



Newsletter

North American Rock Garden Society
Connecticut Chapter October 2014

OCTOBER MEETING

Saturday, October 18, 2014 10:30 am

Home of Nancy Kulas

64 Foote Rd., S. Glastonbury, CT 06073

The October meeting will be a *plant your trough or pot with bulbs for an extended bloom time* hands-on workshop. Bring your recently made Styrofoam trough or use an appropriately sized plastic nursery pot which can be dropped into something more decorative at bloom time. Planting medium, nursery pots and a selection of bulbs, including a choice of either late winter blooming *Colchicum hungaricum* 'Valentine' or *Fritillaria camtschaticensis*, will be available. There is a fee of \$15, well below the actual value of the supplies. To register, please contact Maryanne Gryboski, email strollgarden@aol.com or (860) 822-6589. **A very limited number of fritillaria is still available so please be prompt if you wish to participate.**

Bring a folding chair and a bag lunch. If weather is inclement, we will work under cover.

Directions: From Rte. 2 East, take left-hand exit 7 onto Rte. 17; go 4.7 miles and turn left onto Foote Road; #64 is on the left. Look for Bonnie Maguire to direct you to a parking spot.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our September meeting at Comstock Ferre featured Todd Boland, who spoke on alpine flora of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, followed by a terrific plant sale. Many of our members provided wonderful plants for the sale. I hope we make this an annual feature of our chapter. I enjoyed Todd as a houseguest and learned about the geography, politics and horticulture of Newfoundland.

This past summer I have had 3 bee stings. After the first one, I discovered from the People's Pharmacy column in the **Hartford Courant** that onion or garlic applied to the sting would alleviate the pain. Then, I remembered meat tenderizer which I consider to be the best remedy. My doctor advised the addition of Benadryl for bee stings.

The ladies' tresses are blooming in my bog garden which I made at our Chapter workshop in 2006. The pitcher plants, Venus flytraps and spiranthes are doing very well, but I lost the sundews this year. It has been a good year for my gardens and now the cyclamen are in leaf. A *Cyclamen 'Alba'*, species unknown, which I purchased from Don Dembowski last year at Tri-State, bloomed this summer. It will need to be taken into the greenhouse for winter. Now I am looking forward to our next workshop, *plant your trough with bulbs*.

In the current issue of **Rock Garden Quarterly** Peter George writes of his concern over declining membership in NARGS. I suggest that we consider various ways to publicize our meetings: **Connecticut Gardener**, **Connecticut Horticulture Newsletter**, and local newspapers. Who among our members is willing to take on this task?

~Ginny

Meeting Report: September 14, 2014

Words: Barbara van Achterberg

Photos: Todd Boland

Todd Boland, from St. John's, Newfoundland (pronounced NewfundLAND by natives), presented the last of five talks on his fall tour to our Chapter at Comstock Ferre in Wethersfield to a good audience. His main presentation, *Wild Flowers of Nova Scotia*, which also covers most of New Brunswick and PEI, as well as part of Newfoundland, was a reprise of one he gave at the International Rock Garden Conference two years ago, with some new photos added. Following that, he gave a short talk on the *Limestone Barrens of the Great Northern Peninsula, Newfoundland*.

St. John's, Newfoundland is at the same latitude as Paris and Portland, Oregon. Newfoundland gets 60 inches of rain per year and it is very windy, especially near the coast. They can grow meconopsis, though this past July they had a four-week heat wave and had to water them with ice cubes. The average winter temperature is 25-30 F, with lots of snow. The Appalachian mountain range extends from northern Alabama to northern Newfoundland at Belle Isle. Gros Morne National Park is in the southern part of the Great Northern Peninsula and has fresh water fjords below 802 m. peaks.



Silene acaulis could have a place in our gardens.

Most of the plants he showed seem to be difficult or very difficult in cultivation, some even in St. John's. *Silene acaulis* grows readily in gardens, however. He showed us four willows: *Salix glauca*, *S. arctophila*, *S. herbacea*, and *S. uva-ursi*. *Rhododendron lapponicum* is unusual for its genus in that it ALWAYS grows on limestone. *Kalmia* (formerly *Loiseleuria*) *procumbens* is a very beautiful alpine azalea with cherry colored flowers. *Vaccinium uliginosum*, the alpine bilberry, looks like blueberries but is even sweeter.



Top photo: *Rhododendron lapponicum*; lower photo: *Kalmia* (formerly *Loiseleuria*) *procumbens*.

Diapensia lapponica extends as far north as there is land in North America. Needless to say it is difficult in cultivation.

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PROGRAMS: Please talk to one of the officers if you are interested in the Programs Chair position.

Parts of western Newfoundland near the coast and the Shickshock Mountains in the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec have serpentine rock. This rock is toxic to many plants and results in areas known as serpentine barrens, yet some plants are endemic and do very well there. *Campanula rotundifolia* is one. With its distribution around the northern hemisphere, it is very blue when grown in serpentine soil. *Cerastium terranovae* (i.e. Newfoundland) is an attractive chickweed. Like the campanula, it can be grown in gardens. Larix (larch) never gets higher than about 6 inches in serpentine areas. Cuttings taken from stunted conifers from these areas will often stay dwarf even in cultivation.

Limestone supports forests in the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland except right at the coast. Here, you can drive up good roads to the Viking Museum and also see plenty of wildflowers. The Viking word 'Vineland' has nothing to do with grapes: it means rocky. The Inuit came from northern Asia across the Bering Strait after other Indians. When they went south, the land was already taken, so they moved east - all the way to Greenland. They are well adapted to cold weather and eventually displaced the Vikings.



Cypripedium parviflorum grow abundantly.

Newfoundland has a number of orchids including one that smells like vanilla. Yellow ladyslippers bloom "by the millions" in southern Newfoundland in June and in northern Newfoundland in July. They are easy to grow as long as they get lime sprinkled on them each year.

The rocky mountain goldenrod also grows in Newfoundland, and is very short in stature. *Potentilla crantzii* is easy in cultivation while *Saxifraga opposi-*



TRI-STATE MEETING

Sunday, October 26
10am-2pm

The New York Botanical
Garden, Bronx, NY

Mike Kintgen

Mike is Senior Horticulturist at the Denver Botanic Garden and oversees the Alpine Collection and nine gardens including the Rock Alpine Garden and the South African Plaza. He has interned at the Chicago Botanic Garden and the Rhododendron Species Foundation. He will give two presentations: *Rocky Mountain Alpines* and *Rock Gardens of Europe*.

Admission and parking is free for attendees. Use the Mosholu Parkway entrance, to the west of the main entrance, and parking is on the left. Just tell the guard at the gate that you will be attending the rock garden meeting. The lot there is adjacent to the entrance of Ross Hall, where the meeting will be held. The garden is asking for a count of how many people expect to attend, so please contact Maryanne who will forward that information.

There will be plant vendors, an auction, a raffle and a display of plants. The show will be open entry and plants should conform to one of four classes: Rock Garden Plant in Bloom, Bulb in Bloom, Foliage Plant, and Trough. The classes won't be judged, but attendees can rate the plants in each class individually and a popular favorite will be identified in each class. Please start preparing your entries now.

If you are interested in car-pooling, contact Ginny.

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tifolia is difficult - European forms are much more amenable. "Alpine" ferns include *Cystopteris fragilis* and *Asplenium viride*, and can be grown in vertical crevices. *Sarracenia purpurea* is the floral emblem of Newfoundland. On serpentine rock, it grows in gravel, but it is always wet underneath. This pitcher plant is growable here in a natural or artificial bog.

As soon as the talk was over, we adjourned to the outside of the building where we enjoyed a members' seedling and division sale at bargain prices.

