

The Urban Rock Gardener



Volume 30, Issue 1

January/February 2017

JANUARY MEETING

Monday, January 23 at 6 p.m.

NYBG Midtown Education Center, Room D

GALANTHIA: THE AMERICAN STATE OF SNOWDROPS

Speaker:

Ernest Cavallo

In his new talk, "Galantia: the American State of Snowdrops," Ernest Cavallo will describe his journey from casual observer to obsessive collector. Through his own research and information gathered from the generous Galanthus community in the UK and the USA, he has learned much he is eager to share.



Galanthus 'Arcturus'



Galanthus 'Green Arrow'



Galanthus 'Fluff'

I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN NEW JERSEY by non-gardening parents. I discovered the dirt as a young man in my twenties and have never had clean hands since. The month before I retired from my position in the New York State Court System in 2008, I read an article in *The Garden* about Colesbourne in the UK. I decided to treat to myself to a trip and fell in love with Galanthus. I have gardened on the East End of Long Island for 35 years and hope to do so for another 35 years.

ERNEST CAVALLO



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

FEBRUARY MEETING

Monday, February 27 at 6 p.m.

NYBG Midtown Education Center, Room D

TRANSLATING PLANTS TO PAPER: 40 YEARS AS A BOTANICAL ARTIST

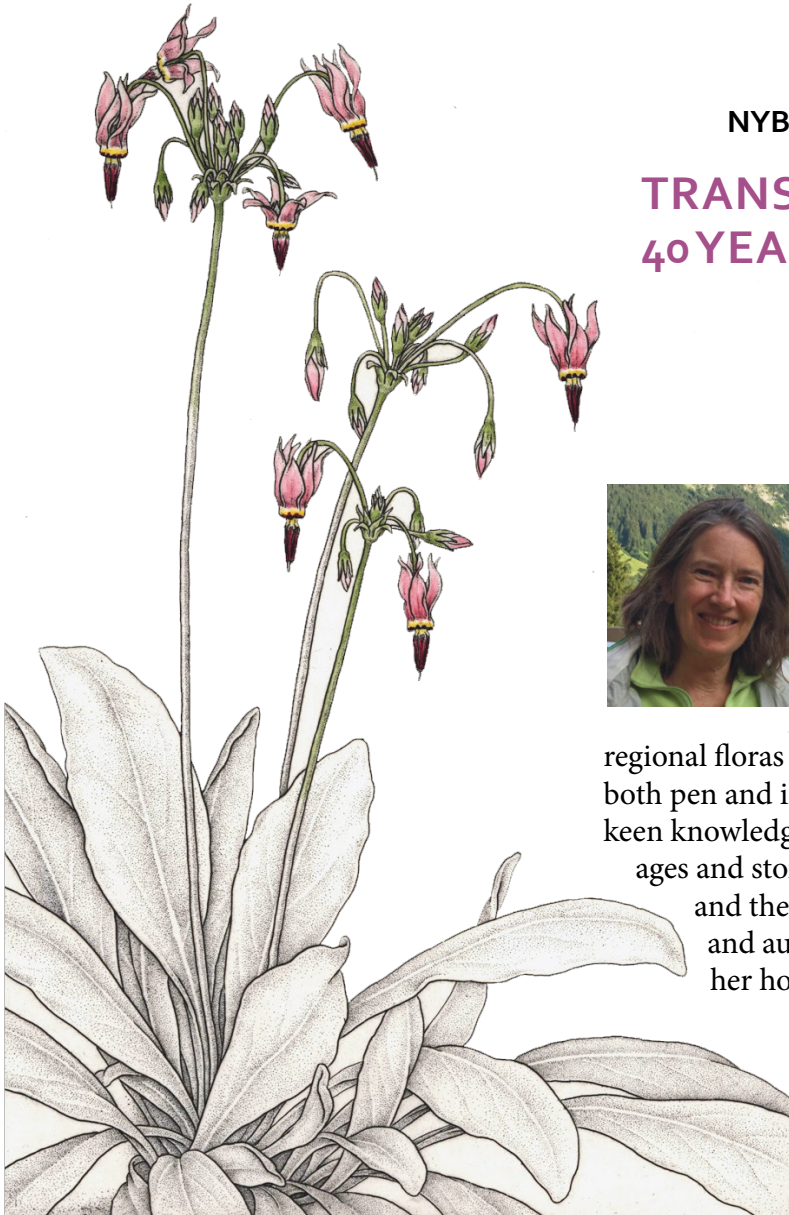
Speaker:

Bobbi Angell

Botanical Illustrator



Common garden plants, tiny alpine, tropical forest trees, native wildflowers, rare species new to science – Bobbi Angell draws them all with equal enthusiasm. A scientific illustrator for The New York Botanical Garden and other institutions, her work has been widely published in garden memoirs, seed catalogs, regional floras and scientific journals. Her distinctive style, in both pen and ink illustrations and copper etchings, reflects her keen knowledge of the diverse world of plants. She will share images and stories from her travels for tropical field work projects and the rich relationships she has cultivated with botanists and authors. Bobbi will also discuss works inspired by her home garden in Vermont.



Shooting star



Daffodils



Soldanella



Campanula cochlearifolia



Solanum sotosquense



Field sketching

DIARY OF A SEED-SORTER

Today is December 17, two days after NARGS opened its 2016 Seed List for ordering. Yesterday I became very aware, as I scrolled through the list, that I still had many seeds on my kitchen table that others might want to order, and if I didn't get my act together as our Chapter's Seed Sorting Coordinator, those "others" from all over the world might not get the seeds they were ordering. But at the same time I knew that there were likely to be some taxa listed that would be in short supply, and if I didn't get my seed order in quickly I might fail to receive what I wanted. What to do first?

I managed in a totally unplanned rush to complete my order later in the day. It included several different species of genera that I already grow, such as cyclamen and narcissus. Then there were



Eranthis pinnatifida

a few from among the taxa that our chapter were given to process: primula and pulsatilla. When you handle seeds of many different species of one or two genera, you start Googling their pictures and choosing some to try.

But my most-wanted choices were two different offerings of *Eranthis pinnatifida* and one for *E. hyemalis* 'Schwefelglanz', which might be translated as "shimmering brimstone," and is lovely according to its Google picture. Listed among this genus I also saw my own *E. hyemalis* 'Moonlight' whose seed I had sent to Laura Serowicz as soon as it was ripe last March. As to the white aconite (*E. pinnatifida*), Jacques Mommens and I have tried repeatedly to get its seed to germinate to no avail. The most perplexing thing is that I have the bulb, purchased from Barry Yinger; it bloomed in 2012 after so many years of dormancy that I had forgotten where I planted it, or in fact, that I owned it. But sadly, it has never reemerged. That's why I am trying again with NARGS seed.

THANK YOU, LORI!

In their Fall newsletter, Oliver Nursery in Fairfield, Connecticut, gives a big thumbs up to the North American Rock Garden Society, and in particular the Manhattan Chapter. In a lead article about suggested activities for the winter months, Lori Chips, Oliver's Alpine Manager, writes:

Some of the best divertissements come from the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS.) There are big and elaborate Winter Study Weekends from time to time & they are utterly worthwhile to attend, but more manageable for most of us are the smaller lectures & events arranged by local chapters. Most plant societies & clubs tend to center their meetings beginning in spring and running through fall for obvious reasons. That is when the plants grow & flower, the soil is warm & the gardener ventures outside to work on whatever it is that fires the imagination at the moment. But the Manhattan Chapter of NARGS (MCNARGS) functions on a completely different time table, more like "The New York Season." This is when influential folks return from trips: The South of France, Tuscany, Saratoga, the Hamptons

Now that my order is in, I tell myself that this year I will be organized and make lists of wanted species as the year progresses. Larry Thomas, MCNARGS' founder, was diligent with his lists, and he had many splendid results. Nevertheless, whether thought out or spontaneous, there is an excitement to the chase that starts when our own personal seeds are sent in, when the list is online, our order is made, and finally, sometime in January, our packet of new seeds arrives. From then on, it's a matter of patience, maybe experience, and luck. If you haven't tried growing from seed you have missed out. I hope you'll give it a go this year!

ASK ANY OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS if they didn't have a good time processing seeds: Ellen Borker, Mary Buchen, Francisco Correa, Loretta Darby, Kean Teck Eng, Patti Hagan, Jack Kaplan, Brendan Kenney, Michael Riley, and John Rommel.

My thanks to all of you who share my pleasure (addiction?) to getting closer to plants by way of their beginnings.

LOLA LLOYD HORWITZ



The seed-sorting crew at Lola's house on December 6. Left to right: Ellen Borker, Jack Kaplan, Brendan Kenney and Loretta Darby.

Photo by Lola Horwitz

& resume a flurry of activity in The City. Way back when, (think the Vanderbilts) the summer season created the reputations of Saratoga, Newport and Tuxedo Park. The fall season coincided with the beginning of the concert program. And so it goes with alpine and other garden lectures in Manhattan too.

Just a short winter train ride away we can attend these lectures, located at the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) Midtown Education Center at 20 West 44th Street, New York, N.Y. ... They usually occur at 6:00 p.m. on Monday evenings. This chapter by the way, along with most others welcomes visitors and guests even if they are not members. Often simply experiencing a couple of events galvanizes people into joining. Either way, they are friendly gatherings.

She goes on to mention our speakers series, and is particularly enthusiastic about the forthcoming talk by Bobbi Angell on February 27. Her article is graced by some of Bobbi's fine drawings.

Be sure to check out www.olivernurseries.com to browse their newsletter archive, and for a glimpse into a truly remarkable nursery.

JACK KAPLAN

ANOTHER HOOSIER IN MANHATTAN

By Brendan Kenney, Chair



Reflection on the past year and the future is a hopeful and sobering part of each new year. Landscape and memory is a part of every gardener's psyche. In our November program Michael Hagen provided us with a good perspective on the NYBG Rock Garden in the past, present and future. Most of the audience came with their own memories but few were aware of the previous Rock Garden in a different spot at NYBG. Crevice areas have been added

to the present garden and a future renovation is planned. At Untermyer Gardens the next project on the agenda is the Rock Garden. Tremendous progress has taken place there under the direction of Timothy Tilghman. Though it will never be the estate garden of former times, the present condition and the future development are exciting.

MEMORIES OF LANDSCAPE REMAIN as we look to the future. Many recall the delightful shady landscape created by Joann and Fred Knapp over many decades on Long Island. Now gardening in a few 8' x 8' full-sun raised beds at Cedar Crest Retirement Community in Pompton Plains, New Jersey, they are an inspiration to those who realize that gardening practices should change as one ages. New conditions have allowed them the excitement of growing new plants. Fond memories remain but the present and future is the essential

WHY DON'T YOU?

by Steve Whitesell



*Submit seed exchange requests early to avoid disappointment? Plant out seed pots containing species requiring cold stratification before the end of February. Professor Norman Deno's *Seed Germination Theory and Practice* will provide some guidelines.*

Replenish gravel mulch on troughs and containers to ensure water drains away

from the crowns of plants sensitive to water accumulations and help prevent rot.

Salvage conifer branches from discarded Christmas trees to cover containers and raised beds, shade plant crowns and discourage frost heave from repetitive freeze/thaw temperature swings. Hope for adequate and extended snow cover for insulation.

Think about how you can improve the view from your primary garden viewing position – window, doorway, chair or bench. You'll have time to devise additions or revisions in the off-season and act in the spring.

truth of the gardener's viewpoint. Likewise, the fact that Helen Dillon moved from her impressive garden in Ranelagh, Dublin, to a new smaller one is heartening news. Her lecture at the newly-opened NYBG Midtown Education Center a few years ago compelled me to visit her garden in 2015. Lovely landscape images remain in my mind's eye. Unlike Great Dixter, her garden looked great from every angle. New ideas will come from a new perspective and are highly anticipated.

RECENTLY, I MET UP WITH SUE ELLEN PAXSON, a Hoosier artist, who left her expansive garden in Indianapolis for a high-rise in Long Island City three years ago. City gardeners are often torn between horticulture and the culture offered by the city. The rapidly rising high-rises of LIC are an intense urban environment. Sue Ellen's memories of landscapes old and new sustain her as she concentrates on her art.

IN 2016, THE MANHATTAN CHAPTER moved our meeting location to the NYBG Midtown Education Center which has proved to be well suited to our needs. Many thanks to the manager, Jason Griffith. The historic venue reminds us of the past as we look to the future. Landscapes like Luke Kreye's remain etched in our memory as we consider our own present and future garden plans.

Brendan Kenney

Note: Jane Allison, who lived in the Village for 60 years, wrote a newspaper column called "A Hoosier in Manhattan" for many decades.

**Spring Garden Gala
Madison, Wisconsin**

NARGS STUDY WEEKEND

May 19 – 20, 2017

**Hosted by the
Wisconsin-Illinois Chapter of NARGS**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER will be **Joseph Tychonievich**, author of the recent Timber Press book, *Rock Gardening: Reimagining a Classic Style*.

Nancy Nedveck will talk on choice plants. She and her husband David own The Flower Factory, one of the largest perennial nurseries between the coasts.

A tour of a pair of unique private gardens and a visit to several wonderful public gardens (including the University of Wisconsin's renowned Arboretum) will be offered. There will be ample plant-buying time at The Flower Factory and at Klehm's Song Sparrow Farm – famous for select perennials and woodies.

The Conference fee is \$190 until April 19. Hotel rooms are available at double room rate of \$109 plus tax.

For more information or questions, email the Wisconsin-Illinois Chapter at NARGSWIS2017@gmail.com. See the ad in the Winter 2017 issue of the NARGS *Rock Garden Quarterly*, which includes a meeting registration form.

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MCNARGS MEMBERSHIP

Membership renewal is due this month. If you are not up to date, please take a moment to complete the form below and mail it with your 2017 dues to our treasurer, Yukie Kurashina.

If you are in doubt about your membership status or have any questions relating to your membership, please contact Nancy Crumley (Acting Membership Secretary) at 718.788.3306 or via email: nancycrumley@gmail.com.

Some words on Membership from the Chair...

Please consider getting more involved in the Manhattan Chapter. 2016 was another great year of programs, garden tours, the spring plant sale and the Tri-State meeting, all of which were made possible by the group working together.

Deep appreciation is felt for the years of effort from Steve Whitesell in his many roles (Chapter Chair, Tri-State Coordinator, Newsletter Editor and more), Abbie Zabar as Program Chair extraordinaire, and Gelene Scarborough, our beloved Membership Secretary. All three have now left the MCNARGS Board. There are vacancies to fill.

Nancy Crumley is our enthusiastic incoming Membership Secretary. And we need your help! Available positions are: Program Chair, Tri-State Coordinator, Webmaster and Plant Sale Committee member. Please speak with me if you are interested. Even if you cannot take on an official role, your assistance would be appreciated. Our webpage on the

NARGS website, though functional, is not beautiful. Additional help could allow us to have a presence on Instagram, Twitter and keep our Facebook page updated.

There is a lot to look forward to in 2017.

Yasemin Konuralp has been confirmed to speak at the October Tri-State meeting. She operates a touring company in Turkey, and is the author of a field guide, *Wildflowers of Turkey, Volume I (Bulbous Plants)*. For information, see www.wildflowertours.com.

Ernest Cavallo, Bobbi Angell and other top-notch speakers at the convenient NYBG Midtown Education Center, our spring plant sale, garden tours, our newsletter, *The Urban Rock Gardener*... all are on the horizon in 2017. Group involvement is critical in these changing times.

BRENDAN KENNEY, CHAIR

MANHATTAN CHAPTER NARGS

Membership Form

Membership renewal is due in January.

- Individual** \$20 **Individual 3 years** \$50 **Student** \$15
 Gift membership \$15 (Current members may give a Gift Membership to a new member)

You may give cash or a check (*payable to MCNARGS*) to our Treasurer, Yukie Kurashina, at our next meeting.

Or, mail a check with this form to:

Yukie Kurashina 3217 Hull Ave., Apt 8D Bronx, NY 10467

PLEASE PRINT NEATLY

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please check all that apply:

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

We would like your participation in our activities. How can you help?

- Help increase our presence on Social Media Plant Sale Committee member
 Help plan October Tri-State Meeting Contribute articles to the newsletter

Other: _____

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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 alpines 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. Or write: Bobby J. Ward, Executive Secretary NARGS, P.O. Box 18604, Raleigh, NC 27619-8604, USA.

The NARGS *Quarterly* is now online and members have free access at www.nargs.org/rock-garden-quarterly.

NEW MEMBERS

MCNARGS welcomes new members:

Kaitilin Griffin

Jeanne Lapsker

Lynn Torgerson

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Monday, March 20

Speaker and subject to be announced

Monday, April 17

Speaker and subject to be announced

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 March/April issue: February 20, 2017

MANHATTAN CHAPTER OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

101 West 104th Street
New York, NY 10025

Happy New Year!

Have you renewed your dues?

FIRST CLASS MAIL



Please recycle this publication. Thank you!