

# Newsletter

North American Rock Garden Society  
Berkshire Chapter      September 2006

## Next Meeting

**Saturday, October 7, at 10:30 AM**

Berkshire Botanical Garden Exhibit Hall  
BBG is located 2 miles west of Stockbridge  
MA at the junction of Routes 102 & 183

**Chapter Business:** Show & Tell,  
Announcements, and Plant Auction

**AM & PM – Jane McGary, *Exploring  
Unusual Bulbs & Bulb Workshop***

Jane McGary, Editor of the NARGS journal *The Rock Garden Quarterly* for the past 5 years, and of several NARGS anthologies published by Timber Press, is a lifelong avid gardener who now specializes in growing hardy and half-hardy ‘geophytes’ – plants that spend part of their annual cycle as underground storage organs such as bulbs, corms, and tubers. Although the climate in western Oregon where she lives is quite different from that of New England, many of the techniques she’ll present are appropriate to any part of the country, since she grows many of her more than 1300 species in pots under cover. Her **AM lecture**, “Exploring Unusual Bulbs” will present numerous lesser-known plants and will discuss how to get and grow them. Her **PM workshop** will demonstrate types of bulbs and other storage structures and how to grow bulbs from seed. It will also include a question-and-answer period as well as a display of bulb lists and catalogs from around the world.

**Lunch — BYO.** We welcome dessert contributions. This will be followed by our plant sale.



## Chairman’s Message – 9/16/06

*By Peter F. George*

Today I wandered around my gardens, simply taking in the beauty of the day. I planned on planting some bulbs I picked up from Odyssey Bulbs in Lancaster, MA, but with the sun shining, the fall asters glistening with dew as they warmed and opened to the sun, I simply couldn’t detach myself from the unusual pleasure of observing, rather than participating. I sipped my morning coffee and watched the more ambitious bumblebees start their daily effort at getting inside the bottle gentians, *Gentiana clausa*. We rarely assign intelligence to insects, but this process of bee forcing her way inside the flower, disappearing for a minute or more, and then bursting out covered with pollen is certainly ‘intelligent’ to me. Intellectually I may accept instinct as the driving force of these

insects, but I cannot truly believe there is nothing beyond DNA that creates the interplay, which assures these oddly beautiful flowers will produce seed and give them a chance at reproduction.

I thought about getting my camera to record the beauty of flower and insect, but I decided that memory and imagination would provide me with a more satisfying image of the day than the digital images I would store and rarely, if ever, view. Even now, only hours later, I find my mental image more evocative than the reality that resides only 100 or so feet from my computer.

I have other plants that are in flower, and are providing me with great pleasure and beauty, so I'll provide brief descriptions of some of them, which hopefully may give you some sense of the palette I am seeing these last weeks of summer.

*Calylophus serrulatus*, a shublet in the evening primrose family, has been blooming all summer and still looks as beautiful today as it did in June. My plant is 4 years old, about 16 inches across and 12 inches tall, and features nickel sized yellow flowers that stay open during the day. It is bone hardy, and loves it hot and dry. *Aster liariifolius*, a very compact form I found in the Quabbin Reservoir watershed, is covered with small lavender daisies. 10 years old, it is about 15" tall and 2 feet across, and provides my garden with a much-needed boost of color in September and October each year. *Corydalis lutea* continues its 3-season display, and the



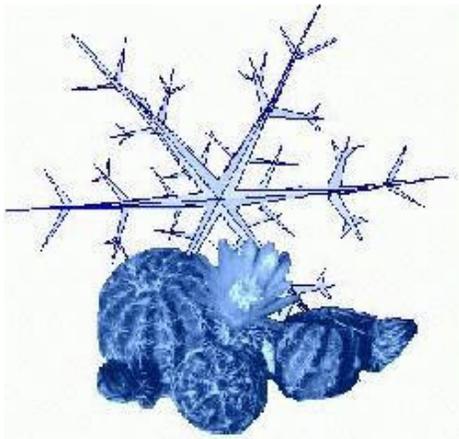
YELLOW SANDWICH  
Calylophus serrulatus  
- ONAGRACEAE -  
CARNEGIE HILL  
MOUNT PISGAH BEDS AREA  
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP, N.J.

fall blooming Cyclamens are starting their lovely, always unexpected display. They are complemented by the aggressive but beautiful *Chrysanthemum weyrichii*, whose white and pink daisies stay with me until after Halloween each year. *Serratula tinctoria*, a composite with pinkish thistle like flowers, repeats its annual display, subtle but distinct, in a corner of my shady garden that sees little other color after July. *Zauschneria garrettii* is flashing its orange-red tubes of color, contrasting nicely with the small yellow flowers of *Picradeniopsis oppositifolia*, a rhizomatous composite whose seed I collected in Western Kansas in 2000. There remain a few late blooming *Dianthus* scattered around, but the bulk of the gardens are still texture and shape, rather than the brilliant display of May and June, yet the effect is still remarkably satisfying to me.

This issue will be our month we are focusing on soil mixes for growing first 12-page issue, in full color, and I was a bit concerned about filling it. But as always, our members have continued to contribute the quantity and quality we need.

My intention is to organize each issue around a gardening theme, and this seeds and for the open garden. Next month our theme will be 'Getting Ready For Winter,' so please write a short article about what you do as we start the process of closing down our gardens and giving our plants the best chance of surviving the unpredictable weather we face here in New England.

## Hardy Cactus Nutrition



To be honest with you, this article is not about cactus growing mix. Since I've never known a serious grower of any kind who did not have his or her own ideas on soil mixes, I'm not about to foist on your shoulders one more 'formula' for growing hardy cacti plants. But when it comes time for establishing an outdoor bed for cacti, there are a few things to consider.

Since drainage, along with sunlight, are the keys to all cactus growing, you will probably want your outdoor bed to be built up as high as possible and contain not more than 20% of organic matter. In some cases growers have succeeded well with 10% or less 'soil' in their mixes. The remaining portion in your bed can be all sand. Builder's sand, the roughest kind, seems to be best. Or, as I prefer, half sand and half 3/8<sup>th</sup> inch pea gravel. Some boulders can be used for structure where needed. The plants like to put their roots down next to them for warmth and moisture during dry periods. This is a good place to try your plants of questionable hardiness, on the south side if possible.

When it comes to growing hardy cacti in containers where small amounts of mix are required, there are these ingredients to consider. For sand, you might want to use 'chicken grit,' chips (granite, I believe) that come in several sizes. It is coarser than sand and plants like it. Another product being used is Turface. It comes in small pellets like Kitty Litter, and is intended to be used in breaking down clay soil. It produces aeration with the ability to retain moisture. A third product is 'Dry Stall.' This is a pumice product ground small and used in horse stalls. Like Turface, it can provide aerations while retaining moisture. Any combination of these, plus a small amount of organic material, will be good in your trough or other container. It will produce the high degree of drainage you want.

*John Spain*

## A Plant Interlude

Some years ago, even before our mistress of the region, Anne Spiegel, I visited the Dolomites with an English group. It started with a delightful three days in Venice.



Shortly after our arrival in the Dolomites I found a tiny shrub coming out of a crack in solid limestone – no soil, sand or other detritus was present. It was remarkable. It had about six to eight lanceolate green leaves and tiny yellowish-green fragrant flowers with narrow petals. It was like a jewel.

I took several pictures and then forgot about it with no idea of its name. Sometime later at home, while browsing through a book about the alpine plants of northern Italy, I found an excellent photograph. It was *Rhamnus pumilus*.

I mentioned this to Paul Held and again, some time later, he put a small 2" pot into my hand with a label. It was *Rhamnus pumilus*.

I put it in a very well drained spot in Carol's rock garden in a mixture of gravel, sand, crushed oyster shell and a kiss of loam. It has done well. It presently has 12 leaves and looks very healthy. I am now waiting for flowers.

Every rock gardener should visit the Dolomites, as it is the source of many of our finest rock garden plants.

Nick Nickou

## Plants From Seed

*By Anne Spiegel*

Peter George indicated that he'd like a summary on how I grow plants from seed and what mix is used. So here goes.

The mix is quite straightforward: 2/3 sharp sand and 1/3 soil mix such as Metromix. I have used others but found some of them too peaty and difficult to combine. A word on "sharp" sand. As I define it and can get it

here, it's highway sand (i.e. what is used on the highways here in winter – sand which has not had the fine gravel removed - not mason's sand, which HAS had the fine gravels removed and is very uniform. Obviously, no salt has been added). These are mixed together by measure, in a very large, deep wheelbarrow. When the mix looks uniform, I add some Osmocote, which ensures more mixing. The resulting mix held some moisture but is fast draining so seedlings are not soggy.

I use small pots (2 1/2" square by 3" deep) and when there's a lot of seed, multiple pots are used so the seed has room. Often one pot will have wonderful germination and the other pots lag behind. With this kind of fickle behavior there's all the more reason to use multiple pots. Pots are filled to within an inch of the top, and tamped down with whatever device I've found at the moment. The label is placed in the pot and seed is then sown thinly on top and the pot is dressed with 1/8" gravel. I found a gravel yard, which made this gravel as an experiment, and I bought 10 yards, which at my rate of use will probably last a lifetime. I hope so, because it's no longer available. If the seed is very fine, I either mix it with the



dressing.

fine gravel and sow them together, or pour the seed on top of the gravel

The pots are then placed in the deep, bottom half of the turkey roaster, and water is added until it comes within half an inch of the top of the pots. This saturates the pot quickly, very important since there is only one turkey

roaster in my kitchen. The pots are removed and placed on the kitchen counter which has been prepared in advance by a covering of either wax paper or foil, whichever I have an excess of at that time. It's easy to sponge up extra water, which I do periodically. When there are enough pots done, they're placed in a fitted tray that holds 32 pots. Meanwhile the next batch has gone into the turkey roaster that has had more water added and the process is repeated until trays cover the counter. The counter can hold 12 trays; you can do the math. At any rate, that's enough for one day. The trays sit there all night and are inspected the next morning for any excess moisture, which is wiped away. At some point before that night, the trays are taken outside to sit under the lathe shelter. By the simple expedient of placing old kitchen screens (never throw anything away – I learned that when the children were in kindergarten), on cinder blocks, everything is covered to protect it from heavy rain. Then I do nothing except keep heavy snow brushed off the screens or else they perform a swan dive on the top of your pots.

All the sown seed pots spend the winter this way and usually start germinating some time around the third week of April. It's amazing how the seedlings seem able to handle snows and sharp cold spells. They seem to respond most strongly to the amount of daylight. By May, they are popping up like crazy and I start the process of moving pots to group the germinated ones together. By mid June, I'm deep in the process of transplanting into individual pots.

Do I have my own method of doing this? Of course. There are probably as many methods as there are seed growers.

## Hellebores

A Comprehensive Guide

By Burrell and Tyler

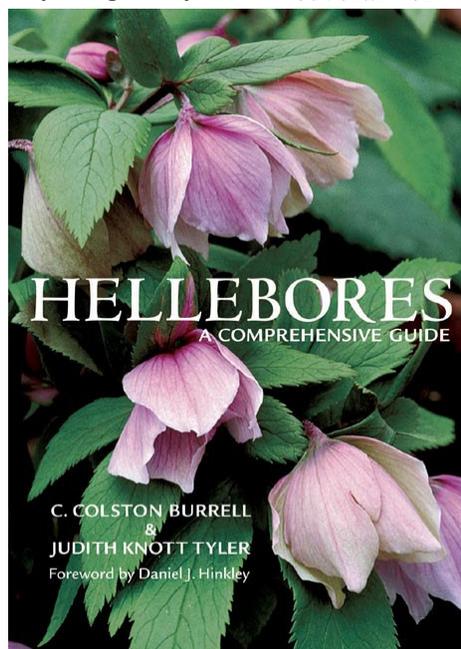
The title pretty much says it all. The numerous excellent photographs are all first rate and the cover is a masterpiece depiction of *Helleborus tibetanus*.

Chapter headings cover all phases of interest in the subject...from fertilization to breeding and from history to a listing and description of the known species. "Throughout History" is of particular interest to me as (because of my 84 years) I have known several of the subjects personally...L.H. Bailey, John Wister and of course Pierre Bennerup.

Every one of the species has characteristics unique enough to make it desirable for acquisition. "You can never have enough Hellebores" which of course also applies to trilliums, rhododendrons and peonies.

I consider this one of the best books about a single genus of plants.

Reviewed by  
Nickolas Nickou MD



*Note: We have 25 copies of 'Hellebores' at a discount price available for the November meeting. Cole Burrell will be signing at that meeting, so please notify me if you wish to reserve a copy at \$30.00.*

# September Meeting Notes

*Prepared by Tom Clark*

Well before Peter George called the September meeting to order the room was abuzz with activity. Members and guests were toting in trays of plants for the BIG plant sale, others were organizing and pricing the offerings, and everyone was checking labels and jostling to see what was arriving in each new tray. Robert Siegel deserves a hearty thank you for coordinating the plant sale, our largest single fund-raiser each year.

Amongst those in attendance were several guests and several members who make it only occasionally to meetings. Jo Anne Greene of Lenox, MA and London, England; Marie Greener of Averill Park, NY; as well as a couple of others whom I, unfortunately, could not track down to get their names. Linda Montanaro of Scotia, NY is a member but is unable to attend many meetings. Linda is Chair of the Capitol-Hudson Iris Society, an affiliate of the American Iris Society. Charlie Spencer, Curator of the Wildflower Garden at Stanley Park in Westfield, MA, was also in attendance as a newer member. As always, welcome to all.

*Show and Tell* was particularly enriching both to our knowledge and our chapter coffers. All plants shown were generously donated for auction. Amy Olmsted showed a fine double-flowered form of *Lewisia*.

Nick Nickou brought a full pot of the Mexican *Bessera elegans*. This charming plant, although not hardy (even for Nick and Carol) is easily managed in a pot – corms are kept dry over winter in their pots and brought out in spring, watered and resume growth. From atop the 12-15” stems dangle clear orange bells. Nick also mentioned the new book, *Hellebores: A Comprehensive Guide* by C. Colston Burrell and Judith Knott Tyler. Nick stated that it is a tremendous book and amongst the finest books dealing with a single genus. Mr. Burrell will speak at our November meeting and it is likely that copies of the book will be available. Joe Strauch had layered divisions of a special dwarf cherry, *Prunus*



*pumila* var. *depressa* ‘Gus Mehlquist’. This ground-covering shrub was found on an island in the Connecticut River in New Hampshire. Joe obtained his original plant from the Arnold Arboretum. One of the guests

even got in the act. Marie Greener brought bulbs of *Fritillaria acmopetala* which grow to foot-tall plants bearing two-toned yellowish-green and reddish-brown nodding bells. Our speaker Mark McDonough showed several wonderful species and selections of *Allium* for which he is so well known. *Allium togasii* is a late flowering species from Japan. *A. thunbergii* ‘Ozawa’ is a compact, clump-forming plant with purple flowers that open exceptionally late. On September 15<sup>th</sup> the plant I have is loaded with buds but not showing any color yet! *Allium dhagastanicum* is another late bloomer with dainty pinkish flowers on six

inch plants from central Asia. The plant that prompted the most enthusiastic response both in terms of oohs and aahs and frenzied bidding when it was on the block was a hybrid between *A. nutans* and *A. senescens* that Mark has dubbed 'Labor Day'. This plant with rich, deep purple globular flower heads above dense clumps of foliage has not yet been released but will be introduced by Plant Delights Nursery of North Carolina.

He has been called 'The Onion Man,' and to the delight of all, Mark McDonough provided us with a smorgasbord of onions to seek out and try in our gardens. But he made it clear from the start that his interests go well-beyond *Allium*. Over the years Mark has traveled down many garden paths - *Allium*, *Crocus*, *Arisaema*, *Epimedium*, trees, and shrubs, to name a handful. During that time he has noticed that certain themes run through his interests - ease of care, scents and aromas, late-blooming, multiple seasons of interest and so on. He highlighted some of his favorite trees and described how he creates mulched tree rings and uses that space in which to grow a very wide range of dwarf bulbs.



When asked how he prevents damage from voles and other such critters, he said that he plants most his small bulbs quite deep. Despite what many books say he generally buries them at least six inches. Throughout his talk Mark mentioned a few of the mottos he lives by - be in the garden as much as possible, mitigate adversity, learn to let go and allow for moderate chaos to gain unexpected rewards. Certainly everyone who jumped into the moderately chaotic plant sale that followed Mark's wonderful talk reaped some rewards!

## 'Rose Growers Disease'

Last year, at just about this time, I noticed that my left thumb was infected. After a week of soaking in saltwater, the infection worsened, so I went to the doctor who removed a tiny splinter from beneath my fingernail, and prescribed an antibiotic. About one week later, I noticed a small red lesion just above my wrist on my forearm. Over the next 9 months, 3 more lesions appeared, in a straight line up my forearm. After several misdiagnoses, and several rather unpleasant experiences with antibiotics and sulfa drugs, I have finally gotten the correct diagnosis. I have what is known as 'Rose Growers Disease,' (Sporotrichosis). It is a fungal infection that enters the body via a break in the skin, usually on the hand or arm. It is found on roses, other brambles, sphagnum moss, and hay, and is extremely difficult to diagnose. It is treated with the drug 'Sporanox' or alternatively, potassium iodide. Treatment can take as long as 6 months to completely defeat the fungal infection. The lesions are both ugly and painful, and must be treated or they will continue to spread.

What is of real concern to me, and should be to all of you, is that many commercial potting mixes contain *Sporothrix schenckii*, the fungus that causes this disease. I would caution all of you to be extremely careful around brambles or any non-sterile potting material/soil if you have any cuts or scrapes on your hands or arms. At this point I wear gloves all the time while gardening, and the literature on this disease suggests that if you want to be certain NOT to get infected, gloves make a lot of sense.

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/sporotrichosis\\_g.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/sporotrichosis_g.htm)

Peter George

When drinking wine amongst the  
roses  
Or guzzling beer while throwing  
bricks  
Or playing games in bales of hay  
Where lurks the tricky sporothrix,  
Beware, the price you pay for play  
When you get struck by dread  
mycoses  
---author unknown

## Partnering With Plants

By Elliot Jessen

My story begins in the early 30s. I don't think my folks were too happy to see me; my father was out of work and would be for a couple of years. Money was scarce and he took a summer job picking tomatoes for the local cannery in Windsor, CT at \$2.00 a day! Fortunately my folks owned their house. People walked away from their mortgages in those days. Since there wasn't any money and no place to go, my sister and I had to entertain ourselves most of the time. I don't remember being bored! My mother had always had an interest in plants and wildflowers in particular. She used to organize long walks in the woods. In the dry woods, among white pines, cyripedium grew by the hundreds along with *Pyrola elliptica* or *P. rotundifolia*. Naturally we learned to identify many of the trees and shrubs – flowering



honeysuckle, *Rhododendron prinophyllum* and *R. viscosum* were occasionally found.

As we grew older, my father would take me out to the pastures and swampy areas to catch butterflies. We had quite a collection at one time, mounted in a deep frame for display. This must have lasted 20 years before it finally fell apart. One of the more interesting people I met was a gent who owned property on the banks of the Farmington River. This land had once been owned by a botany professor from Trinity College in Hartford. He used the land as a summer retreat and built a sizable cottage sometime in 1913. By the time I first saw it, it was not in good shape; it slid into the river in the late 1940s, as the underlying soil was mostly clay. According to my mother this was not the first time a chunk of land slid into the river in this area.

My friends and I used this land as access to the river to swim and fish. Spring brought on a display of spring flowers beyond compare in this area. The Professor had established a collection of *Trillium* and in the thirty years that had passed they really took off. *Trillium erectum* (white and red), *T. grandiflorum*, *T. sessile*, *T. nivale* and *T. luteum* are what I can recall. Carol and I returned to this area three or four years ago with permission from the present owner, and found so many trees down we had difficulty getting around – quite a disappointment! Among other introductions were several *Primulas*, including *P. veris*, *P. vulgaris* and *P. polyanthus*. These I still covet.

One of my favorite childhood pastimes was trout fishing.. In the 40s there were perhaps six or seven good trout streams in Windsor; likely there are only a couple left due to suburban sprawl. My favorite was a tiny stream in a steep sided ravine not far from Bradley Airport. You could always get a couple of 6-10" native trout from this brook. Trees surrounded this little ravine and their leaves cascaded down the sides, eventually producing a rich, friable soil mix.

Underlying springs created a moist but well-drained area

which grew

*Orchis spectabilis*,  
*Adiantum pedatum* and  
*Trillium cernuum*,  
the latter over 18" tall! In the 1960s this ravine became the Windsor landfill.



My teen years were spent boating and fishing on the Farmington and Connecticut Rivers. Another trout fishing trip was part of an outing with my Sunday School class; we went to Granville State Forest in Massachusetts. I don't recall catching any trout but I do recall collecting a single *Trillium undulatum* – the painted *Trillium* – the most beautiful one found in nature in my opinion. This plant grew for years in my mother's 'rock garden.' Little did I know that I would eventually move to West Hartland, CT, only about 10 miles from Granville. My experience with *T. undulatum* has been frustrating. With hundreds growing in my woods, I have been unable to move even one into my garden and have it survive

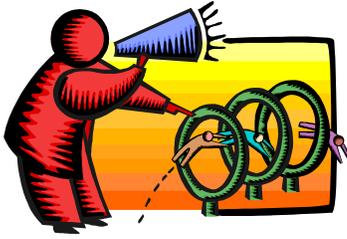
for more than a couple of years. I've had more success moving pink ladyslippers!

College and the Service occupied most of the 50s. Carol and I were high school sweethearts and were married in 1954. We built our first home in West Granby, CT in 1957 and shortly thereafter joined our first gardening group, The Connecticut Botanical Society. Through this Society we were introduced to Linc and Timmy Foster, Nick Nickou, and Gus Mehlquist, among others. One of the members lived a couple of miles from us. He and his wife were retired farmers in their late 70s. His wife had quite a wonderful collection of wildflowers, including a patch of Hartford fern (*Lygodium palmatum*) almost as large as the patch at Garden In The Woods. This also became one of my favorite plants. Norman Priest gave me one many years ago, and it is still doing well for me. This couple had a hay lot with a boggy area in which grew several orchids of interest. *Arethusa bulbosa* and *Pogonia ophoglossoides*, in particular, were growing there in large numbers, which was quite a thrill for me. As a youngster I had seen these two orchids in Windsor, but never in the numbers that I saw here. Speaking of orchids, in the pinewoods behind our home in W. Granby grew a couple of the Coralroots, *Corallorhiza odontorhiza* and *C maculate*.

In the 1960s I became interested in Rhododendrons and joined the Connecticut Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. I replaced Linc Foster (who was as interested in Rhododendrons as he was in alpine and rock garden plants) as the Secretary in 1962. Later I served in all of the offices of the Society, including three stints as President. (*to be continued*)

Note: This is Part 1 of a two-part article. Part 2 will appear in the November issue.

## Important Announcements!!



### ▪ **USDA Forest Service Website**

The USDA Forest Service recently launched the new Celebrating Wildflowers web site. The url is: <http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/> Celebrating Wildflowers is a series of events for people who are interested in native plants. Activities include wildflower walks, talks, festivals, slide shows, seminars, and planting events emphasizing the values and conservation of native plants.

The web site includes modules: Wildflower News, Just for Kids, Coloring Pages, Teacher Resources, Pollinators, Native gardening, Wildflower Ethics, Invasive Plants and Wildflower Links; there are also listings of wildflower events, wildflower viewing areas and Plant of the Week.

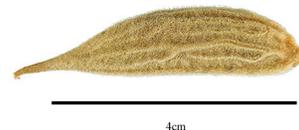
Our new web site is the gateway to an enormous amount of botanical information. The web site and the Wildflower Links are constantly being updated to keep information current and to add more botanically related pages. A number of other modules, such as rare plants, native plant materials, ethnobotany, lichens, ferns and other botany subject areas are being developed and will be posted to the web site as they become finalized.

*Mary Stensvold*

### ▪ **Seed Exchange Volunteer Time**

Growing from seed brings your garden a host of rare and unusual plants from the four corners of the earth. A benefit of NARGS is the fantastic yearly seed exchange (over 4500 entries from many temperate areas) for members only. Each member may donate seed – wild-collected or garden-variety rock garden plant. Then for a small nominal fee, donors get 35 packets; non-donors get 25. Volunteers get moved to the head of the line at fulfillment time. This year the BNARGS fulfills its three-year responsibility to national NARGS by packaging seed for SEED EXCHANGE 2006/2007. We are volunteers! We had two years to learn, but never fear. If you do not know how to package, we will demonstrate for you.

We need your help during December, usually the second half.



There are several options- packaging parties or taking home seed to package. Please let me know if you can captain an area (stage a few days of packaging parties), attend one, or take some home. We are signed up for 2,000 entries, about double from last year. We all had a good time at packaging parties last year. Make time for this important task. It is not difficult. All hands are needed.

Give me a call at 860.307.7345, or email me at [canbya@gmail.com](mailto:canbya@gmail.com) and let me know how you will help.

*Elisabeth Zander*

## Reminder

Our Annual Luncheon Meeting will be held on November 18 at The Berkshire South Regional Community Center in Great Barrington, MA. It's a Pot Luck, and Dean Evans will be coordinating the food so we don't end up with 65 desserts and no entrees

## Our Illustrations

- The New England Aster on P. 1 was drawn by George Olson, and can be found in The Elemental Prairie, published by The Iowa University Press.  
<http://www.uiowa.edu/uiowapress/madelepra.htm>
- Donald Davidson provided the drawing of *Calylophus serrulatus* found on P. 2. See  
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/cw/watercolor/index.htm>
- Hannelotte Kindlund provided the photograph of *Rhamnus pumilus* on P.3. His website is:  
<http://www.abc.se/~m8449/index.html>
- The photograph of *Allium cernuum* on P. 6 was provided by Mark McDonough and can be seen at  
[www.plantbuzz.com](http://www.plantbuzz.com)
- The line drawing on P. 7 is taken from  
<http://www.savvygardener.com/>
- Catherine Hatinguais, an artist living in NYC, provided the illustration of *Pyrola elliptica* on P. 8. Her other work can be found at  
<http://www.science-art.com/member.asp?id=130>
- Skip Williams took the beautiful photo of *Orchis spectabilis*, found on P. 9. His website is  
<http://www.skipwilliams.com/index.html>

## BEAVER CREEK GREENHOUSES

Beaver Creek Greenhouses is a mail-order specialty nursery located in the Selkirk Range in SE British Columbia just north of the US/Canadian border. Tucked into the east-facing slope of a narrow north-south valley at an elevation of approximately 2000' above sea level, our site would rate a cold Zone 5 on the USDA climate chart. Winters are long, quite cold with occasional lows to -30C (-20F) but with reliable heavy snowfall that helps to protect outdoor plantings. Spring weather is generally cool and unstable. Summers are short and hot but due to the elevation & surrounding forested hills, even very warm days are followed by cool evenings. Autumn is a long and drawn out season giving the plants ample time to harden up and prepare for winter. Since the early 1980's we have been growing & selling a wide range of perennial plants. Over the last five years or so, we have narrowed our focus to concentrate on dwarf hardy plants suitable for growing in rock, woodland & alpine gardens as well as in the container plantings known as alpine troughs. We are also steadily increasing the number & variety of native plants we grow including many that feature substantial drought tolerance. All the plants we sell are grown here at the nursery. Many are propagated by means of seed, cuttings & divisions from the large collection of stock plants we maintain. In addition, we travel to various areas of Western North America each summer collecting seed of native alpine and dryland plants for trial & growing on at the nursery. Additional seed comes from exchanges with fellow nurserymen and seed collectors all over the world. We hope you enjoy browsing our website & plant lists & find within some alpine & dryland gems to grace your own rock garden.

<http://www.rockgardenplants.com/index.htm>

*Roger & Debbie Barlow*

## **Positions of Responsibility**

Chairperson – Peter F. George  
978-724-0299 – petergeorge@verizon.net  
Vice-Chairperson – Dean Evans  
518-766-5374 – revans8@nycap.rr.com  
Secretary – Norma Abel  
Treasurer – Jeffrey Hurtig  
Archivist – James Fichter  
Audio Visual Chairperson – Dean Evans  
Greeter – Harold Peachey  
Independent Director – Elizabeth Zander  
Newsletter Editor – Peter F. George  
Meeting Recorder – Tom Clark  
Plant Sale Chairperson – Bob Siegel  
Program Chairperson – Robin Magowan  
Proofreader- Rita Evans  
Refreshments Chairperson – Joyce  
Hemingson  
Speaker Housing – Anne Spiegel

## **Published 10 times per year (Feb. through Nov.) by the Berkshire Chapter NARGS**

Membership is open to all members of  
NARGS

Dues \$10.00 single, \$12.50 Family

Payable to the Treasurer

Jeffrey Hurtig

33 Jeremy Drive

East Lyme, CT 06333

Deadline for Next Newsletter is October 15,  
2006

Please contact editor before reprinting  
articles

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