

Ilex verticillata 'Red Sprite'

CURIOUS GARDENERS

The Newsletter of the New England Chapter of NARGS

October 2017

-2017 Fall Program Calendar-

Special Notice to NARGS-NE Gardeners

It has become increasingly difficult to find appropriate meeting space. Although we have contracted with Memorial Congregational Church of Sudbury (MCC) to be the main site for our meetings through November 2018 they have long term commitments to other groups for the same Ames Hall space on some Saturdays. Consequently, a few of our meetings will be held at the *Presbyterian Church in Sudbury*. Please check the calendar in our newsletter to be sure you travel to the right place each meeting. We are working hard to keep our meetings in one place as much as possible and we appreciate very much the willingness of both churches to put us up.

The Board thanks you for your patience!

October 21, 2017 - **Saturday** Presbyterian Church in Sudbury* 330 Concord Road Sudbury, MA

- 10:30 am** Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies.
Members A-M please bring cookies
- 11:00 am** *Stephen Schneider, Arnold Arboretum, Director of Operations*
Plant Collecting in the Republic of Georgia part 1
- 12:00 noon** Lunch (bring your own) chat, check out our show & tell. Board Meeting
- 1:00 pm** *Stephen Schneider, Arnold Arboretum, Director of Operations*
Plant Collecting in the Republic of Georgia part 2

November 18, 2017 - **Saturday** Memorial Congregational Church 26 Concord Road Sudbury, MA

- 10:30 am** Welcome – coffee, tea and cookies.
Members N-Z please bring cookies
- 11:00 am** ***ANNUAL MEETING***
- 12:00 noon** Buffet sandwiches or byo lunch. Board Meeting
- 1:00 pm** *Michael Levin from Bonsai West, Growing Hardy Bonsai*

*directions at the end of the newsletter

October 21 , 2017 11: 00am morning session and 1:00 pm afternoon session

Stephen Schneider

"Plant Collecting in the Republic of Georgia: A Tale of Two Trips"-

The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University's long history of foreign plant exploration has yielded one of the finest collections of wild-woody germplasm in the United States. In keeping with that tradition, the Arboretum's recent "Campaign for the Living Collections", aims to expand its wild collected holdings through a series of expeditions aimed at bringing nearly 400 targeted taxa into the collections. In spring of 2016, the Arnold was presented with the opportunity to travel to the Republic of Georgia on a scouting expedition that would lead to the Arboretum's very first official plant collecting expedition to Georgia in the fall of 2016. Director of Operations, Steve Schneider, participated in both trips which covered many different regions of the country. From ancient [Shatili](#) in the north, to coastal [Batumi](#) in the west, and the arid sands of [Davit Gareja](#) in the south, the [Greater and Lesser Caucasus](#) present a diverse range of flora that is guaranteed to tickle the fancy of any plant enthusiast. Join Steve on a virtual trip through these magnificent lands as he shares some of the sights and sounds he experienced while on his quest.



A Note from the Chair

For this newsletter column, I would like to write an erudite article on an obscure subspecies, but instead I will focus on the mundane logistical details of Chapter administration and leave it to the rest of you to write the interesting stuff. (Really; please do. Your contributions are needed and appreciated.) Thank you to Harriet and Marilyn for their offerings in this issue; seeing Harriet's lovely meadow plants made me wonder what our members might have going in their rock gardens right now, as they tend to lean so heavily to the spring bloomers. Who is successfully using the tips from our September speaker, Marcia

Tatroe? If you have some little plants with great autumn color or interesting seed pods or something that is just showing up now, please take a photo and share with the rest of us.

Seedling sale: we brought in about \$370. Many thanks to all who brought plants, bought plants, and helped with setting up and cleaning up. It was a good time. And speaking of autumn bloom, what a thrill to see all those colchicum bulbs that Ellen Hornig brought! Hope everyone got at least one and hope every single person has colchicum to brighten up their fall gardens.

Think about what you might like to bring to the auction, which will be in May this year. That event needs a little pumping up and we hope that holding it in May instead of June will allow a wider range of offerings. It's been pointed out that it's hard to dig up plants that haven't even poked their heads through the soil yet.

Annual meeting: the date is November 18 and the place is the Congregational church. We are planning to order lunch from Roche Bros as we have in the past; I believe it's basically sandwiches, cookies, and beverages, and runs about \$15 per person. You can sign up at the October 21 meeting or you can email me by November 10. The cost can be paid to our Treasurer, Ernie, as can annual Chapter dues of \$10 each. It's certainly fine to bring your own lunch as usual, if you prefer.

Seed Exchange packing: Ellen H. has been making the Chapter look good for the past

couple years or so by taking on 100 taxa of seed donations to repackage into those little glassine envelopes we all love, but she can't do it this year. I think it's important for us to contribute to the SeedEx effort, so the seeds will be coming to me and I'll be soliciting your help to get them done. This will happen in early December and I'll invite you to my house in Norwood, unless someone has a better/more central location. More info to come.

Future speakers: our schedule is set through Spring 2018, but we need to start thinking seriously about Fall 2018 and Spring 2019. Our members are great resources, both for speaking and for recommending speakers, so if you have ideas for possible candidates, please speak to me or Leslie Milde or someone else on the Board.

Vivien Bouffard

2017 Annual General Meeting



Welcome

The 2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) will be in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina and is being hosted by the Piedmont Chapter. The AGM will explore the past, present, and future of rock gardening in the southeastern and mid-Atlantic regions of the U.S.

The meeting is being held in November to see the amazing drifts of fall-blooming snowdrops (*Galanthus elwesii* var. *monostictus*) and other bulbs at Nancy Goodwin's garden at Montrose; to see Tony Avent's Juniper Level Botanic Garden (and its recently installed crevice garden) and to shop at Plant Delights Nursery; and to see the plants and gardens at the JC Raulston Arboretum. It will be an opportunity to learn about and see other outstanding gardens. The Triangle Area (Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill), North Carolina, has a rich history of outstanding gardeners, including Tony Avent, Nancy Goodwin, Elizabeth Lawrence, William Lanier Hunt, and J. C. Raulston.

Registration is now open for the NARGS Annual General Meeting in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, November 17 – 19, 2017. Details and further information are contained in the summer issue of the *Quarterly* and on line here: <http://www.piedmontnargs.org/>

A Note from the Vice-Chair

For many years we have spent some summer vacation in a coastal community in Maine. Forty years ago it was a bustling community with gift shops, two restaurants, two convenience stores and a movie theater. Lately stores have closed and the town has lost the feeling of prosperity. This last year, however, several community gardens have opened and offered fresh vegetables to anyone who wanted some (they were asked to pull a few weeds). Everything, except the pumpkins which are destined for the elementary school, is available for visitors. The rows are neat and abundant. There are many new raised beds in individual gardens and flower boxes are sprouting in front of local businesses. What a change in the town. What a big difference gardens make.

Leslie Milde



Milbridge, ME Community gardens

Growing Oxalis outside: or a bonus from our Rare Plant Sale:

The story of my lucky purchase which turned out to be a mix of 15 *Oxalis adenophylla* corms, 1 *Adiantum pedatum*, 1 *Arum* & 1 *Hepatica nobilis obtusa*. Surprise!

Two years ago a lovely large *Adiantum pedatum* was offered at our Rare Plant Auction and I considered buying it. Then Roy Herold held the pot up said, “Oh, what do I see here a bit of *Hepatica* too!” Well, that was just enough of a come-on to entice me to out bid everyone else. I planted the pot in a new little pocket under some trees.



Initial planting in 2015



Oxalis adenophylla Spring 2016

I also decided to separate the *Hepatica* out and move it two feet away. The next spring, much to my surprise before any of the hepatica or fern fronds emerged there was a generous cushion of little, pink-tinged 5-petaled flowers. I never guessed this was an oxalis that had survived the winter. My only experience with oxalis was the non-hardy greenhouse type. Research suggested *Oxalis adenophylla*. A few weeks later the hepatica also put out “blue” flowers and by June the fern fronds appeared. But one surprise remained; a broad variegated leaf appeared at the edge of the fern rhizome, possibly an *Arum*. With the addition of some complementary plants my pocket grew.



Arum and fern pocket June 2017

I was so pleased with the hardiness of the oxalis that I bought 25 more this September. When they arrived I was shocked to open a package of hairy, solid 'bulbs'. How could they possibly be bulbs? I checked with Ellen Hornig and she suggested I check out *geophyte* the term for a class of bulbs, corms, rhizomes and tubers. The corms, rhizomes and tubers are modified stems growing underground as storage knobs. But bulbs are different. Wikipedia lists them as, “other”, saying that they are a “short stem with fleshy scale leaves.” Nothing quite describes the covering of oxalis; it remains a mystery.



Altogether my purchase at the Rare Plant Auction proved an unexpected horticultural lesson on several fronts; a lesson in succession planting, a lesson on hardy oxalis, and a lesson in terminology research. Well worth the price.

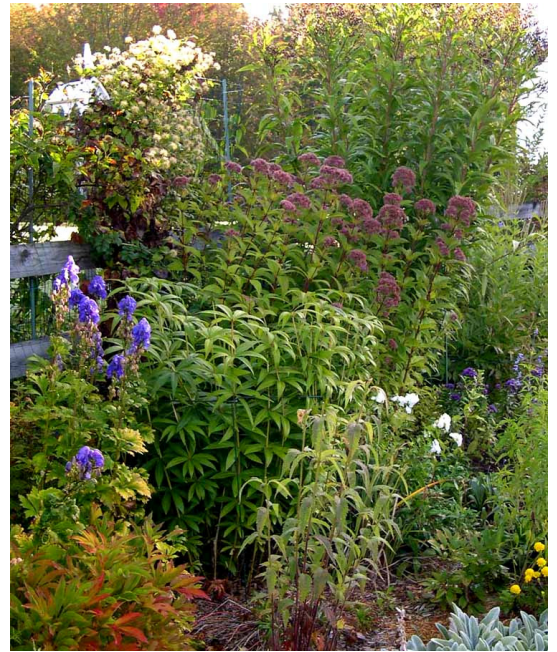
Marilyn Beaven

Late Fall Blooms from Otisville,ME: A Photo Essay



Asters around the armillary in the sun

The 3 asters are *Aster laevis* 'Bluebird' and New England *Aster* 'Alma Potschke' and 'Mrs. Grant'.
I am seeking 'Hella Lacy' if anyone has a division to share.



The bottom of the fence garden

In the bottom of the fence garden the ironweed is done but Joe Pye (Little Joe) Weed continues to show color, now joined by a late monkshood.



***Persicaria* 'Darjeeling'**

Persicaria 'Darjeeling' goes on and on! It has been blooming all summer. I don't deadhead because I like the contrasting colors of the pink flowers to red brown seedheads.

Aster 'Bluebird' is a pollinator magnet!



***Aster laevis* 'Bluebird'**

Harriet Robinson

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 the first meeting of the year.

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: 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

Chapter Officers for 2017

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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 2016 expect February-March, April-May, September-October, November issues and occasional notices of special events.