

# The Urban Rock Gardener



Volume 31, Issue 4

September/October 2018



## SEPTEMBER MEETING

Monday, September 10 at 6 p.m.  
NYBG Midtown Education Center, Room A



## HARDY BULB FAVORITES: Growing Colchicum, Narcissus and Allium

Speaker:

**Arnold Trachtenberg**  
Pacific Bulb Society



**A**rnold will offer an overview of the bulbs he grows both outdoors and inside the greenhouse at his New Jersey home. He specializes in South African and miniature narcissus.



**ARNOLD TRACHTENBERG** has a keen interest in nature, the world around him, and how the two interact. Whether volunteering for the Leonia Shade Tree Commission (a municipal commission charged with maintaining and increasing the number of trees planted on borough land) or serving on the board of the Pacific Bulb Society (a non-profit organization that encourages education and study of the world of geophytes), Arnold

always strives to improve the environment and his community.

His passions are further manifested in his home greenhouse, where he primarily grows South African bulbs from seed. The process requires patience as it can take up to seven years for the bulbs to achieve flowering size. Arnold also trades bulbs with members of the Pacific Bulb Society's online community, and was instrumental in the Society's acquiring non-profit status.



Left column, top down: *Eucomis vandermerwei*, *Ferraria densepunctulata*, *Tulipa ferganica*, *Tulipa clusiana*, *Narcissus cordubensis*. Right column, top down: *Narcissus* 'Firelight Gold', *Narcissus viridiflorus*, *Fritillaria imperialis* 'Lutea maxima', *Massonia pustulata*, *Cyclamen coum* 'Yayladagi'

NYBG Midtown Education Center is located at 20 West 44th Street, 3rd floor, between 5th and 6th Avenues (General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen Building). This location is two blocks from Grand Central Terminal and near several subways.

## OCTOBER TRI-STATE MEETING

Saturday, October 13  
New York Botanical Garden – Ross Auditorium

**VOJTĚCH HOLUBEC**  
Speaker



*Geranium saxatile*

## SOUTHWESTERN CHINA – YUNNAN, SICHUAN, QINHAI

*Heaven of alpine flowers*

Southwestern China is thought to have the highest diversity of alpine plants in the world, with Yunnan and Sichuan alone having more than two-thirds of Chinese flora. The talk will focus on late summer and autumn in some of the ridges with the greatest variety of alpinism, with particular emphasis on gentians in full bloom. In Vojtěch's words: "The diversity is so rich that you cannot walk, only move on your knees with a camera!"



*Gentiana arethusae*

## TIAN SHAN – CELESTIAL MOUNTAINS

*Land of burning sun and cooling ice*

Drawing from his new book, *Tian Shan and Its Flowers*, Vojtěch's talk will cover the broad sweep of the Tian Shan range, from its western ridges in Uzbekistan, through Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and ending in far-off Xinjiang China. These mountains have vast glaciers, yet are surrounded by several large deserts. Photographs of the principal ridges and their plants will showcase the beauty and diversity of Tian Shan. The talk will include general information about the region as well as tips on growing these alpine beauties.



*Gentiana cf. harrowiana*



*Silene scopulorum*



**VOJTĚCH HOLUBEC** has traveled extensively in the mountainous regions of the world, exploring and photographing alpine plants. He has organized many exhibitions of alpinism, and in addition to his latest volume on Tian Shan, has written books on the Caucasus and rock garden construction. He was the president of the Czech Rock Garden Club for three terms and in 2010 received the Alpine Garden Society's Lyttel Trophy. Mr. Holubec studied agricultural botany and plant genetics.

A native of Prague, he currently heads the Czech Gene Bank.

### Please note:

All MCNARGS members (and members of other NARGS chapters) are welcome to attend free of charge. If you plan to join us, contact Judi Dumont at [judi.dumont@gmail.com](mailto:judi.dumont@gmail.com) so NYBG may be given an accurate head count.

Those attending are encouraged to use public transportation if possible. If you are driving, our current information is that you should enter via the Mosholu Gate (the one closest to the Library Building), NOT the main gate (the Conservatory Gate). If you intend to drive, it is important that you contact [judi.dumont@gmail.com](mailto:judi.dumont@gmail.com) at least a week before the meeting, so a list of attendees and number of vehicles can be given to NYBG for parking, and so we can provide you with any changes to the entrance gate and parking information. Parking is always tight so please carpool if you are driving.

Lunch will be on your own. Dining options include the full-service restaurant Hudson Garden Grill and the Pine Tree Cafe, a cafeteria near the Visitor Center. You may also bring your own lunch but please note that no food or drink is allowed in the Ross Auditorium/Library Building. While attendees are allowed free admission to the Rock Garden, those wishing to visit the *Georgia O'Keeffe: Visions of Hawai'i* exhibit in the Conservatory will have to purchase an All Garden Pass separately.

A Metro-North train leaves Grand Central at 8:42 a.m., arriving at the Botanical Garden station at 9:05. There is also a 9:42 train arriving at 10:05. Please check the MTA website to confirm train times.

- 9:00 – 9:45 Arrivals and vendor set-up
- 9:45 – 10:30 Plant sales
- 10:30 – 10:45 Greeting and announcements
- 10:45 – 12:00 First talk: "Tian Shan"
- 12:00 – 1:30 Lunch, auction, sales continue
- 1:30 – 2:45 Second talk:  
"Southwestern China"
- 2:45 – 3:30 Raffle, sales continue
- 3:30 – 4:00 Clean up and vendor pack up



## TWO QUEENS GARDENS – A RAIN CHECK YIELDS DIVIDENDS

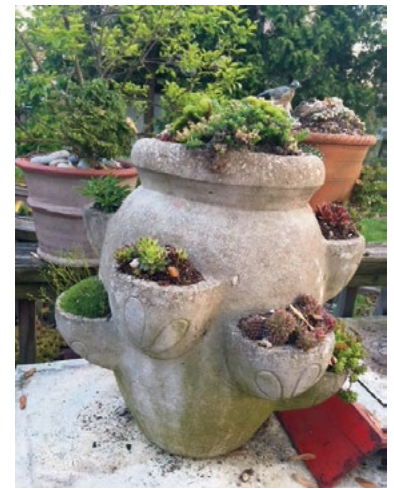
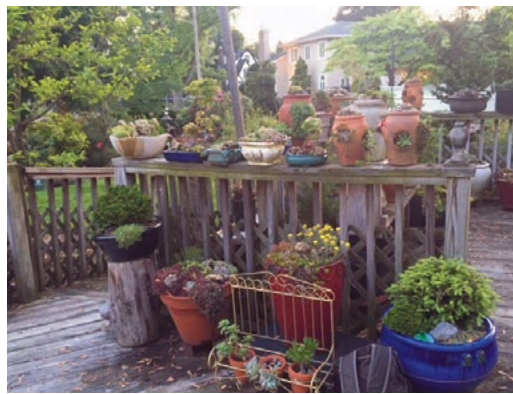
The patience of MCNARGS members was tried in May when the tour of Queens gardens slated for Wednesday, May 16 had to be postponed due to rain. But a week later, on May 23, we were treated to a close-up look at Paul Dambrosi's tufa garden in Fresh Meadows, as well as the garden he designed for Lisa Parvin in Little Neck. All agreed it was well worth the wait!

### PAUL DAMBROSI'S GARDEN



### LISA PARVIN'S GARDEN

Photos by Kean Teck Eng and Carrie Ho



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: SUSAN STEINBROCK



MCNARGS member Susan Steinbrock is not only a professional gardener, she is also a talented textile designer who has run her own business, Susan Steinbrock Design, since 2004, specializing in hand-painted fabrics, wool rugs, wallpaper, and paper collages.

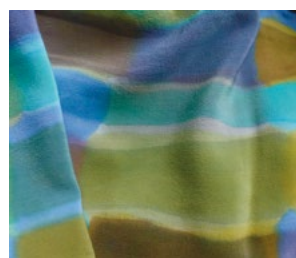
Susan spent last winter recovering from a knee operation, and kept herself busy making collages inspired by the fashion trends of the 1950s, '60s and '70s. Two of her collages have been turned into hand-woven rugs produced by Classic Rug. Susan recently participated in the "Brooklyn Designs" show at the Brooklyn Museum, and was profiled in *Brownstoner*.

Be sure to check out her website: [www.susansteinbrockdesign.com](http://www.susansteinbrockdesign.com).

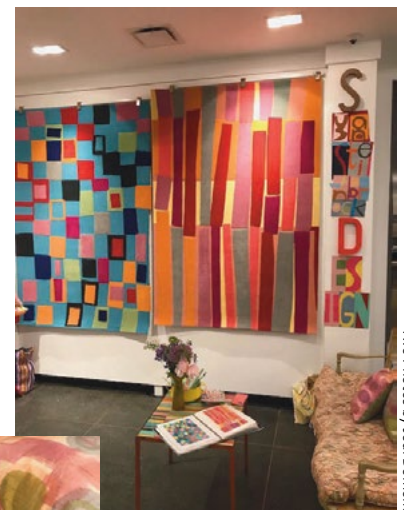
JACK KAPLAN



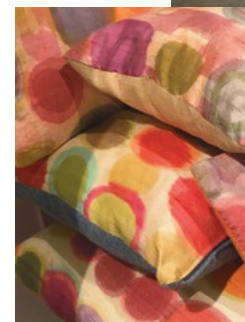
Susan's apartment/studio



Painted fabric



The Brooklyn Museum exhibit, showing Susan's new rugs based on her collages



Hand-painted pillows

Two Photos by Judi Dumont



# SOUTH FORK GARDENTOUR: TWO MASTERFUL GARDENS

On Sunday, June 24, MCNARGS and NARGS members made the pilgrimage to the South Fork of Long Island for private tours of two outstanding gardens. The first was Abby Jane Brody's lush Glade Garden in East Hampton. After a brief lunch break, we traveled to Bridgehampton for a look at Entwood Garden, the six-acre estate of Marlene Marko and Loren Skeist. The final stop was for shopping (and an optional tour) at Marders Garden Center. A day well spent!

Photos by Nancy Crumley, Carrie Ho, Jack Kaplan, Sabine Stetzenbach

## GLADE GARDEN



Abby Jane, garden guide



*Rhododendron pachysanthum*



Pots and espalier



King Louis exploring his domain



Japanese maple—and more



*Stewartia pseudocamellia*



*Schizophragma* 'Moonlight'

## ENTWOOD GARDEN



Three smoke trees (*Cotinus*)



The pond



*Kalmia*



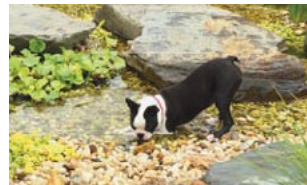
Zig-zag bridge over stream



*Liquidambar styraciflua* 'Oconee'



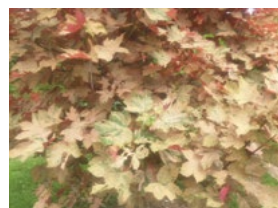
*Astilbe*



Emmy is curious



Francisco and Loren



*Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Eskimo Sunset'



Meditation pond



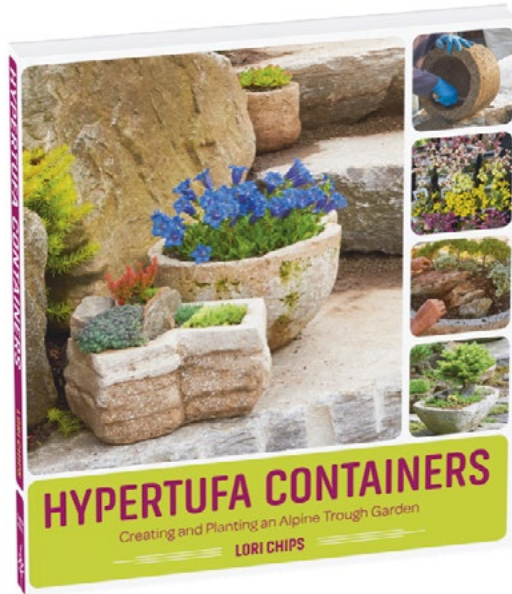
Rock garden with sedum



Balinese statue, lilies



## CONGRATULATIONS TO LORI CHIPS ON HER NEW, BEST-SELLING BOOK



It was hardly a stretch when Timber Press, publisher of *Hypertufa Containers: Creating and Planting an Alpine Trough Garden*, asked me to compose an endorsement blurb for the most eagerly awaited book in the rock garden world.

But in truth, anyone who has ever gone to Oliver Nurseries, where Lori Chips is Alpine Manager and has been for over two decades, or has observed Lori working in her little kingdom (an open-sided shed) or bought one or many of her hypertufa troughs (from “meatballs” to “ziggurats”) or transplanted one of her recommendations (if not all of them), could have also written a testimonial. Her enthusiasm for her topic is contagious and Lori’s fans grow like hens and chicks.

Here is a natural raconteur with clever insights that will get you thinking, even if you have never grown an alpine, let alone one in a trough. Lori’s horticultural wisdom comes through loud and clear. She knows “how to fill bottoms with a slurry” and what it takes to grow an enviable collection of *orostachys*. And true to her botanical expertise, Lori cannot pack you off with one of her babies without putting a label into the pot, with the Latin name – correctly spelled.

ABBIE ZABAR

*Hypertufa Containers: Creating and Planting an Alpine Trough Garden*, Timber Press, July 2018. Paperback. \$24.95.

NOTE: NARGS members receive a 35% discount when ordering from [www.timberpress.com](http://www.timberpress.com). Use coupon code NARGS.

### SAVE THE DATE!

Lori Chips will speak to the chapter on  
**January 14, 2019.**

## ANOTHER HOOSIER IN MANHATTAN

by Brendan Kenney, Chair

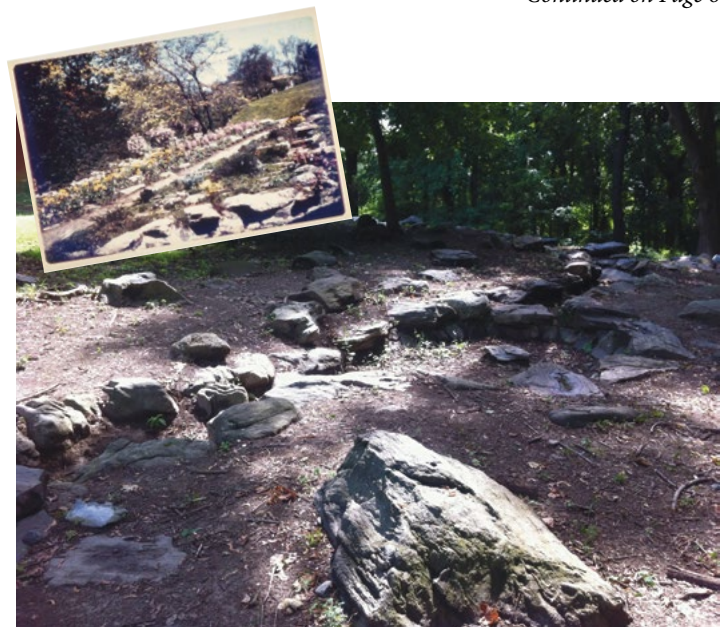


RESTORATION OF THE HISTORIC ROCK GARDEN at Untermyer Gardens is set to begin this fall, with planting scheduled for 2019. A brook, waterfalls, pools and bridges amongst the rockwork will once again form a gardened link between the Walled Garden and Temple of Love.

WHILE MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN about a “younger generation” less interested in horticulture, a greater environmental concern is looming on the horizon. Trees are the number one way in which carbon can be removed from the atmosphere and stored in vegetation over the long term. Clean air and water are dependent on the earth’s forests. Change has been slow and almost undetectable. The ages of those who own the forests have moved closer to triple digits. As land is passed on to heirs, the number of woodland owners has grown and the sizes of woodland parcels have shrunk. Private forests are at risk, as many owners have little knowledge of how to manage the woods. And with hundreds of thousands of acres expected to transfer hands in coming years, invasive species are running rampant.

More than half of the 751 million acres of forest land in the United States are privately owned. In the last ten years, the number of landowners across the U.S. has grown by more than one million, according to the National Woodland Owner Survey.

*Continued on Page 6*



The site of the Untermyer rock garden today. Inset: the garden in the 1930's

Photo by Brendan Kenney



MNARGS WELCOMES OUR NEW MEMBERS

**Kristy Delfausse**  
**Sinan Karabas**



## ANOTHER HOOSIER...

Continued from page 5

Sixty-three percent of New York's land area is covered with 19 million acres of forest land. About 14 million acres, or 74% of the forest land, are owned by nearly 700,000 diverse private landowners.

Indiana is no exception, with nearly 193,000 private forest ownerships currently across the state. Eighty-five percent (4.1 million acres) of Indiana's forests is privately owned. More than half of forest owners in the state are over 55 years old and nearly a quarter are over 65. While some land has already been passed on, apparent by the ongoing fragmentation, it is only the beginning. Demographics suggest a massive upcoming intergenerational transfer of lands.

A FAMILY REUNION TOOK ME TO NINEVEH, INDIANA – birthplace of William Merritt Chase. Outside of town is the home of my cousin, Mike Armstrong, age 64, set within fifty-five acres of diverse, well-managed forested hills. I was impressed by a Hoosier's stewardship of his land as I reflected on our pioneer ancestors clearcutting nearby with little concern. Will Mike's grandchildren continue his dedication? It is doubtful.

BACK IN NEW YORK, THE CITY'S FERRIES are providing more access to "natural" sites. The recently-opened 5.5 acre Hunters Point South Phase II is an inspiring landscape for quiet

reflection in Long Island City, at the intersection of the East River and Newtown Creek. Notice the successful long bioswale along the road and bike path. Curving tidal marshes created as replacement for wetlands in the Bronx as well as the trails through native grasses and trees are an utter delight. Three thousand housing units will be constructed nearby, so enjoy the present tranquility. A natural marsh awaits at Pugsley Creek Park, now easy to reach on the new Soundview ferry route to Clason Point in the Bronx. The quiet beauty of the marsh on Long Island Sound will carry your mind far from urban concerns. Fall is a great time to visit both of these parks.

THE CATSKILL MOUNTAINS beckoned seven MCNARGS members to the July 21 Metro Hort tour to Mountain Top Arboretum in Tannersville. We were impressed with *Betula uber*, a rare Smyth County, Virginia native with small round leaves and striped bark. A poor fen, marsh and hemlock forest add to the botanical interest (see photos below). The Education Center, now under construction with local materials, will soon allow for more programming.

Twenty years ago it was predicted that the hemlock forests in the Eastern United States would disappear. It was a relief and pleasure to walk through an intact forest at Mountain Top. Good land stewardship in Yonkers, the Catskills, Queens, the Bronx and by an individual Hoosier inspires hope as fall brings thoughts of spring.

*Brendan Kenney*

Photos by Brendan Kenney and Nancy Crumley



Poor fen: natural spruce nurseries



Hemlock forest



Wet meadow boardwalk

*Betula uber*



*Asclepias tuberosa*



## WHAT IS "PECHAKUCHA?"

**P**echaKucha (Japanese for "chit-chat") is a presentation style in which twenty images are shown for twenty seconds each (six minutes and forty seconds in total). The format keeps presentations concise and fast-paced.

Please join us for our third PechaKucha program on November 19. As coordinator, I can help you put your images together. But fear not – we aren't wedded to the strict 20x20 formula. For instance, if you only have ten images, you could speak for approximately forty seconds on each image, and the total would still be under ten minutes.

Is there anything you'd like to share with us? Here's a chance to attain your ten minutes of fame! Let me hear from you, please: [Riley2362@aol.com](mailto:Riley2362@aol.com).

MICHAEL RILEY

## WHY DON'T YOU?

by Steve Whitesell



Cover lawn areas you want to convert to garden with black plastic, especially in sunny areas while the sun is intense. It's so much easier and more effective than exhaustively digging up grass. In a few weeks the top growth and roots will be cooked away and the soil will be loose and easy to cultivate and amend. Save the plastic for reuse.

Collect ripe seed now and in future weeks to submit to the various seed exchanges. Clean the seed before sending it in and try for unusual or high demand species, though all donations are appreciated. Most seed exchange websites list high demand species.

Continue pulling the lush and abundant weed crop that appeared after recent rains before it goes to seed and produces another huge crop. Devote the time you'd normally spend watering.

Prepare bulb lists and send them in before items sell out. Experiment with growing expensive or commercially unavailable species from seed, even if reaching flowering size takes years.

## STEVE WHITESELL IN THE NEWS

After working for the New York City Parks Department for twenty-seven years as a landscape architect, Steve retired about two years ago. His last project was Big Bush Playground in Woodside, Queens, which, we are delighted to report, was cited by *Time Out* magazine in their July 16 issue as one of the "Ten Best Playgrounds in New York City."

On retiring, Steve moved permanently to North Blenheim in Schoharie County, New York. His "Greek Revival Garden" is the subject of a fascinating article in the August issue of *Old House Journal*, which can be accessed online at [www.oldhouseonline.com](http://www.oldhouseonline.com).

Congratulations to Steve!



*Glaucidium palmatum*



Steve Whitesell's North Blenheim garden in May

## REMINDER: SAVE THOSE SEEDS!

Remember, all you plant lovers, that seeds are where it all begins! NARGS serves a great purpose by gathering hundreds of packets of seeds from its members to distribute to those who want to grow a plant they can't buy, something rare or something they have seen in the wild, or even something they have admired in a friend's garden. Please collect and save seeds of a few species. I'll give you more details at our September meeting, or contact me at [llhorwitz@gmail.com](mailto:llhorwitz@gmail.com).

LOLA HORWITZ

## MEMBERSHIP FEES ON THE RISE

### Please note:

MCNARGS membership fees are going up, effective immediately. The new rates are:

- One-year membership: \$30
- Three-year membership: \$75

This small increase is necessary to continue our excellent speaker programs. The MCNARGS Spring Plant Sale (our biggest fund raiser), our Tri-State plant sale and member dues together fund our programs. Your participation and support are critical to our future! Thank you.

Membership renewal for 2019 is due by December 31, 2018.

## MANHATTAN CHAPTER NARGS

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form and give it with your payment (cash or check payable to MCNARGS) to Nancy Crumley (Membership Secretary) at a chapter meeting.

Or, mail a check with the form to Nancy Crumley at:  
324 Seventh Avenue #4R  
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Please check one:

- 1-year Membership \$30
- 2-year Membership \$75

PLEASE PRINT NEATLY:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check all that apply:

- I am renewing my membership  I am a new member
- I would like to receive a paper copy of the newsletter
- I would like my newsletter via email only

We are a volunteer organization and would like your participation in our activities. How can you help?

- Plant Sale Committee  Help increase our presence on Social Media
- Serve as Webmaster  Contribute articles to the newsletter
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



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### NEWSLETTER FOUNDING EDITOR

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THE MANHATTAN CHAPTER of the North American Rock Garden Society, founded in 1987, is a group of gardening enthusiasts who are dedicated to the propagation and promotion of an eclectic range of plants, with emphasis on alpine and rock gardening selections. Our Chapter programs, designed for a sophisticated mix of professionals and amateurs, cover a broad spectrum of special interests such as rock and alpine, woodland, bog, raised bed and planted walls, as well as trough and container gardening.

*The Urban Rock Gardener* is a newsletter published by the Manhattan Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society.

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Our gratitude to Michael Riley for donating the printing and mailing of the *Urban Rock Gardener*.



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## WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AT ALL THE UPCOMING MEETINGS

*Submission deadline for November/December issue: October 20*

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### MANHATTAN CHAPTER OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

5½ Jane Street #4R

New York, NY 10014

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

**Monday, November 19**

### **PechaKucha**

MICHAEL RILEY, *Coordinator*

(See note on page 6)

**Monday, December 17**

### **Kiku (Chrysanthemum) Bonsai**

DR. EUGENE SEKULOW, DR. JEANNE LAPSKER  
and YUKIE KURASHINA

## THE NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

**JOIN TODAY.** NARGS is for gardening enthusiasts interested in alpine, saxatile, and low-growing perennials and woody plants. Annual dues in the U.S. and Canada are \$40, payable in U.S. funds. VISA/Mastercard accepted.



Benefits of membership include: *Rock Garden Quarterly* with articles on alpiners and North American wildflowers; annual Seed Exchange with thousands of plant species; study weekends and annual meetings in either U.S. or Canada; and book service.

Join online at [www.nargs.org](http://www.nargs.org). Or write: Bobby J. Ward, Executive Secretary NARGS, P.O. Box 18604, Raleigh, NC 27619-8604.

The NARGS *Quarterly* is now online and members have free access at [www.nargs.org/rock-garden-quarterly](http://www.nargs.org/rock-garden-quarterly).

### FIRST CLASS MAIL



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