

WISCONSIN-ILLINOIS NARGS

THE NORTHERN OUTCROP

A Rock Garden Newsletter

April 2017

ROCK GARDEN RAMBLINGS

For the past couple of months, the thermometer has bounced up and down more than a basketball at the final four, but it looks like spring has really arrived. Early spring bulbs are beginning to bloom and rock garden plants like *Drabas*, *Eunomia oppositifolia* and *Adonis amurensis* are brightening up the rock gardens.

We have a busy spring coming up for the WI-IL Chapter with preparations for our NARGS Spring Gala. Plans have come together nicely and it looks like a fun weekend and a chance to show our visitors some of the gems of our area. As of our March meeting, we had over 50 registrants and with the registration deadline of Apr 19th, we expect quite a few more. If you haven't registered yet, please come and join us for an enjoyable garden weekend. We have a good group of volunteers to help out with the meeting, but there is always room for more.

We will have 2 meetings this month. The first one will be Saturday, April 15th at noon at the Flower Factory. David and Nancy have once again graciously invited us to help them test out their systems and get in some early shopping. Please bring a bag lunch and we will meet in the barn at noon for our meeting. We will have details to go over for the Spring Gala. Also, NARGS asked us for a list of 20 rock garden plants which are easy to obtain and grow in our area. They would like to list this on their website for beginning rock gardeners. There was an article about this in the January newsletter but we neglected to do this at the March meeting, so please bring a list of your 5 favorite rock garden plants that meet this criteria to the meeting and give it to Jean. We will compile the list and send it to NARGS and post it on our website.

NARGS has thirty-three chapters, scattered around the United States and Canada, and several chapters have produced lists of twenty plants that they have found are easily grown by beginning rock gardeners... and are also easily accessible (no hard-to-find rarities).

So we are asking your chapter to add to the sum of knowledge on our website and submit a list of 20 (or even 10) of the basic rock garden plants that are available to you (either through local garden centers or by mail order) and will grow well in your climate and soils.

(My contributions to this list, so far, are *Lewisia cotyledon*, *Dianthus* 'Tiny Rubies' and *Aquilegia saximontana*. Jean H)

The second meeting will be the following Saturday, April 22 from 9-noon at Allen Centennial Garden to help get the rock garden in tip-top condition for the Spring Gala. The Rockheads will be working hard, but we can use your help.

I look forward to seeing you all at our April events.

Good Gardening,
Ed

As Ed mentioned above, our April 22 meeting will be at Allen Centennial Garden where he and his Rockheads team of volunteers helps maintain a beautiful and extensive rock garden. This garden contains some amazing cushion plants as well as a wide variety of other uncommon rock garden plants. Ed provided the following pictures of *Eunomia oppositifolia* and *Adonis amurensis*.



SPRING SPLASHES OF COLOR

Spring bulbs are so welcome, indication that winter is finally ending. Galanthus or snowdrops are among the first to bloom and I have the common *G. nivalis*, *nivalis* f *pleniflorus* "Flore Pleno" and *nivalis* "Viridapice." These are readily available by mail order and sometimes in the fall bulb section in stores.

There are several other species that I will add to my garden but I discovered there are also many, many more cultivars. My impression is that England is the source of the earliest named cultivars, variations that have been found in long established gardens, and older gardens in eastern US have also provided selections. Then gardeners started crossing the species as well as the selected cultivars, producing some amazing forms

which can be seen [here](#). Most of them aren't easily available—limited availability, overseas nursery, etc.—and I'm too cheap, so far, to buy them. Since only a few plants were brought with me when I moved, maybe I'll order a big bag of *G. nivalis* plus some other species and see if any unusual forms appear. Even if they are just the usual, their flowers will be welcome next spring.

Jean Halverson

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