



The Tribbium

Piedmont Chapter
North American Rock Garden Society
Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, NC

Planning a New Rock Garden

I first became interested in rock gardens and rock garden plants as an International Trainee at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in England in 1978. Until then, I'd never seen a rock garden. There was a good one at Kew and an even better, more renowned, one at the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens in Scotland. I've seen quite a few since, including exquisite, very innovative examples at the Brno Botanic Gardens in the Czech Republic but even now the concept of a rock garden seems a little intimidating. But I'm about to dip my toes in the water this spring and discover the possibilities.

There were not a lot of Lewisias, Gentianas or Cyclamens growing in gardens around my home in Louisville, Kentucky in the seventies. Winters can be alpine-like when, on occasion, the Ohio River might freeze over (yes, even in the sunny south!) but summers are more akin to the tropics – a beastly hot and humid climate- not thought to be so hospitable for alpine

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Evergreen Magnolias

Few gardeners can resist evergreen trees and shrubs that are showy in bloom. This is understandable since they provide so much year-round interest. Our 'southern' magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) immediately comes to mind. Alas, it's a large garden indeed that has space for a mature specimen. Cultivars, such as 'Little Gem' and 'Alta' promise a smaller overall size accompanied by smaller leaves than those commonly encountered. Of course, there are evergreen strains of our lovely *Magnolia virginiana*. My favorite is a National Arboretum introduction, 'Satellite'. As beloved as these two evergreen magnolias are, one must admit the choice is limited. The purpose of this article is to call attention to the many Asian species of evergreen magnolias that are becoming available. They substantially widen our choice of evergreen flowering shrubs and trees.

Until just a decade ago, most of the species that are now recognized to be evergreen Asian magnolias were given the genus names of either *Michelia* or *Manglietia*. They were included in the family Magnoliaceae merely as distant relatives. Some authorities claim there are approximately 135 species in these two groups vs. the 55 species in the original Genus *Magnolia*. As you

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Announcing Open Garden Days of Piedmont Chapter Members

April 14

Rita Mercer

103 Beechtree Ct. Apex, NC

919-610-6363

www.ritasgarden.net for directions.

Open **Saturday April 14, 9am to 4 pm**

The woodland garden is fabulous this time of year...a jewel to share with other gardeners.

Amelia Lane

4904 Hermitage Dr. Raleigh, NC

919-787-6228

Beth Jimenez and I are hosting a **Spring Open Garden and Art Sale** on Saturday, **April 14, 2007 from 10 am - 4** in my garden. I have a woodland garden with wildflowers, blooming shrubs, and small conifers.

We will have six artists, Missy Manning - garden sculptures, John Petersen - hand-thrown ceramic birdhouses, Sue Aldworth - botanical art, Juan Jimenez - crystalline glazed pots, Jean Cheely - jewelry, and Beth and I - concrete leaf sculptures.

There will also be plants from the garden for sale. If anyone has questions, they can call me.

April 15

Roland Flory

1412 MacDuff Ct., Cary

919-469-2443

MapQuest for directions.

Open **Sunday, April 15, 12 to 5 p.m.**

Call for more information.

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Planning a New Rock Garden (Continued from page 1)

species, normally thought to grow in high mountain conditions. Still, over the years, there were some plants that I've found adaptable and some I'm keen to try.

There is no need to get too fussy about what is and what's not considered a rock garden plant. It's permissible to include low-growing species that might not be associated with rocks or the high mountains. The lovely, low growing Missouri evening primrose, *Oenothera macrocarpa* ssp. *incana* can be found on rock outcrops in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas, territories not thought of as so intrepid to high alpine enthusiasts. And *Cyclamen hederifolium* grows naturally on Sardinia and Crete! So, you've got a lot of wiggle room.

You don't have to bring in a construction crane, and a hundred tons of rocks, to get the job done, either. Many species are perfectly suitable for the front of the border or in containers with mixed plantings of tender perennials or annuals. And, stone troughs, or reasonably priced facsimiles, are becoming available at garden centers across North America.

As a rule, for most perennials -and especially those mentioned here – good drainage is essential. For those suitable for the front of the border, well-drained soils that do not permit standing water will be sufficient. For some others mentioned later, it will be beneficial to amend soils with grit or small gravel to ensure sharp drainage or even to incorporate moisture retentive soils for those species requiring it more evenly moist. And, finally, for a few it might be necessary to mulch with small gravel, or rocks, to keep dry the crowns of some species. None of this is so formidable.

One idea I'm entertaining for this spring is turning over a small spot on one end of a perennial border into a 15' x



Pulsatilla vulgaris 'Rote Glocke'

Source: Krischanphoto.com/gardens"

15' feature for some of these small plants. I'm going to search for some limestone rocks (indigenous to the Ken-



Aubrieta 'Cascade Blue'

Courtesy of mailorderplants4me.com

tucky Bluegrass) to use as edging or for placement throughout. I'll sensibly limit myself to rocks that are of a size that I can muscle around with a few friends.

What's on my plant wish list? First, I'm thinking of some easier ones, yet plants that I wouldn't want to be without. And these are versatile enough so that they could be planted in the front of the garden, on walls, in the rock garden or in containers. I'd plant the early flowering



Armeria maritima 'Splendens'

Source: stauder.net/bildarkiv

Pasque Flowers, *Pulsatilla vulgaris* and especially 'Rote Glocke' ('Red Bell' or the semi-double flowering seed strain, 'Papageno'. Follow these with bright golden, spring flowering *Abyssum montanum* 'Berggold' ('Mountain Gold') with its low-growing loose cushions. And combine this with similarly spreading *Aubrieta* 'Cascade Blue' or the lower-growing Candytuft seed selection from

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Source: alba.web.infoseek.co

Gypsophila cerastoides

Jelitto, *Iberis sempervirens* 'Snow Cushion'. Follow these in mid-late spring into early summer with the grassy clumps and small pink drumsticks of *Armeria maritima* 'Splendens'. You could throw in the dainty blue flowers of *Campanula cochlearifolia* 'Bavaria Blue' or 'Bavaria White' and combine these with *Gypsophila cerastoides*, the durable *Dianthus amurensis* or *Lychnis flou-jovis* 'Peggy' with its cheery rosy-red blooms and grey felt-like foliage.

And it's not all about flowers. There are perennials that can stand alone for their distinctive foliage. *Armeria*, *Dianthus*, *Iberis*, *Sedums* and *Sempervivums* are well regarded for sunny conditions. And in the sun, or shade, the popular *Heuchera* 'Palace Purple Select' can't be ignored. The lesser-



Source: Robsplants.com

Heuchera villosa 'Autumn Bride'

known autumn-flowering *Heuchera* 'Autumn Bride' has chartreuse foliage that stands as a beacon when its foliage emerges in spring.

And *Salvia argentea*, the silver sage, could be combined with the purple-brown foliage of *Euphorbia dulcis* 'Chameleon'. And, since we're not being too fussy about



Source: anniesannuals.com

Euphorbia dulcis 'Chameleon'

restricting ourselves to munchkin plants, alone, I'll recommend *Lavandula* 'Hidcote Blue Superior'. It looks good even in November while I'm writing this. And, I'm going to venture into *Primulas* next year and one I'm keen to try is *Primula elatior* 'Jessica' because it has copper-red foliage that will remain once the spring flowers have faded.

I'm pushing things with *Primulas* in the south since they're notoriously fussy once the summer temperatures start soaring; and are allowed little breathing room here when the nighttime temperatures hardly cools a bit. Still, I imagine (Hope springs eternal!) that if I carefully place them so they are not in sun all day, perhaps preferably with a northern exposure, I might stand a chance. I'll give these a cool root run, shaded by stones, and keep them evenly moist. I'm going to try the *Primula* \times *pubescens* 'Exhibition Series' in both yellow and blue. I like the leafy rosettes with broad, paddle-shaped leaves in addition to the charming flowers.

I'd been intrigued with *Lewisia*s for over 20 years. I'd first seen these Pacific Northwest natives growing splendidly in England but I had sentimental interests, too. The genus is named in honor of Merriwether Lewis who dis-



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covered the genus on his legendary trans-continental journey in the early 19th century with William Clark. Their three-year journey began across the Ohio River from Louisville, in what is now Clarksville, Indiana. I'd thought Lewisias might be a little dicey here but found Lewisia 'Little Plum' to be right at



Source: seedman.com

Lavandula 'Hidcote Blue Superior'

home in a small trough. The thick, fleshy rosettes remain semi-evergreen and the clusters of plum-colored blossoms are delightful.

And I've always thought the blue-flowering Gentians possible only in cool, high alpine meadows but *Gentiana septemfida* endures though maybe not to the majestic style it might were it a little cooler. And cyclamens can be brought outside and not just thought of as greenhouse pot plants but *Cyclamen coum* has proved durable and reliable in a spot that has gritty well-drained soil.

☞ **Allen Bush**

Open Garden Days (Continued from page 1)

April 28

David White
3 Ontario Ct., Durham
484-7885
dmwhite_nc@yahoo.com

April 28, 10:00 - 2:00, I invite you to my garden.. My garden is 1/2 acre in the Woodlake subdivision of south Durham (off Fayetteville Rd about 1 mile north of I-85). Although small, the lot drops ~30 ft from front to back and contains areas with full sun and woodland shade. Along the driveway, I've planted a "rock garden" with various sedums and alliums. At the lower end on the property is a bog garden with iris virginiana, louisiana, siberian, ensata, fulva, and psuedocorus, plus various water loving woodies and perennials acquired during NARGS plant auctions. In between, there are various perennial and vegetable gardens. I make no promises about what will be in bloom, but would be happy for NARGS members to come visit.

Anytime during the week

Teddy Lovejoy
3 Mount Bolus Road
Chapel Hill, N.C.
919-960-2580
tlovejoy@bellsouth.net

People are welcome **anytime, especially during the week**. Property is located on Mt. Bolus Road, which is off Martin Luther King Boulevard, just two streets above the Police Station. Contact by email preferred. There is a woodland garden, summer-blooming perennial beds in both front and back yards, a new stone retaining wall, and new patio and deck. Garden was begun eight years ago and plant material was selected with the advice of a professional garden designer.

Anytime except...

Ruth Bierhoff
198 Weatherbend
Pittsboro, NC 27312
919-533-0124 b_email@ruthbierhoff.com
People can visit **any time but** the following: April 13-16 & May 3-6. Not on these dates. Please call ahead to make sure I'm here and available. Directions on MapQuest or Google Directions, or call ahead.

Garden consists of the following areas: Annual/Perennial Half-sun garden, Oriental Garden, Azalea Walk, Patio gar-

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Evergreen Magnolias (Continued from page 1)

can see, the ranks of the Genus Magnolia have been swelled by this reclassification especially in the evergreen category. What caused this change were the results obtained using newer techniques in molecular genetics coupled with a fresh look at the structural taxonomy.

This new taxonomy in itself doesn't change anything for the average gardener. But what it did do was renew interest in this group of plants by magnolia collectors and hybridizers. This renewed interest has resulted in a lot of work on hardiness. Before the reclassification, many of these species were assumed tender because most of them are found in subtropical and tropical regions. It turns out that there is a great deal of seedling variation in hardiness. For some reason known only to Mother Nature, many of these evergreen species have genes for hardiness. The happy consequence of this is that gardeners in Zone 7 can grow many of these species if selection for cold hardiness is made. For example, I grew up a batch of seedlings of the 'joy perfume tree' [Magnolia (Michelia) champaca] listed as hardy to Zone 9 or 10 depending on the information source. Two of the seedlings survived in my garden west of Chapel Hill, NC (Zone 7a) for several years and are now 20 feet tall. Another example is Magnolia (Michelia) floribunda. Most sources of this species proved tender in Zone 7. Tony Avent of Plant Delights Nursery, Raleigh NC has an authentic hardy plant of this species. A plant grown from a cutting Tony provided is growing well in my colder garden.

nurseries list increasing numbers, but you still have to search for them. Camellia Forest Nursery in Chapel Hill,



Courtesy of gralanfarms.com

Magnolia grandiflora 'Alba'

NC has offered a variety of them but they sell out rapidly. One problem is that they are generally difficult to root from cuttings. They grow readily from seed but most seed sources are in Asia with the usual accompanying



Magnolia champaca flower and seed pod



Courtesy of magnoliasociety.org

As hardy strains of these plants are found and propagated, they are becoming more available. Mail order

uncertainties. Also some species are endangered due to deforestation. As the plants growing in the USA reach a flowering age, seed supply may become less problematic. David Parks of Camellia Forest Nursery recently grew a

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Open Garden Days (Continued from page 4)

den, Rock garden, Woods garden. Garden covers about 1/4-1/2 acre. It's a new garden, but lots of interesting woodlanders and others are coming up. Might be fun for members

Anytime

Tom Harville.

104 Birklands Drive, Cary

Ph# 851-5369

email: tomhar@bellsouth.net

I am happy to have people come visit my garden, but am not able to set a specific time/date. **Please call if you would like me to be here when you visit** and we'll work something out. You are welcome to come to see it on your own too. **Anytime.**

May 12

Mary Jane Baker

708 West Main Street

Carrboro, NC 27510

May 12: 9am - 6pm

From 15-501 Bypass: Head West on bypass toward Hwy 54. At Intersection (on the right is a Cole Park shopping center). of Main St./Bypass is a redlight. Take a right (toward downtown Carrboro). You'll be headed uphill. As you start cresting the hill, watch on left for house and garden. It's only a few blocks from the Carrboro Farmers Market if you're coming from Chapel Hill or Carrboro.

I began gardening on this 1/3 acre lot on a busy street in Carrboro in 1991. The landscaping consisted of overgrown hollies higher than the windows and a bad lawn all the way to the street. Since I work in other gardens all day my own garden is a place for me to have fun and experiment with new plants and combinations. It is a four-season garden of color, structure, detail and harmony, intensively planted, with something new happening almost every day. In mid-May the sunny parts of the garden should be full of roses and perennials, and the shady parts a lush tapestry of green.

For those of you who are looking for an adventure away from home.

Always open

Wyatt Lefever

4536 Kernersville Rd, Kernersville, NC 27284

Phone 336-788-3845

Email wyatt1efevermindspring.com

Mv garden is always open even if I am absent

The garden is accessible from my front yard through an opening in the rail fence. My shade garden is about 3 acres in size.

March There are hellebores, camellias, magnolias, pulmonaries, cyclamens, rodeas and minor bulbs.

April There are trilliums. hostas, maples, dogwoods, rare trees and bulbs.

May There are Rhododendron, azaleas, hostas and Kousa dogwoods. June There are daylilies, Hostas, conifers and rhodeas.

Editor's comment: This is definitely worth the drive. An outstanding experience.

By Appointment

Ozzie Johnson

4363 Bishop Lake Rd , Marietta, Ga.30062.

Mapquest usually works well.

Time is **by appointment.**

The "One-of-This-and-That Garden" is looking good before the cold weather forecast, considering the 3000 to 7000 taxa involved. My garden is always **open by appointment anytime** for Rock Garden members and other interested people.

Evergreen Magnolias (Continued from page 5)

large batch of Magnolia (Manglieta) fordiana from seeds of a tree planted on the nursery site. At Nurseries Caroliniana in SC, Magnolia (Michelia) maudiae sets abundant fertile seeds. Tony Avent has a very floriferous and beautiful specimen of Magnolia (Michelia) dianca named 'Michelle' after his wife. He grew this plant from seed he collected in China. It's a real show-stopper.

Although some of these Asian evergreen magnolias become large trees with time, there are a good number that are shrubs or small trees. These are of considerable beauty and are potentially useful in smaller gardens. Whether you are looking for a shrub or tree. I urge you to consider this group of Asian evergreen magnolias. They are new and exciting and offer much to the garden. Visitors to your garden are sure to ask, "What's against their extinction."

✍ **Tom Krenitsky**

Book Review —

Hellebores: A Comprehensive Guide,

by C. Colston Burrell and Judith Knott Tyler,
photos by Dick Tyler and Cole Burrell.
Timber Press 2006.

It is for sure that when this trio sets out to do something, it's going to be thorough and entertaining. If you think you've seen hellebores, think again. This will be the definitive book on hellebores for years to come. Cole Burrell, Judith Tyler, and Richard Tyler are gifted horticulturists as well as collectors, and their book nimbly treads the sometimes rocky terrain of both scholarly work and plant passions surrounding this genus.

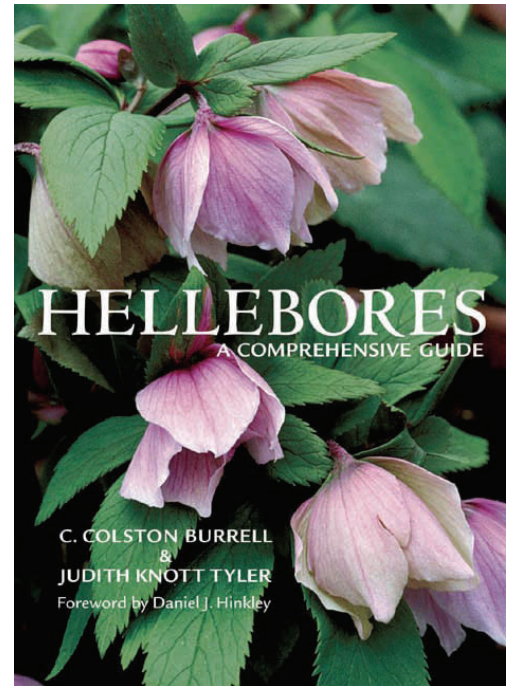
The authors begin with a description of hellebore morphology and follow it with a delightful chapter on the history of hellebores in Europe and the US. They include a survey of old texts and discussion of the many people who have been involved with hellebores over the last few centuries. There's even a nice bit on hellebores in the South, featuring William Lanier Hunt and Elizabeth Lawrence.

In the Balkans the authors tracked down species hellebores. Their chapter on wild hellebores reads like a travelogue, with extensive information on each of the species, including cultivation, propagation, range and habitat. In this section, they take up the complicated issue of Hellebore taxonomy, clearly presenting the latest work to unravel the tangled genus.

The chapters on the interspecific and intersectional hybrids, and *Helleborus x hybridus*, address the hellebores we are most familiar with. These are fascinating chapters, and include many of the biographical sketches with which the book is generously populated. The authors' interviews with virtually everyone involved with hellebores today are presented as colorful vignettes inter-woven in boxes throughout the chapters — it's a great method of presentation which gives almost journalistic immediacy to the information.

Judith Tyler's work in Virginia at her nursery, Pine Knot Farms, and with other prominent breeders and nurserymen in the field, gives her a strong position from which to present cutting edge information on propagating and hybridizing. These chapters, liberally illustrated, are an important contribution to the literature, and should be very helpful to anyone working to make hellebore selections.

The final chapter discusses designing winter gardens, and describes the authors' own gardens. The diversity of color and form so neatly illustrated in this book gives us a huge palette to work with to design for specific color and effect. We can have glorious colorful intensively planted gardens featuring hellebores and their cold weather tree, shrub and bulb companions. With summers growing hotter and more miserable, I'm inclined to enjoy the cooler months more and not let virtually half the gardening year go by with so little use made of it.



There are good appendices to the book, including a list of plants with winter interest, gardens that feature hellebores, and sources of hellebores. New research on hellebore black death and nutrients for nursery production of hellebores is presented as well.

This book is exceptionally well-illustrated. *Helleborus thibetanus* on the cover is only the first taste of the luscious photos by Richard Tyler and Cole Burrell. And one of my favorites is by Judith Tyler --- the frontispiece of *Helleborus torquatus* in the wilds of Bosnia, which represents to me all that is mysterious and glorious about hellebores. Cole Burrell, Judith Tyler, and Richard Tyler have produced a generous book full of knowledge and passion. It is timely and exciting and has something for everyone who loves hellebores. Whether you are backyard enthusiast, garden designer, hellebore breeder, or just love to look at beautiful pictures, you'll find this book indispensable. *Hellebores: A Comprehensive Guide* has won the American Horticultural Society book award for 2007. Congratulations Judith, Dick and Cole — you're a brilliant team.

☞ **Book Review by Mary Jane P. Baker**



Piedmont Chapter Meeting

April 21, 2007

Allen Bush

Jelitto Seeds (former owner of
Holbrook Farm & Nursery
Louisville KY

“What a Seed(y) Guy
Grows in His Garden”

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Todd Lasseigne

Marlyn Miller

David White

TRILLIUM EDITORS:

Dave Duch and Marian Stephenson

OTHER SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS:

Sept. Plant Sale Manager: Kirtley Cox

Refreshments: Gwen and Maurice Farrier

REMINDER

We encourage you to bring goodies to share during the meetings this year. If your last name begins with the letters below, we hope you'll bring something to the appropriate monthly meeting. Or if you have something tasty to offer with any last name, please do! Thanks.

April V—Z

May—Picnic

The Trillium, Newsletter of the Piedmont Chapter
The North American Rock Garden Society
1422 Lake Pine Drive, Cary, NC 27511

Place
Stamp
Here

First Class Mail

Mail label

Annual Potluck Picnic—May 19, 2007 J.C. Raulston Arboretum

12 noon until...

Celebrate Spring in the Garden

**Bring food to
share—it is a
potluck!**

See the new scree garden filled with rock garden plants donated by JCRA members, planted and curated by Piedmont Chapter members.



Charles Kidder in newest JCRA garden