

The Urban Rock Gardener



Volume 31, Issue 5

November/December 2018

MY TWO PAWPAWS AND THEIR LONG BACK STORY

Lola Horwitz



The sad removal of a grand old cherry tree led me to choose two beautiful, productive and moderately fast-growing replacements.

SNOW COVER, WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Michael Riley



Highbush cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*)

Weather people talk about where snow falls, how much accumulates in a given area, and how it impacts our morning commute ... but how does it affect our plants?

NOVEMBER MEETING

Monday, November 19 at 6 p.m.
NYBG Midtown Education Center
Room A

OUR THIRD MCNARGS PECHAKUCHA NIGHT

PechaKucha (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 what promises to be a fun and informative evening.

Photos by Lola Horwitz, Brendan Kenney, Gail Robinson, Abbie Zabar

CHANTICLEER: AN AMERICAN PLEASURE GARDEN

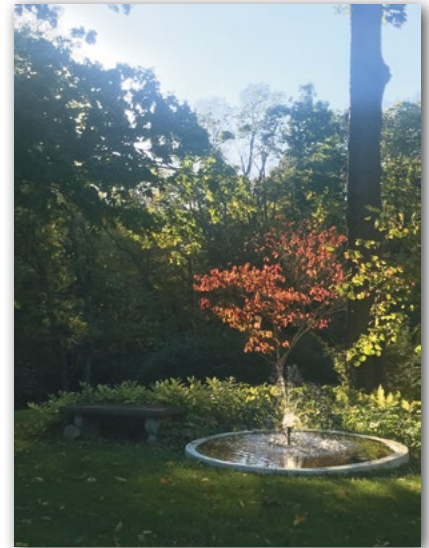
John Tweddle



Chanticleer Garden, near Philadelphia, was transformed from a private estate to a public garden, allowing everyone to experience this exuberant and extravagant landscape.

LESSONS FROM A HOOSIER LANDSCAPE

Brendan Kenney

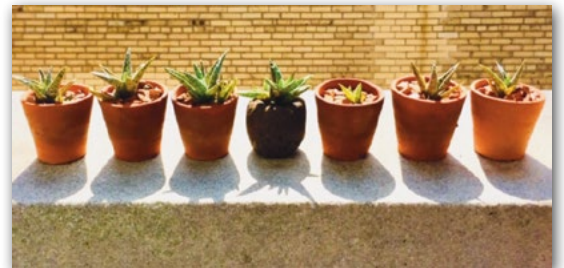


The recent loss of five old *Fraxinus americana* due to emerald ash borer has added more sunlight to part of the garden

Sixty years of intermittent experience in my mother's garden, which overlooks a glacial river valley in the aptly-named Clay Township.

EDGE OF A LEDGE GARDENING

Abbie Zabar



Seventeen years ago I downsized. Parts of my tiny garden now grow on a parapet wall that circumnavigates an equally tiny apartment. Here's to an edgy style of high alpine gardening.

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.



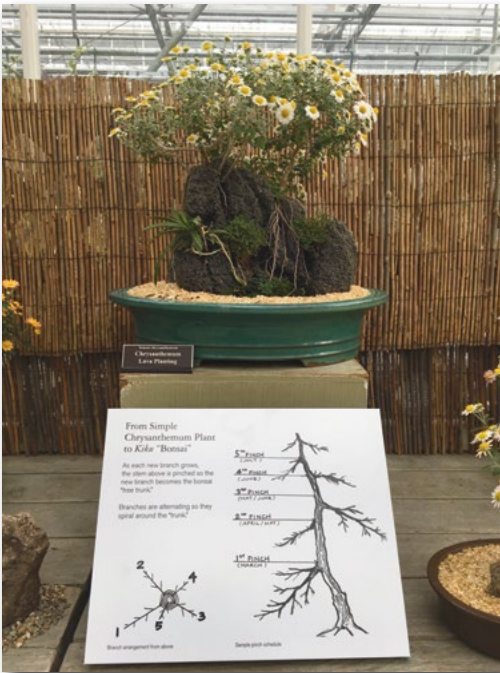
DECEMBER MEETING

Monday, December 17 at 6 p.m.
 NYBG Midtown Education Center, Room A

KIKU BONSAI The Art and Techniques of Growing Chrysanthemum Bonsai

Speakers:
**Yukie Kurashina, Dr. Jeanne Lapsker
 and Dr. Eugene Sekulow**

Small-flowered *kiku*, chrysanthemums, are trained to resemble bonsai – miniature trees grown in containers – a traditional Japanese practice. While true bonsai may take decades to cultivate to their ideal shape, these fast-growing herbaceous perennials are grown from cuttings over the course of eight months. The presentation will describe traditional methods for cultivating these tiny “trees” which mimic a variety of classical styles, including forest style, cascade, and root-over-rock.



Photos by Yukie Kurashina



YUKIE KURASHINA is a MCNARGS member and a gardener at NYBG. She was sent by NYBG to Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden in Tokyo, where she spent seventeen months learning how to grow, train and display chrysanthemums. She applied these skills and techniques to the NYBG Kiku exhibitions from 2007 through 2009.

DR. JEANNE LAPSKER, M.D., is a MCNARGS member and a retired cardiologist. She has been a frequent NYBG volunteer in both the Native Plant and Azalea gardens. She also works with NYBG staff to propagate plants for the Rock Garden and prepare the annual Kiku exhibit. She has a Horticulture Certificate in Sustainable Garden Design and is an Adult Education instructor at NYBG.

DR. EUGENE (GENE) SEKULOW, PH.D., studied tree bonsai with Yuji Yoshimura, one of the world’s leading bonsai masters, and has been growing tree bonsai for 35 years. He has been a volunteer for the NYBG Kiku exhibit.



Lewisia tweedyi

JANUARY MEETING

Monday, January 7 at 6 p.m.
 NYBG Midtown Education Center, Room A

TROUGHS: GARDENING IN THE SMALLEST LANDSCAPE

Speaker:

Lori Chips

Alpine Manager, Oliver Nurseries



Saxifraga grisebachii

It is not often that a writer on a particular subject gets to speak to a roomful of people who are highly informed on exactly that subject. Although my first-ever talk to a NARGS chapter was grounds for much trepidation, I have found over the years that a knowledgeable audience is indeed the best audience of all. I can bring out the big guns that would frighten or befuddle beginners, just for starters.

In that spirit, I plan to focus this lecture on the finer, more advanced aspects of the Art and Science of Gardening in Troughs. For instance: building trough shapes that have more than one level. The spiny issue of tinting and texturing hypertufa. What about handling extra planting holes in the walls? Can a bunch of

rocks become an “anchor” or focal point? (Yes! But be bold, use bigger stones and more of them than you think you dare.) There is the relatively new wrinkle of drilling genuine tufa rock to plant in, or, even newer: sandwiching “slices” of tufa, choice plants, and air-floated clay to make crevices in troughs. What about this myth of succulents being “easy?” How do we maintain a healthy colony? And, since so many of this chapter’s members have scoured the sources for a wide range of trough subjects, I will offer my version of “The Miffy List.” There will ALWAYS be one.

Then there is the biggest question of all: Why do we all adore the sweet torture of considering the most beautiful and difficult plants, from the highest, most inaccessible places?



Illustrations by Lori Chips. Photos by Jeff McNamara, from *Hypertufa Containers: Creating and Planting an Alpine Trough Garden*



LORI CHIPS has been committed to the exploration of alpine plants since her student days at the New York Botanical Garden. After graduating, she took a job as the propagator for NYBG’s Rock and Native Plant gardens. She has been Alpine Manager at Oliver Nurseries for 21 years, expanding the rock garden collection and pushing the boundaries in the art and science of trough making and planting. Trough gardening holds a special place in her heart.

She has taught classes at NYBG, lectured to the North American Rock Garden Society and written many articles for NARGS as well as for Oliver’s over the years. As a botanical illustrator, her artwork has appeared on the covers of the NARGS *Quarterly*. She is the recipient of the Carleton R. Worth Award for horticultural writing and has served as a judge at the Philadelphia Flower Show as well as at smaller venues.

Lori lives and gardens with her husband Joe, without whom there would be less rock in the rock garden, and who is her unflinching partner – traveling to climb mountains, explore other gardens, and meet fellow rock gardeners.

In July 2018, Timber Press published Lori’s new book, *Hypertufa Containers: Creating and Planting an Alpine Trough Garden*.

ALPINES OF CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIA ARE FOCUS OF NARGS TRI-STATE MEETING

On Saturday, October 13, members of several NARGS chapters in the tri-state region met at the New York Botanical Garden for our annual gathering. We swapped news, chatted about gardening, brought home-grown plants and books to sell, auction and raffle, and of course, bought plants by the dozen. Some were even treated to a tour of the NYBG Rock Garden with its curator, Michael Hagen. And, in addition to all this, the plant and book sales raised a bit more than \$180 for our chapter.

The main event was two talks by Prague native Vojtěch Holubec, who spoke of his explorations for alpine plants in the Tian Shan mountain range of Central Asia and in provinces of Southwestern China. Inspired by his thrilling discoveries and beautiful photographs, attendees eagerly bought copies of his new book, *The Tian Shan and Its Flowers*.



Vojtěch and his book



Joe Berman and Lori Chips with her new book, at the Oliver Nurseries table



In the lecture hall



No one can pitch a plant like John Rommel



Don Dembowski waits while John Rommel ponders

Photos by Yukie Kurashina, except where noted



Bill Perron setting up



Brisk sales at the MCNARGS table



The auction table attracting keen interest



Vojtěch autographs his book for Judi Dumont

Photo by Francisco Correa



Brendan Kenney, Elisabeth Zander, Michael Hagen and Vojtěch in the NYBG Rock Garden

A VISIT TO WAVE HILL

A first encounter with Wave Hill was a highlight of Vojtěch Holubec's New York visit. His gracious host, Michael Riley, and Brendan Kenney also thoroughly enjoyed the well-spent hours in the Bronx.

Photos by Brendan Kenney



A warm welcome to Vojtěch from Louis Bauer, Director of Horticulture



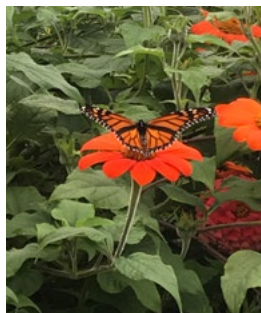
Passiflora caerulea



Vojtěch identified several plants that were missing labels and clarified that the draba in the center has no name



Gelene Scarborough gave an intimate tour of the Conservatory



Tithonia rotundifolia 'Torch' with migrating Monarch butterfly



Susannah Strazera had a lively discussion with Vojtěch about the plants in the Alpine House and its treasure trove of troughs

VERA MYJER (1926–2017)

MCNARGS is saddened to report the passing of longtime member Vera Ann Pauerova-Myjer of Woodside, NY, on September 8, 2017 at the age of 91. She was the daughter of the late William Pauer and Anna Mala, born on January 18, 1926 in Vienna, Austria. Vera is survived by her children, Una, Andy, Ivan and D'Arcy Myjer.

VERA MYJER CULTIVATED GARDENS with her late husband, Bill, in Woodside, Queens and Callicoon in Sullivan County, on the western edge of the Catskills, where she spent summers. Vera was a generous donor to our plant sales and chapter activities and I have large patches of various sedum species from her gardens growing vigorously between stones in walls in my garden. We used to ride the subway together when I lived in Sunnyside, returning home from meetings at the old Horticultural Society location on 58th Street. When Vojtěch Holubec, who spoke at the most recent Tri-State meeting, first visited the chapter, Vera and Bill were his hosts and I was fortunate to share dinner with them in their home. Vojtěch was able to relax and speak Czech with Vera during his exhausting tour schedule. He remembered her fondly during his most recent visit.

STEVE WHITESELL

A DEDICATED ART LOVER, Vera spent many happy hours at the Museum of Modern Art and was always up on the best art

exhibitions in New York City. Her interest in plants and art and her sunny disposition always made for good conversation. Lola Horwitz and I fondly recall her efforts to coach us in Czech to prepare for travel. Her love of Prague was evident in her recommendations. She is gone, but lives on in our memories. Deepest sympathy for her children.

BRENDAN KENNEY

VERA WAS A LONG-STANDING MEMBER of the Manhattan Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society and we will miss her cheery smile and her inspiration to our passion for rock gardening. Our thoughts are with her family.

MICHAEL RILEY

VERA HAD A GREAT INTEREST IN ROCK GARDENING even though conditions in her Queens garden prevented her from having what we then believed was necessary for a true rock garden: lots of sun. When troughs came into vogue, she was among the first to make her own, and offered them for purchase at some of our plant sales. I still have one.

I wish we had persuaded her to give a talk about her yearly trips back to Prague and the gardens she loved over there. She will be missed.

LOLA HORWITZ

ANOTHER HOOSIER IN MANHATTAN

by Brendan Kenney, Chair



*And the blue gentian flower, that, in the breeze,
Nods lonely, of her beauteous race the last...
Yet one rich smile, and we will try to bear
The piercing winter frost, and winds, and darkened air.*

From "November," William Cullen Bryant

POETICALLY SITUATED BETWEEN BRYANT AND LONGFELLOW AVENUES in the Bronx lies Rock Garden Park. As the term "rock garden" is generally poorly understood and misapplied, it is a shock to encounter a large waterfall and beautiful rock outcroppings with excellent drainage in the South Bronx adjacent to Charlotte

Gardens, the famous housing project from the 1980's. Twenty years after the park won a New York Art Commission Design Award, the multi-level landscape continues to delight the visitor, though the weeds would be better replaced with alpiners in the mind's eye. The current reconstruction of the nearby Sheridan Expressway into a boulevard will soon offer easy access to Starlight Park and the Bronx River. For rock gardeners who like to dream, it is a good landscape to visit.

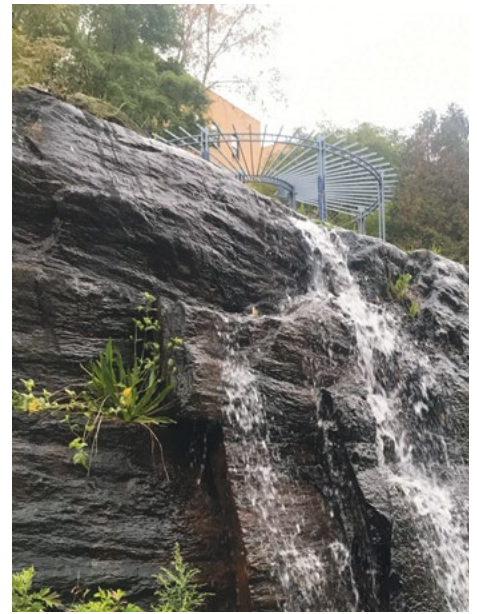
TRANSFORMING THE HOOSIER LANDSCAPE LATELY, landscape architect David Rubin of DAVID RUBIN Land Collective, based in Philadelphia, recently described his firm's many innovative projects in a lecture at Scandinavia House in Manhattan.

The Commonground at Eskenazi Hospital, a 1.5-acre plaza, provides opportunities for the Indianapolis community to congregate, and has become a successful space for community events. The project includes contemplative areas, a farmers' market and local-fare café, and the Sky Farm rooftop garden, which annually produces 2,000 pounds of food for patients of the hospital. Another privately owned but publicly accessible site is Cummins Distribution Headquarters in downtown Indianapolis. The park/plaza design allows people to gather in a variety of environments, including a small amphitheater, a harvest table, and spaces for thoughtful meditation throughout. The horticulture is regionally appropriate and maintainable. With commissions from Fort Wayne in the north to Columbus in the south, DAVID RUBIN Land Collective recently opened an Indianapolis studio to facilitate current and future projects, including enhancing and protecting the banks of a 58-mile stretch of the White River.

THE NEED TO PROTECT OUR LOCAL LANDSCAPE was jarringly brought to our attention in October with the sudden New York State quarantine of plants from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Virginia due to the spotted lanternfly, *Lycorma delicatula*. Last summer the Asian longhorned tick, *Haemaphysalis longicornis*, was found to be present on Staten Island. New York City's current control efforts include disinfecting mice, surveillance in city parks and doubling the number of surveillance sites on Staten Island from fourteen to twenty-eight.

Enhancing and protecting our landscapes is critical to our health and well-being. In a rapidly changing world it is important to perceive and react to new conditions. Relish the past but delight in the future.

Brendan Kenney



Rock Garden Park

Photos by Brendan Kenney



Two views of the adult spotted lanternfly



Commonground Plaza



Sky Farm rooftop garden



Cummins Distribution Headquarters

Shirley Shorter sorted seeds... Surely you can see the seeds that Shirley Shorter sorted!

As I write this, Halloween is almost upon us, which means that Thanksgiving is around the corner. To me, that means seeds will be arriving on my doorstep for processing soon after that holiday.

Please e-mail me at llhorwitz@gmail.com if you can join me at 446 6th Street in Park Slope, Brooklyn on one or more evenings, from 7 to 9 p.m. We have scheduled four dates: Thursday, November 29; Wednesday, December 5; Thursday, December 13 and Tuesday, December 18.

For those who have never processed seeds, fear not: there are always experienced sorters who can help you through the first couple of packets, at which point you'll "know the ropes." Let us hope that all our assigned seeds are peonies, not primroses!

Don't want to make the trek to Brooklyn? We will also have a group working in Manhattan at the Merchant's House Museum, located at 29 East 4th Street. The dates are Monday, December 3 and Monday, December 10, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Food will be served! (Rugelach and potato pancakes on the 3rd and various seasonal snacks on the 10th.) When you arrive, text or call John Rommel at 646-334-3162 and enter under the stoop. Do not ring the bell. If possible, please let him know ahead of time if you plan to attend.

I hope to have new members getting the thrill of filling forty glassine envelopes with little bouncy seeds. What an antidote to falling temperatures and darker days!

LOLA HORWITZ



2019 MCNARGS MEMBERSHIP— TIME TO RENEW!

Attention MCNARGS members! We value your participation and hope you are planning to renew your membership for 2019. Please be sure to make your 2019 dues payment by December 31, 2018.

If you have a multi-year membership and aren't sure of your status, feel free to contact Nancy Crumley (Membership Secretary) at 718.788.3306 or nancycrumley@gmail.com. All others, please take a moment now to write and mail your check.

Please see the form below for more information.

MANHATTAN CHAPTER NARGS

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Date: _____

Complete this form and give it with your payment (cash or check payable to MCNARGS) to Nancy Crumley (Membership Secretary) at the November or December chapter meeting.

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

324 Seventh Avenue #4R
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Check one:

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

PLEASE PRINT NEATLY:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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: _____

WHY DON'T YOU?

by Steve Whitesell



Continue dividing desirable perennials until soil temperatures fall below 50° or so. That epimedium clump will yield a dozen or so small plants and fill in bare areas under shrubs. If you run out of room, save plants for our plant sale or give them to friends.

Pulverize leaves with a lawnmower or shredder and return them to garden beds as mulch. The improvement to soil texture as they decay will be apparent by next season. Leaves are too

precious a commodity to discard with the trash.

Order remaindered bulbs at steep discounts when they go on sale in November. The selection won't be as good as earlier, but it's a good way to bulk up quantities of minor bulbs or replenish older tulip plantings. Check bulb dealer websites for sale starting dates.

When cutting back perennials, make an effort to pull perennial weeds so you'll be that far ahead come spring. Weeds like glechoma and aegopodium are almost ineradicable, but now is a good time to get them under better control.



MCNARGS WELCOMES OUR NEW MEMBER

Rick Plate



ROOTED IN DIVERSITY

NARGS SPRING STUDY WEEKEND
MAY 3 – 5, 2019

Hosted by the Delaware Valley Chapter

Sheraton Great Valley Hotel in Frazer, PA

Pre-Conference trip to Shenk's Ferry and
New Jersey Pine Barrens, May 2–3

For details and registration, see the
Fall 2018 NARGS *Rock Garden Quarterly*
or online: www.dvcnargs.org/studyweekend.html

Deadline for registration is March 1, 2019

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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 January/February issue: January 4

MANHATTAN CHAPTER OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

5½ Jane Street #4R
New York, NY 10014



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MANHATTAN CHAPTER OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

Monday, December 17 at 6:00 p.m.

NYBG Midtown Education Center, Room A

(preceding Kiku Bonsai presentation)

MCNARGS members will elect the Board of Directors. We would like to have an additional two people on the board. Please contact us if you are interested, or want to nominate someone who would like to serve.

Current board members up for election are:
Nancy Crumley, Judi Dumont, Lola Horwitz,
Brendan Kenney, Yukie Kurashina and Michael Riley

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 alpine 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. 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.

NARGS TOUR

BOTANIZING GREECE

October 28–November 8, 2019

This tour will focus on the fall-blooming bulbs of the Peloponnese and includes botanizing in northern Greece and the Athens area

Led by Eleftherios Dariotis (Liberto Dario)

For details and registration: www.nargs.com

FIRST CLASS MAIL



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