



Growing Interests

Watnong Chapter, North American Rock Garden Society

✂ Volume XLVI ✂ Winter 2022 ✂ Number 1 ✂

Upcoming Programs for Watnong Members Only!

Our winter lectures will be via Zoom,
Saturday mornings at 10:30 a.m.

February 19, 2022

**Jay Akerley, 'Rock Garden Plants
of Canada's Wet Coast'**

Saturday, March 19, 2022

**Kenton Seth,
'The Modern Crevice Garden'**

The Plant Sale Returns!

**April 23 & 24, at The Leonard J. Buck
Garden in Far Hills, see page 3 for
details**



Jay's degree in Geography from Simon Fraser University and training at the Pacific Horticulture College in Victoria nurtured an interest in the world's montane and high steppe plants and landscapes.

Please join us!

Our March Speaker

Kenton J. Seth, an active member of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of NARGS, is a thirty-something Colorado-based garden designer and hopeless plant slut. He has a small nursery to grow plants for his gardens, which range from around Western Colorado to the US Coasts and even a few overseas. Crevice Gardens dominate his work, including a book in 2022, but he also works with

Our February Speaker

Jay Akerley is a rock gardening enthusiast with gardens in both Greater Vancouver and at Sun Peaks, Canada's second largest ski resort - two very different climates. He is the current President of the Alpine Garden Club of British Columbia.

natives, dryland gardens, and recently meadows. He writes a blog at kentonjseth.blogspot.com and his work is at PaintbrushGardens.com

Crevice gardens have historically been an esoteric, European garden style with a strange name, but recent developments have catapulted them onto the international stage and into major public gardens and back yards, especially in the USA. By virtue of growing plants closely with rocks, the opportunity arises to grow certain exotic and native plants better than they can be in a traditional garden. Remarkably, a crevice garden works to shed water in a wet climate and store water in a dry climate, making it a universally useful system, also dealing with awkward garden spaces or making plantable alternatives to retaining walls. The ecological use of broken concrete as a stone alternative offers opportunity to include gardeners in places where rock is unavailable or too expensive.

NEWS FROM THE WATNONG CHAPTER

The Haggerty Center at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum remains closed. Noel Schulz, our program chair, skillfully arranged for zoom lectures for the first half of 2022. We remain hopeful that we might be able to meet in person for fall lectures and will announce dates and speakers later in the spring.

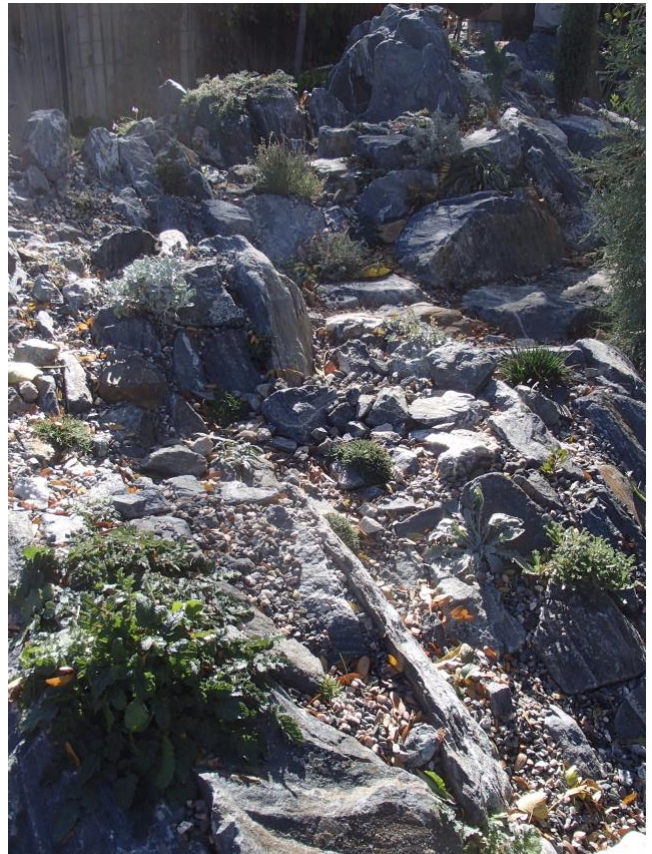


Photo by Kenton Seth

Dues are due!

2022 dues are due 1/31/22. They remain at \$10 per person, or \$15 per mailing address. Since we won't be meeting in person, please make your check payable to Watnong Chapter NARGS, and mail it to Sid Jones, 123 Mountainside Drive, Randolph, NJ 07869. Do you have a friend or neighbor who discovered gardening during the pandemic? Consider gifting them a membership to the Watnong chapter while sending in your dues for '22!

The Plant Sale Returns!

Mark your calendar for April 23 & 24!

Planning is in progress for an annual plant sale April 23 & 24 at The Leonard J. Buck Garden in Far Hills. In addition to the complications the pandemic presents, there are also challenges facing the Plant Sale Chair, Melissa Grossmann, in finding new sources for wholesale plant material for the sale, as some of our previous sources are no longer in business. This makes plants donated by members more important than ever! Please pot up your divisions and extra seedlings this spring, they can be dropped off from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Saturday April 16 through Wednesday April 20 (noon – 3 p.m. Sunday April 17).

Hours and the official call for volunteers will appear in our next newsletter. If you have suggestions for wholesale plant sources, contact Melissa at donmliss@msn.com; if you need pots for divisions or seedlings, contact Hilary at hilaryhclayton@gmail.com.

Treasurer's Report for 2021

From Don Grossmann

Our end of year balance for 12/31/2021 is only slightly lower than 12/31/20. Individual donations and revenue from the August plant sale increased our revenue, offsetting the higher program expenses during the year. Overall, the chapter is in good financial condition, with reserves available to support a 2022 plant sale, should it take place.

For the Watnong chapter's final 2021 financial report, please see page 5.

Tufa Tuesdays at The Leonard J. Buck Garden

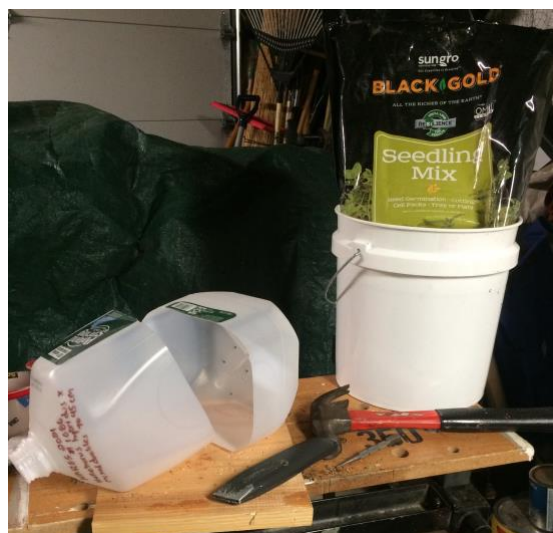
Do you follow social media? Gardener Brian Ensminger manages the Leonard J. Buck Garden Instagram account, and every Tuesday features all things hypertufa. If you don't already follow the action there, give it a look!

A Method to Cold Stratify Seeds Outdoors.

Text and photos by Debby Zweig

In the past I have tried to cold stratify seeds in trays outside, but curious squirrels would mess with the trays. Last year I saw this method on the Garden Gate Magazine website. It worked well so I thought I would pass it on.

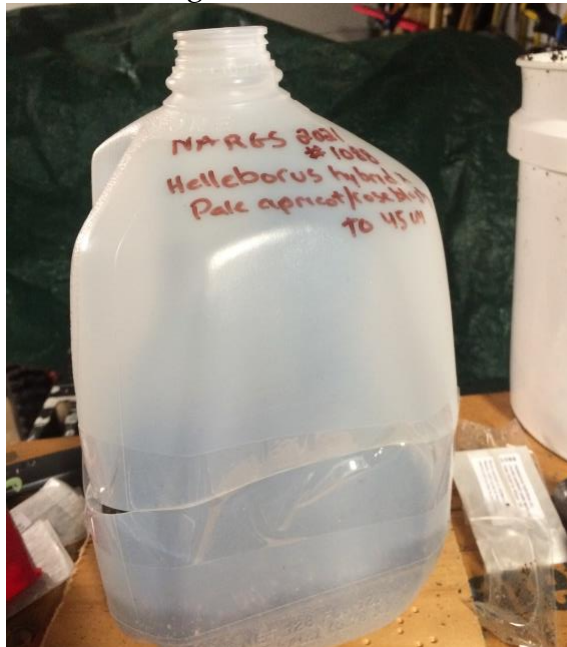
Materials: an opaque one-gallon jug, utility knife, hole punch, hammer, seed starting mix, seeds, clear packing tape, waterproof marker.



Step 2: add moist seed starting mix to the bottom of the jug to a depth of 2 inches. Plant your seeds to the appropriate depth. Label your jug with the waterproof marker.



Step 3: using packing tape, tape the area that was cut in step 1 closed to make a mini greenhouse.



Step 4: place the jugs in a sheltered spot outside so they don't blow over but make sure rainwater can still get in the hole at the top of the jug. These jugs are against a south facing wall.



Step 5: in a few months when the seedlings pop up you can transplant to your garden or larger pots for more growth.



Good Luck and Happy Gardening!

NARGS Watnong Chapter		Five Year Financial Summary				
		2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Revenue						
	Membership Dues	\$965	\$635	\$1,160	\$1,100	\$2,355
	April Plant Sale Profit - Net	\$0	-\$200	\$5,235	\$3,891	\$3,053
	August 2021 Plant Sale Profit	\$393				
	November 2019 Plant Sale Profit			\$100		
	Donations from Individuals	\$400				
Expenses						
	Administration	-\$68	-\$54	-\$46	-\$129	-\$264
	Bus Trip - Net	\$0	\$0	-\$82	-\$400	-\$653
	Hospitality	\$0	-\$60	-\$809	-\$823	-\$1,974
	Insurance	-\$327	-\$327	-\$327	-\$327	-\$327
	Newsletter	-\$198	-\$219	-\$298	-\$258	-\$325
	Program	-\$850	-\$689	-\$1,810	-\$3,023	-\$2,038
	Rent	\$0	-\$175	-\$175	-\$175	\$0
Donations						
	Blackburn Scholarship			-\$500	-\$500	-\$500
	National NARGS			-\$500		-\$500
	Laurelwood			-\$200		-\$1,475
	New Jersey Historical Garden Foundation*	-\$250				
	Master Gardeners of Bergen County*	-\$200				
Net Cash Flow		-\$136	-\$1,089	\$1,748	-\$645	-\$2,648
Checking Account Balance - End of Year		\$11,125	\$11,261	\$12,350	\$10,602	\$11,246
* Donations made in lieu of speaker fees						

Thank you, Don

NEWS FROM NARGS

The **Main round of seed ordering** will end January 31. Second round/ surplus seed ordering will be from March 1 – March 20, 2022. If you have not joined or need to renew your membership, now is the time to do so!

If you prefer to place your seed order by mail, **send a request for the print copy of the Seed List** and order form by December 1 to Joyce Fingerut, via email at alpinegarden@comcast.net, or to 537

Taugwonk Road Stonington, Connecticut 06378-1805 U.S.A. Be sure to include your postal address.



Save the Dates: June 14–16, 2022 is coming!

By Carol Eichler, Adirondack Chapter

We're going to try again! We're hosting 2022 NARGS Annual General Meeting to be held June 14-16, 2022. The theme is similar to last time but with minor modifications: **Alpine Visions: Exploration and Inspiration**. Cornell Botanic Gardens will again co-host with us. To quote Yogi Berra, if our program feels like "déjà-vu all over again"...well, in a way it is! The enthusiasm for the 2020 AGM that we were forced to cancel was so overwhelming that we're willing to give it another shot and we've tried to retain much of the original itinerary. That's why you may see some resemblances, yet with some important differences too.

All rock gardens start with a vision, often one inspired by what we've seen in nature. Therefore, we are emphasizing the "exploration" side of our theme. The

experience of seeing plants growing in their native habitat can be revelatory, even inspirational. So you will see us welcoming a new line-up of plant explorers as our speakers and we hope you'll be as excited about them as we are.

The 3-day meeting will be based on the north campus of Cornell University, voted one of the most beautiful U.S. college campuses. Many of our activities will occur in the Robert Purcell Community Center or nearby. Residence hall lodging, if you want to stay close to the action, is offered literally steps away from this building.

Unofficially this AGM, like those of the past, provides a great way for NARGS members (enthusiastic gardeners all) with an annual opportunity to share our gardening experiences, to renew friendships, and to form new ones. Together we will share our own plant explorations, inspirations, and visions.

What to Expect: daytime field trips, evening talks (line-up below), plant sales by choice vendors, plus an optional pre-AGM tour to visit three exceptional private gardens in the Syracuse area.

Speakers

F. Robert Wesley, botanist at the Cornell Botanic Gardens, is one of our area's foremost experts on native plants of New York State. He spoke at Taproot 2020 about the native plants of the

Finger Lakes gorges and the flora of the Chaumont Barrens alvar preserve. This time he will speak about the rich diversity of native orchids in New York State.

Eleftherios Dariotis (aka Liberto Dario, the moniker he gave himself for use on his Facebook page) is a horticulturist, botanist, and plant explorer from Athens, Greece. He owns a small nursery and bulb business, travels extensively around the world to study and photograph plants in their native habitats, and leads plant tours, including a NARGS Tour to Greece in 2019.

Sue Milliken and Kelly Dodson are the owners of Far Reaches Farm in Port Townsend, Washington, whose extensive collection of plants is spectacularly unfocused and a plant collector's paradise. They are also founding directors of Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy, a non-profit whose mission is the acquisition and conservation of vulnerable plants of wild and cultivated origin that are new or rare in North America. They travel the distant corners of the world to acquire and conserve horticulturally and botanically important rare plants, learn about them, and teach what they know.

Field Trips

While these field trips will probably have less relevance to our members, we are planning a field trip on Wednesday,

to include a guided walk to one of our renowned gorges – either Upper Treman gorge or Upper Buttermilk Falls gorge, visits to two choice private gardens (the Stark/Stauble garden and Kobre/Denson garden), and a lakeside lunch on the shores of Cayuga Lake (Myers Park). On Thursday, we visit the Cornell Botanic Gardens plant collections with their docents on hand to answer questions. Free time in the afternoon allows our registrants to further explore the Gardens and Arboretum, or to venture to other on- or off-campus attractions.

Additional Activities

There will be NARGS awards, election of officers, and the annual report, plant sales, book sales and signings. On Thursday evening there will be a banquet and open bar, and post-AGM on-your-own tours of ACNARGS members' gardens.

Schedule

The meeting schedule will be posted on the NARGS website (www.nargs.org) in the forthcoming Winter 2021/22 *Quarterly*. We will also publish it in our newsletter and our own website.

Registration

As a registrant, you will have the advantage of full access to ALL the AGM activities. You are required to be a member of NARGS to register (still a

bargain at \$40). Ready to sign up? Online registration will open about mid-January 2022. At that time, further information and the registration link will be posted on the NARGS.org Home Page under Events, listed as Annual Meeting and Tours 2022. The registration fee of \$450 payable by credit card will be due at registration. We are limited to a maximum of 150 registrants and we know, from the last time (when covid lockdown and Cornell shut down forced the June 2020 cancelation) that those spaces had already filled by mid-March.

The Rock Garden Meadow: A Contrast and Relief from the Rocky Garden By Panayoti Kelaidis

If you are in a bonsai club, you're expected to have a lot of little trees beautifully trained in pots and not necessarily anything else in your garden. I've visited many a succulent collector in Southern California where the entire garden was bristling with cacti, aloes, agaves—anything succulent and not much else. The same phenomenon occurs with many collectors: dahlia, hosta, conifer, iris—most any specialist collection is often arrayed in rows often surrounded by bare soil. There are “native plant gardens” where any plant from beyond an arbitrary political boundary is eschewed, banished, reviled!

And then there are rock gardeners. I suppose you have alpine gardeners in Britain who may possess only teeny plants in pots—but in North America rock gardening is truly catholic (not necessarily in the religious sense! I'm Orthodox after all): I don't think I've ever visited a rock gardener in our continent who didn't have some special trees, unique shrubs, a patch of woodland and often a pond, a bog and perhaps even a dry spot with some cacti. Rock gardens aspire to the peaks, but we are always nestled in reality. Our art exemplifies the Taoist principle expressed in chapter 11 of the *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu:

“Mold clay into a bowl

The empty space makes it useful....

Therefore, the value comes from what is there

But the use comes from what is not there.”

Perhaps the best example of a “not there” of rock gardening would be a meadow. The “alpine lawn” has been a feature described in many rock gardens—which can manifest itself in any number of forms. In Colorado many of us have patches of buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*) or blue gramma grass (*Bouteloua gracilis*) which are the dominant short grasses of the Great Plains. These provide an ideal matrix for spring and fall bulbs—not to mention perennials like *Liatris punctata*, that benefit from the competition of grass roots. For others a lawn can be a few square feet or yards of thyme or veronica

that provide a contrast and relief from the rocky garden presence and venue for social plants.

Anyone who's designed a meadow knows it's every bit as tricky as creating a crevice or other rock garden. I've noticed a half dozen or more books on the subject published in just the last few years. Midwestern designers like Roy Diblik have raised the tall-grass prairie to new heights (so to speak) and I was transfixed when I visited Great Dixter: the "lawns" there are fantastic anthologies of indigenous orchids and all manner of wildflowers that have become increasingly rare in overpopulated Britain.

I invite you to sign up for NARGS last Webinar of this winter season scheduled for Saturday February 19th. This will be the first time I know of that an entire symposium has been dedicated to the creation of meadows and the use of grasses and graminoids in rock gardens. The talks are being orchestrated by Kenton Seth, better known for his crevice garden creations around the world: Kenton designs all

manner of gardens, and meadows are especially near and dear to his heart. I have no doubt this Webinar will be revelatory and great fun: check the NARGS website (www.nargs.org) for further announcements and a sign up to this seminar!

For some views of a Colorado prairie check out this post:

<http://prairiebreak.blogspot.com/2017/09/prairie-daze-magical-preserve-north-of.html>

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 the late winter newsletter is March 5, 2022.

2022 WATNONG CHAPTER OFFICERS

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