



Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society

✧ Volume XLVI ✧ Late Winter 2022 ✧ Number 2 ✧

Upcoming Programs for Watnong Members Only!

Our next lecture will be via Zoom,
Saturday, March 19, 2022, 10:30 a.m.
Kenton Seth,
'The Modern Crevice Garden'

The Plant Sale Returns!
Saturday, April 23, 2022 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
& Sunday, April 24, Noon – 4 p.m.
at The Leonard J. Buck Garden
11 Layton Road, Far Hills, NJ 07931.
See page 2 for volunteer opportunities!

Save the Date for our Summer Picnic!
For members only
Saturday, August 6 (rain date 8/7/22)
In the garden of Noel Schulz
More details in upcoming newsletters

Our March Speaker: The Modern Crevice Garden

Crevice gardens have historically been an esoteric, European garden style with a strange name, but recent developments have catapulted them

onto the international stage and into major public gardens and back yards,



Photo by Kenton Seth

especially in the USA. By virtue of growing plants closely with rocks, the opportunity arises to grow certain exotic and native plants better than they can be in a traditional garden. Remarkably, a crevice garden works to shed water in a wet climate and store water in a dry climate, making it a universally useful system, also dealing with awkward garden spaces or making plantable

alternatives to retaining walls. The ecological use of broken concrete as a stone alternative offers opportunity to include gardeners in places where rock is unavailable or too expensive.

Kenton J. Seth, an active member of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of NARGS, is a thirty-something Colorado-based garden designer and hopeless plant slut. He has a small nursery to grow plants for his gardens, which range from around Western Colorado to the US Coasts and even a few overseas. Crevice Gardens dominate his work, including a book in 2022, but he also works with natives, dryland gardens, and recently meadows. He writes a blog at kentonjseth.blogspot.com and his work is at PaintbrushGardens.com

NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

Plant Sale Volunteers Urgently Needed!

The plant sale has been scheduled for April 23 and 24, and your help is needed as much as ever! The Watnong Chapter has a pressing financial need to have a successful plant sale. Please note that it is requested that all volunteers be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Other safety protocols will be consistent with state requirements at that time.

To volunteer, please call Melissa Grossmann at 908-604-8060 or email her at donmliss@msn.com

We need volunteers to fill the following capacities:

1. Set Up at the Buck Garden at 9:30 on April 21. We are usually mostly done by lunch time. Lunch will be provided.

2. Cashiers. The shifts will be the same as in past years: Saturday, 9:45 a.m. - noon; noon - 2:00 p.m.; 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Sunday, noon - 2:00 p.m.; 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Even if you can only work for part of a shift, your help would still be invaluable. A thousand thanks!

3. Plant Advisors (help customers select plants). The shifts are the same as for the cashiers.

4. There will be no holding pen this year, so please consider being a cashier or plant advisor instead.

5. Plant sitters to guard the plants on Friday, April 22 during the Buck Garden's open hours, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., alerting visitors that the plants will not be available for purchase until Saturday. Please volunteer for whatever portion of those hours you are available.

6. PLEASE DONATE PLANTS! Please pot up your divisions and extra seedlings, they can be dropped off from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Saturday April 16 through Wednesday April 20 (noon – 3 p.m. Sunday April 17. Please contact Melissa if you need to make alternate arrangements for donating plants.

If you need pots for divisions or seedlings, contact Hilary at hilaryhclayton@gmail.com.

7. Please print and share the flyer on page 9!

To volunteer, or for any other questions, please call Melissa Grossmann at 908-604-8060 or email her at donmliss@msn.com. Thank you!

Welcome to our new members!

2022

Dante Cifelli, E. Hanover

Barbara and Earl Conklin, Towaco

Hugh Merritt, Towaco

Judy Snow, Basking Ridge

Kathleen Swick, Anchorage, AK

Lorraine Tooley, Sparta

Suzanne Yamarone, Maplewood

2021

Diane Adams and Moti Kopilovitch, Ridgewood

Rick and Jackie Plate, Holmdel

Mary Jo and Steve Sichak, Wanaque

Please welcome them at our next zoom meeting! We will have an opportunity to meet with each other and welcome them in person at the Plant Sale at The Leonard J. Buck Garden in April.

NEWS FROM NARGS

Second round/ surplus seed ordering will be from March 1 – March

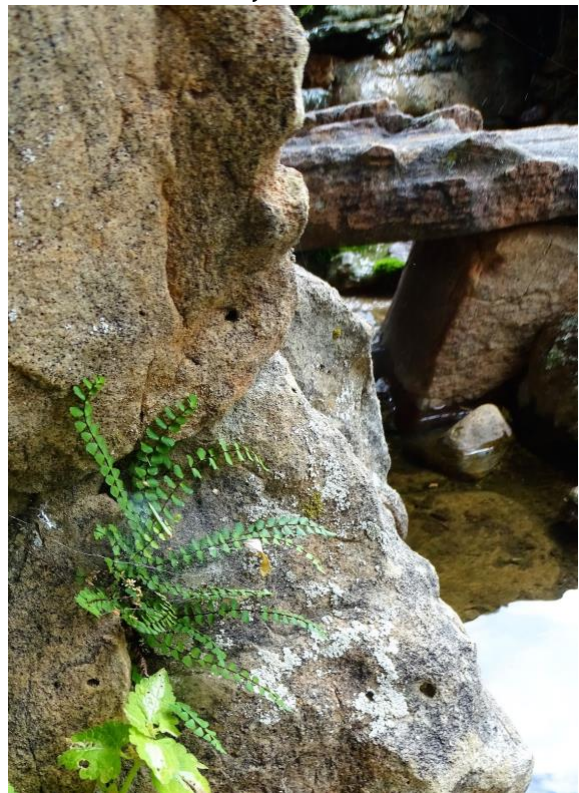
20, 2022. Take a look, there are still lots of interesting seeds to try!

President's Message:

Rock Garden Manifesto

By Panayoti Kelaidis

“...discern /Upon the rough gray wall a rare wall fern” -- John Shade



Asplenium trichomanes at Radebaugh Garden, Louisville

Why on earth would rock gardening require a manifesto? Whose barricades would we want to storm, anyway? Admit it: what really appeals to all of us is the wonder of plants—rock plants especially of course—those enchanting little waifs that thrive where bold, brash perennials would fear to tread! As the poet John Shade “discerns/Upon the

rough gray wall a rare wall fern” we are fascinated by the frequent partnership of rock and plant whether moss campion embracing a speckled granite boulder on Mount Evans, paintbrush bursting into scarlet flame in a crevice in Canyonlands, or *Asplenium ruta-muraria* festooning a rustic wall in the Lake District. And we strive to create habitats in our gardens where we can replicate these vignettes.

In Britain, most rock gardeners replace rock with a clay pot—and grow all manner of rock plants to a size and glory most can never attain in nature. To wander through a British rock garden show must approximate the ecstasy the devout believe they’ll experience daily in Paradise for eternity (not sure I’d be able to put up with it that long and may be better suited for the other place as a consequence).

There are perhaps a dozen journals published around the world dedicated to rock gardening—and most focus on single plants, or plant genera (although you often find travelogues about trips to remote mountains to see alpine in habitat as well). The photographs contained in these journals often show plants—gorgeous plants, often rare and unobtainable plants—growing contentedly in pots or by themselves in a garden. The North American Rock Garden Society’s Quarterly has had a few of these images as well—not to the extent of European societies, however.

If you’ve been lucky enough to watch any of this year’s NARGS Webinars (you can always sign up to do so, by the way:

they’re available ongoingly on the Quarterly web pages) you’ll notice that none of the three this year feature alpine on rocks or in pots. What’s afoot?



Castilleja integra at APEX in Colorado

There has been another current that has run through rock gardening from its hoary wellsprings in Britain, Central Europe and before that even in China and Japan: the early practice of rock gardening was really about landscape: creating a vignette not of a few plants and a rock, but a scene you might find on the Alps or in East Asia—some of those fantastically stacked mountains. Often as not, a stream winds through and there’s a waterfall. Rock gardening as we practice it is a late born child of the Romantic Movement which glorified nature and attempted to replace the squalor of the Industrial Revolution by bringing the Alps piecemeal into burgeoning suburbs of London or Prague. A millennium or so before that, Chinese bureaucrats dreamed of capturing something wild and rugged in their cloistered gardens, while the cities

and farms were obliterating all traces of wilderness over thousands of square miles of East Asia.

Theoretically, you could grow alpine in a highly formal, “modernistic” style—tuck them into crevices of otherwise rigidly rectilinear walls or rigid, mid-century modern quadrants. Dwight Ripley—one of the supreme gardeners of the 20th century—did just that at his last house on Long Island. But almost all of us try to create free-form, naturalistic constructs around our highly rectilinear built spaces. Much of the charm and fascination with our art is how we go about fitting our round garden spaces in the square holes of Civilization.

Meanwhile, humanity has replaced so much of the globe with those built spaces—farms, cities, suburban and exurban waste spaces that the Romantic “nature” of the past has become restricted to remote mountains in distant places, to rapidly shrinking prairies, woodlands and postage stamp parklands and token forgotten corners subject to development at a moment’s notice. Douglas Tallamy’s powerful premise is that we can transform our suburban and urban gardens back to something resembling the natural ecosystems that we’ve displaced. That way the fantastic array of native insects that eschew our sterile lawns and pesticide infested gardens can return, along with the birds that depend on them. Tallamy’s gained some traction, and his philosophy makes great sense in the Eastern hardwood forest—which can regenerate surprisingly quickly if

homeowners can be de-programmed from bluegrass lawns.



Cypripedium hybrid at an English show in Kent

Even in wooded areas, not everyone wants to live among towering trees. I am always struck how sparse and treeless neighborhoods often are in California or the Pacific Northwest: in cloudy and rainy climates people often yearn for sun. Likewise, those of us who live in arid or semi-arid climates may not want to have our landscape revert entirely to treeless prairie or gravelly desert pavement.

That’s where rock gardening comes in. The contemporary rock gardener’s home landscape is often a mosaic: most of us have portions—often large portions—dominated by native vegetation. In my case, I have a miniature patch of shortgrass prairie—not unlike what would have grown where my garden is now. But most of us have trees—and often these are not native. We do so for shade, for their beauty in different seasons—and for rock gardeners because we love to grow the woodland plants that grow in tree

shade. Lots of us have desert-like corners—sometimes under the eaves of roof overhangs on the hot sides of the house where we may grow cacti and other xerophytes. And so our gardens transform into a sort of microcosm of the temperate world. This is not altogether unnatural: nature is a master of microenvironments. I know a spot in Baca County, Colorado, where cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) is massed along Tecolote Creek, a shady rock face is festooned with thousands of two-foot fronds of Venus hair fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris* var. *modesta*), and on the hill above a sparse rocky pasture is studded with eight-foot Walking stick chollas (*Cylindropuntia imbricata*). Not many homeowners will go that far with our microclimatic manipulation—although most of us would like to try!

May I suggest that rock gardeners are of course hobbyists who love to grow small plants in rock gardens for the sheer aesthetic joy it brings us. But rock gardening is more. Our hobby is a serious laboratory where we conduct pretty ambitious research on an enormous spectrum of wildflowers, shrubs and trees. Much of this research finds an outlet in our amazing Seed Exchange, but also as we learn to adapt wild plants to our urban settings—we are also forging landscapes that are much closer to natural processes than your clipped lawn, sheared juniper and yew foundation plantings.

I'd like to suggest our gardens in and of themselves are manifestos celebrating the science of horticultural

experimentation as well as the art of garden design. And the Quarterly bulletin of NARGS and chapter newsletters are a voice for a vibrant community: These are timely bulletins and lifeline communications among gardeners who are working to create harmony between what's left of the truly wild and the ever-expanding juggernaut of Civilization.

I have done seven presentations on plant travels for Denver Botanic Gardens you are welcome to watch for free at your convenience at this URL: <https://www.botanicgardens.org/our-impact/trips-travel>. They include my plant focused travel to China, Greece, Turkey, Georgia (Caucasus), Tibet, New Zealand and Central Asia)



Save the Dates: June 14–16, 2022

By Carol Eichler, Adirondack Chapter

We're going to try again! We're hosting 2022 NARGS Annual General Meeting to be held June 14-16, 2022. The theme is similar to last time but with minor modifications: **Alpine Visions: Exploration and Inspiration.** Cornell Botanic Gardens will again co-host with us. To quote Yogi Berra, if our program feels like "déjà-vu all over again"...well, in a way it is! The enthusiasm for the 2020 AGM that we were forced to cancel was so overwhelming that we're willing to give it another shot and we've tried to retain much of the original itinerary. That's why you may see some resemblances, yet with some important differences too.

All rock gardens start with a vision, often one inspired by what we've seen in nature. Therefore, we are emphasizing the "exploration" side of our theme. The experience of seeing plants growing in their native habitat can be revelatory, even inspirational. So you will see us welcoming a new line-up of plant explorers as our speakers and we hope you'll be as excited about them as we are.

The 3-day meeting will be based on the north campus of Cornell University, voted one of the most beautiful U.S. college campuses. Many of our activities will occur in the Robert Purcell Community Center or nearby. Residence hall lodging, if you want to stay close to the action, is offered literally steps away from this building.

Unofficially this AGM, like those of the past, provides a great way for NARGS members (enthusiastic gardeners all) with an annual opportunity to share our gardening experiences, to renew friendships, and to form new ones. Together we will share our own plant explorations, inspirations, and visions.

What to Expect: daytime field trips, evening talks (line-up below), plant sales by choice vendors, plus an optional pre-AGM tour to visit three exceptional private gardens in the Syracuse area.

Speakers

F. Robert Wesley, botanist at the Cornell Botanic Gardens, is one of our area's foremost experts on native plants of New York State. He spoke at Taproot 2020 about the native plants of the Finger Lakes gorges and the flora of the Chaumont Barrens alvar preserve. This time he will speak about the rich diversity of native orchids in New York State.

Eleftherios Dariotis (aka Liberto Dario, the moniker he gave himself for use on his Facebook page) is a horticulturist, botanist, and plant explorer from Athens, Greece. He owns a small nursery and bulb business, travels extensively around the world to study and photograph plants in their native habitats, and leads plant tours, including a NARGS Tour to Greece in 2019.

Sue Milliken and Kelly Dodson are the owners of Far Reaches Farm in Port Townsend, Washington, whose extensive collection of plants is spectacularly unfocused and a plant collector's paradise. They are also founding directors of Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy, a non-profit whose mission is the acquisition and conservation of vulnerable plants of wild and cultivated origin that are new or rare in North America. They travel the distant corners of the world to acquire and conserve horticulturally and botanically important rare plants, learn about them, and teach what they know.

Field Trips While these field trips will probably have less relevance to our members, we are planning a field trip on Wednesday, to include a guided walk to one of our renown gorges – either Upper Treman gorge or Upper Buttermilk Falls gorge, visits to two choice private gardens (the Stark/Stauble garden and Kobre/Denson garden), and a lakeside lunch on the shores of Cayuga Lake (Myers Park). On Thursday, we visit the Cornell Botanic Gardens plant collections with their docents on hand to answer questions. Free time in the afternoon allows our registrants to further explore the Gardens and Arboretum, or to venture to other on- or off-campus attractions.

Additional Activities There will be NARGS awards, election of officers, and

the annual report, plant sales, book sales and signings. On Thursday evening there will be a banquet and open bar, and post-AGM on-your-own tours of ACNARGS members' gardens.

Registration As a registrant, you will have the advantage of full access to ALL the AGM activities. You are required to be a member of NARGS to register (still a bargain at \$40). Additional information and the registration link are posted on the NARGS.org Home Page under Events, listed as Annual Meeting and Tours 2022. The registration fee of \$450 payable by credit card will be due at registration. We are limited to a maximum of 150 registrants.

WATNONG CLASSIFIEDS

HYPERTUFA TROUGHS



If you would like to place an ad here, send copy to the Newsletter Editor, hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com. Deadline for the spring newsletter is March 25, 2022.

Spring Plant Sale

Leonard J. Buck Garden 11 Layton Road Far Hills, NJ

Saturday, April 23, 10am - 5pm

Sunday, April 24, 12pm - 5 pm

Choice selections
of perennials,
ferns, alpine,
woody, native &
deer resistant
plants!

This event is co-sponsored by the
Watnong Chapter of the North
American Rock Garden Society.



Somerset County
Park Commission



Leonard J. Buck Garden
908 722-1200, Ext. 5621
www.somersetcountyparks.org

Health regulations and guidelines are subject to change, based on circumstances at the time of this event. Individuals with hearing/ speech impairment, please call the relay service @ 711

2022 WATNONG CHAPTER OFFICERS

Co-Chair	Roxanne Hiltz	973-361-6680	roxanne.hiltz@gmail.com
Co-Chair	Melissa Grossmann	908-604-8060	donmliss@msn.com
Vice Chair	Brian Coleman	973-325-3453	bell.coleman@verizon.net
Treasurer	Don Grossmann	908-604-8060	donmliss@msn.com
Secretary	Debby Zweig	201-230-7725	zweig@hotmail.com

2022 WATNONG COMMITTEES

Membership & Distribution	Sid Jones	973-366-7241	rsj40jr@icloud.com
Programs	Noel Schulz	201-445-6445	noelschulz@verizon.net
Program Committee	Debby Zweig	201-230-7725	zweig@hotmail.com
Digital Projector	Michael Wilson	862-397-9339	miwilson@ramapo.edu
Publicity	Martha Podilchuk	908-507-6487	marthapod@comcast.net
Plant Sale	Melissa Grossmann	908-604-8060	donmliss@msn.com
Newsletter	Hilary Clayton	908-781-2521	hilaryhclayton@gmail.com

If you print this newsletter, please recycle it when you're finished

**THE WATNONG CHAPTER
NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY
c/o The Leonard J. Buck Garden
11 Layton Road
Far Hills, NJ 07931**

FIRST CLASS MAIL