



The Trillium

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Piedmont Chapter
North American Rock Garden Society
Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, NC
<https://www.piedmontnargs.org>
www.facebook.com/piedmontNARGS

Flora of Southwest Greenland

Todd Boland, Chair, Newfoundland Chapter

Very few people ever get the chance to visit Greenland. I was fortunate to be invited along as an on-board botanist on an expedition cruise from Greenland, south to coastal Labrador then finally to St. John's, Newfoundland. I really didn't know what to expect, other than ice and snow; however, I was pleasantly surprised. Greenland was indeed green...at least along the coast! In reality Greenland is 95% covered by a huge ice cap. The spring icebergs along the Newfoundland coast (the nemesis of the *Titanic*) all spawn from a tiny portion of this ice cap located on the western side of Greenland near the community of Illulisat. So how does a land mostly covered by ice get the name 'Green' land? The name is thanks to Eric the Red, the famous Norse Explorer who traveled across the North Atlantic all the ways to Newfoundland, around the year 1000 AD. As a way to encourage settlers, he called this great land "Greenland". In fairness, the world's climate around 1000 AD was much milder than today and records show that much of the lowland regions of southern Greenland were covered in birch forest, with grass and willow-covered hillsides; a fine area for grazing sheep, the main activity of many Norsemen. A small offshoot of the Gulf Stream actually reaches southern Greenland and even today, the seas remain ice-free year-round and the climate is equivalent to USDA zone 2. Erik did not see the huge icecap that covers much of the land since in the southern part of Greenland, the icecap was located beyond sight.

The people of Greenland are a mix of Inuit and Danes (Greenland is part of the Kingdom of Denmark although they have ruled themselves since 1979). Paleo-eskimo immigration to Greenland occurred around 2500 BC. These native peoples came and went. During the time of the Norse settlements, the southern regions of Greenland were uninhabited. The last wave of native peoples were the Thule (ancestors to today's Inuit), who moved into Greenland from Alaska and Canada around 1200 AD. The Norse settlements were abandoned by the late 1400's, leaving Greenland in the hands of the Thule until Dane and Norwegian missionaries revis-



ited Greenland in the early 1700s. Shortly thereafter, new settlements arose to take advantage of the fishing and whaling opportunities that existed.

Now that I have presented a brief history of Greenland, what about the plants? The areas I visited were all located on the southwestern side of Greenland. We flew into Kangerlussuaq, cruised along one



The town of Sisimiut

of the world's longest fjords then proceeded north to Illulisat, then south to Sisimiut and finally Nuuk, the capital of Greenland. Everywhere we landed, I was amazed at the diversity of plant life, several of them being plants I currently grow in my own

rock garden or at the Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Garden, where I work as their head horticulturist.

The vegetation along Greenland's coast is Arctic tundra. In places the terrain is primarily large outcrops of lichen-encrusted granite and sandstone. In other areas, there are large expanses of greenery dominated by dwarf shrubs. While birch and mountain-ash do exist as 4-6 m 'trees' in southern Greenland, the tallest woody plants of the southwestern region were willows which reached up to 2 m in height. On the more exposed hillsides, these willows were completely prostrate. I saw four different species of willow including *Salix glauca* (the most common), *S. herbacea* (perhaps the world's smallest willow), *S. uva-ursi*, and *S. arctophila*. I should note all these species



Phyllodoce caerulea



Empetrum nigrum

also naturally occur in Newfoundland. Dwarf birch (*Betula nana*) was also among the more common deciduous woody plants. The vast majority of woodies were evergreen. The advantage of these plants is that they can start growth as soon as the temperatures rise above freezing. Ericaceous plants dominate; arctic mountain heather (*Cassiope tetragona*), mossy mountain heather (*Harrimenella hypnoides*), purple mountain heather (*Phyllodoce caerulea*), crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), alpine bilberry (*Vaccinium uliginosum*), lingonberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*), Labrador-tea

(*Rhododendron tomentosum*), lapland rosebay (*Rhododendron lapponicum*), alpine bearberry (*Arctous alpina*) and bog rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) were among these. Wet depressions were a sea of cottongrasses (*Eriophorum scheuchzeri* and *E. spissum*) whose bunnytail seedheads swayed in the gentlest of breezes.

Rocky outcrops were home to a vast array of Arctic-alpine plants that would make any rock garden enthusiast



Eriophorum scheuchzeri

drool (more than once I had to wipe the corners of my mouth!). I was surprised by how many of these herbaceous plants I recognized from northern areas of my own province of Newfoundland. As it happens, northern Newfoundland has the



Saxifraga oppositifolia



Saxifraga cespitosa

southernmost distribution of many Arctic-affinity species.



Silene acaulis

Saxifrages were by far the most common: *S. oppositifolia*, *S. aizoides*, *S. hirculus*, *S. paniculata*, *S. rivularis*, *S. cernua*, *S. tricuspidata*, *S. caespitosa* and *S. flagellaris*. As garden plants, I have only been successful with cultivating *S. paniculata* and *S. caespitosa*; the others seem to need

cooler summer temperatures than I can supply. In the most exposed gravel areas, the predominant plants form low mats or mounded cushions, great adaptations to cope with the excessive winds. These were also primarily evergreens. They included moss campion (*Silene acaulis*), *Diapensia lapponica*, white mountain avens (*Dryas integrifolia*), several *Draba* species.

Some of the other showier natives included riverbeauty (*Epilobium latifolium*), arctic poppy (*Papaver radicum*), hairy lousewort (*Pedicularis*



Diapensia lapponica



Campanula gieseckiana



Rhodiola rosea

hirsuta), alpine catchfly (*Silene suecica*), alpine chickweed (*Cerastium alpinum*), few-flowered anemone (*Anemone parviflora*), strict primrose (*Primula stricta*), alpine cinquefoil (*Potentilla crantzii*), alpine bartsia (*Bartsia alpina*), arctic plumboy (*Rubus acaulis*), rock-cress (*Arabis alpina*), harebell (*Campanula gieseckiana*), snow gentian (*Gentiana nivalis*) and alpine veronica (*Veronica alpina*).

Along the rocky shorelines, the native plants need to add adaptations to salty environments to



their ability to survive. Here grew roseroot (*Rhodiola rosea*), silverweed (*Potentilla anserina var. egedii*) and the silvery-blue foliaged strand wheat (*Leymus mollis*).

This is also home to Greenland's tallest herbaceous wildflower, *Angelica archangelica*, which can tower to 100 centimetres!

This is but a sampling of the wonderful diversity of plants that exist in Greenland. The flora really is a rock gardeners dream come true. Readers hailing from or having visited northern regions



of Alaska, Canada or Scandinavia will recognize many of the plants as these regions have similar climates and flora. I consider myself very fortunate to have had the opportunity to visit this remote and starkly beautiful corner of the world. It certainly was a trip of a lifetime.

Piedmont Chapter Slate of Proposed Officers for Members Consideration at the April meeting from the Nominating Committee — Amelia Lane and Charlie Kidder

- Chair: Sandy Harwood
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- Membership Chair: Ruth Little
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 - Charlie Kidder
 - Chris Glenn
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 - Jay Yourch
- Newsletter Editor: Marian Stephenson



Almost life-long gardener: My personal journey

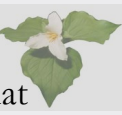
Jay Sifford

Growing roses, camellias and tomatoes was my childhood passion, but life took me on a different path. Fortunately, 15 years later, I jumped back into my first love. This time, though, things were different. The old quest and appreciation for beauty was still part of me, but I saw gardening through a different set of eyes, viewing it as a means of creative expression. This new view became a spiritual exercise. I discovered mentors and muses. I began to see a garden as more than a collection of plants, more than soil composition, more than a way to decorate a yard. The garden became a metaphor for life, choreographed theatre, and a healing immersive experience. The garden became a platform for living out the best version of life, where possibilities were limited only by my own imagination, where things were bigger and brighter, where fantasy often exceeded reality. Illusion loomed high and large, as large as it ever was on a Vegas stage with Siegfried and Roy or David Copperfield. I wasn't working in the medium of white tigers or pressurized water chambers. My medium was gnarled tree trunks, weeping trees that looked like giraffes or Japanese pagodas, and stone shapes in which I could clearly see human features or lion heads.

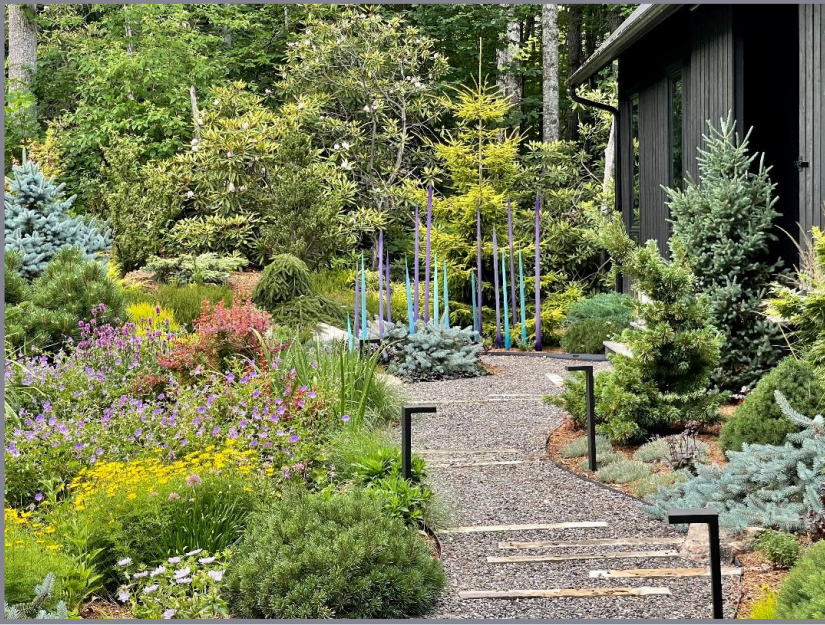
Packing up my newly discovered bag of tricks, I set out to share my vision of what a garden could or should be. In the beginning, it was rough going. In the rather traditional city of Charlotte, responses centered around statements like "Can't you just plant some Formosa azaleas or box-



woods?" But I kept plugging away. Finally a few people began allowing me to work my brand of magic. In a stroke of luck that was, in reality, more fate than happenstance, I was asked to begin writing for a website called Houzz, which I did for six years. I established quite a following of people that were hungry for something more than what they had. As a result, more doors began to open. During Covid, I created my dream garden on a parcel of land I'd purchased in the mountains of western North Carolina. It was built atop a septic field in front and two natural bogs out back. People began to see the magic.



Through the phone calls and emailed inquiries for my brand of garden design, I discovered that there were all types of gardeners. The most confounding to me were those who were plant collectors. Some were Master Gardeners. I went on these appointments and saw such rare and beautiful plants and thought to myself: “Why do these people need me? Their plant knowledge can run circles around me any day of the week”. But as I looked closer, I saw that there was no magic, no illusion, no metaphor. Frequently, plants were neatly labeled and lined up like cans of green beans on grocery store shelves. There



was no flow. I heard single musical notes played in staccato fashion, rather than hearing a flowing symphony that touched me emotionally. I began to “get it”. So I began helping these really smart plant people create their own symphonies. I’d like to take a few minutes of your time to tell you how.

What I noticed was that there was no sensuality and no rhythm in many of these gardens. Rhythm is something I define as meaningful repetition, and is an integral part of sensuality. Sensuality happens when rhythm touches us deep down. It moves us. It is my belief that this rhythm, this planned meaningful repetition, connects with us because we all possess a unique in-

ternal rhythm, be it our breathing patterns, our pulse, or that old song that you just can’t get out of your head. I will create rhythm in ways like laying groups of 3 to 5 stone plinths at intervals in a gravel path. I’ll also repeat shapes throughout a garden. Perhaps I’ll use multiples of a narrow columnar plant like ‘Taylor’s’ juniper or ‘Black Tower’ sambucas. These plants also create the illusion of sentries standing guard over the garden. Or maybe I’ll use globose boxwoods interspersed with stone spheres dotting through the garden.

I’ll also attempt to break up groupings of very similar plants. Siting your dwarf conifer collection in one area of your garden, for example, can read as predictable and lacking imagination. It’s rather like walking through a big box furniture store and seeing “The Italian Collection”, then “The California Collection”... on and on. How often do I want to pull a modern Scandinavian chair into a room of English furniture! Eclecticism is the spice of life. I do understand that plants have specific cultural requirements and that this sometimes leads to grouping similar plants together, but even within those parameters there is room for some eclecticism.



So the question arises: “How do I knit together a disparate collection of plants?”. I’ll mention two ways here. The first way is to utilize ground covers. Think of a disparate collection



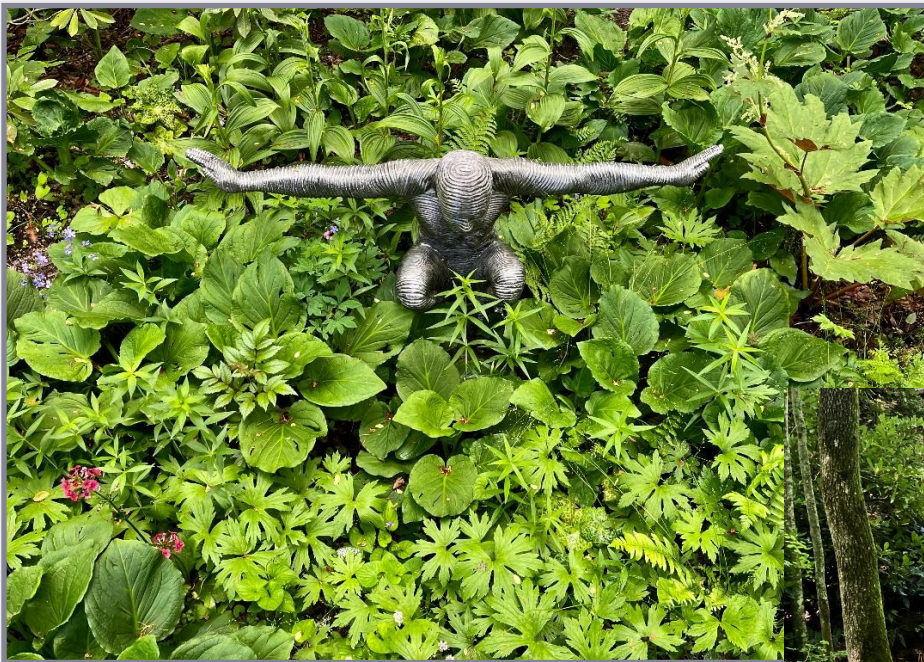
of furniture in a room. Finding a rug that repeats the colors or style of those pieces of furniture knits the room together. Consider plants like ‘Blue Rug’ or ‘Golden Pacific’ shore juniper, ‘Streib’s Findling’ cotoneaster, some of the shorter carexes, ‘Angelina’ sedum or ‘Firewitch’ dianthus to form the carpet that introduces that peaceful common thread to your plant collection.

The second way is by understanding and employing juxtaposition, or “comparison-contrast”. If

you stop and think about it, you’ll realize that most everything in this world has four characteristics: size, shape, color and texture. Start by taking stock of your plants, and seeing them in the light of these four parameters. You’ll want to create a common thread, yet allow for individuality. With too much commonality, your garden will read like you went to



Rooms To Go and bought an entire suite of furniture in an hour. If there’s no common thread, your garden will read like you went to the Home Depot and bought a bunch of plants off of the clearance rack.



Start by matching two of those parameters and varying the other two. Doing so will give your garden enough continuity to hold the vignette together, yet enough interest to capture the attention of those who visit your space. If, after doing so, you feel as though your garden is still

too predictable, alter a third variable but keep the fourth variable as the most noticeable or predominate one. Or, if after evaluating your 2:2 ratio, you feel that your space lacks enough continuity, pull it back to varying only one, the predominate, parameter.



North American Rock Garden Society Presents Award for Service to Jim Hollister for Distinguished Service and Devotion to the Piedmont Chapter.



Jim Hollister (Piedmont Chapter) has served as Plant Sales Chair of the Piedmont Chapter since 2019, through a variety of conditions, from “normal” times to pandemic shutdowns and back again. Whatever the circumstances, Jim has been a wonderful manager of people and logistics. Thanks to Jim’s efforts, the Piedmont Chapter can continue to bring in outstanding speakers and donate generously to the JC Raulston Arboretum Internship program. Jim and his wife, Anita, also opened their home and garden for the chapter’s annual picnic last May, when members enjoyed warm hospitality and several lovely rock gardens.



Field Trip with JCRA's Tim Alderton

Please join us at 10 am on Saturday, March 25 for a tour of wildflowers in bloom at the White Pines Nature Preserve in Sanford.

Address is 548 South Rocky River Road, Sanford NC 27330.

The rain date is Saturday, May 1.

Purchased by the Triangle Land Conservancy in 1986, the 258-acre property sits at the confluence of the Deep and Rocky rivers. It is home to several stands of white pine with some trees over 150 years old and thirty inches in diameter. All five of the major pine species of North Carolina are here: white pine, loblolly pine, shortleaf pine, Virginia pine, and longleaf pine. The forest is also host to catawba hodo-dendrons, mountain laurel, old growth beeches and many wildflower species. Some of the spring highlights include trilliums, trout lily, hepatica, phlox, bloodroot, Jack-in-the-pulpit and a mountain disjunct population of Dutchman's breeches.

As most of you know, Tim is an excellent botanical guide, so everyone will have a great opportunity to see all that's in bloom. Plan to park in the large, newer lot, where restrooms are available. Sturdy shoes, layered clothing, a hat, snack and hiking poles would all be good ideas. This is also a wonderful spot for birding, so bring your binoculars!

There is no limit on numbers, but to ensure you aren't left behind, please sign up by emailing cyndycrom@gmail.com.

Plant Profile: *Picea abies* 'Dan's Dwarf'

by Amelia Lane

Common name: Dan's Dwarf Norway Spruce

Family: Pinaceae

Category: dwarf conifer

Primary uses: Rock Garden, front of a sunny Border, large container, or wherever you want an ever-green dwarf conifer.

Dimensions: In 15 years, mine has grown from about 5" in a 4" pot, to 2'x2' keeping a very dense habit.

Culture: Full sun is best, but will do well with some afternoon filtered sun. Needs good drainage.

General information: This cultivar originated at Elmwood Nursery in Maryland. It is not known if it was a seedling selection or witch's broom. It is distinctive by its dense branching. There have been no pest problems.



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Welcoming New Members - Suzanne Caso

Thank you for reaching out to me about my gardening interests.

I heard about NARGS from my neighbor and friend, Marilyn Gist. She invited me this past November (2022) to attend a NARGS tour of Montrose gardens. I enjoyed viewing the grounds with the mass of snowdrops plantings and seeing the garden architectural structures that support the different plants.

I'm fairly new at gardening and now that I'm retired I enjoy visiting various garden shops (not to mention the plant cart at JCRA) to purchase new plants, conifers, hellebores, ferns, mahonias, etc., to my yard. Concentrating on obtaining those plants are "considered" deer resistant. My yard is a combination of areas that are shady, sunny, too wet at times and, of course, hard clay soil. Because of the deer you will see many of the new plants in cages until they are more mature.

My husband and I built a masonite stone wall (using stone block you get at Home Depot) on either side of our driveway to help direct rain water runoff under the culverts of the driveway rather than on the street. We placed stone on the ground near the culverts to make it more attractive. Digging this area has resulted in a little larger planting area behind the mailbox and across the drive where I've planted perennials, bulbs, hellebores, and a small conifer.

While at a plant give away at JCRA, I was able to obtain one Crinum Lily called 'Lorraine Clark' and would like to have more. If anyone knows where I can purchase more or if you have any to share, please let me know. Suzanne Caso, email: suz1204@nc.rr.com



New member—Gail Posey



Why did you join the Piedmont Chapter? I was attracted by the thought of new people to meet, new things to learn, and being in a group where I had no current responsibility. I enjoyed the meeting I attended, the program was interesting, and members were included with Zoom. I had a good time. I saw several ways I might choose to participate, many pleasant faces and a few familiar ones.

What is a favorite plant and why? Ice plant is new to me and has performed beyond expectation and looks great. Sadly, ice plant does not discourage weeds the way I hoped.

Georgia Blue Veronica, or creeping speedwell, amazed me with its profusion of intense blue flowers and growth, so I'm looking for more of those.

Do you have a woody or herbaceous plant preference? Herbaceous plants are quicker to show progress, and

blooms tend to be showier. I really like bulbs, but apparently so do the voles, rabbits, and deer in my area.

Something people would be interested to know about you or your garden. While waiting for city repairs on our street, we collected plants and ideas. Our yard was patient for ten years! and now has improved greatly with our additions. It was a learning experience because not all our choices worked as expected.

What would you like to learn about rock gardening? I'd like enough of a general overview to plant a small rock garden in a shady spot. I have a specific spot in mind. But with more knowledge, maybe i will find other good spots.

Do you have a gardening challenge? Pine woods were removed to build houses on our street back in 1960. The soil remains acid, which made it nigh impossible to grow vegetables like a good suburbanite. I'm keeping an eye out for other plants that would like a sweeter soil, and may try again one day (after lime).

Lasting Impressions offers fun and creative workshop opportunities for your group.

Led by Beth Jimenez and Amelia Lane, partners.

Trough and Birdbath workshops: Saturday, March 25 and Saturday, June 17.

You can also plan a date that works for your own group.

Get together a group of friends or members of your club, minimum of 6 and maximum of 12.

We offer three different workshops:

a Hypertufa Trough workshop, a Hypertufa Birdbath Workshop, and a Concrete Leaf workshop.

Hypertufa Trough Workshop: Create your own stone like planting container. You put together a reusable form, mix the ingredients, and build a hypertufa planting trough. It is a lightweight concrete product that has excellent drainage for your special plants. All materials are supplied. Cost is \$95.

Hypertufa Birdbath Workshop: Create a contemporary style hypertufa birdbath approximately 14" square with a shallow area perfect for your feathered friends. You will mix the ingredients, shape the birdbath with a reusable mold, and take your birdbath home that day. All materials are supplied. Cost is \$85.

Concrete Leaf Workshop: Using a real leaf, you create a one of a kind concrete leaf to decorate your home or garden. All the details and veins of the leaf will be captured in your creation. You will learn molding techniques, mix the ingredients, and cast your unique leaf to take home. All materials are supplied. Cost is \$80.

For a more information about any of these workshops, please contact Amelia Lane
@ amelia.lane@gmail.com

To all Piedmont Chapter members – a personal message from Jim Hollister, Plant Sale Manager

Hello fellow members.

As I write this, it is just gorgeous outside, and that is where I would like to be, but first I want to remind everyone of our big event coming up. We will again participate in Raulston Blooms, selling the fantastic plants provided by our members... YOU!

This is a fun event. A wonderful opportunity to get some great plants, meet people, learn something new and of course make some money so that we can continue to have interesting speakers and help support our beloved JCRA. Here is what I would like YOU to do right now:

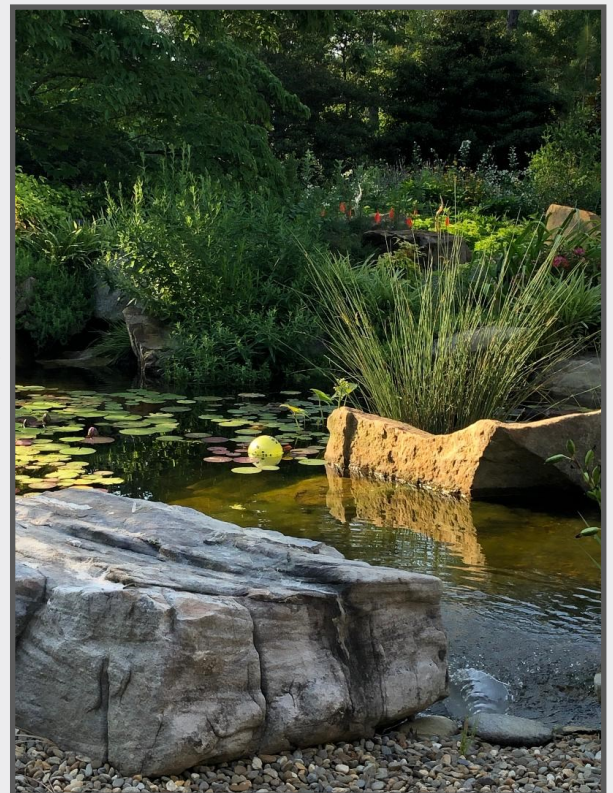
- 1) Block off time on your calendars. Block off the afternoon of Friday April 28 to bring your plants to the arboretum (exact time will be determined as we get closer to the event). While you are at it block off Saturday for Raulston Blooms.
- 2) Start potting up some of those beauties from your gardens now so they look nice and healthy for the sale. People ask what kind of plants we want... The simple answer is, "if you like it in your garden, we want it so we can share your joy with others)
- 3) Think about volunteering for the sale. It is actually a lot of fun meeting people and talking about plants.

That's all for now. Jim

May 6 Spring Picnic—Sunny Mount, Southern Pines

This is a brief, altered excerpt from an article by Kyle Sonnenberg that will be featured in a special issue of the Trilium, coming in April. To tempt you and to encourage you to put it on your calendar, here's a bit in advance.

The gardens at Sunny Mount comprise approximately 1 acre of the seven acre property owned by Kyle and Mary Sonnenburg. A quarter-mile road encloses the principal areas under cultivation. You can anticipate seeing mixed beds of exotic shrubs and perennials which extend from the parking area to and along the front of the house. The front gardens feature several sculptures. There are 10 trough gardens, a goldfish pond, a 3000-gallon pond containing water lilies and golden orfes. You'll enjoy a bog bed and a variety of waterfalls and much, much more.





NARGS Piedmont Chapter Meeting

McSwain Center at the Raulston Arboretum

10:00 a.m.

March 18, 2023

Todd Boland

Memorial Univ. of NF Bot. Garden
NARGS Traveling Speaker
St. John's, Newfoundland

**“Spring Alpines of the
Spanish Argonian Pyrenees”**

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THE TRILLIUM

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Plant Sale Manager: Tim Alderton
Plant Sale Chair: Jim Hollister

Message from the Chair

Cyndy Cromwell

It's hard to believe that this is my final message! A new slate of officers and board members will be announced in March and voted on at the April meeting. We'll be welcoming an exciting lineup of new and seasoned chapter members to continue bringing you great programs, plant sales, workshops and field trips.

I was so blessed to work with a hardworking and talented board the last four years, including the late Bobby Wilder, Bobby Ward, David White, Amelia Lane, the late Ralph Whisnant, Charlie Kidder, Elsa Liner, Jim Hollister, Tim Alderton and Marian Stephenson. I am so grateful for all they did for our chapter, especially during the long months of covid restrictions. I'll still be involved, taking on the role of treasurer, to succeed David White, who has done a magnificent job of keeping our books up to snuff for many years.

In the meantime, there's a busy spring ahead! In March we are thrilled to host NARGS traveling speaker Todd Boland from MUN Botanic Garden in Newfoundland, speaking on wildflowers in the Spanish Pyrenees. In April, we round out JCRA programs with a very exciting program on design by Charlotte, NC superstar Jay Sifford. In between, there's a Fern Table workshop, botanizing at White Pine Nature Preserve and our big Plant Sale fundraiser at JCRA's Raulston Blooms event. And, oh yes, the May Picnic at the Sonnenbergs' Sunny Mount Garden to cap things off. Mark your calendars and buckle in for a busy spring!

Piedmont NARGS Speakers Spring 2023

March 18, 2023

Todd Boland

Memorial Univ. of NF Bot. Garden
NARGS Traveling Speaker
St. John's, Newfoundland
Topic: "Spring Alpines of the Spanish Argonian Pyrenees"

March 25, 2023

Tim Alderton

Spring Botanizing Trip to White Pines
Nature Preserve, Chatham County, N.C.

April 15, 2023

Jay Sifford

Landscape Designer
Davidson, N.C.
Topic: "Making Garden Magic: Designing Gardening Spaces"

Saturday, May 6, 2023

Spring Picnic
Rain date May 7

**Kyle and Mary Sonnenberg garden
"Sunny Mount"**

Southern Pines, N.C. — Look for April issue of Trillium featuring Sunny Mount!

Membership Form

Piedmont Chapter—NARGS

Membership year is from July 1 to June 30

Membership Options: Individual: \$15
Circle one. Household: \$20

Name: _____

Second person name: _____

Street _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Make Check payable to: **Piedmont Chapter, NARGS**

Mail to : **David White, 3 Ontario Court, Durham, NC 27713**

Visit <https://www.piedmontnargs.org/> to learn more about the Piedmont Chapter

Save the Date, Saturday, April 22, 2023!!

**Lasting Impressions' is having our
17th Open Garden, Art & Plant Sale**

Join us at 4904 Hermitage Dr., Raleigh,
9am-4pm, rain or shine.

Mark your calendar, come enjoy the spring garden,
15 local artisans, and lots of great plants!

Beth Jimenez & Amelia Lane, partners
Lasting Impressions