

GREAT LAKES CHAPTER

North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS)

SPRING NEWSLETTER, APRIL 2012



CALENDAR OF CHAPTER MEETINGS **meeting details below**

**SUNDAY, April 22: SPRING MEETING

[NOTE the change to SUNDAY to accommodate the schedule of the NARGS Speaker's tour]



MEETING: 10:30 AM – ca. 2:30 PM

PLACE: Hamburg Senior Community Center (see map insert)

PROGRAM: 10:30 AM Brief Business Meeting

11:00 AM Fritz Kummert

Searching for Plants in Albania

12:30 PM – CATERED LUNCH

1:30 PM Fritz Kummert

Our New Alpine-House & Crevice Garden

**SATURDAY, MAY 12: GARDEN TOUR & PLANT SALE

MEETING: 10:30AM – ca. 3:30 PM

PLACE: Don & Mary LaFond's (see map insert)

10:30 AM-ca. 1:00 PM tour the Garden

The Garden is sited in what was once a gravel pit so drainage is ideal and many species thrive to perfection.

BAG LUNCH: while touring Garden

PLANT SALE: 1:30 PM



MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Saturday, September 15, 2012: Fall Meeting and Plant Sale at Clarence Owens garden in Jackson.
Details about the Fall Meeting and Plant Sale will be in the Fall Newsletter.

UPCOMING NATIONAL MEETINGS:

The Eastern Study weekend will be held in the Pittsburgh area, Pennsylvania, hosted by the Allegheny Chapter, October 12-14, 2012. See the Quarterly or the NARGS website for details.

From the Chair

Well, we never really had much of a winter so I expect your gardens are as advanced as ours here in Ann Arbor. We are all looking forward to hearing Fritz Kummert this coming Sunday, April 22, at the Hamburg Senior Center (thanks again to Don LaFond for getting the rooms reserved!). Do plan to come, hear Fritz's first lecture, help eat the catered barbeque lunch and then enjoy the second of Fritz's lectures. Should be a fascinating day.

And then our Spring Plant Sale on May 12th which will be at Don LaFond's lovely spring garden. Alas, my husband Patrick and I will have to be in Washington DC that weekend for a family event so we will miss the sale entirely. Tony and Don will need your help in making the sale a success so please volunteer to help as needed!

For those of you interested in the NARGS Seed Exchange, our chapter will be receiving a load of extra seeds sometime in the beginning of April so they will either be available at the Kummert talks or certainly at the plant sale at Don LaFond's on May 12th.

And on a last note, I am in the process of applying to become a Peace Corps Volunteer somewhere in the 160 countries that the Peace Corps operates. Since I will be leaving on assignment probably by the beginning of 2013, Libby Greanya has graciously agreed to fill in for the rest of whatever my chair term is left. Thank you very much, Libby!

Enjoy your Spring weather and we hope you will come to the Kummert talks as well as the Plant Sale on May 12th.

Bonnie Ion

Please everyone also express your thanks to our past officers John and Laura Serowicz and Jacques Thompson and Andrea Urda-Thompson in the next meetings. John and Jacques served as Chapter chair and Vice-chair since 2008, taking over from Fred Case and Elaine Rappley. Laura has performed above and beyond the call of duty as the Chapter Secretary since 2002, when she followed Vivienne Armentrout, and Andrea served as treasurer from 2007, taking over from Michael Kaericher.

The Earliest Spring Ever?

Tony Reznicek

Yes, as far as I can tell. I don't keep detailed records of bloom times, but I think until this year, most spring things bloomed at somewhat variable times, but mostly centered on a fairly consistent average. And it was uncommon to break the April 1st barrier except with a few con-



sistently early blooming plants, like snowdrops (*Galanthus*), some *Crocus*, some *Adonis*, *Trillium nivale*, spring *Hamelis*, and a few other things. This year, not only did I have a few things (*Helleborus niger*, for example) blooming essentially all winter, but the earliest date for many dozens of species broke the March barrier. March 31 was on a Saturday, and I had a chance, just as I was working on this newsletter, to look around, and the list things – but they were too numerous to repeat here!

Many things that I normally associate with mid to late April were in full bloom – *Lathyrus vernus*, some Primulas, *Iris bucharica*, many Epimediums, Pulsatillas, some sessile Trilliums, even a *Trillium grandiflorum* in a warm site was almost fully expanded, though probably not yet shedding pollen, thus not technically in bloom. Imagine *Trillium grandiflorum* in bloom in March– admittedly in a warm site in town. Some early April plants were done – like most *Corydalis solida* forms, and a lot of the common minor bulbs (*Scilla sibirica*, *Chionodoxa*, etc. Even most of my Bloodroots were finished.



But even in the native woods in the country, there was a surprising amount of bloom in March – where in most years the best one could hope for in common woodland wildflowers, besides some of the trees, and Skunk Cabbage, was Hepaticas in warm sites blooming on the last day or two of March. This year, Hepaticas in the woods were mostly done by March 31! Violets, Toothworts and other Cardamines, Anemonellas, Erythroniums, Dicentras, Bloodroots, and several other early species were out – even a single Wood Anemone! Mayapples were up (though not in flower, of course), so the forest floor had a lot of texture. Even a quick few minute visit one time to a west facing gravelly barrens produced our only southern Michigan native *Draba*, *D. reptans* in full bloom! It's hard to imagine such a striking divergence from the norm, but we are seeing it.

Of course, all this warmth begs the question of what the summer will be like, and also generates some worry that plants and animal populations will become out of sync with each other – pollinators not yet out when plants are blooming or perhaps certain insects already past when migrant birds move up from the south? It will be an interesting season.

Meeting Notes – Fall Meeting, Oct. 22, 2011 & Winter Potluck, Jan. 21, 2012
Libby Greanya

Fall Meeting

Our own Dr. Tony Reznicek spoke on Alaska Alpines: From Sea Level to the Mountain Peaks and wowed every-

one as usual. The lecture slides will be put on the glcnargs.com web site.

Of note during Tony's presentation, *Gentiana platypetala*



received a lot of attention. It is always fascinating to listen to the stories of plants loved and lost.... over and over.... like Devil's Club (*Oplopanax horridus*).



Meeting notes – Winter Potluck

The winter Potluck Meeting was held at Matthaei Botanical Gardens Auditorium Ann Arbor Saturday January 21, 2012. The potluck was great - the day was sunny and the view of snow covered grounds through the large windows in the Auditorium was lovely.

Our speaker was Don Wild on Dwarf Conifers for the Rock Garden. Don presented a broadly informative (and entertaining) program with a great deal of information on dwarf conifers.

One favorite quote - prune conifers in March when the temperature is above 45°. Question: Why 45°? Answer: Because I don't like to go outside when it is any colder!!!



People were also amazed at the way to harvest scions from brooms high in trees. A 45 foot pruning saw works. A 20 year old young man climbing the tree with a pruning saw was also demonstrated. The jaw dropping method was when the broom was too high or the tree not safe to climb. For those the method was to use a shotgun with a narrow pattern to blast scions out of the tree. This was captured in a memorable photo and, as suspected, Gary Gee was nearby.

Fred Case & Bob Stewart Memorial Contributions

President Ion brought to the floor a discussion of a memorial contribution for Fred Case (who died Jan.12, 2011) and Bob Stewart of Arrowhead Alpines (who died Dec.16, 2011). Both of these men did so much for this chapter, generously donating plants for many years and sharing their incredible expertise and unique personalities. We are so lucky to have known them. In their honor, the chapter has contributed \$500 to the Nature Conservancy in honor of Bob Stewart and \$500 to the Michigan Nature Association in honor of Fred Case.

Our New Website:

For those of you that have not checked it out yet, please look at our New Website: <http://glcnargs.com/home.htm> You can find all the information about meetings, past newsletters, more photos, links, and lots of interesting and informative material. It's great to have this, and please thank Patrick Ion for building it up. If you have comments, helpful suggestions, and photos, please let him know.

Please send address changes to our Treasurer, and please include your up-to-date email address. Thank You.

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:

Great Lakes Chapter:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email/FAX: _____

Send \$10.00 per year (check payable to Chapter) to:

Susan Reznicek
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Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105-1227

National Organization:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

email/FAX: _____

Send \$30.00 dues (check payable to NARGS) to:

Bobby Ward
Executive Secretary
North American Rock Garden Society
P.O. Box 18604, Raleigh, NC 27619

OR pay in person at the next GLC meeting

We strongly encourage people to join both the Great Lakes Chapter, and the National Organization.

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FIRST CLASS