~ SPECIAL EVENT ~

Join us for a rare opportunity to hear the world-renowned alpine plant authority, taxonomist, author, plant explorer, and garden designer from the Czech Republic

JOSEF HALDA

“Rare Bulbs From Turkey to China”

“Troughs From A Czech Perspective”

Sunday, May 17, 2009
1-3:30 PM

*At Wave Hill, a public garden and cultural center, 675 West 252nd Street

(A tour of Wave Hill’s Alpine House and Trough Collection with Gelene Scarborough, M’NARGS member and Curator of Wave Hill’s Alpine House and Alpine Collection, precedes the second talk)

In the way of many of his fellow Czech countrymen, JOSEF HALDA traveled to the mountains at a very early age. By the age of twelve he had his own collection of plants in his parent’s greenhouse. By sixteen, he was corresponding with Lawrence Crocker, a partner in Siskiyou Rare Plants in Medford, Oregon and subsequently sent them cuttings of Daphne arbuscula, a very hardy evergreen Daphne that grows only on the limestone cliffs of the Muran Valley in Slovakia. This led to more correspondence with other growers in both Western Europe and North America. One of those remarkable occasions where gardening trumped politics, but it would be another twenty years before Josef would travel to America. He and his wife, Jarmila Haldova, have collected seed of new discoveries in Turkey, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Siberia, Western China, and Upper Burma. Their Czech background has given them better access to remote regions in states of the former Soviet Union. Even now, travel can be restricted at best, or worse, dangerous. They have also researched and published monographs on Primula, Gentiana, Daphne, Paeonia, and Androsace. The photos Josef will share with us portray both plants we have never seen and their natural habitats that can hardly be described. From this vast region originate many of the hardy bulbs grown in our gardens. This is a wonderful opportunity to be taken to another realm by one of the world’s great field botanists.

HARVEY WRIGHTMAN has known Josef Halda for 15 years, and during that time Wrightman Alpines Nursery has germinated and grown many new plants from seeds purchased from him. In addition, Josef has passed along a wealth of knowledge about the culture of alpine plants while generously sharing his advice. We are grateful to Harvey and to the Minnesota Chapter of NARGS for granting us permission to reprint this piece on Josef Halda, which originally appeared in Minnesota Rock Plant Notes, May ’09 Newsletter.

*Exclusive offer to M’NARGS Members: There is no additional fee to attend this lecture. However, reserve your space in advance and receive free admission to Wave Hill. Simply email your name and address to lectures@wavehill.org to receive a confirmation email. You will need to supply your name and confirmation at the Front Gate in order to gain entrance. This offer is non-transferable.
~ NEW & IMPROVED WEBSITE ~

The website for the North American Rock Garden Society has been redesigned and uploaded to the Internet. It is still evolving in terms of a lot of the new features, but will ultimately include new functions for the Seed Exchange, Book Service, Chapter Information, as well as many other features. Check it out at the same and previous address: www.nargs.org.

~ MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT ~

MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2009
MALCOLM Mc Gregor: “SAXIFRAGES”

[Please allow 90 minutes for Malcolm’s very engaging and informative talk]

Malcolm McGregor, who was born in 1947, lives in East Yorkshire, England but has traveled widely in North America, Turkey, Morocco, the Himalayas, the Olympic Mountains, Austria, and Italy observing and photographing plants in the wild, while continually in the pursuit of saxifrages. He was past Editor of both the Scottish Rock Garden Club Journal and Saxifrage, the specialist publication of the Saxifrage Society, of which he was Chairman. He is a well-known and passionate lecturer who has been growing alpine plants for 30 years.

“Saxifrages have inhabited large parts of my garden, have dictated where I’ve been on holiday, and have generally absorbed an awful lot of my spare time: watering the plants in the alpine house, tending the rock garden and taking cuttings; writing, editing and giving lectures; learning botanical Latin, traveling to increasingly obscure places to find and photograph plants in the wild. As with all enthusiasms, the subject can become an obsession. I have been interested in wild flowers since I was a boy. Perhaps it was the sheer magic they represented when we moved from a basement flat in Fulham in bomb-damaged London, where we had no garden, to the outer fringes of London, and I was suddenly, at the age of nine, free to tramp the Kentish woods, finding flowers, watching woodpeckers, catching fish, and over the next few years exploring further on my bike, finding orchids in the chalk meadows, crayfish in the chalk streams. I can still feel the same joy in my searches for saxifrages or edging along a rocky ledge – even if today caution occasionally takes over."

And though our enthusiastic speaker has also worked in arts administration and writing computer software for the engineering industry, “it is the unforced charm of mountain plants” that most attracts him.

Malcolm McGregor’s new book Saxifrages: A Definitive Guide to the 2000 Species, Hybrids & Cultivars, the first fully comprehensive account of saxifrages since the early 20th century, will be available for sale and inscription. (See Book Review, page 9)

MEETING LOCATION: 15 Rutherford Place is between 2nd and 3rd Avenues and 15th and 16th Streets. Our meeting room is on the ground floor of the building adjacent to the historic Friends Meeting House, facing Stuyvesant Square. Socializing begins at 6PM and the meeting starts at 6:30 PM.
The NARGS plant sale at Stonecrop in Cold Spring was a total success, sponsored by the Merchant House Museum, our host. THANKS to the donors and the buyers and organizers; and to everyone who really pitched in and made this a success, once again — the “feeding frenzy” of our Annual Chapter Plant Sale. Everyone had an ample supply for our own gardens, with the added bonus of growing herbs and vegetables. Thanks to Kean and Lola and John, who brought their expertise to the event. The extension into summer, harvest, and beyond is a complex process, but our hard work pays off. Getting everything planted and happily growing for that time of year is a labor of love. Thanks to Kean and Lola and John, we had an ample supply for our own gardens, with the added bonus of growing herbs and vegetables. Everyone really pitched in and made this a success, once again — THANKS to the donors and the buyers and organizers; and to Merchant House Museum, our host.

The NARGS plant sale at Stonecrop in Cold Spring was a total delight with perfect weather, perfect vendors, perfect plants, and a perfect setting — thank you Caroline, (and Cholmondeley). Even Jody Payne (NYBG) found a meager flat of plants that she “needed” and I finally bought Harvey Wrightman’s famous red-handled steel trowel. We actually “got the drop” on the Heirloom Tomato madness that is sweeping the country (world?) since the publication of Amy Goldman’s definitive book on the subject. My tomato frenzy usually starts when I find them in the farmer’s markets in late July, but Amy now has us all growing them and eagerly anticipating a bountiful harvest. By now you must have all read her book cover to cover and are ready to taste the recipes. A word of warning ... I have cooked with many of her recipes and they are delicious, but guests have often tried to duplicate them using “regular tomatoes”, rather than heirloom’s and it just doesn’t work — they don’t have the flavor. So don’t waste your time — get the “real deal” with heirloom vegetables.

Thanks again to Amy Goldman for getting us all straight on the subjects of Melons, Squash and Tomatoes — what’s next? (And, if you don’t have the books yet, Amy generously donated a few signed copies to our chapter so let me know please.)

We are all looking forward to the Joseph Halda and Gelene Scarborough event at Wave Hill, the gardens should be lovely at this time (and any time!). Susan Keiser is ready, willing and able to guide us through the trough gardens of Rockefeller Center; and if you thought you just couldn’t manage another Saxifrage in your garden ... Malcolm McGregor will tell us how to grow them all, and make room for just one more. His new book will be available for signing at the June meeting.

Somewhere in the middle of all this — I will be skipping off to Ecuador (again) on a field trip to collect and study gesneriads in the northeastern slopes of the Andes. Many of these areas have recently become accessible to botanists and are extremely rich in plant material that may be new to science. Such trips are extremely focused in order to be productive but we don’t exactly drop out of the clouds into the middle of the jungle, so the process of getting to these areas takes us over and through many fascinating areas of highland paramo terrain, desert lands with only acacia and cactus growing and then ... the lush vegetation and flowers of the tropical and subtropical rain and cloud forests. I’ll see you when I return and undoubtedly have some stories to tell and plants to show and grow. Happy Summer ... already!

(Michael Riley is the current Chairperson of the Manhattan Chapter of NARGS. His own gardens on the Upper West Side, range from sites as diverse as interior walls, tree pits, and roof tops.)
~ EDITOR'S LETTER ~

Dateline: Manhattan. A part of my terrace gardens that I call the ‘Back Forty’ – is dark and uninviting for most of the year. Only my cats and the Warner Cable mechanics would go there. In the depressing shade of an ugly high-rise apartment building the black-tarred walls and soggy bottom remain a constant challenge. But we all have a ‘back forty’ and so did Derek Jarman in Dungeness, Kent, where this innovative English film director, stage designer, artist, and writer, who died in 1994, lived in a tar-slated wooden fisherman’s cabin. Yet “Prospect Cottage” ultimately became a cult destination, as well as a National Trust Property.

Though Jarman was most notable in later years for discussing his AIDS condition in public, his private life was about creating a desolate but beautiful garden on a shingle landscape in the shadow of a nuclear power station. If ever inspiration hit, here it did. I imagined an emerald fernery, a kingdom of fronds that would preside with cool and refreshing majesty against a backdrop of the bleak and the black. It would be my shady retreat on ninety-degree days in August, as well as a menagerie of fiddleheads that will always catch me off guard in early spring by their variety. Little Woodia Polystichoidea, first thing in any part of my gardens to show green, to wiry black strands destined on becoming elegant Japanese Painted Ferns, Athrium Nipponicum ‘Pictum,’ and the furry Ostrich Ferns, Matteuccia Struthiopteris, so tall, straight, and upwardly mobile are three of my favorites.

As long as you get the mood right, you can create the soul of a garden anywhere. Don’t show me beauty in the classical sense. That’s no stretch, when life is not always beautiful. But give me a sunless shaft that seems more like a hell than a haven and as Alexander Pope said, I’m ready to “find the genius of the place.” Even if mechanics tell me it’s the best camouflage job they’ve ever seen, I might now also add welcome to my “Back Forty Garden.”

(Abbie Zabar is the Newsletter Editor. She has written, illustrated, and designed five books; 2.5 of them relate to gardening.)

~ LETTER TO THE EDITOR ~

(RE: March/April ’09 McNARGS Newsletter) Hi Abbie, So who were the founding members of McNARGS? It was kind of you to include me. But, alas, I was not present at the founding or even around much during the earliest days. But I was a garden buddy of many who were. And I included quite a few of them in my Magnum Opus, The City Gardener’s Handbook. First published by Random House in 1990, this book is still going strong in an updated paperback now published by Storey Books. Photographs of gardens by early Manhattan Chapter members include Lalitte and Howell Scott. Larry Thomas’ garden is there too – an amazing winter setting viewed through his terrace door. And there is Niki Ekstrom’s garden for his parents’ house. Pamela Berdan’s spring garden for Pat and Francis Mason is also included. I suspect Pat may well have been an early member, as Pamela could be very persuasive. I hope that clarifies things a bit – or at least doesn’t add much to the confusion. Alas, my present city garden is drenched in shade much of the time, which kinda puts a damper on my rock gardening aspirations. Linda Yang

If you, too, have a fear of rock gardening in the shade, check out Steve Whitesell’s advice to Linda in his Why Don’t You ‘feature’

If that’s not enough to convince nonbelievers that rock gardening is equally beautiful in the shade, turn to the current issue of The Avant Gardener. Thomas Powell, founder, editor, and publisher of this valuable and unique horticultural news service, writes that “Nearly 400 species of Saxifraga, which rock gardeners seem to regard as their exclusive property, are easy to grow and reliable shade garden plants.” He goes on to say, “For some gardeners, they have become as essential for shade as hostas and trilliums. Shaded rock walls are ideal habitats for the encrusted saxifrases while mossy saxifrases will thrive in well-drained and rich soil with part or deep shade in summer.”

And for further insight and inspiring imagery, then definitely come to Malcolm McGregor’s talk on June 1 to hear all about the ways of Saxifrages in shade – and non-shade – gardens.
Cultivate shade-loving rock garden plants against your north-facing wall or in the shade of trees and shrubs? I have a series of hypertufa troughs against a north wall where I grow and bloom dozens of herbaceous species and a few woody plants including *Daphne* x “Lawrence Crocker” and *Sorbus reducta*. *Primula marginata* and *P. auricula* are flowering happily, as well as *Antennaria rosea*, *Omphalodes lojkae*, and a very pretty white mossy saxifrage I lost the label for. Saxifrages can be challenging in our hot summers, but *S. cotyledon* and *S. cochlearifolia v. minor* have been persistent and increased happily. *Aquilegia flabellata v. nana* and *A. bertolonii* both seed vigorously and bloom well. *Heuchera pulchella* blooms heavily as I imagine other western species like *H. cylindrical* would? *Gentiana acaulis* has increased slowly but reliably over several years and there is no better floral color than that deep cobalt trumpet. *Campanula portenschlagiana ‘Aurea’* is easy and long-lived and the golden foliage brings a bright note to a dark area. This is just the tip of the iceberg. There are hundreds of rock garden plants that will thrive in shade, some easy, some challenging. Shade gardening doesn’t only involve woodland plants, so don’t think shady conditions prevent you from having a rock garden. Only sloth does.

Use a chisel to create planting holes in tufa? These tools work much faster and create larger holes for better plant growth than drills. They also leave you with small chips of tufa for use in your rock garden planting soil.

Top-dress your pots, troughs, and planting beds with gravel while you still have your spring energy rush, before it gets too hot. Edge planting beds, finish new construction, and prune out dead wood and leaves, too, so you’ll only need to weed, water, and admire by summer.

Divide your most choice and unusual plants for our 2010 M'NARGS Chapter Plant Sale. Someone will want your unwanted plants, but everyone will want what you’re most proud of, so please share it for a good cause.

~ MEMBER NEWS ~

**Marni Horwitz**, a native plant and rock garden enthusiast acknowledges she is constantly learning from experience. And her mother, Lola Horwitz. Marni also credits working for Susan Keiser as a great learning experience and was thrilled to be a part of The Rockefeller Center Trough Garden project. A second-generation member of M'NARGS since 2008. Marni’s two-year old business, ALIVE STRUCTURES, [marni@alivestructures.com](mailto:marni@alivestructures.com), focuses on green roofs and ecological gardens. She has already installed several green roofs in the city and is preparing for an upcoming busy season. Indeed! On Saturday, May 30th, Marni Horwitz will marry Eric Majorelle in a friend’s Park Slope rooftop apartment with views of Prospect Park and the city. She and Eric have an emerging product line that consists of papercrete and reclaimed wood planters filled with sedum, succulents, and alpine species as well as native plants that are propagated in her ‘humble-sized backyard nursery.’ They hope to sell their creative containers and products at city Farmer’s Markets, select stores, and at special events. A recent article in [dailycandy.com](http://dailycandy.com) features these planters.

**Louis Raymond**, [www.RGardening.com](http://www.RGardening.com), is a landscape designer and new M'NARGS member, who “… got into the field (so to speak) almost 30 years ago, after being unhappy (in reverse chronology) as: an opera singer, a magazine writer, and a student in medical school. I needed to face facts: I just loved plants. For about twelve years, I've been at work on my own gardens out in Rhode Island. Check their progress out at [www.dirtonthekeys.blogspot.com](http://www.dirtonthekeys.blogspot.com). There I revel in many hundreds of plants - including, inevitably, this Spring, ten troughs' worth of (comparatively) very small-scale plants that would be lost in regular-size beds and that will be the subject many posts on these troughs and their plantings.”

Our second new member is **Rebecca McMackin**, a gardener with NYC Parks and Recreation. She has a MSc Degree in Biology from University of Victoria, BC. Rebecca is in love with all plants, especially Begonias, and is a member of the Begonia Society.

And a third new member joined at our recent Plant Sale. He is **Jim Freeman**, a Garden Coach and a member of The Manhattan Orchid Society.
No sooner had Michael Riley become our new Chair, than he discovered an equally new NARGS attraction, **The Linc & Timmy Foster Millstream Garden Award Program.** After reviewing the entry classes, Michael – a pro at sizing up competitive odds – submitted Larry Thomas’ Garden in the ‘Special Award’ category “not only because of the garden’s uniqueness but because it was equally special to the Chapter.” Join us – on this virtual May garden tour – as we reprint some of the visuals and support materials that garnered Larry Thomas’ New York City terrace garden **The Special Garden Award, 2008, from the NARGS Linc & Timmy Foster Millstream Garden Award Program.**

~ **Dear Ms. Bennett and the Awards Committee, (of NARGS) ~** Please accept this application as a candidate for **The Linc and Timmy Foster, Millstream Garden Award, 2008.** We propose the New York City Terrace Garden of Lawrence Thomas in the category of **Special Garden.** Over the past course of a year, this special garden has been all but destroyed through the process of renovation and repair of the masonry facade of Larry’s building. It was a necessary but certainly not a pleasant experience for all concerned. Now, with the refocus of the master and the help of friends, this garden has been ‘reborn’ and much has survived and is flourishing. We celebrate the vitality and spirit that was and is what Larry created. He makes us want to know, and want to grow everything. Mr. Thomas cultivates a rare and special garden. Attached please find testimonial from Steven Whitesell, Larry’s successor in the Chairmanship of the Manhattan Chapter; Lola Horwitz, our immediate past Chapter Chairman; and Abbie Zabar, a friend and Editor of our Chapter Newsletter. We greatly appreciate your consideration of this special garden.

**Michael A. Riley, Chairman, 1.29.09 ~**

~ **from Steve Whitesell ~** “Eleven stories above First Avenue, high above the ambulances and garbage trucks, lays a hidden mountain retreat, filled with a wide assortment of seed and cutting grown alpine and rock garden plants, choice shrubs, an assortment of Clematis species and cultivars, and a few select trees. The plants are grown and displayed in wooden planter boxes, homemade hypertufa troughs, and an array of high-fired unglazed pots of the owner’s creation. A shaded sitting area with a bubbling fountain has welcomed countless travelers to this oasis, and most left refreshed, sated by a variety of sensory impressions and they often carried away a few choice plants, grown from seed in Styrofoam cups. The garden belongs to and was created by Larry Thomas, who also formed the Manhattan Chapter of NARGS over twenty-five years ago in order to bring like-minded local gardeners together to pursue their mutual interests. Larry has since hosted numerous speakers to local chapter meetings and alpine gardeners traveling to and through New York City. In addition to human guests, Larry has nurtured and sheltered a stellar variety of challenging and unusual alpine plants, particularly members of the Campanulaceae and Ranunculaceae. Most were grown from seed and hundreds have been offered for sale at chapter plant sales, the proceeds funding chapter speakers and activities. Seed harvested from Larry’s plants has been freely shared with a number of society seed exchanges, and likely a large percentage of members of this organization can boast of plants traceable to Larry Thomas. Larry has frequently shared technical cultural horticultural methods and information as a speaker at local and national meetings, and his terrace is familiar to many from his slide presentations and photographs published in the Rock Garden Quarterly. Larry’s garden has been an inspiration to NARGS members from several states and this award will recognize his contribution to rock gardening and rock gardeners around the world. Recently reorganized after a disruptive period of roof repair, the containerized garden will continue to evolve and inspire for years to come.”

~ **from Lola Lloyd Horwitz ~** “I’ve known Larry Thomas and his garden since the mid-80’s. I can’t remember anytime, except during building renovations that his garden wasn’t full of visual delight. He fitted so much into that comparatively small space that a visitor couldn’t take in every plant or beautiful pot. Early on, he became fascinated with the genus Campanula and grew many species successfully from seed, even some very difficult ones. But he also grew species of Lewisia, Androsace, Saxifraga, and many others. One year he had prompted *Shortia galacifolia* to bloom. I was in awe. All that he learned in those early years of the Manhattan Chapter he shared with members, and for many of us, myself included, Larry’s knowledge and generosity was crucial to our own growth as rock gardeners. We were invited to enjoy his garden every May. Seedlings could be examined up close. Flowering specimens were shown off in carefully staged arrangements that bore witness to his combined gifts as ceramicist and rock gardener.
His potting/propagation table, pond, woodland garden, hosta path, conifers, Saxifrage on tufa, and whatever was blooming at the time were all there on his 13 by 40 foot terrace which managed to fit in many wide-eyed visitors as well, often holding umbrellas since Larry insisted that all he needed to do was schedule an open terrace afternoon and Mother Nature would provide light rain as accompaniment! I believe that Larry was in the vanguard of demonstrating the beauty of growing plants, both herbaceous and woody, in pots. This is not new for those with greenhouses or alpine houses, but very few city dwellers fully embraced the possibilities of growing plants, particularly alpine plants, in fetching ceramic pots year round on their terraces, balconies, or rooftops. This, Larry has done with the zeal of a Texan, a full dose of Southern charm and lack of pretension. His garden is the outcome of the greed common to most rock gardeners: how to grow more of the plants they covet. But instead of going at the project willy-nilly, he studied ceramics so that he could house his plants happily and beautifully, year round and out of doors. He maintains a few large wooden planters for his conifers and larger Japanese maples, but the majority of his plants are kept individually or in small groups in his hand thrown, frost-proof variations of the classic ‘long Tom.’

When I overhauled the central section of my 17 by 40 foot backyard in Brooklyn, I was greatly influenced by Larry’s terrace garden. He showed me the beauty of big and little plants in pots, arranged artfully, and also the possibility that all my little seedlings could be interesting, that the process of growing the plants was worth showing off to visitors. I’m still working at the ‘artful’ part, but I thank Lawrence Thomas for much that I have learned.”

~ from Abbie Zabar ~ “It’s 1997 and the librarian at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society suggests a recently published article in the Rock Garden QUARTERLY. The title is ‘A City Terrace Garden’ and to quote the byline, “Lawrence B. Thomas gardens on an eleventh floor terrace in New York City. He is a stalwart of the Manhattan Chapter of NARGS and its newsletter editor.” I read the piece and, right away, opened up a Manhattan phone directory – though any kid born and raised in New York City knows you don’t speak to strangers. Yet I was interested in the garden, the gardener, and especially those hand-thrown terracotta pots. We had an okay talk – this strange man and I – but it was the wrong Lawrence Thomas. The speakers were British, as well as Larry’s houseguests at my first NARGS Manhattan Chapter meeting; and even if they were raffling off a copy of the Sunday Mail’s coverage of Charles and Diana’s wedding I suspected here was an organization of serious gardeners. So I joined; and in May I went to my first annual garden ‘walkabout’ on Larry Thomas’ terrace – a spring season highlight of the Manhattan Chapter. Larry was certainly welcoming enough. As were the other members, oohing and aahing, nibbling his cheese and imbibing his booze. But I made like a wallflower, standing on the sidelines the whole evening. I looked, listened, and kept my mouth shut because it didn’t mean a hoot that – for two decades – I had cultivated green walls of 14’ hornbeams and 30-running feet of taxus hedges on my well-documented New York City duplex penthouse terraces; or that I had created an Elizabethan herb garden in a seaside meadow on Nantucket Island. Rock gardening was a new world to me in 1997. Besides, here was a group where no self-respecting member called a plant by its common name and I didn’t speak Latin. Ultimately I would pick up some of the mother tongue; and eventually, Larry Thomas would become a loving friend, a mentor, and even sponsor me to be a judge at the Philadelphia Flower Show. To this day, Larry’s garden remains an expression of his art, his horticultural skills, and an ongoing fascination with the next plant he’s propagating from the NARGS seed exchange. (You’ve never seen so many foam cup incubators.) His eagerness to teach, his passion to share, and his Yankee pragmatism (by way of Amarillo) pervade his garden as much as the noise and pollution of First Avenue traffic. With a diverse collection of containerized alpines – plus indomitable optimism – Larry draws us all together: comrades who know the meaning of gardening in hostile urban circumstances, no matter what obstacles are thrown at us next. Though modest in size, Larry’s 13’ by 40’ densely planted terrace is a mighty inspiring example of rock gardening, not least of all to members of an idiosyncratic Chapter that he helped to found.”
Monday, September 21: **Susan Braverman** and **Joyce Jed**  
(from Urban Oasis at Kingsboro Psychiatric Hospital)  
and **Bruni Torras**  
(from Red Hook Community Farm)  

“**Sustainable Urban Agriculture**”  

[Once again, we return to the “6th & B Garden” for our September McNARGS meeting.  
With special thanks to Mary Buchen and Delphine Oravitz of the 6th & B Events Committee for opening their community gardens to us and for hosting our first meeting of the new season.]  

**Sunday, October 18:** **TRI-STATE MEETING** with **Pam Eveleigh**,  
(A founding member of the Calgary Rock and Alpine Gardening Society (CRA GS) and Board member of the American Primrose Society.)  

“**Wildflowers of Alberta**”  
and  
“**The Genus Primula**”  

(Note: The new location for this event will be Lyndhurst in Tarrytown, NY. Transportation will be provided to the meeting from the Tarrytown train station. The new meeting room will accommodate about sixty people, with additional space for plant sales, vendors, and raffle – plus the ever-present and amazing Hudson River view. Following the program there will be time to also view the beautiful house and grounds.)  

~ Thank you to Don Dembowski & Steve Whitesell for arranging this program ~

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**~ BOOK REVIEW ~**


I haven’t written a book review since college, and I am not enthusiastic about starting again in my seventh decade of life, but this book is good enough for me to break with tradition. I received it as a review copy from Timber Press, and was immediately struck by the book’s fine appearance and feel. It is solidly bound, printed on matte paper, and filled with photographs of exceptional beauty and clarity, including the terrific cover photo. I began reading with some trepidation, expecting an impenetrable text loaded with technical plant jargon, but quickly found myself delighted by the accessibility of the language and the logical order of McGregor’s presentation. From the discussion of ecology and habitats through the description and taxonomy of the species to the clear explanation of how best to grow them in your garden, I was carried along effortlessly. By the time I was done, I was ready to start again. McGregor has written a book fit for a specialist, yet completely accessible to the novice. His descriptions of the enormous variety of these interesting and beautiful plants will absolutely delight any plant person, and will motivate many readers to acquire and grow more than just of few of these often challenging plants. I am always somewhat skeptical about books that describe themselves as “definitive,” as the claim is usually far from true. This one *is* definitive, and will remain so for quite a while. McGregor takes us to places we’ve never been, and gives us the opportunity to grow a small piece of these places in our own gardens. If you get the Sax bug, you’ll be returning to this book almost daily as you delve into this arcane corner of the rock garden world. And as gardeners in New England, you’ll be able to learn which Saxifrages we can grow, and exactly how to grow them. 😊

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(Peter George, Editor of the Berkshire Chapter’s Newsletter, gardens three hours north of NYC in Petersham, MA. He has a special fondness for pollinators and so reserves a large swath of prime garden space for the common stuff seen in every Home Depot, such as Echinacea, tickseed, various mints, lupine, etc. He says that they attract a HUGE variety of bees, wasps, and butterflies, which he can sit and watch for days on end; and, in late July he counts insects in the hundreds at almost any daylight hour. Peter’s book review originally appeared in the Berkshire Chapter Newsletter, February 2009, and we reprint it here with his kind permission.)
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.

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~ WE’LL SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER ~

{Submissions Deadline for September/October Newsletter: 1 September 2009}