

Alpine Line

NEWSLETTER

ALLEGHENY CHAPTER NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

1ST
QUARTER 2024



Phlox tuberosa habitus

Message from the Chair

Message from the Chair-
Nancy Knauss speaks to the membership
on plans and happenings.

Rock Garden Update

The National Aviary Rock Garden Plantings
and growth through the seasons

2024 Plant Show and Sale

Plant Propagation update
Photo Contest Comeback

Projects, Events and Plans

Focus on Rock Garden Plants, Review of Member Library Books,
Articles, Meeting Events and monthly meeting dates, times and
locations.
Awards and *Tell Us About It*

What else would you like to see in your newsletter?

Allegheny Chapter Library Book Review

Ever wanted to learn more about rock garden plants?

As a member you are sitting on a treasure trove of information hidden away between book covers in the member's library. How-to's on rock gardening, encyclopedias of special hard-to-find plants good rock gardeners yearn to add to their collections and books aching to spill their contents into your next new experience. Such opportunities can fill a quiet winter season of growing knowledge.

Contact Patty McGuire for loan outs.

To AC Members & friends who have rock garden/plant books they want to tell us about, share a picture and review.

[A]n exciting year
for the Allegheny
Chapter with many
opportunities to get
involved...!



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Happy New Year! 2024 is an exciting year for the Allegheny Chapter with many opportunities to get involved and have fun! This time of year, when garden work is minimal, is a fitting time to plan for the future and the club has some dynamic plans in the works including our newly designed newsletter. A special thanks to Marie Tkacik for designing this amazing template for the chapter!

The annual Plant Sale and Show will again be held at Soergel's Garden Center on May 5, with the sale chaired by the dynamic duo of Lyn Lang and Deb Meyer. This year's sale will include deluxe signage with cultural information for each plant. A special shout-out to Marie and Sandy Ciccone's husband for constructing the stands. And, the photo contest and exhibit will be returning after a several-year hiatus, so start taking photos!

At the January meeting, we will review the guidelines and classes for the photo show. The January meeting will also include information from the propagation committee on prepping for the plant sale and growing the perennial plugs.

In February, we will take a garden tour through Michigan with Dennis James. We will visit some outstanding private gardens and public gardens, including the Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. No garden tour is complete without a stop at a nursery and Dennis will take us to some of the best—Walters Gardens and Raker Trial Gardens and Greenhouses--unfortunately, there is no room for plants!

The March meeting will feature Paul Spriggs, co-author of *The Crevice Garden*. Paul makes his home in British Columbia where he has been rock gardening for 24 years and building crevice gardens for the last 17. Paul will be speaking on the basics of building a crevice garden and his favorite crevice plants. This meeting will be open to the public, so invite friends and family who may be interested in rock gardening and joining the Allegheny chapter.

I thought I would share a couple of favorite blooms in my garden and home. Pollinators are enjoying *Helleborus niger*, the Christmas rose, and the Doublet amaryllis has seven blooms per stalk—it is a showstopper!

See you in January!

Nancy



Upcoming Meetings:

JANUARY 21, 2024 – 2:00 PM NORTHLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Nancy Knauss & Marie Tkacik - Photo Contest and Plant Propagation

FEBRUARY 18, 2024 - 2:00 PM NORTHLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Dennis James – Gardens of Michigan

MARCH 24, 2024 - 12:00 PM & 1:45 PM BEECHWOOD FARMS

Paul Spriggs – Cracks & Crevices and My Favorite Crevice Garden Plants

APRIL 21, 2024 - 2:00 PM NATIONAL AVIARY

Bill Barnes – Gardens of Ecuador & Crevice Garden at Juniper Level Botanic Garden

Northland Library
300 Cumberland Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Beechwood Farms
614 Dorseyville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

National Aviary
700 Arch St
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Aviary Rock Garden Update



SEASON CHANGES- BEDTIME, BY LYN LANG

The Aviary rock garden was put to bed for the winter on Friday, December 15. Leaves were removed from the pathways and sunny garden areas, and winter protection was placed around the Larry Hankowitz memorial Japanese maple and the *Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Goshiki'. Winter has been mild so far, but the fencing will also protect these treasures from pruning by rabbits.

Thanks to our dedicated members for their time and attention to the garden during 2023! The garden's founders provided a beautiful landscape and great diversity of plants. Each passing year brings opportunities to add new plants and learn more about the ones that thrive. It's a pleasure for all who visit.

If you'd like to get involved in helping with the rock garden in 2024, watch for announcements of maintenance visits as the weather warms in March.



TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP



NARGS Allegheny Chapter memberships need to be renewed as of January 1 every year. We hope you are enjoying our programs and activities and plan to continue your membership in 2024. Annual dues are \$10 for current members and \$15 for two adults. (Thank you to those who prepaid 2024 dues in late 2023!)

Dues for 2024 can be paid at the January 21st meeting at Northland Library. Treasurer Patty McGuire will receive dues and issue payment receipts at meetings. If you prefer to submit your dues by mail, address them to the membership chair and mail to:

Lyn Lang
NARGS Allegheny Chapter Membership
4042 Valleyvue Drive
Gibsonia, PA 15044

Make checks payable to **NARGS Allegheny Chapter**.
Be sure to let us know of any changes to your email
address and other contact information.

Thank you for your continued participation and support

Allegheny Chapter 2024 Plant Show & Sale May 5, 2024

Soergel Orchards
2573 Brandt School Rd
Wexford, PA 15090



PLANT PROPAGATION

This year your Allegheny Chapter took a leap into various plant propagation strategies for this year's plant sale. Miniature evergreens and three varieties of dwarf ferns in ideal sizes for trough planting were ordered early this year. Seeds from the NARGS seed exchange were planted this fall with some germination success. Other seeds are soon to begin a cold moist stratification process over the winter to generate some small and widely varied rock garden plants to add to the mix. This year's plant sale offerings will also include 12 different and beautiful rock garden cultivars in pre-germinated plugs that will be re-potted to expand the growing space for roots below and foliage above. Keep the date MARCH 3 open on your calendar & join us in the potting up of plugs and also to learn how to divide and pot garden plants as well.



Heuchera 'Electric Plum' and 'Caramel Yellow' Coral Bells

Heuchera make excellent border plants. The growth shape is a neat clump 8-10" high and up to 18" when in bloom. The flowers are held high above on fine light stems from mid to late summer. These perennials can be used in a shady courtyard pot or as a groundcover under deciduous trees. Prefers average to low moist soil conditions. Occurs in Zones 4-9 and grows in bright shade & sunny conditions. Attracts butterflies & hummingbirds. Plant 15-18" centers.



NOTE: In cold climates, winter mulch applied after the ground freezes will help prevent root heaving. It keeps the mature crown in contact with the soil and keeps the soil moist in the summer as well. Must have good drainage over the winter, though, so don't over-do the overwintering mulching. Can be divided every 3 years in spring.



Sedum Sunsparkler® Firecracker

This sedum cultivar is a tough vigorous, colorful and drought tolerant plant. It grows 8" in height, 18" wide in full sun in dry or moist well-drained soil types which can vary from normal or sandy to poor. Grows in Zones 3-9. The foliage is red, the flowers pink and will last for 4 weeks or more attracting butterflies.

Coreopsis auriculata 'Nana' Dwarf Tickseed

Native evergreen perennial wildflower in the daisy family. Low growing (6-9" high) and spreads slowly to 2 feet by underground stems. It is deer resistant. Butterflies and bees attracted to the flowers. The bright showy yellow flowers appear singly in spring with an occasional light blooming during the summer. Plant in neutral soil, moist but with good drainage, in sun to partial shade. It is somewhat drought tolerant but not as much as other tickseeds.





AWARDS BY PATTY MCGUIRE

“Without YOU, there would be no Allegheny Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society.”

PATTY MCGUIRE,
AWARDS CHAIR

Audrey and Clarence Rauch - Lifetime Membership

Very few Lifetime Memberships have been awarded since the inception of these awards. I didn't want to be the one who waited too long to award them with this well-earned award. They oversaw the chapter's hospitality – always attending the meetings and making sure everyone had their coffee. They also gave demonstrations on how to make troughs whether at a meeting or at their home. Now in their 90's, Audrey's still trying to maintain her gardens.

It's been a while since our chapter gave awards to our most deserving members. Our esteemed Awards Chairman Al Deurbrouck passed away November 2019 and then in March of 2020 the COVID pandemic began and continued through 2022. I volunteered to be the awards chair which was going to be difficult after Al but knew that our chapter has many deserving members who give their time and talent, continuing the work of our gifted predecessors like A. J. Brownmiller, Madeline Modic, Carl Gehenio, Clare Williamson, Al Deurbrouck, and Len Lehman to name a few.

I put on my thinking cap and began a list of deserving members and at the beginning of the alphabet, which is always a good place to start. My first candidate was:

- **David Amrhein - Madeline Modic Service Award**

David has been a member prior to 2007 – he was a board member and volunteered whenever possible. He recently chaired the return of the Plant Show in 2023. He provided garden tool information and sharpening for Garden Fest along with another member of the Pittsburgh Men's Garden Club.

- **Amanda Haney - A. J Brownmiller Award**

Amanda is another long-time member prior to 2007. A former board member, webmaster and director of our seed packaging. Amanda is a deserving candidate for writing, lecturing and photographing work that expands the knowledge of rock gardening. She is an avid and awesome photographer of the plants taken on her various trips around the world and presentations of them are shared with our membership and with other gardening groups.

- **Nancy Knauss - Madeline Modic Service Award**

Nancy has been a member since 2010 – a board member, webmaster and speaker at many of our meetings. Nancy took on the role of Chairperson for the Allegheny Chapter through the very tough pandemic years to bring us back to a plant show and sale in 2023.

- **Gina Teams - Madeline Modic Service Award**

A former board member – member prior to 2007 and speaker at the Plant Show and Sale teaching others how to build and plant a trough and always lending a helping hand at many volunteer opportunities.

Patty McGuire also tirelessly serves as Treasurer for the Allegheny Chapter

“Photography”

“You can look at a picture for a week and never think of it again. You can also look at a picture for a second and think of it all your life.”
– Joan Miro

Photo Classes

Class 1 Single plant or several of one variety in bloom or not.

Class 2 Wide shot of a rock garden in a natural habitat or cultivated setting.

Class 3 Close-up of a rock garden plant in bloom.

Class 4 Container/trough with multiple plants in bloom or not.

Class 5 An artistic interpretation of any one of the above categories but with Photoshop editing.

Point Scale

Creativity 25

Composition 25

Technical Skill 20
(focus, sharpness of objects)

Conformance 20
(follows class requirements)

Distinction 10
(creative, unique photo)



Photo Contest Comeback.

“The earth is art; the photographer is only a witness.”
– Yann Arthus-Bertrand

-Exhibitor



GUIDELINES

An exhibitor must be an active member of the NARGS Allegheny Chapter.

-Exhibitor too

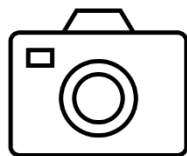


- An exhibitor may submit only one entry per class.
- A photograph previously entered in any NARGS contest may not be entered again even with slight alterations and/or reprinting.
- Each photograph must be the work of the exhibitor under whose name it is registered. Any editing must be the work of the exhibitor. This includes enhancement for color or clarity, removal of a part of the image, combining images, or distorting the original subject. In manipulated photographs, any added imagery must be the work of the exhibitor.
- Photographs must be flush mounted on foam core and may not be over-matted. The overall dimension of entry must be 8”x 10”. Matte or luster finish printing is preferred. Glass and framing are not permitted. Mounting and printing may be done professionally. All photographs must be two-dimensional and printed on paper unless otherwise specified.
- Each entry must have the entry form properly completed and affixed to the back of the photograph. The top of the photograph must be indicated. A title must be included on the entry form.
- The photography chair will provide an entry card to be staged with each photograph. Identification of plant material on the entry card is required.
- Printed and mounted photographs must be received by 8:30 a.m. Sunday, May 5 at Soergel’s Garden Center.
- Only the photography committee may reclassify an entry with the exhibitor’s permission. The photography committee and/or the judges may subdivide a class that has many entries.

This year the Plant Sale & Show expands to include the talents of both rock gardeners and photographers. Photography lets you carry around the beauty of a rock garden in your pocket and to share with others. Many of our Allegheny Chapter travelers bring home incredible photos from both cultivated public and private gardens. The special finds of a rare plant in natural habitats are of great interest to the membership, celebrated by some as though a win at the gaming table or a lottery.

SHARE YOUR GARDEN IN PICTURES

PHOTO CONTEST ENTRY FORM



Name:

Email:

Photo Title:

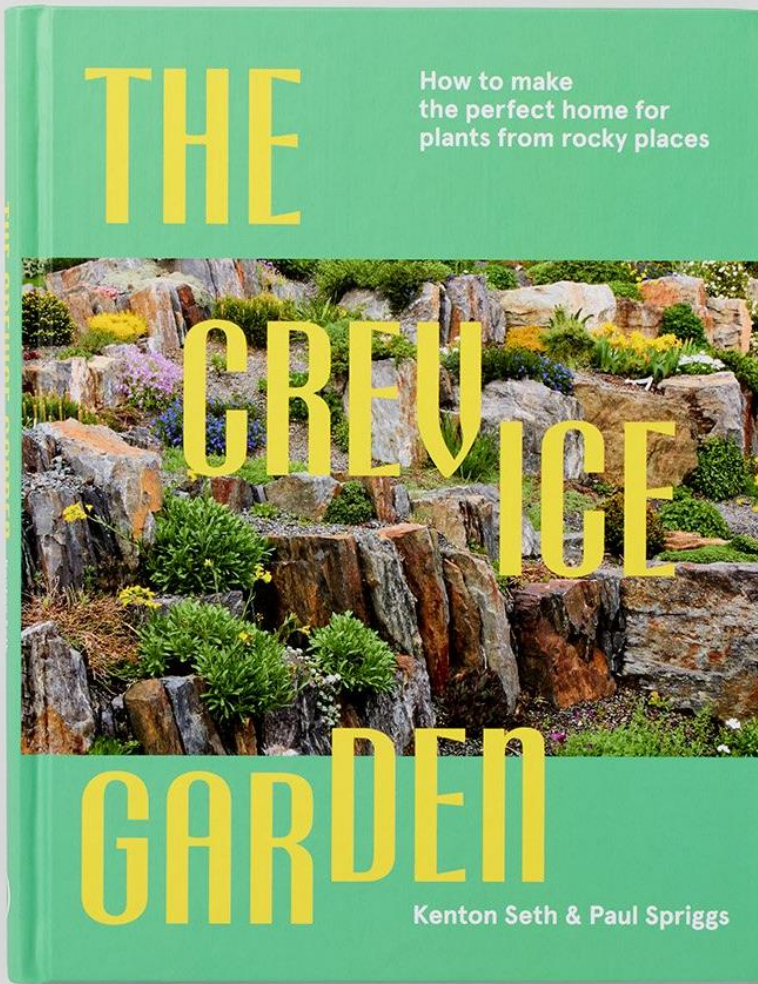
Plant(s) Common Name & Botanical ID:

Class:

Allegheny Chapter Volunteer Opportunities

We are all volunteers!

- Allegheny Chapter NARGS Rock Garden Maintenance at the National Aviary --- Regular Aviary rock garden visits will resume in spring 2024—March or April, depending on the weather. Watch for email announcements. Send a reply email to claim a space for the 10AM-12PM project cleanup.
- Support Propagation Efforts for 2024
Adopt a small flat(s) of potted plants in March to grow into sale worthy beauties for the 2024 Plant Sale. Attend the potting up activity at Nany Knauss' home and learn about dividing plants from the ground to the pot.
- Allegheny Chapter Library BOOK REVIEWS
Borrow a book from the members' library and write a small review to go into the next Newsletter. If you have a special garden book you'd like to write a half or full page article about, please do.
- Allegheny Chapter Newsletter PLANT PROFILE
Select a plant, research its growth habits and plant care, write it up and submit it for an upcoming Newsletter.
- Allegheny Chapter Plant Sale at Gardenfest
Each year AC plants still in need of a home after the NARGS Plant Sale are brought to Gardenfest; a gathering of specialized plant-focused groups hosted by the Fox Chapel Garden Club. This important opportunity will be missed without a leader(s) taking on coordinating efforts to make this happen. This is important for May 2024! Contact Nancy Knauss to ask about this project and what it entails.
- Support Chapter Growth
Tell someone about rock gardening and how the Allegheny Chapter helps all of us by sharing knowledge, experience and building camaraderie around hard-to-find plants and gardens. Bring a friend to the monthly meetings to introduce them.



MARCH 24, 2024

Paul Spriggs, co-author The Crevice Garden

12:00 PM – Cracks & Crevices

1:45 PM My Favorite Crevice Garden Plants

BEECHWOOD FARMS

614 Dorseyville Road

Pittsburgh, PA 15238

This special guest speaker is in high demand and is currently traveling across the country to teach people about this unique form of rock gardening. Unique in the backyard garden but found in rocky terrain around the world.

This subject is so interesting your Allegheny Chapter is sponsoring two focused presentations and inviting all to experience the excitement.

Listen to the crevice garden how-to, history and plants that fit this special type of gardening.

Check out this link to the NARGS book review:

<https://www.nargs.org/news/2021-12-01/crevice-garden-review>

TICKETS

All prices in advance or at-the-door.

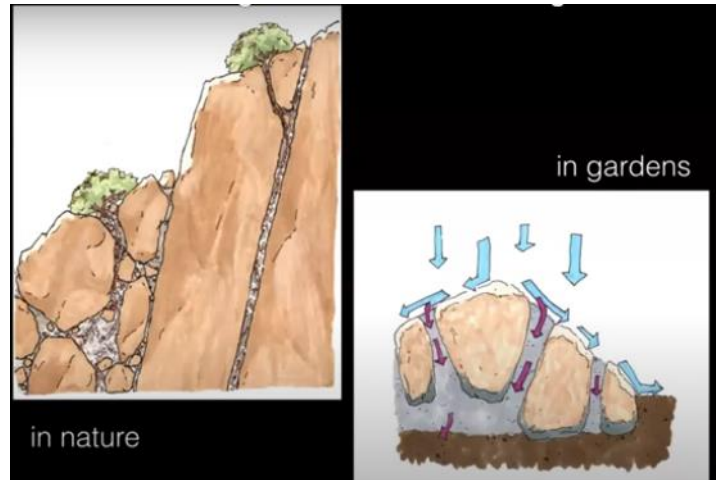
Non-members- \$15

RAFFLE TICKETS

\$1/TICKET

\$5 FOR 6 TICKETS

PRIZE DONATIONS INVITED





A Gift from Audrey by Jane Powell

Jane Powell is a longtime West Virginia University Extension Service master gardener through the Kanawha County chapter. She is a member of the Charleston Municipal Beautification Commission and the city Tree Board.

Find her blog, "Gardening in Pearls," at gardeninginpearls.com.

Contact her at janellepowell@aol.com

TELL US ABOUT IT

This fall, I received a gift from Audrey—two handmade planters filled with sedums.

I met her daughter in my sophomore year of college, and we became instant best friends. When I would travel home with her for long weekends, her parents were always kind. Her dad would check my brakes, tires, and other parts of the car he knew I would neglect. The car inspection was always followed by a lecture about safety and car maintenance, but I was a young college gal who pumped gas and didn't think much more about auto care.

Audrey was cheerful yet a bit anxious – well, she did raise six kids, so I'll give her the tendency to be a bit high-strung. Her plate was full.

As they were becoming empty nesters, the once busy parents stepped outside and began to garden. It became a passion. The front yard pride was a Korean Fir tree and the purple-colored pinecones it would produce. Other perennials filled beds.

The back garden was a series of raised beds with a stone pathway and concrete steppingstones the couple created. The beds were filled with perennials. At one time, there was even a koi pond to add to the garden's serenity.

Lenten roses – hellebores - were favorites. Ferns created borders under shade trees. There were coneflowers and hibiscus mixed with other summer-blooming perennials. It was their private oasis.

As their free time increased, so did their interest in hostas and succulents. Trips to nurseries and weekend festivals filled their weekends. They became members of the Hosta Society. Soon, their gardens were filled with many different varieties.

Audrey and her husband took classes during these weekend getaways and learned to make hypertufa planters. Using a mixture of cement, perlite, and peat moss, they would fill molds of different shapes to create custom containers. The last count was over fifty planters filled the back garden. Many were planted with her beloved succulents.

It is these planters that her daughter shared with me. Audrey and her husband are now in their 90s, and the intricate designs of the garden have become too much to manage. This year also brought new health challenges.

This Christmas holiday will be the first time the couple married sixty-seven years will not be home. After 60 of Christmas mornings in their split-level living room, they have moved to be provided with more care. The family has worked to maintain the gardens, but with six children spread across the country, each busy with their children and careers, it is hard.

Landscapers have been careless, and weeds continue to grow despite valiant efforts from family. I hope to visit in the early spring. I'm sure memories of college weekends and car repairs will come flooding back. I expect by this time next year a new family will be making memories in the kitchen and living room. Let's hope they are gardeners who appreciate the carefully planned landscape.

For now, I will cherish my gift of a handmade plant container created by the hands of someone I know. Like all handmade crafts, it is original and one of a kind, much like the matriarch of the family who grew her family and her garden to give and provide beauty to all who visit.

OFFICERS

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Nancy Knauss

VICE CHAIR

Marie Tkacik

SECRETARY

Joanne Burzese

TREASURER

Patty McGuire

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Patty McGuire

BANQUET

Sandy Ciccone

FACEBOOK

Lyn Lang

Bobbi Diller

LIBRARY

Patty McGuire

MEMBERSHIP & PROOFREADER

Lyn Lang

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Marie Tkacik

PLANT SHOW

Open seat- Contact Nancy Knauss to volunteer

PLANT SALE

Lyn Lang

Debra Meyer

SEED EXCHANGE

Patty McGuire

WEBMASTER

Lyn Lang

NARGS ALLEGHENY CHAPTER ROCK GARDEN

The NARGS, Allegheny Chapter rock garden occupies a space next to the National Aviary on Pittsburgh's North Side. Members usually work at the garden the 2nd and 4th Thursdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

