



# ALPINE LINE

Allegheny Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society

March–April 2015

## Message from the Chair, Len Lehman

Ah March - the crazy month. Our language is rife with references to March -*Crazy as a March Hare, In like a lamb - out like a lion* and vice versa, *Beware the Ides of March*, and the Leprechaun's pot of gold at end of rainbow on Saint Paddie's day. (By the way, do you know why St. Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland? Answer - they couldn't walk!) March is one of those topsy-turvy months, sunny and warm one day and bitter cold and snow the next. It's a month where weather changes from winter conditions into more mild temperatures in preparation for spring.

Meanwhile, Mother Nature is getting all set for the big explosion of plant growth and new life. Snowdrops, winter aconites and crocus start to grow and bloom. Daffodils and tulips begin underground growth of new roots and break dormancy—all in preparation for the big show in April and May. And in forests, spring ephemerals such as Trillium and blood-root begin to bloom. My favorite is the snow trillium (*Trillium nivale*) which starts to bloom around early March. This new growth and bloom is why spring is my favorite season.



Once again we thank Karen for the exciting schedule this year - a March meeting at the Aviary learning all about pocket gardens from *critterologist* speaker Jill Nicolaus.

Once again we thank Karen for the exciting schedule this year - a March meeting at the Aviary learning all about pocket gardens from *critterologist* speaker Jill Nicolaus.

On April 15, we will host a guest speaker from Germany, Dieter Zschummel (see page 6 ). Please note the change in time and location of this meeting, which will be held at **4:00 at St. John Lutheran Church on Cumberland Road**, across from the library. Dieter's travel itinerary provides us with some time to visit before the lecture, so we've decided to invite members to share a covered-dish dinner. The club will supply main dishes, and we are asking members to bring side dishes and desserts. Please notify Patti (412-366-8364, [cmpmam@comcast.net](mailto:cmpmam@comcast.net)) what you are bringing to ensure we don't have an abundance of desserts and no veggies. Thank you, Patti, for coordinating this feast.

Before you know it, our annual show and sale will be here — Sunday, May 3. Don't delay getting started on your entries. The weather hampered participation in last year's show, but we are hoping for warmer weather this year. A possible incentive to enter may be the rule change regarding time of ownership. We voted at the February meeting to reduce possession to two months. You can now enter plants you've had for **60 days!** See page 3 for details regarding the show and sale.

Remember to save Sunday, May 17, to join us for a trip to the Lynch residence and tour of the nearby captivating Japanese garden.

Don't be like a bear and hibernate—come to our meetings! The first day of Spring is only a few weeks away.

## Mystery Plant of the Month

Put on your warmest thinking caps and try to figure out the **botanical and common name** of this choice Japanese wildflower, a member of one of the largest flower families. Found in Japanese woodlands, it is a relatively easy plant to grow in humus-rich soils. It is named for a Dutch East Indian Company physician who botanized in Japan and who introduced it to Europe. One problem in growing it is that after blooming it tends to go dormant to a resting bud, and many times is accidentally dug up. Breeding has created many fine varieties.



Send as many entries as you like to Len, [llehman1@verizon.net](mailto:llehman1@verizon.net).

## CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

### Officers

**Chair:** Len Lehman, 412- 233-5902  
lclehman1@verizon.net

**Vice Chair:** Karen Schmidt, 724-679-3818  
KarenSMG@aol.com

**Secretary:** Dianne Passoth, 724-444-4862  
DiannePassoth@mtsaonline.org

**Treasurer:** Patty McGuire, 412-366-8364  
cmpmam@comcast.net

### Committee Chairs

**Awards:** Al Deurbrouck, 412-653-0281  
adeurbrouck@verizon.net

**Honorary chair:** Connie McKeever, 412-823-7250  
Raymck27@earthlink.net

**Banquet:** Deb Meyer, 412-734-2039  
DebrASM@aol.com

**Hosts:** Bonnie and Steve Plato, 412-726-7865  
stephenplato@gmail.com

**Library:** Patty McGuire, 412-366-8364  
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**Membership & Proofreader:** Lyn Lang, 724-443-7092  
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**Newsletter Editor:** Linda Kalcevic, 412-847-0825  
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**Plant Show & Sale:** Al Deurbrouck, 412-653-0281  
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**Website:** Sylvia Lynch, 412-795-0736  
home.comcast.net/~sylvialynch/

### Contributors

Al Deurbrouck  
Lyn Lang

## Join NARGS

Contact Lyn Lang at lyn9@consolidated.net, or visit  
www.nargs.org.


## Aviary Garden

There is no Aviary garden news. The garden is under cover of snow, so we are printing a summer picture to remind you that plants will bloom soon and the weather will be warm again.



## Allegheny Chapter Membership Renewals Due

Allegheny Chapter membership renewals are due by March 31. The annual fees are \$10 for individuals and \$15 for family membership. Annual dues are used to fund workshops, speakers and field trips. If you have not already renewed your membership, you may mail your check (payable to **NARGS Allegheny Chapter**) to **Lyn Lang, 4042 Valleyvue Drive, Gibsonia, PA 15044-9501**, or bring your renewal to the March meeting. Please include any change in your address, phone number or e-mail.

	<b>2015 MEMBERSHIP</b>	
	<b>NARGS Allegheny Chapter</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	Date _____
Name _____		
Address _____		
Phone _____		E-mail _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual - \$10	<input type="checkbox"/> Family - \$15	
Please make checks payable to: NARGS Allegheny Chapter		
Mail to: Lyn Lang, 4042 Valleyvue Drive, Gibsonia, PA 15044-9501		

## May 3—Rock Garden Plant Show and Sale

### RULES

1. Nonmembers of the Allegheny Chapter of NARGS are encouraged to enter, but will not qualify for high cumulative score monies or trophies.
2. There are no limits on the number of entries per class.
3. The term "rock plant" shall mean any plant suitable for the rock garden – be it a bog garden, shade garden, wild garden, or alpine house.
4. All plants for competition must be the property of the entrant and must be in their possession for at least two months (60 days).\*
5. All plants entered for competition should be clearly labeled and the names should be displayed. Inaccurate identification shall not be grounds for disqualification.
6. The judges are the final authority for awards.
7. No exhibit shall be removed from the floor from the time of judging to the close of the show without express permission of the Show chair.
8. The Chapter will not assume responsibility for exhibits left on the tables after the Show ends.  
(A sale plant will be given to those who enter 3-5 plants, and two sale plants will be given to those who enter six or more.)

### CLASSES of ENTRIES

- A committee will be available to assist exhibitors in the proper identification and placement of their entries.
- Class #1. One pan rock garden plant in flower\*\*
- Class #2. One pan native wildflower suitable for the rock garden
- Class #3. One pan primulaceae in flower, including primula and androsace
- Class #4. One pan bulbous or rhizomatous plant suitable for the rock garden
- Class #5. One pan succulent including sempervivum, sedum and crassulaceae
- Class #6. One pan rock garden plant grown primarily for foliage, including hosta, saxifrage and ferns
- Class #7. One pan dwarf shrub, tree, or conifer
- Class #8. One bowl of cut flowers of rock garden plants, to be judged for variety and quality of material
- Class #9. A trough of three or more distinct species rock garden suitable plants arranged for effect
- Class #10. Miniature Garden. A trough of three or more distinct species rock garden suitable plants along with accessories arranged to create a miniature garden landscape.

### AWARDS

#### Best Plant in Show – Clair Williamson Award

Presented in honor of a former Chapter member, given to the entry judged best in show Classes 1 thru 8. Winner will receive Best in Show ribbon traveling trophy and \$25. Trophy will be held for one year and then passed on to the next winner.

**Best Trough in Show** (combined classes 9 and 10). Traveling trophy and \$25. Trophy will be held for one year and then passed on to the next winner.

**Ribbons.** 1st (blue), 2nd (red), 3rd (yellow) if merited in each class. Honorable Mention may be given at the judges discretion.

**HIGH CUMULATIVE SCORES** - 1st (\$20), 2nd (\$15), 3rd (\$10). Total is based on 5 points for 1st place ribbons, 3 points for 2nd place ribbons, and 1 point for 3rd place ribbons. Also, 5 additional points for best in class plus an additional 5 points for best in show.

**AWARDS TABLE** will be comprised of the best entry in each class. From these best-entries in classes 9-10 Best Trough in Show will be selected. All awards will be presented at our annual awards banquet in October.

\*Revised from last year

\*\*A *pan* is any container; a *trough* is a container that simulates a rock trough.

## Useful Apps and Web Sites

**Dirr's Tree and Shrub Finder** by Timber Press, Inc., based on Michael A. Dirr's *The Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, covers 1670 species and 7800 cultivars, with 7600 high-quality plant images. The plant database is searchable by 72 criteria, including hardiness zones, water and light requirements, growth characteristics, etc. \$14.99

Back 

Cattails  
*Nympha spp.*



**ID Weeds** is produced by the University of Missouri's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources' Division of Plant Science. Free.

**Landscaper's Companion** - By Stevenson Software, LLC. Plant & Gardening Reference Guide. A most comprehensive plant guide. \$4.99.

**WrightmanAlpines.com.** Aside from a lot of choice alpiners for sale, they have a number of very interesting and informative videos including a detailed presentation for building of a tufa garden by Josef Halda, the renowned Czech plant explorer and crevice garden designer.

**DavesGarden.com** is a favorite of gardeners around the world. Articles and videos show how to start seeds, etc. Members can chat with other gardeners

**WildGingerFarm.com** is a specialty nursery located near Portland, Oregon, specializing in U.S. alpine, rock garden, select western U.S. native and woodland plants. They grow many hard-to-find perennials from around the world, and offer a diverse selection of interesting and uncommon plants.



## NARGS Annual Meeting - Ann Arbor, Michigan, May 7-9, 2015



Plan now to hear Ger van den Beuken from Horst, Netherlands, speak about *Growing High Alpines at Sea Level or Below*. In addition, Malcomb McGregor will present *Rock Gardening—or — What's a Heaven For*.

Tony Reznicek's topic is *The Michigan Landscape and Gardening In It*. More details are available at NARGS.com.

The host hotel is Ann Arbor's own Weber's Restaurant and Boutique Hotel, an Ann Arbor institution—a family owned hotel, restaurant, and conference center renowned for its

food and local atmosphere. Rooms are available at a special NARGS rate of \$99 per night. Discounted rates are offered to NARGS members for the nights of May 7-9. You can extend your stay at the same rate for two nights before and three nights after those dates. Please contact the hotel directly, before March 20, 2015, and use the Code: MAR050715 when registering.

To make a reservation online, use Weber's website (<http://www.webersinn.com>) and click on *Book My Room*. Otherwise, to make a telephone reservation, call Weber's Reservation Desk at 800-443-3050 and inform them that you are attending the NARGS meeting and mention the Group Code MAR050715. The address is Weber's Restaurant and Boutique Hotel, 3050 Jackson Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103.



## Call for Nominations for NARGS Awards



# NARGS

Now is the time to nominate one of the many individuals deserving these awards who go unrecognized for the lack of nomi-

nation. Members who are aware of their merits and contributions should take time to send nominations. Do you know a deserving individual? Please step up and make a nomination.

These awards are presented at the Ann Arbor General Meeting on Saturday, May 9. **The deadline for this year's nominations is April 15, 2015.**

Any member of the Society can nominate a person. Nominations for the Award of Merit must be accompanied by a letter stating why this person deserves the award. List outstanding services to the Society, comment on the person's plantsmanship, and - if appropriate - refer to any published articles or books on rock gardening authored by the nominee.

- Nominations for the Marcel Le Piniec Award and the Marvin E. Black Award must be accompanied by a letter stating why this person deserves the award and listing the specific activities that qualify him or her for the award.
- Two seconding letters should also be sent to the Awards Chairman.
- No supporting letters are needed for the Edgar T. Wherry Award or the Carleton R. Worth Award, only a letter outlining the specific books and/or articles written by the nominee that qualify him or her for the award.

Visit the NARGS Awards page for more information and the list of eligible awards.

You may email your nominations to [PeterGeorge@verizon.net](mailto:PeterGeorge@verizon.net) or mail to Peter George, POB 833, Petersham, MA 01366-9755. The deadline for this year's nominations is April 15, 2015.

# Allegheny Chapter 2015 Meetings/Events

**Next meeting—2:00 Sunday, March 15 at the National Aviary**

Members A through H are asked to bring snacks. Raffle contributions will be appreciated.

	Time	Speaker	Topic	Location
January 18	2:00	Debra Meyer and Carol Przyborski	NARGS Annual Meeting in Santa Fe	Northland Library
<b>February 15</b>	<b>2:00</b>	<b>Len Lehman</b>	<b>Seed planting workshop</b>	<b>Northland Library</b>
<b>March 15</b>	<b>1:30</b>	<b>Jill M. Nicolaus *</b>	<b>Pocket Gardens</b>	<b>National Aviary</b>
April 19	4:00	Dieter Zschummel**	One Year in Our Garden in the Middle of Germany	St. John Lutheran Church Cumberland Road
May 3	9-3:00	Allegheny Chapter Annual Plant Show and Sale		Soergels
May 17	2:00	Garden tour	Lynch's garden and her neighbor's Japanese garden	TBD
June 28	9:30 am	DJ	Breakfast at DJ's and hands-on Terrarium workshop	DJ's Greenhouse
August 16	11 & 2:00	Picnic		TBD
September 20	2:00	Chuck Gleaves	Gardening for the Fun of It	Northland Library
October 17	5:00	Banquet		TBD
November 15	2:00	TBD		Northland Library
December	9 am	Seed packing workshop		Northland Library



\* **Jill Nicolaus**, known as critterologist and prolific author from *Dave's Garden* ([davesgarden.com](http://davesgarden.com)) and *All Things Plants*, Jill crams all types of amazing plants into her suburban yard in Frederick, Maryland, a natural wildlife refuge. A graduate of University of Chicago, she began gardening at an early age. You can read her blog at [allthingsplants.com](http://allthingsplants.com). At our March meeting, she will speak about helping us find a way to incorporate alpine plants and rock garden techniques into cottage gardens and mixed borders.



\*\***Dieter Zschummel**, a retired chemist, has been interested in rock garden plants since the 60s. He is experienced with growing and propagating choice alpines, especially Daphne, and the use of tufa. Dieter favors cushion plants, especially the Androsace and Dionysia. Dieter has a special interest in propagation to keep these plants in cultivation in an unfavorable climate. Living in Wallendorf, a small village in what was once East Germany, unrestricted travel wasn't always possible so Dieter's targets were the High Tatras, the entire Carpathians in Roumania, the High Balkan, Rhodopes, Rila and Pirin in Bulgaria and the Caucasus. With his wife Rosi he has been exploring mountain habitats yearly since 1967. After 1990 he and his wife explored mountains outside of Europe touring the Rockies in the 90s.



**Note April 19 meeting change of time to 4:00 and location to St. John Lutheran Church meeting room, located across from Northland Library on Cumberland Road. We are planning a cover-dish dinner meeting. See details on page 1.**

## Garden Pics and Contributions Welcome

Would you like to share an interesting and informative article, an idea, or helpful suggestion about gardening? Send it, and we can publish it in the *Alpine Line*. Although gardens presently are snow covered, some are still picture worthy. Take a shot and send it to be published in the newsletter.

Email information to [kalcevicl@verizon.net](mailto:kalcevicl@verizon.net) - or mail it to Linda Kalcevic, 772 Village Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15237. The deadline for contributions is the **20th of the month**.

Thank you for your interest and support of the *Alpine Line*.

# Daffodil & Hosta Society of Western PA (DHSWP)

<b>Saturday, March 14</b>	Annual Meeting, state of the DHSWP, Northland Library
<b>Fri – Sat, Mar 20 – 21</b>	Hosta College, Piqua, OH
<b>Thu – Sun, Apr 9 – 12</b>	National Daffodil Convention, Williamsburg, VA
<b>Saturday, April 11</b>	Daffodil Meeting, Northland Library
<b>Saturday, April 18</b>	Daffodil Show at Shadyside Academy, joint with the Penn State Master Gardener's Symposium & Marketplace. Ice Rink at Shady Side Academy, Fox Chapel
<b>Sunday, May 3</b>	Hosta Grooming Clinic joint with Rock Garden Society Show & sale at Soergels
<b>Saturday, June 6</b>	Hosta Show at Soergels
<b>Thu– Sat, June 18 – 20</b>	National Hosta Convention, Raleigh, NC
<b>Sat – Sun, June 20 – 21</b>	Whispering Pines Hosta Sale
<b>Fri – Sun, July 10 – 12</b>	Great Lakes Region Tailgate, W NY Hosta Society
<b>Saturday, July 18</b>	Picnic & Hosta Auction at DJ's Greenhouse
<b>Saturday, August 8</b>	STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
<b>August---TBA</b>	Garden in the Parks Field Day, demonstration gardens at North & South parks
<b>September---TBA</b>	Fall Hosta Forum, Edinboro PA
<b>Saturday, October 10</b>	Pot Luck meeting: Put your Hosta to Sleep/Plant your Daffodils for Spring, Northland Library
<b>Saturday, November 7</b>	End of Season Luncheon, TBA
<b>Saturday November 21</b>	STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING



## Forgotten Bulbs



If you have a bunch of bulbs that you left in a cold place but never got around to planting in the ground, you can still try a forcing method. But you better not delay! Tulips and Daffodils require a minimum of 12 weeks for a rooting period.

Simply place them in a pot with at least 2 inches of soil below them. Cover with soil, water, and place them in a cold, dark garage or cellar. After the cold period, place them in a warm sunny area.

They will bloom in 2-4 weeks. If you want to have a container full of pretty spring blooms by the end of April, start right now.

Pinterest

## Spring Tonic for the Garden

Developed by George Hooker, a Pittsburgh gardener, and recommended by Al Deurbrouck.

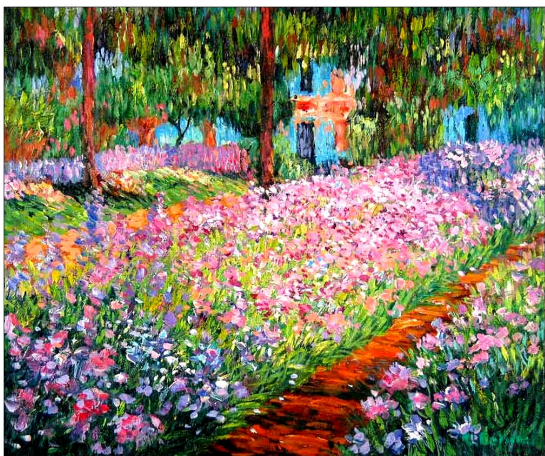
To one gallon of water add:

- 3 tablespoons of Orthene or Isotox
- 3 tablespoons of fish emulsion
- 2 tablespoons of Epsom salts
- 4 tablespoons of iron chelate
- 4 level tablespoons of Benlate
- 1 teaspoon of liquid soap
- 3 tablespoons of a 15-30-15 water-soluble fertilizer

For general garden use, apply from sprinkling can, March 15, April 15, and May 15. Avoid applying to true alpine plants that prefer Spartan diets or you may have some uncharacteristically large and floppy plants. However, keep in mind, that many "rock garden" plants, not to be confused with "alpine" plants, will thrive with occasional feeding of the Hooker tonic including, but not limited to, primulas, dianthus, hostas, paeonia, lily, iris, helleborus, Daphne, and our bulbs.

## DJ's Greenhouse 2015 Calendar of Events

April 15-30	Thousands of spring bulbs in bloom
April 7, 6:30	Create your own Terrarium. \$35. Materials Included
April 9, 6:30	Create your own Fairy Garden. \$35. Materials included
April 15, 9-5:00	Opening Day Stop by for Refreshments
April 25, 10:00	New Plants for 2015. Greenhouse Tour
April 28, 6:30	Vegetable garden series
May 14	Gardening to attract Hummingbirds (Paula Shacklock)
May 19, 6:30	Gardening to attract Butterflies (Donnajean Enyeart)
May 26, 6:30	Vegetable Garden series
May 28, 6:30	Container Class. \$25 Includes material
June 2, 6:30	Create your own Fairy Garden. \$35. Materials included
June 6, 9:00	Breakfast with DJ. Reservations
June 9, 6:30	Create your own Carnivorous plant Terrarium. \$35. All material Included. Reservations
June 12, 6:30	Ladies Night Out. \$15. Reservations
June 13, 10:00	Creative Planting. \$18. Plant a unique Container
June 16, 6:30	Herb Infused Butters. \$5. Pam Brown, Pamela Gardens
June 20	TBA
June 23, 6:30	Vegetable Garden Series
July	Hundreds of Daylilies in Bloom All Month
July 11, 9:00	Breakfast with DJ. Reservations
July 14, 6:30	Create your own Fairy Garden. \$35 Materials Included
July 17, 6-9:00	Evening in the Garden. \$26. Good food, good times, and good music! Reservations.
July 25, 6:00	River Watchers Fund Raiser
July 28, 6:30	Vegetable Garden Series
Aug 8, 9:00	Breakfast with DJ. Reservations
Aug 11, 6:30	Tappas at Sunset. \$23. Small plate with beer & wine. Tasting Chef David Armstrong. Reservations
Aug 18, 6:30	Create Your own fairy Garden. \$35. Materials Included
Aug 22	Customer Appreciation Day: Refreshments and Specials
Aug 25, 6:30	Vegetable Garden Series
Sept 5, 9:00	Breakfast with DJ. Reservations
Sept 8, 6:30	Make your own Terrarium. \$35. Materials included
Sept 22, 6:30	Vegetable Garden series
Sept 26, 10:00	Fall Clean-up Class and Garden Walk. A Guided tour of the Fall Garden. Q & A
1004 East Lake Road, Transfer PA 16154, <a href="http://www.djsgreenhouse.com">www.djsgreenhouse.com</a> or 724-92-1230	



*I perhaps owe having become a painter to flowers.  
~ Claude Monet*



## Slug Control

The most important thing is to clean up all the garden debris in the fall. This gets rid of a lot of slug and snail eggs that were likely to emerge in the spring. In February we use the blue slug pellet and distribute it around the garden like seeds. This gets rid of the first generation of slugs and snails that are emerging in the spring.



When the leaves are emerging we use a garlic spray that does not kill the slugs but irritates their nervous system and drives them into the neighbors' gardens. The spray does not kill them but it does kill slug eggs in the soil.

To make the garlic spray crush one bulb of garlic and add it to one quart of water and boil it for 5 minutes. Now strain the liquid, cool and store in the refrigerator. When ready to apply add one tablespoon of the garlic solution to one quart of water and spray the foliage.

Several years ago I bought sheets of copper flashing and had it cut into 6 inch strips with which to line my hosta beds. An Alpine-L contributor noted that his experience with copper barriers was a complete failure. Very quickly I noticed slime trails going up and over the strips. Apparently the hostas were too attractive to them to slow them down.

I've never tried cracked corn, but dry dog or cat food also attracts them. I had a neighbor who created traps from 2 liter plastic drink bottles. She cut off the tops (maybe 5 inches from the top), turned the top backward and attached to the bottom, and then put some dog food in. The slugs climbed in but couldn't find the small hole to crawl back out.

I'd forgotten about that--think I'll try it again!

Excerpts from a talk by June Colley and John Baker

*What is a weed?  
A plant whose virtues have never been discovered.*

*~Ralph W. Emerson*



## Seed Starting Containers

You can start right now by making a little space on a garage shelf or hidden box and begin saving little containers for seed starting. I promise you'll collect more recycled items than you can believe and it's really awesome not to spend any money this spring on new plastic seed cells or pots.

Seeds will also appreciate a little babying while they germinate by giving them some humidity. If you don't have a plastic lid, you can make-shift a cover out of plastic baggies and bamboo sticks or chopsticks to hold it in place over the containers.

### Seed container ideas:

- yogurt cups
- toilet paper or paper towel rolls (cut 2/4 times)
- sour cream and cottage cheese containers
- Egg cartons and their lids (even egg shell halves)
- Plastic milk or juice containers (use the bottom)
- Paper, plastic, or Styrofoam cups
- Salad or sandwich plastic deli trays
- Tiny snack-sized Ben & Jerry ice cream containers
- 



You get the idea. Be sure you wash the containers out thoroughly and **don't forget your drainage holes.**

~Chris McLaughlin, contributor to Vegetable Gardener



## January Meeting Report

The January 18, 2015, meeting of the Allegheny Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society was called to order in Northland Library at 2:10 by Vice Chair Karen Schmidt. Chair Len Lehman was recovering at home from recent surgery. The entire membership wished him well.

Vice Chair Karen Schmidt introduced the speakers, Carol Przyborski and Debbie Meyer. Their presentation, *Deb and Carol's Excellent Adventure in the Southern Rocky Mountains*, chronicled their trip to the NARGS convention in Santa Fe. Pictures from the Dale Ball Trail showed a variety of wildflowers, lichens, mosses and cactus. The highlight, however, was the Ponderosa Pine. The ladies showed scenes from the Taos Ski Valley and gardens that showcased organic gardening, troughs carved from stone, and plantings in stone walls and steps. Carol and Debbie toured Albuquerque BioPark Aquarium and Botanic Garden, which included a rose garden, a Japanese garden, a children's fantasy garden, water features, planters and beautiful artwork. They concluded with a visit to the Santa Fe Botanical Garden. A refreshment break followed.

The Business Meeting began with the reading of the November 16, 2014, minutes by Secretary Dianne Passoth. Janice Klingelhofer moved and Al Deurbrouck seconded that the minutes be approved as read. The motion unanimously passed.

Patty McGuire read the Treasurer's Report. There were 3 checks written and 5 deposits. The Audit Committee review of the books 2012 through 2014 showed financial records were in perfect order. The Committee thanked and commended Treasurer Patty McGuire for her outstanding work.

Vice Chair Karen Schmidt gave the audience a preview of upcoming club events. She then thanked Committee Chair Trish Abrams and others who helped with repackaging seeds for the NARGS seed exchange.

The purchase of a new projector and the wording for the trough section of the Rock Garden Show will be discussed at the next meeting. Please advise if you are interested in carpooling or in need of a ride.

Contact Al Deurbrouck if you want Styrofoam boxes, and he will bring them to the meeting. It was suggested that we plant a few Styrofoam troughs to sell at the May show. Al had pots available for sale – 20 for \$1.00.

Steve Plato made a motion to donate \$100 to the National Aviary and \$100 to the Western PA Conservancy. Michelle Newton seconded. The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

The meeting adjourned at 3:25. The afternoon ended with a raffle.  
~Dianne Passoth, Secretary

## NARGS Book Review



*The Plant Lover's Guide to Snowdrops*, Naomi Slade, Timber Press, (April 22, 2014); 254 pp, hardcover; publisher's price \$24.95, Amazon price: \$18.27.

This book confirms the fact that in the heart of every gardener lie the primal cells of a galanthophile. Yes, we have heard the mutterings: "they all look the same", but a quick flip through the photographs is enough to convince the reader that the Brits may be on to something.

This something has been going on for a few centuries in Great Britain, but is now being embraced by a growing number of North Americans.

Cutting to the chase, the reason to buy the book is the 60 pages dedicated to approximately 60 species and cultivars. Each of these is described by height, flowering time, cultivation difficulty, and distinguishing features. This is followed by one to two paragraphs dedicated to the origin of each species or cultivar.

A color photograph filling one half to a full page accompanies each galanthus. In these pages, the reader can begin to appreciate the uniqueness of such lovelies as "Lady Elphinstone," "Yaffle," "Diggory," and the simple elegance of species such as *fosteri*, *gracilis*, and *plicatus*.

Often, books dedicated to a specific genus are collected for a future reference. These are not often read cover to cover. "The Plant Lover's Guide to Snowdrops" entertains the reader with discussions of the history of collectors and the stories regarding various episodes in the history of galanthomania.

*Reviewed by Terry Laskiewicz who has a one acre garden, part woodland, part alpine slope in southwest Washington along the Columbia River. In the greenhouse, primroses as well as fritillaria and many other bulbs are cultivated, many grown from NARGS seed.*

You may read the entire review at [Nargs.org](http://Nargs.org).

## February Meeting Report

The February 15, 2015 meeting of the Allegheny Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society was called to order in Northland Library at 2:15 by Chair Len Lehman. He thanked the members and the one guest for venturing out on such a cold day.

The Business Meeting began with Secretary Dianne Passoth reading the January 18 minutes. Susan Benn moved and Patty McGuire seconded the minutes be approved as read and the motion passed unanimously.

Patty McGuire presented the Treasurer's Report. Four checks were written and two deposits made. Linda Kalcevic moved and Susan Benn seconded that the report be accepted.

### Old Business:

- The audit report was received. Linda Kalcevic moved and Lily Villasenor seconded; there were no dissenting votes.
- In regard to the wording of the trough and fairy garden category rules for in the show and sale, it was decided that no action would be taken until Lyn Lang returns.
- No one correctly identified the Mystery Plant described in the last issue of *Alpine News*. Len revealed it was an *Electric Light Plant*, a member of the *campanula* family. He introduced the group to this elusive beauty. A new Mystery Plant contest will be in every issue of the newsletter.
- Len brought the latest addition to our library, *Designing and Planting a Woodland Garden*. Approximately 40 books are available for members to borrow for one month. Patty McGuire is cataloging the books and will bring books as requested.
- Patty advised that the club received letters from the National Aviary and the Western PA Conservancy thanking us for our recent donations.
- For those interested in sharing a ride, a sign-up sheet will be available.

### New Business:

Len Lehman reviewed the upcoming meetings:

- The March 15 program on pocket gardens will be held at the Aviary, which will give us an opportunity to enjoy early spring flowers in the rock garden.
- The April 19 meeting, which will be **held at St. John's Lutheran Church across from Northland Library**, will feature Dieter Zschummel, a speaker from NARGS, presenting *One Year in our Garden in the Middle of Germany*. Festivities begin at 4:00, dinner at 5:00, and the speaker at 6:30. The Club will provide ham and chicken. Members are asked to bring a salad, a vegetable, or a dessert. Please RSVP to Patty McGuire and indicate what you plan to provide.
- The June 28 meeting will be held at DJ's Greenhouse. A terrarium workshop is on the agenda. Vice-Chair Karen Schmidt described the type of container we should look for.

Al Deurbrouck explained rules for the May show and sale. One change should be noted—you must own a plant for a period of at least 60 days before it can be entered into the May Plant Show. It was the consensus of the group that this be accepted as Club policy.

Patty McGuire moved and Susan Benn seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

After a refreshment break and a raffle, Len Lehman conducted a seed planting workshop. As always, the participants benefited greatly from Len's knowledge and experience.

Submitted by Dianne Passoth



*... each spring...a gardening instinct, sure as the sap rising in the trees, stirs within us. We look about and decide to tame another little bit of ground.*

*~Lewis Gantt*

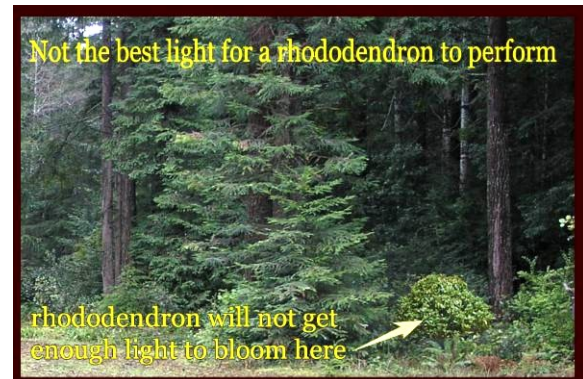


## The Right Plant for Your Location

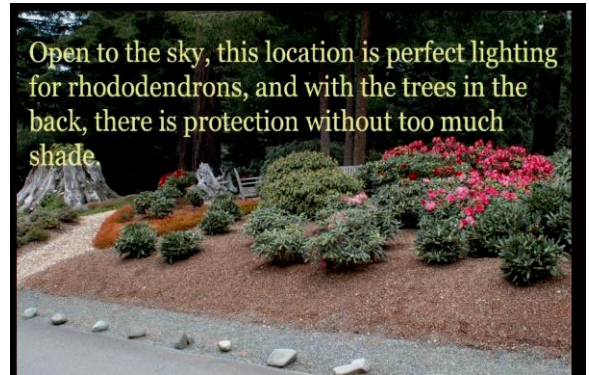
You obviously wouldn't plant a rhododendron in the desert, nor should you plant a gardenia outside in Minnesota. Each location will have a unique set of conditions that dictate what plants will thrive there. There are more conditions across the USA to address them all. I will mention a few that make sense here in our coastal northern California area. Below are some suggestions for

placing rhododendrons where they will bloom well. Rhododendrons require good light, not necessarily full sun exposure, to bloom well. In the summer months rhododendrons are making flower buds for the next year, and if they have ample light and food, they will create more new flower buds than leaf buds.

Many gardeners plant rhododendrons and azaleas in dark shade, as in the photo below, thinking that is where they will best perform.

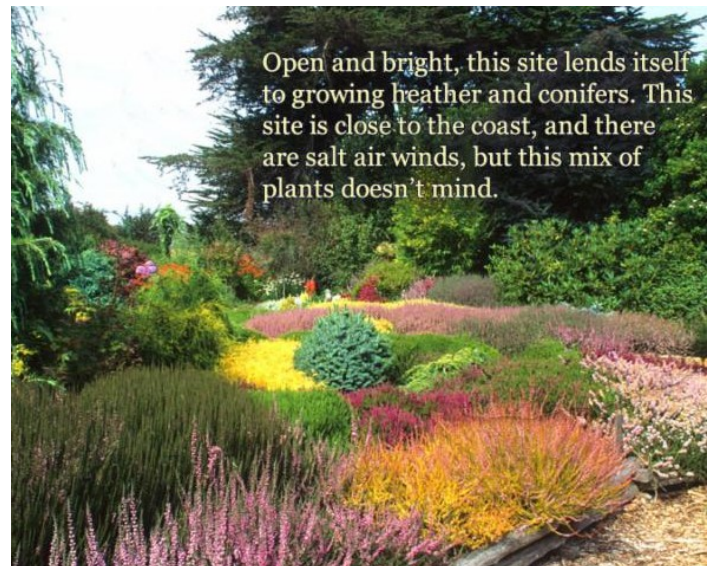


This is usually a mistake. Although a rhododendron will survive just fine in dark shade, they will not bloom much, if at all. So, give your plants ample light (even the north side of your home is fine as there is ample light from the sky) and they will reward you with a lovely display in the spring.



Here by a stream ferns and primula thrive, but plants like heathers or rhododendrons would not. There is too much shade and wet soil for plants that need good drainage and light. Look for plants that like the same conditions as these thriving plants to add here. Iris, Ranunculus, or Gunnera would be some possibilities.

**Windy Locations:** There are a few plants that can thrive in the windy location, most being conifers and ornamental grasses. If your location is super windy, it may be advisable to plant a windbreak. Cypress and Cryptomeria work well.



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## Annuals for the Rock Garden by Mike Kintgen, Denver Botanic Garden (Part 1)

Often overlooked for our beloved choice buns, mats and cushions, annuals can offer color to rock gardens when it is needed most—the dog days of summer or other times after the peak flush of perennial alpine and saxatile plants has faded. Annuals add an extra dimension to the rock garden—those that bloom all summer, given reasonable care, those that are programmed to be short bursts of color in the spring and some unsung heroes that are really biennials but bloom for so long they act like annuals. All of the plants below I have had at least some experience with in my Denver, Colorado gardens, either at Denver Botanic Gardens, or in the personal gardens I have had since a young age. Generally where a particular plant has not performed well, it is when I skimped on water, an easy thing to do in often hot and dry Denver, especially when grown in containers. One thing we do not have much of in Denver is humidity combined with nights above 70F. Heat and humidity may affect the performance of some of these plants by shorting their bloom span. With others, especially those in the summer long color section, it may actually improve their performance.

### Summer-long color

#### *Angallis monelii*

Mention the word scarlett pimpernel and gardens shriek, weed, weed! However just like any genus you cannot judge the whole genus by one or two thugs.



*Anagallis monelii* is a complex species from around the Mediterranean basin

found in both blue and orange. Various forms are available; one of the best for me has been 'Skylover.' It has gentian blue flowers through the summer on ever-lengthening stems. I use it as a rambler, so keep it away from your small choice items. Otherwise, it will send them to the big garden in the sky. It has since politely self-sowed in the area where I originally had it, never too much and honestly I could use a few more. 'Skylover' seems to be fine with heat; it came through the summer of 2012, when Denver set a record of 72 days above 90 degrees and hit 105 degrees twice in a 5 day consecutive streak of 100+ temps. In total we had 10 days above 100. It was a great test of plants.

The Wildcat Series from the University of New Hampshire is also nice and includes blue and orange. I could not tell the difference between 'Skylover' and the blue Wildcat except I think the Wildcat series is a bit leggier.

However none of the *Anagallis* in cultivation compare with *Anagallis monelli* var. *monelli* in the orange form found in Morocco. This plant has flirted with cultivation on several occasions and

made a big splash in Colorado after it was reintroduced in 2006 from a trip to Morocco. Much more compact and a short-lived perennial in Colorado; it came through most of our winters. Sadly it seems to have slipped through our hands as only 1 clone persisted to the propagation state. Our gardens are poorer for it.

*Anagallis* prefer full sun to part shade and a well-drained soil. It is best established from plants set out in the coolness of early spring.

*Bacopa* (*Sutera cordata*). Native to South Africa and other places, this genus has burst onto the scene over the last 20 or so years. Delicate ground covers generally used in containers and hanging baskets, they would fit in to rock gardens if kept away from tiny gems. They should bloom all summer and seem to resist heat and humidity. They do not relish drought and in Denver letting them dry out means no flowers for a while, as they recover.

*Bacopa* do best with full to part shade, regular water and decent soil. They are best established from plants set out after the last frost. A regular liquid fertilizer might also promote heavier bloom, but it is not required.

*Bulbine frutescens* 'Tiny Tangerine.' South Africa offers us all kinds of cool plants for summer color. *Bulbine* 'Tiny Tangerine' is one of my favorites. In Denver, it blooms all season until we drop below 28 or 25 degrees in the fall. It's often used in Texas, so you know it takes heat and humidity. The cultivar 'Tiny Tangerine' is more refined and compact than regular yellow *Bulbine fruticosa*, which is a workhorse as well; its delicate orange flowers with a yellow center are welcome all summer.

*Bulbine* loves full sun and the more baking the better. The only things it does not tolerate are poorly drained soils and shade. It is a great plant to fill that hot dry corner that nothing lives in. It is easily established as young plants or even cuttings set out after the last frost. It can be overwintered in a sunny window.



*Calibrachoa*. Related to petunias, these flashy plants from Argentina, Brazil and neighboring countries come in a wide array of colors with a creeping to mounding growth habit. They seem to tolerate heat and humidity, but are not very drought-loving. Keep the

moisture levels even for a summer long display. *Calibrachoa* prefer full sun and regular irrigation. A regular application of liquid fertilizer will help them keep up with their profuse rate of flowering. If they get leggy they can be cut back. They are established by setting out plants after danger of frost.