

WISCONSIN-ILLINOIS NARGS

THE NORTHERN OUTCROP

A Rock Garden Newsletter

February 2025

We have two great programs scheduled for this spring, a reminder that growing season is coming!

Panayoti Kelaidis will present a program on plants of the Caucasus, including ones that we may be able to grow! The meeting will be at 1 pm, March 2, at the West Madison Agricultural Research Station, 8502 Mineral Point Rd, Verona. Please bring a small desert to share after the meeting.

Panayoti is Senior Curator and Director of Outreach at the Denver Botanic Gardens, a board member of the American Horticultural Society and has served many other organizations. He's most familiar to us as past president of NARGS and an advocate of alpine plants. He's led explorations to most parts of the world, as well as treks through western ranges of the US. His blog is at <https://prairiebreak.blogspot.com/>

Regarding his upcoming talks, he wrote the following:

Most rock gardeners notice over time that a surprising number of tough and beautiful rock plants we grow have “*armenum*” or “*caucasicum*” in their Latin Names. Not nearly as familiar as the European Alps, nor as vast as the Himalayas, the Caucasus are somewhat intermediate between these two ranges in other respects as well. They possess a rich representation of classic rock garden genera: *Androsace*, *Campanula*, *Dianthus*, *Gentiana*, *Primula* to name the most obvious ones, many species in these genera are endemic to just the Caucasus.

He said he traveled to Georgia in the spring of 2018 on a plant hunting trip with the Plant Collections Collaborative, and visited a wide swath of Armenia in May of 2024 on a trip with Harry Jans. Both trips were blessed with unusually good weather, and resulted in a vast array of photos that Panayoti is having a devil of a

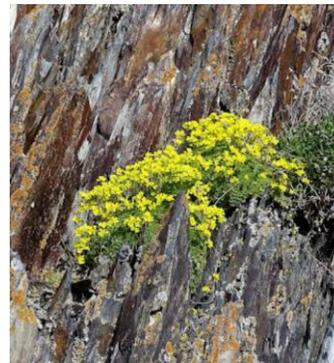
time boiling down to an hour long. Below are a few pictures from his blog that caught my eye.



Glaucium grandiflorum



Scutellaria orientalis



Draba bryoides



Primula auriculata



Paeonia tenuifolia

Paul Spriggs co-wrote [The Crevice Garden](#) which is subtitled “How to make the perfect home for plants from rocky places” and will speak to our chapter on May 4. The time and place will be posted later on our [website](#).

Paul posted on Facebook that this book is reviewed in the latest Fine Gardening issue and people have added comments, all basically saying it’s a ‘must have’ guide for crevice gardening.

The following is from an introduction to Paul posted on our website:

Paul has been rock gardening for 23 years and building crevice gardens for the last 16. He is a professional gardener and landscaper, and an avid plant explorer, photographer and mountaineer. He learned the art of crevice garden from one of its innovators, Zdeněk Zvolánek. He has built many crevice gardens in public parks and private homes ranging from small feature troughs to large installations with many tons of stone. Paul is passionate about spreading the crevice gospel through lectures and workshops and by having served as president of the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society.

We have another speaker planned for this fall. Mark Akimoff is owner and head grower of Illahe Rare Plants, a Salem, Oregon, nursery. These speakers should introduce us to new planting techniques and plants that we may need to buy or find on the NARGSseed exchange.

Carol Eichler provides info to newsletter editors and first is a reminder that the annual NARGS meeting in Cheyenne Wyoming, June 11 – 15 is open for registration on the NARGS website.” The folks at the Cheyenne Botanical Garden have a terrific line-up of gardens, outings, and speakers planned. I am looking forward to seeing plants growing in their natural habitat, which is always eye-opening as well as meeting up with fellow rock gardeners.”

Then she goes on to discuss plant labels. I now use 2 kinds – one for my seeds and seedlings, the second in the garden. For seeds/seedlings I choose a short-term solution. I could of course buy labels but at a cost I’m not willing to pay. Rather, I go to second-hand stores and look for plastic mini-blinds which are durable, all-weather and can be cut to size with all plant information recorded in pencil. To be even more frugal some folks I know cut up yogurt or milk containers for their labeling. More-or-less the same idea.

For labels more permanent in the garden, these white labels stand out like little grave markers – not so attractive. Instead I recently converted to transparent polycarbonate (trade name Lexan). Years ago after much research our Chapter used them in Wurster, our public rock garden, and they held up well. I didn’t bother to do further research this time but I suppose acrylic (brand name Plexiglass) could hold up just as well and may possibly be cheaper. Both are durable and hold up to UV light, while other plastics quickly become brittle and useless.

I was able to find both products online in sheets of varying sizes and thicknesses. I placed an order and had the sheet custom cut into strips that I could then further trim to the size label markers I desired. In hindsight I might have had them cut the strips a bit wider than ½ inch (since my labels are also ½ inch) and I might have ordered a sheet a tad thicker than 1/16.” You can live and learn from my hindsight. The cost ran about \$100 which seemed like a good price considering it will provide me with hundreds of labels for the foreseeable future. With my newly acquired label maker I printed the plant names on transparent labels and attached them to my Lexan markets.

Our experience at Wurster has been (I use past tense because one of our volunteers removed them years ago – ‘sigh’) that these markers did not winter heave, which is the real plus for this system. The weak link is not the stick marker but the label. We were careful to cut the label to fit within the width of the stick, so that there were no turned edges where water could seep in and “unsticky” it. I have yet to test this hypothesis with my own new system. Whether I meet with success, time will tell.

Thanks to Carol from those of us who struggle with plant labels!

And the following is my personal comment. A small group has been planning these programs. We will have more meetings during the summer and really, really need other members to step in and help with planning! We don’t have an elected chair or co-chair at this time and I believe that needs to change if we are to remain an active chapter. Respectfully, Jean Halverson

