



The Mason-Dixon LINE

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

October 2014

Pumpkin and Berry Season



October greetings, everyone! The summer has flown by, and we've had some beautiful early fall weather and even some much needed rain. I hope your garden this year was a happy one and that

you are enjoying the season's changes. Sometimes after the chaos of summer, it's a bit of a relief to have the growing season slow down, and to take time to enjoy the views that open up when the leaves come down.

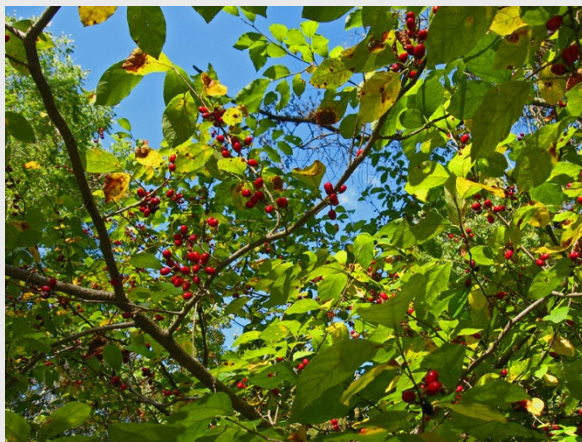
We are fortunate to live near a state park (Rocks State Park, north of Forest Hill). If you go down to the bottom of our road, there is an unpaved road that winds through the woods which makes a perfect place to walk on a fine fall day. I've started taking my camera along to capture some of the beautiful scenery and native plants along the way. The road follows a meandering stream called Kellogg Branch. The stream eventually crosses Route 24 and merges into the Deer Creek, which has its start in Shrewsbury, in York County, and flows some 50 miles to empty into the Susquehanna.

Along the road is Camp Wo-Me-To, which hosts various gatherings during the year. We sometimes hear music coming through the woods, especially on Sunday mornings. Recently, dozens of the trees along the road that border the camp had streaks of blue paint on them, something we thought was vandalism. A phone call to the camp revealed a different cause: it is to delineate the "No Hunting" boundaries of the property. According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, property owners can use "bright blue oil base paint on trees" to mark their property boundaries. The paint mark must be a vertical mark at least 2 inches wide and at least 8 inches in length, appearing 3 feet from the ground but no more than 6 feet high. We found this paint rather unattractive, but it has softened over the season and hopefully, has served its purpose.



I hope you enjoy taking walks this season, and pictures of your own.

— Susan Stiles, Editor



(Left) Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) is one of our beautiful natives. The spring flowers are a brilliant pale green that makes an excellent cut flower. The fall berries are an important food source for birds. The fruit can persist well into winter, as repeated freezing and thawing are what make the berries palatable. Fall is a great time to plant shrubs, and the fruiting varieties will support migrating birds as well as those that overwinter in our region. Some have excellent fall color and spring bloom as well. Consider adding these recommended local natives in your garden to help support diversity: *Viburnum* spp., Elderberry (*Sambucus* spp.), dogwood (*Cornus* spp.), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), and serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.).

NARGS Annual Meeting: Santa Fe Visit by Dick Arnold

The 2014 NARGS annual meeting was held in Santa Fe, NM the last weekend of August. The attendance was only 90 which was much lower than expected. The north central NM scenery is beautiful, from very dry desert landscape to the moist green mountain vistas. The drive from Albuquerque to Santa Fe is about an hour and is up hill as Santa Fe is at 7000 feet. The scenery is mainly desert with mountains visible in the distance. I returned to Albuquerque by way of the Turquoise Trail which is through the mountains and a number of quaint towns along the way.

The meeting was opened Thursday evening with a welcome by Peter George and an informal visit with old friends. Hikes and garden visits were scheduled for Friday and Saturday. I chose the Friday hike, and it was scheduled as an 8 hour hike but it ended up at less than 2 hours (very disappointing). We did see quite a number of plants and flowers and I was lucky to be hiking with Malcolm McGregor and Alex and Lillian Maksymowicz who really could I/D the plants. The guides were very nice and knew the trail but didn't know any of the plants. I do enjoy the hiking on these trips and was sorry not to see more of this beautiful part of the country.

The speakers for Friday evening were David Salman of High Country Gardens who helped us understand more about Xeric plants and how to be more successful in growing them without wasting water. Dan Johnson spoke on the Steppes of the world and although they're on different continents, the growing conditions on each are very similar.

I toured the member gardens on Saturday and while all 5 gardens were unique and great, I would mention David Salman's lived up to his talk and we saw how every drop of water was used to its fullest. He developed a wonderful garden under these conditions. Lack of water is a huge concern in this area of the USA. I saw a *Burkiniczia cabulica* that seeded down in his gravel driveway and I bought one



at the plant sale figuring that even I should be able to grow that back east.

I also enjoyed Robin and Juliet's garden and it's only 3 years old. They have put a ton of work into the design, building and planting of this garden. It's a beautiful garden with a huge variety of plants. They also have many great views of the surrounding mountains.

That evening we heard Panayoti Kelaidis (Sky Islands in a sea of sage). He discussed many of the plants of the mountain west and had many great slides to display just how beautiful they are in the wild.

There was a plant sale every day, and even knowing that most of the plants are tough to grow in the east, as always, I bought quite a few. I asked one of the growers how these plants would grow in the east and he was sure they would do just fine in east Santa Fe!!

The Zozobra festival was Friday night and this is where they burn a huge paper man (50 feet tall). Everyone in the crowd writes their worries on a

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Santa Fe NARGS Annual Meeting



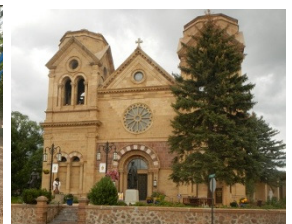
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piece of paper and Zozobra is stuffed with all these papers. He's then lit on fire and all your worries go up in flames! (I'm worry free for at least 2 years.)

During and after the meeting I toured Santa Fe and drove up to Taos. Both towns are artsy/ crafty with many galleries and museums. I did a lot hiking in the national parks and saw some of the cliff dwellings and even climbed ladders 140 feet to one at Bandelier. The highlight of my touring was a balloon ride over the Rio Grande Gorge. Overall a very fun trip.

Just a reminder that the 2015 annual meeting will be held in Ann Arbor MI May 7th to 10th. The Great Lakes chapter is very active and I'm sure this will be a great meeting.

—Dick Arnold, September, 2014



Members Page

Our thanks go to **Jim Dronenburg and Dan Weil** for hosting the summer picnic at their art-filled home in Knoxville, Maryland, near Harper's Ferry. It was a bright, sunny day and the garden was overflowing with countless interesting plants that Jim has collected over the years. Jim knows his Latin! Members of the Potomac Valley chapter joined us for a very pleasant get-together.



*Left, Cephalanthus, one of the unusual plants in Jim's garden, the buttonbush plant .
Right, members browsing the flowerbeds at Dick Arnold's Jarrettsville garden.*

Thanks also to **Dick Arnold** for hosting our plant sale, pot luck and plant dig at his wonderful garden in Jarrettsville, Maryland this September. A perfect day presented itself, and much needed funds were raised from the sale for future programs. During his guided tour, Dick generously dug all kinds of perennials, shrubs, and even small trees for people to take, as well as giving everyone a piece of genuine tufa.



Jerry Hudgens will have seeds available at the next two meetings for several specialty plants from his garden in Churchville, Maryland. Depending on the weather, seeds should be available in October or November. The list includes:

1. *Magnolia ashei* (Ashe's Magnolia). Indigenous to the panhandle of Florida, but quite hardy to at least this area. The flowers are about the size of a dinner plate, even on very young plants. It is deciduous and tolerant of a fair amount of shade.
2. *Stewartia malacodendron* (Silky Stewartia) Native to the coastal plain from VA to FL. Hardy here and generally considered hardy Z7-9. **VERY nice in bloom.**
3. *Aesculus parviflora*, an early variety of Bottlebrush Buckeye. Nice.
4. *Aesculus parviflora* var *serotina*, the later variety and even **nicer**.
5. *Euonymus americanus* (American Strawberry Bush; Hearts-a-burstin; Bursting Heart); native to eastern USA. Attractive fruit in September/October.
6. *Pollia japonica* (Pollia). Herbaceous perennial from Japan. 2-3' tall. Flowers and fruits late summer/fall.
7. *Paeonia japonica*; a Japanese woodland peony. Fall fruit at least as attractive as the flowers.
8. *Paeonia obovata*; very much like the above but later

blooming. Also from Japan.

9. *Styrax wilsonii* (Wilson's Snowbell); lower growing than *Syrax japonica* (can be more shrub-like or trained to a small tree form) with very attractive reflexed flowers. China.

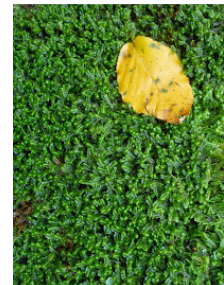
10. *Cardiocrinum giganteum* (Giant Himalayan Lily). To 15 feet tall or more under the right conditions. China. These look like small blades of grass the first year after germination. Very large trumpet flowers.

11. *Cardiocrinum cordatum* (Japanese Cardiocrinum). To 4 feet tall; otherwise like the above.

12. *Asimina triloba* (Pawpaw)

12. *Franklinia alatamaha* (Franklin Tree); named for Ben Franklin; now extinct in the wild. Can be difficult to establish, but possibly easier from seed than from nursery pots. Blooms late summer to fall.

Joan King recently attended a moss walk with The Muhlenberg Botanical Society, led by Dr. Susan Munch at French Creek State Park, Pa. You can see a selection of her beautiful photographs at Google plus. Please email Joan for the link (it is too lengthy to type manually!).



John Lonsdale, Proprietor of Edgewood, to Speak October 18

John Lonsdale was born in 1959 and raised in Sheffield, England - the home of the world's finest silver cutlery, Sheffield Wednesday, and "The Full Monty." His childhood interests mainly rotated around various sports but definitely didn't include being dragged around numerous rose nurseries every Sunday afternoon. However, the latter must have had a deep but sub-conscious effect, which came back to haunt him later, albeit manifest rather differently. He went to University in Newcastle upon Tyne and gained a Double First Class Honors BSc in Biochemistry & Microbiology and a PhD in Microbiology. After much thought he became a Microbial Biochemist and has spent the past 18 years attempting to discover novel antibiotics in the pharmaceutical industry.

John is married to Eleanor and has three girls. The older ones



are very interested in plants ("If I dug that up how much could I sell it for?"). Fortunately the little one seems genuinely interested and was last year heard telling a couple of older ladies at Longwood Gardens about the various events involved in

pollination. They were very impressed.

The 1.5 acre garden in Exton, PA, called Edgewood, was started in 1995 with a move to the US. The new house and garden came with an added bonus - a wonderful climate for growing in-character hardy plants, especially bulbs, and many other flowering trees and shrubs. Propagation is vital to the well-being of any successful garden and John sows in the order of 450 pots of seed each year, mainly from bulbs. After many years, there is still very little to compare with the thrill of seeing a freshly germinated pot of seedlings. Edgewood is also home to four beautiful outdoor cats, vital to the integrated pest management that is practiced. For more on John and the gardens at Edgewood, please visit his website at www.edgewoodgardens.net/index.html.

Joe's Chessboard

Joe Donovan recently installed an outdoor chessboard in his Jarrettsville garden. The oversized chess pieces have been coming his way, a few at a time over the past several birthdays and Christmases, from an online source called MegaChess (www.Megachess.com). The pieces are fairly light-weight, made from molded fiberglass and resin. The king is about 24" tall, and the pawns about 17". Joe plans to paint them this winter, possibly to look like marble.

The chessboard is made from contrasting 8" squares of bluestone and sandstone, set in a crushed stone base.

An inaugural game was played by two brothers, ages 7 and 10, on a recent Saturday afternoon. Despite a shortage of pawns (4 black & 4 white are still needed to complete the set), the young contenders eagerly aligned their opposing forces and began the contest. White proved the more aggressive player, quickly crowding the black king into a defensive position which could not be salvaged even after a tricky castling move. A rematch is pending scheduling.



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.

October 18, Saturday 12:00 noon social, 1:00pm meeting Norrisville Library
John Lonsdale will present "Woodland Treasures." We visited John's garden in April, so you can request additional information on plants that interested you, and ask questions. Cyclamen will be for sale.

November 15, Saturday 12:00 noon social, 1:00 pm meeting Norrisville Library
Joan King will present "A Remnant Prairie Habitat in Southern Ohio." Joan's report on a trip she and Tim Draude took last August to a dolomite habitat featuring *Buchnera americana* (blue hearts), *Hexalectris spicata* (crested coral root) and four species of *Liatris*, along with many other plants.

December TBD NARGS seed-packing workshop and seed distribution; information to follow.

January 17, 2015 Saturday 12:00 noon social, 1:00 pm meeting Norrisville Library
Members meeting. How did your 2014 garden grow? Please bring slide shows or photos to share with other members. A projector and laptop will be provided.

Additional Meeting Dates in 2015 — Details to follow!

Feb 21

March 21

April 18

May 16

June 20

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RETURN UNDELIVERED COPIES TO:

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Yearly dues for the Mason-Dixon Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) are \$10 (single or joint at same address). Make checks payable to M-DC/NARGS. Mail to Jerry Hudgens at above address. Please contact Jerry for more information. Phone: 410-826-2469
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