

THE NORTHERN OUTCROP

October 2018

We celebrated our 50th birthday at our August meeting at Flower Factory. Jack Ferreri had provided a history of our chapter for a 1995 newsletter which he shared again. Below is an excerpt from Jack's article and his comments.

The Wisconsin-Illinois Chapter of the Society was founded in 1968 under the guidance of Don Havens of Glendale, Wisconsin. He had been a member of the national organization for several years and felt that the lack of a local chapter was cutting into his horticultural enjoyment. So he started one, calling together other national NARGS members in the Wisconsin-Illinois area for an October kick-off meeting in his garage. He was encouraged in his efforts by NARGS President Bernard Harkness. Dick Redfield, Vice-President of the Society, encouraged Don Havens to include northern Illinois in his area to bolster the pool of potential members.

At the time there were about thirty national members in Wisconsin. The first garage meeting drew a dozen participants, mostly from greater Milwaukee. The Chapter was the tenth in the formation of the national Society.

Over the years, the WI-ILL Chapter has been home base to a number NARGS notables:

- the late Don Havens himself, (Chapter founder, Award of Merit - 1985))*
- Dr. Iza Goroff (NARGS Board member and Chapter Chair)*
- Waid Vanderpoel (a pioneer in growing alpines in troughs and recipient of the Award of Merit)*
- Hans Asmus (Award of Merit - 1981)*
- the late Deon Prell (NARGS Board member)*
- the late Vaughn Aiello (Chapter Chair and skilled grower)*
- Ted Berginc (one of the top Kabschia saxifrage growers in the country and Award of Merit recipient)*
- Gwen Moore Kelaidis (former NARGS bulletin editor and former Chapter Chair)*
- Olive Thomson (Chapter Chair and NARGS Board member)*
- Elise Felton (before moving to Maine)*
- Muriel Milsted (an experienced Chicagoland grower, Chapter Chair, and Board member)*
- Don Peach (former NARGS Secretary and Board member)*

The Chapter -- then just four years old -- hosted the NARGS Annual Meeting in Milwaukee in

1973, which included a memorable trip to visit some unique sites in northeastern Wisconsin on the scenic – and horticulturally unique -- Door County peninsula. A special speaker was Olafur Gudmundsson from Iceland, a friend of the Havens. The Chapter hosted a second Annual Meeting in Chicago in 1979. In 1992, the Chapter hosted a regional plant conference on "Flora of the Driftless Area and Environs," which drew close to a hundred gardeners from across the upper Midwest.

The Chapter now covers a large geographic area, including the entire states of Wisconsin and Illinois. There's also an occasional member from Iowa as well. Here in "fly-over" country, gardeners are somewhat isolated from the rich horticultural cross-fertilization that seems to take place on the coasts. Mountains are very far away. And the continental climate puts most alpine plants to a serious test ... both in the hot, humid summers and the long, cold winters.

In the years since the Chapter's founding, its "alpine center" has shifted around, as various points in the Chapter's territory came to the fore. For a time early in the life of the group, the Milwaukee area had the more knowledgeable gardeners; Illinois has put forward several accomplished growers over the years; and the greater Madison area seems to be a major rock gardening center in the area these days.

The Chapter meets in Chicago, Rockford, and Madison. In the twenty-seven years since its founding. It's brought in a sizable group of renowned speakers to address members, including Jerry Cobb Colley, Jim Archibald, Josef Halda, Marvin Black and Fred Case. The group has also staged joint meetings with the Minnesota Chapter and the Great Lakes Chapter (twice). We've also made ourselves an increasingly regular presence at area horticultural shows. The Chapter has also made overnight treks to clusters of gardens "upstate" in Wisconsin as well. A trip "downstate" in Illinois is being talked about for the future.

This birthday meeting was very enjoyable, with members sharing stories of joining the chapters, learning botanical nomenclature and memories of past members.

September Meeting

Jane Barnett hosted our September meeting and plant sale as she did last year. We were provided with a lovely environment for our meeting, safe from mosquitoes. For our October meeting we will have a speaker. **This will be at Olbrich Gardens on October 23, 2018 from 6-8 PM. A paragraph about Marcia Tatroe, her subject matter for the talk and history is posted on the [NARGS Meeting site](#).**

We discussed possibilities for our November meeting. We will not be doing seed sorting this year. Dave and Joy Collura were in Iceland this year. Dave has volunteered to do a presentation on this. Damon mentioned that perhaps he could organize another walk next year. Other members recalled "FAVORITE PLANT" meetings and thought this might be a possibility. We did have one last year in which some of our members referred to slides and others actually brought in plants to share.

As an update the Flower Factory is propagating some plants for us. This will be a multi-year project. Ed gave them 6 plants to propagate asexually.

Next the filling of the second round of seed orders for NARGS members was mentioned. Reportedly we will need to identify a location that will allow us to have things set up for about 3 weeks, undisturbed. Ed suggested the UW Madison building he works in as a possibility, seeing as there are parts of

it that are not used and he has access to the building. there is also the possibility that another member would allow us to use her garage which is heated. Ed suggested we would need one person to develop a relationship with the post office to make sure of the mailing rates.

Last year I bought a few plants at our sale, put them in the ground and wished them good luck. I've lost the tags too. I was surprised when *Arisaema dracontium* popped up much later than the *Arisaema speciosum* I have so many of. This year I bought 3 plants. 2 little mounding plants and a double *Sanguinaria canadensis* that I am really looking forward to meeting in the spring. We had a terrific sale and made a nice profit for our local chapter. (The total was \$408 and thanks to Flower Factory for the plants they donated to our plant sale. Steve Lesch donated \$70 which was a percentage of member purchases at our July meeting. Editor)

Thanks to a sort of pep-talk from our treasurer (he said;"just pour some dirt on it and plant) I have filled in part of my pile of limestone rocks with rock garden mix and planted about 40+ plants so far. If anything dies I get to plant another plant next year.

Lynn S. Groeschel
Secretary

Now that fall is here, we start to think about next spring and now is the time to plant bulbs. Below are three tulip portraits from Iza Goroff's Plant of the Month articles.



T. batalanii "Yellow Jewel"



T. tarda



T. vvedenskyi

Tulipa batalanii itself is now considered a variety or form of the red species *Tulipa linifolia* with which it has been bred to produce a variety of intermediate hybrids. *T. batalanii* is native to Uzbekistan in Central Asia, where it receives spring rains and summer drought. Despite that, *Tulipa batalanii* is relatively easy to please, planted 4 or 5" (12 cm) deep in a sunny, well drained and relatively dry location in the rock garden. This is a very short tulip; its flowers are carried on stems no higher than 6" (15 cm), more likely less than half that high. Each flower is 2 - 3" (5 - 7 cm) across. Its leaves are narrow, wavy edged, and grayish, forming a basal rosette.

Tulipa batalanii and its hybrids with *T. linifolia* are commonly available in the bulb trade as named clones of *T. batalanii*. Seeds from the hybrids are likely to produce plants with a wide range of colors.

Tulipa tarda, a native of the Tien Shan Mountains, is one of the easiest and most rewarding of the species tulips suitable for the rock garden. It requires a well drained soil and some sun, but it is somewhat shade tolerant. Unlike the hybrid tulips it is relatively permanent and can seed itself around the rock garden, never becoming invasive. It produces as many as four flowers to a stem, rising as high as 6" (15 cm) , but usually lower.

Tulipa vvedenskyi (The initial letters of the species name are two "v"s, not a "w" which two "v"s resemble.) is native to Central Asia, an area noted for drought and high temperatures in summer. *T. vvedenskyi* in flower is about 6" (15 cm) in height. Its flower is about 2.5" (6 cm) in length, and its leaves are about 5" (13 cm) long. Its color, a brilliant orange red, may frighten those who garden only with pale lavender and white. It blooms about a

month after the crocuses.

This is an easy plant for the sunny rock garden. Its bulbs should be planted about 5" deep. Species tulips are more likely to be permanent when their bulbs are surrounded by drier soil. The plants pictured are on a south facing slope in a sand bed where their roots can reach the native soil below. Tulipa vvedenskyi is hardy to at least -30 F (-35 C).

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