

# The Dodecatheon

NEWSLETTER OF THE DELAWARE VALLEY CHAPTER OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY



## GUESTS ARE WELCOME TO OUR NEXT MEETING: APRIL 13

### Beneficial Insects in Your Garden – Presented by Samantha Nestory

...submitted by Louise Clarke

Did you know that less than one percent of insect species are considered pests? That leaves a lot of room for insects that we can learn to love, like the beneficial bugs in your garden! Beneficial insects can control pests, reduce (or eliminate) the need for pesticides, and make your garden healthier and more sustainable, so it's important to be knowledgeable about them. In this presentation, we will learn about the benefits of some key insect groups, how to identify them, and how you can attract them to your yard. Feel free to come with questions about your own mystery insects and let's learn just how cool bugs can be!

**Samantha Nestory** is a horticulturist at Stoneleigh, a natural garden in Villanova, PA. She graduated from the University of Delaware with a B.S. in Ecology (2014) and an M.S. in Entomology (2016). She has worked extensively with Sarver Ecological, an ecological consulting firm based in Wilmington, DE and she recently completed a year-long internship at the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania focusing on natural areas management. She is passionate about native plants, ecological gardening, and insect conservation, and she is strongly committed to educating the public about these important issues.



Samantha Nestory

*NEW PLANT for 2019!*  
*Leontopodium alpinum 'Blossom of Snow'*  
 Huge flowers bred by a florist for long-cut stems!  
 Reblooms spring and fall, Zone 4-7 from  
 Concept Plants, JRT Nurseries.

Read more hints from fellow members  
 in the notes from our annual  
 "Show and Tell" meeting on page 3!



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## PAST MEETING AND LECTURE: FEBRUARY 9

### Front Door and Backyard Gardening – Presented by Eva Monheim

...submitted by Paula Burns

Eva Monheim was our February speaker and shared many beautiful photographs from her travels in England and many other places. Her ideas showed us how plants brighten the streets, the owners' gardens and windowboxes, and the effect on community safety. The plantings showed that people were involved and watching what went on. The most often used entry should have more interest and more connection with nature.

(continued on pg. 6)

## THE DODECATHEON

This publication is issued on the first of odd-numbered months. All copy must reach the editor no later than the 10th day of the preceding month. Any text in this newsletter may be used in any other NARGS publication, unless otherwise specified. Please credit the author and *The Dodecatheon*.



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**Plant Show:** Radford MacFarlane  
& Michele Hall

**Pot Shop:** Sharee Solow

**Web Master:** Janet Novak

For membership info, the latest program changes and bad weather cancellations check out our web site: [www.dvcnargs.org](http://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  
ulmannc@msn.com, 610.431.2511

## THE CHAIR'S CORNER

...submitted by Janet Novak, Chairperson

We're all looking forward to spring, right? As I write this, snowdrops and witch hazels are blooming, and the first crocuses have been opened by the sunshine. By the time you read this, I hope you're seeing hellebores, snow iris (*Iris reticulata* and hybrids) and early rock garden plants like drabas (*Draba* species) and dwarf wallflower (*Erysimum pumilum*) as in the photos below. We can all get a dose of spring by visiting the Philadelphia Flower Show, March 2-10.

As you seek to keep the show going in your own garden, the chapter wants to help.

We can help you get the plants you need for an outstanding garden. Have you been to our chapter plant sales? These events, the second Saturday in June and September, offer a wide range of plants, some of them general garden perennials, others rock garden plants. The sale always includes some plants that aren't available commercially. To make things easy for beginning rock gardeners, we set aside some excellent basic choices as "easy-pick plants." All the plants at our sale are a bargain; most of them are just \$1 to \$3 per pot. If you're starting out in rock gardening, or if you have a new garden to fill, this sale is a great opportunity. I'm very proud that our chapter can offer members this benefit.

Another way we can help you get the plants you need is through our sale at Morris Arboretum, May 10-11. We will have dozens of varieties of plants for sale as well as hypertufa troughs. This year, under the leadership of Sandy Vernick, we are expanding our plant offerings. For example, we will offer carnivorous plants, such as pitcher plants (*Sarracenia*).

We can help you get ideas for your garden. For example, see the article on page 3 for ideas on which camellia to plant in your garden. This advice comes from our member Charles Cresson, who grows camellias to perfection in his garden. Another great source of ideas is the talks at our meetings. I'm looking forward to getting ideas on how to foster beneficial insects in my garden at our next regular meeting. Yet another source of ideas are our chapter garden tours, where we see wonderful gardens that always inspire me.

Also, we can help connect you to the rock gardening community across the US and Canada. Our umbrella organization, the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS) connects rock gardeners through annual meetings, a web forum, a seed exchange, and a beautiful magazine, the Rock Garden Quarterly. Membership in NARGS is separate from chapter membership, and I hope you'll join both. To join NARGS, visit [nargs.org](http://nargs.org). If you're not yet a member of our chapter, you can use the membership form on page 7 or you can join online at [dvcnargs.org/join](http://dvcnargs.org/join).

This issue of *The Dodecatheon* is the first under the editorship of Sharee Solow. I hope you are enjoying the new format, which was designed by Sharee in conjunction with graphic designer, Felice Croul.



Dwarf wallflower (*Erysimum pumilum*) in early April. This plant is highly recommended for the sunny rock garden. It blooms for 3-4 weeks, stays compact, and needs no maintenance.



Drabas are charming little plants for the rock garden or trough. This one is *Draba dedeana*.

## MEMBERS' "SHOW AND TELL": JANUARY 12

...submitted by Hope Punnett and Paula Burns

### Tool Terminology - Let's Get it Right – Presented by Rick Ray

Rick gave us a demonstration of tools and how to use them. First were two types of rakes; one for raking grass, the other for getting soil out of grass. Then, he demonstrated the difference between a shovel for digging and a spade for cutting. As a side note, he explained how to replace a handle by grinding out the rivet and then replacing it with a screw to hold the new handle in place. He also commented on the use of linseed oil to protect against rust and using files to keep edges sharp. Finally, Rick showed a new type of netting that is secured under the arms to cover the head for protection against next summer's mosquitoes.

### Camellias – Presented by Charles Cresson

Charles explained that camellias like the same growing conditions as rhododendrons. They are easy to grow, drought and heat tolerant, and bloom over a long period. The flowers can open on a fairly cold day, but if bitter cold kills them, remember that there are plenty of buds to continue the bloom season when the weather moderates. These plants can grow to the height of small trees, so if deer are a problem, they should be protected up to a height out of the deer's reach. *C. sasanqua* is a fall-blooming camellia with smaller leaves than *C. japonica*, a spring-bloomer which also has larger flowers.

*C. oleifera* 'Lu Shan Snow' is known as the tea-oil camellia. Charles showed this growing in his own Swarthmore garden, both in bloom and covered in snow. Local snow and ice loads weigh camellias down but they are flexible enough not to break. His tea camellia has white flowers in Oct/Nov plus displays beautiful cinnamon bark. For the autumn season, it is better to have an early-blooming camellia so the flowers don't get killed off by a hard freeze. *C. oleifera*, when hybridized with others, improves hardiness. Another interesting species is *C. chekiangoleosa* with shaggy buds and big seed pods. This and *C. oleifera* are raised for oil in China.

\*One question that was asked: Are camellias clay tolerant? Answer: Yes, with drainage.

Spring-blooming varieties:

*C. chekiangoleosa* – scarlet or pink, large single flowers, probably as hardy as *japonica*

*C. japonica* 'Korean Fire' – single red, this is probably the most cold-hardy available, both plant and flower buds.

'Korean Snow' – white, single flower, also very hardy

'Kumasaka' – deep pink, double, and late blooming

'Blood of China' – red double, also late blooming

'Tricolor' – variable pink and white striped with white, semi-double

'April Remembered' – a favorite of Charles, pearly pink, semi-double, long blooming

'April Rose' – pink, formal double

'April Kiss' – pink, formal double, smaller flowers than 'April Rose' but very floriferous

'April Tryst' – red, anemone flower

'Red Jade' – bright red, single

'April Snow' – white, the only good hardy double, spring bloomer

Fall-blooming camellias (*sasanqua* and *oleifera* crosses with other related genetics):

'Survivor' – white, single

'Winter's Star' – pink, single

'Snow Flurry' – white, anemone form flower

'Winter's Interlude' – pink, anemone form flower

'Autumn Spirit' – deep cranberry pink, fully double

'Winter's Rose' – pink, formal double, dwarf, blooms late \*The most suitable for rock gardens.

*Camellia sinensis* – white, single, longest bloomer (Sept to Nov.) and compact at 3-4'.

This is the "tea plant." 'Rosea' has striking pink flowers and purple new growth.



*Camellia* 'LuShan Snow' at Charles home



*Camellia* 'April Snow'

...and in the garden



*Camellia sinensis* 'Rosea'



*Camellia chekiangoleosa* fruit

### 2019 New Plants for Rock Gardens – Presented by Sharee Solow

One of Sharee's most surprising selections was *Leontopodium alpinum* 'Blossom of Snow', the edelweiss that we usually associate with the Alps. (Photo on page 1.) How appropriate for a rock garden! She then treated us to fifteen more selections, some were cross-overs for the non-rock gardener and many were new forms of old favorites.

### Creating My New Garden – Presented by Cyane Gresham

Cyane described the major transformation of her home garden, beginning in 2017, through to its completion. We saw the "before" and "after" of the eroded slope next to the house. The project began with visiting a quarry to select the massive stones for building a Zen garden. This necessitated building an infiltration trench for rainwater, stabilizing the edge of the slope, and then placing the stones (slabs of Wissahickon schist). Fabric was placed around the stones and then the garden was finished with gravel. In addition to the Zen garden, the carport area was redesigned, with removal of a large tree, digging of a trench and a concrete block wall installed. The resulting terrace garden was planted with grasses and native plants.

### Adventures in Newfoundland – Presented by Gwynne Ormsby and Betty Mackey

Gwynne and Betty shared their travel with and around the national rock garden society annual meeting for those of us who did not get there. We were treated to scenes of local color as well as many colorful gardens and scenes of the area.

### Mary Gibson Henry – Presented by Susan Treadway

Susan introduced us to her ancestor, Mary Gibson Henry and brought us up to date with the Henry Foundation for Botanical Research. It began as a 105 acre farm in 1927. It evolved into a collector's garden (Henry Botanical Garden) that today encompasses 40 acres with varied topography including steeply-sloping granite deposits. Mary Henry's deep interest in plant collecting is reflected in the many rare species that she first collected, then placed by habitat. The plants grow there to this day so that some are now available to us. Open to the public, the garden is a treasure that is unknown to most Philadelphians. (Photo on page 7.)

*Hours & Admission: The garden is open by appointment only. During the current period of renewal/restoration, visits to the garden are restricted to guided tours by reservation for small groups on Thursdays from 10 am to 3 pm. Admission is \$10.00 per person and includes a one-hour tour. We recommend that you make a tour reservation at least one week in advance.*

### Winter Arrangements – Presented by Helen Lightcap

Last for the day, Helen gave a demonstration of 2 examples of Winter Arrangements. Helen took the Barnes course and has worked part-time at Chanticleer and at Scott Arboretum where she does flower arranging. Aucuba is a favorite of Helen's because it is very easy to grow and looks beautiful with its speckled green/gold leaves. It has even been seen in white. Japanese Laurel is the common name for *Aucuba* and it is native to Asia, growing in the Himalayas, Japan, and China. In Japan, the name means 'Blue Tree.' It is a dioecious plant; the female flowers grow close to the stem, and the male flowers are stalked. Helen showed a bunch of *Aucuba* she had kept in water for a couple of weeks and they had developed roots.

One arrangement showed Aucuba with winterberry holly and dried hydrangeas. Red or yellow twig dogwoods could be used also, or any interesting branch. The congregation at Helen's church enjoys these arrangements.



Cyane Gresham's garden – before



Cyane Gresham's garden – drainage installation



Cyane Gresham's garden – stone placement



The dock in St. Johns



A "jellybean" house

Betty Mackey's scenes from Newfoundland



## CHAPTER PLANT SHOW AT NARGS STUDY WEEKEND

### Plant Show Rules – Presented by Betty Mackey

We are the hosts for the DVCNARGS Study Weekend coming up in May at the Sheraton Great Valley Hotel in Frazer, Pennsylvania. We want our competitive Plant Show to be wonderful.

#### Please consider entering one or more plants!

Here are the rules and the entry classes. You may enter the plant show even if you are not attending the whole event. Our plant show guy, Rad MacFarlane, is in charge and has the usual helpers.

Plant show entries will be accepted on opening day, May 3, from 3 to 5 pm in the Plant Show room (Windsor) and in the same area from 9 to 10 pm that day. If these times are a problem for you, please contact our committee person, Gwynne Ormsby.

Voting will take place on Saturday afternoon prior to the dinner meeting. The show winners will be announced during the Sunday morning program.



### ENTRY RULES

- Entries must have been in the exhibitor's possession for a minimum of three months prior to the show.
- There is a maximum of three plants per category by an exhibitor.
- Winners are decided by popular vote for each category, plus Best in Show.
- Plants should be potted in clean pots and be well groomed, mulched, and tagged with correct botanical names.
- Plants may be entered on May 3. There will be one opportunity from 3 to 5 pm and another at 10 pm. Anyone who has a problem may contact a committee person (Gwynne Ormsby) to see if there is another possible time.



### THE SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

- Bloom: Rock garden plant in bloom.
- Foliage: Rock garden plant grown for foliage – green, silver, variegated, etc.
- Succulent: A Sempervivum, Sedum, Jovibarba, Rosularia, or the like.
- Conifer: Any dwarf conifer
- Container: Troughs or containers planted with one or more plant.
- Seed Plant: Any rock garden plant grown from seed by the exhibitor.
- Shrub: Rock garden shrub, non-conifer, either evergreen or deciduous.
- Woodland: Any appropriate woodland plant including ferns, grasses, shrubs.
- Native: A plant native to North America.
- Whimsical: A rock garden plant or plants in a design of your creation.

More of Betty Mackey's scenes from Newfoundland



Orchids were everywhere in the bogs.



Lady's Slippers



Anemones in Todd Boland's garden.

## SPRING PLANT SALE AT MORRIS ARBORETUM

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### THE DELAWARE VALLEY CHAPTER OF NARGS WILL BE A VENDOR – by Sandy Vernick

Thursday May 9 to Saturday May 11 in Chestnut Hill, 100 E. Northwestern Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19118 (directions on page 8)\

Our Rock Garden Society chapter is happy to be participating again as a vendor. This fundraising event brings us several benefits. Members of our group can shop on members' day (Friday), we get a 10% discount, and we have free admission to the entire Arboretum on Friday and Saturday. Best of all, we get the chance to introduce more people to rock gardening. The plants we plan to sell will be listed shortly on our web site at: [dvcnargs.org/plantsale.html](http://dvcnargs.org/plantsale.html).

#### Please volunteer to help shoppers at our DVC-NARGS tables!

We need volunteers to encourage people to buy our plants, to answer questions about the plants, but mostly to encourage people to join our chapter. We also need a few volunteers to help set-up everything before the sale. Volunteering is fun – it is a chance to talk with interested people about the plants we love. Benefits? Volunteers get 20% off everything at the sale – not just our plants, but also those sold by Morris Arboretum and the Rhododendron Society.

We are seeking volunteers for the following times:

- Wednesday, May 8 (set-up), 1:00 to 4:00 PM
- Thursday, 4:30 to 7:00 PM. Note that you cannot shop on Thursday, but you will receive a 20% off coupon to use Friday or Saturday.
- Friday, 9:45 to 1:00 PM
- Friday, 4:00 to 7:00 PM
- Saturday, 9:45 AM to 12:30 PM
- Saturday, 12:30 to 3:00 PM

The schedule will also be posted on our volunteer page: [dvcnargs.org/volunteer](http://dvcnargs.org/volunteer).

Please contact our committee chair, Sandy Vernick to sign-up: [sandra.barenbaum@gmail.com](mailto:sandra.barenbaum@gmail.com) (preferred) or call 610-688-1086.



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(Meeting and Lecture: February 9 – from pg. 1)

The slides of the backyards showed a great variety of styles, with seating areas, pergolas, different paving materials, ponds, fences (painted or supporting racks of plants), and various decorative elements. Things to keep in mind are:

- How often is the door used? Is it the main entrance?
- Is the style to be formal or informal?
- Is the house symmetrical or not?
- What material, style, color and shape is the door itself?
- Is it a back or a front door?
- The location, visibility, and access to the door.
- Additional accents of herb gardens, personal collections, and containers.

Many slides were of Buffalo, N.Y., which has a tour in the summer. A lot of these front gardens are small and use annuals. The houses are set close together with alleyways in between. One house had a beautiful back gate, leading into a garden with a koi pond, a gazebo and a bear carved from a tree. Another showed strawberries growing between slate steps and a side door demarcated with potted red geraniums. A converted power plant dwelling had a door between planted tiers while another home had a crescent lawn surrounded by flower beds.



**2019 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME IS HERE** – by *Chuck Ulmann, Membership Chair*

The deadline for renewals is Wednesday, 20 March 2019. As of February 15 about 78% of our membership has renewed. Thank you so much for your responses. Now to the other 22%, please read what follows. We need your renewal!

Save a stamp! Renew your membership by credit card through our secure web site [dvcnargs.org](http://dvcnargs.org) and 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 website. 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? You can use the form below.



**Garden Visit and Pot Luck Invitation**

**12 Noon, Saturday April 13**

**RAIN OR SHINE!**

Steve Silberstein welcomes guests to walk around his extensive garden collections where camellias and daffodils should be in full bloom. Please bring a lunch dish (with serving utensil) to share. Dishes can include salads, cheese/crackers, casseroles, fruit, veggies, hummus, etc. Bring a chair if you have one (chairs here if needed). Plates, plastic-ware, napkins, cups, and iced tea/water will be provided. This will be an enjoyable day filled with gardens, good plant talk, and delicious food.

Feel free to bring a friend.

Address: 200 Charleston Road,  
Willingboro, N.J., 08046.

Arrive 10:00 AM (Please park across road on Sedgwick).



*The chapter awarded John Gyer the Lifetime Service Award, in recognition of his decades of volunteering for the chapter.*



*Mary Gibson Henry (center) with her husband, Dr. J. Norman Henry, their four children and some of the 1931 British Columbia Expedition crew.*

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

*Join at [dvcnargs.org](http://dvcnargs.org) or by using this form*

Please print the information as you would like it to appear in our membership directory. This directory is solely for NARGS activities.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Individual \$15.00       Household \$20.00

Circle the committee(s) in which you might like to participate:    Plant Sales    Phila Flower Show    Special Events    Programs    Hospitality

Make your check payable to DVC NARGS and send it to Charles Ulmann, 1320 Ashbridge Road, West Chester, PA 19380.

*\*New members joining after July 1 pay one-half of the annual dues.*

# The Dodecatheon

Sharee Solow, Editor  
7914 Park Avenue  
Elkins Park, PA 19027



## LOOKING AHEAD

### Delaware Valley Chapter NARGS – Meetings and Activities

...submitted by Program Chairs: Lyudmyla Berestetskal16vostok@yahoo.com & Louise Clarke hortigal55@yahoo.com

**March 2-10:** Philadelphia Flower Show (theflowershow.com)

**April 13:** “Beneficial Insects in Your Garden” with Smantha Nestory (Plymouth Township Community Center)

**May:** NARGS Study Weekend and Plant Show (Sheraton Great Valley, Frazer, PA)

**May:** Chapter plant sale to the public (Bloomfield Farm/Morris Arboretum)

**June 8:** Chapter Members’ Plant Sale at Robbins Park followed by a garden visit

Check The Dodecatheon and our website ([www.dvcnargs.org](http://www.dvcnargs.org)) for details & updates.

## MEMBERSHIP

Please welcome the following new members to the DVC chapter of NARGS:

Margaret Sobolewski  
Mary Huis  
Gerald Vetter  
Janice Plum  
Mary Maran  
Richard and Kary Mercer

### Philadelphia Flower Show: Remember?



### Membership has Benefits: Join NARGS

### Directions to Plymouth Township Community Center

2910 Jolly Road, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462 [www.plymouthcommunitycenter.org](http://www.plymouthcommunitycenter.org)

#### From the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-276)

Take Exit 333 (Norristown, old exit 25). At the end of the ramp, turn left onto Plymouth Road. At the light, turn right onto Germantown Pike West. Continue approximately 1 mile, through 4 traffic lights (not counting the left turn light at Sandy Hill Road). At the fifth light, turn right onto Jolly Road. The Community Center is on the right.

#### From the Blue Route (I-476)

Take exit for Germantown Pike West (Exit 20). Continue on Germantown Pike west for 1.3 miles, through 5 traffic lights (not counting the left turn light at Sandy Hill Road). At the fifth light, turn right onto Jolly Road. The Community Center is on the right.

### Directions to Morris Arboretum

100 E. Northwestern Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19118 <http://www.morrisarboretum.org>

Note: The Arboretum entrance is on the opposite side of the street from their Bloomfield Farm entrance where the plant sale is located.

#### From the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-276)

Pennsylvania Turnpike to the Norristown exit (Old Exit 25 – New Exit 333), Take Germantown Pike East (it becomes Germantown Avenue) for just over 3 miles; turn left on Northwestern Avenue. Arboretum entrance is about 1/4 mile on the right.

#### From the Blue Route (I-476)

Blue Route (476 N); get off at exit 19 (old exit 8) (Plymouth Meeting). Make a right onto Germantown Pike. Continue on Germantown Pike (it becomes Germantown Avenue) for just over 3 miles; turn left on Northwestern Avenue. Arboretum entrance is about 1/4 mile on the right.

### Address for the NARGS Study Weekend: Sheraton Great Valley Hotel

707 East Lancaster Avenue, Frazer, PA 19355  
(near the intersection with Rte. 202) 610.524.5500

### Address for Robbins Park

1419 E. Butler Pike, Ambler, PA 19002  
(Near Temple University-Ambler) 215.641.0921