



The Mason-Dixon LINE

Newsletter of the Mason Dixon Chapter,
North American Rock Garden Society

April 2015

Spring Greetings



The orange flowers of witch hazel 'Jelena' against the spring sky.

All gardeners grow. Well, that sounds obvious. But what I mean is that by being gardeners, we grow ourselves — in our knowledge and experience, as well as our goals and ideas. As we grow and learn, our gardens succeed more and more in satisfying our artistic visions, providing peaceful places for reflection and homes for wildlife, and hosting our ever-intoxicating plant collections. Of course, there are also the other types of life lessons, such as letting go of the tender things that disappeared for good in a winter such as the one we've had the last few weeks. As we approach the first day of spring here in a few days, I'm sure we will all be looking for the emerging shoots of our favorites. Fingers crossed.

Dr. Doug Tallamy, the author of [Bringing Nature Home](#), recently published an Op-Ed in the New York Times on the critical importance of native plants in the garden. Here is the link:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/11/opinion/in-your-garden-choose-plants-that-help-the-environment.html>

In this piece, he describes plants as something akin to “biological miracles” because they allow us, and other animals, to essentially “eat sunlight.” This makes me wish I had paid better attention to photosynthesis in science class. I got the part about plants using sun, water, and nutrients to make food, but it never dawned on me what an

amazing thing this

was, or how mind-bending it would be if people never had to eat, but could manufacture our own food energy by walking around outside in the sunshine and drinking water.

Last fall, chapter member and nurseryman Stan Kollar gave away a great number of greenhouse plants that he could no longer keep. Joe and I acquired a couple of staghorn ferns as well as several cymbidium orchids. We don't know much about growing orchids, but did our best by repotting them and giving them reasonable care over the winter, which consists of a cool greenhouse. Nighttime temperatures are usually near 40, but sometimes even a few degrees colder than that, while daytime temperatures can get into the 90's on a sunny day. One of the orchids, a mature plant, put out 4 flower spikes in December. We awaited the flowers, but the buds seemed to pause for weeks upon weeks in their green phase. Then over the course of a few days in February, the buds suddenly swelled up and began to open. Creamy white with pink insides. Each flower is the size of a golf ball, and one of the stalks has 18 flowers on it. Wow.



— Susan Stiles, Editor

SPRING TIPS FOR YOUR GARDEN

from Rene Monaghan

Now that winter is becoming a memory, its time to get back out into the garden. Start now to get the gardens off to a healthy start.

- Prune your woody plants. If you have dead branches you will want to remove them. Now is also a good time to prune and thin deciduous trees. When the leaves are not fully open you can really see where the thinning needs to be done. On all woodies remove any branches that are going straight up and any that cross another. Remove the damaged one if they have been rubbing against each other.
- If you didn't remove the dead foliage from your perennials or annuals in the fall, now is the time. Also remove any tree leaves that are

covering the crowns. This will reduce the incidence of rot and mold growing on this decaying plant material. This in turn will allow the new growth to emerge strong and reduce the chance that they will be attacked by the bacteria and fungi that cause rot!! Air circulation is one of the important ways to keep the emerging new shoots healthy.

- It is also time to remove the leaves that have accumulated in your garden since the final raking of the fall. These too can cause the new emerging plants to be contaminated with organisms that will cause them to rot or just get a slow start.
- Cut back grasses before the new growth begins to emerge.
- Adding perennials or other hardy plants to your garden can be done as soon as the ground thaws. The earlier you put them in, the better established they will be before those hot days of summer stress them. By summer they will be better able to handle a slight drought. It is better for you because you are planting in better temperatures and those spring showers will water for you. If you wait until May or later to plant those perennials, those showers may be gone and you become the rainmaker. In addition the plant now has to struggle to not only establish itself but to also find water.
- If you are planting a new garden or replacing an old one, now is the time to get started if you haven't already. This way you can get the plants in the ground before the hot days of summer arrive and you can take advantage of those spring showers.
- Wait until Mother's Day to plant your annuals.

This is my favorite time of year. Gardening is artistic, therapeutic, fun and best of all provides us a chance to exercise without even knowing it!!

The Mason-Dixon Chapter Officers

The New Year brings new opportunities for you to volunteer for official responsibilities for our chapter. The positions are unpaid, but deeply rewarding, and we will be glad to get you up and running. Please join our informal leadership team!

Chairman	Joan King <i>Acting Chair</i> jking121@gmail.com
Membership	Jerry Hudgens gahudgens@comcast.net
Secretary	Open Please volunteer!
Treasurer	Bill Yonkers Billyonkers@gmail.com
Programs	Marika Sniscak marika123@verizon.net
Newsletter	Susan Stiles Susan.Stiles@zoominternet.net
Plant Sales	Susie Leslie seleslie111@verizon.net
Website	Open Please volunteer!

Garden Time Designs



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2015 Calendar, continued

August -- no program

September 19, Saturday – Norrisville Pavilion

We will have our plant sale as usual. Sale starts at 10am, those bringing plants please arrive by 9:30.

October 17, Saturday – Norrisville Library TBA

November 21, Saturday – Norrisville Library

Last February, our member Sue Leslie and her nephew Ed savored the true flavors of New Zealand with the help of a past student who lives on the North Island and her neighbor's family who live on the South Island. Through the magic of PowerPoint, Sue will take you along on a photographic journey from the North to the South Islands, and give you some insight into planning your own trip along the way. Ride a train along the coast, cross a glacier, soak in a thermal pool, walk the best day hike in the world, and sail a fjord.

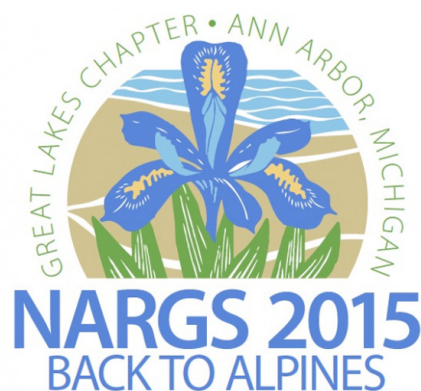
December

Seed packing workshop, details to follow.

NARGS Annual General Meeting, Ann Arbor, Michigan, May 7, 8, and 9, 2015

The registration pages are now open at the NARGS website.

Please visit <https://www.nargs.org/ann-arbor-agm> to review the program details and to register to attend this wonderful conference. Among the highlights will be the speaker Ger van den Beuken on Friday evening, who will have two presentations. The first at 8:00 PM will be "Growing Alpines at Sea Level or Below," followed by second presentation ("for dedicated gardeners") called "Argentina and Chile in 50 Minutes." On Saturday, Malcolm McGregor will present "Rock Gardening, or What's a Heaven For?" There will be tours of several NARGS members gardens, as well as visits to public gardens and natural areas. And of course, plant sales, silent auctions, and plenty of tufa.



Ger van den Beuken's garden in Horst, Netherlands (photo by Ger van den Beuken from the NARGS website)

2014 Calendar of Events and Meetings

We meet at the Norrisville, MD branch of the Harford County Public Library, located at 5310 Norrisville Road (MD Rt. 23) in Norrisville/White Hall, MD 21161. The meeting room is open at noon for our lunch social. Bring your lunch! The meeting begins at 1:00 PM.

In the event of inclement weather, Marika will notify members by email by 10:00 AM on the day of the meeting if the meeting is canceled. If you do not have email, and are not sure if the meeting is canceled, please call Marika at 410-461-1923 before 10AM.

March 21, Saturday – Norrisville Library

Jacqueline Doyle of Doyle Farms Nursery (now closed) will present a talk on Maryland native plants with an emphasis on woodland plants at Shenks Ferry.

April 11, Saturday – Highland, MD

Visit to the garden of Dick and Freddi Hammerschlag, members of Potomac Chapter NARGS. Here is more about this garden, from Dick: What first must be said about our garden is that when we purchased our house in 1989, what predominated around the property were large trees and a few rhododendrons, plus two small ponds. We were thrilled about the layout of the 2 ½ acre property in that there was a sweeping driveway leading down to a very modern custom built house and an acre of healthy woods behind the house leading down to a stream. There's ample opportunity for landscaping with both sunny and shaded areas. We have been adding and replacing sections ever since with stones, dwarf conifers, Japanese maples, wild flowers and herbaceous perennials. The bed of rhododendrons were transplanted elsewhere and replaced with a bed of day lilies, hellebores and a variety of bulbs. We have enlarged the ponds, and added two additional small ponds. All have a variety of water tolerant plants (Japanese butterbur, turtleheads, ferns, Japanese maples, etc.) around them. Dick has large collection of dwarf conifers, and Japanese maples plus several rockeries, while Freddi has collections of daffodils, day lilies, peonies, hellebores and hostas. Many of these plants are labelled. Freddi and Dick want the garden to be whimsical and have added many metal and ceramic creatures throughout hoping to put a smile on everyone's face. The garden has several goals including four season display, diversity of ecological plantings and need to plant in best suited locations. For rock garden enthusiasts there are rockery areas using different rock types, new small crevice style gardens (shale and Setter's quartzite), a rock terrace, stone streams, and various usages of stone throughout.

April 25, Saturday – Alpine Plant Sale at Stonecrop Gardens, Cold Spring, NY

We will attend the Stonecrop Plant Sale in Cold Spring, NY. You can look up more information about this sale for plant enthusiasts at www.stonecrop.org/ or look at the January newsletter for more information. Rob Gimpel, a member of our chapter and a former intern at Stonecrop, will treat us to a guided tour of the gardens after the sale.

On the Friday before, **April 24**, we have arranged a guided tour at 1pm of the Leonard J. Buck Garden in Far Hills, NJ. The garden is about 3.5 hours north of Baltimore, and about 1.5 hours south of Cold Spring. It is a 29 acre naturalistic woodland rock garden that incorporates 12 outcroppings with varying exposures and microclimates which enable different plants to flourish. The Buck Garden also has a plant sale on Saturday and Sunday, co-sponsored by the Watnong Chapter of NARGS.

<http://www.somersetcountyparks.org/parksfacilities/buck/LJBuck.html>

May 7-10 – Annual Meeting of NARGS in Ann Arbor, Michigan

June 20, Saturday – Norrisville Pavilion

Annual plant sale starts at 10am. Those bringing plants please arrive by 9:30. **Following the plant sale will be a trough planting workshop.** Bring your own trough; planting medium will be provided. Use plants purchased at the plant sale or from home. A limited number of trough plants, mostly conifers and evergreens, will be available at a nominal charge. Fee \$20. Advance registration required BEFORE April 1; please notify Marika at marika123@verizon.net if you want to participate. A minimum of 10 people is required to hold this workshop.

July 18, Saturday – Jarrettsville, MD

12 noon. Our hosts are Susan Stiles and Joe Donovan in Jarrettsville, MD. Bring a dish to share, a bathing suit and a towel.

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