



The Dodecatheon

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Newsletter of the Delaware Valley Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society

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Basics of Rock Gardening

Janet Novak, our Chapter Chair, began her talk on fundamentals. Question: what is special about rock gardens? A simple answer is that they are home to small plants with large flowers. The French Alps illustrate what rock gardeners try to duplicate, plants growing in lean soil, usually in sun, often on outcroppings, producing lovely flowers. Therefore, the most usual siting in a garden is on a slope or berm. Janet's slide diagrammed the structure, while she discussed the placement of rocks in the soil (a mixture of 50% sand, 30% small gravel, 20% soil), and the finishing touch of a gravel mulch both for drainage and to unify the design.



Rock gardens may be in walls. Janet used her own experience, including working with the stonemasons to ensure that plants went in during construction. She illustrated the wall through its first years, as the plants matured. Photographs of the wall in bloom have often illustrated The Dodecatheon. Raised beds may be used to construct a rock garden, as seen at Stonecrop. If space is limited, containers such as troughs or ceramic pots can serve.

What to grow in the rock garden? The early spring bloomers include bulbs such as *Tulipa vvedenskyi* with its wavy edged leaves. *Euphorbia myrsinites*, the donkey tail spurge, provides texture and can take some shade. A favorite shrub is *Daphne* Eternal Fragrance with its long flowering period. Other April bloomers include Angelita daisy (*Tetraneris acaulis*), *Phlox subulata*, both 'Ellie B' and 'Herbert', *Aysssum spinosum*, and *Aethionema*. May bloomers include *Pulsatilla*, *Eriinus alpinus*, *Dianthus*, *Helianthemum*, *Delosperma* and *Sedum dasyphyllum*. June brings *Campanula* and July adds *Origanum*. Late in the season, we really appreciate foliage plants like *Sempervivum*, *Sedum*, and *Yucca nana*, which is evergreen in winter.



Clockwise Upper Left: *Alyssum spinosum roseum*; Troughs in La Fond Garden; *Euphorbia myrsinites*; *Yucca nana* in February; *Thalictrum thalictroides*



The Chair's Corner

Gardening season is finally in full swing. It feels wonderful to see plants emerging and coming into bloom and wonderful to get my hands into the dirt again.

This is, of course, a busy time in the garden, and also a busy time in our chapter. In May, we have our plant sale at Morris Arboretum and the annual garden tour. In June, we have a bus trip to the New York Botanical Garden, the chapter plant sale and a workshop on bog gardens in containers. I hope you'll participate. The Morris sale, the bus trip, and the bog garden workshop are all open to the public, so invite your gardening friends! You can also invite a friend or two to the chapter plant sale. For details, see later pages in this issue.

Our gardens need tending, and so does the metaphorical garden that is our chapter. Just as a garden needs trees to give it structure and definition, our chapter needs officers. We have several officers who are planning to step down at the end of the year, so I urge all of you to think about stepping up. The largest need is for a program co-chair. Lyudmyla Berestetska, who has been serving us capably for the past year and a half, is willing to stay on for another term—if another person will share the job with her. It's the program chairs who choose the speakers, so they are arguably the most important people in the chapter. We also need another recording secretary, to share the job with Hope Punnett and Joan Schmitt. All you have to do is cover two or three events per year: take notes and write up an article for the Dodecatheon.

If you are interested in serving, send an email to dvcnargs@gmail.com or talk to me or any of the other chapter officers. We are listed in the box to the right.

Pruning, too, has its analog in the chapter: members who have not yet renewed their membership will be pruned from the membership roster immediately after this issue. No more issues of the Dodecatheon; no more emails about events. If this issue came with a notice that you're unrenewed, don't let yourself be pruned away from our group—renew now.

If you'll forgive me for stretching the gardening analogy a bit further, we all sometimes forget the names of plants—and the names of chapter members. To help with members' names, we're developing a photo directory of members. This will be an alphabetical listing of members with 2"x2" photos. It will be distributed only to members. If you're willing to appear in the directory, send a digital photo of yourself to me at viola@indri.org. Don't worry too much about the size or shape; as long as it isn't blurry or tiny, I can probably make it work. Alternatively, at any chapter event, ask Lyudmyla to take your photo. You might just find more people remembering your name.

Janet Novak

Right: Bog gardens can be beautiful even late in the season. This is *Gentiana autumnalis* (pine barrens gentian) and *Sarracenia* 'Daina's Delight' in a container bog garden in September.



The Dodecatheon

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Coffee & Tea— Paula Burns & Louise
Clarke

Name Tags —Paula Burns

Phila. Flower Show Coordinator -Jerry
Rifkin

Plant Sales -- Betty Mackey

Plant Show — Radford MacFarlane
and Michele Hall

Pot Shop — Sharee Solow

Web Master — Janet Novak
viola@indri.org, 215-248-2642

For membership info, the latest program changes and bad weather cancellations check out our web site: www.dvcnargs.org

We do send out email notices from time to time between issues of The Dodecatheon to those who have given us email addresses.

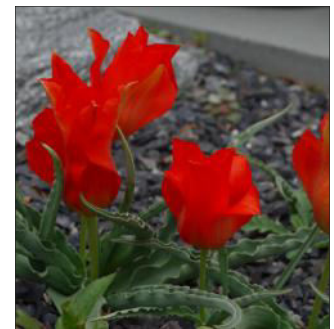
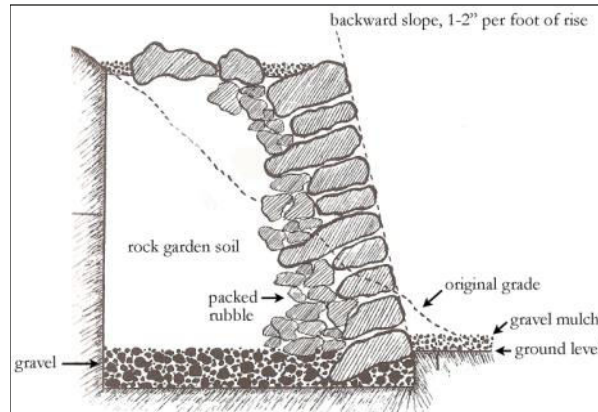
Please check your email address in the membership list and if it is wrong, send us the right one! If you don't have email and want a phone call on these notices, give us a call and we'll put you on a phone list.

Chuck Ulmann, Membership Secretary
ulmann@msn.com, 610-431-2511

Janet Novak's Lecture, continued from page 17

For those whose gardens are shady, it is still possible to have a rock garden. Plants that will do well include *Anemone*, *Epimedium* 'Pink Star' and 'Bandit', *Phlox stolonifera* 'Fran's Purple', *Aquilegia flabellata nana*, and *Thalictrum kiusianum*.

A suggested reference was Rex Murfitt's book, *Creating and Planting Alpine Gardens*, and WellSweep Farm in New Jersey as a good source for plants. Text by Hope Punnett.



Left: Janet Novak's rock garden stone wall in spring bloom; Center: Diagram for a planted wall, modified from Lincoln Foster's book; Right Top: *Phlox subulata* 'Ellie B'; Right Bottom: *Tulipa vvedenskyi*

Last chance for 2018 Chapter Membership Renewal

This is the last copy of the Dodecatheon you will receive if you haven't renewed your membership. The chapter plant sale is for members only!

Thank you so much for your responses. Now to the 30+ members who still need to renew, please read what follows! We need your renewal!

Save a stamp! Renew your membership by credit card through our secure web site (dvcnargs.org). Click on the 'Membership' link on the left side of the screen. Follow the directions to purchase a membership. I'll know it is a renewal! You do not have to have a PayPal account; we accept credit cards at the web site. You'll get a confirmation from PayPal and I'll send you one as well just to be sure we both agree that you renewed.

Not sure if you renewed or not? Check the cover note on the email and it will let you know. Don't use email? Give me a call and I'll let you know.

Can't find the renewal form that was sent out? Simply make out a check to DVC NARGS (\$15 for an individual or \$20 for a household) and send it to Chuck Ulmann, 1320 Ashbridge Rd, West Chester PA 19380.

Chuck Ulmann, Membership Chair

610.431.2511 home, 610.329.7884 cell

PLANT SHOW WINNERS

Best in Show	(Tie) Ann Rosenberg Ann Rosenberg	Planted Trough <i>Primula denticulata</i>
Bloom	(1) Joan Schmitt (2) Ann Rosenberg	<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i> <i>Campanula waldsteiniana</i>
Foliage	(1) Ann Rosenberg (2) Jerry Rifkin	<i>Paeonia tenuifolia</i> <i>Primula x kewensis</i>
Succulent	(1) Jerry Rifkin (2) Jerry Rifkin	<i>Sempervivum arachnoideum</i> <i>Haworthia fasciata</i>
Bulb	(1) John Gyer (2) Peggy Bowditch	<i>Trillium foetidissimum</i> <i>Cyclamen coum ex. CSE88397</i>
Primrose	(1) Jerry Rifkin (2) Jerry Rifkin	<i>Primula x pubescens hybrid</i> <i>Primula farinosa</i>
Container	(1) Jerry Rifkin (2) Ann Rosenberg	Planted Trough Planted Trough
Seed Plant	(1) Jerry Rifkin (2) Ann Rosenberg (2) Ann Rosenberg	<i>Draba rosularis</i> <i>Lathyrus vernus 'Albo-Roseus'</i> <i>Lewisia cotyledon</i>
Shrub	(1) Peggy Bowditch	<i>Daphne x medfordensis 'Lawrence Crocker'</i>
Woodland	(1) Ann Rosenberg (2) Jerry Rifkin	<i>Jeffersonia dubia</i> <i>Corydalis solida S.P.</i>
Native	(1) Ann Rosenberg (2) Ann Rosenberg (2) John Gyer	<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i> <i>Houstonia caerulea</i> <i>Trillium oostingii</i>
Branch	(1) Michael Lofurno (2) Gwynne Ormsby	<i>Cercis canadensis</i> Eastern Redbud <i>Lindera benzoin</i> Spice Bush
Novice	(1) Rick Ray	<i>Camellia japonica 'April Tryst'</i>

The Chapter Plant Show was held on Saturday, April 14, 2018 at the Church of the Redeemer. Rad MacFarlane and Michelle Hall were the Plant Show Co-Chairs. This year's show featured over 60 fantastic entries! The winners, who are listed in the table to the left, had their pick of rock garden plants as their prizes.

*The annual Dick Van Duzer Award for Best in Show was shared by Ann Rosenberg — with herself! The judges could not decide whether Ann's beautiful planted trough or her lovely *Primula denticulata* was the Best in Show, so they gave the award to both of them!*

We are already looking forward to next year's show.



Spring Plant Sale

Saturday, June 9, 2018, 10:00 AM through picnic lunchtime
Donors Check In 8:30-9:30 AM

Our members' plant sale will be held on June 9 at Robbins Nature Center in Ambler, whether there is snow on the ground or not!

Seriously, the recent bad weather will make us all the more eager to get outside and work on our gardens. When you do so, you will find that many plants have spread and maybe a few have died. The remedy is at hand. Other members can use plants that may have overgrown their allotted space, and new plants can be found at very reasonable member prices. Be sure to use white labels marked on one side with the name of the plant and the other with your name or initials. Special plants and items can be used in our silent auction. It is fun to visit with other members, shop, and stay for a picnic lunch afterwards. Bring a sandwich or something else for the main part of lunch, but drinks and more are provided.

As usual, we need volunteers to bring some goodies for snacks and to help with plant intake, pricing, and placement.

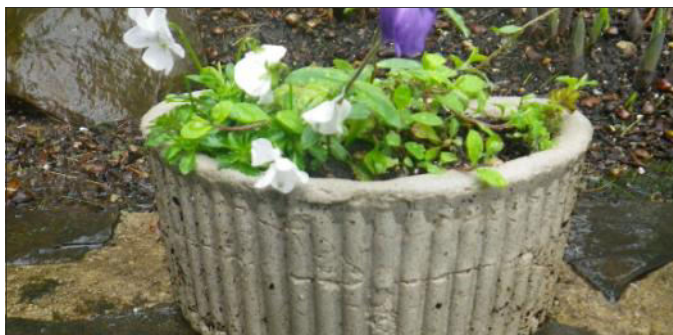
Please come at 8:30 to 9:30 to donate your plants and check in. Announcements are made. The actual sale begins at 10:00 sharp. Members may bring guests. Donors will be given five minutes for their first choice plant picks. Then everyone leaves the area and the general sale begins. If there are many plants left over after 11 am, the chair may announce that remaining plants are half price. Sometimes this does not happen.

The plants are very inexpensive but most are very good rock garden plants. It is all part of being a member of DVCNARGS! Don't miss it!

If you can help or have questions about the sale, write to me at bettymackey440@gmail.com.

See you at the sale and picnic!

...Betty



Chapter Plant Sale Rules for Spring, 2018

Only members and their guests can purchase plants. You may join DVC-NARGS the day of the sale.

Come early to donate plants. Plants will be accepted for donor credit between 8:30 and 9:30 AM.

Plants must have a white label with the botanical name of the plant on one side and donor's name on the other side.

Donors are entitled to select up to five first choice plants, one for every ten plants donated, and are allowed several minutes to do this before non-donors are allowed to start shopping. Members pay for their first choice plants.

One new plant label will be given for each plant. Replacement pots will be given if possible. You may purchase additional white plant labels for 5 cents from Sharee Solow or her assistant at the Pot Shop.

Plants of exceptional rarity, quality, or size are welcomed for the silent auction; extra donor credits will be given.

No diseased, insect infested or invasive spreaders will be accepted. See the DVC website for a list of invasive plants for the Delaware Valley area.

After pricing, plants must be left where they were placed. Members who move plants to a different table will be asked to leave the sale. Picking up a plant to read the label and putting it back in approximately the same position on the table is allowed.

The sale will start at 10:00 AM sharp. At this time donors will be given five minutes to select their first choice plant or plants. The sale area will then be opened to all paid-up members of the DVC-NARGS and their guests.

After all plants are paid for from the donor and general rounds, the Sale Chairperson may discount any remaining plants at his or her discretion..

Directions to Robbins Park, 1419 Butler Pike, Ambler PA 19002

From PA Turnpike exit #26 (Ft. Washington), take Route 309 N toward Ambler. Exit at Susquehanna Ave. From ramp turn LEFT and go to light at Butler Pike. Turn RIGHT onto Butler Pike and proceed for 2 or 3 minutes to Robbins Park on the left - across from Temple U. Ambler Campus.

Coming from the north on Route 309, you must use a different exit: Exit at Ambler/Butler Pike. From ramp turn LEFT onto Butler Pike and Robbins will be only about 600' on the left.

Plant Sale at Morris Arboretum: What's in it for Me?

Janet Novak

Thanks to DVC-NARGS participation in the plant sale at Morris Arboretum (May 10-12), our members get several benefits. First, chapter members can shop on members' day: Friday, May 11. The sale is less hectic on members' day, and the selection is better. Second, members get 10% off everything at the sale. The sale is a great place to find unusual plants that are well adapted to our region. In keeping with Morris's mission as an arboretum, their selection of trees and shrubs is especially good. For hours and more information on the sale, visit www.morrisarboretum.org/events_plant_sale.shtml.

Third, chapter members get free admission to the garden on Friday and Saturday. The garden is lovely in May. Be sure to see the rose garden, which is bordered by a planted rock wall.

If you volunteer to help at the sale, you get a coupon for 20% off everything at the sale. As of this writing, we are still seeking volunteers for two slots:

set-up on Wednesday (May 9) from 1 to 4 PM

Friday (May 11), 1 to 4 PM

To volunteer, contact Sandy Vernick, sandra.barenbaum@gmail.com.

Finally, I'll mention the chapter's fine offerings at the sale: around 70 different varieties of rock garden plant, as well as hypertufa troughs (empty and pre-planted). The plants cover a wide range of needs: sun or shade, small troughs to larger areas, flowering or foliage, bloom times from spring to fall, familiar to virtually unknown. Most of what we sell is easy to grow, given good drainage and appropriate light. But if you're an experienced rock gardener, we are offering a few challenging plants to test your mettle (e.g. *Edraianthus graminifolius*). Check out our selection at www.dvcnargs.org/plantsale.html.

Rock garden plants available at the Morris Arb. sale:



Left: *Antennaria dioica* 'Rubra' (pink pussytoes) is a host plant for American painted lady butterflies. Photo by Patrick Standish.

Center: *Edraianthus graminifolius* (grassy bells) bears bell-shaped flowers in May. Photo by Ghislain Chenais.

Right: *Gypsophila cerastioides* (alpine baby's breath) offers white flowers charmingly striped with pink. Photo by Ghislain Chenais.

The Dodecatheon



Joan T. Haas, Editor
70 Iron Bridge Road
Pipersville, PA 18947

Looking Ahead

Delaware Valley Chapter NARGS

Meetings and Activities

- May 9-12: Plant Sale at Morris Arboretum (see page 22)
- May 19: Garden Tour (being finalized—look for an e-mail with more information)
- June 2: Bus tour to NY Botanical Garden (pg. 23)
- Jun. 9: Chapter Plant Sale w/picnic afterwards (Robbins Park) (pg.21)
- Jun. 23: Bog Workshop at Aquascapes in Pipersville, PA (see page 23)
- Sept. 8: Chapter Fall Plant Sale (Robbins Park)
- Oct. 6 (tentative) : Lecture by Vojtech Holubec (location tba)

Check *The Dodecatheon* and the DVC/NARGS website (www.dvcnargs.org) for details before each meeting. Program Chair: Lyudmyla Berestetska, l16vostok@yahoo.com

Welcome new members!!

Ana Hartman
Sarah Dooley
Janet Dzubow
Terri Gold
Jim and Karen Nemeth
John and Lisa Calhoun

A Bit of History

Part 16

This is the last segment of articles from our 2001 Philadelphia Flower Show Exhibit, "Look Out Below." They were in the booklet named "Easily Grown Plants for New Rock Gardeners." If you would like to see all these little descriptions and lots of additional information including trough making and planting, pick up a copy of the booklet, **Rock Gardening In The Mid-Atlantic Region**, that was prepared for the Philadelphia Flower Show, at one of our meetings. It's 37 pages of goodies about what will grow around our area!

Stachys minima

Bill Siegel

A garden-worthy plant of the genus *Stachys* is the species *minima*. It is entirely different from the typical silver, wooly leaf *S. byzantina*. *S. minima* has dark green wrinkled basal leaves 1" wide and 3" long that form clumps up to 6" high and 8" to 10" wide. Rigid stems hold 2" long cylindrical whorls of rose-purple flowers about 4" above the foliage. It blooms from mid-July through mid-August and is insect and disease free. Its leaves turn reddish bronze for semi-evergreen color. Another species *S. monneri* has the same characteristics but has pink flowers.

Note: Bill belonged to the chapter from 1975 through 2010.

Aster linariifolius

Mary Ann Ulmann

Spring and early summer are the peak bloom times for the rock garden. This little aster is one of my favorites because it blooms when there is very little else blooming in the late summer and fall. *Aster linariifolius* makes a splash of medium purple on stalks from 8 to 10 inches tall. It isn't fussy about soil and does well in full sun or part shade. It can be easily grown from seed and will self-seed sparingly in the garden. This native of the New Jersey Pine Barrens is a "must" for the fall rock garden.

Note: Mary Ann joined the chapter in 1981 thanks to Anita Kistler and continues to be involved in many of the chapter's activities.

I hope you all have enjoyed this series of brief descriptions of rock garden plants that work in the Delaware Valley. It's been fun for me to put these together. Chuck Ulmann