



Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society
✧ Volume XL ✧ Late Summer 2016 ✧ Number 5 ✧

Upcoming Programs

Saturday, September 10, 10 a.m.

Frelinghuysen Arboretum

Speaker Hilary Clayton presents 'A Higher State: Steppe to Alpine in Northwest Colorado'

Saturday, September 17, 10 a.m.

Work day in the South Rock Garden

Laurelwood Arboretum

**725 Pines Lake Drive West,
Wayne, New Jersey, 07470**

Sunday, October 16, 10 a.m.

Frelinghuysen Arboretum

**Speaker Elaine Fogerty presents
'Wildlife Control in the Home Garden'**

Bring a friend, a favorite plant or blossom, a warm beverage, and a snack to share!

helpful in becoming a better grower, and in developing a deeper understanding of the death, or near – death, experiences of plants in her charge.



Hilary has served as Watnong Chapter Newsletter Editor since 2012, and coordinates our Chapter seed packing efforts toward the NARGS Seed Exchange.

Her talk will feature highlights of the gardens and hikes of the NARGS Annual General Meeting held June 2016 in Denver and Steamboat Springs, Colorado. This will be her first presentation for the Watnong Chapter.

Please join us, and bring a friend!

Our September Speaker

Our September speaker is long time Watnong member Hilary Clayton. Hilary grows very short-lived alpinines and other rock garden plants, many from the NARGS seed exchange, at The Hay, Honey Farm, where she has worked since 1989. She finds visiting these plants in their natural habitats



Roxanne Hiltz, one of five Watnong members to attend the NARGS AGM, in the home garden of AGM Chair Mike Kintgen, June 27, 2017. Photo by Hilary Clayton.

NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

The Annual Picnic By Noel Schulz Photos by Albert Martin

Our annual picnic, organized by Noel Schulz, was held on Saturday August 13 at noon at Watnong Gardens in Morris Plains. We were the guests of Helen Donn, the longtime caretaker of these beautiful gardens. Although the temperature was in the 90s, there was a nice breeze in the shade, which made the location perfect for the picnic. Fortunately the threat of thunderstorms never materialized. The picnic was well attended by about 25 members. Shop Rite provided the catering, which included roasted chicken, grilled vegetables, roasted potatoes, rice pilaf and salad. Members added side dishes and desserts for the enjoyment of all.



Membership Chair Sid Jones beats the heat at the Chapter Picnic August 13.



The picnic was held in the garden created by Helen Donn, seated left.



Keeping cool in the shade!

The Annual Picnic, continued



Robert Iglesias and friend enjoy conversation.



John and Lainie Beavin offer an ice water toast.

NEWS FROM NARGS

Keep collecting seeds from your favorite rock garden plants! All seed must be submitted to the seed exchange by November 1. For more information, visit www.NARGS.org. For more information on helping our Chapter pack seeds in December, contact Hilary Clayton at hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear All,

The other day, Pam asked me if I would help her harvest Cattail leaves for a basket weaving project. Since we were going to Hillburn, NY to harvest Sweet Grass, I figured we could get Cattails in one of the wetlands near there. We checked several areas to no avail. So, we decided to take a ride to Ramapo College and look at the wet areas there. Again, we had no luck. A look around some of the wetlands and flood plains along the Ramapo River in Oakland also turned up empty. The next day I checked different areas near home around Shongum Lake. There were no Cattails to be had.

In every spot it appeared the Cattails had been choked out by *Phragmites*. I did finally find Cattails in the detention basin at the Fire and Police Academy, but the experience reinforced just how bad the invasive plant issue is, and how rapidly we are losing our native flora. I hope all of you are doing your part in helping to prevent the spread of invasive species, both in your garden and from potentially leaving your garden. New York State last year enacted an Invasive Species Act that regulates the nursery trade and bans the sale of certain plants, which should make it easier for home gardeners to choose well behaved garden plants.

On a brighter note, I am looking forward to our fall gardening season and programming. I hope to continue the Laurelwood Arboretum rock garden project. The bed we restored in the South Rock Garden is looking good, although the little stream nearby deposited some sediment during a summer flood in Wayne. My goals for this fall are to maintain the bed that we restored last year, and to prepare another bed for planting next year. The process will be the same as last time: dig out the existing soil, get new tufa rocks, and then plant. Unfortunately, we did not receive the Norman Singer Grant from the North American Rock Garden Society, but the Chapter has allocated sufficient funds to move ahead with the project.

I plan to lead a workday at Laurelwood on September 17 at 10 a.m. Anyone interested in helping can contact me at miwilson@ramapo.edu or call 862-397-9339. Hopefully, we will be able to schedule another work day in October.

Regards,
Mike Wilson

IT GREW FOR ME

Your editor would like to institute a brief new column each issue, featuring a rock garden plant grown by members, since we share similar growing

conditions. Please send pictures and the how and why of one of your success stories, and a brief essay, to hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com. The deadline for our next issue is September 17. Below I submit the inaugural column; I look forward to printing yours!

***Gentiana septemfida* var.
*lagodechiana***
Hilary Clayton



This little gentian has been one of our longest-lived trough plants, sown in 2001. It has flowered reliably each summer since, with true-blue blossoms the color of a clear summer day. Considered one of the easier, more heat tolerant gentians, it is about four inches high by eight inches wide. It has proven hardy to -12F and tolerant of light shade. Try it in your garden!

OUT AND ABOUT

Two local private gardens will open Saturday, September 17, to benefit the Garden Conservancy. Stone House Garden and The Hay, Honey Farm will open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Hay Honey will host a plant sale by Broken Arrow Nursery. Admission is \$7 per garden. For more information and directions, visit

www.gardenconservancy.org

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**THE WATNONG CHAPTER
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