



Woodland/Shade Gardening

By Jimi Blake

Woodland plants are the brave plants that burst into flower in the spring lifting my spirit and encouraging me to start back to gardening in Hunting Brook, Co. Wicklow, Ireland. These plants are so important in the garden to extend the season of interest and brighten up a shady area. An expanse of deciduous woodland is not necessary to create a woodland garden, though it is a dream situation for this purpose but that shaded area in the corner of the garden where you dump the grass mowings can take on a whole new life, or by simply pruning a shrub to let more light under it will allow for your mini woodland garden. The other type of shade in lots of gardens is the shade created by walls, which is also suitable for growing woodland plants.

In the wild, these plants flower under the dappled shade of the deciduous trees before the leaves shade out the woodland floor during the summer months. Generally the woodland plants finish flowering by early to mid summer and form a ground cover of various shades of green. These plants are called spring ephemerals.

Remember the secret of a good woodland garden is the preparation of the soil, as these areas can be quite dry in the summer with the roots of the trees or shrubs taking up the moisture. When I started the woodland gardens in Hunting Brook I cleared the weeds by hand and then dug over the soil and incorporated a mixture of leaf mould or garden compost, and very well rotted farmyard manure creating a delicious mixture for these woodland gems to grow well in. The best time to do your planting is in the autumn before the onset of early spring growth and dry weather in early summer. I like to remove all the fallen leaves in winter before the woodland plants start to grow. I noticed a few years ago that the slugs lived under the leaves and feasted on the new growth of the woodland plants in spring. The beds must be mulched with garden compost or leaf mould after the herbaceous perennials are cut back, leaves from trees removed and before new growth has started.

Resist using too many design features or much hard landscaping, as woodland gardens should feel natural and uncluttered. I use the trunks of dead trees to edge the beds and paths are made from woodchip, topped up twice a year. If possible provide a range of light levels, including open areas and deeper shade to allow the widest possible range of plants to be grown.

My Top 3 Woodland plants

ERYTHRONIUM

Erythronium or dogtooth violets are predominantly woodland species. The common name comes from the shape of the bulb which is reminiscent of a canine fang.

They are spring flowering bulbous perennials emerging in spring; flowering, setting seed and dying down before mid June. After growing them for the last ten years I realise that the growth reserves and



Photo from NARGS.org

Erythronium americanum



flowers are laid down the year previous to flowering, so the longer you can keep a plant in leaf the greater the increase in leaf and flower stems will be the following year. This is achieved by avoiding letting the plants dry out too quickly after flowering by mulching every winter. My most successful plants were all plants I bought as pot-grown plants in the spring and not shrivelled up tubers in the autumn. They also can be purchased damp packed freshly lifted in summer from reputable suppliers.

The easiest method of propagation is by division, which is best done after flowering. They can also be propagated by seeds, by collecting fresh seed and sowing straight away, though these bulbs can take up to five years to flower from seed.

Erythronium grow best under deciduous trees in a deep loamy/leaf mould soil that dries out in summer, similar conditions to growing snowdrops. They will happily grow in good acid or alkaline soil without any extra feed. Adding fertilizers scorched the plants when I tried it.

Erythronium ‘Harvington Snow Goose’

My favourite woodland plant this year!! This clump forming, bulbous perennial is the most asked about plant on my garden open days in spring. With large white elegant flower with yellow centres held well above the maroon – mottled leaves this posh woodland gem is a must have for any shade garden.



Photo by Jimi Blake

Erythronium ‘Harvington Snow Goose’

TRILLIUM

Trilliums have really tested my patience since I started Hunting Brook Gardens 11 years ago. But in the last 2 years they have suddenly taken off and look incredible in the spring. They are a rhizomatous perennial emerging in February/March, flowering, setting seed and dying down before midsummer. Trilliums need similar growing conditions to Erythroniums by maintaining them in leaf for as long as possible to bulid up the flower for next year. Again mulching in winter is a must.

Trilliums are not bulbs as most people think, so don’t buy bare-rooted plants as they usually die. The best way to purchase a plant is to obtain a living established potted specimen from a reputable supplier. Trilliums grow best with dappled light but not in deep shade, in a soil that is humus rich and doesn’t dry out completely until midsummer. They are very hardy and will take intense cold – surviving perfectly in our winter of -15°C ($+5^{\circ}\text{F}$) in Hunting Brook Gardens. Trilliums are a bit like peonies in that they are best planted and left to establish into a clump over a number of years.

Trilliums are best propagated by division while in growth in May, about three weeks after they finish flowering. They will then root out and establish before autumn. I find growing them from seed is painfully slow but if you do want a challenge then go for it. If you are collecting seeds from your own plants don’t let collected seed dry out. Seed has a double dormancy and will need two warm spells and two cold winters to germinate.

Trillium kurabayaschii – Another of my favorite woodland plants, this uncommon species comes from southern Oregon and Northern California and is the most spectacular easy



Photo from alpinegarden.co.uk

Trillium kurabayaschii



grown species. It has dark red sessile flowers with a slight twist of the petals that stand at attention above mottled leaves. This species will take more shade than most Trilliums.

PODOPHYLLUM

Podophyllum is the crème de la crème of foliage plants in the woodland garden in Hunting Brook Gardens. These are fun and fascinating plants to grow if you can give them that delicious woodland soil/compost that they grow in, in their native habitat. They are best grown in dappled shade in an area where you won't miss them erupting from the ground in spring. There is only one flush of growth each spring and it takes young plants several years to establish fully and to mature. As with a lot of the spring flowering flowers they go dormant in summer.

Podophyllum hexandrum 'Majus' - This Podophyllum has stunning big pink flowers, which face upwards sitting on top of an umbrella-type foliage and in late summer, striking scarlet-red, egg shaped fruits hang down under the leaf. ❧



Photo by Jimi Blake

Podophyllum hexandrum 'Majus'

Sampling of trillium growing in North Carolina.



Photo by Mark Rose,
from www.wildflower.org

Trillium cuneatum, NC native plant



Photo by Adam Cressler, from the
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center website

Trillium grandiflorum



Photo by Tom Harville,
from www.ncwildflower.org

Trillium catesbeai



Photo by Bobby Ward
from the Native Plant Society webpage

Trillium pusillum var. pusillum

Stellar Plantsman, Gardener & Visionary Creator of Hunting Brook Gardens

Hunting Brook Gardens consists of five acres of amazing botanical herbaceous gardens and fifteen acres of wonderful woodland gardens and valley. Jimi Blake, its creator, collects plants from his foreign expeditions and sources rare seeds globally. Using his palettes of assorted treasures he generates a unique fusion of tropical, prairie and woodland styles which are graced with expansive views over the Wicklow Mountains, Ireland .

Jimi Blake trained in the National Botanic Gardens in Dublin as a horticulturist and was subsequently appointed Head Gardener at Airfield House in Dundrum, Dublin. He resuscitated a large Victorian garden to its former glory enabling the public to rediscover and enjoy a lost gem.

After twelve years at Airfield, Jimi sought a new challenge and having secured twenty acres of the family estate he established “Hunting Brook Gardens.” He was now fulfilling his ambition of having his own garden, to grow and expand his plant collection and share his passion and knowledge with the public. He envisaged using his garden as a classroom and a showcase to demonstrate the diverse range of designs he could develop.

Jimi has realized his dream of a dynamic and innovative garden and continues to develop his vision in new directions, always pushing the boundaries outwards. He continues to share his knowledge in a series of courses and workshops often engaging internationally renowned gardeners as guest speakers.

Hunting Brook is a perennially popular educational space for students, volunteers, allotment holders and visitors and is now known as Ireland’s most exciting and fascinating garden.

Jimi is a Gardening Consultant, Planting Designer, and International Lecturer giving talks and presentations all over the world. He is touring the eastern U.S. now giving a series of lectures beginning in Boston and ending in Raleigh.



Photo and text taken from the Hunting Brook Gardens website.

Piedmont Chapter Celebrates its 30th Anniversary

By Bobby Ward

The Piedmont Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society was founded in the fall of 1985. Edith Boyer, Nancy Goodwin, and Sandra Ladendorf, its co-founders, sent a letter to their local gardening friends and also placed a notice in the local newspaper announcing an organizational meeting. They had been urged to form a local chapter by Norman Singer of Massachusetts, who would later become a NARGS president. Twenty-five people showed up at the first meeting.

Our chapter has hosted four national meetings, consisting of two Eastern Winter Study Weekends in January 1990 and 1999; and two annual meetings in May 2004 and in May 2013.

Our chapter members have been active nationally. We have managed the NARGS seed exchange in 1996 and 1997 and in 2015 and upcoming 2016. We served as seed intake manager for one year. We managed the NARGS Book Service. Two of our members have served as the national presidents of NARGS. And two of our members have received the esteemed NARGS Marcel LePiniac Award for “enriching the plant material available to American rock gardeners.” They were J.C. Raulston and Tony Avent.

Come to our November 21, 2015, meeting and help celebrate our chapter’s birthday. ❧



What I did last summer...

By Panayoti Kelaidis

I remember fondly a very old issue of *Mad Magazine* (yes, I said *Mad Magazine*) that showed how a child writing a report for grade school on his visit to his grandparents' farm gradually morphed over the next few decades into a Ph.D. thesis on the "Economics of Pig Farming in Iowa" (or something along those lines)... how does this relate to this piece I'm drafting for the Piedmont Chapter?

Last year I was awarded a scholarship from the Chanticleer foundation to travel and research the flora of Mt. Olympus in Greece, and Ulu Dag (which was also called Mt. Olympus in ancient times) in Turkey. I was



Photo from publicgardens.org

Panayoti Kelaidis

joined on my quest by Andrew Hsu—who maintains the Plant Record database for Chanticleer Gardens among many tasks there—and Eleftherios Dariotis (better known as Liberto Dario on the web) an extraordinary Greek botanist and horticulturist, and on the Turkish portion of the trip Bob Beer, a Seattle horticulturist who just spent 14 years in Istanbul .

In addition to the two massive mountains (which are really clusters of high peaks and ridges) we visited another national park in Turkey (Kaz Daglari National Park) and a number of high mountains in Greece. We were extremely fortunate that Greece and Turkey both had an

abnormally wet, late spring—heavy rains extending all the way to June. So by early July when we arrived, the alpine areas were in peak bloom on both peaks—although the lower elevations were passing mostly into seed mode.

Several sonorous themes reverberated through this trip for me, rather like background music in an epic film: I had spent four summers as a child and young man in Greece with family and friends: although I had always been interested in wildflowers and gardening, I'd never much had a chance to botanize seriously—just noticing plants here and there in the margins of my youthful life. I remember the well in my mother's village trembling with Venus-hair fern, for instance (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*). One year the villages of Crete were filled with thousands of colorful spikes of Aroid seedheads—probably several species —although mostly *Arum italicum* I suspect. I noticed what had to be bulbous plants in seed—and I remember finding a trowel in the village and starting to dig randomly and every shovelful of soil revealed a dozen or more little cormlets and bulbs which I dusted off, brought back home to Colorado and planted that fall. I had a few grape hyacinths and other minor thingums come up the next year or so—our severe continental climate was too much for these seaside waifs!

The most haunting encounter was spending a week at Stavro in Crete, a tiny seaside village then, and now a huge tourist destination (where *Zorba the Greek* was largely filmed). The sand dunes surrounding my uncles little cabin near the coast were studded with hundreds, maybe thousands of clumps of Sea Daffodil (*Pancratium maritimum*): it's inebriating, rich, sweet fragrance wafted in the evening and made one practically swoon. I spent a long time every day lying next to these and examining their intricate, waxy flowers and marveling at their beauty: and wondering what else might be lurking nearby if I were only there in the spring.



Twenty five years later, I returned in the spring for a few rushed weeks leading a tour: we did find masses of bloom everywhere at lower elevations. I remember photographing a dozen or so species of orchids at Delphi alone—and walks along the beach in Mykonos yielded dozens of unfamiliar flowers.

But the real drama with both Greek and Turkish plants was playing out in my professional life as Curator of the Rock Alpine Garden at Denver Botanic Gardens: we exchanged seeds with a hundred or more sister botanic gardens around the world, as well as purchasing seeds and plants from dozens of nurserymen. Over the years, I targeted more and more plants from the Eastern Mediterranean—not only because of my ancestral links there, but also due to the fact that these performed so well in my climate, and thrived in our summer heat unlike plants from cooler, wetter regions.

A few of these plants that have been distributed nationally and internationally just by Plant Select (Denver Botanic Gardens' plant introduction program managed in partnership with Colorado State University and the green industry) include *Artemisia versicolor*, *Anthemis marschalliana*, *Crambe maritima*, *Epilobium fleischeri*, *Erodium chrysanthum*, *Linum narbonense*, *Origanum libanoticum*, *Primula elatior*, *Salvia daghestanica*, *Salvia argentea*, *Satureja montana v. illyrica*, *Sedum sediforme*, *Seseli gummiferum*, *Tanacetum densum ssp. Amani* and *Veronica livanensis*. There are hundreds of others introduced through other avenues or distributed through our *Index Seminum*. I am sure we have grown thousands of taxa from the Mediterranean over the decades: I would not be surprised if we had more Mediterranean plants in our collections than our own Western American taxa (for a variety of interesting reasons)...

So another quarter century elapses, and after an enchanting day visiting the botanic garden in Reykjavik, Iceland (Icelandic airlines encourages layovers), five days in Copenhagen studying in the Herbarium and their remarkable botanic garden, a few days getting our bearings in Istanbul, and preparing for our first destination a few hours southwards, across the Bosphorus in Asia, we begin our journey with a quick ascent on the Teleferik onto the slopes Ulu Dag above Bursa: for what we saw and what happened next, you'll have to come to my talk in a few weeks time! ✨



***Viola delphinantha* on Mt. Olimbos**



***Euphorbia cf. anacampsera*-Mt. Tynof**

These photos were taken from Panayoti's August 9 blog –blogspot.com—on his Chanticleer sponsored trip to the Mediterranean. Enjoy the fine treasures of the Eastern Mediterranean mountains.



Alpine steppes on Kaz Dag



Plant Profile

by Kirt Cox

Botanical name: *Hydrastis canadensis*

Common name: Goldenseal

Family: Ranunculaceae

Category: Herbaceous perennial

Primary uses: Woodland garden

Dimensions: 18" tall

Culture: Shade to light shade, good drainage, pH 5 - 7

Bloom: White, in spring, followed by a single cluster of red berries in summer.



Hydrastis canadensis fruit

Photo from www.extension.org

General attributes:

Goldenseal is native to the eastern US (Missouri to the Appalachians and north to Ontario). Two, typically 5-lobed, palmate leaves emerge from a knotted yellow rhizome in early spring. The single white flower consists of a cluster of stamens.

Like most plants for woodland gardens, it likes moist, fertile, well-drained soil. In my experience, though, it is surprisingly tolerant – comfortably persisting in my thin and drought-prone soil around the base of a 35' tall *Stewartia monadelphica*, while too often being visited by *Pollia japonica* and *Lamium galeobdolon* (among other things that I'm embarrassed to have running about the yard). It likes some mulch but otherwise seems to have low fertilization needs. I've not noticed any diseases. It is easy to propagate from segments of the rhizome; seed propagation can be erratic.

Goldenseal contains various alkaloids, including berberine, and is valued as a medicinal herb. Collection from wild populations is a concern, which has prompted considerable research into cultivation, including some at NC State. Fortunately, it is amenable to cultivation and commercial production is increasing. ♪



Hydrastis canadensis

Photo by Kirt Cox

Piedmont NARGS Speakers Fall 2015/Spring 2016

November 21, 2015

Panayoti Kelaidis

"Rock Garden Nation"

Denver Botanic Gardens

1244 S. Quince St.

Denver, CO 80231-2531

January 16, 2016

Piedmont Members' Presentations

("Gardens and Travels")

Limit of 5-6 members/max.

10 minutes each.

Contact Bobby Ward to participate.

February 13, 2016 [note special date]

Damon Waitt

"Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center"

Director, NC Botanical Garden

UNC Campus Box 3375

Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3375

March 19, 2016

Tim Alderton

"NARGS Trips: Santa Fe and Ann Arbor"

JC Raulston Arboretum

NC State University

Box 7522

Raleigh, NC 27695-7522

April 16, 2016

Pam Beck

"Creating Intimate Garden Spaces"

337 N. Fallsview Lane

Wake Forest, NC 27587s

Happy 30th Birthday

Piedmont Chapter



NARGS Piedmont Chapter Meeting

JC Raulston Arboretum
Ruby McSwain Education Building

9:30 am October 31 —NOTE SPECIAL DATE

Jimi Blake

“A Plantsman's Pick: Best New Plants from European Nurseries”

Hunting Brook Gardens
Lamb Hill, Blessington
Co. Wicklow, Ireland

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Charlie Kidder, Chair
chas36kid@gmail.com 919-377-2938

Amelia Lane, President Elect
www.lastingimpressionsleaves.com
919-787-6228

Bobby Ward, Vice President/Program Chair
biblio@nc.rr.com 919-781-3291

Marlyn Miller, Secretary
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kirtley@ncrrbiz.com 919-489-7892

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tomhar@bellsouth.net 919-851-5369

Elsa Liner
elsa_liner@hotmail.com 919-942-1766

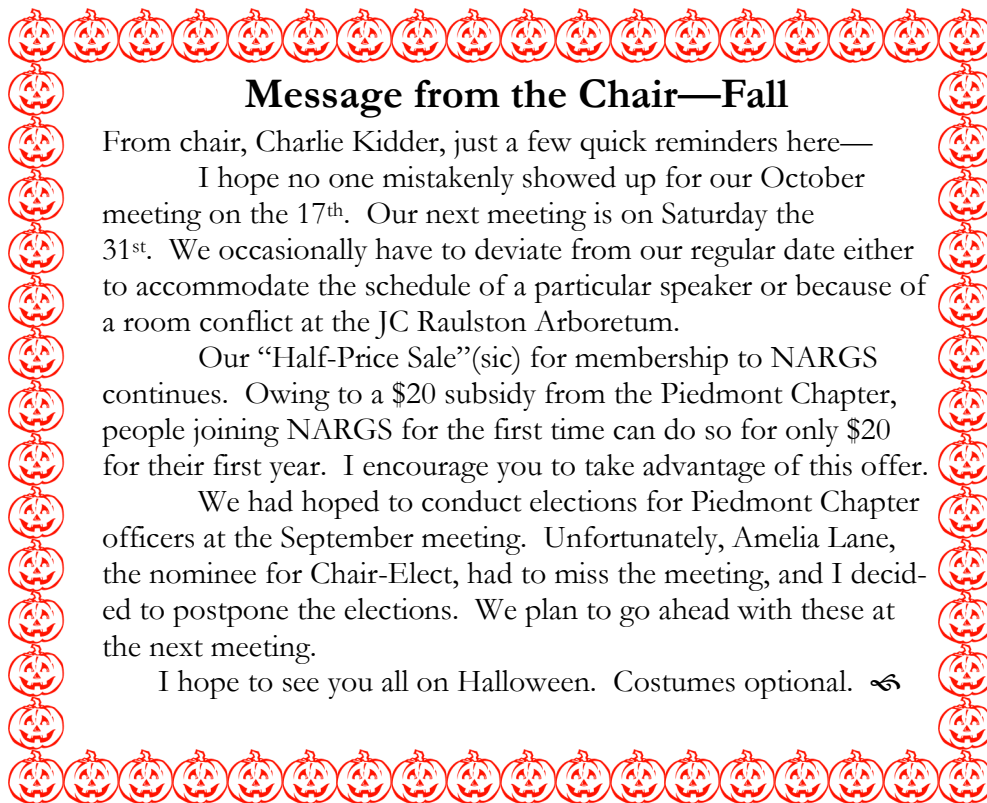
TRILLIUM EDITOR

Marian Stephenson
marian42836@yahoo.com 919-918-3580.

Bobby Wilder, Distribution Manager
wilder@nc.rr.com. 919-755-0480

OTHER SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS:

Sept. Plant Sale Manager: Kirtley Cox
Refreshments: Gwen and Maurice Farrier



Message from the Chair—Fall

From chair, Charlie Kidder, just a few quick reminders here—

I hope no one mistakenly showed up for our October meeting on the 17th. Our next meeting is on Saturday the 31st. We occasionally have to deviate from our regular date either to accommodate the schedule of a particular speaker or because of a room conflict at the JC Raulston Arboretum.

Our “Half-Price Sale”(sic) for membership to NARGS continues. Owing to a \$20 subsidy from the Piedmont Chapter, people joining NARGS for the first time can do so for only \$20 for their first year. I encourage you to take advantage of this offer.

We had hoped to conduct elections for Piedmont Chapter officers at the September meeting. Unfortunately, Amelia Lane, the nominee for Chair-Elect, had to miss the meeting, and I decided to postpone the elections. We plan to go ahead with these at the next meeting.

I hope to see you all on Halloween. Costumes optional. ☺

Lasting Impressions' Garage Gallery & Plant Sale

Saturday, October 24, 10 am - 2pm

4904 Hermitage Dr., Raleigh, NC 27612

Buy hypertufa troughs - planted and empty -
and hand cast concrete leaves

20% off regular price!!

Unique handmade gifts for your special friends and family.

Also, lots of plants ready to be planted in this cool, moist fall soil!!
Next spring they will be well established for you to enjoy!



Food Goodies to Share

If your last name begins with
the letter below,
please consider bringing
something delicious to share.

October D—F

February N—S

November G—H

March T—Z

January I—M

April All!

