



# Newsletter

**North American Rock Garden Society**  
Connecticut Chapter November/December 2013

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

Sunday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at Comstock, Ferre & Co.:  
**Matt Mattus** will present *Collector Bulbs for the Cold Greenhouse*. Matt is a self-described leisure-time plant collector, explorer and garden blogger as well as professional creative director, visual design doctor and lifestyle designer who lives in central Massachusetts. He has been gardening for his entire life, and his goal is to master growing things perfectly. Check his blog: [www.growingwithplants.com](http://www.growingwithplants.com).

Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at the Avon Public Library:  
**Elisabeth Zander** will discuss the latest goings-on in her Goshen, CT garden where plants are grown beautifully and the stonework is to die for.

April, time and place TBA:  
**Russell Stafford** of **Odyssey Bulbs**, South Lancaster, MA, will discuss *Choice Bulbs for the Garden*.

June, **Variegated Foliage Nursery**, Eastford, CT  
Join us for our annual pot luck picnic and explore the nursery. Then tour the nearby garden of Sally Katkaveck with its newly constructed rock garden.

## OPEN GARDENS FOR 2014

It's been a number of years since the chapter has organized open garden days of our members' gardens, and there is interest in reinstating this tradition. If your garden has an especially good season, there are plants of particular interest, you just want to show off your hard work, or you are looking for input from other members, consider an "open day". You pick the day and time when members are welcome; there are no other obligations.

Send name and date to Maryanne Gryboski for newsletter inclusion (if there is lead time) or for email dissemination.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

After a long growing season, one of my *Primula japonica* re-bloomed this fall; and with a hard frost only two weeks ago, my gardens are ready for winter.

I have enjoyed my cyclamens and have a new one to observe, *Cyclamen hederifolium* 'Artemesia', purchased from Don Dembowski at Tri-State this fall. One of the benefits of traveling to meetings is finding new plants to grow and new "things" to try. At the Annual Meeting of NARGS in Ashville, NC in May, the hotel where Maryanne and I stayed had complimentary shampoo by Gilchrist \* & Soames of London, England: "Conditioning Shampoo". I was so delighted with it that I ordered it from the U.S. distributor in Indiana. There is no comparison to shampoos and conditioners purchased separately both for quality and price.

But back to the garden. There is a new invasive, the Asiatic snake worm, *Amyntus agrestis*, that is eating the leaf litter and duff in our hardwood forests. I first heard of it about 3 years ago while at Norcross Wildlife Sanctuary in Monson, Mass. Since then, I have found some of these worms in my wooded area. Judy King wrote about the worm in the Conn. Horticultural Soc. Winter Newsletter; she had attended the October event, **Worm Day**, sponsored by the UCONN Master Composter Program. She also reported on Bill Cullina's interview in *Fine Gardening* citing this problem and reporting that the worm has been found in nurseries and that eggs or worms may be found in the pots that you purchase. I will ask Judy to write about methods to control the snake worm in the next newsletter.

~Ginny

## TRI-STATE MEETING REPORT October 20, 2013

by Barbara van Achterberg

The Tri-State Meeting once again was held at the beautiful Lyndhurst Estate in Tarrytown, New York. Members of NARGS chapters from New Jersey, New York and Connecticut, and a few from more distant states, met. There was an enticing sale before, with many plants at reduced end-of-season prices. Since I have a small cold greenhouse I decided to hold over my four purchases there for spring planting in my rock garden, although *Armeria maritima* 'Little Penny' may go this winter into the Styrofoam trough I made last spring at the Richos and painted this summer.



A vendor's table filled with many species of *Cyclamen*.

The morning talk was "Bulbs in the Garden". I enjoyed hearing Ian refer to "we" and "our garden." It is obvious that his marriage to Margaret is a partnership of equals.

The only feeding the Youngs do is mulching; they return all gardening waste to the property. Ian's favorite late winter bulb is *Eranthus* because its flowers look right up at you. The sunny color is a bonus. *Iris histrioides major* is "remarkably tough" and early. *Tulipa biflora* and *Tulipa humilis* are among the tulip species that persist year after year.

The Youngs grow numerous colors of *Corydalis solida* in more sun than it might like in Connecticut (although even here it is not a plant for deep shade). *Erythronium* do best planted in communities. *Anemone x lipsiensis* is a hybrid between the bright yellow *A. ranunculoides* and *A. nemorosa*; it has lovely pale yellow flowers. *Dactylorhiza* is a good summer bulb; it is an orchid, and likes moisture. *Cyclamen purpurascens* has flowers with a "heavenly scent."

After lunch there was an auction and raffle. Two *Gentiana acaulis* with huge flowers, a yellow reblooming *Iris pumila* in flower now, and three exquisite pots made by the late Lawrence Thomas of the Manhattan Chapter were among the auction plants. There were so many raffle plants that the auctioneer finally threw up his hands and offered what was left to anyone who had bought nine tickets and hadn't yet won. I chose note-paper with alpine plant drawings.

The afternoon talk was "Nature, Gardener's Tutor". Ian Young interspersed photos of alpines in the wild with ones of similar plants in the garden. In arctic Norway you have to walk on *Dionysia lapponica* and *Saxifraga oppositifolia*. The Youngs grow these and almost all alpines in troughs. Broken concrete rubble is used in

*Tri-state con't next pg.*

### NARGS CT CHAPTER OFFICERS

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

*Tri-state con't from pg. 2*

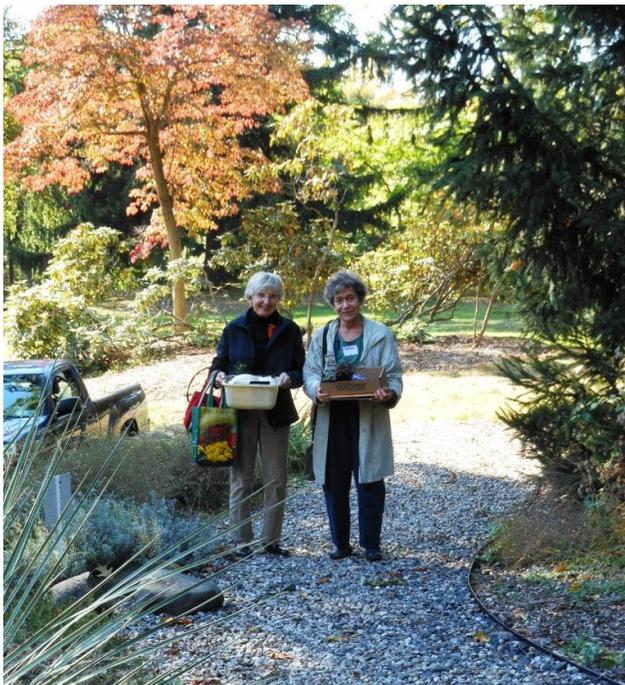
the troughs and the garden. They buy some fine gravel and sharp sand, sharp sand being better than fine, although fine sand can be used if gravel is also used.

Nature teaches that 45 degrees is about as steep as a scree can be! Each plant has a narrow range where it grows in the mountains, but hybrids are more forgiving.

The first colonizers of rocks are lichens, then mosses and liverworts, then ferns. Ian lets all these grow, with only minimal weeding. The liverwort helps keep the rock moist for the alpiners.

The Young's garden is full of fritillaries and erythroniums which have naturalized. *Campanula sartori* grows where it wants to grow; it will not grow where they plant it. It is a tiny, very attractive biennial that likes dry soil, so let it seed where it will.

Sow seeds of bulbs in Styrofoam boxes with sharp drainage. *Narcissus* and *Crocus* sow deep; *Lillium* and fritillaries sow shallow; west coast erythroniums and *Dicentra cucullaria* sow right on the surface.



*Ginny Gingras and Barbara van Achterberg carry their purchases from the Tri-state meeting.*

## Notes from Our Members

Sally Katkaveck has 40+ years of **NARGS Quarterlies** to offer someone for winter reading, browsing. Contact her at 860.974.2563 or [sallybillkat@charter.net](mailto:sallybillkat@charter.net).

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Maryanne Gryboski discovered this gold-laced polyanthus blooming below fern fronds on October 27 after two nights of frosts; it was still going strong on November 20<sup>th</sup>. And the *Cyclamen hederifolium* that originally came as a seedling from Barbara van Achterberg was blooming away on Halloween.



\* \* \* \* \*

What's going on in your garden? Send a note and/or photos to the editor for inclusion in future editions.

## **NARGS BOOK REVIEW**

The November Book of the Month is now posted on the NARGS Web site ([www.nargs.org](http://www.nargs.org)). Look for it under "Plants."

The review by Kathy Purdy, of the Adirondack Chapter, is on Essays on Gardening in a Cold Climate by Brian Bixley of our Ontario chapter. He knows cold, is an avid plantsman, and is funny, especially for an economics professor, although there are projections and graphs for those who are interested.

This book is not only useful but full of firsthand experiments in the garden which we can all share and chuckle over. Remember, this is a collection of essays. Great gift idea for holidays. Yes, there is some practicum, too.

Copies are limited and the book needs to be ordered directly from Brian. Information is part of the review on the NARGS website.

And while I have your attention, please use the Amazon portal on NARGS for **ALL** of your shopping because NARGS gets a royalty. You can even buy slippers to wear while you read all of your garden catalogs in front of the fire.

Also, look for other recent book reviews including, in October, a book by former NARGS president James Jones on Fall and Winter Bloom in the Solar Greenhouse.

Betty Spar  
Chair, Book of the Month Column



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