

GREAT LAKES CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS)

SPRING NEWSLETTER, MARCH 2019



CALENDAR OF CHAPTER MEETINGS **meeting details below**

You can always check our website for information: <http://glcnargs.com/>

****SATURDAY, April 6: Spring Meeting, Focus on Choice Alpines!**

- MEETING:** 11:00 AM – ca. 3:00 PM
PLACE: Matthaei Botanical Gardens Auditorium
– see the map below right
- PROGRAMS:** Ger van den Beuken
11:00 AM – The Cultivation and Propagation of the Genus *Saxifraga* (includes *Porphyron*, *Saxifraga* and *Ligulatae* Saxifrages)
- CATERED LUNCH:** 12:30 PM (Please let Holly know you are coming before April 1, if you have not done so, to set up the catering)
1:30 PM – Cushion Plants

Ger van den Beuken is one of Europe's most eminent experts on the cultivation of choice alpine plants. Saxifrages and one of the most desirable rock garden plants we can grow reasonable well, and the cushion plant like form is an ideal one for rock gardens of all types, so this meeting should be inspiring. The NARGS speaker's tour is sponsoring Ger.

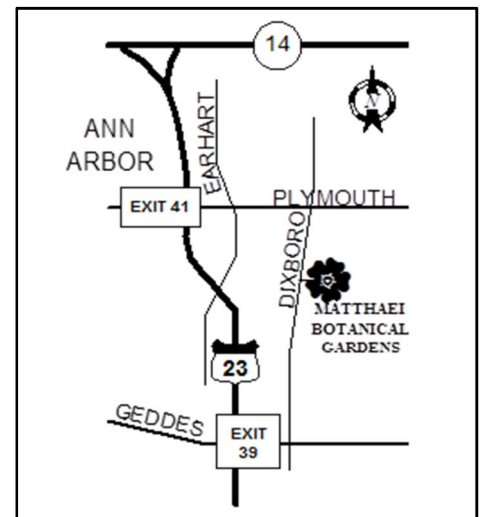
Our Spring Gala!!

****Friday, May 17 -- Sunday MAY 19:**

We will be hosting another Spring Gala, with a plant sale and get together Friday evening, garden tours Saturday, and a nice dinner and program at Webers by Vojtěch Holubec, and them Sunday morning open gardens also. This is going to be a great event – we'll keep you posted, and there will be a separate flyer for it

****SATURDAY, June 8, 2019: Spring Meeting**

We have a great opportunity to have Marcela Ferreyra from Argentina come to give us two talks: 1) Best Patagonian Flowers, 2) Rosulate Violas
Naturally, we'll have lunch in between. This will be in a new venue, the meeting room at the Herbarium. More details as the time draws closer, but mark your calendars.



NARGS ANNUAL MEETING 2019: registration closed March 1

NARGS ANNUAL MEETING 2020: will be held in Ithaca, New York, on June 18 – 20, 2020, on the campus of Cornell University.

**Minutes for the January 19, 2019
Winter Potluck Meeting
Holly Pilon**

Meeting was held at Matthaei Botanical Gardens in the auditorium, starting about 1pm. We had 33 members present. Meeting opened by Holly Pilon, chair, thanking everyone for braving the weather to attend and for bringing great food. Coming events mentioned-

6 April, two talks and lunch at Matthaei by Ger van den Beuken. Don LaFond offered to be host.

8 June, two talks, probably, with lunch by Marcela Ferreyra. Location still being determined. We had thought the University Herbarium but there are issues about entry since doors must be kept locked for security. May need a gatekeeper. Don offered to see if Hamburg Library would be available. Julie Caroff is thinking about hosting her.

As far as catering, Tony said University catering is good and reasonably priced. If we go to Hamburg, we may use Cajun Joes again.

May gala will be held May 17-19. Will have meet and greet Friday evening at Tony's with member plant sale and some other vendors, like Esther Benedict, Wrightman's and others. Open gardens on Saturday and Sunday, with Andy Duval opening nursery. Snack food at gardens to lessen need of out of towners to hunt for places to eat. Banquet with speaker Saturday evening at Webers with plated dinner, not buffet. Cost to be borne by chapter, but questions were raised about this violating non-profit status. Will ask Tony Frasca, attorney, about this.

Brief discussion of state of chapter and reason we have an attorney. We lost our non-profit status briefly and there were issues with the state of Michigan through non-compliance. These issues have been resolved and we are in process of getting bylaws to keep us in compliance. Bonnie Ion as new treasurer has been very active with this and also recovered money from state in a money market account the chapter had lost. We have a large balance, about \$48,000 in checking. How we use the money as a non-profit is at issue.

Ed Weiss brought up many questions based on his experience getting bylaws for his home association. Questioned why we are not incorporated, why we have officers and are proposing a board of directors-many just have one? How to amend laws, getting new copy of articles of association that look better and other ideas. Charlene Harris told of using a different avenue, a group called NEW that works with non-profits for free. Because of all this it was decided to postpone vote on proposed bylaws until things are clearer.

Bonnie Ion is out of town until February 5th, so a meeting of officers should wait until then. Also Andy Duval expressed interest in being on a board, and Ed was drafted because of his experience. Will contact Tony Frasca to get his input on some of these issues.

**January 19, 2019 Winter Potluck
Program GLC NARGS
Holly Pilon**

**Esther Benedict January 19, 2019
Trials, Triumphs, Tragedies**

Esther spoke for about an hour and a half about her gardening adventures. She discussed why she grows alpines, ways to cultivate them and many other topics. She also showed pictures of some of her beds in various stages and many of the plants she has grown, some of which she no longer has. Her topics included growing in troughs, soil composition, micro-climates and how she prepares plants to go into her beds. Many hints were also given, like putting down soil barriers under beds to prevent earthworms from mixing regular soil into her special mixes, washing the soil plants were brought in off roots so the plants adapt better to her beds.

We also learned about her attempts at crevice gardens and troughs with many pictures of how she protects beds in cold, snowless winters and newly planted conifers. Her use of papercrete, a lighter form of hypertufa that she is using, was also discussed. And she gave us recipes! We also learned about haydite and green roof mix, soilless mixes she used in her troughs that helps her with some of the trickier alpines. And here as well, we got her ratio for mixes.

She also showed us a new tool she is using for propagation called a cloning machine. Andy Duval has also used it but prefers other methods. But Esther likes it and is getting good results. It involves suspending the cuttings in a container over a mister and plants are rooting very quickly. She also showed how she prepares cuttings of daphnes and the results. Her timing for rooting tricky plants like daphnes is different from other members but it works for her – again lots of pictures of her beds and the newly rooting plants were a pleasure.

Esther also recommends trying growing from seeds and spores, since all plants will die-sometime. She talks about the economy, especially when starting a new area where lots of plants are needed. It's much cheaper to grow your own than to buy. But record keeping is also important, tracking date, treatment, placement, and types. She takes lots of pictures, too, as a backup. For ferns, she showed how she collects spores and treats them to get to baby ferns.

She briefly touched on the use of fungus mycorrhizae and whether there is potential, still making up her mind on that. So-we should experiment, ask questions and learn from our mistakes. And we are thankful to have such a great source of information to help us answer those questions when they come up. Thank you, Esther!

***Adonis* for Spring Bloom Tony Reznicek**

In March, all gardeners think about the first blooms of spring. We are lucky in southern Michigan that bloom often begins in late winter, and several groups of plants stand out. Among shrubs, we have the varieties of spring blooming witch hazel (mostly *Hamamelis ×intermedia*), and of course, bulbs and tubers – most notably snowdrops (*Galanthus*), winter aconite (*Eranthis*), and *Crocus*. As an aside, weather conditions this year were such that the winter aconites came out first, before either snowdrops or *Crocus*. Usually, snowdrops are first.

But one other plant is always up among the early blooms, and that is the plant popularly called *Adonis amurensis*. This is a choice plant, sometimes slow to establish and always expensive. It is rep-

resented in horticulture in North America almost always by what is called *Adonis amurensis* 'Fukujukai' – a good grower forming nice clumps but frustrating because it does not set seed. You can see from the picture below that we would all like drifts of it, especially as some winters it can start to bloom in early February warm spells.

Why no seed? Therein lies a clue. It is because *Adonis* 'Fukujukai' is not a selection of *A. amurensis* at all, but a vigorous, sterile triploid (three sets of chromosomes) hybrid between two east

In fact, this group of *Adonis* in eastern Asia contains at least 15 species. A few of these are high elevation more or less alpine plants (some of these are blueish or whitish-flowered, but not such early bloomers), but most species are early spring woodlanders. Some of the other cultivars (generally not so vigorous) may really be *A. amurensis* – or some other species, but it is quite hard to get information, and I have only grown a couple, as the plants are as hard to get in North America as the information! Not only that, but the plants are somewhat difficult to establish from nursery stock.



Asian species, *Adonis multiflora*, a diploid (two sets of chromosomes, like people) occurring in Korea and Japan and *A. ramosa*, a tetraploid from Japan. Calling it *A. amurensis* is a relic of long ago when all Asian woodland *Adonis* were considered one species. The true *Adonis amurensis* has unbranched stems and sepals longer than the petals.

They are dead if too dried out in storage or shipping, and also seem susceptible to rot. So be prepared to lose expensive plants! Also, while *Adonis* 'Fukujukai' is a quite vigorous plant, so far, my experience has been that others are slower to “bulk up” and take a while to produce a show.

While looking at Japanese nursery catalogues will certainly make one drool

over the great range of remarkable *Adonis* cultivars offered, you only occasionally see others selections offered in North America. One sparingly available – at a stiff price – is *Adonis* 'Chichibu Beni' with coppery flowers (not red! but nice), picture below.



This is also sterile and thought to be of similar parentage to 'Fukujukai' but definitely not so vigorous.

So what about *Adonis* that are fertile? I've grown several, but only one has done well (read survived!), and that is *A. multiflora*. This always sets full heads of plump seed, but like so many things, you have to be there to get it and, I suspect that like other similar members of the buttercup family, the seeds are short-lived and cannot stand drying. But I'll try to get some this year! One other unusual feature of this species is that the mature leaves are incredibly glossy as if they were coated in shiny plastic – it's quite interesting. The next two pictures are apparently this *Adonis*.



**Please send address changes to Bonnie Ion, 1456 Kensington Drive Ann Arbor, MI 48104 – bion@umich.edu
Do include your up-to-date email address.
Thank You.**

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:

Great Lakes Chapter:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email/FAX: _____

Send \$10.00 per year (check payable to Chapter) to:
Bonnie Ion
Treasurer, Great Lakes Chapter, NARGS
1456 Kensington Drive
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

OR pay in person at the next GLC meeting

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

National Organization:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email/FAX: _____

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

OR pay through the NARGS website:
<https://www.nargs.org/join>

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