

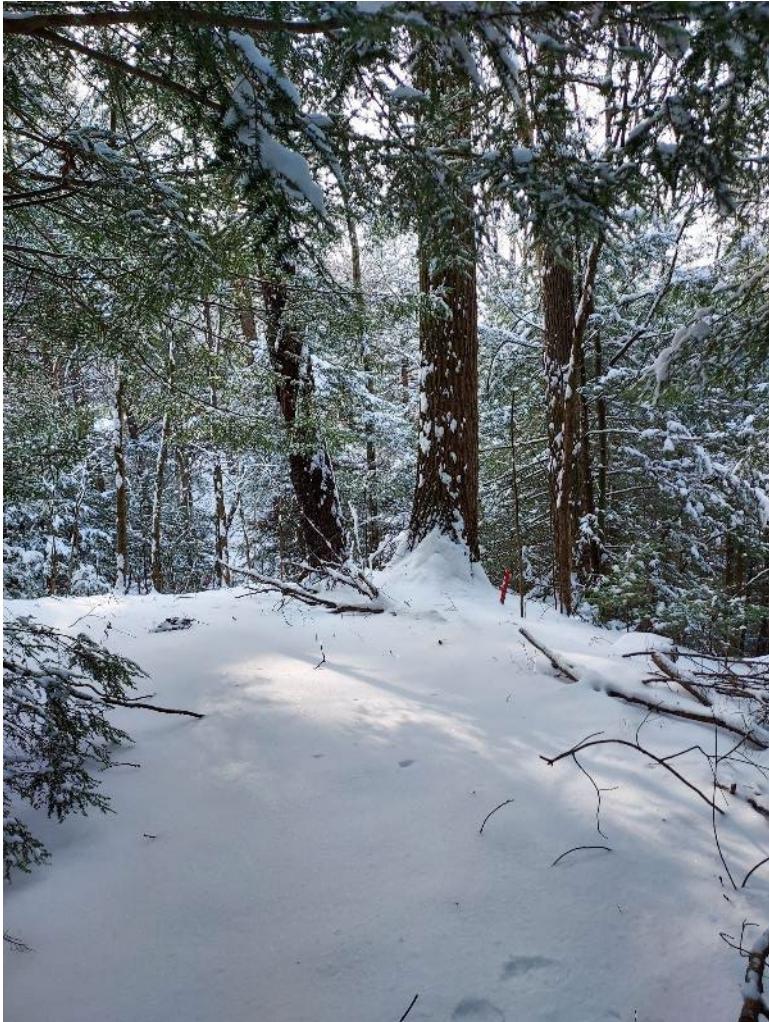
Alpine Line

NEWSLETTER

ALLEGHENY CHAPTER NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY 1ST QUARTER 2026

Message from the Chair

 Leslie Kaplan speaks to the membership on plans and happenings.



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 Facebook and Instagram

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**PSST! GET YOUR AQUILEGIA
FLABELLATA VAR. PUMILA PLANT READY
TO ENTER IN THE CHAIR'S CHOICE CLASS
AT OUR 2026 PLANT SHOW.**



Putty Root, Adam & Eve,
Aplectrum hyemale

Upcoming Meetings at locations listed. This schedule is current plan. Changes to schedule will be updated in newsletters or email.

Date	Speaker, Topic	, Location
JANUARY 18 AT 2PM	Leslie Kaplan, NARGS AGM 'Rocky adventures in Wyoming and Montana'	Christ Church (Tyndall Chapel)
FEBRUARY 15 AT 2PM Need Volunteers	Seedex Surplus Round Organizational Mtg and Soup Meeting. Loan speaks on tips for better camera photos	Nancy Knauss' home Bring tables & folding chairs
MARCH TBD	Seedex Surplus Round and Pot up	Nancy Knauss' home
APRIL 19	Judy Semoc 'Bogs and Ferns: rare habitats in need of protection'	National Aviary
APRIL 25 9AM-3:30	Garden Marketplace and Landscape Symposium	Hampton Community Center
MAY 3 AT 9:30-2:00	Show and Sale Trough demo and plants focus	Soergel Orchards and Garden Center
MAY 9 AT 9AM-2PM	Gardenfest	O'Hara Twp Park
JUNE 7 AT 9:30AM	Breakfast and Bog-making	DJ's Greenhouse & Gardens
JULY 26 AT 2PM	Garden tour	Ed Bennett's home
AUGUST 16 AT 2PM	Picnic	Alcoa Shelter Hampton Community Park
SEPTEMBER 20	Speaker TBD	Christ Church
OCTOBER 11 OR 18	Traveling speaker TBD	Beechwood Farms
NOVEMBER 8 AT 2PM	Banquet	St Joseph Church
DECEMBER	No Meeting HAPPY HOLIDAY	

Meeting locations:

Christ Church, (Tyndall Chapel)
410 Christ Church Lane,
Pittsburgh (Fox Chapel), PA
15238

Nancy Knauss

National Aviary
700 Arch St
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
Hampton Community Center

Soergel Orchards and Garden Center
2573 Brandt School Rd
Wexford, PA 15090

Hampton Community Center
3200 Lochner Wy, Allison Park, PA 15101

O'Hara Twp Community Park
330 Fox Chapel Rd
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

DJ's Greenhouse & Gardens
1004 E Lake Rd
Transfer, PA 16154

Ed Bennett

Alcoa Shelter, Hampton Community Park, 3101 McCully Road, Allison Park, PA 15101

Beechwood Farms
614 Dorseyville Rd
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

St. Joseph Church
342 Dorseyville Rd
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

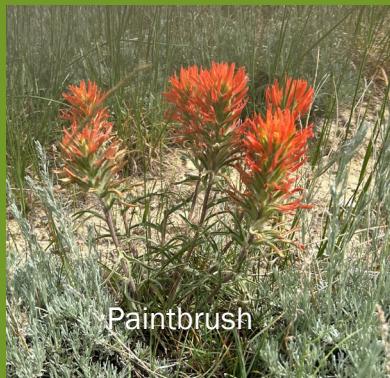
DON'T FORGET TO ENTER YOUR CHAIR'S CHOICE
AQUILEGIA FLABELLATA VAR. PUMILA
GET 'EM READY FOR THE PLANT SHOW 2026!



“We have an interesting set of events planned for the first quarter...”



Lupines



Paintbrush



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends

I'm always happy when we pass the winter solstice and I know that Spring is on the way. Each extra second of light we gain, day-by-day, brings spring's unfurling leaves and flowers closer!

Since the snow (for now) has melted and the sun is out, I was out this morning checking on the plants in my troughs, which seem to be holding up rather well. In the fall, I sprinkled randomly chosen NARGS seeds over a couple of them, and I was excited to see seedlings emerge this fall. Since the last of the snow has melted, I was delighted to see that they are still evident, perky and green. It will be interesting to see how they develop this year and try to identify what they actually are (I neglected to keep track, not recommended!)

We have an interesting set of events planned for the first quarter, starting on January 18 (at Christ Church, Fox Chapel) for our first Meeting of 2026: the NARGS Annual General Meeting 'Rocky Adventures in Wyoming and Montana'. I will be talking about the amazing plants (and scenery) of the Bighorn, Absaroka, Beartooth, and Snowy Range Mountains.

In late February and early March our Chapter is responsible for filling the NARGS Seed Exchange (SEEDEX) Surplus round orders. This is a big, fun job which will require lots of volunteer hours – but the more who volunteer, the less any one person must do! We will be looking for team leaders and hope that all of you will sign up for shifts of filling and checking orders. Nancy Knauss has volunteered her nice basement for the SEEDEX and our February 15 meeting will be there: Soups to share, a short program by Loan Hutton on Phone Photography, and organization/orientation for the SEEDEX. Toward the end of March, we will also plan a day of potting up at Nancy's for the Sale, more information later!



-Leslie Kaplan, Chair



We now have 411 Facebook followers
and 113 Instagram followers!
We have never looked so good!!
Keep gardening with rock garden plants.

The new hashtag, #chaptermembermonday posts have gotten a good number of *views* and *likes*. I'd love to post pictures from our chapter members every Monday.

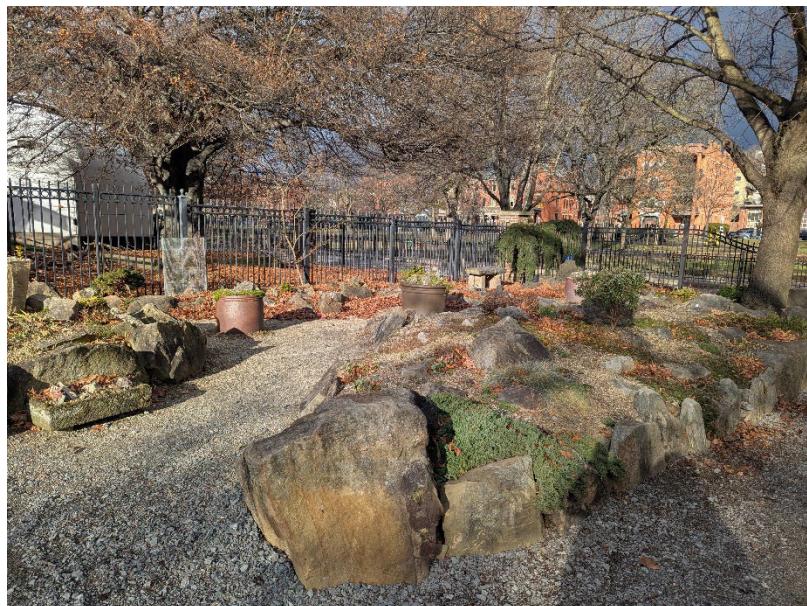
The photo does NOT have to be a rock garden plant you are growing. Please also name the plant and anything special about the origin or a story. **Please continue liking, commenting, and sharing the posts to your personal page...this is how we build a larger audience.**

Many thanks, Barb

The Aviary Rock Garden

Winter 2025-26

We put the Aviary Rock Garden to bed for the winter in late November, removing the last leaves, at least until more blow in! We erected winter protection for the Japanese maple (from rabbits and deer) and the Osmanthus shrub from winter wind damage. The amazing Daphne was still blooming when Leslie took this photo on December 29th.



Aviary Rock Garden Update

After two years of hot and dry summers, let's hope 2026 will bring more consistent moisture. We have learned to resist installing new plants in spring and wait until fall when rain is more dependable. We're looking forward to the spring bulbs and hellebores, including a few of the blue Iris reticulata received at the annual banquet. **Regular maintenance will resume on Thursday, March 12, weather permitting.** The current plan is to continue with the traditional schedule of maintenance on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month from **9:00 to 11:00**. The full year's schedule is included here. As we work in the garden, we discover it is admired by visitors from all over the U.S.A. as well as local and Pittsburgh area residents. We are grateful to all of the members who participate

in maintaining this beautiful garden on the North Side. A couple of new volunteers joined us in 2025, and we could use help from additional members in 2026. Please consider reserving a few days to visit the rock garden and help with watering, weeding, trimming and picking up leaves. Reminders will be sent by email on maintenance weeks. Other **plans for this year include adding more gravel to the beds and pathway** and the inevitable excavation of Belgium blocks where tree roots have raised them. With the abundance of seedlings from Paul Spriggs' "Easy Ten", there may be an opportunity to pot up extra plants for our spring sale. Later in the season after choice alpine flowers have bloomed, it may be possible to collect mature seeds to sow at home or donate to the NARGS Seed Exchange. See you in the garden in 2026 on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month:

March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
12, 26	9, 23	14, 28	11, 25	9, 23	13, 27	10, 24	8, 22	12

Alan Peacock

October 10, 1939 - December 17, 2025

Alan Peacock left this earth on Wednesday, December 17, 2025, to join his beloved Patricia Bishop Peacock, his wife of 42 years. Alan was 86 years old at the time of his passing. Alan was born and raised in East London just as World War II began. His first recollection was the dropping of bombs during the Blitz and hurrying to the Anderson bomb shelter buried in the back garden of his family's home. Alan and Patricia grew up in the same neighborhood in Dagenham, met at the local junior high school, became friends and started dating. Alan continued his education beyond high school and after an apprenticeship started his long career as an engineer, first with airplanes (including the Concorde) and then specializing in longwall coal mining. He married Pat in 1961. The couple moved to the southern coast of England. During this time, they welcomed their two children, Joanne and Richard. His work moved the family to Cheltenham. In 1975, an opportunity resulted in the Peacock family's move to the United States and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where Alan and Pat raised their children and remained for the rest of their lives. Sadly, Pat fell victim to cancer and died in 2003. Although always a proud Brit, Alan loved the city of Pittsburgh and living in the United States. He became a US citizen in 2017. Alan never stopped learning and creating. In his retirement, he pursued varied interests. The list is long but includes traveling abroad and the United States, antique cars, RVing, gardening, wildflower collecting, mushroom spotting, rowing, rock gardens and birding. He really enjoyed writing and worked on many volumes of his memoirs as well as novels. Alan was a talented and prolific artist and recently immersed himself in watercolors. His artwork, including paintings of pets are treasured by his family and friends. Alan will be interred with Pat, the love of his life, at Allegheny Memorial Park Cemetery, Pittsburgh. (Excerpted obituary posted on Simons Funeral Home)



“[Bulbs] provide one-step food shopping for bees...”

Some bulbs bees like:

Early Spring



glory of the snow - (*Chionodoxa* spp.)
reticulated iris - (*Iris reticulata*)
spring beauty - (*Claytonia virginica*)
snowdrops - (*Galanthus* spp.)
winter aconite - (*Eranthis hyemalis*)
wood squill - (*Scilla siberica*)

Mid Spring

fumewort - (*Corydalis solida*)
grape hyacinth - (*Muscari* spp.)
Grecian windflower - (*Anemone blanda*)



wood anemone - (*Anemone nemorosa*)

the Florentine tulip, the woodland tulip - (*Tulipa sylvestris*)

Late Spring

Dutch iris - (*Iris hollandica*)
English bluebells - (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*)
hyacinth - (*Hyacinthus* spp.)
quamash - (*Camassia* spp.)

Tell Us About It – PLANT BULBS : FEED BEES by Elise Ford

On an unseasonably warm day in February, worker bees leave their hive to forage. After a long winter, honey and pollen supplies are low, the queen soon will begin laying eggs, and food stores must be replenished to feed the colony and a new generation of worker bees. The late winter landscape is bleak but the blooms of some early-flowering bulbs have just opened. Early-blooming bulbs and those that flower later in spring, provide the sugar-carbohydrate nectar and the protein/fat-rich pollen that bees need for survival until wildflowers and spring perennials bloom. Nectar will be converted to honey in the hive and, when combined with pollen, eventually will feed bee larvae.

Every garden has room for a few spring bulbs but bulbs planted in masses or drifts have greater visual impact and provide ‘one-step’ food shopping for bees. Some bulbs even naturalize and can be planted in lawns and woodland gardens. Research bulbs before purchasing. **Many bulbs are deer, rabbit, and rodent resistant.** Some bulbs are North American natives, others are not. Some prefer a sunny location while others are more appropriate in a part-shade woodland garden. Determine if the bulbs you like are viable in your USDA growing zone. **Choose cultivars that have single flowers;** bees often cannot reach nectar at the bottom of double-flowering forms. Avoid over-hybridized varieties as nectar and pollen often have been bred out of these bulbs. Instead, plant species and heirloom bulbs whose flowers bees love to visit. Extend the flowering season of the bulbs in your garden by choosing early, mid, and late spring-blooming bulbs. Also, be aware that **bees are attracted to blue, purple, white, and yellow flower colors.** Most importantly, ensure that your bulbs have not been cultivated using systemic neonicotinoid insecticides. Studies have shown a link between neonicotinoids and declining bee populations. Reputable bulb growers should include this information in their literature.

Plant spring-flowering bulbs between the end of September and the end of November when the soil temperature is below 60 degrees F. Plant in loose, well-drained soil that has a pH between 6-7 and add bone meal or bulb fertilizer before planting. For a natural look, drop handfuls of bulbs from waist height and plant where they land. Most bulbs are planted 2-3 times deeper than their height. Make certain to plant the flat end down and the pointed end facing up. Bulb can be a catchall term. Determine whether you have purchased corms, tubers, rhizomes, or true bulbs as they may require different planting depths. Always **follow the planting instructions** that accompany your bulb purchase. Be a thoughtful gardener. Plant bulbs this autumn, not only for your delight next spring but to feed bees. The bees, in return, will pollinate your flowers, vegetables, shrubs, and fruit and ornamental trees. Everyone wins!



allium

Dormant plants are to be uncovered March 1st to begin growing for the Allegheny Chapter 2026 Plant Sale



PROPAGATION UPDATE –

The pots and seedlings from 2025 are covered in tarps and snow. The dormant plants are scheduled to be uncovered March 1st to begin recovering from a long, variably temperatured, polar vortexed winter. Who knows what we'll find growing from the NARGS Seed Exchange seedlings started in the summer or what new seeds will germinate after cycling through the cold stratification of the past several months. The pictures shown in this section are part of a selection of plants ordered for the plant sale as pre-germinated plugs. These will be potted up early March into larger pots and grown up to saleable size for 2026.



ACHILLEA MILLEFOLIUM
NEW VINTAGE TERRACOTTA



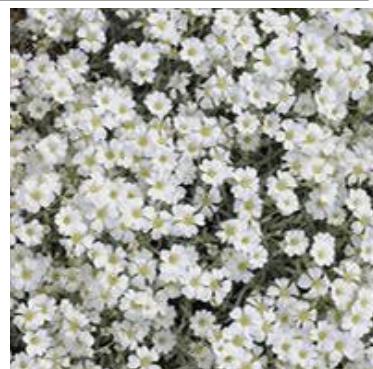
ALLIUM MILLENIUM (Rosy
Purple)



ALYSSUM WULFENIANUM
GOLDEN SPRING



ARMERIA MARITIMA
RUBRIFOLIA



CERASTIUM TOMENTOSUM
YO YO



CERATOSTIGMA
PLUMBAGINOIDES



GALIUM ODORATUM (SWEET
WOODRUFF)



LYCHNIS ARKWRIGHTII
ORANGE GNOME

These pictures are a sampling of what is in store for the spring NARGS Allegheny Chapter 2026 Plant Sale. Join with other volunteers to help make this a grand show this year. Come to the pot up! Let's raise some healthy plants.

OFFICERS

CHAIR

Leslie Kaplan

VICE CHAIR

Marie Tkacik

SPEAKER COORDINATOR

Karen Schmidt

SECRETARY

Joanne Burzese

TREASURER

Patty McGuire

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

AWARDS

Patty McGuire

BANQUET

FACEBOOK

Barb Kline

LIBRARY

Patty McGuire

MEMBERSHIP & PROOFREADER

Lyn Lang (temporary)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Marie Tkacik

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT

Sue Colaizzi

PLANT SHOW

Michele Newton

PLANT SALE

Nancy Knauss

PROPAGATION

Bill Barnes

SEED EXCHANGE

Patty McGuire

WEBMASTER

Lyn Lang (temporary)

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.

