

WISCONSIN-ILLINOIS NARGS



January 2017

ROCK GARDEN RAMBLINGS

Here's wishing all WI-IL Chapter members a very Happy 2017 Gardening New Year! We have a busy schedule for this year with the NARGS Wisconsin Spring Garden Gala coming up in May. Lois Kinlen and her team of Barb Cochrane, Jane LaFlash and Jack Ferreri have put together what should be a fun weekend and a chance to show NARGS members from around the country what we have going here in the midwest. I hope many of you will be able to attend and there will be opportunities to volunteer to make it a superb weekend. The ACG Rockheads will be working hard to have the rock garden at ACG in tiptop shape for visitors and we will schedule a Chapter workday there in late April.

NARGS is making a big effort to recruit new members and especially Chapter members who do not belong to NARGS. You will see a number of initiatives in this newsletter and the leadership is increasing their interaction with Chapters to be more supportive and in turn get support from the Chapters. Many of us who have been members for a long time have found our relationship with NARGS and other members from around the country and the world to have been a great benefit in our rock gardening experience. I hope at future meetings we can share some of these benefits. Panayoti Kelaidis, who is the most visible face of US rock gardening, recently wrote about his experience with NARGS and some of the people he met through the organization who have been important to him <http://prairiebreak.blogspot.com/2017/01/my-secret-weapon.html> Check it out, I think you will enjoy it and some of you will recognize many of the people.

Our first activity of the year will be Garden Expo Feb 10-12. This will be our 23rd year of participating and we will have our usual display booth which is very popular with visitors. Many thanks to all who have signed up to staff the booth. We have come a long way since that first year when it was Jack & I sitting at a table with a small trough and a couple of books!

Good Gardening,
Ed

Easy and Available Rock Garden Plants

Joyce Fingerut, who is on the Membership Recruitment committee for our parent NARGS, sent an email, part of which is included below.

Rock gardens are so appealing that many want to begin to create one as soon as they see them. But it can be difficult for beginners to know what plants are best suited for their local growing conditions and the specialized environment of a rock garden. Garden centers may be helpful, but the best source of useful

information would come from other gardeners who have already succeeded in creating a rock garden in their area.

Gardeners who search the web for hints and help for their incipient rock gardens generally find the NARGS site. We would love to be able to tell them: "Click on the chapter that is based nearest to you to see the list of suggested rock garden plants, as well as a description of the growing conditions with which they are working." This would be a great way to increase the understanding and love of rock gardens... as well as attracting new members to our local chapters and to the national organization.

So as we in the midwest think about spring and the plants that we expect to appear in our rock gardens, consider which fall into the guidelines from Joyce. You can send them to me (editor Jean) or bring a list to our March meeting for discussion. Including the type of soil and zone that you grow them in would help. My rock garden is pure sand but some of the plants seed into or also grow in clay. Some of you have native sandy soil or maybe nice loam.

We can also include our list on our Web site. Some of our new members have joined after locating our chapter online.

How we benefit from the National NARGS Organization

Rich Rodich & Don LaFond

Hello, my name is Don LaFond. I'm the chair of the chapters committee. This is a new committee charged with the task of getting a conversation going between the national organization and the chapters. I don't know Rich Rodich but I was sent this compelling essay, written by him. With his permission, I ask that you publish this in your chapter newsletters. (Don edited a few lines to reflect the current financial situation with NARGS, and wrote a short bit at the end.)

Are we a Minnesota Rock Garden Society all by ourselves? Certainly not! Our club would never be what it is today, with all that we know, share, learn, teach, give and receive without the (national) North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS). Actually, we wouldn't even be at all! Our entire existence is made possible by the National Organization.

So yes, we are here as a Chapter society of NARGS, even though we are not required to be members of NARGS. I wondered what else do we get from NARGS without being members? Lots of things.

The program that we take the most advantage of is the International Speakers Tour. Through NARGS, we are able to book world-wide authorities on plants for presentations at our meetings. Yes, we pay each speaker an honorarium, but the many thousands of dollars needed to facilitate their journeys here is absorbed by NARGS. Unfortunately because of lack of funding the board was forced to discontinue this service, with help this can be temporary.

Knowledge is what we get from NARGS. Whether you access the National Organization's presence through Facebook or the many options through the NARGS website, like all the back issues of the quarterly available on our website (except the most recent) on nargs.org, all this is "free" at your fingertips, but paid for by NARGS. The online discussion forum is available to ask questions, post photos or discuss topics or just eavesdrop. There are rock garden reference pages and a wiki of plants information and pictures. Also available are links to other information sites and related vendors. And let's not forget the world-wide publicity our Chapter enjoys through our own listing and link on the NARGS site.

We are blessed with many knowledgeable stalwarts in our Chapter. These are our "go to people" when we have particular plant related questions. How did they get so smart? Ask any of them: NARGS is integral in their learning experience.

The Book store used to loom large in the NARGS inventory of benefits, but except for books actually published by NARGS, it is no longer a viable option because of modern commerce changes. So, now, if you plan to visit Amazon.com for buying books (or anything else), go to the Amazon site via the link at the bottom of the nargs.org home page. Doing so will automatically give NARGS a monetary cut of your action on the Amazon site, without any added expense to you. If you don't see the Amazon link, turn off your browser's ad blocking program for the NARGS home page.

Non-members of NARGS also get plants through NARGS by piggybacking on NARGS members. Those of us who participate in the renowned world Seed Exchange (with over 4000 plant species) bring vibrant and exciting new plants to Chapter plant sales. (Should I list the hundreds that I have brought?) Individual plant swaps throughout the country can also be facilitated through the NARGS programs, like the forum.

So we received a whole bunch of free advantages from NARGS that help to make our Chapter a viable fun, and vibrant society. But to NARGS non-members, don't feel guilty: feel thankful! NARGS realizes that there can be legitimate reasons why some of us don't sign up with the National Society. That's okay. However, if your reason is that you don't get any benefits from the National Society, think again.

Of course, joining NARGS brings more benefits on top of those already mentioned. You will receive the acclaimed Rock Garden Quarterly periodical, but you'll also have electronic access to all the past bulletins. Unlike many, this archive is searchable, too. New members automatically receive the Beginner's Handbook for rock gardeners. While non-members can view the Seed Exchange listing, only members enjoy the privilege of participating. Members can also receive discount pricing as they attend national and regional education meetings that feature international speakers. First time attendees can apply for a stipend. The stipend also has been temporarily discontinued due to quite simply not enough cash). A membership directory is available, as well as deals on tours and expeditions.

Wow! We get a lot from our parent National Organization. I am so very proud to be a member of both MN-NARGS and NARGS!

Rich has succinctly stated what NARGS does and could do for its members. I would like to see NARGS continue to do all that it does, I'm sure you do also, but frankly we don't bring in enough revenue to continue to do all that we have done in the past.

That's where the chapters committee comes in. We are trying to help chapters to figure out how to build up membership numbers so we can continue to produce the quarterly, seedex, website and restart the speakers tour and stipends. What I see in the gardening community is change. Although other gardening organizations whether they be clubs, magazines, or nurseries, they are in a state of flux. All with technology at the forefront of the change. Judging by the amount of garden activity I see in blogs, facebook and other social media, I don't believe gardening is going away. But interest in the social aspect of gardening is declining. We need to counteract this trend. We want to hear from you what you think can be done to get people interested in rock gardening, aka, getting new members. The only way we can continue the long term survival of NARGS is by getting new members. The best place to accomplish this is at the local level. We want to share the ideas that your chapter does to accomplish this with other chapters. One small idea is to have you and/or your chapter buy a membership to NARGS for your local library, that is a way to get more eyes in front of our quarterly. Some chapters partially or fully give memberships to new members.

Each chapter has been assigned a director to manage this conversation, I urge you all to take advantage of this by contacting her or him and let us know what you think, and how you feel we can accomplish this task. Please help us continue this great organization. (Dave Brastow toadlily@aol.com is the director who is our contact. Jean editor)

Annual Meeting

(Lynn Groeschel submitted the following which I edited slightly to reflect current meeting information. Jean)

Following a delicious potluck lunch members, we were treated to a presentation by Dave Collura . Joy and Dave traveled to Norway in June. They had incredible slides of plants at the Tromso Gardens . I want them all . How long have I lusted after blue poppies, any blue poppies, but haven't had any success growing them. Apparently Joy and Dave will be traveling to South America soon and hopefully we will be fortunate enough to share some of their experiences again.

Ed Glover brought a sympathy card for the membership to sign for Jerry Berg's family. Ed shared many of his personal memories of Jerry. I'm sure the members appreciated this as much as I did.

Officers were elected for 2017:

Chairperson : Ed Glover

Assistant Chairperson : Damon Smith

Secretary : Lynn Groeschel

Treasurer : John Mather

The treasurer's report was accepted. Our overall expenses have been greatly reduced by converting the publication of the newsletter to an online format vs. paper.

On 12-3-16 we met for one more year of seed counting at the facility on Fen Oak Court in Madison, WI . Next year we will be filling orders.

Plan ahead for the Garden Expo in February (always held on the coldest day of the year!) put your boot warmers in, even the floor is cold.

In March Steve Lesch will do his annual TRAVELS WITH STEVE. Information was distributed regarding the NARGS study weekend sponsored by our group . This is scheduled for the weekend of 5-19-17 & 5-20-17. We will advertise the study weekend at Garden Expo.

Please think of experiences you would like to have in the future so that we can plan meetings.

2017 Meeting Schedule

February 10,11,12	Garden Expo at Alliant Energy Center Madison, WI
March 18 Sat 1 pm	West Madison Ag Research Station 8502 Mineral Point Rd Steve Lesch will present "Travels With Steve" which will be another installment of his trip to Africa
Apr 22 Sat 9 am-noon	Allen Centennial Garden on UW Campus Work party in the rock garden to get it ready for our Spring Garden Gala May 20
May 19 & 20 Fri Eve & Sat	NARGS Wisconsin Spring Garden Gala
June 17 Sat 9 am-noon	Rotary Gardens at Janesville, WI Work party in the rock garden followed by lunch
July 15	
Aug 19	
Sept 16 Sat	Plant Sale-Site to be determined
Oct 21	Place & Program to be determined

Nov 18 Sat noon Dane County Ext Office, 1 Fen Oak Ct, Madison Annual Meeting
Dec 2 or 9 Sat 9am-4pm Seed Sorting Workshop

Membership Renewal Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____ **Amount Enclosed:** _____

Dues are \$10 per year. Please clip this form and send it along with your check (payable to WI-IL NARGS) to: Jean Halverson PO Box 101, Dodgeville WI 53533

2017 Chapter Officers

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