



Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society
✧ Volume XL ✧ Fall 2016 ✧ Number 6 ✧

Upcoming Programs

Sunday, October 16, 10 a.m.
Frelinghuysen Arboretum
Elaine Fogerty, Executive Director of
the Laurelwood Arboretum, presents
'Wildlife Control in the Home Garden'

Bring a friend, your favorite plant
friend, your favorite warm beverage,
and a snack to share.

Saturday, November 12, 10 a.m.
Members Only!
Speaker Matt Mattus, President of the
North American Rock Garden Society
presents 'Autumn and Winter Bulbs
for the Serious Collector'
To be followed by the
Annual Meeting & Luncheon

Help Wanted: the Watnong Chapter needs a Chair!

Mike Wilson's term as Chapter Chair comes to a close in November! The rest of the Board will stay on, and Mike will continue as Co-Chair and coordinator of the Laurelwood Arboretum Rock Garden restorations. Please consider stepping up to lead our Chapter!

Our October Speaker

Elaine Fogerty is a retired Rutgers Cooperative Extension County Agricultural Agent and County Agricultural Assistant with expertise in Ornamental Horticulture. Elaine has also taught Ecology classes at William Paterson University, inspected farms for the North Jersey Farmers' Market Council, and owned and managed a farm in Warren County.

Elaine earned her Master of Science degree in Horticulture from Rutgers University and is a New Jersey Certified Tree Expert. Currently, she serves as the Executive Director of Laurelwood Arboretum, a 30-acre public garden in Wayne, New Jersey. She lives in Columbia, New Jersey, within view of the Delaware Water Gap.

Elaine's presentation, "Wildlife Control in the Home Garden", will highlight some biology and control of animal pests and protection of desired plants. Please join us, and bring a friend!

NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

We need a new Chair!

Mike Wilson's term as Chapter Chair comes to a close in November! The rest of the Board will stay on, and Mike will continue as Co-Chair and coordinator of the Laurelwood Arboretum Rock Garden restorations. The Chair's responsibility is to oversee the business of the Chapter and the Board. Could you be Watnong's next Chair? Please consider stepping up to lead our group for the next two years, and contact Mike or Sid (see page 7) for more details.

Membership Chair Sid Jones will be on hand at the October meeting to collect dues for 2017. Watnong dues remain a bargain at \$10 individual or \$15 per household/ mailing address.

Roxanne Hiltz called our attention to the New York Times Best Seller List, where Watnong Member Marta McDowell's new book, *All The Presidents Gardens*, made the Top Ten Bestsellers list in the Fashion, Manners and Customs Category in both July and August. Congratulations, Marta!

Our Chapter will once again participate in the NARGS seed exchange, packing seeds for distribution. This year we hope to meet at the Jordan House at The Leonard J. Buck Garden in Far Hills. Hilary Clayton will coordinate the effort. Helpers currently on her list are Sid

Jones, Terrie Reid, Noel Schulz, Melissa Grossmann, Susan Deeks, and Peggy Kremetz. Currently we plan to package seeds from the first of December until December 16, or when done, times and days to be determined. If you'd like to participate, please contact Hilary (see page 7).



Watnong member Inge Langer was the door-prize winner at our September meeting, an *Aquilegia chrysantha* donated by speaker Hilary Clayton. Photo by Albert Martin.

Do you have information to share? The deadline for our Late Fall issue, the final issue of 2016, is October 22.

NEWS FROM NARGS

It's time to donate seeds to the annual NARGS seed exchange! All donated seed must be **received** by November 1. There are benefits to being a seed donor, Donors are defined as a NARGS member who contributes at least five different taxa of seed appropriate for the seed exchange. Donors are allowed 35 packets of seed, while non-donors receive only 25 in the main round. In addition, orders from donors are filled before those from non-donors. Finally, donors receive the recognition and gratitude of their colleagues! For more information, visit www.NARGS.org, and find 'Seed Donation Instructions' under Seedex.

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear All,

As I sit to write, the ground outside is still damp from a recent, much needed rainfall. The *Lindera* in my yard are no longer wilting. There was approximately a 2 ½ inch deficit of rain for the month of August, and we are now up to a seven-inch deficit for the year. I am afraid that this may be a continuing trend, and possibly the future of gardening. It is time to revisit the concept of a xeriscape- a landscape that requires little or no irrigation- and include the use of native plants and the concept of right plant, right place, in our gardens. Fortunately, as rock gardeners we are familiar with a wide

array of plant materials that tolerate drought.

I am glad it rained for another reason, too: on September 17th, a couple of gardeners from our chapter joined me at Laurelwood to continue our project on the South Rock Garden. We planted some new material, and it was great to have it watered in. We also spent some time weeding and cleaning up the bed, and added a new layer of gravel mulch. We made plans for the next bed that we will restore. Another work -day is planned for late October or early November.

If you are interested in working on the Laurelwood project, please contact me by e-mail at miwilson@ramapo.edu, or call 973-328-3723.

Regards,

Mike Wilson

Our September Speaker: A Higher State: Steppe to Alpine in North- West Colorado

Words by Michael Clayton

Photos by Hilary Clayton

Our September speaker was our long time member Hilary Clayton, who guided us through the highlights of her trip to the NARGS Annual General Meeting that took place in Steamboat Springs, Colorado the third week of June.

The meeting, titled ' A Higher State', focused on the diversity of plant communities within Colorado, a state

which rises from the high plains to some of the highest peaks in North America. Hilary's slide presentation documented the sub title of the conference: From Steppe to Alpine, with a complete series of photos that also followed the conference schedule, starting us off with a photo tour of the tremendous Denver Botanical Garden, where attendees convened.



The Rock Alpine Garden at Denver Botanic

As the meeting participants were adapting to the altitude, the conference schedule allowed for tours of nearby attractions, such as the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens in Vail, and Loveland Pass, on the Continental Divide west of Denver. Watnong member Noel Schulz, who also attended the conference, shared some of his photos of these with

Hilary, who included them in her discussion.

From Denver, the meeting moved north and westward to Steamboat Springs, where the group visited the Yampa River Botanic Park. YRBP is a unique municipal/private garden collaboration: the land was donated to the City of Steamboat Springs by Bob and Audrey Enever, and it is maintained by an Association, a volunteer organization which raises funds, hires staff, and creates and maintains the gardens. The park is free and open to the public during the short, 60- day growing season, from May 1 to October 31. Hilary highlighted some of the key features there, such as the Crevice Garden and Members Rock Garden.



Crevice Garden at Yampa River Botanic Park

Hilary's focus steered us mostly up slope you might say, as her talk diverted towards the hikes portion of the conference. The Red Dirt Trail in the Mount Zirkel Wilderness was featured, showing us how the trail changed from montaine xeric shrublands to dark coniferous forest,

with *Wyethia amplexicaulis*, Mules Ears, and *Aquilegia coerulea*, Colorado Columbine, noted as the state flower of Colorado, along the way. That trail meandered down through the Mad Creek Canyon, where we were shown some inspirational pictures of natural crevice gardens and she explained a bit about the geologic forces that created the state.



Aquilegia coerulea, Colorado Columbine, in the Mt. Zirkel Wilderness

The Steamboat Springs area of Colorado has become a winter ski destination of incomparable beauty, but through Hilary's photos of the ski slope hike we were able to see the area in ways that most of the winter visitors

can scarcely imagine. Vast colonies of fragrant *Ceanothus velutinus*, Elkbrush, drape the ski slopes, and moist seeps were shown to harbor such gems as *Pipera unalascensis*, the Slender Spire Orchid.



Mertensia brevistylis, Mountain Bluebell, in the Rocky Mountain National Park

Rocky Mountain National Park, although not on the NARGS conference schedule, was our next treat as Hilary explained that she and her husband Michael enjoyed two days of touring through the true Alpine and Tundra regions within the park. Areas over 11,000 feet- and some just nudging over 12,000 feet- in elevation were shown.

The discussion helped us understand how wind, high UV light levels, and snow cover, or lack there- of, in the case of an alpine desert, can create the most unusual evolutionary circumstances. Adaptations such as hairy leaves, miniature plant size, bun formation, and other alpine plant characteristics were pointed out in the examples she showed of *Mertensias*, *Castillejas*, and *Polemoniums*, to name a few.



Primula angustifolia, Alpine Primrose,
Rocky Mountain National Park

We appreciated Hilary's comprehensive, informative synopsis of a convention that many would have liked to attend; with her attention to detail, and depth of knowledge, for an hour we felt like we were transformed to the Higher State.

IT GREW FOR ME!

Sedum caudicola

Words & Photos by Brian Coleman

Sedum caudicola is a great Sedum for fall color in a trough. It loves poor soil and full sun, and shrugs off drought. It reliably blooms in late September when there's not much else blooming in my troughs. The bright pink flowers contrast beautifully with the bluish, circular foliage.



It forms a low clump about three inches high but sprawls outward to a foot or more in diameter. Like most sedums, it needs to be cut back to the ground in the spring, before the new growth emerges. It self-seeds slightly for me, but I'm always happy to see it popping up in other places.



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Chair	Michael Wilson	973-328-3723	miwilson@ramapo.edu
Vice Chair	Sid Jones	973-366-7241	rsj40jr@icloud.com
Treasurer	Caroline Ford	973-993-9426	Carolineford7@gmail.com
Secretary	Debi Graf	201-919-0749	DGRAFatHome@aol.com

2016 WATNONG COMMITTEES

Membership	Sid Jones	973-366-7241	rsj40jr@icloud.com
Programs	Noel Schulz	201-445-6445	noelschulz@verizon.net
Program Committee	Brian Coleman	973-325-3453	bell.coleman@verizon.net
Program Committee	Lainie Bevin	908-537-4448	beavin@embarqmail.com
Digital Projector	Michael Wilson	973-328-3723	miwilson@ramapo.edu
Publicity	Carolyn Iglesias	973-763-3275	mushroomhouse1@optonline.net
Plant Sale Co-Chair	Jim Avens	908-234-2677x 22	javens@scpark.org
Plant Sale Co-Chair	Melissa Grossmann	908-604-8060	donmliss@msn.com
Mailing	Diane McNally	908-234-1170	dmc79@verizon.net
Newsletter Photography	Albert Martin	908-403-0029	AlbertMartin@ AlbertMartinPhotography.com
Newsletter	Hilary Clayton	908-781-2521	hilaryhclayton@gmail.com

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**THE WATNONG CHAPTER
NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY
c/o The Leonard J. Buck Garden
11 Layton Road
Far Hills, NJ 07931**

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