



Cypripedium parviflorum

CURIOUS GARDENERS

the Newsletter of the New England Chapter of NARGS February- March 2019

February 23, 2019 Ames Hall, Memorial Congregational Church,
26 Church St. Sudbury, MA (changed venue)

- 10:30** Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies. Members A-M please bring nibbles
11:00 a.m. *George Newman & Rosemary Monahan: Botanical Treasures of
Newfoundland*
Lunch (bring your own). chat, check out our show & tell.
1:00 *Discussion of great nurseries and beautiful gardens to visit, led by
Ernie Flippo. Come prepared to plug your favorites and we'll
assemble a list that we'll share electronically*

March 23, 2019 The Presbyterian Church in Sudbury,
330 Concord Rd, Sudbury, MA

- 10:30** Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies. Members N-Z please bring nibbles
11:00 am *Elisabeth Zander: Building a Rock Garden, Part 1*
12:00 noon Lunch (bring your own), chat, check out our show & tell. Board Meeting
1:00 pm *Elisabeth Zander: Building a Rock Garden, Part 2*

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: Species Clematis*
12:00 noon Lunch (bring your own), chat
1:00 pm *Julia Cordon: 12 Months of a Botanical Tour Guide.*

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

- 10:30 am** Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies. Members M-Z please bring nibbles
11:00 pm *Rare Plant Auction set-up*
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 Chair

Welcome to 2019 and another crazy New England winter. There's just no predicting this stuff, is there? These untimely warm spells give me fits, and unlike all my non-gardener friends, I am praying for the temperature to hurry up and drop before my plants get the wrong ideas in their little green heads. Meanwhile, I am busy in my basement at my potting bench (aka the washing machine) sowing my treasures from the NARGS SeedEx, separating the ones that will go out into the cold from the ones that will stay in the basement for a time. Hope you're all planting a few seeds – happy germination to you!

Amal Moamar and I are now sharing the responsibilities of chapter co-Chairs. A big thanks to Amal for stepping up! You'll be hearing from her instead of me in the next newsletter. We do still need another person to join Amal as a co-chair so I can finally "retire". As I promised Amal, though, I will be around to pitch in where needed, so it will really be a team of three. Meanwhile, programming for the 2019 meetings is just about complete, so whoever agrees to come on will have one job already done.

Being on the board of a group like ours whose members live nontrivial distances from each other presents some challenges. We will soon be setting up a meeting (aside from our regular meetings) to talk about our chapter's business and how we can better communicate with each other. Everyone will be invited, so stay tuned. Please note that the venue for the February meeting has had to be changed since the earlier announcement. We will meet at the Congregational Church (NOT the Presbyterian Church) in the parlor downstairs. In the event that scores of people show up (unlikely in February!), we will go to Ames Hall. The two rooms are near each other and both are accessible.

We always have show-and-tell at our meetings (one of my favorite things!), but this cold, dark month of February, let's make a special effort to find something interesting in our houses or greenhouses that we can bring in to show the group. Let's make our meeting place bloom!

Vivien Bouffard

From the Vice-chair

The first NARGS annual meeting that I attended was in Alaska, 2002. My husband, Helmut, and I had just bought on auction forty acres sight unseen in Healy, Alaska to help a cousin with access to his camp. This conference would be the perfect chance to see if we had bought a pile of rocks and to enjoy guided hikes and flourishing plants. The flight to Anchorage was long but exciting, flying over

craggy, Canadian mountains, and, finally over shimmering water. We did not stay at the conference center Sheraton but enjoyed walking from presentations at the hotel to our lodge at 10:00pm in daylight. The conference sales room was exciting with books (my suitcase became very heavy), plants and seeds. The presentations concentrated on tundra plants but also included the Chugach mountain plants given by Verna Pratt and Alaskan Garden Art as well as troughs. As a first time attendee, I won the table centerpiece trough. Luckily in those days we did not pay for extra luggage weight. The trip to the Chugach mountains was memorable in many ways. As the bus drove by the entrance sign, the moose statue beside the sign moved. Dall sheep were spotted at roadside, foraging for salt. We saw no bear but young athletes, sporting noisy bells, ran by us on the trail, preparing for a competition and noisily trying to warn away bears. Chasing Andrew Orsini and Jaime Rodriguez up the mountain, we spotted many unique plants - *Veronica grandiflora*, *Castelleja unalaschcensis*, *Salix artica*, *Fritillaria camschatcensis* and the state flower *Myosotis sylvatica* (and many others). The pace was fast and, as we neared the snowfields, most of us dropped out. Helmut was amazed at the many plants at the edge of the melting snow. The number of various plants was overwhelming and I would have liked to drop down on the ground and photograph each gem. On the way to Healy (up the George Parks Highway) we stopped at several members' gardens and admired the sparkling air, the unspoiled views, and the ways the gardeners deal with wildlife, including moose. I wish I had been a more experienced rock garden traveler in 2002 but it certainly was an exciting way to begin alpine adventures.

Leslie Milde

From the Editor

I am pleased to be taking on the Editor's job -- and yet. The last time I did it was forty some years ago and, my goodness, things have changed! Back then, Xeroxing was only just replacing the mimeograph as the way to go, and it all had to be readied for the U.S. mail, a fairly tedious business in itself.

So yes, there seems to be some catching up ahead of me, but, right off the bat, Marilyn Beaven is providing me with insights, techniques, and a smoothly functioning model to serve as a guide. I hope to do as well as she has done.

One of the keys to her success, of course, was the steady supply of articles and news bits from you members. I am ready for business, and eager to see what you all will contribute.

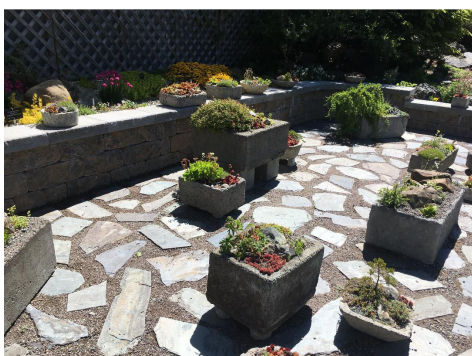
Jim Jones

Please note change of meeting venue to Memorial Congregational Church

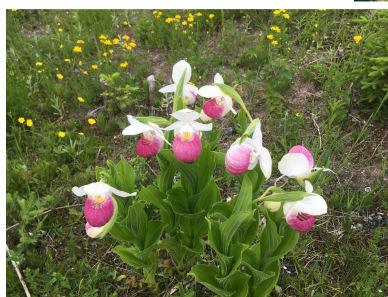
February Meeting Saturday 24, 2019

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

Chapter members George Newman and Rosemary Monahan have each travelled to Newfoundland to see the unique habitats and amazing and beautiful flora of Newfoundland. They will focus on the plants of the Great Northern Peninsula, which is rich in limestone barrens and host to many unusual species. Rosemary will also show some photos of the rock garden at the Memorial University Botanical Garden, which was one of the sites visited during the July 2018 NARGS Annual General Meeting in St. John's.



Troughs in Newfoundland
Botanical Garden of
MemorialUniversity



Cypripedium reginae. Showy lady's
slipper



The real *Viola Labradorica*



Silene *acaulis*



Saxifraga oppositifolia



Dryas integrifolia

And speaking of Rosemary Monahan: we are informed in the Quarterly that she has been nominated for a Directors position! We get to vote for her online April 9-22.

Then, after lunch, we will head into the world of nurseries and gardens, led by Ernie Flippo. Bring us your visions of spring and summer!

March Meeting Saturday 24,2018

The Presbyterian Church in Sudbury, 330 Concord Road Sudbury MA

Elisabeth Zander

The Evolution of a Garden: Parts I and II



Primula farinosa



Primula auculis

While working in the propagation department at White Flower Farm in the mid 80's, Elisabeth was invited to help set up at one of the Connecticut Chapter of the

American Rock Garden Society plant sales. Linc Foster, Ed Leimsider and Dick Redfield, encouraged her to buy, pointed out great plants (with full discussion of their habits) at amazing prices. She was hooked.



P. vulgaris sibthorpii

Elisabeth joined the CCARGS and started attending meetings in New Haven. Shortly thereafter, she also joined the Berkshire Chapter. Under the tutelage of Norman Singer, she became the Newsletter Editor. During this time, she published articles of Geoffrey Charlesworth (which became his



Primula veris

second book), Anne Spiegel, Cliff Desch and many others. In 1994-96, she directed the

NARGS Seed Exchange with the help of the CT and Berkshire chapters. Before passing it on, she split it into a three part operation for future exchanges. An Avid grower since joining, she was sowing well over 1400 packets of seed yearly by the late 90's. She built raised berms, hill pocket, and shade gardens to house all the plants and kept over 2,500 species thriving. She was a member of the BNARGS committee for the NARGS 1995 Annual Meeting and the 2008 EWSW. A former BNARGS Chapter Chair she now organizes the Chapter

Program venues. At the turn of the millennium, Elisabeth moved her gardening to a blank slate property in Goshen. Since then, she and her husband Rod have built a greenhouse, stone walls, plunge beds, troughs, raised beds, sand beds, and extensive crevice gardens. In 2018 she received the Linc and Timmy Foster Millstream Garden Award for creating a superior garden which reflects the standards of the Millstream Garden. Still sowing seed, she has tapered down to a couple hundred packets of seed a year. Days, Elisabeth programs relational databases for Forecast International.

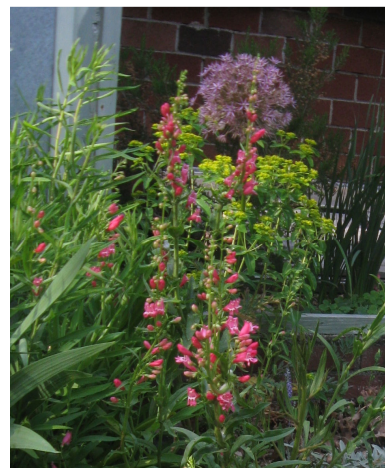


Primula allionii 'Warfdale'

Elisabeth's talks will focus on rock garden plants that can be grown in New England and tricks she has learned for creating the garden conditions where they can succeed. This is sure to be a presentation full of ideas and techniques for gardeners at every level. Bring a friend!

Penstemon x mexicali

It must have been simply rock gardener's reflex rather than any expectation of success that prompted me to try seed of *Penstemon x mexicali*. I ordered it from Rocky Mountains Rare Plants fourteen years ago and, what do you know, despite the unpromising name it has proven to be pretty much what we want in a penstemon: thoroughly hardy, enduring and obliging. The broad leaves are attractive and willing to be evergreen in a protected enough situation, though in my case the foliage tends to be nubby come spring. Blooms in various shades of red are borne for 3 or 4 weeks in July and August.



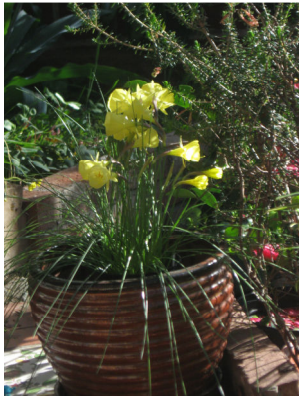
It comes along willingly through seed or rooted stems, and thrives here in any reasonably sunny spot with typical moisture. I'm aware of flower variations in the various seed lots but have not paid them the attention they deserve.

The Web confirms that it wants well-drained soil of low fertility, and is not too fussy about moisture otherwise. The Web is, however, somewhat fuzzy about its background, describing the plant as a purported hybrid between Mexican and American species, combining the best traits of each, and developed in Colorado. Several seed companies offer it on line.

A Fine Time for Snowdrops

It is a pleasure, as editor, to receive newsletters from other chapters. On hand now is the one from the Sierra Rock Gardening Club. It talks of spring-like doings and of crocus and cyclamen blooming in the garden. And here we are, so far behind.

Or are we? Word is just in from Ernie Flippo: his vaunted snowdrops are making a supreme effort and thrusting into bloom phenomenally early! And Marilyn Beaven's *Galanthus elwesii* in showing a flash of white, as is mine. (*G. elwesii* is that bit earlier and sturdier than *G. nivalis*. And yes, this is last year's picture.)



The Sierra newsletter also showed a picture of a nice pot of dwarf daffodils in lush bloom, and I would say we can also hold our own against that. Sort of. Pictured is my *Narcissus bulbocodium praecox*, blooming away all through January and still going strong. It's a sturdy little thing, holding up through the occasional freezing temperatures in my cranky solar greenhouse, and increasing well. It's from the Atlas Mountains

North American Rock Garden Society 2018 Year-End Report

The year 2018 has been a fantastic year financially for NARGS. Our dues increase in 2017 has resulted in higher dues revenue year-to-date; however, that increase has been offset by a greater decrease in donations year-to-date. Tour income for the year, however, added nearly \$35,000 to our treasury, leaving us net positive income over expense year-to-date. We plan more tours in 2019 and beyond that will financially support our society, as well as provide great opportunities for members to see plants in their native habitats and in gardens.

NARGS STUDY WEEKEND, 2019 The Delaware Valley Chapter of NARGS will host the 2019 NARGS study weekend, May 3-5, in Frazer, PA. A pre-trip (May 2-3) will tour natural areas in Lancaster County and in the New Jersey pine barrens. Frazer is just outside Philadelphia. Go to NARGS.ORG for more info.

NARGS ANNUAL MEETING, 2020 Next year's NARGS annual meeting will be held in Ithaca, New York, on June 18 – 20, 2020, on the campus of Cornell University. It is hosted by the Adirondack Chapter of NARGS and

co-sponsored with Cornell Botanic Gardens. Registration for the meeting will begin next fall. In conjunction with the annual meeting next year, the NARGS Tours and Adventures Committee has organized a pre-conference tour on June 15 – 17, 2020, to see the native flora of the Adirondack region, including vegetation of Whiteface Mountain and bogs of the western Adirondacks. Also, a post-conference tour will be on June 21 – 23, 2020, and will visit five public and private gardens in the Hudson River Valley. **Registration for both tours is open now.** Details are posted on the [NARGS website](#).

The prospect for coordinating a group from the chapter will be brought up at the next meeting.

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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The Newsletter of the New England Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society is published 3-4 times a year. In 2018 expect February-March, April-May, September-October, November issues and occasional notices of special events.