

The Trillium

Piedmont Chapter
North American Rock Garden Society
Chapel Hill, Durham, Raleigh, NC
www.facebook.com/piedmontchapterNARGS

Elizabeth Lawrence, A Joy to Read

By Doug Ruhren

For close to 40 years I have been blaming Elizabeth Lawrence for how little I have written about my first love, gardening. I do not think it an exaggeration to say that her writing is perfect. How could I possibly write anything of value compared to her work? So, I might as well blame her for how much I have struggled to write this little article. Though, I think I am also struggling to know where to start, she wrote on such a broad range of topics and in such depth.

So, I decided that I would allow her first book, “A Southern Garden”, to open where it chose and then I would read the first paragraph my eyes lit upon. The following is from page 184 in the 1991 edition:

Although Viburnum tomentosum prefers a rich moist soil, it is not so sensitive to drought as I have implied, and if it does begin to droop is worthy of a good soaking. It is more than worthy, for it is one of the most beautiful of flowering shrubs. The variety mariesii is superior to the type in flower and in fruit; the sterile form is the least attractive.

Let me unpack this brief, 3 sentence long paragraph. Clearly here is a person writing from her own presumably hard-earned experience; an armchair garden writer she is not. One learns of this viburnum’s cultural requirements: “rich moist soil.” She clearly states her opinion that “it is one of the most beautiful of flowering shrubs.” And that the “sterile form is the least attractive.” The sterile form being the type commonly known as snowball viburnum.

As a gardener I value another gardener’s opinions. They can more strongly influence my decision whether to grow a particular plant than a botanical description ever could. It doesn’t mean that I always agree. I sort-of like those snowball viburnums. They are, if not sublimely elegant, whimsical.

Ok, I’ve sliced and diced the information in the quoted paragraph, but now go back and read it once again. There is not one unnecessary word. One sentence effortlessly flows into the next. It is concise and complete. One does not need to know what paragraph preceded or followed it. It reads as elegantly and sounds as beautiful as poetry. For this reason, I freely and highly recommend the writings of Elizabeth Lawrence to anyone who enjoys a good read, yes even to nongardeners.

The completeness of this one paragraph also suggests that if it is true that people don’t read long form literature anymore that one could read just a paragraph from Miss Lawrence’s writing and be both educated, inspired and delighted. This idea occurred to me a month or two ago, so, “A Southern Garden” at hand, I again allowed to book to open where it would and read one paragraph. I repeated this 4 more times and each time the paragraph satisfied. Not the whole box of chocolates, but each time, one perfect morsel.

Edith Eddleman and I are thankful that the NARG Piedmont Chapter is giving us a chance to talk about Elizabeth Lawrence, her many books and other writing, and why she is still relevant today. ❧





An Afternoon at Bigu Tianchi, Yunnan, China

By Nancy Doubrava and Cyndy Cromwell

In June of 2018, Piedmont Chapter members Nancy Doubrava and Cyndy Cromwell traveled to Yunnan, China, on a NARGS sponsored trip, led by Denver Botanic Gardens' Panayoti Kelaidis.

In three weeks of botanizing, thousands of taxa were identified by a group of formidable horticulturists, including *Primula* expert Matt Mattus, woody plant specialists Michael Dodge and Jeff Wagner, and all rounders Scotty Smith and Panayoti Kelaidis. It was a privilege to travel in such rarefied company to the amazing Himalayan habitats of numerous rare and endemic plants. A particularly rewarding aspect of the trip came in encounters with people from various ethnic groups who populate this part of China. What follows are descriptions of the plants and people encountered in one wonderful afternoon.

Plants of Tianchi Lake

By Cyndy Cromwell



Rhododendron telmatium

Our visit to Tianchi began with lunch on a hillside overlooking the natural alpine lake, halfway up Bogda Peak. We nestled in among the low growing, intensely purple *Rhododendron telmatium* for refueling, then scattered in small groups to explore the plants growing here at 3850 meters (12,631 ft) elevation.

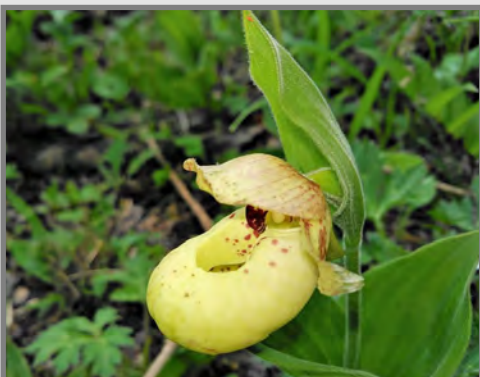


**Scotty Smith with
*Rhododendron wardii***

Woody plant lovers, like my friend Scotty Smith, dove straight into the tall thickets of butter yellow *Rhododendron wardii* on adjacent slopes. Here too, we saw numerous *Fritillaria cirrhosa*, dusky purple with rich golden centers, dotted singly around the Rhododendrons' skirts. *Cypripedium flavum* were also in evidence, clinging to the tops of steep inclines.



Fritillaria cirrhosa



Cypripedium flavum

Soon enough, the lakeside stands of *Rheum* and *Primula* beckoned even the woody plant specialists. The combination of tall, bright magenta *Primula secundiflora* with the lower growing, soft yellow *Primula sikkimensis* was stunning; it made a wonderful backdrop for a NARGS promotional interview of tour leader Panayoti Kelaidis by past NARGS President Matt Mattus, with Jeff Wagner filming.



Primula secundiflora



Rheum alexandrae with
Primula secundiflora



Rheum alexandrae with
Primula sikkimensis



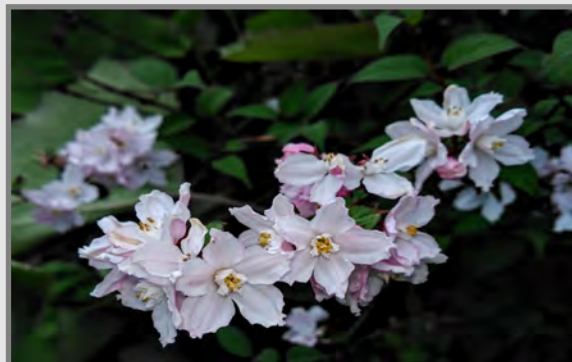
Matt Mattus with
Megacodon
stylophorus (syn.
Gentiana stylophora)



Matt Mattus with
Megacodon
stylophorus (syn.
Gentiana stylophora)



Derry Watkins with *Megacodon*
stylophorus (syn.
Gentiana stylophora)



Deutzia glomeruliflora

In contrast to the *Rheum nobile* we would see later, high in the scree of Baimashan, *Rheum alexandrae* flourished here in standing water. We were able to see the plant in various stages of growth, from early rosette to full bloom, topping out at about 30 inches tall.

Heading back up from the water's edge, we saw two more wonderful plants. First, a three-foot, green flowered *Megacodon stylophorus* (syn. *Gentiana stylophora*) delighted us all, especially UK nursery owner Derry Watkins and Matt Mattus. Finally, a gorgeous *Deutzia glomeruliflora* capped off a typical, highlight-filled day on this magical visit to Yunnan. 🌸



Rheum alexandrae

Tianchi Lake Snapshot – A Yak Butter Tea Party

By Nancy Doubrava

Unspoiled Tianchi lake (elevation 3850m) in northern Yunnan Province could always be counted on for its natural beauty and botanical treasures. Little did we know that the beauty of our visit today would be found in an unexpected encounter.

We arrived after traveling all morning by jeeps from Shangri-La. After a quick picnic lunch we charged off to botanize in the fresh air under clear blue skies. As we approached the lake, the flooded terrain became tricky to navigate, and my boots were soon soaking wet and caked with mud. The wind had picked up and the temperature had dropped when I

crossed paths with Cyndy Cromwell, who had also landed in the mud. We

agreed to head back to the jeeps to dry out and warm up. As we were wondering exactly which direction to head, our Chinese guide, Peter, emerged from the forest, and directed us back toward the access road.

Cyndy and I hiked back to the warm, dry jeeps, only to find they were locked. No one was around except a colorfully dressed Tibetan woman watching us. She had a friendly smile and insisted that we follow her. Soon

we were sitting next to a warm, wood stove, pulling off our wet boots in the shelter she shared with her sister. A large iron pot of tea leaves was boiling, and potatoes cooked on the stove. Smiling was the only language we shared.

Our Chinese guide Peter arrived to translate for us. The sisters were in their late fifties and wanted to know our ages. Peter shared a book with pictures of the plants growing nearby. The rest of our cold, wet group joined us, and it was time for tea.

We were offered a traditional Tibetan drink, a warm cup of yak butter tea. It's made from well boiled tea leaves, salt, and fresh yak butter that are combined in a special butter churn. It gives an instant energy boost from its high caffeine content, natural fats, and oils. The sisters expected nothing in return. They know happiness follows simple acts of kindness. With large smiles, they watched us enjoy our creamy cups of tea. ☺



Tianchi Lake in Yunnan

Photo by Nancy Doubrava



Photo by Matt Mathus



One of the Tibetan sisters

Photo by Terry Humphries



Two sisters pouring yak butter tea

Photo by Matt Mathus



Photo by Marcela Ferreyra

Yak butter tea party is underway (left to right: Panayoti Kelaidis, Derry Watkins, and Al Gerace)



Al Gerace sipping creamy yak butter tea

Photo by Matt Mathus



The Salvia Doctor Has Left the Greenhouse

by Tony Avent

It is with a heavy heart that we share news of the passing of our friend Richard Dufresne (pronounced Doofrane), 75, who passed away this month at his home in Candor, North Carolina. Rich was truly a one of a kind...a 1972 graduate of Carnegie Mellon with a PhD in chemistry. After graduation, Rich did the post-doc shuffle, first at Johns Hopkins, then Brandeis University, and finally UMass, before signing on with Lorillard Tobacco Company in North Carolina as a flavor chemist. There, he researched organic chemical compounds to flavor tobacco. What else could you do with three post docs and a PhD thesis, titled, *Thermal cyclizations of 3-(2-arylhydrazino)-3-pyrroline derivatives: a study of the Fischer indole synthesis?*

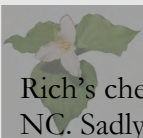
Rich was a regular at our nursery and garden, where we both benefited from the mutual exchange of plants and information. When Rich last visited us about eight weeks ago, it was obvious to us that we were seeing him for the last time. His health had deteriorated due to a cascade of medical issues and a lifetime of less than healthy eating. His XXL clothes were now tightly strapped to a frail frame that was only a shadow of the Rich we'd seen earlier in the year.

I first met Rich in the mid 1980s at a North American Rock Garden Society meeting, where he was extolling the virtues of the salvias he'd brought for show and tell. Rich would always drive the meeting organizers nuts since he had no "off switch" or ability to read social cues. Rich was ridiculously brilliant, had an un-



quenchable passion for salvias and their relatives, but also had a uniquely wired brain that left him only marginally functional in society.

What Rich did so well was to connect people with plants and other plant people. He used every form of communication possible to share knowledge far and wide, including his website, WorldofSalvias.com. Rich has done more for the world of ornamental salvias worldwide than probably anyone in the last century. His early introductions like Salvia 'Marashino', Salvia 'Dark Dancer', Agastache 'Tutti Fruitti', and others were the first hybrid clones in both genera that started a horticultural revolution.



Rich's chemistry job allowed him to buy a house, start a garden, and a small backyard nursery in nearby Greensboro, NC. Sadly, in the mid-1990s, Rich was dismissed from his chemistry job, due to his remarkable inability to complete even the most basic tasks or focus on anything for a meaningful period of time. Shortly after losing his job, Rich also lost his house, garden, and greenhouse since, despite not working, he couldn't manage to find time to file for unemployment benefits, until he was hauled to the Unemployment office by friends. Because of his mental health issues dealing with focus, Richard would never be able to find another job, despite the best efforts of friends who tried to help.

To try and make ends meet, Rich would propagate an array of salvias and drive cross country to sell them at plant fairs, despite losing money simply traveling to each event. In many ways, despite his brilliance, Rich was like a naive child who needed protecting from both himself and others. Were it not for the kindness of a plethora of friends who kept Richard supported financially, there's little doubt he would have been homeless, instead of living in the marginally habitable houses he inhabited during the later years of his life.

Despite being perpetually followed by black clouds, (no rubber left on his tires when he tried to run errands, getting mistaken for a drug dealer and put in jail briefly last fall because of his license plate "Salvia", and only recently taking a financial hit after falling prey to one of the prevalent Social Security phone scams, Rich was the eternal optimist. Even during his last visit, he was so excited about his ambitious plans for the upcoming year during his recent visit. True to the end, he managed to bring a new salvia to share, which is now flowering in his memory.

Rich was not only incredibly kind, but passionate about sharing, and his legacy will live on through all the plants and information he shared. We will continue to keep his WorldofSalvia.com site alive as an informational archive and tribute to this great plantsman.

Thankfully, a year ago, Rich was finally honored by the North American Rock Garden Society with the Marcel LePiniac Award at its national meeting. It was our honor to know Rich for 30+ years, so thank you my friend for all you did...life well lived! ♡

Awards and Recognition

Tony Avent, class of '78, was one of 17 NC State alumni receiving a 2018 College Distinguished Alumni Award at the black tie dinner on November 1st at the Annual Evening of the Stars Gala. Tony was honored for his many contributions to horticultural research and advancement by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, of which the Department of Horticultural Sciences is a part.

Cyndy Cromwell has been nominated to the Board of Directors of NARGS for a three-year term beginning May 2019. The election will be held in April 2019.



Photo by Bobby Ward

Plant Portrait: Winter Blooming Iris

by David White

I first encountered *Iris unguicularis* (aka, Algerian iris) roughly 20 years ago and was fascinated by the idea of growing a winter-blooming iris. I was told that it preferred a dry, sunny location and planted it in the driest, sunniest place in our yard and marveled at how it produced several flowers during each warm spell from mid-January thru mid-February. The 2" high flowers sit atop a 2-4" long stalk and are deep purple with a white throat and yellow markings. The leaves are 6-12" long, 1/4" wide, and form a small (<12" diameter) evergreen clump. I enjoyed the novelty of having a winter flowering iris, and was impressed that it survived with little or no attention. Although referred to as Algerian iris, its native range extends from Algeria to Syria.



***Iris unguicularis*
'Dazzling Eyes'**

About 15 years ago, Joann Currier brought *Iris lazica* (which she referred to as Black Sea iris) to a Piedmont Chapter meeting. She said it was from northeastern Turkey and was related to unguicularis, but did have much guidance on where it should be planted. I planted it in a sunny dry location near the clump of unguicularis. It doesn't get as much attention from gardeners because it doesn't bloom until late March and has to compete lots of other spring-blooming plants. Its light lavender



Iris lazica

blooms are roughly the same size as unguicularis, but leaves are much wider (3/4"). About a year ago, I read that it prefers afternoon shade and more soil moisture, so I divided the clump and have moved the divisions to shadier locations in our yard. I have seen it referred to *Iris unguicularis* ssp. *lazica*, but it is now officially classified as a separate species.

Both of these iris are suitable for rock gardens in the Piedmont region. The literature says they grow best in alkaline soil, but mine have persisted for 20 years in slightly acid soil (pH 6.0-6.5). Plant Delights sells several cultivars of *I. unguicularis* as well as *I. lazica*. Arrowhead Alpines sells *I. unguicularis* spp. *cretensis*, which is a smaller form of unguicularis that is native to Crete and southern Greece. Its leaves are shorter (6" long) and thinner (1/8" wide) than unguicularis. ❧

Introducing Long-time Piedmont Chapter Member

Bobby Wilder

Provided by Cyndy Cromwell

Bobby Wilder has been part of the Piedmont Chapter from the beginning, attending the first meeting in 1985 in Chapel Hill. For 33 years Bobby has served in a variety of positions, including Chair, and as Treasurer from 1994 until 2015. Members know him as a zealous guardian of the nametags, spending countless hours to keep them and our member database up to snuff.



Bobby hosted chapter members in preparing seed packets for worldwide distribution in 2016, a project that extended over many weeks, and frequently opens his home to out of town speakers visiting our chapter.

On the national level, Bobby has served on the NARGS Board of Directors, acting as treasurer for three AGM's and two study weekends.

Bobby taught math and science in Raleigh public schools from 1959 to 1967, when he left teaching and began a framing business in his East Raleigh home. Over the years he has gardened in the country, on thirty acres on Optimist Farm Road, then in the city, on three acres on Dixie trail in Raleigh, and now much less, in a town home in Raleigh. He says he considers the Arboretum his garden now!

Travel takes up a lot of Bobby's time. In 1964, with his partner Jack, there was a three month, 10,000 mile adventure through Europe in a VW Microbus, shipped over for them. They began in London, ranging up through Scandinavia and all the way to Greece, with Jack's nephew and his fraternity brothers along for the ride. Though Jack sadly passed away in 2000, Bobby is still up for an adventure: cruises to Scandinavia and China are planned for 2019! ❧

Photos from Plant Delights Nursery online catalog

Another Long-time Member

Viv Finkelstein

I've been a member of the Piedmont chapter since a few years after Sandra Ladendorf, Nancy Goodwin and Edith Boyer founded the group at the NC Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill in the early 1980's. I enjoy our local meetings because of the interesting speakers we are able to engage, largely because Bobby Ward knows so many people in the gardening community in the US and in Europe. I have never joined the national NARGS, but I served for a few years on the local chapter board, and I like to help with the seed exchange when our chapter is involved.



My own yard can hardly be called a garden; it is rather a collection of plants, trees present when we moved to the forested lot in 1978, but mostly treasures acquired as gifts for being a member and volunteer at the Raulston Arboretum since 1980. What herds of deer don't eat, we prune and enjoy.

I spent 5 years in the 1980s as a Master Gardener volunteer in Wake County, and I have both taken and audited horticulture classes at NCSU and at the Arboretum, but I have probably learned the most by hanging around knowledgeable Raulston Arboretum staff and speakers for the past 38 years.

In my working life, I have been a French teacher, a computer programmer, and a library reference and information person, but I enjoy retirement more than any paid job I ever had. I volunteer at Rex Hospital once a week in the library, and often in the Arboretum Visitor Center. I sang for 22 years in two Renaissance consorts, and still do sing in the St Timothy's church choir.

My favorite pastime is reading, and I belong to a congenial group of women called the Weed Read and Feed book club. My husband and I travel at least once a year to someplace distant where we can hike and sightsee, and so he can indulge his absorbing photography hobby. A few shots from recent adventures can be seen at petefinkelsteinphotos.me 🐾

New Member Profile: Jerry Yu

Meet the newest, and youngest, member of the Piedmont Chapter, Jerry Yu, who was happy to respond to our questions!

What is a plant you love? What is a plant you hate? Love:

If I had to choose a favorite plant, I would have to be *Stachys byzantina*, or lambs ears. This is not only because of its aesthetic reasons, but also because of its durability. I didn't spend a penny on the clone of Lambs ears that I have. Instead, I picked up 1 sprig of the plant off the driveway of a neighbor's yard 3 years ago. The bottom of this sprig had rotted out but rooted easily. Over the years, this one piece of lambs' ears has multiplied into over 20 clumps in my yard. It acts as a foolproof all-season edger and pairs well with most things. It thrives in pure unmended clay soils and improves the quality of the soil beneath it. It is easily propagated by division and spreads, but not in an invasive way.



Hate: The one plant I cannot stand is Virginia buttonweed (*Diodia virginiana*). It is a creeping, mat forming perennial that creates mounds of plant in unweeded areas of my garden. The tap roots are extensive and buried up to 2 feet in the soil. They are super brittle and break at the slightest pull. The plant seeds insanely - so many. SEEDS. It makes garden expansion a huge pain. Buttonweed, along with my terrible lawn grass are the 2 most severe weeds of my yard.

What is your preference for labeling in your own garden?

HA! There's not much labeling in my garden at all. I try to label, but it is very low in my list of priorities. I also lack experience in this field, so I have yet to move beyond sharpie on window blinds (the ink fades quickly and that's demotivating). I do use Airtable to keep a database of my plants online although it is very outdated. That being said, if anyone has advice on cheap permanent labeling systems, I'm all ears (maybe a better ink for my window blind labels).

If you had to choose, woody or herbaceous plants? I would definitely go for herbaceous plants. The reasons are economic for the most part. Herbaceous plants are usually cheaper.

What do you like best about NARGS? The opportunity to talk with likeminded people more experienced in horticulture than I am. Also, the seed exchange.

One thing I wish the chapter would do... I feel as if the chapter does most things I would like. The most I might ask for is maybe an inventory of alpine plants that have been successful in this climate so that it would be easier to narrow down the list of plants from the seed exchange. That and maybe a local seed exchange so that heat and humidity tolerant forms could be spread. *Continued on page 9.*

Continued from page 8.

Something people might be surprised to know about you or your garden. My goal for my gardening career is to grow 1% of the 391,000 species of vascular plants on earth, as well as to create most of the habitats of the earth to the best of my ability. I already have desert, bog, and swamp areas of my garden in addition to my regular borders. I have always liked nature ever since I was a child. This is because my parents sat me in front of the TV and made me watch nature documentaries while they were at work in China in an effort to make me learn English. Since plants were what I could control, I gravitated to them.

What are your aspirations? I plan to do my undergrad in a horticulture or plant science field, go to medical school, and combine the expertise in my career. I would like to grow my own medicine please! ❧

Announcement

Amelia Lane, Piedmont Chapter Chair

Some of our members have asked about other organizations that have seed exchanges, so we are attempting to put together a list that will offer many options for seeds. This is the beginning of a list of Seed Exchanges:

hardyplant.org

alpinegardensociety.net

srgc.net Scottish Rock Garden Club

NARGS.org

Please send me others that you may be aware of. We can include a list in the next Trillium.

Additionally, if you have other ideas of garden related info that you think would be of interest to our members, please let me know. ❧

Piedmont Chapter Members Pack Seeds for the 2019 NARGS Seed Ex

Chapter Volunteers at Work

Marilyn Golightly	Bobby Ward
Ralph Whisnant	Anne Porter
Neal Sasser	Val Lorenz
Sandy Horn	Jane Sundin
Maurice Farrier	Charlie Kidder
Vivian Finkelstein	Marilyn Miller
Jim Hollister	Meriel Brodie
Bobby Wilder	Marty Howard
Amelia Lane	Richard Lane



Photos by Amelia Lane and Bobby Ward.



Piedmont Picnic at Plant Delights Nursery & Juniper Level Botanic Garden

By Bobby J. Ward

The Piedmont Chapter held a potluck picnic lunch at Juniper Level Botanic Garden & Plant Delights Nursery on Saturday, October 20, 2018, hosted by owner Tony Avent and Jeremy Schmidt, JLBG Research and Grounds Supervisor. Before lunch, they toured chapter members around the continuing installation of the crevice garden. We also saw the hypertufa trough collection that lines the crevice perimeter; they were built during a workshop that Amelia Lane taught to JLBG staff.

Jeremy, who heads up the crevice garden design and construction, explained that the idea came from Kenton Seth's installation of the small crevice garden at the JC Raulston Arboretum, which was sponsored by our chapter in 2014. Because there were a number of old concrete slabs available from a house renovation next to Tony's property, he decided to repurpose them for an urbanite crevice garden ("urbanite" is the term for waste concrete from demolition sites).

Jeremy and Tony said that they've installed about 1200 taxa of plants in the crevices since the beginning of the project in January 2017.



Photo by Kirt Cox



Photo by Bobby Ward

Currently, there are nearly 900 of those still living, with some 350 having survived over one year.

Jeremy and Tony told members instructive and often amusing anecdotes of setbacks, mistakes, and learned lessons. For example, the extreme cold weather in January 2018 led to a valuable discovery. At Juniper Level, the temperature remained below freezing for 200 consecutive hours. Many plants were killed, but many survived. Jeremy found that the temperature of the top six inches of the crevices was colder by at least five Fahrenheit degrees than the compost below. He had assumed that the tons of concrete would provide a warm microclimate, but the opposite was true, resulting in many succulent plants being lost because their roots froze.

One clever design element is the way the path to the crevice garden slowly reveals its magnitude. Walking down from the Botanic Garden entrance, visitors first come upon a small raised bed of slabs

which are reminiscent of the one at the JCRA; it was the first section of the crevice garden that Jeremy installed. Although beautifully done, it gives no hint of what lies a few steps further around the corner: about a 300-foot-long expanse of huge slabs embedded in eight-foot-high slopes. Even in its current unfinished state, the crevice garden is JLBG's most impressive component yet. The intended length is 415 linear feet with an estimated 350,000 pounds of concrete. At completion, there will be six water features.

After the tour, members visited other parts of the garden and purchased plants, and then gathered for lunch in the main house. Sadly, for many members, it was the last time they saw Piedmont Chapter member Richard Dufresne, who died in early December 2018 [see separate memorial by Tony Avent on page 5].



Photo by Kirt Cox



Photo by Bobby Ward

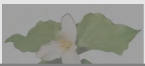


Photo by Kirt Cox



Photo by Kirt Cox

The Piedmont Chapter thanks Tony, Jeremy, and the PDN and JLBG staff who assisted us at our tour and picnic. ☞



Photo by Kirt Cox

Volunteers Needed for Rich Dufresne Archives

Tony Avent and the JC Raulston Arboretum have acquired the belongings of Richard Dufresne, including plant scans, papers, floppy discs, CDs, zip drives, and other plant material.

The goal is to make these items available to the public in a digital format. Tony plans to keep Richard's website, WorldofSalvias.com, alive as an information archive.

Volunteers are needed to help catalog and inventory the materials from Richard's estate.

If you are interested in helping, contact:
Amanda Wilkins, Juniper Level's garden curator,
amanda.wilkins@plantdelights.com.

Thank you in advance!

Piedmont NARGS Speakers Winter and Spring 2019

Feb. 9, 2019

Cyndy Cromwell and Nancy Doubrava
Raleigh, N.C.

**"Botany and Horticulture of Yunnan,
China"**

Mar. 16, 2019

Jeremy Schmidt

JLBG Research and Grounds Supervisor
Plant Delights Nursery
Raleigh, N.C.

"Trillium Hunting in the Southeast"

Apr. 27, 2019 (**note date change**)

Jane McGary

Past Editor, *NARGS Rock Garden Quarterly*
"Bulbs in Their Habitats"
Milwaukie, Ore.

Member Tips

By Cyndy Cromwell

Here are a few random thoughts I had while doing the late fall-into-winter tasks of repotting and organizing tools. I know many of you have such random thoughts – please share!

Root pruning: you may already do this, if you have tender plants that want to out-grow any reasonably sized container, like my crocodile fern, *Microsorium musifolium* 'Crocydylus'. I read somewhere that up to a third of roots can be removed when repotting. I doubt anyone has done a controlled study of this protocol, but it's a good rule of thumb, I think. Add fresh potting mix to replace the rooty stuff, water well, and the wannabe giant will get over it and behave, for a while anyway.



Clay pots for Begonias: I learned this from the geniuses at Logee's in Danielson, CT. Begonias need open soil that can breathe, so pot in light soil – I add tons of perlite – in clay. Then let that soil dry out before watering again. Even finicky Begonias 'Escargot' and 'Palomar Prince' do fine with this treatment.

Sheep Shears: These operate by squeezing and have super-long, sharp blades. They are the best for cutting back herbaceous plants that have finished. Available very cheaply at Amazon.



Mora Insulation knife: A bit scary, but the best for dividing enormous hosta roots, as well as a lot of other gardening jobs. Twenty inches long, with a wide, fourteen inch, sharp and pointy blade, use this when that Hori-Hori knife isn't enough. I got mine long ago from a friend in Connecticut, and recently discovered that Knifeworks.com sells this Swedish import at a very reasonable price! ✂



Plant Portrait: *Impatiens capensis*

By C. J. Dykes

Common name: Jewel Weed

Habitat: Native, lowland, streamside plant growing in moist woodlands in most of the Southeast. Spreads by seed which are dispersed when the seed pods pop open and scatter them. Close relative to the much loved Bizzy Lizzy Impatiens that many people plant as annual bedding plants and *Impatiens balsamina* or Annual Balsam that is a striking annual old fashioned garden plant also spreading by seed pods that pop and throw the seed. You will have hundreds of seedlings that germinate and are up above ground in February usually, they can be pulled easily and moved to other moist locations in full sun or total shade or you can share them with your gardening buds if either potted or transplanted immediately, if they dry out they are dead.

Medicinal uses: the fluid in the leaves and stems has been used to keep mosquitoes at bay when rubbed on exposed skin areas. ✂





NARGS Piedmont Chapter Meeting

JC Raulston Arboretum

9:30 Gathering Time 10 am Program Begins

January 19, 2019

Elizabeth Lawrence and Her Influence on Southern Gardening

Doug Ruhren and Edith Eddleman

Goodies to Share



Jan J—Me Sept A—C

Feb Mi—P Oct D—Fi

March R—T Nov Fi—H

April W—Z

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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David White, Treas.

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Cyndy Cromwell

Kirt Cox

Ralph Whisnant

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Marian Stephenson

Bobby Wilder, Distribution Manager

Bobby Ward, Quality Review Editor

OTHER SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS:

Plant Sale Manager: Charlie Kidder

Refreshments: Maurice Farrier

Message from the Chair

Amelia Lane, Chair Piedmont Chapter NARGS

Well I got my wish, the humidity and mosquitos are gone for the year!! It's true, now you have to work a little harder to stay warm outside, but I love fall and winter in the garden. The trees and especially the Japanese maples give us blazing color and the cool season plants brighten up and put on their winter show. Winter is quiet with time to really see our gardens, the forms, the paths, the interesting tree shapes, berries, and bark. Yes, it's another great season in our area!!

There is plenty going on in the Piedmont Chapter. We just finished packing seeds for the NARGS Seed Exchange. We did 200 different seeds and in record time!! If we decide to do this project next year, we should get 300 different seeds so more members can participate. Thank you to the JC Raulston Arboretum for providing the work space for packaging and thank you to our members who diligently separated seeds, refrained from sneezing, and neatly packed those tiny seeds!! If you are a member of NARGS, beginning December 15 you can order seeds online until January 31.

Remember to share one of your favorite plants for a Plant Profile or share a Member Tip on pruning, propagation, labelling, a useful gardening book, etc. for our newsletter, the Trillium. Contact Cyndy Cromwell or Marian Stephenson for more information.

We had our Holiday Gathering on December 16 and had a great time at Amelia's home.

Our next meeting is Saturday, January 19, 2019, with speakers Doug Ruhren and Edith Eddleman. Their topic is "Elizabeth Lawrence and Her Influence on Southern Gardening". If you are not familiar with Ms. Lawrence, please look her up online or find one of her gardening books. I have several that you may borrow.

I hope you have a warm, safe holiday filled with renewed wonder for the beauty that Nature shares with us. Amelia



