CHAPTER MEMBER HOLDS ALTERNATIVE PLANT SALE

...submitted by Janet Novak, Chairperson

Our chapter plant sale scheduled for September 13 has been canceled, but we have an alternative sale. Canceling the sale was a painful decision, made after consulting with the chapter board. We simply didn’t feel confident we could run it safely. However, we will hold a chapter sale next June. If (heaven forbid) the pandemic is still active, we’ll look for a new venue where we can spread out the plants and maintain a safe distance.

For people who can’t wait until next June for new plants, we have another option. Joan Haas has generously offered to sell plants at her house in Pipersville. Joan is a master plant propagator, so she’ll have lots of fascinating offerings. A list of available plants will be emailed to members shortly before the sale. Pricing will be the same as at our chapter sales, i.e. cheap! And 100% of the sale price will go to the chapter.

Joan is open for shoppers from **Saturday, September 12 to Wednesday, September 30.** To shop, contact Joan and let her know when you want to come.

**Remember to bring a mask for COVID safety.**

You can reach Joan at 215-766-7339 or ladylobelia@verizon.net.

OUR FIRST CHAPTER ZOOM MEMBERS’ GARDEN SHOW AND TELL, JULY 11

...submitted by Janet Novak, Chairperson

Because the chapter had to cancel several events this spring, we added an online meeting in July, Members’ Garden Photo Show and Tell. Eight members showed photos from their own gardens: Sharee Solow, Jerry Rifkin, Midge Sobolewski, Charles Cresson, Louise Clarke, Cyane Gresham, Bob Wheland, and Janet Novak.

If you missed the meeting, never fear: it was recorded. You should have recently received an email containing a link to the recording. If you didn’t receive it, email us dvcnargs@gmail.com with “Meeting Link” in the subject line.

Many of you probably don’t know the third presenter, Midge Sobolewski. She’s a fairly new member who lives way out west in Carlisle, PA. (Our online meetings are making us better acquainted with Midge and other far-flung members.) Midge’s presentation is especially intriguing. ...Member Show and Tell, continued on page 3
...submitted by Janet Novak, Chairperson

I am immensely pleased that our chapter member John Ray won the Millstream Garden Award from NARGS. This is one of the highest honors awarded by the society, and it’s one richly deserved by John. His garden is impressive on every scale, from its sweeping views down to the exquisitely grown alpine plants. To learn more about John and his garden, see Mike Slater’s article on page 4. If you belong to NARGS, you can watch the award ceremony by going to: https://www.nargs.org/news/2020-07-15/nargs-2020-awards-video-annual-meeting. To just see John’s award, start at minute 15:40.

As the season turns, I’m looking forward to fall flowers, like Sedum sieboldii, colchicums, and cyclamens. I’m looking forward to new growth on plants that suffered through the hot August. And I’m looking forward to our fall meetings. Although they will all be online, we have some great programs planned... see the last page for the schedule. Our December meeting and holiday party will also be online. I always look forward to this meeting/party as a chance to talk with old friends and make new ones. That won’t be as easy online, but we’re looking for ways to make an online meeting convivial.

The December meeting will feature election of officers for the next two years. Are you interested in running? We particularly are in need of candidates for program chair and recording secretary. Contact me to nominate yourself or just to learn more about these offices.

Alan P. Slack remembered

....contributed by Chuck Ulmann

Alan passed away this year on June 3. He joined the chapter 10 years before Mary Ann and I joined. We went to several meetings of the Rock Garden Society after Anita Kistler hooked Mary Ann into joining. As some may know, I came along for the “ride” as it were. I’m not sure when I met Alan Slack but he was the chapter chair and greeted both of us. We enjoyed the meetings. We may have enjoyed them a bit too much. We joined the chapter in 1981. We received a telephone call from Alan either in late 1982 or early 1983.

I do remember talking with him in the music room at Longwood Gardens where the chapter had its annual meeting and dinner for several years in the ballroom. I think he noticed how much I was fascinated by the place and that I had heard the organ and had been on a personal tour of the pipe room there. Among his many skills, one was as an organist! Anyway, the telephone call was to ask if I would be interested in becoming the chapter program chair which would then lead to being the chapter chair? He also knew that I knew next to nothing about horticulture (he clearly had discussed the two of us with Anita Kistler) and that I had a “friend” who did! Smart man...he got 2 for the price of one!

I wasn’t bashful about talking with him and bouncing ideas off of him. He was always generous with his time. If you had anything to do with PHS or the Philadelphia Flower Show, you learned that Alan was there with many hats, including head of the Nomenclature Committee for the Philadelphia Flower Show just to mention one. His finger prints were also present with other horticulture organizations like Tyler, Scott and Jenkins Arboretum.

He was clearly the classic "Renaissance man." He joined the chapter in 1972 while he was involved in other activities and organizations, some horticultural and some not. Mary Ann and I were pleased to know him. The chapter was so lucky to have his involvement and guidance for many years. I for one, do miss him.
because it includes aerial photographs of her garden from a drone. Photos of her garden have also appeared in Fine Gardening’s Garden Photo of the Day:
https://www.finegardening.com/article/midges-garden-in-pennsylvania
https://www.finegardening.com/article/more-from-midges-garden-in-pennsylvania
https://www.finegardening.com/article/turning-a-pond-into-a-rock-garden

Rhododendron 'Yaku Prince' by Jerry Rifkin

Lysichiton camtschaticensis by Charles Cresson

Vignette by Cyane Gresham

Nymphaea by Louise Clarke

Persephone by Bob Wheyland

Drone Photo by Midge Sobolewski

Potentilla neumanianna by Sharee Solow
Our Award Winner, John Ray, photo from Mike Slater

John became interested in rock garden and alpine plants when he took an education class at Longwood Gardens taught by Marnie Flook - a longtime member of the Delaware Valley Chapter of ARGS (as it was then) back in the 1980s.

He built and stocked several rock gardens, raised beds for small bulbs and rock garden plants and even several Czech-style crevice gardens which were incorporated into his large formal garden of over 5 acres. One area I particularly like is an area with over half-a-dozen large, hypertufa troughs planted with choice alpines.

John eventually acquired the bug for wanting to grow rarer and rarer plants, including ones that are hard to grow in cool climates let alone at an elevation of 15 feet above sea level on the hot, humid Eastern Shore of Maryland. Chestertown Maryland is where John and his wife Betsy have lived full-time since they retired to what was their summer place near their sailboat’s dock.

While the sailing hobby came to an end, for over 25 years John has focused on using three, well-ventilated, alpine houses with shade cloth and sand plunge beds to grow a large selection of alpines including: Primula cultivars many of them beautiful allionii hybrids; Dionysia species and selections; some nice Kabschia saxifragas*; plus odds and ends of other nice little alpines to fill the corners of his troughs. The Dionysias are mostly yellow flowered species and cultivars, but he now has one pink-flowered one that is doing well from a cross that the bees made in his alpine house.

Under the influence of Harvey Wrightman, John took to growing many of his plants in holes in tufa with great success. He starts with tiny cuttings in very small holes drilled into the tufa and at maturity the results are spectacular.

In 2001, John began to enter plants and troughs into the competition at the Philadelphia Flower Show in the primula and alpine rock garden classes sponsored by the Delaware Valley Chapter of NARGS. This year he celebrated his 20th year of exhibiting there and winning many prizes - especially for his troughs. The sight of a large piece of tufa with fabulous flowering alpines always wows both the visitors and judges at the show. Also, they have been a great advertisement for the Rock Garden Society over the years as they are on full display for the hundreds of thousands of visitors.

The number of exhibitors at the show has declined in recent years (this year there were only a few other competitors). The three troughs John entered were more beautiful than ever. They were filled with Primulas, Dionysias, Saxifragas plus more varieties in full bloom, easily taking all the ribbons along with special commendations from the Delaware Valley Chapter of NARGS.

John has said this will be his last year exhibiting at the show, but he has said this before. Maybe with the team of 5 to 10 volunteers we have pulled together to help him in his efforts, he won’t be able to resist doing it for a few more years, sharing his beautiful plants with the world.

More about the NARGS Linc & Timmy Foster Millstream Garden Award

"Established in 2006, this award is for an outstanding contribution to the North American Rock Garden Society for creating a superior garden. This is not meant to be a competition, but to recognize members’ great gardens across the various styles and regions of the United States and Canada. Since there is such a wide range of possibilities in style and climate regions, it has been decided there needs to be four categories of gardens. They are: the Container Garden, the Alpine Rock Garden, the Woodland Garden and the Special Garden. Any of these gardens must be a private garden to eliminate unfair institutional advantages. This award is meant to reward the creation of gardens that meet a wide standard set by the North American Rock Garden Society and reflects well on that society.”

*What is a Kabschia saxafrage? see page 5
GEOLOGY OF A LABYRINTH

...submitted by Kathleen V Salisbury, Director, Ambler Arboretum of Temple University

I worked with one of our Geology professors, Natalie Flynn, to put together a geology tour of the Ambler campus. Here is what she came up with for the geology of the Labyrinth of the Ernesta Ballard Healing Garden:

“White Granite pavers. High quality Igneous course grained (phaneritic). Igneous rocks. Many of the pavers have a slightly banded appearance. The black and white foliated sections are the result of high grade metamorphism. Long periods of geologic time combined with high temperature and considerable pressure to soften (not melt) the original rock material into a soft and pliable material that begins to separate into distinct bands of stiffer (pale) material and pliable (dark) material. This type of rock is referred to as a Granitic Gneiss. The walls around the circle contain many red mudstones possibly local locating formation sedimentary rocks and conglomerates. Conglomerates have medium to large pebbles of various stone within a finer grained matrix. They are sedimentary rocks and can be used to infer specific weathering and transportation environments. Notice that many of the pebbles are very glassy quartz. If this type of pebble dominates the rock can be referred to as a quartz-pebble conglomerate. Other much darker black rocks found in this garden are amphibole rich gneisses. There are also finer grained sandy quartzites, a metamorphic rock. Large Diabasic blocks are also present. They weather to a unique dull, red-brown, matte toned, clay rich, material. Fresh surfaces would show a dense crystalline fine grained igneous rock.”

Dr. Natalie P. Flynn is an Assistant Professor
Earth and Environmental Sciences Department of the College of Science and Technology.
*When we are able to host walking tours again, this will be one of our tour options. Website: arboretum.temple.edu

KABSCHIA SAXIFRAGE

...submitted by Sharee Solow, Editor

I know I’m not the only one who is left behind by our more experienced members. Here is another of my follow-ups...

OMG! This is dangerous stuff because you can die falling off the cliffs looking at these little things growing up at 2,000 meters. Also, I found it interesting that “No natural hybrids are known but there are numerous artificial hybrids involving this species crossed with others in the same section,” per Kew.

The word from Kew Royal Botanic Gardens:
Saxifraga burseriana (sometimes mis-spelt S. burserana) belongs to a popular group of species known as the ‘Kabschia’ saxifrages, one of the 15 groups into which botanists have divided the saxifrage species. The name ‘Kabschia’ commemorates a German botanist, Wilhelm Kabsch (1835-1864), who unfortunately tumbled off a cliff while studying phytogeography in the Alps.

Saxifraga burseriana was described by Linnaeus in 1753 and is named after Joachim Burser (1583-1649), a German physician and botanist whose herbarium was studied by Linnaeus.


Undeterred? Do you want to know exactly what cultivars fall under Saxifraga, Kabschia and Engleria? The Alpine Garden Society website has a complete list, produced by Adrian Young, in their website’s archive when it was their plant-of-the-month. You can go to: http://archive.alpinegardensociety.net/plants/plant-portraits/Saxifraga%20Kabschia%20Engleria%20cultivars/62/

I would also refer you to Malcolm McGregor’s book: Saxifrages: The Definitive Guide to 2000 Species, Hybrids & Cultivars. Of course, it is available on Amazon.
I grew up in the Poconos surrounded by all nature’s beauty. I spent my summers roaming in the woods, meadows, and along the streams and creek. I think that I knew where every plant grew. There were the wild roses and elderberries along the creek. Wild iris grew in the swampy areas. Daisies, goldenrod, Queen Anne’s Lace, and milkweed grew in the meadows. In the woods were wild orchids, ferns, anemonella, and indian pipes. There were shadblow and mountain laurel. Philox grew in an open area on the mountain. Aquilegia grew in a rocky incline by the creek. Violets, including violets with 10 inch stems, grew at the base of a little stream. I loved them all.

In 1989, Dick and I were buying garden books at the PHS used book sale when Joyce Fingerut noticed that we were buying Lincoln Foster’s book, “Rock Gardening.” Joyce immediately started talking to us and invited us to a DVC meeting which was the next day. We went to the meeting and we joined. We fell in love with this organization and the wonderful gardeners who also love plants and sharing garden information.

From Roxie Gevian we learned how to grow \textit{Lewisia} and woodland plants. Anita Kistler shared her knowledge of growing alpines in her alpine house. Alan Slack taught us how to propagate from cuttings. Joyce Fingerut taught us how to make hypertufa troughs. Jim McClements showed us the joys to be had from woodland gardening. Jan and Mike Slater could answer any question. Mary Ann and Chuck Ulmann, Jan and John Gyer, and Jane and Ira Grushow shared their lovely gardens, as did many other members.

Dick learned to make both hypertufa and strofoam troughs. He made A-frame light fixtures for indoor propagating. He bought me a little English greenhouse. Eventually we had 26 fluorescent shop lights and lots of troughs. We joined NARGS, The Scottish Rock Garden Club, The Alpine Garden Society and several other organizations. I grew as many plants as I could from seed.

We now have too many troughs, too many gardens, and I am still planting seeds. We feel very fortunate to belong to the Delaware Valley Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society.

**HOW DID YOU BEGIN ROCK GARDENING?**

...submitted by Ann Rosenberg

Jill Evans asked me to write about how we came to join DVC...

During the Second World War, my mother had a victory garden. I was six years old and wanted to have my own garden. I did not want to grow vegetables, I wanted to grow flowers. I got my little garden and have been gardening ever since.

I grew up in the Poconos surrounded by all nature’s beauty. I spent my summers roaming in the woods, meadows, and along the streams and creek. I think that I knew where every plant grew. There were the wild roses and elderberries along the creek. Wild iris grew in the swampy areas. Daisies, goldenrod, Queen Anne’s Lace, and milkweed grew in the meadows. In the woods were wild orchids, ferns, anemonella, and indian pipes. There were shadblow and mountain laurel. Philox grew in an open area on the mountain. Aquilegia grew in a rocky incline by the creek. Violets, including violets with 10 inch stems, grew at the base of a little stream. I loved them all.

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**CARDIOCRINUMS IN THE ROCK GARDEN**

...contributed by Sharee Solow, Editor

What emails do your gardening friends send to you? July 31, Charles Cresson was excited that his Cardiocrinum was ready to make a show. “Started blooming about 3 days ago. In heavy shade so leaves don’t scorch. Lighly fragrant.”

He asked about including it in this newsletter, but as a diligent editor, I thought this wasn’t quite rock garden material although I like these flowers and we know how Charles feels about bulbs (He has taught bulb classes at Longwood Gardens for 35 years!). Well, my good friend thought I needed to expand my definitions and I think his thoughts are worth sharing here.

“The great rock gardens that I have seen, including NYBG, Edinburgh BG, and Wisley are not just about alpine buns but include sizable “dwarf” conifers, shrubs, some trees and woodland plantings in shade. What about Lincoln Foster’s classic book? I always thought that above all, NARGS included the best plantsmen and gardeners in general. Let’s not be too narrow-minded here. We can’t grow most of the alpine gems the Scotts and Czechs can grow, but I applaud the members that do succeed with those which we can grow. I think there is room for all and I think it is important for membership.”

![Cardiocrinum giganteum photo by Charles Cresson](Cardiocrinum_giganteum_photo_by_Charles_Cresson.png)

...for another example of plant diversity in rock gardens, please go to the following page...
ROCK GARDEN HISTORY: PLANT SHOPPING AND A SURPRISING FIRST

...submitted by Sharee Solow, Editor

I began thinking about the beginnings of rock gardening in the United States as a fashionable hobby as well as plant diversity within the category of rock gardening. By the magic of Google, I came across some catalogues that I thought you might enjoy. I know the catalogue list is hard to see. But, you can access a clear "zoomable" copy and flip through all the pages of the wholesale catalogue using the following link. I wonder how much the appearance and style of the gardens have changed based on plant selections. Remember this is post-World War I.

https://archive.org/details/CAT31308123/page/n1/mode/2up

A Forgotten Garden is Unearthed

"For decades, the rock garden was one of Stanley Park’s top attractions, but after the Second World War, the park became neglected and gradually disappeared into the adjacent forest. Its rediscovery began when Chris Hay, great grandson of John Montgomery, started researching his family history. ‘The true extent of the Rock Garden was not revealed until a devastating windstorm hit Vancouver on December 15, 2006,’ writes Hay. ‘All over Stanley Park, hundreds of trees came down, some miraculously allowing lost portions of this amazing landscape to be revealed again.’"

https://www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org/place-that-matters/stanley-park-rock-garden/
LOOKING AHEAD

Delaware Valley Chapter NARGS – Meetings and Activities

**October 10, Saturday:** Chapter Zoom meeting, “Rock bald and scree gardens at Mt Cuba”, by Vic Piatt.

**November 14, Saturday:** Chapter Zoom meeting, “Alpines of the Alberta Rockies”, by Todd Boland.

**December 12, Saturday:** To be determined

Check The Dodecatheon and the DVC/NARGS website (www.dvcnargs.org) for details before each meeting.

Save the Date

Garden Visit/Potluck; Sunday September 27. RAIN OR SHINE! 200 Charleston Road, Willingboro, N.J., 08046 Arrive 10:00 AM. Please park across road on Sedgwick. Walk around garden, socialize, Gawk at the new vertical garden and it's accompanying root mass! The remains of a 2.5 foot diameter tulip tree that uprooted during the storm. There's plenty of room on the 4.5 acre property for social distancing.

POT LUCK at 12 noon: Please bring a lunch dish (with serving utensil) to enjoy and share. Dishes can include salads, cheese/crackers, casseroles, fresh fruit & veggies, hummus, etc. Bring a chair if you have one (extra chairs here if needed). Hand sanitizer, plates, plastic silverware, napkins, cups, and iced tea & water will be provided. There will be afternoon visits to nearby public plantings of hardy palms, crape myrtles, etc. This will be an enjoyable day filled with gardens, good plant talk, and delicious food. Feel free to bring a friend. Steve Silberstein

How do you Join or Renew?

...submitted by David Lauer, Membership Secretary

Anyone who has not renewed or joined for 2020 should do so with alacrity! Payment through Paypal is easy and efficient. Please check our website.

To join or renew, go to the website (DVCNARGS.org) for the mail-in form or use PayPal.

1. Using Paypal:
   - Click the 'Membership' link on the left side of the screen.
   - Follow the directions to purchase a membership. You do not need to have a PayPal account, that is OK, because they accept credit cards at the PayPal website.
   - PayPal emails a confirmation invoice and I will send you one as a confirmation

2. Paying by check: mail checks with a membership form to this address:
   
   **David Lauer, DVC-NARGS Membership**
   
   49 Cornell Avenue
   
   Churchville, PA 18966

Reminder: NARGS Seed Exchange

Join NARGS to take advantage of this benefit. To join or renew, go to the website (DVCNARGS.org) for the mail-in form or use PayPal.

- July - Donation instructions included with the Summer issue of the Rock Garden Quarterly
- October 25 - US donations should be sent by this date to ensure they arrive by November 1 deadline
- December 1 - requests for print seed lists must be received by this date
- December 15 - Seed List and web ordering begins
- Early January - Main round order filling begins
- January 31 - Main round ordering ends
- March 1 - Surplus seed list and web ordering begins
- March 20 - Surplus round ordering ends
- Early April - remaining seed distributed among requesting chapters

You can also find helpful hints for seed collection on the NARGS website as a free service: https://nargs.org/seed-exchange-helpful-links