



The Trillium

Piedmont Chapter
North American Rock Garden Society
Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, NC
www.facebook.com/piedmontchapterNARGS

NARGS AGM 2017, Pre-Meeting Trip: Old Haunts Revisited

Charlie Kidder

I signed up for the 2017 NARGS Annual General Meeting almost as soon as registration opened up. Why wouldn't I want to attend one of these meetings when it's held in your my backyard, no hotel or flights required? But only a few months later I began to question my decision. Why was I willing to pay good money to re-visit gardens and natural areas that I had visited many times in the past and would continue to visit in the future?

For some three dozen people the AGM began with a pre-meeting trip to the Coastal Plain, led by Dr. Larry Mellichamp, retired from UNC-Charlotte. Our first stop was Jones Lake State Park, located within the Bladen Lakes region of southeastern North Carolina. These lakes are water-filled Carolina Bays, the distinctive oval depressions found from Delaware south to Florida. These bays generally have a sandy rim, best developed on the southeastern end; here we found a xeric vegetation complex, with longleaf pines (*Pinus palustris*) and turkey oaks (*Quercus laevis*). Moving "downhill" toward the lake, a barely perceptible drop of only a few feet, conditions gradually became wetter and supported plants such as Titi (*Cyrilla racemiflora*). Some were impressive multi-stemmed shrubs, perhaps eighteen feet tall and nearly as wide.

Moving closer to the lake, Larry introduced us to three species of bay trees. (People differ as to whether bay trees were named because they grow near bays, or that the Carolina bays actually were named for the trees that grow around them.) The swamp bay (*Persea palustris*, a member of the laurel family, Lauraceae) has evergreen leaves with a fragrance similar to the bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*). Sweet bay (*Magnolia virginiana*) bears fragrant flowers, typical of its family. A member of the tea family (Theaceae), *Gordonia lasianthus* blooms with showy white flowers in late summer. Around the lake we also found other species indigenous to wetter areas of the Coastal Plain: pond cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*), two lyonias (*L. lucida* and *L. mariana*), clethra (*C. alnifolia*) and white cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*).

We moved on to Lake Waccamaw, largest among the Bladen lake group. Plants here were similar to that at Jones Lake, but a boardwalk trail allowed us to walk unfettered through the dense pocosin vegetation. (The various *fetter* bushes growing here are indeed aptly named!) Walking through this dense tangle of mostly evergreen trees, shrubs and vines would be nearly impossible without a ma-

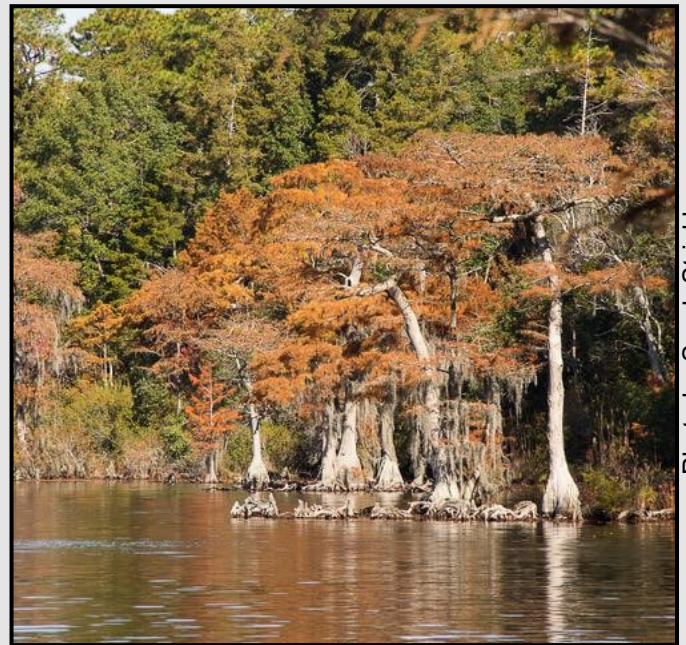


Photo by Sarah Strickler

Taxodium at Jones Lake State Park



chete. The boardwalk extended a few yards out into the lake, and one of our more adventurous travelers took advantage of her high boots and jumped into the water to make a plant ID. A true plant-nut. It was already dark when we arrived at Ocean Isle beach for the night. Dinner at Sharky's introduced many in the group to Calabash seafood, which I explained as essentially, "fried fish". Good-tasting, but not that good for you in repeated doses.

An early start the next morning gave us a chance for a sunrise walk on the chilly beach, as well as a glimpse of pelicans. Heading inland, about five miles north of Supply, NC we found the barely-marked parking lot for the Nature Conservancy's 17,000-acre preserve in Green Swamp. We were joined by Dr. John Taggart from UNC-Wilmington, providing an additional guide for the group; Tim Alderton also led a few of the group on a high-speed plant chase.



Photo by Nancy Doubrava

Preparing to Enter the Green Swamp

Larry Mellichamp in shadow on left, appearing to check his watch; John Taggart, in sun, hat in hand.

through supported a slightly different flora than our ultimate destination. Of most interest here were the cobalt-blue pine-barren gentians (*Gentiana autumnalis*), nearly hidden in the grassy understory.



Photo by Sarah Strickler

Pine-Barren Gentian

A short walk on a narrow boardwalk through a tall pocosin brought us to the Shoestring Savannah, known for its carnivorous plants. Shortly after we emerged from the pocosin, we encountered Venus Flytraps (*Dionaea muscipula*) close by the trail. Close, but easy to miss as you walk by. Farther on in the savannah, we also found four species of pitcher plants (*Sarracenia*). Burned periodically and dominated by longleaf pines, this place

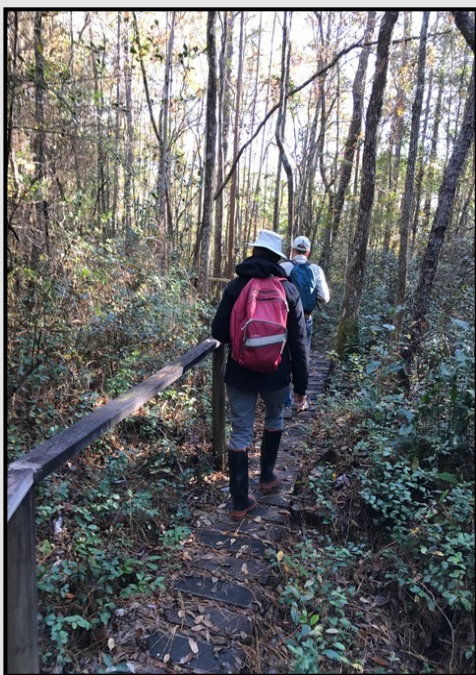


Photo by Nancy Doubrava

Crossing the Tall Pocosin into Shoestring Savannah



Photo by Sarah Strickler

Venus flytrap



would be magical even without the unique flora. Visit on a breezy day, and just enjoy the whisper of the wind in the pines.



Photo by Sarah Strickler

Sarracenia purpurea

leaf pines growing in nearly pure sand.



Photo by Sarah Strickler

Sarracenia rubra

Garden, Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Montrose and Juniper Level Botanical Gardens), as well as the opportunity to hear a variety of speakers and to participate in auctions and raffles.

In the afternoon we headed south from Wilmington to Carolina Beach State Park. Despite the name, the park is not directly on the beach; rather it fronts on the Cape Fear River. We followed a trail along the riverfront, noting a thin strand of *Spartina* marsh. Just back from the shore were scrubby sand live oaks (*Quercus geminata*) and yaupon hollies (*Ilex vomitoria*)—some almost glowing with their translucent berries. Moving further inland, we entered a scrubby woodland of turkey oaks (just starting to show their fall color) and long-



Photo by Sarah Strickler

Sarracenia flava

Our trip was capped off with a dinner at the rustic Holland's Shelter Creek Restaurant near Burgaw, ending a wonderful, whirlwind tour of North Carolina's southern Coastal Plain.

Many thanks to Larry Mellichamp, John Taggart and Tim Alderton for their efforts as guides.

In the interest of brevity I haven't recounted the many other facets of the AGM—our trips to local gardens (the JC Raulston Arboretum, North Carolina Botanic

Garden, Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Montrose and Juniper Level Botanical Gardens), as well as the opportunity to hear a variety of speakers and to participate in auctions and raffles. Back to my original question: why did I revisit all these places with NARGS? For one, it gave me the chance to learn from people much more knowledgeable than I, and to see things I had missed many times. Tim was able to spot pitcher plants hiding among the grass in Green Swamp that I had overlooked for years! Also, attending the AGM let me reconnect with plant enthusiasts I had met at past meetings, as well as to meet folks I look forward to see again. I took some pride that North Carolina has such great gardens and natural areas to share with folks from across North America—and the UK.



Photo by Sarah Strickler

Sarracenia flava

I encourage you to consider attending a NARGS Annual General Meeting in the future, even if it might be in your own backyard. Thanks to our AGM committee of Amelia Lane, Bobby Ward and David White for putting together such a successful event! ♡



The Flora of Australia by David White

My wife, Carolyn, and I enjoy visiting botanical gardens and seeing wildflowers in their native habitats. Our “bucket list” trip in 2016 was to Australia. When we first started planning the trip, a neighbor who grew up in Australia commented that it is a very large and diverse country, that most Americans visit only the east coast (Sydney, Melbourne, the Great Barrier Reef), that relatively few visit the country’s west coast and center and, therefore, they haven’t really seen Australia. I normally do our travel planning and, after some initial research, realized that because of the country’s size (roughly the same as the contiguous 48 states of the U.S.) we needed professional help.

However, we found that tour operators focus on the east coast and the “outback” of central Australia and do not visit the west coast. As a result, we ended up booking a two-week tour that included Sydney, Melbourne, and Cairns on the east coast, Adelaide and the Barossa wine region in South Australia, plus Alice Springs and Uluru in the Northern Territory, and then added a week of independent travel to Perth and Margaret River in Western Australia. After checking on the best time of year to see wildflowers in bloom, we decided to go during



Photo by David White

Western Australia Wildflowers

the last three weeks in September.



Photo by David White

Zingiber spectabile

The Flecker Garden has an outstanding collection of tropical plants from around the world (it is located 17° south of the equator, similar to Belize in the northern hemisphere). Our visit to Uluru was especially nice because greater than normal rainfall during the preceding May – August (their fall and winter) had resulted in an abundant bloom of spring wildflowers. The botanical highlight of the trip was the Western Australia Botanic Garden that focuses on the indigenous flora of Western Australia. To stimulate your interest, here are a few photos from these three areas. ☞

At each of the areas that we visited, we made time to visit local botanic gardens or native habitat areas. My presentation will include a quick overview of the unique flora of Australia and our three favorite locations: the Flecker Botanic Garden in Cairns, the native habitat near Uluru in Australia’s “red center” and the Western Australia Botanic Garden in Perth.



Photo by David White

Swainsona formosa



The Italian Dolomites Tour, June 28 – July 5, 2017 by Richard and Amelia Lane

This tour was sponsored by NARGS and led by Naturetrek. When Richard and I decided to take this trip, because we had not been to Italy, I wanted a “looking at plants everyday” trip, and it was well priced.

The Dolomites are a complex mix of geology and habitat, supporting a great range of plants amidst stunning scenery. We had beautiful weather, perfect for hiking and stopping to photograph every plant that our excellent guide, Jessica Turner, pointed out. We enjoyed the warm hospitality and food of the Gran Mugon, a small family owned and operated hotel, during our stay.

Our group of 16 was met at the Venice airport by our guides. Luca Boscain was our bird and butterfly expert. Our mini buses drove us to the Fassa Valley, where we were met by flowery meadows, whetting our plant appetites for the coming days.

The first day we explored the meadows and pine woods, hiking from our hotel. We began to see native orchids, Campanulas, Liliiums, Gentians, Vaccinium, and Clematis, and so many other plants that were totally new to us. Each one was more exciting and photographic than the previous! The second day we drove to the Pordoi Pass (7,346 ft) to explore. We saw Daphnes, Veronicas, Salix, Saxifraga, Potentilla, and more Orchids and Gentians. The views were stunning. If you were not interested in the alpine plants, the mountain views would keep you enthralled.

Each day we visited a different pass or valley, seeing some of the same plants, but always finding new jewels that had to be photographed!



Photo by Richard Lane



Photo by Richard Lane

We hiked from 4-7 miles each day, stopping for a picnic on some huge boulders or at a Refugio by a trail. We saw plenty of animals and our bird guide, Luca, was always pointing out a bird or butterfly that he did not want us to miss. Each night our guides would go over with us the plants, birds, and butterflies that we had seen that day. We had a check list that we could follow along so we would have a record of the jewels that we had

seen. It did not matter to me that these plants will not grow in NC. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn about another gardening region, and to see and touch these plants that live in such harsh conditions, are so delicate looking, yet are real survivors!

After we returned home, our guides sent us a detailed summary of the entire trip, the plants and their locations, and the birds and butterflies we had seen. We look forward to sharing our trip to the Dolomites with you at our January meeting. ☺



Photo by Richard Lane



Our Trip to Machu Picchu and the Galápagos by Trish and Kerry MacPherson

In late March and early April of 2017 we were on a tour of Peru -primarily Lima, the Cuzco area, and the Inca ruin of Machu Picchu, and Ecuador-Quito and the Galápagos Islands. Lima is a coastal, tropical city with a completely different flora, than the Cuzco/Machu Picchu area where elevations range from 9,000 to 12,000 feet. The highlights of the trip were obviously Machu Picchu and the Galápagos Islands.

Machu Picchu was built in the 1400s by the Incas as a settlement area along the Inca Trail. The flora is a cloud forest community at the ruin, but on the 2 hour train ride that descends in elevation we



Machu Picchu

Photo by Trish MacPherson



Flower Market in Cuzco

Photo by Trish MacPherson

saw mountain sides covered with bromeliads, agave, and other tropical plants, indicating the close proximity to the rain forest.

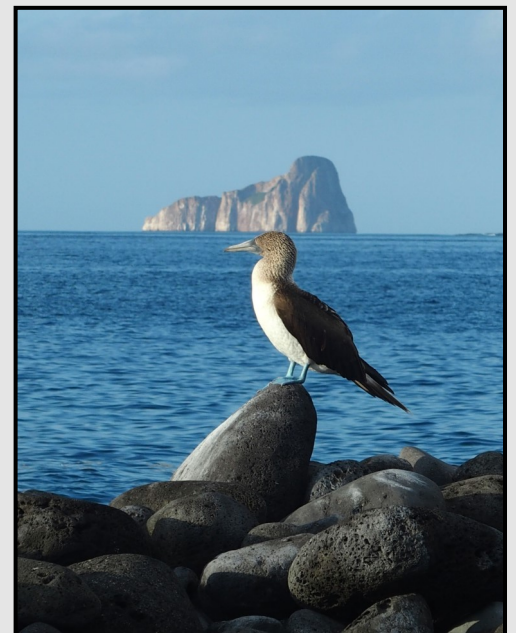
The Galápagos - the Islands of the Tortoises - are equatorial volcanic islands 600 miles from the mainland of Ecuador. We flew into the island of San Cristóbal, and within 30 minutes were on a tour ship that took us to five different islands during a five night cruise. Traveling at night allowed hiking and snorkeling twice a day. Each island had a very different flora and fauna. As birders, we were excited to see Darwin's finches, blue footed boobies, and magnificent frigate birds among others, and as aquatic biologists, the fishes seen snorkeling were amazing. Two memorable plants included tree Opuntia, and two kinds of Portulaca completely covering small South Plaza Island.

The photos we will present do not do justice to the exquisite stonemasonry and sheer size of the Inca ruins, or the unspoiled beauty and diversity of the Ecuadorian islands. ☺



Tree Opuntia

Photo by Trish MacPherson



Blue-footed Booby

Photo by Trish MacPherson



In Search of *Araucaria*

By Charlie Kidder

The monkey-puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*) has long been on my plant bucket list. In youth it looks like a not very convincing artificial Christmas tree made of surplus bottle brushes; with age it comes to resemble an umbrella torn apart in a gale. How can you not love it? Native to a small swath of the Andes in Chile and Argentina, I hoped to glimpse the monkey-puzzle in its native haunts on my trip to Patagonia in 2011.

Photo by Charlie Kidder



What Is his Man Doing?

Occupying the southern portion of South America, Patagonia extends from sea-level on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, to over 8,000 feet in the Andes. Climate ranges from desert, through semi-arid, to permanently wet and temperate, while volcanoes, jagged peaks, glaciers and fjords add drama to the landscape.



Photo by Charlie Kidder



Photo by Unknown Traveler

Much of the flora of Patagonia would be unfamiliar to us, although a few genera are native both there and in our part of the world—*Baccharis*, *Gaultheria* and *Berberis* to name a few.

Grasses, shrubs and cushion plants cover the windswept steppe; moving west toward the Andes, the climate quickly becomes wetter and trees such as the southern beech (*Nothofagus*) predominate.



Photo by Charlie Kidder



Photo by Charlie Kidder

I'm including a few teaser pictures of Patagonia here, hoping to entice you to see many more during the presentation on January 20. And the outcome of my search for the monkey-puzzle tree will be revealed!



Photo by Charlie Kidder

key-puzzle tree will be revealed! ☺



Photo by Nancy Doubrava

Award recipients at NARGS Annual Meeting, Durham, NC, November 18, 2017. Information on right.

Bobby J. Ward (Marvin Black Award);
 Tony Avent (Millstream Award);
 David White (Award of Merit);
 Tim Alderton (Award of Merit); and
 Richard Dufresne (Marcel Le Piniec Award).

Not pictured Tony Reznicek (Edgar T. Wherry Award); Nancy Goodwin (Millstream Award); and Don Selcer (Geoffrey Charlesworth Award). Awards presented by Panayoti Kelaidis and Betty Spar.)

Piedmont NARGS Spring 2018

February 10, 2018
Tim Alderton, Nancy Doubrava, Chris Glenn
 “Plantsman Tour of Wyoming”

March 17, 2018
Wesley Knapp
 “Extinct Plants of North America”
 N.C. Natural Heritage Program
 Asheville, NC

April 21, 2018
Marta McDowell
 “All the Presidents’ Gardens”
 Chatham, NJ 07928-1627

May 2018
Annual Picnic/Garden Visiting
 (TBA)



Photo by Bobby Ward

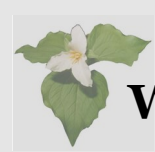
Nancy Goodwin (center) from Montrose, Hillsborough, NC, receiving the NARGS 2017 Millstream Award for outstanding garden, with Betty Spar (Arizona), NARGS president, and David White, Piedmont Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society.

ERRATA

Please note changes to be made in the Oct-Nov issue of the Trillium.

Captions should be switched:
Eranthis hyemalis and
Ranunculus aconitifolius.

Also, *Astragalus loanus* has no “a” at the end of it.



Welcoming New Chapter Members — interviews by Cyndy Cromwell

Hedy Hollyfield

Why did you join the NARGS Piedmont chapter? I enjoy the lectures and have over the years. I decided it was time to commit to the chapter.

What is a plant you love? What is a plant you hate? This is a hard question for me, because I what I love most of all is the right plant in the right location (something I find challenging to orchestrate.) I am particularly fond of natives. It is easier to name the plants I hate. The top of my list of plants that I hate is smilax. Among others are privet, and English ivy.

What is your preference for labeling in your own garden? I generally don't label individual plants, but keep a note book with the location. As I have more time to garden I may start labeling, it would be far easier than relying on my garden map.

If you had to choose, woody or herbaceous plants? That is a tough one, though I plant a lot more herbaceous plants than woody, so by that count alone, I would have to say herbaceous.

What do you like best about NARGS? The lectures are great, I'm looking forward to meeting more members.

Something people might be surprised to know about you or your garden. My garden started with a master plan, but then my partner and I joined forces and now it is far more random. He has a strong desire to get rid of grass and my planting can't keep up with his grass eradication program, so some of the plants are planted without a lot of fore thought - so things don't always knit together very well. ♪



Stephanie Lauck

Thank you for such a warm welcome! I have always enjoyed gardening, and am in love with the Raleigh area. I lived in Houston, TX for 25 years and was a master gardener. My favorite plants: anything that blooms, and have no luck with edibles. When my husband, Bob, retired my wish list was: topography and a change of seasons. North Carolina fills the bill and finding the JC Raulston Arboretum was a bonus. After gardening so many years in a zone 9, zone 7 is a bonanza, so many new plants to discover. We have lots of sun in our new home. The NARGS Piedmont chapter brings in amazing speakers, and the members are friendly and knowledgeable. Through the Arboretum, I have been able to travel and visit gardens in S. Africa, Italy and France. I can not wait to see where they plan to travel next.

I hope this is ok for the news letter, and by the way “What a newsletter!!” ♪





NARGS Piedmont Chapter Meeting

JC Raulston Arboretum

9:30 Gathering Time 10 am Program Begins

January 20, 2018

**Three Piedmont Members'
Presentations**

**Travels to Other Gardens
and Vistas**

Goodies to Share

As always, we invite you to bring foodies to share.



Jan J—Me

Feb Mi—P

March R—T

April W—Z

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Refreshments: Maurice Farrier

Message from the Chair

Amelia Lane

2017 was an exciting and busy year for the Piedmont chapter! At our January meeting we heard from our own members of their travels and gardens, keeping us rooted and expanding our horizons. April found us busy gathering plants for our first year participating in the JCRA's Raulston Blooms event with a huge plant sale. With lots of members contributing, we had a most successful sale. Our May picnic was held at Helen Yoest's Garden Haven; sharing food and visiting a super interesting garden! In the fall we began with interesting speakers, a Tony Avent led plant auction, and lots of preparations for hosting the AGM in November!

It was a great AGM thanks to all the planning and organization of the AGM committee and our NARGS chapter members! The pre tour was full and was expanded; the raffle and silent auction room was busy and profitable; the speakers challenged and informed us; the food drew compliments; and the attendees were awed by our gardens, nurseries, and the flora of NC!! Many thanks to all of our members who participated!! As a direct result of the success of the AGM your Board has decided to make several donations to gardens and NARGS for their generous help and support. We will share the AGM profit with NARGS as per the national policy, and donations of \$500 each will be made to Juniper Level Botanic Garden, the JCRA, and Montrose. We will also make an additional donation of \$1000 to NARGS that will be matched 100% by the Rocky Mountain Chapter. Sharing our financial success is one means of sharing our chapter's mission and promoting gardening.

And SIX of our members received NARGS awards. Bobby Ward received the Marvin Black Award for excelling at promoting membership in NARGS, Tim Alderton and David White received Awards of Merit for outstanding contributions to rock gardening, Tony Avent and Nancy Goodwin received Millstream Awards for creating superior gardens, and Richard Dufresne received the Marcel Le Piniec Award for extending and enriching plant material available to gardeners. What a proud chapter chair I am!! Congratulations to each of you!!

And now we head into 2018 – new members to welcome, more plants to try in the garden and share with friends, seeking new ways to promote our chapter, and appreciating this wonderful and generous group of gardeners that are Piedmont members!!

Happy 2018!

Amelia Lane, Chapter Chair 