



October 2015

We will meet October 10 at Janesville Rotary Gardens to weed and plant in the the Alpine Garden. The address is 1455 Palmer Dr, Janesville WI 53545. Plan for a 9 am start (or when you can arrive) and we'll work until around noon, then adjourn to a nearby restaurant for lunch provided by our chapter.

This work day was postponed from July due to extreme heat. After a beautiful, warmer than usual start of the fall season, temperatures are predicted to drop to normal and we'll probably need to wear a second layer at least at the start of work.

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October 17 is the date of our regular October meeting. Tom Horner visited family in Denmark and will show slides of his trip. We will meet at 1 PM at the New Berlin Public Library, 15105 W Library Ln, New Berlin, WI 53151.

Tom said "there is much attention given to fascinating dwarf conifers and plants that fit in small places."

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Astragalus angustifolius and Calylophus serrulatus

Debbie Wopat

I have been growing both of these plants for about six years. They are growing in what is basically a raised sand bed in full sun. They are two of my favorite plants for the rock garden, but for very different reasons.

Astragalus angustifolius is a beautiful foliage plant. It is a woody plant that has formed a dense mat of very silvery divided leaves that have draped over a rock.



It is supposed to have white flowers in early to mid summer, but my plant rarely flowers. I have also had some trouble with winter burn/dieback coming out of winter, but by mid-June the plant has fully recovered and is a beautiful mound of silver. This coming fall I plan to try using conifer branches to give some protection from the winter sun and cold temperatures to see if that helps protect the foliage.

Even with those drawbacks, I like this plant so much that I have added a second astragalus, which is busy covering another rock in the garden.

Calylophus serrulatus is one of those rare plants that starts blooming in early summer and is still in bloom come fall. It has several common names, yellow sundrops and shrubby evening primrose being two that help describe this cheerful little bloomer. This is a taprooted, drought tolerant plant that has 1" yellow flowers on stems with narrow lance-shaped leaves. My plants grow to about 6" where they are sited, but literature says they can reach statures up to 18". I have found that plants tend to last only a few years (I think

they bloom themselves to death), but it reseeds just enough to maintain a nice presence in my rock garden without becoming a problem.

I purchased both of these plants at the Flower Factory and would recommend them for a sunny rock garden site.

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Have you tried a new plant or have an old favorite? Visited a garden or nursery? Please consider sharing a short article about it or about anything else that interests you. We all try new ideas or have made changes or adjustments to our gardens that may intrigue other members.

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If you visit New Orleans

Jean Halverson

A niece attending medical school in New Orleans introduced Lois and me to this fascinating city several years ago. Jocelyn knows that plant nurseries are great ways to entertain her aunts.

[American Aquatic Gardens & Gifts](#) is near the French Quarter and we have visited it at least once on each trip to NOLA. Below is part of their back wall.



They offer the typical types of lawn ornaments and statuary but often with a unique twist. Maybe it is the colors used or maybe the humor behind some of the pieces but browsing through this nursery is always a joy.

When visiting a nursery far outside our growing zone, attention must be paid to hardiness when purchasing

plants. I have some Iris louisiana cultivars from them as well as non hardy water plants.

But hardiness works both ways. We were amused on our last visit to see Aquilegia offered as a new landscaping option for the area. While many of their plants are unusual (to us) or uniquely colored, these were standard colors that didn't tempt me to bring any back to Wisconsin.

Since Jocelyn and her family will be returning to NOLA and her parents will also be moving there in a few years, I know there will be many more visits to this nursery.



FUTURE MEETINGS

November 21 12 noon Annual business meeting

[West Madison Ag Research Station](#)

8502 Mineral Point Rd, Verona WI 53593

Potluck lunch. After our annual meeting, Steve Lesch will show slides of a family trip to an exotic location.

December 5 9 AM to 4 PM, seed sorting for seed exchange

[West Madison Ag Research Station](#)

8502 Mineral Point Rd, Verona WI 53593

The gathering of the chapter to help NARGS sort and package seeds of plants both wild and cultivated, common and rare.

Includes pizza, drawings for prizes and great discussions about the size and appearance of seeds and of the plants they will become. Always a fun meeting. If you have unneeded garden items, bring them along so they can find a new home

If you have ideas for 2016 (or later) meetings, please share them with Debbie Wopat or Lynn Groeschel.

The following is excerpted from a 1984 talk by Waid Vanderpoel, a member of our chapter who landscaped with huge and small troughs and also grew many of his plants from seed.

Composites are excellent plants for troughs. They look their best in small colonies and they mix well with other plants such as later-blooming American drabas, *Physaria*, *Lesquerella*, and penstemons. They generally come easily from seed. And generally true from seed, an advantage when you have several forms of the same species close together. Marvin Black says, and I agree, these species come in many different forms and the best forms are worth searching for, as Claude Barr spent his whole life doing. Some composites are short lived, some long lived, some easy, some difficult and some a real challenge.

Miscellaneous good composites for the garden:

Actinea herbacea (from Rose Best): A little big for the small part of the rock garden, but very showy and long lived. I have not had luck growing this plant from seed, but I probably could lift my established clump and divide it if I felt the need to do so. Seems iron hardy. [Added from Iza: it's native near here, in Joliet.] [Added in transcription: also known as *Hymenoxys acaulis glabra*.]

Erigeron sp. Mt. Eddy (from Siskiyou): barely hanging on since I bought it in 1980. Seeds have not germinated for me, including after my efforts with a camel hair brush to insure fertilization. I like it well enough that I'd like to have more plants.

Erigeron linearis in our garden--takes a couple of years from seed before it will bloom. We've started some new ones in our high plains—cactus project, which we hope will bloom this year. Those in the cactus project seem to have greyer leaves, looking like *Townsendia*.

Erigeron allocotus: from cold desert or drylands on west side of Big Horn Mts.; nice plant for a dry area, good trough plant; quite small.

Dwarf *Senecio*, northern CO: We like senecios. One species is very easy to grow, we pull it out it's so easy.

Dwarf *Solidago*: good trough plant, but they can be infested with red spiders in the summer.

Editorial Ramblings

Each new season, except for winter, makes me think it is my favorite. The beautifully warm but not hot start to fall was especially nice this year, making garden work pleasant. Weeds to pull, as always, as well as plants to cut back and mulch to be laid down. Anything that still has attractive foliage or is still blooming will be cut back later. Maybe this work will actually be completed this fall so early spring can be spent doing other things.

New England Asters are blooming but I need more plants that provide fall color. *Echinacea* "Razzmatazz" along with *Gaura lindheimeri* "Siskiyou Pink" are still brightening up one corner of my lawn. I like similar colors in different forms in an area and these along with a *Gypsophila* bloom in shades of pink.

But the growing season is coming to an end and non hardy plants need to start coming indoors. I put them in a plastic bag with fly spray for a few hours first. Based on past experience, there is only one that needs to be protected from being chewed by the two house cats.

A package with four trees will arrive in a few days and then some bulbs. I don't remember how many bulbs were ordered but hopefully I was mindful of the time it will take to plant them.

The rock garden needs less maintenance than any other area and is starting to look more established. A few very happy plants have formed large buns and corpses have been removed. No large nearby trees so no need to remove leaves. Tree seeds are another matter since they can travel a long ways.



Dracocephalum argunense, still blooming

Happy gardening in the upper midwest! May we have a long fall, and a winter that is cold and snowy enough to prepare the soil for another spring.

THE NORTHERN OUTCROP

Editor Jean Halverson

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Membership Renewal Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Email: _____

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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

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