



Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society
✧ Volume XLIV ✧ Winter 2020 ✧ Number 1 ✧

Upcoming Programs

Sunday, February 16, 2020 10 a.m.
Frelinghuysen Arboretum
Speaker Barbara Melera,
'The D. Landreth Seed Company and
the Story of America's Great
Seedhouses'

Saturday, March 21, 2020 10 a.m.
Frelinghuysen Arboretum
Joseph Tychonievich, Editor of the
NARGS Rock Garden Quarterly,
'Rock Gardening: Reimagining a
Classic Style for Today's Garden'

Please bring a friend, a mug, and a
snack to share! Interesting plants or
blossoms are always welcome, too.

Our February Speaker:

Barbara Melera is president of Harvesting History, founded in 2016 to provide finest quality horticultural and agricultural products, including seeds, roots, bulbs, tubers, plants, garden tools and equipment, garden clothing, and garden-related books and art.



Ray Waksmundzki and Lina Canonaco discuss *Echeveria* care at our November meeting.

The company is a collaboration between experienced horticultural professionals and Page Seed, a 120-year-old seed company located in Greene, New York. For 13 years previous Barbara was president and CEO of The D. Landreth Seed Company, the oldest seed house in America, established in 1784, and the fourth oldest US corporation.

Prior to purchasing Landreth, Ms. Melera was the Managing Partner of Trittech Partners, LLP, a venture capital partnership which invested in seed stage technology enterprises in the Mid-Atlantic region. Throughout her career as an investment professional, she has been privileged to be involved with some of the most interesting, innovative technologies and entrepreneurs of the 20th century.

Barbara has a S.B. in Mathematics and Soviet Studies from MIT and was awarded an S.M. in Finance and the Management of Technology from the Sloan School of Management at MIT in 1981. She also has an M.Ed. with a Reading Specialist's Certification from Northeastern University

NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

The 2019 Treasurer's Report, By Don Grossmann

The Watnong Chapter ended 2019 with a checking account balance of \$12,349, the highest level in several years. The \$1,748 increase over the prior year is primarily due to higher plant sale revenue and lower program expenses. The chapter was also able to increase donations in 2019: \$500 each to the Blackburn Scholarship and National NARGS and \$200 to Laurelwood. Please see page 10 for the full report.

Member Garden Tours

Are you proud of your garden? Would you enjoy showing it to other Watnong members? If yes, please contact Noel Schulz to discuss dates and arrange a 2020 open garden day for Watnong members. We hope to have two or three gardens open on several different dates by county or region. Contact Noel at 201-445-6445, or noelschulz@verizon.net

Hospitality is back!

We had good response to the call for hospitality volunteers at the annual meeting. For February, Terrie Reid has volunteered, and for March, Renate Gudat. A second person to help on each of these dates would be much appreciated; please email Roxanne at Roxanne.Hiltz@gmail.com if you are willing to pitch in.

Volunteers should arrive at 9 a.m. on the day of the meeting to set out table covers, paper and plastic ware, beverage fixings, and start the water for tea or cocoa, which takes about 40 minutes to heat. Hospitality volunteers will also help those who arrive with snacks to share to arrange them for serving. After the meeting, allow at least five minutes for those who want a post meeting snack, then clean off the covers, pack up the remaining supplies, and help carry them out.

DUES ARE DUE!

Dues are \$10 per person, or \$15 per mailing address. Sid Jones will be at the February meeting to accept payments.

If you aren't able to attend the February meeting, please make your check payable to Watnong Chapter NARGS and mail it to Sid Jones, 123 Mountainside Drive, Randolph, NJ 07869.

NARGS Seedex Phase III

The Watnong chapter will be filling orders for the NARGS seed exchange from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on January 9, 10, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 30, weather permitting. The Leonard J. Buck Garden will again allow us to use the Jordan House, 186 Liberty Corner Road, Far Hills, New Jersey, 07931. Cocoa, tea, and snacks will be provided; volunteers may wish to bring a headlamp or book light. For more information, contact Hilary at 908-781-2521 (land line) hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com, or 908-255-0987 (cell).



Lorette Cheswick and speaker Michael Hagan of the New York Botanical Garden at our November Annual Meeting and Luncheon. His

lecture, 'The T. H. Everett Memorial Rock Garden: Past, Present, and Future' was an interesting look at a garden that has inspired generations. Photo by Hilary Clayton.

Save the dates for our 2020 meetings!

2/16/20 Barbara Melera, Landrith Seed, 'The D. Landreth Seed Company and the Story of America's Great Seedhouses'.

3/21/20 Joseph Tychonievich, NARGS Editor, Green Sparrow Gardens, 'Rock Gardening: Reimagining a classic style for Today's Garden'.

4/25& 26, Annual Plant Sale at The Leonard J. Buck Garden, Far Hills.

May, June, July, or August: tours of member gardens, picnic, and Plant Swap. More details below.

9/19/20 Lisa Roper, Chanticleer Horticulturist, 'Bulbs'.

10/18/20 Randy Heffner, Aquascape, 'Sarracenia'.

11/21/20 Lori Chips, Oliver Nurseries, 'Container Gardening'

In Memoriam

Long term Watnong member Ruby Weinberg passed away peacefully at home on Monday December 9, 2019. She and her husband Martin were among the earliest members of the Watnong chapter, already 20-year members when

she wrote a history of the chapter in 2007. They built a spectacular garden together, Frog Pond Farm, which they frequently opened for garden clubs, including the Watnong chapter. They were intrepid alpine hikers and flower photographers; their completion of the Hollyford Track in New Zealand, which they described as "difficult," inspired Murray Turoff and Roxanne Hiltz to do the Milford Track for Murray's 60th birthday. Roxanne and Murray found it was more than difficult, and barely completed it, in spite of being years younger than Ruby!

Susan Deeks remembers making her first trough with Ruby and Martin at a session led by Mike Wilson at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum. The Weinbergs brought a small bathtub as their 'form'; it turned out beautifully but was so heavy that once it was set in their garden, it could not be moved ever again! Jim Avens recalls that in 2004, when Ruby and Martin Weinberg visited his home garden in Lebanon Township, he seriously admired the depth of her horticultural knowledge and both Ruby and Martins' outstanding sense of humor. Ruby included several of Martin's photographs of Jim's garden in her book *The Garden Reborn, Bringing New Life to Your Aging Landscape*. She asked Jim to write a description of her new book for the back cover and he was truly honored to accept.

Ruby was active in the leadership of the chapter for many years. She served as vice chair from 1992-1994, was

secretary in 1996, and newsletter editor from 1997 through 2008, back in the days when it was typed, printed, and mailed, no small feat.

The Weinbergs hosted garden tours, the picnic, the soiree, and the annual luncheon, all at least once. Ruby gave numerous talks for our chapter, among them "South African Floral Safari", "French Gardens: The Regal, the Romantic, and the Rococo", "Exploring the Mountain Wildflowers" (about the American West), and "Scotland and Its Rock Gardens.

Ruby designed and constructed many private gardens in New Jersey and was a Certified Horticultural Instructor who taught adult education classes and vocational high school. She published numerous articles in a wide range of horticultural publications, and in 2004 published 'The Garden Reborn: Bringing New Life to Your Aging Landscape', based on her own experiences simplifying the care of Frog Pond.

Ruby will be deeply missed. Condolences may be sent to Martin at 26 Beavers Road, Califon, NJ 07830.

NEWS FROM NARGS

**THE SEED EXCHANGE PHASE III/
DISTRIBUTION IS COMING!**

As one of the largest and most active chapters of NARGS, we've been asked to handle the main distribution of seeds

again this year, beginning in late December with the receipt of packaged seeds from various chapters. Seed orders arrive via e-mail and paper mail, and orders are fulfilled throughout the month of January and into February. Last winter 25 volunteers logged about 355 hours to fill 561 seed orders in 13 sessions. Please consider joining the fun this year!

The Leonard J. Buck Garden will again allow us to use the Jordan House, 186 Liberty Corner Road, Far Hills, New Jersey, 07931. Weather permitting, we plan to fill orders from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. January 9, 10, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 30. You don't need to stay for the whole day, and you don't need to be a member of NARGS (or even the Watnong chapter!).

If you would be interested in helping with the seed distribution, please contact Hilary Clayton at 908-781-2521 or hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com.



Foresight 2020: Exploration and Inspiration

By Carol Eichler, Adirondack Chapter

It's not too early to be thinking about June. And why? As gardeners there are many reasons to look forward to summer and the NARGS Annual General Meeting and Conference I hope is one of them.

The Adirondack Chapter invites you to attend NARGS' Annual General Meeting— whether you are a return attendee or are considering attending for the first time. We promise an action-packed few days that include visiting the public gardens of Cornell Botanic Gardens and some very special private gardens. We are eager to showcase the beauty of our area that is often described as gorge-ous – which references our many gorges and waterfalls. But we're also proud of 40-mile long Cayuga Lake, the 2nd largest of the Finger Lakes, and the rolling, wooded hills and verdant gardens that surround it.

Each afternoon, after returning from field trips, you can indulge your plant lust at our plant sales featuring an exciting list of specialty vendors. Dinner and evening talks will follow. We are thrilled to introduce the NARGS community to Kaj Andersen and the Bangsbo Botanical Gardens of Northern Denmark where he and his wife Minna, working alongside Zdeněk Zvolánek, have been instrumental in the construction and care of the world's largest crevice garden. Our other

international speaker is Harry Jans, who believe-it-or-not is making his AGM debut and needs no introduction to the rock gardening community. Harry, renowned for his extensive travels, will take us on a whirlwind around-the-world tour in 60 minutes - highlighting alpines that he considers the best, new, rare, or strange and looking at different survival techniques. For his second talk he will focus on the alpines of Ecuador and Peru, two countries not often visited by plants people. Rounding out the Conference activities are: book sales and signings, door prizes, and always the camaraderie of fellow plant enthusiasts.

We believe Ithaca is the place to be this June! You might even want to consider extending your stay to more fully experience the Finger Lakes region. So mark your calendars for June 18-20 and start saving up to make the trip to Ithaca in the heart of the Finger Lakes region in the center part of the New York State.

The NARGS winter Quarterly as well as the website (www.nargs.org/Events) contain the details. Online registration will be opening by the end of January.

It Grew for Me:

Corydalis 'Blue Line'

Words and Photo by Sid Jones

I have greatly admired *Corydalis* since I first saw it growing in my father-in-law's garden in Pullman, Washington in the early 1970's. He grew *Corydalis lutea*,

yellow of course, and *Corydalis ochroleuca*, with white flowers. Both are native to Europe. I obtained plants from Pullman and they have grown easily in my garden ever since. They are self sowers but tend to restrict themselves to shade or partial shade. *C. lutea* will grow in sunny spots if the roots are cool. It loves a north facing dry laid wall that permits the top growth of the plant to get lots of sun. Both species produce light green ferny foliage which stays fresh looking throughout the summer. Foliage may be cut back in late summer, and then it regrows. The plants flower from spring to late fall or early winter. The foliage can persist through the winter.



Corydalis 'Blue Line', with *C. lutea*, 5/31/2019

There is a group of *Corydalis* with blue flowers and they have been something I have wanted for decades. Many in the trade are selections of *Corydalis flexuosa*, native to China. They have beautiful flowers; however it does not tolerate our local climate even if planted in shade.

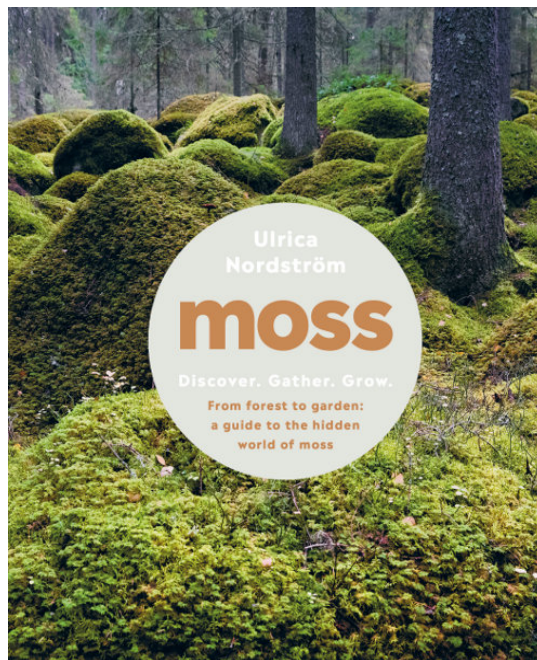
Another species is *C. elata*. I grew this one for a number of years before it also succumbed to our climate. The flower color of *C. elata* is not as attractive as *C.*

flexuosa. A few years ago I discovered another blue selection *Corydalis* 'Blue Line'. It is a cross between *C. flexuosa* and *C. elata*. I have grown it for 4 years and it is very robust and tolerant of a lot of sun. It has typical *Corydalis* foliage, but has one primary flush of flowers in late spring, with sparse flowering afterwards. Like other *Corydalis*, it is 12-18" high and wide. Nevertheless, it is a very desirable addition to a partially shaded spot that does not dry out.

JUDY GLATTSTEIN'S BOOK REVIEW:

Moss. Discover. Gather. Grow. From forest to garden: a guide to the hidden world of moss, By Ulrica Nordstrom

"Moss" is a generic category of plants, much the same as "tree." Whereas we easily recognize the diversity of trees overhead in any season of the year the lowly moss underfoot is, perhaps, trod upon and ignored. In the winter season it is more readily observed, with velvet green carpeting the earth. Perhaps you've had moss replace grass in your lawn. There are directions available on how to kill off the moss and return to turf that needs mowing, fertilizing, weed control, and more. Then there's [Moss Acres](#) where Dave Benner in Pennsylvania promotes moss as a lawn alternative for shady areas. Until now, general gardening books have not made much mention of moss. But now there is.



A brief introduction is followed by a discussion of moss anatomy, types of moss, and their uses. Peat moss has uses beyond the garden or as fuel, as medicinal wound dressing. Once the understanding that moss is a variable, how do we learn to identify the different species? Go into the field, collect with respect, and then observe the details.

A wonderful chapter has two-page descriptions of a variety of mosses, each with a full-page photograph by Henrik Bonnevier and a facing page with excellent drawings by Stephan Engblom and text.

Ulrica Nordström and Henrik Bonnevier then travelled around the world, visiting moss gardens and their gardeners. The greater section is Japanese gardens such as Saiho-ji, where moss carpets the ground under the small maple trees, assiduously tended by monks who rake the fallen leaves. There are a couple of gardens in the UK,

and more in Oregon, Washington, and the north-western United States.

Inspired? You should be. But rather than going to the woods and ripping up moss wholesale Nordström describes how to carefully collect "starter" plugs and best establish them. Even better are the descriptions of growing moss from spores - moss is, remember a plant without flowers and hence no seeds. Or, make a cocktail from moss and a substrate such as yogurt or beer that is then spread where moss is wanted to grow. These are techniques a young friend used, several years ago, to establish moss on rocks in a small rill in his garden. Other suggestions include growing moss on concrete, on peat blocks, roofs, or making your own pot or dish from hypertufa (a cement, sand or perlite, and peat moss blend popular with rock gardeners.) Then there are fanciful crafting suggestions, a small brush for example.

Live in an apartment with no outdoor garden space? Not a problem. You can grow moss indoors. Even if you have a garden these are very appealing ideas, ranging from a miniature saikei tray landscape.

Moss is a delightful book with practical ideas and useful information.

Moss: Discover. Gather. Grow. by Ulrica Nordström, published by The Countryman Press, a division of W.W. Norton & Company. Hard cover, color images throughout, \$22.95 ISBN 978-1-68268-483-2.

A review copy of this book was provided by the publisher

OUT AND ABOUT

Insect Armageddon

By Carole Stober

On Saturday, November 23, 2019, Raritan Headwaters Association presented Dr. Hans de Kroon, of Radboud University in The Netherlands, in a free program at Raritan Valley College. Dr. de Kroon was here to speak at Princeton University, and asked if there were other venues at which he could present his Insect Armageddon information. Raritan Headwaters, on short notice, organized this program, which was attended by 130 representatives from many concerned organizations, including our Watnong Chapter. Dr. de Kroon spoke for one hour and entertained questions at the conclusion, continuing conversations as our group exited.

His message was indeed alarming, but he kept his program more upbeat by informing us what actions we could take or encourage. Dr. de Kroon helped analyze the data collected during a 27-year study in Germany that recorded biomass of all insects collected. They found that flying insect numbers had plunged 76 percent in all species of the insect population. The conclusion drawn was that human interference from agricultural and home practices that destroyed habitat or applied pesticides was in large part to blame. The most alarming fact to me was that neonicotinoids may break down

relatively quickly in air but in water will persist for one year. This clearly presents a danger for all aquatic life.

This loss of insects is a world-wide phenomenon due probably to many reasons, leading to Dr. de Kroon's conclusion that there is not a single remedy. He cited success in a small flower rich area of Holland where researches found a thousand bees from 78 wild bee species. A complete summary of this program can be found on the Raritan Headwaters website.

The recent edition of *Wings*, the magazine of the Xerces Society (invertebrate protection) also cited an article in *Conservation Science & Practice* (online) by Forister, Pelton, & Black, 'Decline in Insect Abundance & Diversity: We Know Enough to At Now' (2019). This well written article cites additional information including positive steps toward insect recovery.

The Garden Club of Morristown will present a free lecture January 22, 2020, 10:30 a.m., at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum. Speaker Katy Kinsolving, co-founder of C-Change Conversations, will present *Food and Climate: The Way Forward*. Food production and agriculture are major contributors to climate change. Our food systems will also be radically affected by climate change. How can we work with the plants that feed us and the natural systems that support them, to reduce the contribution that agriculture makes to climate change, mitigate the effects of

extreme weather on our farming systems, store more carbon in the soil and feed ourselves more healthfully? Please join us and bring a friend!

WATNONG CLASSIFIEDS

HYPERTUFA TROUGHS



Coopers Hollow Farm specializes in native plants with people-pleasing qualities; pollinator friendly and ecologically beneficial. We offer selections of flowering perennials and shrubs, understory trees, shade grasses for dry to wet areas, ferns, and ground covers. Smaller sizes are available for mass plantings. Coopers Hollow is a NJ registered nursery located in Bernardsville, using only organic practices (not certified).

We are open by appointment only. For requests and availability, contact CoopersHollowFarm@yahoo.com

If you would like to place an ad here, send copy to the Newsletter Editor, hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com. The deadline for our Late Winter 2020 edition is February 22, 2020.

NARGS Watnong Chapter

Five Year Financial Summary

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Revenue					
Membership Dues	\$1,160	\$1,100	\$2,355	\$1,185	\$1,205
April Plant Sale Profit - Net	\$5,235	\$3,891	\$3,053	\$4,752	\$3,883
November Plant Sale Profit - Net	\$100				
Expenses					
Administrative	-\$46	-\$129	-\$264	-\$30	-\$122
Bus Trip - Net	-\$82	-\$400	-\$653	-\$390	\$0
Hospitality	-\$809	-\$823	-\$1,974	-\$1,961	-\$2,416
Insurance	-\$327	-\$327	-\$327	-\$333	-\$351
Newsletter	-\$298	-\$258	-\$325	-\$138	-\$156
Program	-\$1,810	-\$3,023	-\$2,038	-\$1,931	-\$1,220
Rent	-\$175	-\$175		-\$350	-\$175
Donations					
Blackburn Scholarship	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500		
National NARGS	-\$500		-\$500		
Laurelwood	-\$200		-\$1,475		-\$2,245
Buck Garden					-\$8,000
Wycoff Ave Garden					-\$100
Net Cash Flow	\$1,748	-\$645	-\$2,648	\$804	-\$9,697
Checking Account Balance - Beginning of Year	\$10,601	\$11,246	\$13,894	\$13,090	\$22,787
Checking Account Balance - End of Year	\$12,349	\$10,601	\$11,246	\$13,894	\$13,090

2020 WATNONG CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Treasurer	Don Grossmann	908-604-8060	donmliss@msn.com
Secretary	Debi Graf	201-919-0749	DGRAFatHome@aol.com

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**THE WATNONG CHAPTER
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c/o The Leonard J. Buck Garden
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