



Gardens, Landscapes, and Life in Scandinavia

By Charlie Kidder - photos by C. Kidder

Gardens may be not the first thing that come to mind when you mention Scandinavia. Fjords, sophisticated capital cities, Danish pastry, lutefisk, vast conifer forests, long summer days, Bergman (either Ingmar or Ingrid), yes. Although few people set out for Scandinavia specifically to enjoy horticultural attractions, there are worthy gardens to be found in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, as well as natural areas to be explored.

In late June 2018 my wife and I went on a McDuff Tours trip to Scandinavia. McDuff Tours is operated by Robert and Nancy McDuffie, both retired professors at Virginia Tech.

DENMARK

Only about a half-hour walk from Copenhagen's touristy waterfront section of Nyhavn, the 25-acre Botanical Garden attracts both the dedicated plantsperson as well as the lover of greenspace. As part of the Natural History Museum of Denmark, in turn part of the University of Copenhagen, the Botanical Garden is home to over 10,000 plant species.

A small lake forms the central feature of the Botanical Garden, surrounded by winding paths and convenient benches. The Rock Garden hill, home to many well-labelled alpine plants, may well be one of the highest points in a flat city. (I'd guess that the material removed to create the lake went to form the hill.) If the weather happens to be foul during your visit, pop into the Palm House Complex. Dating from 1874, the spiral staircase takes you up toward the roof of the conservatory, allowing you to walk through the canopy of the tallest plants.

Beer aficionados will appreciate the Botanical Garden's Beer Garden. It's not the typical place for enjoying beer in a leafy setting; rather it's an actual garden with many of the plants—hops, for example—used in brewing beer.

While in Denmark we took in a castle or two, along with their attendant gardens. Forty minutes north of Copenhagen by car is Fredericksborg Castle, dating to the 16th century and home to the Danish National History Museum. The largest garden here is a formal parterre, although a romantic English-inspired garden provides a counterpoint.



Fredericksborg Castle

Heading west from Copenhagen about two hours we came to Egeskov Castle, near the village of Kvaerndrup. Rated as "One of the 50 Most Beautiful Places in Europe" by *Conde Nast Traveler* and home to Count Michael Ahlefeldt and his family, this is not only a castle, but gardens, museums, events, etc.—all located in a pastoral setting. Reflecting the castle's age—more than 460 years—some of the massive hedging dates back 280 years. Nineteen separate gardens include a rose garden, the more than 100 varieties



Egeskov Castle, Copenhagen ("Seen one castle..." but still quite impressive)

peaking from mid-June through mid-July. As the roses fade, 140 varieties of dahlias come into their own. You could easily enjoy a full day here, spending the night at one of the coastal towns nearby.

SWEDEN

Heading southeast from Copenhagen the seven-mile Oresund Bridge-Tunnel took us to Malmo, Sweden. Instead of immediately traveling east and north to Stockholm, we headed almost due north up Sweden's west coast to the town of Helsingborg, a good place to stay for a couple of nights. Only three miles to the north is Sofiero, the one-time summer home of the Swedish royal family, now belonging to the town of Helsingborg. Although one might refer to

it as a castle, Sofiero is really more a large summer house with castle-style towers. Architecture aside, the gardens are the centerpiece of Sofiero, and one could spend the better part of a relaxing day enjoying all of them. In early summer the rhododendrons, planted in two "gullies," are the main attraction, followed by roses in mid-summer and dahlias toward summer's end. A very well-maintained garden, with a friendly feel. While at Sofiero, look across the narrow strait to Denmark, and you'll spot Kronborg Castle in the town of Helsingor. The latter name translates to Elsinore; Shakespeare applied this name to Kronborg castle in *Hamlet*.

Before leaving this part of Sweden make an effort to visit The Rhododendron Garden (@rhododendrongarden.se), in a rural area a half hour north of Helsingborg. The private garden of Lisbeth Nilsson and Ulf Jonsson, the concentration is on rhododendrons, with over 500 varieties, with trilliums, hostas, Japanese maples, and magnolias acting as foils. All were planted in beds of peat laboriously brought onto the site. Even in July when the rhodies are not in bloom, the newly-flushed foliage creates a wonderful effect. Be sure to contact Lisbeth before planning a visit.

Turning east toward Sweden's Baltic coast, we came to The English Garden (*Den Engelska Trädgården*) near the town of Kivik. Dating from 2014, the labors of gardeners Maria Nilsson and Anette Cato have produced an unabashedly English-style garden. Why English? As Maria puts it, "They have the best gardens!" Featuring double perennial borders, a rose garden, a cottage garden and a kitchen garden, we could indeed imagine that we were in the U.K.

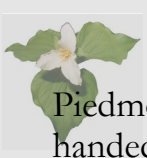
While at The English Garden I inquired after Swedish gardener Peter Korn. You might recall Peter from a presentation he made to the



Soccer Ball Garden at Sofiero, Sweden



English Garden at Kivik, Sweden



Piedmont Chapter about fifteen years ago. At that time Peter amazed us with his stories of single-handedly constructing “mountains” of sand to serve as his planting medium. I was so dumbfounded by his abilities that I quipped to my lecture neighbor that “he must have swum over here from Sweden”. Years later I still occasionally hear that comment going around.

They had indeed heard of Korn at The English Garden, but had not met him. One owner did say that she thought that “he really doesn’t have a garden, just a collection of plants.” Ouch. Regardless, I wonder what has become of Peter Korn. He relocated a couple of years ago to Malmo, and his website no longer seems up to date. *[Editorial note. He regularly posts on Facebook. B. Ward]*

Although known for its extensive green spaces, Stockholm is not home to any well-known botanical gardens. Visitors might want to take in Millesgarden, known more for sculptures, fountains and terraces than plants. Or consider a visit to the allotment gardens in Tantolunden Park. Dating from the early 1900s and originally intended to provide supplemental vegetables in hard times, these plots now tend more toward the ornamental side, with tiny cottages serving as weekend retreats.

NORWAY

Oslo is home to a fine Botanical Garden, part of the Natural History Museum/University of Oslo and a half-hour walk from the waterfront and railroad station. A few highlights: the Systematic Garden, displaying related plants in groupings; the Meadow, an endangered plant community in Norway; a Rock Garden with over 1700 species; and a 19th Century Palm House that includes a Mediterranean Room, a Desert Room and a Victoria House specifically built for the giant water lily.

Traveling west from Oslo to Bergen by rail, we traversed the mountainous Gol Plateau



Rock Garden at Oslo Botanical Garden

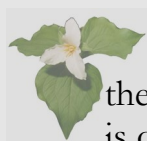
the site of two national parks, Hardangervidda and Hallingskarvet. The average elevation is around 3,500 feet, with some peaks over 5,000’.

With its harsh climate the terrain is essentially treeless moorland, sprinkled with lakes, ponds and a few glaciers. We passed through all too quickly by train, so I’m hoping to return to explore this piece of alpine tundra in southern Norway. We did manage a short side trip to a couple of fjords, even more spectacular than they appear to be in photographs. By the way, Naturetrek, the British company that conducted a NARGS tour of the Italian Dolomites, also offers a tour of the Gol Plateau.



Gol Plateau, Norway

For the plant-oriented traveler, summer is the obvious season to visit Scandinavia: warm, but not hot, with up to twenty hours of daylight to enjoy



the sights. If your schedule is flexible, there is one particular time of year to visit, even if it has nothing to do with horticulture. The last weekend of June is the time of graduations from Danish high schools, or *gymnasiums* as they are called. This is a much more public affair than the proms we have here, and a hoot to observe.

Upon graduating, Danish students don white cloth caps (*studenterbue*), somewhat resembling nautical headgear worn by the sporty class early in the twentieth century. Somewhat dorky-looking, until you grow accustomed to seeing them.

Flaunting their hats and party attire, each class—only about 15-20 students—rents a small stake-sided flatbed truck and decorates it with balloons, streamers, banners, and vegetation. They crank up their music, and accompanied by horns, whistles and general yelling, proceed to drive around the city for the day. (I'm assuming that the actual *driving* duties are being handled by a responsible, sober adult.) While cruising around they wave at people on the sidewalks and in cafes, while the onlookers cheerfully wave back. The grads periodically stop at parents' homes to get a snack and swill champagne, fortifying themselves for the next foray.



**High School grads in fountain,
Copenhagen**



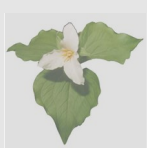
Norwegian Fjord

When the truck reaches a plaza or public square the kids all pile out and engage in whooping and dancing for a few minutes. If there's a fountain around, most wade in, with varying degrees of modesty. Fortunately for the graduates, in 2018 all this reverie was taking place during exceptionally warm and sunny weather. Given their general state of mind, I'm not sure they would care too much if it was cold. Luckily for the rest of us, this carousing ends at a pretty early hour. To get a better idea of the revelry, go to YouTube and search "Danish High School Graduation."

This general cheerfulness reminds of me of what an American told me in Stockholm. He had previously lived there for quite a while, and said the demeanor was much more somber in the winter. Small wonder, given that they receive only six hours of daylight. Still, the Scandinavian countries usually rank near the top on the U.N.'s *World Happiness Report*, while the U.S. can manage only 18th place.

The Scandinavians must be doing something right.

The Scandinavians must be doing something right. ❧



Piedmont Picnic

by Bobby J. Ward

The Piedmont Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society visited chapter members Graham and Helen Ray's garden on May 18, 2019, in Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Paul J. Ciener Botanical Garden in Kernersville, North Carolina. About 30 members and their guests attended, and Amelia and Richard Lane arranged boxed lunches.

It was a hot, but thoroughly enjoyable day. The first stop was the cool shade of the wooded garden of the Rays. We ambled among the numerous paths and delighted at plants snuggled in under the high



Photo by Bobby Ward

Graham Ray's Rock Garden



Photo by Kirt Cox

shade of the garden, which has been developed over the past 50 years. After the tour, we had our picnic lunch beside their swimming pool and the adjacent rock garden, the center piece of the garden.

Its outstanding features are conifers and ferns with an occasional hosta and azalea tucked about.

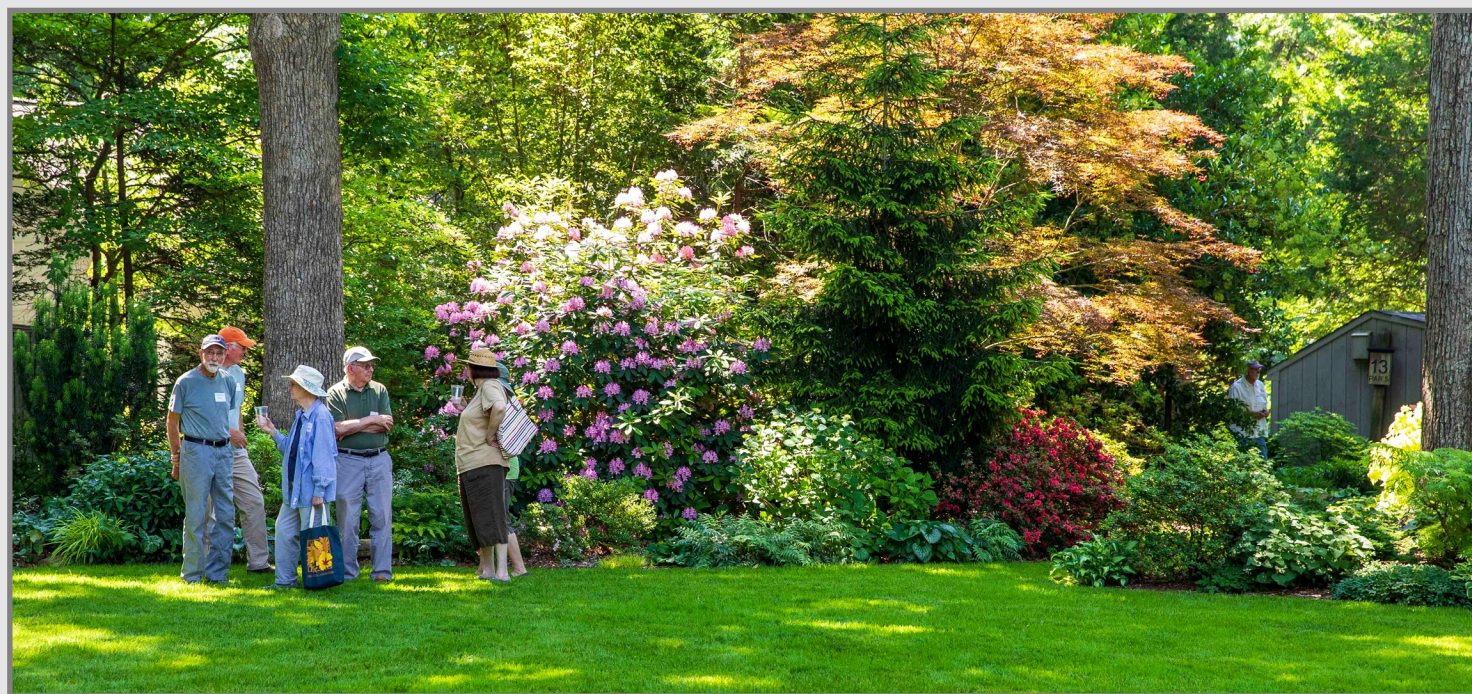


Photo by Kirt Cox



The second stop was at the Paul J. Ciener Botanical Garden, where we were met by Adrienne Roethling, Director of Curation and Mission Delivery. The garden, designed by Chip Callaway and by



Photo by Kirt Cox

Robert Hayter, consists of seven acres in downtown historic Kernersville, and will eventually be developed into 25 acres. Adrienne told us about the history of the garden, future plans for development, and guided us through parts of the garden.



Photo by Bobby Ward

Furcraea

We thank Graham and Helen, Adrienne, and Richard and Amelia for organizing the tour and making it available to our members. 🌿



Photo by Bobby Ward

Pallets Used for Walled Garden



Photo by Bobby Ward

Eremurus (Foxtail)



Photo by Bobby Ward

Upside down bald cypress
Taxodium distichum



American Horticultural Society 2019 Great American Gardeners Award Landscape Design Award

Given to an individual whose work has demonstrated and promoted the value of sound horticultural practices in the field of landscape architecture. First awarded in 1974.

Suzanne Edney and Harriet Bellerjeau

As volunteers, Suzanne Edney and the late Harriet Bellerjeau jointly led the development of the Master Plan for the JC Raulston Arboretum (JCRA) in Raleigh, North Carolina. The founder of Custom Landscapes Inc., in Apex, North Carolina, Edney was one of the first volunteers at the JCRA in the early 1980s. There she met Bellerjeau, a landscape architect working in Raleigh who was also an early volunteer. Recognizing that the rapidly growing arboretum needed a plan to steer its development, in 2005 Edney and Bellerjeau offered to organize and oversee the work of a Grassroots Master Plan Committee composed of other professional designers. The idea was approved by the JCRA administration and the committee began work in 2006. Over the next 10 years, Edney and Bellerjeau contributed their landscape design vision along with thousands of hours of volunteer time. Among the highlights of the plan were restoration of the iconic Lath House structure, creation of accessible pathways that improved visitor flow around the arboretum, and relocation and design of the Finley Nottingham Rose Garden. Bellerjeau died in 2017, but Edney is still involved with the JCRA's Master Plan Committee. ♡



Photo by Mark Weathering

Plant Profile: Habranthus or Rain Lily

By Amelia Lane

Botanical Name: Habranthus robustus

Family: Amaryllidaceae

Category: Herbaceous flowering bulb.

Primary Uses: Accents in the summer garden.

Dimensions: Flowers are 2-2 1/2 " long funnel shaped; leaves are 6-12" long.


Culture: Well drained soil, sun to part sun.

Bloom time: late May-July, typically after rain. A delightful surprise!

Color: Flowers are pale pink with a darker pink on the outside edge of the petals.

General attributes: Commonly known as the pink rain lily, it is native to Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. It is one of the most prolific of the summer flowering rain lilies and is easily propagated by dividing the bulbs and from seed. I will be glad to share bulbs with anyone interested. ♡





Piedmont NARGS Speakers

Fall 2019/Spring 2020

September 28, 2019

Hans Hansen

Director, New Plant Development
Walters Gardens, Zeeland, Mich.

**“Breeding Better Perennials from a
Gardener’s Perspective”**

October 19, 2019

David White

Durham, N.C.

“Gardening Adventures in Great Britain and Ireland”

November 2, 2019 (Rms 107 & 109 only)

Tim Alderton

Research Technician, JC Raulston Arboretum
Raleigh, N.C.

**“The Wildflowers of Mount St. Helens
and Mount Rainier”**

January 18, 2020

John Lonsdale

Edgewood Gardens
Exton, Penna.

“Woodland Treasures”

February 8, 2020

Speaker and title: TBA

March 21, 2020

Todd Boland

St. John’s, Newfoundland
NARGS Traveling Speaker

“Spring Alpines of the Spanish Pyrenees”

April 18, 2020

Cyndy Cromwell, Nancy Doubrava, David White
“NARGS Fall-Bulbs-of Greece Tour”

Spring Plant Sales

Charlie Kidder

The Piedmont Chapter once again held a plant sale in conjunction with Raulston Blooms at the JCRA; proceeds were \$1472. An additional \$149 was earned in the remainder sale at our regular chapter meeting later in April. Also, Ralph Whisnant sold some of our remainders at two of his own sales, earning us an additional \$250 and bringing total sales to \$1871. Many thanks to Ralph for his help, and to all members who donated plants, as well as their time, to make this a successful effort! 🌸

Great Member Benefit ! October Bulb Sale Coming

The Piedmont chapter has ordered unique bulbs!

We have ordered 6 different small bulbs, shown below, from Van Engelen’s wholesale flower bulbs.

They will be in packages of 5 each of the 6 types of bulbs. The cost will be \$13 a bag for 30 bulbs or 2 bags for \$25.

Bulbs will be arriving in the fall, so we plan to have them available at our October 19th meeting.

Consider adding some of these beautiful bulbs to your rock garden, pots, troughs or tucked in a corner to offer delightful surprises to the garden next spring!



Photo by Tim Alderton

Crocus minimus
‘Spring Beauty’



Photo by Tim Alderton

Iris reticulata ‘Pixie’



Photo by Tim Alderton

Tulip cretica ‘Hilde’



Photo by Tim Alderton

Tulip clusiana
‘Lady Jane’



Photo by Tim Alderton

Narcissus bulbocodium



Narcissus ‘Altruist’

From John Scheepers online catalog



NARGS Piedmont Chapter Meeting

JC Raulston Arboretum

9:30 Gathering Time 10 am Program Begins

September 28

Hans Hansen

Director, New Plant Development
Walters Gardens, Zeeland, Mich.

**“Breeding Better Perennials from a
Gardener’s Perspective”**

Goodies to Share

If your last name begins with a letter below,
we encourage you to consider bringing a
goodie to share with others.



Sept A-C	Feb M-P
Oct D-F	March R-S
Nov G-H	April T-Y
Jan J-L	May Picnic

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Bobby Ward, Quality Review Editor

OTHER SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS:

Plant Sale Manager: Tim Alderton

Refreshments: Maurice Farrier

Message from the Chair

Cyndy Cromwell

Fall is just around the corner, bringing with it another fantastic lineup of programs, thanks to Program Chair, Bobby Ward.

We begin the year at the JC Raulston Arboretum on Saturday, September 28 with superstar horticulturist Hans Hansen, of Walters Gardens, talking about his work breeding new plants. Hans doesn't do a lot of appearances, so do plan to attend what is sure to be an exciting talk!

Looking forward to October, we'll be enjoying a presentation by Piedmont Chapter member David White on his travels in the U.K. summer. There will also be a sale, at cost, of samplers of some unusual fall bulbs to try, thanks to former Chair Amelia Lane and Kirt Cox.

I'm excited to be your new Chapter Chair, and appreciate so much all the work Amelia Lane has done over the past three years to keep our chapter vibrant and strong - thanks Amelia! ✨

Congratulations!

Cyndy Cromwell has been elected to the NARGS Board of Directors for a three-year term.

Invitation to Share

Do you have a favorite tool, tip, or technique that makes your gardening easier, more efficient or just more fun?

We'd like to share it with other members through the newsletter. Send your tips with photos to Marian Stephenson, editor: marian4236@yahoo.com.

Plant profiles are also welcomed. Let us know about your plant de jour.

Deadlines for receiving
material are: 9/5/19

10/6/19

12/19/19

2/25/20