

# The Urban Rock Gardener



Volume 31, Issue 2

March/April 2018

## MARCH MEETING

Monday, March 19 at 6 p.m.

NYBG Midtown Education Center, Room D

## PATAGONIAN PLANTS— FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

Speaker:

Anne Spiegel

**A** view of the unique flora of Patagonia, from steppe to alpine, with an emphasis on the plants that anyone would love to have in a rock garden.



*Calceolaria uniflora*

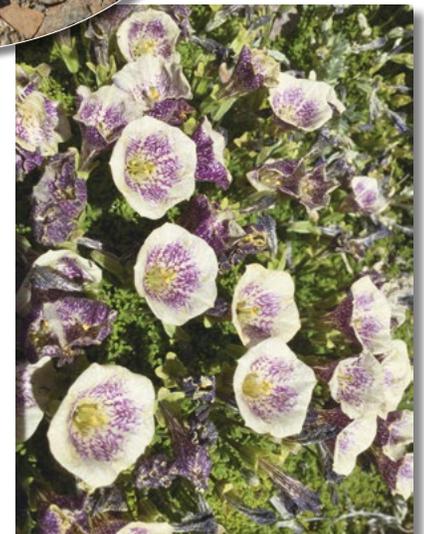


*Calandrinia caespitosa*



Photos by Anne Spiegel

*Viola sacculus*



*Petunia patagonica*



Photo by Cliff Booker

Anne with Joe and Ranger

**ANNE SPIEGEL** is the owner, designer, builder, planter and maintainer of a large rock garden on a site of stepped ledges ending in a small cliff. She lives in Wappingers Falls with her husband Joe and their German Shepherd. Though self-taught, she has been blessed with mentors who were “superstars” of NARGS and who encouraged, taught and gifted her with rare plants every step of the way. Starting in 1986, Ms. Spiegel has botanized every year in a wide range of locations, including the American West, Italy, France, Switzerland and South America.

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.

## APRIL MEETING

Monday, April 16 at 6 p.m.

NYBG Midtown Education Center, Room D

# SPRING AWAKENING! THE BEAUTY AND ECOLOGY OF OUR SPRING EPHEMERALS



*Trillium erectum*

Speaker:  
**Carolyn Summers**  
Flying Trillium Gardens  
and Preserve

**T**his talk will reveal secrets of our earliest spring-blooming wildflowers and their importance in regional ecology. Ms. Summers will also offer gardening tips.



*Trillium spp.*



*Dicentra cucullaria*



*Erythronium americanum*



**CAROLYN SUMMERS** is the author of *Designing Gardens with Flora of the American East* (Rutgers University Press). After completing her B.S. in Landscape Architecture at CCNY, she joined the Trust for Public Land, producing an open space report for the Harbor Herons Project that has guided preservation efforts to create an urban wildlife refuge on Staten Island. As the first Director of Natural Resources of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, she implemented a new native plants policy for all agency construction/restoration projects. At the Natural Resources Defense Council she initiated a regional project to preserve and restore wildlife habitat and public access in the New York-New Jersey Bight.

Ms. Summers is an adjunct professor for Go Native U, a joint project of Westchester Community College's Continuing Education Program and Native Plant Center. She and her husband recently opened their country home, Flying Trillium Gardens and Preserve ([www.flyingtrillium.com](http://www.flyingtrillium.com)), for public tours so designers, gardeners and homeowners can see the beauty of native plants in both garden and natural settings and be inspired to create more of the same.

Photos by Carolyn Summers



## MCNARGS ANNUAL PLANT SALE

**SATURDAY, MAY 5**

**El Sol Brillante  
Community Garden  
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

East 12th Street  
between Avenues A & B

Our annual plant sale will be here before we know it, so be sure to put May 5th on your calendar. The Plant Sale is a wonderful event for urban plant lovers and an important fundraiser for our chapter. In addition to plants provided by chapter members (YOU!), the Plant Sale Committee will select and purchase a variety of reasonably-priced rock garden plants and other uncommon perennials for sun and shade from Gowanus Nursery, Wrightman Alpines and other specialty nurseries.

Enthusiastic member participation is key to the success of the sale. Here are some ways you can help:

- Donate plants from your garden (see below for details).
- Help transport plants to El Sol Brillante early the morning of the sale or to one of our plant holding locations a week or two before the sale. Contact Lola Horwitz ([llhorwitz@gmail.com](mailto:llhorwitz@gmail.com)) if you can help with this.
- Help with publicity by inviting your plant-loving friends, neighbors, colleagues and fellow community gardeners.
- Post flyers, send emails, tweet, and invite Facebook friends. Find the event through the MCNARGS Facebook page.
- Come early to help price plants and set up (*but no plant shopping before 10:00, please*).

### For plant donors — please read:

- All types of well-grown plants are needed – not just rock garden and alpine plants.
- Pot up your offerings well in advance so they are well-rooted and settled in their pots by May 5.
- Label your plants with the name of the plant. Please note that plants without labels will not be accepted for the sale. Additional information (name of donor and growing conditions) is helpful but not required. A photo of the mature plant in bloom from your garden or from a catalogue can really boost sales. Michael Riley has generously offered to make photo labels of donated plants, so please contact him directly (a week or more in advance of the sale, if possible) at [riley2362@aol.com](mailto:riley2362@aol.com) if you'd like photo labels for any plants you're donating.
- Bring plants to El Sol between 8:45 and 9:30 a.m. We need time to price each plant before the sale begins.
- If you have plants to donate but can't come the day of the sale, please contact Lola Horwitz to make other arrangements.

*Please note:* Members arriving early with their own healthy, labeled plants will have first choice of one purchase at the start of the sale.

If you'd like to help with the sale, or have any questions please contact Lola Horwitz at [llhorwitz@gmail.com](mailto:llhorwitz@gmail.com) or Judi Dumont at [judi.dumont@gmail.com](mailto:judi.dumont@gmail.com).

## ON THE "SNOWDROP TRAIL" WITH ERNEST CAVALLO

Every year since 2009, I have traveled to England to follow a snowdrop trail from one delightful garden and/or gardener to another. This year, the last stop on the trail was Kew Gardens in London.



*Dionysia curviflora*

Ikariae is pretty dull when I compare it to the other treasures in the Alpine House, such a perfect primula, *Dionysia curviflora*.

Two blues blew me away: *Tecophilaea cyanocrocus* from Chile, and *Iris* 'Sindpers', a Juno hybrid.



Right outside, I found an array of troughs. Never have piles of rocks looked so appealing.



*Galanthus* 'Primrose Warburg'

Photos by Ernest Cavallo

Finally, on the way out, I spotted her. Small and sparse but beautiful, *Galanthus* 'Primrose Warburg'. She had not gone over. She reigned in her scree bed. Appropriately, I knelt before her to capture this image.

All in all, a very good day.



*Galanthus ikariae*



*Tecophilaea cyanocrocus*



*Iris* 'Sindpers'

ERNEST CAVALLO

## SIGNS OF SPRING IN LOLA'S GARDEN



The first picture is of *Galanthus elwesii* var. *whittallii*, a big, fast-to-increase snowdrop that sways beautifully in a breeze. I bought one (!) bulb from Ernie Cavallo only three years ago, I believe. It's also the first one up in my garden.

The second picture is of my first winter aconite, *Eranthis hyemalis* 'Moonlight', a lovely, creamier version of the plentiful species.

LOLA HORWITZ

## ANOTHER HOOSIER IN MANHATTAN

by Brendan Kenney, Chair



A TRANQUIL SPOT FOR CONTEMPLATION IN THE CITY is the garden of the Noguchi Museum in Long Island City. Among the perfectly-situated trees and shrubs are sculptures that blend Japanese and Western aesthetics. Noguchi was a master landscape designer as well as sculptor. Large specimens of *Prunus pendula*, *Magnolia virginiana* and *Stewartia pseudocamillia* greet the visitor like old friends, and delight from spring into summer. Anchoring the garden is an 18-inch caliper katsura (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*). East and West are in modernist harmony.

Sam Gilmour (who later formally adopted his Japanese given name, Isamu Noguchi) lived in LaPorte County, Indiana starting in 1918 and graduated from LaPorte High School at the top of his class in 1922. Not generally thought of as a Hoosier, at the age of fourteen he arrived in Indiana from Japan, where he had lived since the age of two. It must have been a shock. Twentieth-century art was the better for it. In April 2015 it was reported that an abstract Noguchi sculpture which he had donated to his alma mater had been stolen from the school library. Local reaction was classic Hoosier... "I didn't even know we had something so culturally important, but now I'm horrified to know I've been robbed of it" (LaPorte Senior Joe Swanson, as reported in the *LaPorte High School Hi-Times*).

THE PERFECTION OF NOGUCHI'S HANDIWORK contrasts greatly with Frederick Douglass Memorial Park on Staten Island. Recently I visited the neglected historic black cemetery with Kaitilin Griffin. The wet site includes many large *Liquidambar styraciflua* as well as several species of oak. Deer have grazed heavily on the many *Thuja occidentalis*, which led me to consider the wildlife invasion of the city. For many years city dwellers felt immune to the ravages of deer, which are much in evidence in the Northeast.

In New York City, white-tailed deer can currently be found in Pelham Bay and Van Cortlandt Parks in the Bronx and throughout Staten Island. Deer migrated to Staten Island by swimming from New Jersey, and to the Bronx by walking from Westchester. All five boroughs have been visited by the garden nemesis. Interestingly, regulations exist which could provide a possible solution if current trends continue.

Restrictions are complex and stringent, but the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation does issue permits that allow the killing of deer on private property. New York City residents can apply for a Deer Damage Permit (DDP), though the NYSDEC has neither issued any permits nor received any applications from city residents. Eligibility requires "demonstrated impacts and the lack or failure of other practical alternatives to alleviate the problem." DEC "impacts" include: agricultural, horticultural, and tree growth damage; impacts to biodiversity and native plant communities; and threats to human health and safety. Of course, hunting is not permitted in New York City, so one wonders how deer would be killed. Perhaps the ongoing deer vasectomy project will alleviate the problem – 1,011 bucks with vasectomies on Staten Island and counting! The program was scheduled to begin again in late February or early March.

On a brighter note, across the street from the cemetery is a branch of my favorite Russian supermarket, NetCost. Jars of Tian Shan honey caught the eye of both Kaitilin and me. Sweet thoughts of bees collecting nectar from alpine flowers in the Tian Shan Mountains took our minds far from the deer problem.

SAFE FROM DEER FOR THE TIME BEING is the Sheridan Square Viewing Garden. The rock garden facing West 4th Street has been lovingly maintained by MCNARGS member Zabel Meshejian for over 35 years. A large *Daphne odora* 'Aurea-Marginata' is among the treasures. Many people hardly glance at the Pamela Burdan-designed triangle, even though the elevation makes the plants more visible. Always worth checking out if you are on a stroll through the Village, look for the spring bulbs pushing up now with their promise of flowers later in March and April.

*Brendan Kenney*

## WHY DON'T YOU?

by Steve Whitesell



*Finish planting pots of hardy seeds that require stratification outside ASAP so they can get a sufficient cool period to germinate.*

*Cut back old hellebore foliage to better reveal new flowering stems,*

*if you haven't already. This will also allow early flowering bulbs planted close to the crown, such as galanthus and crocus, to bloom profusely without being smothered.*

*Be careful about walking on sodden lawns and garden beds to prevent excessive soil compaction and destruction of delicate soil structure. Use pieces of board or carpet to distribute weight until soil has dried somewhat.*

*Finish garden cleanup you may have put off from last season. Prune leafless woody plants now that you can better see the bare branching structure, but delay pruning excessive bleeders like maples until buds start to push.*

*Clean and sharpen gardening tools.*



## TOUR OF YUNNAN, CHINA June 13 – 29

TOUR LEADER: PANAYOTI KELAIDIS

The minimum number of participants is 15, the maximum is 22. The price for a shared room is US\$4,500; a single-room supplement is US\$1,000.

NARGS membership required.

For questions please contact Jody Payne or Lola Horwitz:  
[jodycpayne1@gmail.com](mailto:jodycpayne1@gmail.com) [llhorwitz@gmail.com](mailto:llhorwitz@gmail.com)

**DON'T DELAY! DEPOSIT DUE IMMEDIATELY!**

**NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN  
ALPINE HOUSE TOUR**  
Wednesday, March 28 at 11 a.m.



Photo by Yuki Kurashina

This is a very special opportunity. **Yukie Kurashina** will give us a guided tour of NYBG's Alpine House, which is not open to the public. Her years of experience and knowledge are greatly appreciated. Thanks to Michael Hagen and Yukie for making our visit possible.

*Please note:* Limited to ten people. Reserve immediately if you are interested and Brendan will provide the details. MCNARGS members unable to attend this tour will be put on a waiting list for a possible future tour.

Contact: Brendan Kenney at: [nycbeard@gmail.com](mailto:nycbeard@gmail.com).



**NARGS ANNUAL MEETING: NEWFOUNDLAND**  
July 6 – 8

**WHERE ALPINES MEET THE SEA**

Optional Post-Conference Tour:  
Newfoundland Pine Barrens, July 9 – 16

Main registration at <http://bit.ly/zn8f834>

For post-conference tour, please contact Jody Payne or Lola Horwitz:  
[jodycpayne1@gmail.com](mailto:jodycpayne1@gmail.com) [llhorwitz@gmail.com](mailto:llhorwitz@gmail.com)

**TOUR FULLY BOOKED – WAITING LIST ONLY!**



**MCNARGS WELCOMES  
OUR NEW MEMBERS**

**Kay Spurlock**  
**John Tweddle**

**MCNARGS 2018 MEMBERSHIP**

**Attention MCNARGS members!** Renewal for 2018 membership was due in December. As of this writing, 53 members are not current.

Please take a moment to renew by completing the form below and mailing it with your dues to our Membership Secretary, Nancy Crumley, or give your payment to Nancy at our March meeting.

We encourage taking a multi-year membership. At \$50 for three years, you get a discount *and* don't have to write a check every year.

Please support MCNARGS and remember all the benefits membership entails. We welcome your participation in other ways too – contributing ideas for speakers, tours and activities; sharing photographs on social media; and helping with the Plant Sale. Please consider greater involvement.

If you have a question about your status, please contact Nancy at [nancycrumley@gmail.com](mailto:nancycrumley@gmail.com) or (718).788.3306.

**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 our March chapter meeting.

Or, mail a check with the form to Nancy at:

324 Seventh Avenue #4R  
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Please check one:

- Individual \$20     Individual - 3 years \$50
- Student \$15     Gift Membership \$15

*Current members may give a Gift Membership to a new member.*

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: \_\_\_\_\_

## OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS 2018

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### NEWSLETTER PROOFREADER

Nancy M. Crumley

### NEWSLETTER FOUNDING EDITOR

Lawrence B. Thomas

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 May/June issue: April 20*

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

5½ Jane Street #4R  
New York, NY 10014

**Memo:**  
**Don't forget**  
**to pay your**  
**membership**  
**dues!**

### FIRST CLASS MAIL



*Please recycle this publication. Thank you!*

## UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

### Monday, May 21

Speaker and subject to be announced

### Sunday, June 24

### Tour: Abby Jane Brody's Garden

East Hampton, Long Island

*(Details will be in the May/June newsletter)*

## 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, illustrated in color photographs and pen and ink drawings; 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).