston.

Featured speakers include: 
Gordon Hayward, author and garden designer, on the Uses of Stone in the Garden.
Jan Sacks and Marty Schafer, proprietors of Joe Pye Weed’s garden and Iris breeders, on Small Irises.
Lauren Springer Ogden, authors and garden designers, on Plant-driven Garden Design.
Bill Cullina, author and plant & garden curator, Coastal Maine Botanical Garden, on Trilliums.
Darrell Probst, horticulturist and plant breeder, giving two talks; one on, New Introductions of Astilbes, Coreopsis and More; and the other on Epimediums From the Wilds to the Garden.
Sally and John Perkins, Rhodendron experts, on Ericaceous Plants for the Rock Garden
Jeff Good, landscape director of The Fells, Newbury NH, on Design and Restoration of the Rock Garden at The Fells

Attendees will choose 2 of these 3 workshops: 
1. Discussing the Design Process – Lauren Springer Ogden and Scott Ogden
2. Propagation of Trilliums – Bill Cullina
3. Sturdy, Reliable Plants for the Rock Garden – Mike Slater

In addition to lots of vendors selling great plants, we’ll have a plant show and we encourage newcomers as well as experienced plant show participants to enter.

For further information, check out the NARGS website www.nargs.org or contact Registrar Vivien Bouffard ewswregistration@msn.com or, Chair Rosemary Monahan (rosemonahan@comcast.net or 978-568-1780).

{Editorial note: The Manhattan Chapter and NARGS award stipends to members who have never previously attended a National NARGS meeting. Chapter members interested in applying for the stipends should speak with Michael Riley about the specific criteria for grants.}
~ NARGS ANNUAL MEETING, 2010 ~

ROMANCING THE ROCKIES: THE MARRIAGE OF PLANT AND STONE

What is it about limestone substrates that seems to foster biodiversity?

Are plants dependent on nutrients and other factors from rocks, or are they growing by accident where you find them?

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER PRESENTS THE 2010 NARGS CONFERENCE

July 11-14, 2010 in Denver & Salida, Colorado

Visit the Rocky Mountain Chapter Website Convention Page for more information:


~ 2010 CALENDAR EVENTS ~

Monday, January 25 – MCNARGS Meeting at HSNY:  **COLTA IVES, The Impressionist in the Garden**

Tuesday, January 26 – MCNARGS table at METRO HORT GROUP, **Plant-O-Rama**, Brooklyn Botanic Garden

February 10 – Royal Horticultural Society, **The Garden**, essay in Garden Talk by **ABBIE ZABAR** about her style of rock gardening

Monday, February 22 – MCNARGS Meeting at HSNY:  **GELENE SCARBOROUGH, On Gardening At Wave Hill**

February 28 – March 7 – **The Philadelphia Flower Show, Passport to the World**, Philadelphia PA

March 19-21 – **Eastern Winter Study Weekend, Rock Gardens of the Future**, Devens MA (deadline for early registration February 1st)

Monday, March 22 – MCNARGS Meeting at HSNY:  **BRENDAN KENNEY, Hermann von Pückler-Muskau: His Gardens and Influence**

Saturday, April 17 – Wave Hill, **Alpine Trough Day**, a day dedicated to making and planting alpine troughs

Monday, April 19 – MCNARGS Meeting at HSNY:  **LOLA L. HORWITZ, Love It and Leave It, Maybe**
2010 Membership Form

Individual $20          Student $15
Individual 3 years $50          Gift membership* $15 (When renewing, you may give a Gift Membership to a new member.)

Send your check with this form to: Gelene Scarborough, Membership Secretary
103 West 105th Street #5B
New York NY 10025

PLEASE PRINT

Name __________________________________________________________________

Address_________________________________________________________________

Telephone ____________________________ Email _____________________________

Do you want to receive your newsletter via email only? We do not use your email for commercial purposes.

☐ Yes       ☐ No

Gift Membership
Name ________________________________________________________________

Address_________________________________________________________________

Telephone ____________________________ Email _____________________________

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

☐ Plant-O-Rama (the last Tuesday in January at BBG)   ☐ Annual Plant Sale

☐ Newsletter       ☐ Hospitality

Other__________________________________________________________________
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THE MANHATTAN CHAPTER of NARGS, 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, planted walls as well as trough and container gardening.

The yearly membership fee of $20 entitles members to five informative copies of THE URBAN ROCK GARDENER, to attend all meetings and field trips, as well as tours of unique and private gardens; plus participation in our much-anticipated Annual Plant Sale. If you are not already a member we invite you to be a guest at one of our upcoming meetings.

~ WE’LL SEE YOU AT THE JANUARY MEETING ~
{Submission Deadline for March/April Newsletter: March 10, 2010}