



# Newsletter

**North American Rock Garden Society**  
Connecticut Chapter February 2011

## SEED SOWING WORKSHOP

Saturday, February 19, 2011 10am

**Workshop Leader: Diane Huling**

Diane has a BS in Plant Science and an MS in Studio Arts. She acted as Greenhouse Manager for the Biology Dept. at Rhode Island College for 35 years and is a longtime member of many plant societies. At our plant swap last April, Diane brought pots of two year seedlings that attendees drooled over. She will be sharing her secrets for successful seed sowing at this workshop.

Pots, starting medium, and a variety of seeds (see page 4 for partial list) will be available for members. You may also bring seeds for yourself or to share, and any supplies that you particularly wish to use. Please call Maryanne, 860-822-6589, to register. There is no cost to members; the fee for non-members is \$3.

The workshop will take place at the home of Maryanne Gryboski, 88Eager Rd., Franklin, CT 06254.

### Directions:

From Rte. 2 E, take exit 27 "Franklin / Rte. 32 N"; bear right at end of ramp. Go 2.6 miles and take right onto Baltic Rd. (yellow Victorian on corner).\* Go 2 miles and take right onto Eager Rd.\*\* Go to end of road; cross cul-de-sac and enter access road. Immediately, take right up driveway.

From I 395 N, take exit 80 "Rte. 2 W". Off Rte. 2, take exit 25 "Franklin / Rte. 32 N"; bear right at end of ramp. Go 2.1 miles and take right onto Baltic Rd. Follow above \*.

From I 84 E to I 384 E to Rte. 6 E. In Andover, take right at light for Rte. 87 S. Follow through Columbia to the center of Lebanon. At blinking light, take left onto Rte. 207. Go 6.3 miles and take right onto Baltic Rd. Take 1<sup>st</sup> left onto Eager Rd. Follow above \*\*.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The New Year is giving us an ample supply of insulation for our plants and keeps us busy with the shovel and snow blower...but we do have time to order seeds, read about alpiners, and plan our garden adventures. The officers have been planning programs to include speakers and workshops...and we need more ideas. Please offer your assistance. Perhaps you can be a speaker or run a workshop. Consider it.

The Seed List for the 2010-2011 Seed Exchange is on the website at <http://www.nargs.org/index.php>. The deadline for ordering seeds is February 10<sup>th</sup>. **Malcolm McGregor**, the new editor of the Rock Garden Quarterly, has written informative articles titled "Rock Gardening from Scratch" in the last two issues. Under his leadership, the Quarterly has taken on a new look.

The **NARGS 2011 NATIONAL MEETING** will be held **June 17-19** in New London, New Hampshire (in the Lake Sunapee region). A highlight will be a tour of The Fells and Clarence Hay's 80- year old rock garden. A **stipend of \$300** is available to members who have never attended a national meeting before...or as a reward to members for their contribution to the chapter. The goal of the stipend program is to encourage participation at the local Chapter Level. To apply for a stipend, please send an e-mail or letter in writing to me.

Each Chapter of NARGS has received a copy of **The Caucasus and Its Flowers**, generously donated by Frank Cabot. This beautifully illustrated book will be available for viewing at our meetings and may be borrowed by members.

*Ginny Gingras*

## MEETING REPORT: 24 October 2010

By Barbara van Achterberg

Once again the joint chapter meeting took place at the Lyndhurst Carriage House in Tarrytown, New York, a beautiful venue. Especially delightful was the field of scarecrows we passed on our way to the carriage house, each designed by a different artist or school child and each attached to a stake of uniform size. My favorite was a windswept scarecrow hanging on to his stake with one arm while the rest of his body and clothes appeared to be blowing to one side. My second favorite was a very realistic Benjamin Franklin.

Morning Program The morning speaker, Dean Riddle, is a Catskill-based garden designer who showed us slides of some of his splendid gardens, beginning with his own. Few of the plants he favors are alpine or even low growing, but all are showy and most are low maintenance. His "cobblestone carpets" to hold pots and cobblestone paths for walking are particularly effective.

In some gardens, Riddle uses only 6 or 7 perennials repeated over and over for late bloom and drought tolerance. A few of the plants he showed were:

- Annabelle hydrangeas - lush, tall and hardy, hard-pruned each spring.
- Salvia x 'Indigo Spires' - tough and drought resistant.
- Amaranthus 'Oschberg' (brilliant magenta) and purple cleome - two vibrant annuals planted together.
- Kochia scoparia - a grassy shrub, goes from bright green to bright red in September, also good for erosion control.
- Fairy roses - thrive in really poor soil.
- Dragon Wing begonias - beautiful, not hardy, flower their hearts out for weeks in a long season in large pots on a flat-topped rock wall.

Dean also discussed briefly the parallel flora in eastern United States and Japan (Pangaea, anyone?) and showed some beautiful pictures of classic Japanese gardens.

Afternoon Program The afternoon speaker, Janet Novak, gave an exquisitely prepared and well organized talk on America's native orchids. Her background as a molecular biologist and her career as an editor were both put to good use in her presentation.

There are over 100 species of orchids in North America, fewer than any other continent except Antarctica. There are 34 species in Alaska, 55 in Pennsylvania. Orchids are full of amazing pollination mechanisms. 30% don't offer their pollinators any nectar, but have a fragrance that insects like. Pink lady slippers have very low pollination efficiency - 2% to 4%, and generally only one flower per year. Spotted coral root, an orchid in our area, is parasitic on fungi; it has no leaves and no chlorophyll.

The New Jersey Pine Barrens has several beautiful orchids, including *Platanthera blephanglottis*, the white fringed orchid, and *Platanthera cristata*, a yellow-to-orange orchid. Webb's Mill Bog is a place in the Pine Barrens where you can see these wetland orchids in June without getting your feet wet.

*Platanthera grandiflora*, the purple fringed orchid, used to be *Habenaria*. I had no idea the name had changed.

*Cypripedium arietinum*, the ram's head ladyslipper, is tiny and choice.

*Cypripedium californicum*, which grows only on serpentine, wants cooler summers and warmer winters than ours. *Cypripedium montanum* is more widespread but also difficult to grow here. Fortunately, *Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *pubescens*, the widespread yellow lady slipper, is easy to grow in good woodland conditions.

Dean Riddle conducted the auction and got good prices for numerous fine offerings, including a large block of *British Columbia tufa*, *Spiranthes odorata*, an easy native orchid for constantly moist soil, and the double *Anemonella thalictroides* 'Cameo.' (This robust clone seems to grow at

*continued next page*

### NARGS CT CHAPTER OFFICERS

**CHAIR:** Ginny Gingras / 21 Timber Ln. / Vernon, CT 06066 / 860.875.9865 / ginnygingras@netzero.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

**CONNECTICUT CHAPTER NARGS  
ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT 2010**

Beginning Balance:		
Webster Checking A/C		\$4456.81
Income:		
Dues	\$470.00	
Fundraising	<u>185.00</u>	
		655.00
Expenses:		
Newsletter	< 24.20>	
Programs	<650.00>	
Rent	<u>&lt; 80.00&gt;</u>	
		<754.20>
Ending Balance		\$4357.61

Income for the past year showed only a minimal decline. Fewer 'big ticket' speakers and the electronic mailing of the newsletter cut operating expenses by more than half.

*Maryanne Gryboski*

*Meeting Report . . . continued from page 2*

least twice as fast, but no taller than, 'Shoaff's Double Pink' in my garden.) There were many prizes in the raffle. One of my numbers was drawn toward the end, and I got a jar of peach-almond conserve made by Kathy Gaffney of the Hudson Valley Chptr. It turned out to be just about the best jam I have ever eaten, not a consolation prize at all!

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW**

Annual membership in the CT Chapter runs February through January. Membership includes the newsletter, visits to members' gardens, plant sales and auctions, workshops, and access to top notch speakers.

Use the form below to renew your membership for one or more years at the rate of \$10 per year. If you are not sure whether you owe dues, please contact Sally Katkaveck or Maryanne Gryboski; they will be glad to help you. Also, consider giving a gift membership to a gardening friend or relative. A one-time introductory gift membership is only \$7.

**NARGS CT Chapter 2011 Membership Dues - \$10**

Send this form along with check payable to **CT Chapter, NARGS**  
CT NARGS, Sally Katkaveck, Treasurer, 82 Ashford Rd., Ashford, CT 06278

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Gift Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Sending the newsletter digitally saves money. All e-mail addresses are confidential and are not shared.

**CT NARGS needs your time and talents. Please consider volunteering for:**

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Editor | <input type="checkbox"/> Programs Coordinator | <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop Leader    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program Presenter | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden Host/Hostess  | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Article |

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

## MEETING REPORT 13 NOVEMBER 2010

The following is a partial listing of seed that will be available at the seed sowing workshop:

Allium cernuum 'Pink Giant'  
Aquilegia flabellate v. pumila 'Mt. Horohoro form'  
Aquilegia jonesii, A. saximontana  
Arisaema ringens  
Begonia grandis ssp. evansiana  
Claytonia virginica  
Clematis recta 'Purpurea'  
Deinanthus caerulea  
Dianthus alpinus, D. microlepis  
Dracocephalum ruyschiana  
Gentiana asclepiadea, G. cruciata  
Lilium formosanum v. pricei  
Phyteuma hemisphaericum, P. sieberi

and many more!

A group of CT Chapter members traveled to Franklin to Maryanne Gryboski's house on a hill. Maryanne and John have worked hard to build a barn and develop gardens on the four-acre site in their six years there. It was a beautiful Indian summer day, and we all enjoyed a tour of the garden, followed by a DVD about Polly Hill's arboretum in Martha's Vineyard, and a delicious potluck lunch. Plenty of garden talk, too, of course, and even a mini-auction.

\*\*\*\*\*

Barbara van Achterberg reports that in her cold greenhouse (high 30's to 40 degrees) *Helleborus niger* 'Thanksgiving' has been in bloom for 2 months with no sign of quitting. (See [senecahillperennials.com](http://senecahillperennials.com) for a photo of its large, outward facing blooms.)



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