



Heptacodium bracts

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER of the North American Rock Garden Society November 2014

-2014 Fall Calendar-

**Annual Meeting Luncheon on Nov. 15, 2014
Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge,
680 Hudson Rd, Sudbury, MA**

MENU

Chicken, Broccoli and Ziti
Eggplant Parmesan
Meatballs and Sauce

Fresh Mixed Green salad
Dinner Rolls Buffet Basket
Members Homemade Cookies

Cost \$ 15.00 per person

It's not too late to sign up for the catered luncheon.
Please notify Rachel Ross at h.rachel.ross@comcast.net by Nov. 12th.

You can pay Ernie Flippo at the meeting.

If you prefer to bring your own lunch that's fine,
we hope you will enjoy the cookies.



AGENDA

11:00 a.m. Business Meeting
12:00 noon Catered Lunch or bring your own.
1:00 p.m. **Bobby J. Ward**, Executive Secretary of NARGS
Modern Day Plant Hunters



Bobby J. Ward

“Modern Day Plant Hunters”

The speaker for our Annual Meeting is Bobby J. Ward, the past president of NARGS and currently its Executive Secretary. We are already acquainted with Bobby’s literary talents from his many articles and book reviews in the Quarterly publication. His topic with us derives from his book, *“The Plant Hunter's Garden: the New Explorers and Their Discoveries”* (Timber Press 2004) which profiles 32 of today's plant hunters, all of whom are nurserymen/women in the private sector. It provides an overview of these nursery owners and some of the plants they have collected or introduced in the post-Cold War era of plant hunting. Included are such nursery people as Jim and Jenny Archibald, John Watson, Chris Chadwell, Josef Halda, Dan Hinkley, Tony Avent, Sean Hogan, Don Jacobs, Barry Yinger, our own Darrell Probst, Robert McCartney, etc. They are an international cohort hailing from the U.S., Canada, Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Chile.

Ward lives in Raleigh, North Carolina . He is a native North Carolinian and received an undergraduate degree in biology from East Carolina University and masters and doctorate degrees in botany and plant physiology from North Carolina State University

Among his other publications are *"A Contemplation Upon Flowers: Garden Plants in Myth and Literature"* (Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, 1999 and paperback 2005) and his latest book is *"Chlorophyll In His Veins: J. C. Raulston, Horticultural Ambassador"* (BJW Books, 2009) which is a biography of the founder of the arboretum at N. C. State University and its director for 21 years.

Ward earned the Award of Merit in 2004 from the North American Rock Garden Society for contributions to the society, both at the national level and the local Piedmont Chapter in North Carolina.

Notes from the Co-chair

Rachel Ross is traveling to Toronto at press time and taking advantage of her out-of-the-country time to research winter gardens in Toronto especially the many gardens along the lakeshore. Notable among those is the Music Garden which was designed by Julie Messervy. Originally the plan was submitted for the ‘Boston Greenway’ competition but the committee couldn’t decide so Julie offered it to Toronto and they accepted. Rachel is continuing her interest in urban gardens, like the NY Highline on which she reported in the February issue. Keep posted for a new article in our *Other Views* series. Ed.

Notes from the Tandem

Journey of a Gardener

THEN & NOW, THERE & HERE:

Helen du Toit

As I am sure most of you already know, I was born and raised in Cape Town and lived there until I was 50, when we emigrated to the United States, wrongly believing that apartheid would never end. Cape Town had a Mediterranean climate, which meant hot, dry summers followed by wet cool winters, leading to evergreen native trees and shrubs. We lived in Newlands, right up against the back of Table Mountain and close to Kirstenbosch, the National Botanic Gardens, where we were lucky enough to have our wedding reception, as my father was Chairman of the National Botanic Gardens Board of Trustees, hence my interest in and life-long passion for gardening. Newlands, being close the mountain, received more rainfall than other parts of Cape Town and as we lived in a long-settled historic area it had an abundance of old English oaks leading to good soil. Our area was full of hydrangeas, camellias, roses, avocado trees, irises and numerous annuals. I was even lucky enough to have several cycads in my garden. Clivias could grow outside year-round, and I started miniature cyclamen from seed I bought from Parks. There were no voles, and no bugs to attack gardeners. That was one of the greatest shocks about moving, all those pesky bugs lying in wait for one to venture out into the garden.

But I think of everything that I could grow in Newlands my very favorite were *Sasanqua Camellias*, which grew above the hydrangeas and in front of the fence between us and our neighbors. They flourished there, shaded by large oaks and had beautiful and fragrant flowers. Sadly, they eventually succumbed to vine weevils which girdled the bark on the trunks, which is why I now grow one here in a tub, *Camellia sasanqua* 'Winter's Rose.' I bring it into the garage every winter and place it in a west-facing window. It is just coming into bloom right now and will continue for many weeks to come.

At the end of 1986 once our son had finished his schooling, we joined Derek who had already moved to New Jersey in order to buy a house. When searching for a property to purchase Derek took along a shovel and insisted on checking the "digability" of the soil, as he knew I would be furious if he bought a property that was all rock and ledge so that I couldn't make a new garden. Luckily, he found a suitable Colonial in beautiful (yes) rural Hunterdon County. Here I was on a different continent, with a totally different climate and flora and had to learn how to garden in another country. I was challenged but excited about the huge number of new plant names, not to mention a slew of new bird species as well.



Camellia sasanqua 10/31/14

I joined the local Garden Club and one of my member friends told me I should join the Rock Garden Society, as "all the very best gardeners are members there". So I duly joined the Watnong Chapter, which meant that I was easily able to transfer to the New England Chapter when I moved up to Massachusetts. In 1995 my husband was killed in a car crash so I was left alone to pick up the pieces of my life. One of the things I decided to do was to become a docent at the Leonard J. Buck Garden in Far Hills, NJ. This is a beautiful rock garden where I hoped to learn more about the subject. Then my son came to visit and suggested that I move up to Sudbury to be close to him and his family. It took me no time at all to agree, although I was sad to leave behind all the Garden Club friends I had made.

So here I was in 2002, now aged 62, starting on my third garden in the house my son had found for me. Luckily he knows me well, so I ended up with a property I loved on sight, with more trees than I could count surrounding the property. The only drawback was that Sudbury does not have the rich moisture-retentive clay soil I had in New Jersey, but one adapts to what one has. At least by this time I was totally

au fait with nurseries which had a good selection of shrubs and trees, and best of all, Roslyn Nurseries had not yet closed! So in my current garden I have planted lots of shrubs with emphasis on winter interest, on the assumption that as I age they will fill in and require less attention than flowers. I've added a few trees to augment what are already there and perennials, many of which are native and have self-sown aggressively. When they are in bloom I think they look wonderful, but at other times I wonder if they won't just take over the whole garden. I have tried some rock garden plants, but voles and chipmunks have seen to it that these did not flourish. Having seen Elisabeth Zander's presentation I realize that if I'd started out with nothing but rocks and crushed stone I probably would have had much more success, but then there is only so much one woman can do on her own!

Haskell Nursery becomes Allen C. Haskell Public Gardens

After a year and a half of negotiations, The Trustees of Reservations purchased the Allen C. Haskell & Son nursery, a 6-acre property in the center of New Bedford, MA. Well known to aficionados of rare plants, the Haskell Nursery was the go-to nursery for international clients and local gardeners alike. The death of Allen Haskell and the loss of his horticultural inspiration can not be replaced.

But second best, however, is the intention of the Trustees of Reservations to transform the former commercial property into an urban park. The Trustees have developed a master plan to first; refit its greenhouses and, restore the buildings and second; to introduce a butterfly garden, a bird habitat and a large, grassy common area for classes, events and informal get-togethers. The Haskell purchase is a new kind of venture for the Trustees, who are more accustomed to the preservation of historic estates, but they believe that a 6 acre park in the middle of New Bedford with its 95,000 residents will have a substantial impact and is a worthwhile growth of their mission.

The new Superintendent of the Allen C. Haskell Park, **Kristin DeSouza**, is a good friend of NARGS. When she was Senior Horticulturist at the Garden in the Woods she was responsible for the implementation of a NARGS grant to certify the Trillium collection as an accredited collection by the North American Plant Collections Consortium. Watching Kristen map out the location of the 20 species of Trillium in the Garden made NARGS members realize the meticulous attention she brings to horticultural projects. Kristen has used her mapping skills again to record a botanical inventory of Haskell's plant specimens. This summer DeSouza also supervised the pruning, weeding, and removal of invasive plants with the goal of recapturing Haskell's former vision. The effort paid off and she was able to lead monthly garden walks through the property. "It is really an oasis for the city," says DeSouza. "A lot of the residents that I talk with never knew the place existed. So an October 2014 opening will be quite lovely."

Although we will miss Kristen's presence at the Garden in the Woods, we wish her a successful tenure as Superintendant at Haskell Public Gardens and we look forward to the possibility of a Chapter visit to the Park in the near future. *Photos and text excerpts by permission The Trustees of Reservations*



NARGS-NE “Show and Tell” Ahead of the Curve

Each month Chapter members bring exceptional plants to our meetings to share horticultural hints and successes with friends. At the October meeting Ernie Flippo brought a cutting from his *Heptacodium miconioides* to show everyone its colorful fall bracts.

Not to be outdone the **Arnold Arboretum** selected their *Heptacodium* as featured plant in the October Tree Mob outing.

North American Newbie

Heptacodium miconioides

Tuesday, October 14 at 2:00pm



Flippo *Heptacodium miconioides*

The story of *Heptacodium miconioides*, or the seven-son flower, illuminates the trajectory of an exotic plant from discovery to propagation, to distribution and observation, and finally to the point at which it enters the nursery trade. Native to high cliffs in the western Hubei province of China, seven-son flower is rare in the wild. This large, arching shrub with exfoliating bark is covered with

pale white flowers in late summer, but is most resplendent in the autumn when its calyces and fruits turn rose-purple. *Photos and text excerpts by permission Arnold Arboretum*

Roy Herold brought in his 5 year old *Cyclamen hederifolium* which was in full bloom. Delicate pink flowers crowned the lush, variegated foliage. The flowers and foliage spring from a single corm when last weighed was an amazing 10 pounds!



Cyclamen hederifolium

Additional specimens included these plants in late fall bloom illustrated below.



Nerine mini form



Nerine standard form



Oxalis polyphylla



Oxalis pulchella



Oxalis perdicaria

Photos courtesy Marsha Russell

A Request for Environmental Responsibility

In the interest of being more environmentally responsible we would like to suggest that beginning next year members of our Chapter bring their own mugs for coffee or tea to meetings. The Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge is a "carry in, carry out" facility, which means that we have to remove our garbage after each meeting. We are all concerned about non-recyclables clogging up landfills, so the board feels that this would be a good move. Naturally, we will always have spare coffee cups available should anyone forget to bring their own mug to a meeting.

Please also note that there are recycling bins on the far side of the room we use at ARNWR.

NARGS-New England Chapter Membership and Dues

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

Local Chapters: –There are thirty-eight NARGS affiliated chapters active in North America. Chapter events include lectures, an on-line 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, and organizes Garden Tours in May and June.

National Organization: We encourage you to join the national NARGS organization. www.nargs.org Dues are \$30.00 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.

Support for NARGS national underwrites a **Speakers Tour** bringing internationally known speakers to North America. Local chapters have the opportunity to hear and visit with outstanding plants people from around the world who present talks and workshops.

Directions to Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge

680 Hudson Road,
Sudbury, MA.

from Route 95/128 and the East: Take Route 20 (Boston Post Road) West through Weston. Turn right onto Rt. 27 and follow this into Sudbury. Stay straight on Hudson Rd. and go about 3 miles to Winterberry Lane on the right. The Parking/building is 0.4 miles in on the left.

from Route 1495: Take Exit 26 to Rt. 62 for 6.5 miles as merges with Sudbury Rd and go another .5 miles on Hudson Rd. On the left is Winterberry Lane and the parking/building is .4 miles in on the left.

Chapter Officers for 2014

Co-Chairs: Rachel Ross: h.rachel.ross@comcast.net

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The Newsletter of the New England Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society is published 4-5 times a year, February, March, April, September, and November, as the spirit moves.

