



# Newsletter

**North American Rock Garden Society**  
Connecticut Chapter May/June 2015

## JUNE MEETING

Sunday, June 14, 11:00am  
Earth Tones Native Plant Nursery  
212 Grassy Hill Road  
Woodbury, CT 06798

Earth Tones is a native plant nursery and design service that offers grasses, ferns, perennials, shrubs and trees that are native to New England, and is owned by Kyle and Lisa Turoczi. Kyle has a degree in environmental science while Lisa's is in landscape design. See [www.earthtonesnatives.com](http://www.earthtonesnatives.com) for full information.

Bring a bag lunch and chair. If you wish to carpool, please contact Ginny or Maryanne.

Directions: from I 84 take RT 6 into center of Woodbury; turn left onto RT 317 (look for brown Earth Tones signs), take left onto Grassy Hill Rd and look for Earth Tones Native Plant Nursery sign.

\* \* \* \* \*



*Lysichitum camtschaticensis* in the garden of Sally Katkaveck. Photo by Sally Katkaveck.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I missed the spring season this year for gardening; it has been either too cold or too warm. Most of my plants have fared well and have multiplied in spite of little rain. *Lewisia* 'George Henley' bloomed early and continues to delight me with its many blossoms. This winter, I placed my *Clivia* plants on the floor in the greenhouse (temperature set at 45 degrees). The plants bloomed as never before!

At this time of year, as plants appear and flower, I always reflect on the people who have shared their plants with me and I am grateful for their friendship and the gardening knowledge they impart.

~Ginny



Emily Ferguson and Joyce Fingerhut both reported good blooms this spring on *Shortia galacifolia*, from the late Peggy Taylor's garden. Sharing plants keeps these treasures alive as well as keeping alive the memory of the friends who passed the plants along to us. Photo by Emily Ferguson.

## Back to Alpines: NARGS Annual Meeting

Words by Judith King/Photos by Stephen Gryc



*Trillium grandiflorum* with six petals at Sharon Hollow.

The 2015 NARGS Annual Meeting in Ann Arbor, Michigan, followed the usual annual meeting format that has delighted us through the years. Days were devoted to bus tours of exceptional gardens and natural areas, preceded and followed by time set aside for haunting the vending area for hard-to-find, rare plants that we simply must have. Evenings were filled with a social hour and dinner, followed by a speaker or two.

Anton "Tony" Reznicek, Curator and Assistant Director of the University of Michigan Herbarium and co-author of the *Field Manual of Michigan Flora*, was our inaugural speaker. His topic, "The Michigan Landscape and Gardening in It," set the stage for the weekend. Michigan has a limestone-based soil quite different from New England. The terrain being basically flat, their "alpine" plants paradoxically are "down low", i.e., along the shores of the Great Lakes. Plants there grow low to keep out of the winds off the lakes.

Tony also showed us slides of the wildflowers that thrive in Michigan, whetting our appetite for the tours to come.

Tony's talk was followed by Ger van den Beuken's presentation, "Argentina and Chile in 50 Minutes." Ger van den Beuken runs a small nursery in Holland that specializes in rare alpine garden plants. He was also the

featured speaker the next evening, informing us about "Growing High Alpines at Sea Level or Below." He showed us spectacular buns and cushions grown in pots, his remarks peppered with reports of untimely deaths of the featured plants and warnings that we in North America should not even attempt to grow his plants. He did show one plant that we have had success with: *Daphne mezereum* 'Album', with the helpful hint that it takes kindly to pruning.

Mother Nature was smiling on us. Spring flowers were in full glory, and weather was a non-issue. We took a wonderful wildflower walk in Sharon Hollow -The Nan Weston Preserve of the Nature Conservancy. It is as yet untouched by the ravages of invasive plants or excessive deer browse, threats to native flora and fauna as serious in Michigan as they are in Connecticut. Bow and arrow hunting is allowed in the nature preserve, keeping deer population down. What a treat to see common garden plants such as *Adiantum pedatum* (maidenhair fern), *Phlox divaricata* (woodland phlox), and hundreds of *Trillium grandiflorum* (white trillium) - including a rare double flower growing in the wild.

At our next stop we were treated to the sight of a sea of *Viola pedata* (birdfoot violet) in full bloom at the Pickerel Lake Sand Barrens. Birdfoot violet is not an easy plant to establish in the garden, preferring instead sandy, sunny conditions.



*Viola pedata* growing at Pickerel Lake Sand Barrens.

Con't on page 4

### NARGS CT CHAPTER OFFICERS

**CHAIR:** Ginny Gingras / 21 Timber Ln. / Vernon, CT 06066 / 860.875.9865 / ginnygingras2013@gmail.com

**VICE-CHAIR:** Dave DeLucia / 26 Overlook Dr. / East Haddam, CT 06423 / mrdcac@aol.com

**SECRETARY:** Barbara van Achterberg / 359 Silver Hill Rd. / Easton, CT 06612 / 203.261.2156 / bvanachterberg@yahoo.com

**TREASURER:** Sally Katkaveck / 82 Ashford Rd. / Ashford, CT 06278 / 860.974.2563 / sallybillkat@charter.net

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR:** Maryanne Gryboski / 88 Eager Rd. / Franklin, CT 06254 / 860.822.6589 / strollgarden@aol.com

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

## Connecticut Chapter Visits Paul Waterman's Garden: April 26, 2015

By Barbara van Achterberg

At 1:00 pm, cars gathered on the parking area just across the street from the Waterman house in Canterbury. There was a good turnout, especially from the eastern and northern membership. When I arrived almost half an hour late after a two-hour drive from Fairfield County, most of the people were examining the many small pots of choice dwarf conifers offered by Paul. People purchased a number of these. Joyce Fingerut expressed surprise that Paul grew *Abies* from cuttings. I believe that firs can be grown from cuttings with rooting hormone, though not as easily as juniper, *Chamaecyparis* or *Thuja*. *Picea* (spruce) is almost impossible.



Members eye potential purchases in the sales area. Photo by Joan Mencil.

At another table, Pierre Bennerup was selling alpinines in bloom, including *Saxifraga* in delicious colors and dwarf *Armeria*. These were very popular. Spring is late and gardeners are starved for color.

Maryanne Gryboski was selling raffle tickets for only \$1 for plants harvested from the garden of the late Sandy Steinberg. Several trilliums, small divisions of double bloodroots and wee blooming narcissus suitable for troughs were on the table. The first four winners were Sally Katkaveck, Carole Walden, Paul Watterman and Sylvia Correia, all of whom chose the narcissus. The rest of us got trillium or double bloodroot.

Pierre then offered all of his unsold plants to the Chapter as raffle prizes. Another bargain at only \$2 each. Maryanne distributed the tickets and Sally took the money and made change.

Paul took us on a walk around his property. His *Shortia galacifolia* was in full bloom. Another feature was a large bed of *Primula veris*, growing in more sun than I would have believed it would like. Cole's dwarf hemlock - *Tsuga canadensis* 'Cole's Prostrate' - was a

beautiful low mound, as was an even smaller and younger form, *Tsuga canadensis* 'Bennett'. There were fine specimens of taller conifers as well.



Paul Watterman leads a walk through his garden. Photo by Maryanne Gryboski.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Judy King Reports Crazy Snake Worm Update

There are four pages of excellent information about the worms in the September/October 2014 issue of *Connecticut Gardener*.

Not mentioned, however, is a product sold by Harrington's Landcare called Early Bird. (Clever name!) Last year I skipped my usual practice of mulching with chopped oak leaves. It was ambrosia to the worms. Then I had Harrington's treat my property with Early Bird, a granular, organic product last summer. For weeks I saw no worms at all. In late autumn I did spot a few. This spring I'm seeing baby worms in one bed and dead worms on the driveway adjacent to lawn. (I do not plan to treat the lawn.)

I have high hopes for Early Bird as part of the solution to my worm problem. This year, in addition to omitting my usual mulch of chopped oak leaves, I have broadcast Early Bird over the bare ground of my beds. If and when I see evidence of the worms, I will spot treat those areas with more Early Bird.

Both the articles in *Connecticut Gardener* and the discovery of Early Bird are encouraging signs.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sally Katkaveck is still open to having members dig ramps on her property. Set up a time by phone/email: 860.974.2563 or [sallybillkat@charter.net](mailto:sallybillkat@charter.net).

The remaining four stops were of gardens, primarily gardens owned and cared for by members of the Great Lakes Chapter who were also deeply involved in the time-consuming work of running the Conference! The late arrival of spring did not make garden preparation any easier for them, either. But their gardens were bursting with color from rare and choice plants growing in tufa, crevice gardens, troughs, and amended garden soil. Not content to limit their gardens to the boundaries of their yards, Don and Mary La Fond have appropriated an adjacent, abandoned road easement and Tony and Susan Reznicek bought and rent the house next door - all with the aim of expanding their gardens



A colorful assemblage of blooms in the La Fond garden.

Very little space is allotted to grass in their gardens. They are chock full of expertly grown, exuberantly



NARGS Connecticut Chapter  
Maryanne Gryboski, Editor  
88 Eager Rd., Franklin, CT 06254



The crevice garden at the Reznicek residence.

blooming daphnes, phlox, trilliums, dwarf irises, woodland peonies, and, in tufa, wet-sand-loving plants like primulas and saxifrages. Unlike other NARGS conference gardens I have seen, I did not notice much overlap of plants from one garden to the next. Each had a different approach and different favorites. At the Jacques and Andrea Urda Thompson garden we received a demonstration on carving sandstone troughs. At Bev and Bob Walters' garden we learned about installing a water feature. Don La Fond gave tips on propagating daphnes from cuttings. At the Reznicek garden we received a demonstration on how to use tufa as a rooting medium.

Pieces of Ohio tufa ranging in size from small to huge were available for sale at the conference.