

**GREAT LAKES CHAPTER**  
North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS)  
**SPRING NEWSLETTER, MAY 2024**



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**CALENDAR OF CHAPTER MEETINGS \*\*meeting details below\*\***

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You can always check our website for information: <http://glcnargs.com/>

**\*\*SATURDAY, May 18: Spring meeting, Plant Sale, & Garden tour at  
Bev and Bob Walters Garden, Ann Arbor**

MEETING: 11:00 AM – ca. 2:30 PM  
PLACE: Bev and Bob Walters, 3437 Charing Cross, Ann Arbor MI 48108  
11:00 – ca. 1:00 tour the gardens  
BAG LUNCH: At your convenience while touring the gardens  
PLANT SALE: 1:30 PM

This is a phenomenal garden that we have not been to on quite a while, with a great diversity of plantings – water features, a crevice garden, dryland beds with succulents, and an amazing pergola that you just must see.

Upcoming events – Mark your calendars:

**Saturday, June 29:**

Last year's bus trips were amazing and enjoyed by everyone, and we're looking to have another one to Blue Horizon Nursery and Chris Hansen's garden in western Michigan. Costs will be higher, so we need to do some budgeting and planning, so think about this for the May meeting.

**Saturday, October 19:**

FALL SALE AND GARDEN TOUR at Tim Karl's. This is a jewel of a garden we have never been to, and we'll be there a bit later than usual to admire the fall display of Japanese maples.

**Letter from the President  
Julie Caroff**

Three years goes by so quickly - here I am, writing my last Chapter Chair Newsletter Note. When I began my term, I was standing in Mike and Libby Greanya's lovely garden, enjoying one of our first in-person events while wearing a mask as so many of us were during the COVID epidemic. Three years later, we are back to meetings and sales, in person speakers, SeedEx, potlucks, renovation of the Azary Garden and bus trips to gardens. Initiated and planned by our Treasurer Colleen Mitchell, the bus trips have been especially popular. (There's one planned to Blue Horizon Nursery on June 29 - keep an eye out so you can be sure to get a seat!)

The renovation of the Azary Rock Garden at the Matthaei Botanical Garden has been going very well, so much that the garden is being expanded. We've also developed relationships with other garden and plant societies, especially the Hardy Plant Society and the Midwest Chapter of the American Primula Society.

These activities and relationships wouldn't have been possible without the efforts of our officers and Board, and our Chapter members who step up and volunteer whether it's working on the Azary Garden, packaging seeds for SeedEx, or opening their gardens for our meetings and sales. My thanks to each and every one of you for making my time as Chapter Chair enjoyable and rewarding.

At the May 18 Chapter Meeting and Sale, I'll be handing the trowel to Sean Zera, our incoming Chapter Chair. With your support, our Chapter will continue to flourish under his leadership. My thanks again for a good three years as your Chapter Chair.

Happy Gardening, Julie

**Getting Past the Spring Craziess  
Tony Reznicek**

Well, every spring in Michigan seems to offer challenges, but I hope we're done with frost! The stiff freeze we had a short while ago was hard on magnolias, and generally, it seems, on Chinese trees and shrubs, many of which don't seem to have the good sense not to lose their cold resistance too early.

Amidst magnolias that still look like they've been attacked with a blow torch, rock garden and many woodland plants are spectacular.



***Trillium grandiflorum*, mutation with sepals white like the petals**

Our native trilliums never seem to get damaged by frost, though the deer eat them near my back fence. But rock garden plants are the toughest. Frost does not damage them, and deer never eat them! My daphnes are especially lovely this year.



***Daphne cneorum* pygmaea ‘Porteous’**

*Androsace villosa* also seems especially nice this spring (though not fragrant like *Daphne*).



***Androsace villosa***

And those of you who were at Don LaFond’s garden for the Primula Society tour saw, besides the beautiful gentians in his new crevice garden, his lovely plant of *Arnebia*

*echioides*, much more floriferous than my plant. The purple-brown dots are on flowers as they open, but they disappear quickly, making for a remarkable contrast.



***Arnebia echioides***

It’s also Iris time – my *iris lacustris* is nearly finished, *I. cristata* is just about to start, and the little Asian irises like *I. koreana*, *I. dabashanensis* (formerly *I. henryi*), and *I. odaesanensis* are near peak.



***Iris odaesanensis***

## New pests and New Diseases Tony Reznicek

This is getting to seem like a regular thing.  
A new disease or pest!

### Jumping worms:

Several people have now mentioned jumping worms to me – they are an Asian earthworm entering our area, and named jumping worms because when disturbed above ground, they thrash about wildly – making them easy to recognize. Worms may be beloved by composters, and are perhaps not much more than a nuisance to most gardeners, but in natural communities in Michigan, they disrupt the forest litter and may be a serious problem for some understory plants. Our Michigan forests do not have any native worms and our native plants are not adapted to them.

In rock gardens, worms are also a bit of a problem, as they mix organic matter into the soil, reducing drainage. In pots and troughs, worms may actually kill seedlings. So what to do? One standard rock garden practice that helps is to clean the roots when planting. I always do this as the nursery soil in pots is unsuitable for growth in the ground. For bigger pots where this is not easy, put the pot in water briefly, and check for worms coming to the surface (and check your garden after a rain too!). If you do have jumping worms, alert people if you brought plants, so they can take measures to eliminate them, especially if they live near forested areas.

### Black Death of hellebores.

Yikes – a relatively newly discovered virus disease that has appeared in Michigan! This is caused by several similar viruses that can be classed as *Helleborus* net necrosis viruses. It causes black streaks and blotches, and distortion of the foliage of especially *Helleborus orientalis* hybrids and cultivars. If you see a plant that has these symptoms,

there is no cure. You just have to dig out the plant, taking a reasonable amount of soil, and put it in the garbage, not the compost. The disease is suspected to be spread, as with most viruses, by aphids and leaf hoppers – but also presumably by pruning shears, and, of course, plant division.

### Rusts of woodland plants

There are diseases of favorite plants that are native to Michigan as well. A number of our spring wildflowers have associated rust diseases – I've seen in nearby woods the orange pustules of the jack-in-the-pulpit rust, *Uromyces ari-triphylli*. Despite the name (from *Arisaema triphyllum*), this seems to affect all *Arisaema* – I just yanked an *Arisaema sikokianum* that had it.



***Arisaema sikokianum* with orange rust pustules**

And that is the solution for this – just pull the plant and put it in the garbage before the pustules ripen to where they can spread the

disease. Fungicides can help, but spores seemingly are not killed, so best to get rid of any sporulating structures. There is also a similar mayapple rust, (*Allodus podophylli*) with orange masses on the leaf undersides and yellow spots on the upper surface) that affects our native mayapple – and will also spread to Asian mayapples. It’s tough for me to keep these diseases at bay because I live beside a woods where they are present on the native plants.

### Lily Beetles – old bugs

On another note, both Jacques Thompson and I have gotten some level of control over lily beetles by stringent, at least twice daily, rounds of picking. They are easily visible and not especially quick to fly, preferring to drop to the ground, and lie upside down so they are hard to see. This offers weaknesses that can be exploited. Naturally, since they can fly, more will come to replace those you kill, but that takes time, so it looks like the numbers can be kept manageable with dedicated early spring picking, thus preventing egg laying and local production of their exceptionally icky young. Remember to intensify your searches as the numbers get fewer. If you get 50 and there are a hundred, you have a ways to go. But if there are only 8 or 10, and you get 6 or 7 of them, you’ve done real damage to their ability to reproduce and locally build up numbers. If they are numerous, they will demolish *Cardiocrinum*, *Fritillaria* and *Lilium*.



Lily beetle!!



Unknown later-blooming *Fritillaria* (could not find the tag!)

**Please send address and contact information changes to:**

**Colleen Mitchell,  
3995 Monks Road,  
Pinckney, MI 48169, USA**

**Do include your up-to-date email address.**

**Thank You.**



**MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:**

**Great Lakes Chapter:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

Send \$20.00 per year (check payable to Chapter) to:  
Colleen Mitchell  
Treasurer, Great Lakes Chapter, NARGS  
3995 Monks Road  
Pinckney, MI 48169, USA

OR pay in person at the next GLC meeting

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

**National Organization:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

Send \$40.00 dues (check payable to NARGS) to:  
Bobby Ward  
Executive Secretary  
North American Rock Garden Society  
P.O. Box 18604, Raleigh, NC 27619

OR pay through the NARGS website:  
<https://www.nargs.org/join>

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