

GREAT LAKES CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society

FALL NEWSLETTER, SEPTEMBER 2016



CALENDAR OF CHAPTER MEETINGS

** meeting details below**

****SATURDAY, Sept. 24: Fall Garden Tour and Plant Sale**

MEETING: 11:30 AM – ca. 3:30 PM

Lunch on your own or bagged

PLACE: **Benedict's Nursery**

5623 W 1300N Nappanee Indiana 46550 (see map insert)

PLANT SALE: 1:30 PM

[note that this is a change of date from that noted in the Spring Newsletter]

****SATURDAY, Oct. 22: Fall Meeting**

MEETING: 1:30 PM – ca. 3:00 PM

PLACE: Matthaei Botanical Gardens auditorium, Ann Arbor

PROGRAM: **Peter Korn** "Alpines"

Don't miss this opportunity to hear one of the movers and shakers in European Rock Gardening! See: <http://eng.peterkornstradgard.se/>

Mark Your Calendars:

****Our Winter potluck will be late this year – Saturday Feb. 25, 2017.** We will have a meeting with an up-and-coming star of rock gardening, xeriscapes, and native plants, Kenton Seth from Grand Junction Colorado! See: <http://www.paintbrushgardens.com/>

More information will be on our usual timely Winter Postcard

UPCOMING NATIONAL MEETINGS – Keep an eye on your Rock Garden Quarterly for news and details.

Our Fall Meeting and Plant Sale
by
Jacques Thompson

The weather these past couple of months has been particularly unkind to many gardens in our region. There were 21 days of 90 degrees or higher temperatures combined with rainfall totals that were extremely variable (I think 'spotty' was the descriptive word I heard most often from the weather forecasters this summer). This one-two punch (at least for me) has meant this has been a summer of endless hose dragging. Oh and weeding! Isn't it amazing how well the weeds did under these harsh conditions? What with the daily watering and weeding I can't think of a single project that got completed this summer, including keeping the plants alive! I am quite sure that our garden is not alone in suffering from plant losses this summer.

FALL PLANT SALE.

Fall the season of cooling temperatures and more timely rain, is also a time of planting. With so many losses in the garden this summer, it is fortuitous that this year Robert & Esther Benedict at their Nursery in Nappanee IN. will host Fall Plant Sale & Garden visit, on Saturday September 24th. In addition to the GLC memberships' plant sale Esther and Robert are generously offering a **30 percent discounted price** on their nursery sales stock to GLC members in attendance. I look forward to seeing everyone there, and to hear how things fared in your gardens

Esther and Robert have a fabulous selection of alpines and rock plants so we will have a chance to see some eye-popping rarities. At the nursery, they have been developing display gardens, including rock gardens, for a number of years including a tufa/sand crevice garden, with plenty of vertical tufa surface for rarities, and have recently completed a rather large fieldstone sand bed and expanded their bog garden. The last several years, they have also been expanding the nursery to include trees and shrubs and are always looking for something a little bit different. They also carry many ordinary perennials for the beginning gardener. In addition to the Nursery, they live on a 60 acre farm, 10 of it

being wooded, and maintain a large vegetable garden, fruit trees, raspberries, blueberries, and have livestock, plus acreage in corn.

They are located in Indiana just south of the Michigan State line (see map) only about 2 ½-3 hours from the Ann Arbor area and less from Grand Rapids, so it is not exceptionally far, despite being in another state (and after all, we are the Great Lakes Chapter). In addition, on the way there or back, you might visit Fernwood Botanical Garden (see the map; hours 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, admission \$9 adult). Just in case, we have included it on the maps. Fernwood was begun as the private garden of long time NARGS member, Kay Boydston, who did pioneering work hybridizing ferns, building tufa gardens (from native tufa outcrops along the St. Joseph River), and naturalizing plants. The gardens and natural areas at Fernwood are well worth a stop.

OUR FALL MEETING OCT. 22

We are privileged to have a program presented by famous Swedish Rock Gardener Peter Korn. Peter is one of the stars of the rock gardening world. See his website: <http://eng.peterkornstradgard.se/> for a selection of Peter's activities.

In our program, Peter will talk about the natural history of Alpines as it relates to cultivating them in non-alpine environments. The gardening conditions in Sweden are more similar to Michigan than many parts of Western Europe, and his rock gardening experiences and techniques should be adaptable to gardening to our Michigan and Great Lakes region climates and soils. Besides that, Peter is an immensely energetic young gardener who undertakes vast gardening enterprises that will inspire us all.

NARGS SEED EXCHANGE

Once again it's time to gather up the seeds of your favorite, interesting, or rare Alpines as well other garden-worthy plants of particular interest, to send into the NARGS Seed Ex. The Seed Ex is one of the Primary benefits of belonging to NARGS. Its value and continued success is dependent upon the generosity of the contributing members. For more

information go to the NARGS website and click on Seed Ex.

HARDY BEGONIAS

by Tony Reznicek

It is always surprising to people beginning to be adventurous in gardening that there are begonias hardy in southern Michigan, but in fact there are two entities grown, both similar looking, tuberous species with axillary stem bulbils and showy pink flowers in late summer and fall.



Begonia sinensis stem bulbils

One, *Begonia grandis* (below) is well known; large, up to at least 80 cm tall in my garden, with red veins (or even substantial red tinting) on the leaf undersides. This is easy and reliable, and may form dense stands in suitable shady settings spreading by



its stem bulbils

It is an admirable plant for a shady mesic garden bed, providing much needed late season color and texture. There is also a nice white form, equally vigorous and easy to grow.

The other, similar, but smaller, more delicate (typically up to 40 cm tall), and definitely earlier blooming is distributed as *Begonia sinensis*. This seems to me to be a harder species to establish – at least as hardy, but seemingly more in need of a moister site. After killing it repeatedly by growing it in sites seeming suited to *B. grandis*, I think I finally have it settling in at the moist base of one of my tufa walls. It is lovely, more in keeping with a rock garden, and very floriferous. There is a rare white form, distributed as “Shaanxi white.” I’ve killed that too!



Begonia grandis white flowered

Below: *Begonia sinensis* female flower (left) male (right)





Begonia leaf undersides *B. grandis* (left) *B. sinensis* (right)

These are both from China. This is in keeping with the observation that the Chinese flora has many hardy plants of tropical affinities (think gesneriads, gingers, etc.). China is also a center of diversity for *Begonias* – 173 species occur in China, though almost all of these are in the tropical southern fringe. So what does the Flora of China say about these two species of *Begonia*

(http://www.efloras.org/florataxon.aspx?flora_id=2&taxon_id=103695&key_no=3)?

What we find is that there indeed two entities, but recognized as subspecies of *Begonia grandis* – subsp. *grandis* for the big plant and subsp. *sinensis* for the small plant, distinguished botanically as follows:

Stem stout; leaf blade abaxially red or at least red on veins, ovate to broadly so, larger than subsp. *sinensis*; filaments connate beyond 2 mm.....subsp. *grandis*

Stem weak; leaf blade abaxially pale, occasionally reddish, elliptic-ovate to triangular-ovate, 5-12(-20) × 3.5-9(-13) cm; filaments connate for less than 2 mm.....subsp. *sinensis*

This certainly fits with our plants. Although they are just recognized as subspecies, the plants are horticulturally very different, so it is a distinction worth making, and perhaps if the evidence from cultivation were better known, they might be considered as species. Both are widespread in forests in southern China, though subsp. *sinensis* reaches much higher elevations, up to 3400 m, as

opposed to only 1100 m for subsp. *grandis*. It could be the hardier plant, though not enough people grow it to have a clear idea of relative hardiness.



Begonia sinensis (or *B. grandis* subsp. *sinensis*)

AVAILABILITY OF ALAN MCMURTRIE'S IRIS RETICULATA HYBRIDS!

Many of you will remember Alan McMurtrie's talk on Reticulata Irises some years ago, showing the beautiful colors his new hybrids are achieving. Now, finally, enough stock has built up that some are commercially available, as follows (though some are sold out already!)

Odyssey Bulbs (<http://odysseybulbs.com/>) will have:

Mars Landing
Orange Glow
Sea Breeze
Velvet Smile

White Flower Farm has Eye Catcher and White Caucasus

McClure & Zimmerman have:

Spot On
Scent Sational
White Caucasus

Jacques Amand International (<http://jacquesamandintl.com/product-category/hyacinth-roman/iris/>) ships to the U.S. They do a bulk shipment to the U.S. and then

individual orders are sent on from within the U.S. People can contact: bulbs@JacquesAmand.co.uk for details.

Beautiful Day
Dance On
Darkness
Evening Twilight
Eye Catcher
Mars Landing
North Star
Orange Glow
Regal
Scent Sational
Sea Green
Sea Breeze
Splish Splash
Spot On
Storm
Summers Day
Sunshine
Velvet Smile
Vivacious Beginnings
White Caucasus

Find out more about Alan's work at: www.Reticulatas.com and look for articles on them in future issues of the NARGS Rock Garden Quarterly. See also The Plantsman for March, 2016.

CATCHING UP ON OUR MINUTES AND BUSINESS from Sept. 2015 to May 2016!

By Libby Greanya

GLC NARGS- Great Lakes Chapter – Fall Meeting: Sept. 19, 2015 Hamburg Township Library and Senior Center

BUSINESS MEETING:

The business meeting was called to order by President Patrick Ion at 10:03 AM. Although the final numbers are not in, we made money on the AGM (Annual General Meeting) in Ann Arbor last May! We have returned a portion to the NARGS nationals. Michael Greanya remitted \$4,800.00 to the GL Chapter NARGS from tufa sales from the AGM. Michael will head a committee to decide what the GL chapter will do with this money. Pat

Byler, Tony Reznicek and Julie Caroff volunteered to join the committee.

Tony Reznicek announced that leftover tote bags from the AGM will be given away – and these lovely totes went like hot cakes.

Jacques Thompson discussed that Rockport, MI which we visited on the post-convention tour, is now a State Park (actually that happened in 2012) and therefore a person only is allowed to remove 25 lbs. of stone per person per year. (Lots of people are now getting marine fossils from there as it is on the internet).

The slate of 2016 Officers: approved by the membership was:

President: Jacques Thompson

Vice President: position vacant

Secretary: Libby Greanya

Treasurer: Susan Reznicek

Newsletter Editor: Tony Reznicek

The Business Meeting adjourned at 10:15 am.

Speaker Jiří Papoušek presented two talks 'Building Crevices and other Czech Gardens' and, after an always wonderful catered chicken lunch, 'Small Daphnes and their Cultivation.' He enchanted the audience with his warmth, knowledge and enthusiasm.

GLC NARGS – FALL PLANT SALE: Rimmer & Susann DeVries, 215 E. Henry Street, Saline October 3, 2015.

The date of the 2015 Fall Plant Sale was moved from our usual 3rd week in September, so we could co-sponsor Jiří Papoušek, from the Czech Republic. Rimmer & Susann's Garden is always a treat with many vignettes of Rock Gardens and other beds for special delicate plants. Thank you Rimmer & Susann.

GLC NARGS – GREAT LAKES CHAPTER - PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING January 30 2016.

Held at the University of Michigan Herbarium 11 am – 3 pm The Chapter is trying to develop a long range strategy for our website, decisions of

what we will support with our Money, and other policies. If you have additional ideas, let the executive know.

Attending: Jacques Thompson (President), Tony Reznicek (Newsletter Editor), Don LaFond (NARGS Board), Michael and Libby (Secretary) Greanya, Patrick Ion (Past President), Julie Caroff, Bruce Pollard, Patricia Bard, and Rimmer DeVries.

GLC has 127 members getting the newsletter, generating ca. \$800.00 income per year (we carry members for a couple years even if they stop paying on the theory that they may “re-up.”)

A brief financial history of the Chapter: from Tony: The GLC was “broke” 20 years ago. The \$2.00 dues did not cover mailings (this was before E-mail). Thanks to Treasurer Michael Kaericher, the dues were gradually raised to \$10.00 where they are today. Also the minimum amount charged for plants at the plant sale was raised to \$2.00. Some plants were being priced at 25 cents, which was just too little and made bookkeeping at the plant sale problematic. GLC was also paying \$100.00 per meeting to Matthaei (U of M Botanical Garden) to use their conference room. Now that our educational meetings are open to the public, and advertised by Matthaei, which is a win-win and can potentially bring us new members, the room use is free. The use of E-mail has saved a great deal of money. We now only mail to 14 people.

Of historical note, the Winter Study weekend of 2003, yielded a \$12,000.00 profit and cemented the good reputation of the GLC in the eyes of NARGS National. 200+ people attended. Susan Reznicek was Planning Chair. Sharing speakers, especially with the Toronto chapter, has also saved a lot of money.

SOME SUGGESTED VENTURES TO SUPPORT:

1. The Marie Azary Rock Garden at Matthaei U of M Botanical Garden: Support the Matthaei to partially Sponsor their Rock Garden, which is kind of pitiful right now. (Note: this is a public rock garden with paths that are not clearly distinguishable from the garden inviting children who love rocks...well you get the idea. It is subject to

more abuse than your own controlled environment. Therefore the plants may need to be bigger, tougher, aggressive (think spreading) and more floriferous (showy) than you would choose. (The ultimate decision on what plants to use is of course the Botanical Gardens decision, but we can advise and, with their approval, donate plants.) The money donation could be in the form of sponsoring an intern (\$8,000 for a full student intern, \$2,000 for a ¼ student intern, etc.). The quality of the service of these interns depends on the person, and frequently they disappoint. They also need training and supervision, which apparently Matthaei does not fully provide...The promise of money is usually over a five year period and is tied to the tenure of the Botanical Garden director. Work Days at the Rock Garden is also a thought – Libby likes this idea to get the membership in the garden.

2. Find a worthy young person to sponsor – membership in GLC-NARGS and NARGS Nationals. Always a challenge – the worthy, consistently interested part...maybe from SNRE (School of Natural Resources).
3. Double the stipend from \$300.00 to \$600.00 for “newbies” to go to a National meeting.
4. Workshops open to the public. Since young people may not purchase houses, the future is in container gardening - troughs, pots, etc.
5. Plant Sales – sell at a bigger venue – like the Dexter Plant Sale consortium, with lots of traffic and, I would think, customers with money burning a hole in their pocket. But since we really don’t need the money, it could be more of a publicity/recruitment event.
6. Field trips and trips to Nurseries and gardens for the members – e.g., Esther and Robert Benedict’s in Nappanee, Indiana; Joan Bolt in Grand Rapids (Spring Plant Sale 2017 will be at Joan’s), Chicago Botanical Garden, etc. The disadvantage is that this only supports a few members and out of town trips can be problematic for people who cannot get away for various reasons.

7. Another Japanese plant purchase – which costs money but generates even more money.

BYLAWS AND MISSION STATEMENT

Our Chapter needs new bylaws. The 2001 bylaws are on GuideStar if we want to pay \$50.00 for the GuideStar membership to download them. However, we need something newer than 2001 anyway and can boilerplate this. They may not be cheaper than preparing new bylaws and filing them correctly.

WEBSITE

We followed the outline presented by Julie Caroff. Thank you Julie for preparing this outline. Julie and Patricia Bard will research our options and costs and hopefully bring back about three proposals. The base decision is whether to use a proprietary site, like Square Space or an open source, like Word Press with plug ins. (Please forgive mistakes here, I am out of my element.) When they come up with these ideas, we need to bounce them off every 13 year old, or otherwise qualified person we can find, for input.

The plug-ins for processing credit cards and PayPal are easy and cheap! We do need security, which comes with a cost, but don't need the level of security of a Swiss bank.

A baseline "vanilla" site for a small business person, like a photography business, costs about \$1,500. Ours will probably cost more. There will be a yearly hosting fee. We will need a Webmaster, who could be an interested individual, or conceivably a paid position. However, as we all have witnessed at other websites, payment does not necessarily lead to performance and can be an issue. Note, there should be a Members only section. We discussed the ability of members to add posts to the website, like photos, without involving the Webmaster hoop. That would need to be password protected to make sure there is no hacking and display of inappropriate things, like photos of annuals. Julie said there should be a new posting weekly to keep the site looking fresh and showing life.

GLC NARGS Winter Potluck SATURDAY, January 16 2016 at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens.

Besides eating well, this meeting was a program consisting of short vignettes by members. We have lined up a half dozen or so members to give brief "mini talks" about topics like seed raising, trough landscaping, etc.

BUSINESS MEETING

The proposal by Jacques Thompson (noted in the newsletter) for our chapter to make a donation of \$ 2000.00 to the Matthaei Botanical Gardens which will be applied towards the cost of a Summer Intern who would be dedicated to caring for both the Marie Azary Rock Garden and the Great Lakes Garden, one day/each week was discussed.

GLC NARGS - SPRING PLANT SALE - Barb and John Haman- Port Sanilac, Michigan ---May 14, 2016.

Barb and John have a breath taking rock garden on the shore of Lake Huron - a riot of spring flowers, swooping Baltimore orioles, clumps of gardeners huddled together in awe. Because of the location, spring bulbs, long gone in SE Michigan, were still in bloom! Barb and John were gracious hosts who opened their home so the members could lunch protected from the elements in a magazine worthy "house beautiful" living room with a window wall overlooking the crashing waves of mighty Lake Huron. The plant auction this year was especially lively and profitable.

BUSINESS MEETING

Patrick Ion proposed \$50.00 per month to support the "new" web site and this was approved, as was the donation of \$2000 to the Matthaei Botanical Gardens to fund part of a Rock Garden intern position for one year.

NOTE:

We have actually had more planning meetings – but are out of room in this newsletter! Additional material will be in subsequent newsletters.

**Please send address changes to our
Treasurer: Susan Reznicek**

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:

Great Lakes Chapter:

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

OR pay in person at the next GLC meeting

National Organization:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email/FAX: _____

Send \$40.00 dues (check payable to NARGS)
to:
Bobby J. Ward
Executive Secretary
North American Rock Garden Society
P.O. Box 18604, Raleigh, NC 27619

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

GREAT LAKES CHAPTER
North American Rock Garden Society
Newsletter Editor, Tony Reznicek
890 Wickfield Court
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105-1227

FIRST CLASS