

ALPINE LINE

May/June/July 2017

**NEWSLETTER OF THE
ALLEGHENY
CHAPTER of NARGS**



49th ANNUAL SHOW AND SALE

The Allegheny Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society held its 49th annual Rock Garden Plant Show and Sale at Soergel Orchards on Sunday, May 7. The show is our opportunity to exhibit to the general public the beautiful and sometimes challenging plants we grow in our rock gardens and troughs, and again we can all be proud of the variety and quality of the plants entered in the show Sunday.

Our Annual Show & Sale went very well, and finally Mother Nature provided us with a reasonably nice day. The show itself was very nice. Considering the strange winter/spring we had this year, it was outstanding. Thank you to all who entered. It is obvious that many of us are taking advantage of entering containers – no digging and a lot less time and effort to get entries ready. And, of course, the prospect of losing the plant if dug up is eliminated. Also, thanks to our judges for a job well done – Sandy Feather, Bob Lynch and Mark Tebbitt; and our show clerks--Carol Przyborski and Sandy Ciccone, as well as our show and sale co-chairs—Debra Meyer and Lyn Lang for a job equally well done.

Following are the best in class and award winners.

Al Deurbrouck



Congratulations to all the 2017 winners!

On behalf of the Allegheny NARGS, we would like to thank visitors, exhibitors, judges and volunteers for creating such a special atmosphere for the event. We not only congratulate the prize winners but also look forward to building on this year's success for the future. The Show had 10 members enter plants with 80 entries.





AWARDS:

- Best Plant in Show - Class 4 - *Arisaema sikokianum* entered by Trish Abrams
- Best Trough in Show - Class 9 - Trough entered by Lyn Lang
- Chair's Choice Award - Class 11 - *Corydalis solida* 'Purple Bird' entered by Lyn Lang
- Daffodil & Hosta Society of WPA Award - Class 2 - *Trillium luteum* entered by Trish Abrams

HIGH CUMULATIVE SCORES AWARDS:

- First Place - Trish Abrams
- Second Place - Al Deurbrouck
- Third Place - Lyn Lang

2017 PLANT SHOW WINNERS

CLASS 1	 <p>A photograph of a flowering plant with numerous small, light purple flowers on thin green stems, growing in a blue plastic trough. The plant is set against a dark background.</p>	CLASS 2	 <p>A photograph of a Trillium luteum plant with three large, dark green leaves and a single yellow flower. It is in a blue plastic trough with moss and rocks. A blue and white award ribbon is visible in the foreground.</p>
	<i>Erinus alpinus</i> Al Deurbrouck		<i>Trillium luteum</i> Trish Abrams
CLASS 3	 <p>A photograph of a Primula kisoana plant with several large, pink flowers and green leaves, growing in a brown terracotta pot. A white sign with the number '2' and a blue award ribbon are visible in the background.</p>	CLASS 4	 <p>A photograph of an Arisaema sikokianum plant with a single large, dark green leaf and a tall, thin, reddish-purple stem. It is in a black plastic trough with rocks.</p>
	<i>Primula kisoana</i> Lyn Lang		<i>Arisaema sikokianum</i> Trish Abrams

2017 PLANT SHOW WINNERS

CLASS 5



Echinocereus triglochidiatus
Al Deurbrouck

CLASS 6



Hosta 'Mr. Asami'
Al Deurbrouck

CLASS 8



Tulips, dianthus, primrose,
coral bell leaves, narcissus, lily of the valley, ajuga
Trish Abrams

CLASS 9



Erinus alpinus, *Sempervivum 'Jade Rose'*,
Draba rigida bryoides 'Teenie Weenie',
Draba sp., *Primula auricula*, *Androsace villosa*,
Dianthus gratianopolitanus 'La Bourboule'
Lyn Lang

CLASS 10



Sedum forsterianum,
Sempervivum sp, *Hosta sp.*
Joanne Burzese

CLASS 11



Corydalis solida 'Purple Bird'
Lyn Lang

Some Choice Alliums

By Mark McDonough

The genus *Allium* is now estimated to encompass 800 - 1000 species, making it the largest genus of monocotyledons. Hundreds of species are suitable to the rock garden, valuable both for providing color in hot summer months and fall when few other bulbs are in evidence, and for their relative ease of culture. It is difficult to narrow down a se-



lection to just ten species. However, my selection is made on the basis of hardiness and reliability, dwarf stature, range of growth form, and extended season of bloom. Adding just a few *Alliums* to the rock garden or trough can add considerable interest and floral appeal, possibly leading to an alliaceous addiction. Let's proceed, with the species listed in no particular order or preference.

1. *Allium meteoricum* - A dwarf, refined species from Greece, Albania, and what we used to know as Yugoslavia. Like a tiny *A. pulchellum*, but with filiform foliage that remains prostrate and evergreen through the New England winter. Open umbels of perky bright pink flowers on 6" - 8" stems in July. Individual flowers are narrow tubes slightly pinched at the ends,

with flared tips. Best grown in a trough where its small dimensions can be appreciated. Easy to grow in well drained sandy soil, although sometimes shy to flower. Doesn't produce much seed.

2. *Allium przewalskianum* - This desirable dwarf species from China is gaining popularity. While easy to grow in well-drained sandy sites, the plants seem to fizzle out after a few years and should be maintained from seed-grown replacements. Makes clumps of narrow grayish foliage springing from bulbs covered with shaggy, reddish-orange, reticulated bulb coats. Purple flower globes appear in summer on 8" - 9" stems, distinctive on account of the stamens that bend at right angles above the flat florets.

3. *Allium paniculatum* - A highly variable entity with a large distribution over most of Europe, North Africa, and Asia. Often a tallish, slender plant to 20" or more, dwarf forms are also common. The only way to get some of the dwarf forms is to continually select *Allium paniculatum* from seed lists. The dwarf forms are most often obtained as misnomers when selecting other species from the seed exchanges. Typically, the dwarf forms are gregarious growers, making dense clumps of flaccid, grassy foliage. In mid-summer they flower rather profusely with informal jumbles of dangling bells, able to produce bouquets of bloom on 6" - 8" stems. The common color theme is white heavily stained with red or reddish brown, but there are all sorts of interesting variations such as pale yellow stained with brown (rather sordid in some clones), tan or parchment colored, pink, pinkish-brown, or white stained with green. My favorite selection is one I named *A. paniculatum* ssp. *fuscum* Jerry, one of the

best dwarf reds. It grows to about 10" tall, with a myriad clusters of white bells stained with red held on white pedicels, giving an overall effect of a unique, pale carnosus pink color.

4. *Allium sibthorpiatum* - One of the smallest species that looks terrific growing in a trough. Originally received as "Allium species from Turkey", this species is unmistakable on account of the unique raised "ribs" on the bulb, only apparent during certain periods of the plants growth cycle. In flower it resembles *A. paniculatum* in miniature, but with delightful clusters of silvery pink bells on decumbent 3" stems in summer. Fertilized flowers become deep raspberry rose. Quickly retreats into dormancy after flowering, the dwarf basal foliage re-sprouting in autumn and remaining healthy all winter. This species has recently become a "regular" in the seed exchanges.

5. *Allium kurtzianum* - This species from Turkey can be found in horticulture misidentified as *Allium olympicum* (originally identified as *A. olympicum* before the epithet *A. kurtzianum* was first recognized in 1983). This is an attractive dwarf species with terete grayish leaves and 3" - 5" silver stems that lie flat on the ground. When grown on a slope, the prostrate growth always faces downhill! Often two fragrant hemispheres of silvery pink blooms appear per bulb, peppered with yellow anthers. Flowers in July, then goes dormant afterwards. Readily hybridizes with *Allium flavum* ssp. *tauricum*, producing beautiful hybrids with semi-decumbent, intensely silver stems, and lively pink flowers. Grow *Allium kurtzianum* in a trough to appreciate its small proportions and prostrate growth habit.

6. *Allium flavum* ssp. *tauricum* - Familiar to most rock gardeners, *Allium flavum* is a pretty species with informal bursts of

bright yellow flowers in July, typically on stems 10-14" tall but possibly up to 18". The subspecies from Turkey, *Allium flavum* ssp. *tauricum*, is the one to look for. It is much smaller in stature, sometimes nearly prostrate, and frequently semi-decumbent to erect up to 12" tall. The common color theme is a pastel blend of pale yellow overlaid with pink, but almost any color is possible. After a decade of growing seed from selected color forms, a whole range of enticing cultivars has emerged. Some of these have been singled out, named, and propagated with the anticipation they'll be available through Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery one day. The following should whet your appetite:

Cinnamon - A robust plant with thick stocky silver 10"-12" stems and firm, curved gray foliage, building up into a multi-stemmed clump. Large many-flowered clusters of smoldering, burnt red-orange flowers. Unlike any else you've seen!

Hot Molasses - Shorter than the preceding, with dark, molten red-orange flowers in smaller clusters.

Caramel - Stocky plant to 8"-10". The silvery leaves and stems are a nice backdrop to the warm caramel tan flowers with violet stamens.

Lemon Cooler - A good clumping plant with 8"-9" stems topped with ample clusters of lovely pale lemon flowers. Green foliage.

Pink Parasol and Pastel Parasol - These siblings are terrific for a trough or small scale rock garden. Quickly forms prostrate, many-stemmed clumps of wiry green foliage, and multitudes of miniature poms of fresh pink and near white respectively. The stems only reach 3" tall.

Truly Faded - Intense silver stems are thick and stocky, reaching 10" tall. Large, many-flowered clusters of an odd madder-rose color. Intriguing!

7. *Allium togasii* (also spelled *A. togashii*) - From Japan, this delightful late flowering miniature species came to me from a variety of reliable sources, including Kew. Bulbs cluster into tight clumps, making flaccid, grassy tufts of flat, linear leaves in spring and summer. The foliage quickly withers away in late summer leaving naked 6" flower stalks topped with lollipop balls of pale pinkish-white. Depending on the clone, flowers may appear from late August through October. A tall, late flowering form is particularly robust and easy to grow, reaching 12" in height and flowering well into the autumn. Seed set is low.

8. *Allium daghestanicum* - The true plant is near impossible to come by because everything in cultivation is misidentified. My plants came from a reliable source and key out to the true species, a high altitude species from the Caucasus. The caespitose clusters of narrow bulbs attached on tough fibrous rhizomes need good drainage to prevent rot. Produces attractive thread-like green leaves that are firm and wiry, with airy clusters of light pink flowers on arching 10"-14" stems in August. The plants have a light, wildflower look about them. One of my personal favorites.

9. *Allium callimischon* ssp. *haemostichum* - This tiny species is hard to come by in this country despite being well known and frequently grown in England. From low coastal elevations in Mediterranean areas, it is surprisingly hardy with prostrate, wiry, thread-like leaves that remain evergreen all winter. A fall blooming *Allium*, this species gives the appearance of drying up and going dead by midsummer, leaving be-

hind spiky, twig-like spears. In September and October, the 3"-4" dead spears spring back to life and erupt into whimsical sprays of open, bell-shaped, white flowers, accented with blood red spots, red anthers, and a dark red eye. Unfortunately the flowers are ill-scented, but they're so delightful to look at that the plant is forgiven. This is a wonderful miniature species suitable for trough culture.

10. *Allium cupani* ssp. *hirtovaginatatum* - This species and several subspecies are widespread throughout the Mediterranean countries and are rather variable, posing difficult taxonomic complexities. My plants came from high mountainous areas of Turkey, from the MacPhail & Watson expedition. Not a great beauty but an intriguing little plant, with hairy, stiff, spear-like foliage to 6" tall in spring and summer. Like the preceding species, it goes dormant for a short mid-summer period. The sheathed buds atop twiggy, dead-looking stems are so thin and narrow that they're easily overlooked. Suddenly in late summer these erupt into modest few-flowered sprays of tiny, tubular pinkish white flowers. Easy to grow and keep, I recommend this little species for cultivation in a trough where its small dimensions and odd growth cycle can be appreciated.

Mark McDonough lives and gardens in Pepperell, Massachusetts USA. Horti. He is widely known as "the onion man". This article was printed with Mark's permission but he asked me to note it was published in 1999.

(Ed note) One of the best alliums in my garden is A. "Millenium". A plant hybridized by Mark, that I purchased from Plant Delights Nursery about five years ago.

Message from the Chair

I do believe Spring has sprung. Wow, the spring bulbs and flowering trees are really great this year. I have been out in the garden to continue my fight against the weeds. While I was out in the garden, I had three of my cats enjoying the sunshine and garden with me. One was supervising, one was digging and the other must have been sorting the weeds. That one is usually laying directly in front of me where I am trying to work, such big help, NOT.

There are some changes to the calendar, so please check it out. We cancelled the May 21st meeting. We were going to have garden visits and that just did not work out, and we already have had the Plant Show and Sale on May 7th. The annual banquet will be Saturday, October 21st. The November 19th meeting will include Michael Szesze from Carnivorous Plants Nursery doing a presentation and workshop.

The Annual Show and Sale was nice even with the bad weather. The committee does a wonderful job, and the show is well worth attending. Thanks to all those on the plant show/sale committee and those that helped Saturday evening and on Sunday. Hope you all attended to see all the great entries and purchase plants.

We will have the always popular breakfast at DJ's on June 11th and the picnic on August 20th. Then for our September 17th meeting we will have Paul Zammit from the Toronto Botanical Gardens. I heard him last month at another seminar and he is AWESOME.

Hope you get out there and enjoy the spring weather.

Here is a picture of my garden helpers. They love to lay right in front of me while I am weeding, such a big help. Not!



Karen Schmidt



Upcoming Meetings

June 11, 9:00 AM - DJ's Greenhouse, Transfer, PA. "Breakfast with DJ" and meeting. Program "You Name it, We Discuss it"! Breakfast provided. No Charge! Reservations Required. Raffle items are welcome.

RSVP to Karen Schmidt, KarenSMG@aol.com or 724-679-3818

July - no meetings this month

August 20, 2:00 PM - Annual Members Only Picnic - again at Pine Township Community Park.



Mystery Plant for May, June, July



This issue's mystery plant is considered to be one of the choice species in its group. It has some very famous relatives such as cabbage, kale, broccoli, mustard greens, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, etc. The entire group has what are called "cruciform" flowers which means cross-shaped. Considered an endemic of the Caucasian Mountains, it forms a tight bun with bright yellow flowers in early spring. Many of its relatives bloom in mid-March as it does. It tends to like tufa and often colonizes rocks along with saxifrages. Growing it successfully requires careful watering, and in England many rock gardeners grow it in a pot.

If you can identify this plant with both the common name and the scientific name, you may win a special prize! Send your answers to Len Lehman < lehmanlen191@gmail.com >



MEETING NOTICES
ALLEGHENY CHAPTER ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

Date/Time	Location	Speaker	Activity
Jan 15, 2:00 PM	Northland Library	Len Lehman	The Truth About Ferns
Feb 19, 2:00 PM	Northland Library	Mark Tebbitt	Seed Planting Workshop
Mar 19, 2:00 PM	Northland Library	Katie Schuller	Vertical Gardening
Apr 23, 2:00 PM	Aviary	Amanda Haney	Rock Gardening of Vancouver, BC
May 7, 9:00 AM	Soergel Garden Center	Show & Sale	Show & Sale
Jun 11, 9:00 AM	DJ's Greenhouse	Dennis James	Breakfast, and "You Name it, We Discuss it!"
July	No Meeting	No Meeting	No Meeting
Aug 20, 2:00 PM	Pine Township Park	Picnic	Picnic
Sep 17, 2:00 PM	Northland Library	Paul Zammit	A Tour of the Toronto Botanical Gardens
Oct 21	St. John's Lutheran Church		Awards Banquet
Nov 19, 2:00 PM	Northland Library	Mike Szesze	Carnivorous Plants Program and Workshop
December	No Meeting	No Meeting	No Meeting
Dec 7, 9:00 AM	Northland Library	Trish Abrams	Seed Packaging



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 Len Lehman <lehmanlen191@gmail.com> or Al Deurbrouck <adeurbrouck@verizon.net>. Thank you for your interest and support of *Alpine Line*.



Mary M. Gehenio



Mary Gehenio, 94, of East Deer Twp., passed away April 4, 2017. She was a long time member of our Chapter who always brought a bit of sunshine to our meetings. She was preceded in death by her husband, Carl A. Gehenio, in 2011. She was a silent gardening partner of Carl's and could always be depended upon to have cookies and a glass of milk for visitors to their legendary garden.

Her survivors include seven children, 17 grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren. Her son, Tony, is a former member of our Chapter. On behalf of the Chapter we extend our deepest sympathy to her family.



Larry Hankowitz



Larry Hankowitz, 76, of Bethel Park, passed away April 21, 2017. He was a long time member of our Chapter and a past president. He was a graduate of the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. He also studied garden design and visited Japan, England, South Africa, and Iceland bringing their influence into the business he owned, Artist Gardens.

He has designed many gardens in the Pittsburgh area. Perhaps his pet peeve was the plethora of trucks driving around the area with "Landscaper" magnetic stickers on the side

door armed with a lawnmower and shovel and little idea of what landscaping was all about.

His latest design was the exquisite rock garden at the National Aviary planted and maintained by the Allegheny Chapter membership. He is survived by his wife Charlene and daughter Stacy. On behalf of the Chapter we extend our deepest sympathy to his family.



Naomi Collier

Naomi Collier, mother of member Carolyn Collier, peacefully passed the evening of May 1st. On behalf of the Chapter we extend our heartfelt sympathy to Carolyn and her family.



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 members. Contact Lyn Lang at lyn9@consolidated.net .



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.



FREE MONEY

NARGS Link to Amazon

Have you ever purchased an item online through Amazon.com? Most of us have. Are you a regular shopper at Amazon.com? Many of us are. Have you ever shopped at Amazon.com through the NARGS website link? Very few of us do. Do you know what the NARGS Amazon.com link is? Every time an individual (NARGS member or non-member) goes to the nargs.org website and then clicks on the link to Amazon.com, the North American Rock Garden Society earns a commission on each item purchased. The commission varies based upon the item purchased and typically ranges from 4% to 18%. You make your purchase just as if you had gone to Amazon.com directly, and there is no additional cost to you. It is free money to NARGS. Make your next Amazon.com purchase by starting at nargs.org. It is a winner for us all! Here is how to financially support nargs.org. through Amazon.com.

Go to the nargs.org website.

At the bottom of the nargs.org home page there is a black banner with a link to Amazon.com. Click on that link and the next web page is the Amazon.com site. (Mozilla Firefox does not provide the link.) Shop as you normally do.

Shop at Amazon.com through nargs.org web link! Together, we can ensure the future value of NARGS to all of us!



March Meeting Report

Approximately 25 members of the North American Rock Garden Society, Allegheny Chapter, gathered on Sunday, March 19, 2017 at the Northland Public Library. The meeting was called to order by our Chairwoman, Karen Schmidt, around 2:00 p.m. and it began with our guest speaker, Katie Schuller.

Katie described Vertical Gardening and then proceeded to show the members exactly what Vertical Gardening is and how it can be accomplished. Katie presented colorful pictures of her favorite vines and what they require as they grow upward in their trellises especially the climbing hydrangeas and the trumpet honeysuckles. Be careful when choosing your plants as you do not want them to be too invasive. Also, make sure

that the plants chosen are the right plants for the location of the trellises. There are fruit-growing vines and trees which can be used for a canopy or even a living fence. She showed us many different ideas of raised planters, for example gutters planted with lettuce, herbs planted in cinder blocks, ladders and their steps holding paint cans filled with flowers and pedestal planters brimming with an array of blooming flowers. There are also green walls AKA living walls which have become quite popular making it cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. In addition to planting vertically, there is always planting horizontally in a vertical structure. The plants are wove into a track system. Window box towers, wave walls, do-it-yourself planting in pallets or even shadow boxes

or picture frames overflowing with hardy succulents. In addition to hill mounds, there are terraced gardens, keyhole gardens and spiral gardens. I'm sure that many of us found some new and interesting ideas within Katie's presentation. And some of us may even be so daring as to give one or two of those ideas a try in the very near future. Thank you, Katie, for a very entertaining presentation.

We broke for the delicious refreshments provided by members with last names beginning with A through H. Raffle tickets were also available for purchase to win one of the great raffle items on display.

After our break, Karen began the meeting by having me, Patty McGuire, read the minutes from the February Meeting which were approved. Then, I read the March Treasurer's Report that was approved by Lyn Lang and Amanda Haney.

Lyn Lang spoke to the members concerning the May 7th Plant Show and Sale at Soergel's requesting that the members dig and pot plants that they would like to donate for the sale. Donated plants make a difference and help to bring a profit to the Chapter as they are free and clear. Len stated that his *Corydalis* is popping up due to this unseasonal weather, and he suggested refrigeration to prevent its blooming. There are some changes to the classes this year. Please read your March-April newsletter for the updates and classifications.

Lyn informed us that the Aviary garden is doing well and that March 23rd is slated for a clean-up at 10:00 a.m. Anyone is welcome to attend and lend a hand.

Karen mentioned that the Daffodil & Hosta Society is sponsoring a bus trip on Friday, June 23rd and Saturday, June 24th. The trip is open to all as they will be traveling up to the Buffalo and Rochester New York area and staying on the American side of Niagara

Falls on Friday evening – visiting gardens and garden centers on the way up Friday and on the way down Saturday. The cost for the trip is \$275 per person and looks to be a great time. Also, don't forget about their Fall Hosta Forum on September 15th and 16th at Edinboro University. The line-up is finalized and includes speakers from Toronto to the UK. Reservations have already been received. And, the Daffodil Show is Saturday, April 29th for all those members who enjoy their beauty at the Ice Rink at Shady Side Academy in Fox Chapel from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The show is free, open to all and approved by the American Daffodil Society, Inc.

Len Lehman, the keeper of our mystery plant name, reminded the members to send their educated guesses to him by email with the common name and the scientific name to win a fabulous prize. He also reminded the members to enter their Chair's Choice plant given to each member attending the 2016 banquet into the May Plant show. This choice plant, *Corydalis solida* 'Purple Bird' not only may win you a spot on the traveling trophy but a \$25 gift certificate from Soergel's, and it makes a beautiful addition to your garden.

We welcomed a new member to our chapter, Jill Traub, in February hoping she will be able to attend our April 23rd meeting to be held at the National Aviary. Our member, Amanda Haney, will be our speaker and she will be talking to us about her travels to the Rock Gardens of Vancouver, British Columbia. The meeting will begin at 2:00 p.m. allowing us plenty of time to visit our Aviary Rock garden before or after the meeting and admire all the blooming plants that were uncovered by our dedicated members who tend to the garden ever so faithfully twice a month.

Susan Benn noted that if we cannot locate an appropriate meeting place for our Chapter, that the United Calvary Church on the North Side has rooms available for free that would be large enough to accommodate our group. Karen stated that as of right now, the Library and St. John Lutheran Church on the other side of Cumberland Road are acceptable.

Bobbi Diller and Susan Benn motioned that our March meeting be adjourned and we ended the afternoon with raffling the fine items on display.

Sincerely submitted by Patty McGuire in the absence of Dianne Passoth



April Meeting Report

The April 23, 2017 meeting of the Allegheny Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society was called to order at the National Aviary at 2:05 p.m. by Chair Karen Schmidt. There were 33 members and 2 guests in attendance.

The speaker was our own Amanda Haney. Her program was entitled "Rock Gardens of Vancouver, British Columbia". Amanda has gardened all her life; her mother and grandmother were both avid gardeners, so she became interested in plants about the same time she learned to walk. She has enjoyed rock gardening since 2000. She retired from teaching and now travels with her husband, hiking and photographing wildlife, wildflowers and gardens around the world.

Last March Amanda visited two (2) private gardens in Vancouver as well as the Botanical Garden at the University of British Columbia. Amanda began her presentation by sharing pictures of the University's large rockery. There is an alpine house there along with a huge collection of semps and troughs. Unfortunately, the garden does not have a wide variety of plants and has not been well maintained.

The first private garden Amanda toured belonged to Bill and Carla Bischoff. Bill was the former head of the Cyclamen Society; therefore it came as no surprise to find 18 varieties of cyclamen, many of which were in

bloom. Hellebores, primroses, choice conifers in pots, a water feature, a rockery, a tufa bed, and an alpine house all could be found on the Bischoff's property.

Next, Amanda toured the garden of David and Wendy Sellars. She commented that this is the largest rock garden she has ever seen. As the president of the North American Saxifrage Society, David has dozens of species of blooming saxifrages in his March garden and two (2) alpine houses. A miniature railroad was running among the huge variety of woodland and native plants. We thanked Amanda for sharing some of the highlights from her wonderful trip.

A refreshment break followed. This provided an opportunity for members to purchase miniature conifers and evergreens in advance of the May sale. Free seeds from NARGS were offered.

The Business Meeting began with Patty McGuire reading the minutes from the March 19, 2017 meeting. Lorraine Duffola moved and Steve Plato seconded that the minutes be approved as read. The motion passed unanimously. Secretary Dianne Passoth thanked Patty for doing such a great job in her absence.

Patty McGuire then submitted the Treasurer's Report. There were 3 checks written and 2 deposits made. Bobbi Diller moved and Ron Sims seconded that the Treasurer's

Report be accepted as received. There were no dissenting votes.

Chair Karen Schmidt announced that the May 21st meeting and garden tours have been cancelled. The Annual Banquet will be held on October 21, 2017 at St. John’s Lutheran Church on Cumberland Road. The Plant Show and Sale will be at Soergel’s on May 7.

Debbie Meyer and Lyn Lang gave a visual preview of the spectacular perennials, native plants and troughs that will be for sale at the May Plant Show and Sale.

The following information was given in regard to the Show and Sale:

•Lyn asked that anyone planning on donating a plant for the sale let her know at the end of this meeting. She has blank labels for them.

•Registration cards and posters were there for the taking.

•Set-up will begin after 6:00 Saturday evening. Volunteers are needed to arrange the tables and to price the plants.

•Len Lehman reminded the members that a new trophy will be awarded to the Best Hosta or Bulb Plant. The Chair’s Choice plant from last year (if blooming) may be entered in the Bulb category.

Joanne Burzese moved and Len Lehman seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion unanimously passed.

A raffle ended the afternoon. The group was reminded to stop by the rock garden to enjoy the abundant tiny treasures.

Dianne Passoth, Secretary



Soergel’s Garden Center — Educational Series

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

Date/Time	Speaker	Activity
May 18, 7:00 PM	Randy Soergel	Annuals 101
May 25, 7:00 PM	Jessica Walliser	Container Gardening
June 1	Len Lehman	Hostas
June 16, 7:00 PM	TBD	Perennials
July 20, 7:00 PM	TBD	Cooking From the Garden
August 17, 7:00 PM	TBD	Build-a-Terrarium Workshop



DJ's Greenhouse & Gardens 2017 Schedule of Events

www.djsgreenhouse.com

1004 East Lake Road, Transfer, PA 16154

724-962-1230

APRIL

- 4th Create Your Own Fairy Garden \$35 All material included 6:30 Reservations required
- 6th Tea for 2 Herbal Container Class \$30 All material included 6:30 Reservations required
- 15th Opening Day 9-5 Stop by for refreshments
- 22nd New Plants Class 10:30 Join us as we walk the greenhouse discussing new plants for the season
- 25th Vegetable Gardening Class 6:30 It's cold outside! Planting a lettuce bowl demo

MAY

- 16th Gardening to Attract Hummingbirds 6:30 Guest speaker Paula Shacklock
- 23rd Gardening to Attract Butterflies 6:30 Guest speaker Donnajean Enyeart
- 30th Vegetable Gardening Class *7:15* Is it time yet? Planting a Veggie Pot Demo!

JUNE

- 1st Container Class \$25 All material included 6:30 Reservations required Yes, you can be creative!
- 3rd Breakfast with DJ 9:00 Reservations required No Charge! You name it, we discuss it!
- 8th Pizza Garden Container Class \$35 Pizza & beer & herbs to plant a pizza herb pot! Reservations!
- 10th Cooking with Herbs! 10:00 Deborah Plant, Plants Herb Farm Bed and Breakfast!
- 20th Create Your Own Fairy Garden \$35 All material included 6:30 Reservations required
- 27th Vegetable Gardening Class 6:30 Now that it's growing, how do I keep it going?

JULY

- 1st Breakfast with DJ 9:00 Reservations required Fertilizer! What's That?
- 11th Create Your Own Fairy Garden \$35 All material included 6:30 Reservations required
- 18th Create Your Own Terrarium! \$35 All material included 6:30 Reservations required
- 21st Evening in the Garden \$26 (Garden Party) Reservations Great Food and Good Music! 6-9 PM
- 25th Vegetable Gardening Class 6:30 And so it begins! Harvest time....

AUGUST

- 5th Breakfast with DJ 9:00 Reservations required You Did What, to Your Plant?
- 15th Adult Create Your Own Fairy Garden Sip & plant \$40 Reservations required All Material included
- 22nd Vegetable Gardening Class 6:30 Yes, you can still plant a fall garden!
- 26th Customer Appreciation Day 9-5 Refreshments and specials

SEPTEMBER

- 2nd Breakfast with DJ 9:00 Reservations required It's not over yet!
- 12th Create Your Own Fairy Garden \$35 6:30 Reservations required
- TBA Leaf Casting Class \$25 Reservations required
- 23rd Fall Garden Walk 10:00 Getting your garden ready for winter! A tour of the gardens
- 26th Vegetable Gardening Class 6:30 It's all over except the harvest! Maybe!

OCTOBER

- 8th Farm to Table 4-9 Fund Raiser \$75 on Facebook@ Our Hometown Farm to Table!

Our Hours of Business are listed on the Web-Site

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Hummingbird Feeders

If you want a hassle free, fun hummingbird project for your kids, you've got to buy a feeder first. No working with wire and old soda bottles. Ease of cleaning will determine the best one for you. You or your child will spend quite a bit of time cleaning and filling a feeder during hummer season. You don't want it to be a chore.

You don't have to shell out for instant food mix, though. If you can boil water, you can make hummer food. You'll want four parts hot water to one part regular white sugar. Just stir until the sugar dissolves and store the excess in the refrigerator. Keep red coloring or other additives out of the mix. The red color of the feeder attracts the birds just fine. If bees or wasps are a problem further dilution of the sugar nectar to 1 part sugar to 5 parts water, but no weaker than 1 to 6, will make your mixture much less attractive to bees or wasps.

Always hang feeders in shade to prevent rapid fermentation of sugar nectar solution.

Change solution at least every four days.

Normally set arrow indicator in the top part of base to the word FULL for a normal nectar level; however, if bees or wasps are a problem set the arrow indicator to the word HALF for a reduced level of nectar, thus discouraging the bees and wasps.

Hang it in early spring. You might want to plop a potted plant with red flowers near the feeder, to act as a signpost and give the little birds a place to sit.

Ripe fruit placed near the feeder can attract fruit flies - which ordinarily would seem like a bad thing. But, hummingbirds get half their diet from small insects. They'll drink from the feeder and then snatch up the yummy bugs.

Rinse the feeder with clean water every time you fill it. Don't use soap! Once a month, a weak bleach solution, rinsed well, will sterilize the feeder and keep your birds happy.

Wash base in dishwasher

They'll expect it back next spring when they return.

Nature's Best Hummingbird Feeder

Phone 1-800-454-2473 or 830-563-2428

Web site: <http://nbhummingbird.com>



Primroses: Diversity is Their Key to Popularity - Part 1: Primrose Culture and Use

Todd Boland, Chair, Newfoundland Chapter, NARGS

Primroses are one of the most popular groups of garden flowers. With over 500 species and countless hybrids, they exhibit great diversity and lend themselves to a variety of garden settings. This article will describe the culture of this lovely group of perennials and their use in the garden. A future article will describe in more detail, the main easily-grown groups of primroses.

What is a Primula?

Primula or primroses are a group of perennial, herbaceous (not woody) plants which may be evergreen or deciduous. Most are low-growing with leaves produced in tufted rosettes. The showy flowers are generally held in open clusters, although some produce a single flower per stem, a dense rounded head, a candelabra arrangement or a dense spike of flowers. These blooms are usually upright or outward-facing and open funnel-shaped or less commonly, bell-shaped and pendant. Typically there are five petals, but semi-double and double forms do exist. Several have delightful fragrances.

Care and Maintenance

In nature, primroses inhabit a wide diversity of habitats including rocky alpine crags, scree slopes, streamsides, dry to moist forests, damp open meadows, swamps and even sub-tropical rainforests. Despite the 500 or so species only certain groups of primroses are easy to cultivate in the garden. All primroses prefer fertile soil, rich in organic matter. The soil pH should be slightly acidic to slightly alkaline. A good soil mix would consist of 2 parts organic material, 2 parts topsoil and 1 part

coarse sand. Additional grit could be added to the planting area of the alpine primroses as they demand excellent drainage.

Primroses prefer a cool location and are intolerant of high temperatures or dryness during the growing season. Because they are susceptible to summer drought, plants should be well-watered if rainfall is scarce. Do not lightly sprinkle with water every day. To ensure deep root growth, give a thorough watering once a week.

In warmer areas, primroses are best grown in part shade; an eastern exposure with early morning sun or dappled shade is ideal. However, in northern areas primroses perform better if grown in full sun. This is especially true of the alpine types.

Primroses prefer mild winters or barring that, a steady snow cover in winter. Unfortunately, depending on where you live, this is not always possible. In fact, the cycle of alternate freezing and thawing in winter is a significant problem and is probably the #1 killer of primroses. In addition, those with evergreen leaves are susceptible to winter desiccation. Thus a sheltered planting area is recommended. In more exposed areas covering plants with evergreen boughs, leaves like oak or beech or dry straw will help prevent these problems. It is important to wait until the ground is frozen before adding winter protection.



A group of Japanese or candelabra primroses

Pests and Diseases

Primroses are not prone to many diseases. Crown-rot can occur if the soil is not well-drained, especially in winter. Protection against alternate freezing and thawing in winter and the addition of coarse sand or grit to the soil of the planting area will keep rot to a minimum.

The leaves of primroses are quick to produce patches of dead tissue (a symptom of drought) if allowed to get too dry. Proper watering will prevent this physiological problem from occurring.

Slugs and snails are among the most serious pests and they will undoubtedly eat the flowers first! Slug bait is available from garden centers, but ensure you following the manufacturer's recommended application procedures because these baits are poisonous to pets and birds. Alternatively, you can physically remove them.

In some areas, the larvae of vine weevils can also do serious harm to primroses. The small, grub-like larvae burrow into the roots and cause the plants to collapse. The adults also feed on the plants, leaving scalloped edges on the leaves. There is no simple cure for this pest, however, predatory nematodes are available as a biological control.

Propagation

Primroses may be propagated by seed or by division. The latter method is usually preferred, since this is a relatively simple process. In addition, division may even help maintain the health of the plant. Primroses are best divided after flowering. Carefully dig up the plant and cut the clump into two or more smaller divisions using a sharp knife. Some roots may be lost, but when placed into fresh soil, primroses are generally quick to send out new ones. The addition of bonemeal to the planting hole is often beneficial. Remember to keep the plants well watered after dividing, especially in mid-summer.



Cowslip primroses are popular in woodland settings.

Most groups, such as the auricula, sikkimensis and candelabra usually look better if left as a large colony while the polyanthus types will bloom better if divided every 3 - 4 years. Never divide the polyanthus types to just a single growth; it is better that each division have 3 - 4 growths. The other primrose groups are more forgiving and if need be, can be divided into single growths without any serious set-backs. Growing primroses from seed can be challenging. The polyanthus types are readily available as seeds and germinate without too much fuss. Other primroses may need a chilling period (4 - 6 weeks) after sowing before the seeds will break dormancy. The key to success is to sow fresh seeds. When ready to sow, sprinkle the seeds on the surface of a pot filled with a high organic, sterilized mixture. Place a very light layer of soil over the seed. Maintain even moisture and if the seeds are fresh, they should germinate in 2 - 3 weeks. Seeds which have been stored for several months or longer will sprout irregularly and may need to overwinter outdoors before they will germinate.

Primroses in the Garden

Many people regard primroses as a typical "spring" flower. However, with the great diversity within this genus and depending on where you live, primroses can be an attractive feature of any garden from mid-winter through to mid-summer.

The 500 or so species of *Primula* are classified into 37 groups based on area of origin, flower form and leaf form. There are several main groups that are popular as garden ornamentals, including the polyanthus, auricula, drumstick and candelabra primroses (part 2 will give a more detailed account of the most popular primrose groups).



A group of drumstick primroses

The polyanthus, auricula and drumstick primroses are useful additions to the perennial border. Due to their small stature, they are best placed in the front of the border. They combine particularly well with spring bulbs and other early flowering perennials such as lungwort, rockcress and leopard's-bane. It is useful to interplant these primroses with annuals to provide summer colour. The best primroses for a rock garden are the auricula group. They benefit from the additional drainage afforded by most rock gardens and the plants themselves do originate from alpine environments. The beauty of the sikkimensis and candelabra primroses is stifled when grown in a perennial border. In a lightly shaded woodland bed, these primroses combine attractively with shooting star, hosta, astilbe, columbine and ferns. If your garden includes a water feature, such an area will bring out the natural beauty of the candelabra and sikkimensis primroses.

Some gardeners devote entire portions of their gardens to primroses. Others only grow a few scattered here and there. Either way, they will add to the beauty of any garden.

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