

ALPINE LINE

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2017

Newsletter of the Allegheny Chapter of the NARGS

Message from the Chair, *Karen Schmidt*



I thought summer was over when we started getting the cool days and colder nights. I got all my house plants inside, and now we are getting a warm up. Since we are getting some great weather, I hope you can get out and get all those final projects done before winter is here. I have been challenged with large branches coming down this summer. One was in my garden. The area was such a mess after being crushed and then more of a mess as we removed the debris. That gave me an opportunity to add a new shade garden. I dug up the whole area and removed the plant material. Then after amending all I needed was more plants. I

just attended a seminar that had some wonderful vendors and was able to add to my Epimedium, Coral Bell and Solomon Seal collections, so that was good timing.

At the September meeting Paul Zammit from the Toronto Botanical Garden spoke on "Succulents." Everyone seemed to enjoy the topic and the entertaining speaker. The final meeting on November 19 will be with Michael Szesze from Carnivorous Plant Nursery. He will do a presentation on carnivorous plants. Mark your calendar for the seed packing workshop on Thursday, December 7th. There will be more information closer to the time.

We are going to do the same as last year for the banquet on October 21 at 5 p.m.. We are going to have it catered at the church across from the library. I need help with table decorations and giveaways. If anyone would like to help, please let me know. There will not be a speaker and it will be more of a social activity. We will do the gift exchange again. Please bring a garden related item worth \$15. There will be more information later in the year.

As my four year term as vice-chair and chair is coming to the end, I want to thank all those that helped out and made the group run smoothly. If you are not helping, please consider how you can help to better the group. It should not be on the shoulders of few, but divided among many. Any help would be appreciated, so next year please offer to assist the new officers any way you can.

The Annual Awards Banquet

will be held October 21 at 5:00 PM

We will again meet at the St John's Lutheran Church, 311 Cumberland Road, 412-364-1606, across the street from the Northland Library. There will be no speaker. This will be a social meeting with the 2017 awards being presented. Please bring a garden related item worth approximately \$15 for a gift exchange. There will be door prizes and table gifts. This year the table gifts will be miniature bulbs - Daffodil 'Canyon Wren', Iris 'Aucheri', and Crocus 'Zwanenberg Bronze'

November 19 at
Northland Library at
2:00 PM

Mike Szesze will present a talk and workshop on Carnivorous Plants. Mike is the owner and operator of Carnivorous Plant Nursery in Derwood, Maryland. He is an award-winning science teacher of 32 years and an accomplished photographer.

MYSTERY PLANT FOR OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER NEWSLETTER



No one entered the last mystery plant contest. The plant was Acantholimon species. Acantholimons are often called Spiny Dianthus.



This month's mystery plant is an oddball of the Tulip clan. As with all tulips, its native range is in the "stan" countries of the Asian Himalayas. Its common name reflects its twisted and spike-like petals of red color. An easily grown species, it is a stand out for rock gardens where it will persist for years.

Members may enter as many times as they want regardless if they have won previously. Only requirement is to be first and correctly identify plant.

Send your answers to: Len Lehman

Upcoming Meeting Notices

Allegheny Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society

Date/Time	Location	Speaker	Activity
Jan 15, 2:00 PM Snacks: I - P	Northland Public Library	Len Lehman	The Truth About Ferns
Feb 19, 2:00 PM Snacks Q - Z	Northland Public Library	Mark Tebbitt	Seed Planting Workshop
Mar 19, 2:00 PM Snacks: A - H	Northland Public Library	Katie Schuller	Vertical Gardening
April 23, 2:00 PM Snacks I - P	National Aviary	Amanda Haney	Rock Gardening of Vancouver, BC
May 7, 9:00 AM	Soergel's Garden Center	Show & Sale	Show & Sale
Jun 11, 9:30 AM	DJ's Greenhouse	Q & A Session	Breakfast
July	No Meeting		
Aug 20, 2:00 PM	Pine Township Park		Picnic
Sept 17, 2:00 PM Snacks: Q - Z	Northland Library	Paul Zammit	Sedums for the Rock Garden
Oct 21, 5:00 PM	St. John's Lutheran Church		Awards Banquet
Nov 19, 2:00 PM Snacks: A - H	Northland Public Library	Mike Szesze	Carnivorous Plants Program
December	No Meeting		
Dec 7, 9:00 AM	Northland Public Library	Trish Abrams	Seed Packaging

Soergel's Garden Center Educational Series

2573 Brandt School Road, Wexford, PA 15090
Phone: 724-935-2090



Date/Time	Speaker	Activity
October 19, 7:00 PM	Aspen Bird Feed	Birding
November 16, 7:00 PM		Creative Ribbon & Bow Workshop
December 21, 6:00 PM		Fresh Holiday Centerpiece Workshop

JOIN NARGS TODAY

NARGS is for gardening enthusiasts interested in alpine, saxatile, and low-growing perennials and woody plants. Annual dues in the US and Canada are \$40, payable in US funds. VISA/MasterCard accepted.



Benefits of membership include: *Rock Garden Quarterly* with articles on alpiners and North American wildflowers, illustrated in color photographs and pen and ink drawings; annual Seed Exchange with thousands of plant species; study weekends and annual meetings in either US 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, USA.

The NARGS *Quarterly* is now online and members have free access at www.nargs.org/rock-garden-quarterly.

ANNUAL PICNIC - 2017

This year Patty McQuire brought fried chicken and spare ribs as our meat dishes and they were excellent, as was the food in general. We do have some real gourmet cooks who make the picnic a gastronomical delight.

The 50 cent plant sale was, as always, a bit of a madhouse as members continue to bring in some choice plants including a lot of dwarf reblooming iris from Amanda Haney.

There was a lot of interest in the Chinese auction where a number of mature gems were available. And of course Len Lehman was again the auctioneer and he again managed to bleed many of us out of just a few-more-dollars for some choice plant material and some other items. A large pot of the choice *Hosta* 'Pandora's Box' was gobbled up by Ron Sims.

A significant highlight of the picnic was the trough competition. This year we had only 13 entries, and some of the participants entered more than one. A disappointingly low number of you participated; however, again the quality of the entries was excellent. Please, next year consider bringing in a trough.



Sandy Ciccone (third picture down) won the Trough Show event and a \$25 gift certificate for Soergel's with as lovely a trough as you could image containing *Lithodora* 'White Star', *Sedum hispanicum* 'Spanish stonecrop', *Draba aizoides*, *Phlox silenefolia*, *Erigeron*, *Sempervivum* 'Desert Bloom', and *Sedum spathulifolium*.

Liz Low (fourth picture down) came in second place and won a \$20 gift certificate with a trough containing *Aeonium*, Desert Gems Cacti, Ponytail Palm, *Leucobryum*, *Polytrichum*, *Sempervivum*, and *Faucaria tigrina*. By the way, Liz entered three troughs - thanks Liz!

Lorraine Duffola (fifth picture down) came in third place and won a \$15 gift certificate. Her trough contained *Hosta* 'Hope', H. 'Lemon Lime', and H. 'Princess of Karafuto', Ripcord Red Cedar, *Allium senescens*, *Achillea x kellereri*, Walking fern, several sedums and stonecrops, and two other plants that Lorraine forgot the names of. It was a full trough!

A very short business meeting was held. Two items were discussed. First, Len Lehman has put together a nominating committee composed of himself, Dave Amrhein, and Susan Benn. The committee will report their selections at the September meeting for Chair and Vice-Chair. Additional nominations will be accepted from the attending members.

Second, Patty McGuire noted there was still some work to do on amendments to the by-laws. They will be finished and included in the O/N/D newsletter distributed by the first week in October so that we can discuss them at the October meeting.

HEY

We are always interested in receiving contributions from you either as articles written by you or sharing an interesting/informative article about rock gardening, send it to the *Alpine Line*.

The deadline for contributions is the **20th of Feb., Apr., Jul., Sep., and Dec.**

Please email your contribution to either:

Len Lehman

Al Deurbrouck

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

Thinking of You

If you would like to let Allegheny Chapter members know of a serious illness, death in the family, or help needed by a fellow member, you may send your message to the membership chair for communication to all the members.

Contact Lyn Lang

NARGS Seed Packing Workshop

The Workshop will take place Thursday, December 7th, 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM at our usual meeting place, Northland Public Library. This year we will start at 9:00 AM sharp. We will continue until 3:00. That way we can package 200 sleeves of seeds instead of the usual 100 sleeves. I hope you will sign up for 3 hours or more. If you do, and you are a NARGS national member, too, you will receive donor status. That way you can then order 10 more packets of seeds. If you can't help for 3 hours, 2 will be appreciated. The afternoon session will begin at noon until 3:00.

The job description is to pack and label seeds received from NARGS members all over the United States. Snacks and drinks will be provided. If you want, you can bring a surprise snack.

Let me know if you will help: **Trish Abrams**

Why Fall Is An Ideal Time to Plant

September and October is an excellent time to transplant [perennials](#), [shrubs](#) and trees, particularly in the Southwest, where winters are mild and the summers are extremely hot. Although you won't see a lot of stem and leaf growth in the fall, the plants are busy growing new roots. With the arrival of spring, the fall-planted garden is ready to burst forth with vigorous new growth and a profusion of flowers.

Fall Planting: Growing Strong Roots

80% of a plant's root growth occurs in the late summer and fall months. Root growth continues slowly through the late fall and winter, as long as the soil is not frozen. Better root growth increases the number of nutrients stored in the plant over the winter.

Compared to spring-planted perennials, which suffer a period of transplant shock, plants installed in the fall grow rapidly in the spring—with both substantial root growth, and more vigorous top growth and flowering.

With a more established root system, fall-planted trees, [shrubs](#), and [perennials](#) are much better able to handle the harsh, drying winds of spring and the withering heat of summer.

Fall Planting For Waterwise Gardening

Fall planting is better from a water-use perspective:

- As plants begin to go dormant in the fall, they use less water.
- The soil is cooler in the fall, so it stores moisture better.
- Watering is easier, because you have to water less frequently.
- Fall is less windy than spring. Wind dries out the soil quicker and dehydrates plants.

However, water is crucial during the fall and winter. Water regularly through the fall months, decreasing frequency as the daytime temperatures cool in late October and November. From 2-4 weeks after planting, the plant should be rooted, especially if [Superthrive root stimulator](#) is used at the time of planting.

Once a plant is established, watering frequency can be reduced. When the soil begins to freeze, soak it once every 2-3 weeks through the winter months, except when it is very cold and the ground is frozen solid.

Mulching is also essential to successful fall planting. It keeps the plants from drying out in the dry fall and winter weather, and will keep the soil frozen over the spring months to prevent frost heaving of the roots.

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THE BOOK CORNER

from

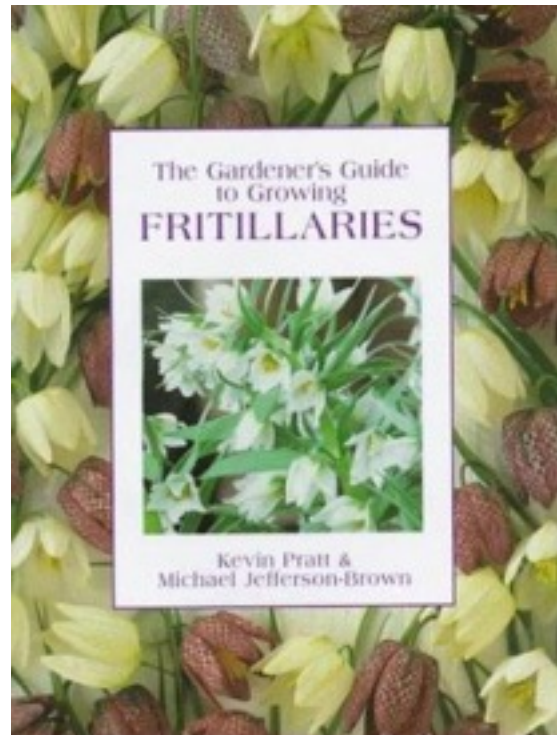
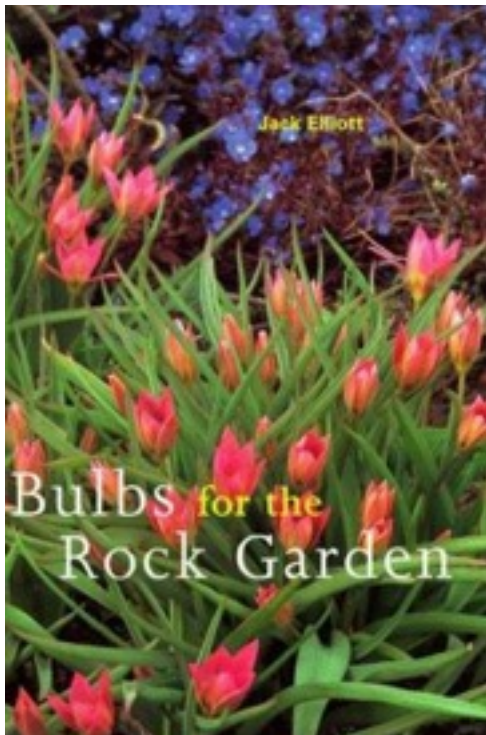
THE BUGCATCHER'S NET

As now is the time for planting bulbs for spring bloom and also the time of cool nights good for sitting in a cozy chair in front of a nice fire in the fireplace with a good book, it is time for increasing one's gardening skills.

A good book for the season is ***Bulbs for the Rock Garden*** by Jack Elliot. Eliot is one of the world's bulb experts and writes in clear concise wording. His hints at planting bulbs are designed for ease and beginning gardeners. This book is available from our club library!

Another good book that should be read this season and along the same lines is ***The Gardeners Guide to Growing Fritillaries*** by Pratt et al. Fritillaries or Guinea Hen Flower or Leper Lilies are delightful rock garden bulbs that, once established, will last for years. The name comes from a Roman name for a checkered dice box. Crown Imperial fritillaries are too tall for the rock garden but are stunning additions to a border. Others are dwarf and suitable for rock gardens. This books tells and shows us the different species and their growing conditions a good read for those who might want to try something different.

To read these books contact: Patty McGuire



What to do in the Garden Now

From the October 2017 issue of the Minnesota Chapter NARGS

October/November: Collect Seed, Cuttings for:

Indoors Seeds: The last rock garden seeds can be gathered, cleaned and donated to seed exchanges.

Alpine Cuttings: If you have a light stand or even cool, sunny window, choice, slow-rooting cuttings may be gathered and struck now. Use a clean deep flat filled with 1/2 commercial potting mix and 1/2 perlite, dampened. Wash the cuttings and dip in rooting hormone. Do not cover but mist 2 or 3 times a day. Suggested plants are saxifrages of all kinds, Auricula Primroses and other choice, restrained growers.

Woody Plants: Chamaecyparis and Juniperus are 2 conifers that root over winter in 1/2 peat and 1/2 perlite as do dwarf Rhododendrons. After washing, dip them in a strong rooting hormone and stick them into the medium in a plastic box under lights. These hardwood cuttings require a whole winter to root. Towards spring, new top growth signals rooting and they can be potted in peat and perlite.

December: Watering until the ground freezes preserves our garden plants, particularly evergreens. We have found it better not to cover the display rock gardens because it encourages vole damage and mold, although we may lose a few tender plants. However, the newly potted plants are collected in a place protected from winter sun and covered with a spun polyester sheet called Remya. This material allows water and light to enter and keeps drying winds out. In spring we will have proven hardy plants to share.



**These tips are from Betty Ann Addison's garden calendar which was printed in full in the March 2017 newsletter.*

