



The Trillium

Piedmont Chapter
North American Rock Garden Society
Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, NC

A Few of My Favorite Things

Twenty-five years ago, I purchased 83 acres of a mix of farm fields and woods just outside of Chapel Hill. The advantages of the site were huge boulders in the wooded sections and a sizable stream. The disadvantages were sections of depleted and/or poorly drained soil. Since I was interested in growing magnolias, a particularly unpleasant surprise was that much of the place was in a frost pocket.

Once committed to the site, my first big lesson was that the land, rather than I, was in control of the schedule of tasks. The open fields very quickly started to revert to woodland, so regular mowing became a necessity. The American Indian saying, “we do not own the land; the land owns us”, took on real meaning for me. The land also dictated the next task. After getting bogged down in mud and finding that the distances were too great to routinely walk, a network of gravel roads through both the woods and the fields seemed a logical solution. My friend, Joe Sica, who isn’t interested in plants but who excels at road building and heavy equipment, largely executed this task. These roads enabled the major mode of getting from one place to another to be golf carts. It also influenced the sequence by which the property was developed. Most large places are developed from the house out with the radius of development increasing with time.



The Walled Garden under Construction

(Continued on page 2)

REMINDERS

ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Bring plants in clean pots with a label in each pot; we don't have time to do it that morning. Remember to have the labels complete, accurate and legible. Good plants of all sizes, shapes and seniority are needed.

RECEIVING AT 9AM

We will start setting up when the Totten Center opens at 9:00 am, and will be eagerly accepting plants at any time between then and the start of the sale.

For more information, contact me at 919-489-7892 (H) or by email (kirtley@ncrrbiz.com). Kirt Cox

SAVING SEEDS

We will be receiving seeds you have collected at the September and October meetings. These seeds will be mailed in a bundle to the seed exchange.

Clean the seed by removing it from capsules, discarding debris and chaff. If the seed is enclosed in a fleshy fruit, remove as much moist material as possible. Paper envelopes or glassine works well.

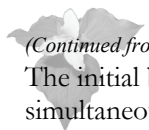
If you have very small seed, put them in folded wax paper or foil before placing them in the envelope.

Print in clear letters: the botanical name, collection site (if wild), color, and your name on each envelope. Be sure that the seed envelope does not leak.

If any seeds are unusually moist, particularly aroids and peonies, enclose them separately in plastic to prevent the moisture from ruining the rest of the seeds.

Happy collecting! Walter Pharr

Photo by Tom Krenitsky



(Continued from page 1)

The initial building of a network of roads enabled a more simultaneous development.

Faced with an expanse of 83 acres, my initial response was a serious design block. Where do I start and what goes where? It took about a year before I really got to know the place, although after 25 years I'm still learning new things about it.

Slowly, I hit my stride and began to make real progress. The turning point came by taking a design cue from nature. Down by the stream, there were massive boulders that served as focal points. It was easier to arrange the plants in these areas because everything was in relation to the dominant boulders. On the other hand in the fields, I was having trouble organizing the large, open spaces. There was a general lack of points of reference. So following nature's lead, I created focal points by building plinths at intervals and then placing statues on them. This greatly facilitated the design process for me. The first three plinths were built of mortared brick. But since I like to try different things until it looks right, more flexibility than these permanent structures provided was desirable. Subsequent plinths were therefore built of dry-stacked architectural blocks. The first statues that I purchased were relatively expensive bronzes. They have a subtle beauty, but weathered to a greenish-brown color that did not stand out from a distance. Next I tried much less expensive concrete statues, which even after acquiring a patina, carried better in the landscape. More recently, I built a walled garden as a focal point at the end of the longest vista.

In the more than two decades of trial and error with plantings, I lost a large variety of plants. No doubt my penchant for the unusual and the exotic enhanced my losses but it also enriched the list of my favorite plants. All of the plants on the list are both tough and to my eyes beautiful. Some are rare and some are common. They have withstood neglect, competition from weeds, and drought. Susceptibility to deer and rabbit browsing was also a major factor. For example, although daylilies and hostas are generally used, they are a priority with browsing animals and therefore did not make the list. Woody plants, like camellias, that grow above the browsing line with time are included because circular wire cages can easily protect them when they are young.

Of course, people played a major role in the composition of the list. I was extremely fortunate in this regard. When I first moved to North Carolina in 1970, my next-door neighbor was Dr. Totten. He taught me much about gardening in this climate. When JC Raulston joined the faculty at NC State University, we soon became fast friends united

by our common interest in woody ornamentals. The Parks family of Camellia Forest Nursery were also a major influence. There were many others that introduced me to favorite plants but I can't name them all or I'll have no space for the plants. Two, however, were particularly influential because we shared the common challenge of large gardens within a 15-mile radius – Nancy Goodwin and Dr. Charlie Keith. As many of you know, Nancy is an expert on bulbs and perennials and Charlie has collected an amazing array of woody ornamentals.

Many of the plants on the list are useful in small as well as large gardens in our area. I particularly recommend them to you if you have limited time and money for garden maintenance. There is a generous representation of evergreen plants and winter blooming plants so that our mild winter months can be enjoyed to the fullest.

If asked about the greatest headache of a large garden, I would say maintenance. If asked about the greatest benefit, I would say, never having to say 'no' to a new plant..

CONIFERS

Abies firma is the only fir that really thrives in our climate. It was a favorite of JC Raulston.

Araucaria augustifolia is from Brazil and Argentina. It adapts more easily here than does the monkey puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*). It is very slow but has a decidedly exotic look.

Calocedrus decurrens is a species native to the West coast that adapts well to the east coast. It has a columnar growth habit.

Cedrus deodara and *atlantica* need a lot of room but have a strong presence. There are dwarf or slow growing selections of both available. Some of the full sized selections featuring gold or blue needles are particularly good in the right situation. They are very long-lived trees, but not in wet places. With age, they spread out majestically. *Cedrus brevifolia* is smaller in all its parts and also thrives here. The biblical *Cedrus libani* tends to sulk in our climate.

Cupressus arizonica and *glabra* are very fast growing spires for dry places. They are reported to be relatively short lived (about 60 years). Some of the blue and yellow selections provide year round color.

Cupressocyparis leylandii 'Gold Ryder' is my favorite Leyland cypress for two reasons. It holds its yellow color in our climate and is slower growing than the common green

forms. Supposedly its ultimate height will not be as overwhelming as the green forms.

Juniperus formosana is a tall spire of fine needles that remains green all winter. Its cousin, *Juniperus rigida*, has attractive pendulous forms that turn brownish-purple in winter. There are two very nice cultivars of the southeast coastal native, *Juniperus silicicola*. 'Brodie' is a dark green and 'Glauca Nana' is a wonderful smaller, fine textured blue form. This species is the only juniper browsed by deer, so it has to be protected by a wire cage when young. The common native, *Juniperus virginiana*, is incredibly variable and there are many interesting forms that can be selected. Most of the commercially available forms were selected because they can be rooted rather than because of their superiority in the garden. I found a particularly graceful pendulous form and had it grafted. It turned out to be one of my better investments. The pendulous form from Woodlander's Nursery is interesting but lacks a strong leader.

Metasequoia glyptostroboides is useful in wet places. If it likes the spot, it can get very big, very fast and is deciduous. Some seedlings form a buttressed trunk that is very desirable. A few of the many at the National Arboretum in Washington DC and the one at Duke gardens are examples.

The spruces (Genus *Picea*) are generally better for cooler climates but there are a few that do well for us. *Picea orientalis* prospers but is exceedingly slow if you start with small plants. *Picea asperata* and *obovata* also thrive. Some strains of the species *pungens* (Puerto Rico) and abies (*pendula*) are heat tolerant enough to do well for us but as a group they sulk in our heat. I have failed miserably with those gorgeous pendulous species, *brewerana* and *smithiana*. Although it is ever present in the garden centers, especially around Christmas, *Picea glauca* 'conica' tends to persist but suffers noticeably in our hot, dry summers.

Pinus bungeana is slow growing at first but is an adaptable and beautiful Asiatic pine. It is famous for its peeling bark. *Pinus densiflora* is the Japanese red pine that can be pruned heavily to form 'landscape bonsai'. This pine is usually seen in classic Japanese gardens. They grow very well for us. There are two native pines that are particularly valuable in the large garden, *echinata* and *glabra*. The former is the short-leaved pine that is much more impressive than *Pinus virginiana* or *taeda* at maturity. *Pinus glabra* is a coastal native that has very good texture and architecture. Some object to its habit of winter yellowing but I like it. *Pinus koreana* is another handsome and adaptable Asiatic pine. *Pinus parviflora* is the

Japanese white pine that adapts to the piedmont much better than our native white pine, *Pinus strobus*. There are many beautiful cultivars of *Pinus parviflora* available.



The native swamp cypresses, *Taxodium distichum* and *ascendens*, have a lot of character. Some really interesting cultivars of *distichum* are available. *Ascendens* has a distinctive reptilian presence.

Taxus chinensis tolerates our heat much better than the Japanese and English yews (*Taxus cuspidata* and *baccata*) or their hybrids. Deer browse all the yews that I have grown.

Torreya grandis from China and *nucifera* from Japan are easy to grow in our area. *Nucifera* is slower and finer textured than *grandis*. David Parks discovered and propagates a lovely variegated form of *nucifera*.

Sequoia sempervirens, but not its relative *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, thrives for us if the right cultivar is chosen. I grow 'Swarthmore' and 'Emily Brown'. Others thrive at the Raulston Arboretum.

MAGNOLIAS

Of the older, deciduous hybrids that I have grown, *M. soulangiana* 'Lennei' stands out. I grow many of the newer August Kehr hybrids because they were deliberately selected in a frost pocket near Hendersonville, NC. To name a few: 'Sunspire', 'Sunburst', and 'Eskimo'. 'Daybreak' has blooms of a most distinctive salmon pink. Only a few of the Gresham hybrids perform well for me, because as a group they tend to bloom very early and are ruined by frost. However, 'Jon Jon' and 'Tina Durio' are usually good performers. The Brooklyn Botanical Garden hybrids 'Elizabeth' and 'Marilyn' are hard to beat.



Photo by Tom Krenitsky

Magnolia dianica of the subsection *Michelia*

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Of the *Magnolia grandiflora* cultivars, I like 'Brown Velvet' (same as D.D.Blanchard) and 'Dearing Street' (same as Phyllis Barrow). The undersides of their leaves are a rich brown/red color. However, neither is a particularly heavy bloomer.

Of the many *Magnolia virginiana* cultivars, the evergreen 'Satellite' is outstanding. It was selected and introduced by the National Arboretum from a batch of seedlings from Tennessee.

Magnolia macrophylla is my favorite of the deciduous big-leaved species. Its variety or subspecies, *ashei*, is more suitable for small gardens but has flowers that are not as elegantly shaped as its larger relative.

There are some very good Asian evergreen species for us that were formerly called *Michelias* and *manglietas* but are now known to be *magnolias*. *Magnolia* (*Michelia*) *dianica* is a reliable bloomer with a shrub-like habit. *Magnolia* (*Michelia*) *maudiae* is a very variable large tree. Its better forms are stunning; unfortunately they bloom mostly in winter and are often ruined by our fluctuating winter temperatures. *Magnolia* (*Manglieta*) *fordiana* is a large late blooming tree more closely related to *Magnolia grandiflora* than are those from the *Michelia* group.

BROADLEAFED EVERGREEN SHRUBS AND TREES OTHER THAN MAGNOLIAS

Camellia japonica is of course the classic but I have a preference for the species and their hybrids that have small but copious flowers. They are referred to as cluster-flowered forms. They have great charm in the winter garden. 'Crimson Candles' is an example. At the other extreme, I like some of the oversized but exquisitely formed blooms of some of Cliff Parks' *Camellia reticulata* hybrids. They need a protected site. All camellias need protection from browsing animals when young.



Photo by Tom Krenitsky

Magnolia maudiae var. *martini* of the subspecies *Michelia*

Daphniphyllum macropodum is a large, elegant evergreen shrub/small tree with leaves that look like an especially good rhododendron but alas it has insignificant flowers.

Illicium species are great shrubs for moist, shady places. *Illicium anisatum*, *henryi*, *floridanum*, and *mexicana* are probably the best of the lot. The leaves of some strains of *lanceolata* droop unattractively in winter. *Parviflora* spreads and lacks grace.

Lithocarpus henryi is an elegant oak relative. It has relatively large evergreen leaves and cream-colored flowers.

Mahonia bealei has naturalized in NC and its coarseness has made the genus unpopular. There are however some really pretty and useful low maintenance shrubs in this Genus. I like *Mahonia japonica* much more than *bealei*. The 'x media' hybrids are now generally available and make good winter blooming shrubs of great character. Many of these hybrids will tolerate full sun. The west coast species generally don't thrive here, but the hybrid of two west coast species, *Mahonia x wagneri* 'King's Ransom', does well. It really puts on a winter show with its purplish winter foliage setting off the yellow blooms. *Mahonia confusa* is an elegant small, shade loving species. Perhaps my overall favorite is *Mahonia nepaulensis* 'Grayswood Hybrid'. It has larger leaves than the other *Mahonias* that I grow and a more graceful habit. Unlike the x media hybrids, its foliage yellows in full sun.

Prunus lusitanica is a small leaved, neat looking evergreen. I have a small plant so perhaps with time I shall discover why it is not commonly planted in this area.

Quercus acuta is probably the best of the evergreen oaks for us. *Quercus virginiana* is very tough and will grow on difficult sites but is not nearly as beautiful as *Quercus acuta*. *Quercus glauca* and *myrsinifolia* are beautiful but the new growth is often hurt by late spring frosts. Charlie Keith has a good specimen of *Quercus salicifolia* in a somewhat protected spot but I have not yet grown it on my frosty land, so I can't judge it.

'Red Tip' photinia has been over-planted and has made the genus unpopular but there are some really good plants in this group for the spacious garden. I

particularly like serrulata (despite its smelly flowers) and davidsoniae.

Rhododendron hyperythrum from Taiwan and its hybrids are heat tolerant and lovely, but only available by mail order.



Photo by Tom Krenitsky

Mahonia nepaulensis 'Grayswood Hybrid'

Unfortunately, the bulk of the rhododendrons sold in local garden centers are better for the mountains. There are stands of native rhododendrons in Chapel Hill (Laurel Hill part of the NC botanical garden) but to my knowledge no one propagates and sells them.

Schima are beautiful evergreen shrubs/small trees with white flowers. Schima remotoserrata seems the best for us. However, this may be simply because David Parks (Camellia Forest Nursery) has a hardy clone and propagates it vegetatively. Schima superba (wallichii) and argentea are marginally hardy and seedlings have to be selected for hardiness.

Trachycarpus fortunei, the hardy Chinese palm, looks best planted in groups. It provides an unmistakably tropical look. Once established, it is completely hardy here. Plant out in spring so they can become well settled in before the next cold weather. It is said that young plants can be tender.

DECIDUOUS SHRUBS AND TREES

Acer griseum has spectacular peeling bark that is especially noticeable in the winter. It grows quite well for us once established. The bark of its relative Acer triflorum is not quite as showy but its fall color compensates.

Acer palmatum has a great many cultivars. Many are not suited to our climate. However, there are some selections that are heat and drought tolerant. They all need good drainage. My favorite is 'Tamukeyama' first mentioned in the Japanese literature in 1710. It has dissected, purplish-red leaves that hold their color well through our summers. For a

very different yellowish-orange look, 'Sango kaku' also does well for us.

Aesculus parviflora var. serotina 'Rogers' is a great improvement on an already awesome species. If you see this cultivar for sale, buy it, you won't be sorry. It produces white candles of bloom twice as large as the species on a large slowly spreading shrub.

Cercis species are almost all tough and heavily blooming plants for us, except for racemosa. I collected seeds from JC Raulston's Cercis gigantea when it was surrounded by a diversity of other species at the Arboretum. Each seedling turned out to be different, probably hybrids. They are all interesting and showy in bloom.

Edgeworthia chrysantha is a must-have shrub. The silvery flower buds are showy all winter. The yellow flowers open in spring. It is best grown in part shade. In my experience, this species is much larger, tougher and showier than Edgeworthia papyrifera.



Photo by Sylvia Stanat

Edgeworthia chrysantha

Prunus mume is one of the glories of the winter garden. In addition, some of them are very fragrant. However, they have some serious maintenance requirements. Firstly, they can be very susceptible to a fungal disease called black knot in our area. Plant a known resistant variety, but realize that complete resistance is rare. Some of my trees that were disease free for 20 years are now infected. The trees need annual pruning since they tend to sprout from the trunk and create a crisscross of branches. Some of my favorite selections are 'Bridal Veil', 'Nicholas', 'Luke', 'Josephine', and 'Big Joe'. Most of the cultivars spread out with time; so unless you're willing to prune them heavily, give them plenty of room.

Rhus typhina is a spreading native sumac. Fairly recently, an attractive yellowish-pink cut-leaf form was

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introduced under the name of 'Tiger Eyes'. It is very pretty and tough once established but should be planted in a spot where it can easily be controlled if it decides to spread.

Roses, especially the hybrid teas, can be very high maintenance plants, but some forms are low maintenance. I'm particularly fond of China roses. Their major requirement is protection from browsing deer with a 3 ft. high circular wire cage. I never spray them. They bloom heavily in spring earlier than the hybrid teas and floribundas. Bloom is sporadic during the summer and then they bloom profusely before killing frosts if it is not too dry. My favorites are the red 'Louis Phillipe' and the pink and red 'Archduke Ferdinand'. They root readily from cuttings in early November.

Viburnums are a generally tough group of plants and can be wonderful in the right setting. *Viburnum macrocephalum* sterile has just the right chartreuse buds to set off *Cercis* in bloom. Later it puts on its own white display. It grows to about the same size as most *Cercis*. The hybrid viburnum 'Cayuga' has a great fragrance that carries well on the air. You don't have to put your nose into this one, just drive by with the windows down.

VINES, BULBS AND PERENNIALS

Aster caroliniana is a late blooming blue aster that distinguishes itself by being a large vine. As the fall garden is fading in late October and early November, it puts on a remarkable show.

Crinum lilies are well known for persisting in old abandoned gardens. They are dramatic in bloom but I also like their sword-like foliage. Animals do not browse them.

Euphorbias are a group of mostly evergreen perennials that have a presence year round in the garden. They have good architecture, interesting flowers, and in many cases dramatic foliage. Individual plants are not long-lived but they seed around. The two species that are thriving for me are *characius* and *lathyris*.

Eryngiums are a diverse genus of very interesting plants. They send up interesting flower stalks from an evergreen base. The dried seed stalks often persist well into the winter. They have excellent architecture and a ghostly quality. The flowers and seed heads are silvery. The species *yuccifolia* has naturalized for me in very poor soil.

Galanthus or snow drops were a genus that I used to think was not particularly suited to our climate. Nancy

Goodwin of Montrose demonstrated that they are great plants for us. In winter, the woodland garden at Montrose is a site of rare beauty. Drifts of snowdrops and carefully selected hellebores are punctuated by masses of *Rhodeas*. Nancy grows many species of *Galanthus* but the one I am particularly fond of is the fall blooming *elwesii* var. *monostictus*. She divides established clumps when they are in bloom.

Helleborus x hybridus have become a very popular group of plants in the last two decades. They are a major feature in the winter garden principally because their blooms are showy for a very long time. Double flowered forms are becoming more widely available. Further, many of the single flowered varieties seed heavily and naturalize in woodland gardens. Where they are particularly happy, they have formed ground covers under deciduous trees for me. These areas are very beautiful in the winter. The pure species have a subtle charm all there own. *Helleborus foetidus* is particularly useful in the winter garden with its greenish-yellow flowers and overall dominant architecture.

Kniphofia 'Lola' is an oversized "red-hot poker" that is indestructible and appropriately provides its fireworks around the 4th of July. Since it can be seen for a long distance, it is especially effective at the end of a vista.

Lonicera sempervirens 'Cedar Lane' blooms almost con-



Photo by Sylvia Stanat

Kniphofia 'Lola' over the lake

tinuously. Even in winter, a few buds open in warm spells. If you like hot colors, this is the vine for you with its orange and red flowers.

Monardas are tough plants for the border. They do spread and need controlling. Some are very susceptible to mildew; plant the resistant varieties. My favorite is the very red 'Jacob Kline'.

APOLOGY

The editors apologize to Chairman Bobby Ward for omitting, in the Summer Issue of *The Trillium*, acknowledgment of his lovely photos of the Appalachian Mountain Refuge taken at the Annual Meeting in Caanan Valley Resort. It was an unintentional error and is greatly regretted.

Narcissus are especially important for the large garden since they look great in large drifts and can be naturalized. I plant them in grassed areas that are mowed after the foliage has ripened. It's hard to beat the local yellow 'lent lily' (*N. pseudonarcissus*) for this use. Find a friend with an old garden. It multiplies rapidly after an old clump is divided. I've grown many different commercially available cultivars. Not all persist, but a particularly lovely one 'Hawera' persisted in a dry woodland area but not in the grass.

Nymphaea (water lilies) are super. If you have a pond, plant a hardy one like x Marliacea and sit back and enjoy them. In my ponds, they are completely self-sufficient.

Yucca is a genus that I would not want to try to do without. These tough plants can be very useful in containers and borders for their dramatic flowers and evergreen foliage. The variegated types are especially effective in winter. The work of Tony Avent has expanded our choices. I particularly like the larger growing species, *treculeana* and *schottii*. They really create a dramatic accent when mature.

My large, hard to maintain garden would not amount to much without the plants on this list. I look forward to discussing them with you at the next meeting.

✍ Tom Krenitsky



Walled Garden in Summer, 2007

CLIP AND SAVE

Piedmont Chapter Programs 2007/2008

After September, 2007

October 13, 2007

9:30 a.m.

Hypertufa Trough-making Workshop (Raleigh)

Taught by Amelia Lane & Beth Jimenez

Registration & fee (\$40) required (contact B.Wilder)

Limited to eight persons. All materials supplied.

October 20, 2007

2:00 p.m. **NOTE SPECIAL MEETING TIME.**

Stefan Bloodworth, Curator/Horticulturist,

Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Durham, N.C.

"Fall Interest in the Native Garden"

November 17, 2007

Ellen Hornig

Seneca Hill Perennials, Oswego, N.Y.

"Notes from a Northern Garden"

January 19, 2008

Tony Avent

Plant Delights Nursery, Raleigh, N.C.

"Mow No Mo': The Wonderful World of Ornamental Grasses"

February 16, 2008

Todd Lasseigne

Paul J. Ciener Botanical Garden, Kernersville NC

"Japanese Plantsmanship and Nurseries"

March 22, 2008

(note it's fourth Saturday)

Peter Korn

Nurseryman and Extreme Gardener

NARGS traveling speaker, Eskilsby, Sweden

Title to be announced

April 19, 2008

Tom Stuart

Gardener Croton Falls, N.Y.

"Rock Garden Ferns"

Spring Picnic

Charlotte-area gardens by bus.

Details to be announced.



Piedmont Chapter Meeting

September 15, 2007

10 a.m.

Totten Center, NC Botanical Gardens

Tom Krenitsky

Chapel Hill, NC

**“A Few of
My Favorite Plants”**

**FOLLOWED BY THE ANNUAL
PLANT SALE**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bobby Ward, Chair

biblio@nc.rr.com

919-781-3291

930 Wimpleton Dr, Raleigh 27609

Bobby Wilder, Treasurer

wilder@nc.rr.com

919-755-0480

2317 Elmsford Way, Raleigh 27608

Marian Stephenson, Past Chair

marian42836@yahoo.com

919-918-3580

750 Weaver Dairy Rd, #205, CHill 27514

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE:

Kirt Cox kirtley@ncrrbiz.com

919-489-7892

2539 Sevier St, Durham 27705

Dave Duch dduch@nc.rr.com

919-467-0653

1422 Lake Pine Dr., Cary 27511

Tom Harville tomhar@bellsouth.net

919-851-5369

104 Birklands Dr., Cary 27511

Todd Lasseigne taxodium@mindspring.com

336-337-6919

523 S Bunker Hill Rd, Colfax, NC 27235

Marlyn Miller marlynmiller@earthlink.net

919-467-3554

1107 Imperial Rd, Cary, NC 27511

David White dmwhite_nc@yahoo.com

484-7885

3 Ontario Court, Durham, NC 27713

TRILLIUM EDITORS:

Dave Duch and Marian Stephenson

OTHER SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS:

Sept. Plant Sale Manager: Kirtley Cox

Refreshments: Gwen and Maurice Farrier

Bring Snacks to Share

We appreciate having members bring snacks to share. Our faithful friends Maurice and Gwen Farrier will again set up the beverage station. Please contribute something tasty during the month in which your last name begins with the letters to the right.

September A—E	February R—U
October F—J	March V—Z
November L—M	April — anyone willing
January N—Q	May—Picnic

The Trillium, Newsletter of the Piedmont Chapter
The North American Rock Garden Society
1422 Lake Pine Drive, Cary, NC 27511

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Piedmont Chapter, NARGS

THIS IS YOUR LAST REMINDER TO RENEW YOUR CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP.

**CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL FOR EXPIRATION YEAR.
JULY 2007 EQUALS MEMBERSHIP EXPIRED.**

Please mail it in before the September meeting to reduce pressure at the check-in process. The Treasurer requests that you renew by September 8.

Circle one:

1. Single Membership \$15 annually 2. Household Membership \$20 annually

You can pay dues for multiple years. Check below the number of years paid.

One year _____ Two years _____ Three years _____ More _____

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