

GREAT LAKES CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS)
SPRING NEWSLETTER, APRIL 2025



CALENDAR OF CHAPTER MEETINGS **meeting details below**

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

****SATURDAY, May 10:** Spring meeting, Plant Sale, & Garden tour at
The Herbarium and Patrick and Bonnie Ion's
Garden, Ann Arbor

This will be an experimental "Double Bill" meeting, where we'll have two talks, with a break for snacks, plus lunch, garden tour, and the plant sale close by.

MEETING:	10:30 AM – ca. 3:30 PM
PLACE:	University of Michigan Herbarium, 3600 Varsity Drive, Ann Arbor 48108
PROGRAM:	10:30– 11:30 Paul Spriggs: "Great Scot in Northwest"
Break/snacks	11:30 – 12:00
PROGRAM:	12:00 – 1:00 Paul Spriggs: "My Favorite Crevice Garden Plants"
GARDEN TOUR:	1:00 – 3:30 Patrick and Bonnie Ion, 1456 Kensington, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
BAG LUNCH:	At your convenience while touring the gardens
PLANT SALE:	2:00 PM

Paul is a great gardener and speaker, and also co-author, with Kenton Seth, of the excellent book "The Crevice Garden." Bring your copy for him to sign!

This will be a diverse plant sale, and with the meeting in the morning, Patrick and Bonnie have arranged to have plants dropped off at their house before the meeting. Their house is only a few minutes away from the Herbarium. Questions, email me: reznicek@umich.edu

Upcoming events – Mark your calendars!

Saturday, September 13:
FALL MEETING WITH MARK AKIMOFF – stay tuned for details.

Saturday, September 27:
FALL SALE AND GARDEN TOUR at Tony Reznicek's.

NARGS ANNUAL MEETING, Cheyenne, Wyoming June 12th – Jun 16th, 2025 – see first article below.

Tonic for the Garden(er) Invitation to a Symposium

Gardening, by its very nature, is generally a solitary occupation. We indulge our inner introverts by delving deep into nature, uprooting weeds, pruning the four “d’s” off of shrubs and trees (the diseased, dead, deformed and demented!). I don’t know about you, but come spring—especially if it’s a warmish day with a bit of humidity in the air so everything smells sweet and strong—and I practically run out into the garden and begin to work. The day flies by “like an arrow” as they say in Chinese. Next thing you know the sun’s setting and you go inside reluctantly. It’s magical stuff—and let’s not even talk about delicate flowers or masses of gorgeous bloom. Don’t you feel sorry for those who don’t have gardens?

Most of us have in-house critics, who ask us unbelievable questions such as “do you really think you need more plants?” or “how much have we spent on soil and amendments the last few years?” We can hardly be blamed for seeking out fellow conspirators--a gardener a few blocks away, or nowadays someone we swap email messages with on the Internet—with whom we can share garden thoughts, plants and commiserate over the bulbs dug up by the damn squirrels!

Imagine, if you will for a moment, a whole auditorium full of such people—and you have a pretty good image of a NARGS Study Weekend or Annual Meeting. I must warn you, these are addictive! I’d hate to count how many of these I’ve attended over the decades (the first for me was in Seattle and Vancouver in 1976—49 years ago!) I cannot begin to relate what I have learned at such meetings or the friends I’ve made and the hero’s I’ve come to know. Jim Archibald was one, who was selling plants at Alpines ’81: little did I suspect at the time that he would use our home as a base of operations as he and Jenny collected across the Rockies and Great Basin in the summer of 1987, or that he and I would collect seed together in Africa a few years later or that we would go to Wales several times to visit.

Multiply that by people manifold—the memories are golden!

This June the NARGS Annual meeting (“Peaks and Prairies”) will be held in Cheyenne, Wyoming—a relatively small, charming city, with a fantastic botanic garden few large cities can match. Cheyenne is surrounded by vast natural areas—many of which will be featured during and after the conference: shortgrass prairie full of paintbrush, penstemon and buckwheats. Several mountain ranges are nearby: the Laramie Range, the Medicine Bow (or Snowy Range) and the northern Front Range. And throughout Laramie and Albany counties, there are concentrations of rare cushion plants--many endemic--which will be in full bloom,

The roster of speakers includes some of the greatest talents of the New Wave of rock gardening: Kenton Seth’s recent book (co-authored by Paul Spriggs) has become a veritable bible for rock gardeners—believe me, Kenton has new things to convey. Mike Kintgen has been Curator at Denver Botanic Gardens for several decades: he has researched rock plants and gardens around the world, and always has fresh ideas and wonderful images to share. Connor Smith—who gardens at Utrecht Botanic Gardens—is also a world traveler in the forefront of European rock gardening. And several local specialists will provide programs on the rich geology and botany of the area.

There are numerous options for flying directly to Cheyenne, or if you plan to take a few days extra, perhaps fly to Denver and rent a car (it’s only 100 miles away). One thing you can be sure of—you will have wonderful programs, beautiful venues, great gardens and natural destinations at the peak of bloom. And droves of the best gardeners from across North America (and beyond) to chat with dawn to dusk! And beyond! Click here for more info (and sign up!):

<https://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/cheyenne-botanic-gardens/nargs-conference>

Hope to see you there!

Panayoti Kelaidis

Easing into Spring Tony Reznicek

Are we done with frost for the year? I hope so, as tender plants have started to leaf out, and Magnolias are in bloom. This year, *Porophyllum saxifrage*s did not have their flowers spoiled by hard frosts, sleet, etc, so were very nice. I love them, even though they are finicky in our climate. Here is pone on a vertical tufa setting – a good spot for them in our area, so long as the birds don't peck at them.



Porophyllum saxifrage in bloom

I fertilized my *Heloniopsis*, so had a good bloom – and a new favorite, *H. orientalis* var. *breviscapa*. These all seem to require cool moist partial shade, a tough requirement for Michigan. I plant them in children's wading pools filled with a peat/silica sand mix which seems to work.



Heloniopsis orientalis var. *breviscapa*

It's early yet for most of my trilliums as I write this, but too late for most *Corydalis*. Here is a nice *Corydalis bracteata*.



Corydalis bracteata

Perhaps the most exciting thing this spring was good bloom on *Pulsatilla flavescens*. This is a bright yellow species, but with flat-open flowers, unlike the soft yellow forms of *Pulsatilla albana*, which has nodding bells. I moved mine several times but it seems to like crevice garden conditions, and appears to be a long-lived, slow growing plant.



Pulsatilla flavescens



Pulsatilla albana, yellow form

I'm getting seedlings now from an odd larger and slightly later *Corydalis* that I got from Janis Ruksans. It is *Corydalis marschalliana* (*C. cava* subsp. *marschalliana*). The species has dingy pale purple flowers, but with seedlings, I got a good white, and oddly enough, a pale yellow.



Corydalis marschalliana, white seedling



Corydalis marschalliana pale yellow

Joan Bolt

One of our long time active members, Joan Bolt passed away this last February 23. Joan was a wonderful gardener and many of us remember the lovely spring visit the chapter had to her Garden in Grand Rapids a few years back. Joan always brought interesting plants to the plant sale, and we all delighted in her enthusiasm for exciting plants.

I wanted to note especially that we will have a few of her plants and a trough or two at the spring plants sale, courtesy of the Family, who allowed us to take selected items from her yard.

I have attached a few pictures of her garden from this April for people's interest. It was as lovely as I remembered it.



Joan's Rock Garden area



Houstonia caerulea in Joan's crevice garden



Joan's trough area



Joan's lovely woodland garden

Chapter Officers, and Chapter participation

Colleen Mitchell

We are ecstatic, thrilled, exuberant, over the moon ... to announce that Libby Greanya has stepped in as our chapter secretary and that two members will be taking over and dividing treasurer responsibilities!! Linda Gates will be membership treasurer (collecting dues) and Bev Walters (who hosted our May 2024 garden sale) will be our financial treasurer. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

As we adjust to these shared treasurer roles, it will mean that check writers will need to bring two checks to a sale if your dues aren't up to date. There were some grumbles at the spring sale about it taking too long to get checked out, so having two treasurers should make things run more efficiently. We think that the line would flow first to Linda who will double check that dues are up to date and assist with pulling plant tags, and then shift to Bev to complete the sale.

We are all happy, as we know that without Bev and Linda stepping up to take on the responsibility as treasurers, we wouldn't be able to host chapter sales. And we all know that our GLC-NARGS sales are THE BEST sales around for unique plants! (Maybe just a little biased.)

Our chapter has approximately 125 members, and we really need additional members to step in to take over the chapter chair position and vice chair position. It can be a little intimidating, as so many of our seasoned members are SO knowledgeable. We have had great chapter chairs this decade with Julie, Holly and Jacques. We love Dr. Tony as newsletter editor (and thankful that he is willing to continue in this role). Don does an amazing and entertaining job with the auctions. Bonnie and Patrick Ion have been a continuing force within the chapter. All are willing to mentor new members as they get their bearings into these positions. One way to become more familiar with these positions is to become a Board member. Our latest board= meeting was a Zoom meeting, so we are hoping to entice members who are not local to SE Michigan to become more active as part of the GLC-NARGS Board.

It was recently brought up that another gardening group had over 200 members and the group was disbanded because nobody was willing to step up into leadership positions. It's heartbreaking to think that could happen to GLC-NARGS if we

can't infuse some new blood into our chapter executive. Please consider our plea to becoming more involved!

You can use the following email address to volunteer or provide thoughts about the chapter: board-glc-nargs@umich.edu The absolute best part of my term as treasurer has been meeting and corresponding with members. There have been so many kind notes and homemade cards and friendships and even coffee! We have the most wonderful members in our chapter. Hugs.



Jeffersonia dubia

Please send address and contact information changes to:

**Linda Gates,
7880 Ernst Road
Manchester, MI 48158**

Do include your up-to-date email address.

Thank You.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:

Great Lakes Chapter:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email: _____

Send \$20.00 per year (check payable to Chapter) to:
Linda Gates
7880 Ernst Road
Manchester, MI 48158

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: _____

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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