



Veronica peduncularis

CURIOUS GARDENERS

the Newsletter of the New England Chapter of NARGS April-May 2019

April 13, 2019 **The Presbyterian Church in Sudbury,
330 Concord Rd, Sudbury, MA**

10:30 am Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies. Members A-M please bring nibbles

11:00 am *Cheryl Monroe speaking on Species Clematis*

12:00 noon Lunch (bring your own), chat

1:00 pm *Discussion on Spring Gardening: What do you do on your first days out in the garden in the springtime? Why? How did your garden fare in this roller coaster winter? If you want, bring photos on a flash drive to illustrate a situation or problem (or just something beautiful!) or email them to Vivien and she will put them on a flash drive so we can all see.*

May 18, 2019 – **Ames Hall, Memorial Congregational Church,
26 Church St. Sudbury, MA**

10:30 am Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies. Members N-Z please bring nibbles

11:00 pm *Hands-on plant workshop – techniques, soil mixes, etc. (see below)*

12:00 noon Lunch (bring your own), chat

1:00 pm *Rare Plant Auction*

Donate what you can, bid early and often, and we will all have a great time!

From the Co-chair

Members of the gardening community frequently talk about “Heroes of Horticulture”. Although our Chapter is fortunate to have such heroes as members, we would not grow and thrive without the hard work and commitment of all our members. In this newsletter, I would like to recognize the heroic efforts of our Treasurer, Ernie Flippo. Ernie is so modest that he might be embarrassed by our collective gratitude but without his tireless and cheerful contributions to all aspects of our meetings, our Chapter would be greatly diminished. We miss you Ernie and wish you a speedy recovery.

Other examples of Horticultural Heroes can be found in our Chapter. Attendees of the February meeting would have seen them in action. Who knew that Peter's fertilizer is now Jack's? Or that Michigan State University sells high quality soil amendments? We learn so much from our members when we share information in an informal way, just by asking simple questions. I would encourage members to attend and to invite like-minded friends to join us. After all, we are The Curious Gardeners.

Amal Moamar

Our Favorite Plant Sources

At the February meeting, we had a discussion that included sharing information about our favorite nurseries, especially those with great display gardens, but also online resources.

The first one that came up is **Cochato Nursery** in Holbrook. Their web address (<https://www.cochatonursery.com/>) won't help you at the moment as it is "under construction" but Cochato's is a great little nursery tucked away on an unlikely street in Holbrook. The display garden includes many dwarf conifers as well as the hostas which are its specialty. Chuck Doughty and his wife Susan Jablonski both have regular day jobs in addition to somehow finding time to run the nursery, but they are very knowledgeable and friendly people for whom this is clearly a labor of love.

After stopping in Holbrook, one could continue south to the wilds of Dartmouth to visit Katherine and Chris Tracey's extraordinary **Avant Gardens**. The nursery is pretty much entirely run as a mail order business now (<https://www.avantgardensne.com/>), but we could maybe lean on NARGS-NE members Kathy and Chris to let us pay a visit if we arrange it in advance. What do they sell? Practically everything rare and wonderful and if you aren't sure what to do with a particular unusual plant, Kathy will tell you the best way/place to grow it, out of her vast and direct experience.

Another nursery with ties to our chapter is Karen Perkins' **Garden Vision** (<https://www.epimediums.com/>) in Phillipston, MA, featuring Darrell Probst's epimedium collections and introductions. (And this season, a couple of new epimediums introduced by Mark McDonough!) Karen will be holding Open Nursery for visiting the display garden and buying plants onsite for 17 days in May; check the website for specifics. Other than that time period, Garden Vision is mail order only. It is obviously THE source for epimediums, but also sells a selection of "Other Shade Perennials," including introductions from Darrell and also Jan Sacks and Marty Schafer.

Jan and Marty's nursery, **Joe Pye Weed's Garden** (<http://www.jpwflowers.com/>) is in Carlisle. While they are not set up for on-site sales, many of us have visited their fabulous garden and they are usually happy to have us, with advance arrangements. Jan and Marty breed irises, especially Siberian Irises, Versicolors, and Species and Interspecies hybrids, and many of their successes are in the trade. Other nurseries in New England that people like, in no particular order:

Peckham's Greenhouse in Little Compton, RI (<http://peckhamsgreenhouse.com/>). Sounds like an idyllic setting and they grow all their own annuals and perennials and hand-propagate 75% of their houseplants. Nearby is Sakonnet Garden (<https://sakonnetgarden.net/>), but you'll need to visit on May 25 or 26, as those are the private garden's open days for 2019. Ed Bowen (**Opus Nursery**) is also down there, but it's not clear to me what the nursery's current status is. Ed has ties to our chapter; if anyone has more information, let us know at the next meeting. Wentworth Greenhouses in Rollinsford, NH (<https://wentworthgreenhouses.com/>).

The Farmer's Daughter (<http://www.thefarmersdaughterri.com/>) in South Kingstown, RI.

The Garden in the Woods (<http://www.newenglandwild.org/>) is the home of the New England Wild Flower Society, a wonderful place to visit – in the heart of scenic Framingham! – especially for the spring ephemerals. It also has a wide selection of native plants for sale, mostly grown at their Nasami Farm site. The garden reopens April 15 (<http://www.newenglandwild.org/visit/Garden-in-the-Woods>).

Russell's Garden Center (<https://www.russellsgardencenter.com/>) on Rt. 20 in Wayland is geared for the sophisticated gardening public. They have a wide selection of nice nursery stock and is a great place to get unusual tender perennials for summer displays.

And finally, a few farther-away sites for mail order:

Broken Arrow Nursery <https://www.brokenarrownursery.com/>, Dick Jaynes' nursery, which is a source for unusual woody plants. Dick spent many years breeding kalmias (when he wasn't selling Christmas trees!) and has the best anywhere.

Rare Find Nursery (<https://www.rarefindnursery.com/index.php/>)

Song Sparrow (<http://songsparrow.com/>). The Klehm family farm in Illinois sells a wide array of plants, but are especially worth checking out for peonies and woodies.

Far Reaches Farm (<https://www.farreachesfarm.com/>). A self-described “plant collector’s paradise,” the owner is Sue Milliken, who was once a member of our chapter until she moved out west to Washington.

Vivien Bouffard

For the May Meeting

Hands-on session on repotting seedlings in gang pots into individual pots for growing on, plus we will tear apart a *Veronica peduncularis* (and hope there’s enough for everyone will take home a growable shred). The chapter will provide supplies and members will share their favorite recipes for soil mixes.

Mark Your Calendar!

September 14 Seedling Sale

October 12 Cliff Booker, 2 talks

November 16 Mark McDonough; Annual Mtg.

(details to come)

From the Editor

A major joy of a greenhouse is the ability it provides to grow new, exotic, beautiful winter-blooming plants. Just so: but a serious setback in my own structure has led me to the realization (however much against the grain) that I can forego ‘new’ and ‘exotic’ and still get a satisfying display in the bleak season. Along with some protection against the full devastation of a ‘setback’.

My disaster was a freeze-up a year or so ago. I had dismantled the adjacent enclosed vestibule which, along with some unfortunate weather, was enough to upset the delicate balance, and I simply was not as alert as I might have been. Potted plants were decimated according to their root hardiness, leaving major gaps. To fill them, I turned to plain old garden plants.

I was already in the habit of bringing in a primula or two. You just can’t go wrong with primula. (In this case billed as *P. elatior ssp. meyeri*, which, however, is red.)

Then, after a little poking around, my eyes lit on two other possibilities: *Brachyscome iberidifolia*, that had been doing floristic duty most of the summer; and



Veronica peduncularis ‘Georgia Blue, which had already quite caught my eye as full of promise.



The Brachyscome is usually sold as an annual, but what did I know? Maybe it only needed a bit of warmth to keep it going. I dug it up in flower, potted it, and it obligingly kept sending out flowers clear through December. As the greenhouse cooled off the foliage lost its sparkle, but that is coming back now with the warmth of March. And to all appearances it’s all set to give a whole new season of service.

And finally the Veronica. *V. peduncularis* proved to be a winner from the beginning with its elegant foliage, then bloomed like blue blazes from mid-January to, really, just about now. It has also been promising outside – in a very protected environment (it is considered a zone six plant). Otherwise it seems to be quite easy-going.

A winter in the greenhouse also tends to set a plant up for early and substantial division, and there it is, ready to pop into the garden bright and early.

Jim Jones



NARGS-New England Chapter Membership and Dues

Membership in NARGS-NE is \$10.00 a year payable January 1 to Ernie Flippo, 264 Wales St., Abington, MA 02351. Payment may also be made in person at a meeting.

Local Chapters: –There are thirty-eight NARGS affiliated chapters active in North America. Chapter events include lectures, an email newsletter, garden visits, field trips, demonstrations, and plant sales. These friendly gatherings provide a wealth of information; offer a source for unusual plants, plus the opportunity to be inspired by other gardeners in your region.

Our Chapter meets 6 times a year (February, March, April, September, October and November), publishes a newsletter in email format, and organizes garden tours in May and June.

National Organization: We encourage you to join the national NARGS organization.

www.nargs.org Dues are \$40.00 a year. Benefits include a seed exchange, a quarterly publication, and an on-line web site featuring an archive of past publications, a chat forum and a horticultural encyclopedia. NARGS national also conducts winter study weekends and holds their Annual Meeting in interesting places.

Reminder: BE GREEN Bring Your Own Mug

Directions to The Presbyterian Church in Sudbury, 330 Concord Road, Sudbury, MA
The Presbyterian Church in Sudbury is located in the town center of at the intersection of Route 27 and Concord Road next to the Town Hall. There is ample parking in the rear. The entrance to the lower meeting room is in the rear with easy access from the parking lot

Directions to Memorial Congregational Church, 26 Concord Road, Sudbury, (across from Goodnow Library)

from Route 95/128 and the East: Take Route 20 West through Weston and Wayland into Sudbury. At the first light in Sudbury turn right onto Concord Road. The church is 2 houses on the right. Turn onto Church St, parking is just up the hill in front of Ames Hall.

from Route 27 and the North: Follow Route 27 south into Sudbury. At the traffic light in Old Sudbury Center turn right (south) onto Concord Road. Follow Concord Road approximately 1 mile and turn left onto Church Street. Parking and the entrance to Ames Hall is up the hill on the left.

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