



Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society

✂ Volume XLI ✂ Fall 2017 ✂ Number 6 ✂

Upcoming Programs

Sunday October 8, 2017, 10 a.m.

Frelinghuysen Arboretum

Speaker Kim Eierman presents

**'Ecobeneficial Gardening 101:
Boosting the Ecosystem in Your Own
Yard'**

**Bring a friend, your favorite warm
beverage, & a snack to share.**

Saturday, November 18, 2017, 10 a.m.

For Members Only!

Annual Meeting And Luncheon

**Speaker Ernie Cavallo presents
'Galanthophilia, A Good Kind of
Love'**

**Bring a ready-to-serve appetizer or
dessert and any necessary serving
pieces.**

Our October Speaker

Kim Eierman is the founder of EcoBeneficial. She is an Environmental Horticulturist specializing in ecological landscapes and native plants. Based in New York, Kim teaches at the New York Botanical Garden, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, The Native Plant Center in New York, Rutgers Home Gardeners School and several other institutions. Kim is an active speaker nationwide on many ecological landscape topics, presenting for industry conferences, "green events," Master Gardener groups, garden clubs, nature centers, Audubon Society chapters, beekeeping groups, and other organizations interested in environmental improvements. Kim also provides horticultural consulting to homeowners and commercial clients.

In addition to being a Certified Horticulturist through the American Society for Horticultural Science, Kim is an Accredited Organic Landcare Professional, a Steering Committee member of The Native Plant Center, and a member of The Ecological Landscape Alliance and the Garden Writers Association.

Please join us, and bring a friend!

NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

The renovations to the Laurelwood Arboretum's South Rock Garden continued on Sunday, September 10, when Mike Wilson conducted a planting day. To learn more about the project and join in the fun next session, contact him at miwilson@ramapo.edu, or 862-397-9339.

HELP WANTED! We are still a NARGS Chapter without a Chair! Please consider if you would be willing and able to:

- Conduct the general meetings of the chapter.
- Conduct board meeting- at least once a year, at the Chair's discretion – currently we meet five times a year, an hour before our regular meetings.
- Oversee the committees of the Chapter: Program, Membership, Newsletter, & Plant Sale.
- Act as liaison to the Friends of the Frelinghuysen Arboretum, to schedule our meetings.
- Attend the annual Plant Sale and other Chapter events, if possible.
- Represent the Chapter for all business conducted by the North American Rock Garden Society.

Your Chapter needs you! Please consider stepping up to lead.

MORE HELP WANTED! We need a Party Planner to coordinate our Chapter's 2018 Soiree, Picnic, and Luncheon. If you enjoy hosting garden parties, this position is for you! Contact Program Chair Noel Schulz at noelschulz@verizon.net or 201-445-6445 to volunteer.

NEWS FROM NARGS

2017 NARGS Annual General Meeting 'Rock Gardening in the Southeastern U.S. – Past, Present, and Future' November 17-19, 2017

The 2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of NARGS will be held in Durham, North Carolina, and is being hosted by the Piedmont Chapter. The AGM will explore the past, present, and future of rock gardening in the southeastern and mid-Atlantic regions of the U.S.

The AGM will include a welcome reception and presentation on Friday evening, November 17; a full day of presentations on Saturday, November 18, and tours to three gardens in the Triangle area on Sunday, November 19. Additional activities include an optional pre-conference, two-day guided tour of botanically interesting natural areas in North Carolina's Coastal Plain on November 15 and 16, and visits to several gardens in the Triangle area on November 17. Details about the meeting, as well as an on-line registration form, are available at www.piedmontnargs.org.

2018 Seed Exchange

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, 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!

Information on seed donation can be found at <https://nargs.org/seed-donation-instructions>

Watnong NARGS will once again be packing seed for the exchange at the Jordan House at The Leonard J. Buck Garden in Far Hills, in early December. Dates and times are yet to be determined; if you'd like to participate contact Hilary at hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com, or 908-781-2521.

The September Meeting: Ornamental Grasses, Presented by Bill Kolvek By Melissa Grossmann

Bill Kolvek began his presentation with brief comparative descriptions of the morphology, distribution, and habitats of grasses and grass-like plants,

covering the true grasses (Poaceae), sedges, (Cyperaceae), rushes (Juncaceae), cattails (Typhaceae), and the restios (Restionaceae). We then embarked on a tour of Bill's favorite ornamental grasses for northern New Jersey.

True grasses are the dominant plants in open habitats, and are rare in forests. For part shade, Bill recommends *Chasmanthium latifolium*, *Elymus patula*, and *Hakonechloa macra*. Some of us winced at the mention of *Chasmanthium*, having experienced its ability to reseed overwhelmingly, but Bill assured us that the plant is weedy only where there is open ground. In his garden, it only pops up here and there. There are other grasses, for example *Miscanthus sinensis* and *Imperata cylindrica*, which are invasive in the southern states but are not a problem here, where they flower too late for their seed to mature.

Bamboos are true grasses, and even the notorious running species have appropriate uses. Bill noted that a short running bamboo had been used well just outside the entrance to the Haggerty Education Center. A useful mid-sized clumping bamboo is *Fargesia rufa*, which in the words of the inimitable Tony Avent, "couldn't run even if it was being chased down the mountain by a pack of starving pandas."

The sedges, which in our gardens are represented by the genus *Carex*, are generally denizens of the dampness, and bring color to shade gardens. Of

the rushes, only *Juncus* and *Luzula* are horticulturally important. The large white flowers of *Luzula nivea*, the snowy wood-rush, are as showy as those of any dicotyledonous perennial.

The Restionaceae are native to the southern hemisphere, and none are hardy here, but Bill showed us a few pictures so that we could appreciate their uniqueness.

As garden plants, grasses are considered first for the contrast between their foliage shape and other foliage types, but grasses can also fill almost any role - accents of any size, edges, backgrounds, hedges, rain gardens, masses in perennial borders, and in rock gardens. They can mingle with shrubs or be substitutes for shrubs. Their textures can be solid or sheer, soft or spiky, gentle or aggressive. All of the colors are present in either their foliage or flowers. Combine them as you would other plants. Public gardens where you can observe grasses include the Frelinghuysen Arboretum, The New York Botanical Garden and the Highline.

Black Bear Pass Trail

Text and Photos by Judy Glattstein

In mid-August we spent a week visiting our daughter and son-in-law at their apartment share in Purgatory, outside Durango, Colorado. Lots to see and do, and on Sunday we went off-roading across Black Bear Pass Trail.



On the trail!

Here's what the guide books have to say about it: "Ouray / Silverton to Telluride. Elevation 12,840 feet where you cross the pass. Expert/experienced only, difficulty rating 6/10. High clearance / 4 wheel drive vehicles required. Trail not suitable for full-size vehicle due to the very tight, off-camber switchbacks, loose talus, and narrow shelf roads with thousand-foot plus drop-offs."



Aquilegia coerulea

We were in my son-in-law's used 2006 Lexus GX470, 4 wheel drive (plus he let air out of the tires down to 24 pounds for better adhesion), skid plates that even with high clearance would scrape over unavoidable large rocks in

the trail, downhill assist control which periodically would make clattering, chattering sounds, and a driver with nerves of steel.



Hymenoxys grandiflora, with a hand for scale



Primula parryi



Caltha leptosepala

The winter snow stayed later than usual. At the higher elevations there were still large patches remaining. The alpine flowers were only now in peak bloom. My most excellent son-in-law would stop every time I asked for photographic opportunities, even had a small folding stool to assist me in clambering back up into the Lexus. We had a fabulous outing before ending up in Telluride for a late lunch.



Gentiana algida

Editor's note:

If you'd like to see more, here are links to the two entries on Judy's website, www.bellewood-gardens.com: [Black Bear Pass Trail - Signs and Scenery](#) and [Black Bear Pass Trail - alpine plants in bloom](#)

OUT & ABOUT

The Cross Estate Gardens Talk & Tea will be held Thursday, October 26, from 1-3 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of New Vernon, 2 Lee's Hill Road, New Vernon. Our speaker will be the very popular **Marta McDowell**, who lives, writes and gardens in Chatham, NJ. Marta will share with us anecdotes from her latest book *The World of Laura Ingalls Wilder: The Frontier Landscapes That Inspired The Little House Books*. Copies of her new book will be available for purchase.

Following Marta's talk, the volunteers of the Cross Estate Gardens will serve our superb tea, featuring savories, sweets and tea. Registration is \$25 for New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation members and \$30 for non-members. Registration checks, payable to NJHGF, may be sent to New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation, PO Box 712, Bernardsville, N.J. 07924.

WATNONG CLASSIFIEDS

HYPERTUFA TROUGHS



If you would like to place an ad here, send copy to the Newsletter Editor, hilaryh.clayton@gmail.com.

Deadline for inclusion in our Fall Newsletter is October 21, 2017

2017 WATNONG CHAPTER OFFICERS

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**THE WATNONG CHAPTER
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