

GREAT LAKES CHAPTER
North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS)
SPRING NEWSLETTER, APRIL 2014



CALENDAR OF CHAPTER MEETINGS **meeting details below**

****SATURDAY, MAY 10: SPRING MEETING & PLANT SALE**

MEETING: 11:00 AM – ca. 3:00 PM
PLACE: Harry Elkins. 916 Westchester Rd., Grosse Point Park, MI 48230 – see map insert
11:00-ca. 1:00 tour the garden

BAG LUNCH: While touring the garden
PLANT SALE: 1:30 PM -- See the Plant Sale insert for details

Mark Your Calendars:

Saturday, September 20, 2014: Fall Meeting & Plant Sale.
Details about the Fall Meeting & Plant Sale will be in the Fall Newsletter.

UPCOMING NATIONAL MEETINGS:

August 28-30, 2014, Santa Fe, New Mexico at the Eldorado Hotel & Spa NARGS Annual General Meeting.

Visit <https://www.nargs.org/santa-fe-annual-general-meeting> for details -- there is still time to register!

There are no Winter Study Weekends planned for this year, but remember our Chapter's NARGS Annual Meeting coming up next May 7-10 at Weber's Inn Ann Arbor.

From the President's Chair

Patrick Ion

So after last summer's good growing season in Michigan we were favored with a real winter. Of course, Michigan had much less serious weather, whether it is floods, ice or snow storms, or worse, than most other parts of the country. Nonetheless it seems to be agreed it was a punishing season for many gardens. There is a lot of red conifer foliage, even where the plants at the edges of their ranges pulled through and many did not. Some favored plants which were apparently doing well have not survived. For me a puzzling one was *Paeonia mlokesevitshii*, the early yellow Peony, which seemed to have been set back by being eaten by rabbits or the like last spring, but looked fine later. Now it's gone, leaving a number of small seedlings, but some seedlings from last year seem to have gone too. Even the slow and wet spring has not helped: the easy (<http://glcnargs.com/images/Ion-CG20120422-4.jpg>) early -blooming plant I thought was *Arabis purshii*, which looked strong a couple of weeks ago now just seems to be hanging on in my crevices. However, there have been some early bulbs, a first *Hymenoxys* flower, Hellebores and more. I am awaiting with interest the first results from the tufa garden I put in last summer, but intend actually to move the whole thing to a better site soon. Others, such as Tony Reznicek, Jacques Thompson, Don LaFond, and Rimmer DeVries (with his many small bulbs flowering from seed after years in pots) show us how much can be done and how rewarding gardening can be.

Unfortunately we seem to have lost a number of our members recently, and these losses will be felt by all of us: Most recently William Comai and Dick Punnet passed away. The most experienced members Dick Punnet and Fred Case were for me, many years ago, and the initial examples of knowledgeable people and generous souls that attracted me to GLC NARGS when I moved to this area from abroad. Recent programs also have proven very successful.

A dominant addition to the Chapter's programs for the coming year is preparation for the NARGS Annual General Meeting 7-10 May 2015 in Ann Arbor. This year's AGM will be in August in Santa Fe, so not very long before our turn. But we hope that the emphasis we have chosen on growing plants in our own gardens, our theme title being *Back to the Alpines*, will provide enough motivation that the event will be well-attended. The AGM2015 Planning Committee, ably chaired by Susan Reznicek, is now fully staffed. The Planning Committee met again 14 April at Libby and Mike Greanya's (very nice Hellebores and early Draba and Saxifrage examples were to be seen) to take stock of the progress made (e.g., we now have Weber's Inn and buses contracted with a deposit paid, a draft program and schedule with speakers cleared and workshops roughed out, and a very nice logo). A new period of activity is starting with emphasis on getting our marketing message out, and on preparations for what the Chapter will produce for the AGM (such as plants for sale and tufa). We shall be needing Volunteers to do quite a lot for the over 200 NARGS members we hope to attract to the event. So we may expect to hear a good number of calls for help this coming season. However, having a good National AGM does help the cause of rock gardening worldwide, and that's something we all believe in.

MEETING REPORT: 28 October 2013 *High Rise and Time Share*

By Don LaFond

The National did us right again. They brought us a brogue speaking bulb guy from Scotland -- Ian Young. Like his 11 year running bulb log, the pictures came clear, detailed, and in multiples. His message was clear and concise, have your garden space do triple duty. Low- bulbs, corms, rock and shade plants, middle-shrubs, tall-trees. In his talk Ian used the often ephemeral nature of bulbs and corms and their flowering times to pack a ton of plants in very small space. For instance, he showed *Eranthus*, *Galanthus*, and Hellebore's, blooming with *Corydalis*, *Crocus*, *Cyclamen*, and *Narcissus* foliage showing through. Later Epimediums will cover the dying foliage of

the early ephemerals. Erythroniums are one of Ian's favorite bulbs and he showed them in every religion growing and self-seeding around and through everything -- his idea being to get the most color, drama and plants in a small space. Like all good gardeners Ian Young proselytizes about the virtues of growing plants from seed. Ian talked about the virus problems that many imported bulbs and corms have. Viruses aren't transmitted through seed. Ian also showed several plants he has named, one being *Erythronium* 'Creighton's Clumper'. Grown from seed, it is particularly adapted to his gardens climate and also clumps up very fast.

Ian and Maggie's garden is fairly small, being a suburban lot in Aberdeen Scotland. They pack dozens of trees and shrubs in this small space to create a three dimensional garden. "Don't forget to look up," Ian said, "even small gardens need trees," (*Sorbus hupehensis* wow). When trees, shrubs and perennials get too big don't be afraid to prune or just get rid of the offending tree or shrub. One idea he showed illustrated their idea of using space wisely was the driveway; instead of a solid slab of concrete Ian used two strips of concrete and the center left open to be cultivated with low growing plants.

Ian and Maggie are consummate rock gardeners. Using troughs made of various materials was well-represented in their garden. Styrofoam fish boxes painted or covered in hypertufa, large patio stones on edge bolted together to make large boxes, regular hypertufa troughs and raised beds. His reuse of materials was illustrated well by the use of broken pieces of solid cement blocks (breeze blocks) arranged convincingly into a trough. When asked how much rain they get in Scotland his immediate reply was "Wrong question!" What should the question be? "What is the evaporation rate?" What is it? "Not Much."

It was a very good talk, and to see more of what Ian and Maggie do go to www.srgc.net. Then click on Ian Young's Bulb Log, you won't be disappointed.

NARGS MINUTES: 18 Jan 2014 Winter Potluck, Matthaei Bot Gardens, Ann Arbor

By Libby Greanya

The meeting at Matthaei Botanical Gardens was called to order by VP Jacques Thompson at 12:20 pm. The Treasurer's Report was presented by Susan Reznicek. We have enough money to pay for the catered lunch planned Feb. 22! Our Chapter will be hosting the NARGS National Thursday May 7, 2015 to Saturday May 9, 2015 with an optional post-convention trip to the Upper Peninsula. Sign-up sheets were available for Volunteers to work at the convention. We are still in need of a Volunteer Coordinator for the Convention, as of this time [The position since filled]. Jacques encouraged people to start propagating "good stuff" this year. Plant sales are a major income source at the National for our Chapter.

We enjoyed a wonderful potluck lunch.

Bill Brown, from Long Island, and yet a member of our Great Lakes NARGS Chapter, spoke on '*Springtime in Istanbul - Plants of Turkey and Cyprus*' and made us long for spring and blooms. The talk was open to the public – 52 people attended the lecture. A great way to spend a cold January day!

NARGS MINUTES: 22 Feb 2014 Matthaei Botanical Gardens, Ann Arbor

By Libby Greanya

Louis Jordaan (<http://www.minwater.co.za>) from South Africa gave two wonderful lectures first (attended by 46 people) *South Africa: A Diverse Natural Environment* the seven biomes of Klein Karroo South Africa including many of their plants and animals. The group was particularly mesmerized by the native African violet - *Aptosimum karoo*.

We enjoyed a fabulous lunch catered by University of Michigan caterers. The portabella mushroom topped with roasted eggplant, tomatoes and cheese was "to die for", as was the rest of the repast! Thank you to Susan for arranging this feast.

After lunch, there was an auction. Generous Andy Duvall donated a Ginkgo and a purple Witch Hazel 'Falling Stars'. The Witch Hazel sold for \$100.00! There was also a book by Rex Murfitt *Creating and Planting Alpine Gardens* and a door prize of a vintage book *Rock Gardening* that went to an "almost birthday boy".

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 pm by President Patrick Ion. Treasurer's report by Susan Reznicek is that we are currently in the red with the cost of the catered buffet but not to worry, we will make that up with the NARGS Spring Plant Sale. Minutes from Jan. 18, 2014 were read by Libby Greanya. No corrections. The next NARGS Annual General Meeting will be held August 28-30, 2014 in Santa Fe at the Eldorado Hotel & Spa, per Don Lafond. Susan reported on the upcoming NARGS National which will be in Ann Arbor May 7-10, 2015. Again it was stressed that members need to plan and grow their plants for the sale and be sure to take photos of your gardens this year in preparation for 2015 [GLC NARGS will have a vending table at the National]. The Business Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm. Second Lecture – *Nature Pictures That Tell Stories* attended by 53 people and open to the public. This talk included a lot on pollination, plant adaptation (called by some "plant neurobiology"), great scat photos, and many, many stories. After the meeting, some members dined with our esteemed speaker at Asia City Buffet.

Another Giant Falls or Farewell to Slim Shady

By Jacques Thompson

I have the somber obligation to report the departure of one of our widely cherished and long-standing members. Dick Punnett passed away quietly in the company of his children, in his home in Belleville, Michigan, 9 Sept 2013.

His eldest son Richard, along with his wife Marie and their children have taken possession of Dick's home and property. Marie had been assisting Dick with some limited gardening duties and seemed keen to learn more about gardening. I had repeatedly urged Marie to join our Chapter where I assured her she would be received warmly.

It was already some three decades ago that Tony had secured an invitation from Dick to bring Andrea and me out to see "The Garden." I remember pulling off the road onto a two-track that bisected a towering wall of the tallest grass I had ever seen. A repeat visit, quickly, then another, and click like two magnets snapping together we hit it off like peas and carrots. It has been an awesome adventure for well, a goodlier while. How to put what he was for me into mere words? He was a generous, patient, uncomplaining, guiding, instructive-mentor, and a constant friend -- a rare person with whom I shared the same sense of humor and with and so much more. I can still hear his voiced greeting, and if you were lucky enough you'd have heard it too "Hey there Turkey" or rounding the corner of the house I'd shout out "Dick!" to locate him in the garden, and his usual "Yo, I'm in the back" would reply.

It would take up the entire issue to share with you just a flavor of what he shared with others and me. The trips and the tips he was forever dispensing knowledge -- OK successes and failures. "You've got to figure out what works for you. I can only show you what worked for me." Class was always in session with Dick, well not always 'cause Dick loved to cut up. But whether in the garden, or a car trip, or around the table at "The Red Apple," he was always giving of himself.

In all that time it never occurred to me to take a single picture, but then he would have never let that happen. But I can see him now standing in a striped button up short sleeve shirt -- top two buttons left undone, with a white tee shirt showing at his neck. A sheen of "Off" on his arms. His slacks were baggy Dickey work pants, worn with suspenders -- the worn wood handle of his cut down trowel sticking up out of his back pocket. A hunter orange hat pushed back on his head -- and an ever present cigarette dangling impossibly off his lip. A 2-liter bottle of Mountain Dew somewhere in sight if not in hand. Tanned, smiling, happy, his thumb sticking straight up in the air from his extended arm pointing right at you saying "Right there Baby". We are sure gonna miss you Turkey.

NEWS: NARGS MEETING Stipend

For a first time attendee to a NARGS National Meeting, a \$300 stipend is available from the national organization (only one stipend per Chapter per year).

From the NARGS website: “The NARGS currently gives \$300 as a meeting stipend to encourage local members to attend either a NARGS Winter Study Weekend or a NARGS Annual Meeting. The stipend is intended as an incentive for a Chapter member to participate in National activities. It is available only one time per person.”

The requirements are that the applicant is a NARGS national member prior to the application, is a contributing member in good standing and his/her local Chapter, and has never previously attended a National Conference. Assisting a local Chapter in hosting a National Meeting does not count as attending a National Meeting. The application for the stipend should be sent to the Chapter Chair who will request funds from the NARGS President.

If approved, the stipend is sent directly to the applicant. It is suggested the Chapter Chair reward a truly deserving, active Chapter member with this stipend. Currently, there are five stipends, with a maximum of one per Chapter per year. One is reserved for those outside the U.S. and Canada and for NARGS members who are not affiliated with a local Chapter. This person is required to apply directly to the NARGS President. For more information, visit the nargs.org website under the "about us/meetings" tabs.

Please send address changes to our Treasurer, and please include your up-to-date email address. Thank You.

Susan Reznicek
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reznicek@umich.edu



Corydalis ambigua var *lineariloba*, one of the best blue Corydalis for southern Michigan – long lived and reliable winter or summer in a moist, shaded site. But I wish it would set more seed!



Daphne blagayana, low and choice

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:

Great Lakes Chapter:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email/FAX: _____

National Organization:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email/FAX: _____

Send \$10.00 per year (check payable to Chapter) to:
Susan Reznicek
Treasurer, Great Lakes Chapter, NARGS
890 Wickfield Court
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105-1227

Send \$30.00 dues (check payable to NARGS) to:
Bobby Ward
Executive Secretary
North American Rock Garden Society
P.O. Box 18604, Raleigh, NC 27619

OR pay in person at the next GLC meeting

We strongly encourage people to join both the Great Lakes Chapter, and the National Organization.

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North American Rock Garden Society
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FIRST CLASS