



The Trillium

newsletter of
the **Piedmont Chapter** of the
American Rock Garden Society

Vol. 3, No. 3

Chapel Hill-Durham-Raleigh, N.C.

September, 1993

Rocky Mountain High...

Diary from Colorado

by John Dilley

According to Panayoti Kelaidis, Curator of the Alpine Garden at the Denver Botanic Gardens, "Rock gardening is more than simply heaping boulders together and planting a few perennials in their midst. It is the art of cultivating plants from the world's high places and placing them in a natural setting. The art of rock gardening is knowing how to combine mercurial elements so that the final product looks effortless and natural. No art requires more artifice than the art of naturalness."

Monday, June 21—With Panayoti's words still in mind, we arrived in Denver for Rocky Mountain Rendezvous '93—the annual meeting of the American Rock Garden Society. Bob Wilder, Willie Pilkington and I planned to spend three days of our trip west exploring some of the private gardens open to ARGs members before traveling to the meeting and its associated activities in Vail, Colorado.

The climate of mile-high Denver to me appears harsh and dry. It lacks the modifying effects from an adjacent large body of water. Thus temperatures may range from 70 F to 10 F in a day's time. These temperatures may stay low and often kill many ornamental, non-native trees that are not adapted to the extremes. When we arrived, the afternoon temperatures were reaching 90 F but the evenings were a cool mid-50s. This was quite a contrast for us who were leaving behind in North Carolina nights that were in the 70s with uncomfortable humidities.

Every distant view from Denver to the west was of mountains with snow-covered peaks. Even some of the higher-elevation alpine areas "set aside" for the ARGs tours near Vail were closed due to late-season snow. Many of the old, deciduous trees in Denver display long scars on the southern side of their trunks and main branching, indicating that the sap had been active when temperatures dropped rapidly. The arid cool climate forces most of the trees and shrubs to grow much more compact than those I am familiar with in Raleigh.

Continued on Page 2

ARGs Piedmont Chapter Speakers' Program Announced for 1993-1994

Piedmont Chapter Chairman Richard Hartlage has announced plans for our 1993-94 speakers' program. The list of speakers is as follows:

September 18, 1993

Kim Tripp

NCSU Arboretum, Raleigh, NC

"Conifers for the Southern Garden"
and Fall Seedling Sale

October 16, 1993

Don Jacobs

Eco-Gardens, Decatur, GA

"In Search of Fine Garden Plants"

November 20, 1993

Caroline Burgess

Stonecrop, Cold Spring, NY

"Stonecrop and Its Development"

January 15, 1994

Dan Hinkley

Héronswood Nursery, Kingston, WA

"Plants for Woodland Gardens"

March 19, 1994

Nancy Goodwin

Montrose Nursery, Hillsborough, NC

"Hellebores"

All meetings will be held at 10:00 am on a Saturday at the Totten Center of the NC Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill, NC.

Tuesday, June 22—Armed with our copy of the Rocky Mountain Rendezvous Garden Guide prepared by the Colorado host chapter for the ARGS meeting, we decided that the garden of Gwen and Panayoti Kelaidis, probably the definitive rock gardeners of the area, would be our first visit. When we arrived at 8:00 am, Gwen was helping her daughter with violin lessons and not quite ready for “tourists.” Their city lot is small—about 50' x 150 I'd guess—but it is totally packed with rock mounds and alpine plants. The front yard has been replaced with gravel beds and raised berms and is filled with acantholimon, penstemons, and eriogonums spreading over the gravel mulch. Surprisingly to me, the expected blankets of colors folding over each other were not the typical display of alpine flowers in June. As Gwen explained in her article in the winter issue of the ARGS Bulletin, “Clearly the traditional perennial border color-coordination thing couldn't apply to rock gardening. It just isn't practical to plant sweeps of *Gentiana verna* or bunches of *Draba rigida*. Except in the largest rock garden there will be fewer than five individuals of a given plant. It was enough to think of special soil preparations, siting the plants in the perfect microclimate...” Having later that week explored the alpine areas around Vail, one would quickly admit that her design of the front beds had achieved her goal of re-creating the wild diverse, random-based look of the tundra.

Continuing to the rear of their property, we were shown a progression of rock mounds constructed over a number of years. The first was very broad and curved, with the larger rocks stacked to create outcroppings in which were growing *Saxifraga*, *Townsendia*, *Iris*, blue *Phlox*, *Sempervivum*, *Sedum*, and pink *Silene*. Three beds and three years later, Gwen had built each mound progressively higher than the previous. The most recent creations was nearly four feet high and perhaps six to eight feet across. Large rocks were packed flush with the surface, resulting in a very smooth rounded appearance for the mound. As Gwen explained “those plants with long tap roots and requiring excellent drainage were placed at the very top of the mound while those alpinists suited best for cool damp soils were located at the base of the mound.”

The second garden we visited was close by and belonged to Gesa Robeson. It was not totally devoted to alpinists. Familiar perennials were grown along the street, while roses, fruit trees and a large grape arbor filled the rear yard. Later, in the same area, we visited other gardens—each unique with one or more plants grown to perfection. We were envious that the dry climate keeps diseases in check.

In the afternoon, we toured the Denver Botanic Gardens, realizing quickly that one could spend an entire day exploring all the numerous areas and display beds. Huge boulders and high mounds filled the garden (One's view was not over these rock but around them!). Many gravel walkways interlaced the beds of native and exotic plants. The rock garden was divided into smaller areas for meadows, streams, woodlands, scree, moraines, and seeps. Each area was filled with plants best suited for a special microclimate. A jewel of the garden was the Japanese Garden containing a large placid lake, sculptured pines, iris

skillfully placed among rocks, and five young precocious ducklings demanding to be fed.

Wednesday, June 23—Nora Hazen's garden was a last-minute addition to the ARGS tour. Fortunately it was close to the motel and we made an early stop. As we knocked on the door, Bob re-read the flyer which requested no tours till 1:00 pm. But Nora graciously invited us to view the one-half acre lot which has been evolving for 30 years. Towering blue spruce provided a stage setting for a huge perennial border in peak flower. Tom Paine had designed a very impressive display of colors and features. With a lush green lawn and whimsical sculptures to finish the garden picture, the composition was judged by the trio of us Carolinians as “Best All Around Garden.”

Driving further south we arrived at Dick and Ann Bartlett's home. Both guided us through the front rock gardens and Dick showed us the garden in back. Dick admitted that working with rocks is a slow-learning process, and now after toiling for many years, he is redesigning some of his earlier beds. Native plants such as penstemon do well in their garden—if not provided with extra moisture during the summer. Ann is succeeding in growing Hebe and *Raoulia* from New Zealand and Australia.

For lunch we stopped at the Black Angus Restaurant and only a few blocks away was the garden of Sandy and Jim Snyder. In front of the home was a huge rock mound covered with *Oenothera*, alliums, *Iris*, poppies, *Delosperma*, *Arenaria*, and numerous other plants. As we walked to the rear, Sandy pointed to a lawn of buffalo grass in which had been planted large beds of *Iris reticulata* and *Iris danfordiae*, species tulips, and *Galanthus*. Until last spring, the display was a tapestry of blooms; then last winter a fungus destroyed many of the bulbs.

One garden center discovered in that area was Englewood on South Emerson St. The selection of small perennials was excellent and we could not resist buying; fortunately the owner was gracious to hold the purchases until we were ready to leave Denver.

Returning to the Denver Botanic Gardens for the Wednesday afternoon reception, we were excited in renewing old friendships and updating our latest gardening escapades. Touring the garden—this time with knowledgeable guides—I was overwhelmed with the diversity of plants; at this elevation even the color of the flowers and foliage appeared more intense.

Thursday, June 24—We packed the van with intentions of visiting a garden center. We realized that it would not open for another hour so we decided to locate a fast food restaurant for breakfast. We were fortunate to find Goodberry's which is a local restaurant on Wadsworth St. Returning to Etchers Garden Center, we finally explored the greenhouses only to discover that most of the plants were lanky with lush growth and certainly would suffer a setback if exposed to outside growing conditions in North Carolina.

The 100 mile drive to Vail from Denver through mountain passes, tunnels and across the continental divide seemed very short. Pine trees at the lower elevations gave way to more hardy spruce and fir. Snow and ice stilled blanketed the higher slopes and peaks. Arriving in Vail at the Westin Resort, the conference

center for the ARGs, we unloaded the van and plunged into conference activities—plant sales, book displays, artwork, etc. After another reception at the Betty Ford Center and alpine garden, we retired early, exhausted from the altitude change.

Friday, June 25—Due to the previous winter's heavy snowfall, many of the ARGs-scheduled areas for hiking were still impassable. The coordinator for the field trips, Bill Snyder, revised nearly all the conference travel plans for the some 370 people attending the ARGs meeting. Busing to Loveland Pass, we stopped at 11,990 feet elevation and found ourselves in the midst of a bicyclist race. Hundreds of bikers were slowly snaking their way through the pass. Watching their physical exertion as they pedaled up the road one could only ask "Why?" I suspect that when they discovered that we had traveled thousands of miles to hike the slopes only to drop down on all fours just to sniff an alpine forget-me-not, they probably also asked "Why?"

The extreme shortness of all the plants in this alpine tundra is truly fascinating. Above the tree line the slopes appear at first glance to be a barren rocky wasteland. Only after time is it possible to become aware of the diversity of plants growing in the more sheltered areas—not in broad drifts as I anticipated but rather in small, tight clumps that cling for life in this very harsh climate.

Saturday, June 26—We took a field trip to Silverheels Mountain with Panayoti serving as guide. After riding in a van for more than an hour, we stopped at South Park (a broad treeless plateau covering many square miles) to explore for green gentian (*Frasera speciosa*) and for the western paintbrush (*Castilleja occidentalis*). Panayoti explained about the unique symbiotic relationship of a few of these plants. He pointed out that some thrived only when growing next to other species.

Climbing into a 4-wheel drive vehicle, we were warned to buckle up and hold on tight for a rough ride up the mountain. Sandy and Ray Ladendorf (also from North Carolina and who joined us on this outing) and I bounced from one side of the seat to the other as the jeep navigated around ruts and boulders, mud holes, and very precarious slopes through the pine forests. Finally above the tree line we were relieved to reach the hiking area and quickly exited from the vehicles. The area appeared to be similar to Loveland Pass, but this time we realized that a huge diversity of alpinines lay ahead of us. *Mertensia lanceolata* and *Mertensia ciliata*, *Draba crassifolia*, *Pseudocymopterus montanus*, *Oxytropis*, *Lewisia*, and a few *Primula* greeted us.

I was reluctant to leave the mountain slopes even though a conference dinner was planned for the evening back in Vail. While standing in that solitude I watched the clouds and sun play tag across the hills. Gradually I became aware that the entire mountainside was a grand display of alpinines. With the wind ruffling the flowers and with birds singing in the distance, the familiar words, "Rocky Mountain High," had an entirely new meaning to me.

[ARGs Piedmont Chapter Board member John Dilley gardens in Raleigh's Oakwood area.]

Financial Report of Piedmont Chapter of ARGs

by Alan MacIntyre

Through June 30, 1993:

Income	\$3,818.41
Expenses	4,176.63
Balance	\$5,575.38

Did You Receive the Summer Issue of *The Trillium*?

In case you waited patiently at the mail box for the summer issue of *The Trillium* and think that yours wasn't delivered, don't fret; there wasn't one prepared. It was just too darn hot; so I took a vacation from the garden and the computer and cooled it in the Blue Ridge Mountains. What a rock garden!

---bjw

Please Remember:

Last Names beginning with I through N, Bring Refreshments at our September 18, 1993 meeting.

Last Names beginning with O through Z, Bring Refreshments at our October 16, 1993 meeting.

Don't forget the September 18, 1993 Seedling Sale; bring some plants and buy some plants.



Gardens of Chance

by Barbara Scott

Some of my favorite gardens are accidents that occur when plants escape the bounds of someone's yard and end up where conditions suit them. Along the road in front of my house, a clump of 'Thalia' daffodils has washed from a neighbor's yard and found its niche in the wild violets that grow along the ditch bank. In April, the milk-white blooms of the daffodils stand out against the rounded foliage and deep purple color of the violets. And they are a relief from all the vivid yellow daffodils and forsythia that dominate most neighborhoods in spring.

Another wild garden is on a street corner blocks away where untended bamboo fills an easement near a stop sign. In mid-spring, some naturalized *Rosa soulieana* winds through its tall stalks with abundant, simple blooms. In summer, wild grape vines with finely serrated leaves travel up and through the bamboo. And in winter, branches of Christmas honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*) spill from the bamboo to scent the air with warm fragrance.

It seems a perfect combination. Something blooms there in almost every season. The bamboo provides a strong background for the indistinctive foliage of *Lonicera fragrantissima*. The honeysuckle's fragrant blooms draw one's attention and soften the bamboo's vertical lines with the unexpected. Although it is not native to the United States and originates in China, *L. fragrantissima* has spread to enough abandoned corners like the one near my house to be considered a naturalized immigrant. It grows almost anywhere.

It is often noted for its ordinary foliage and lackluster appearance during the months when it doesn't bloom, and some gardeners think its flowers are insignificant. But their fragrance in the dead of winter makes up for any weaknesses. Though simple and undramatic in color, they are delicate trumpets at close range with clear white petals and golden yellow stamens. Sometimes the blooms arrive a few days before Christmas, but often I don't notice them until a few days or even a week or two after December 25. I've smelled blooms encased in ice, and their scent still escapes. They last until late March or early April.

Several plantings grow in my neighborhood, and those that receive high shade seem to have better form and greener foliage than plants in full sun. But sun encourages thicker clusters of bloom on the willowy branches, which lose some of their foliage in winter. Christmas honeysuckle likes cool roots, a slightly acid soil, and some mulch. Plants in such settings have less yellowing and loss of foliage in winter. Too often they stand alone at the corner of someone's yard in full sun, pruned into a rigid globe. From watching it in an untended setting, I've learned that this shrub is best when left to cascade in a casual shape with plants that have more prominent foliage.

I am planting a division in a sheltered area in my front yard that is shaded for part of the day. I will plant an evergreen vine behind it on a bamboo trellis with strong vertical lines. Nearby, some of the *Rosa soulieana* that meanders through the neighborhood already is established. Its fine foliage contrasts

well with the solid roundness of the *Lonicera*'s leaves. I will add something with bronze foliage year-round to provide interest when the Christmas honeysuckle is not in bloom—perhaps a conifer with a soft form.

Along the bank where the 'Thalia' daffodils and violets flourish, orange daylilies appear in summer. They line the sunny side of my street in clumps that have washed and settled from yard-to-yard. They are like the daylilies that grow along railroad tracks with Queen Anne's lace and blue wild chicory. I have been imagining a garden for early summer on the bank centered around the orange daylilies, with something airy and something blue, and whatever else I can think to add from watching the gardens of chance.

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[ARGSPiedmont Chapter board member Barbara Scott gardens in Raleigh, NC]

Piedmont Chapter's Fall Seedling Sale Set for September 18, 1993

by John Dilley

Every September our chapter holds an annual plant sale to promote the exchange of interesting, rare, unusual, and hard to find plants among our chapter members. The sale is also a primary source of revenue for our chapter since the receipts from sale of all plants that are donated by our members go to our treasury.

As a plant contributor, plan to provide a dozen or so choice plant seedlings which would be appreciated by the other members. Plants can be propagated from cuttings, divisions, seeds, or bulbs. Clearly label each pot separately with the correct name. Plants will be priced according to size and rarity—generally between \$0.50 and \$2.00. Those plants which are extremely rare or hard to find may be priced at \$5.00.

Members who contribute plants to the sale will be allowed to choose two plants before the rest of the chapter members are permitted into the sales area. Last year our fall plant sale netted \$654 for our chapter treasury; let's exceed that amount this year. So get busy now and pot up some plants for the sale. Remember, the plant sale will be held on Saturday, September 18, 1993 at the Totten Center at the NC Botanical Garden. It will be held immediately after our speaker's program. *And you must be a currently paid member of our chapter to participate in the sale.*

If you are bringing plants, plan to arrive by 9:30 am so that your plants can be set up and priced. And, most importantly, bring some bags or boxes in which to take home your purchases.

If you have any questions, give me a call at 833-1209.

Farewell Comments from Outgoing Chairman...Bob Wilder

As the fall season and a new year for the Piedmont Chapter approaches, I feel a bit sad. It is, after three years of responsibilities, somewhat difficult for me to separate myself from the office of chairman. I have enjoyed the job even though there were times when it was a burden. I hope that the many hours spent were not in vain. I am sure the chapter will survive and continue to move forward. I do want to thank all the members who have donated their time in all the supporting roles. I challenge all members to get involved in a very active way. The new officers will be calling you for assistance. Don't let them down. For instance in January, 1999, OUR chapter will be hosting the Eastern Winter Study Weekend. Six years will come fast.

At the annual meeting this past June in Vail, CO, I was elected to the Board of Directors of the North American Rock Garden Society. (Note the organization is changing its name to include by reference our very active Canadian chapters.) I look forward in serving at the national level. At Vail, the Rocky Mountain Chapter provided us with a wonderful two days of trekking in the high mountains. Some planned field trips had to be canceled because of the snow pack and closed roads. However, good substitute trips were arranged. Correspondence received since the meeting noted that Vail received another 12 inches of new snow the week after the meeting. If you are ever in Denver, make sure you take advantage of the wonderful private gardens in the area and the easily-reached nearby alpine areas. Of course, make sure you visit the great Rock Alpine Garden at the Denver Botanic Gardens.

The 1994 annual meeting of the (N)ARGS will be held in Asheville on May 6 - 8. I encourage you to join the national organization (See the form for membership in this issue of the newsletter.) I believe you will enjoy the experience and fellowship of the organization's membership. The chapter can still benefit from a \$5 voucher for each new member recruited in the organization. This benefit ends later this fall.

A wonderful speakers' program has been arranged for the coming year. So let's all dig in and make this a year of great progress.

Board Members 1993-1994 Piedmont Chapter of ARGS

Chairman: Richard W. Hartlage, P. O. Box 7477, Durham, NC 27708; telephone (919) 490-9785.

Vice-Chairman: Norman Beal, 2324 New Bern Ave., Raleigh, NC 27610; telephone (919) 231-2167.

Past Chairman: Bob Wilder, 1213 Dixie Trail, Raleigh, NC 27607; telephone (919) 781-2255.

Treasurer: Alan MacIntyre, 900 Stagecoach Rd., Chapel Hill, NC 27514; telephone (919) 968-6868.

Secretary: Barbara Scott, 1321 Chaney Road, Raleigh, NC 27606; telephone (919) 859-6705.

Board Member-at-Large: John Dilley, 611 Boundary St., Raleigh, NC 27604; telephone (919) 833-1209.

The Trillium Newsletter Editor: Bobby J. Ward, 930 Wimbledon Drive, Raleigh, NC 27609; telephone (919) 781-3291.

Piedmont Chapter Positions of Responsibility

Refreshments & Hospitality: Volunteers needed. (Contact Norman Beal or Richard Hartlage to volunteer).

Spring Nurserymen's Sale: Volunteer(s) needed.

Annual Spring Picnic, Seedling Sale & Annual Business Meeting: Saturday, April 23, 1994 at Noon at Norris Post, Creedmoor, NC.

Spring Garden Tour Committee: Volunteer gardens and coordinator(s) needed.

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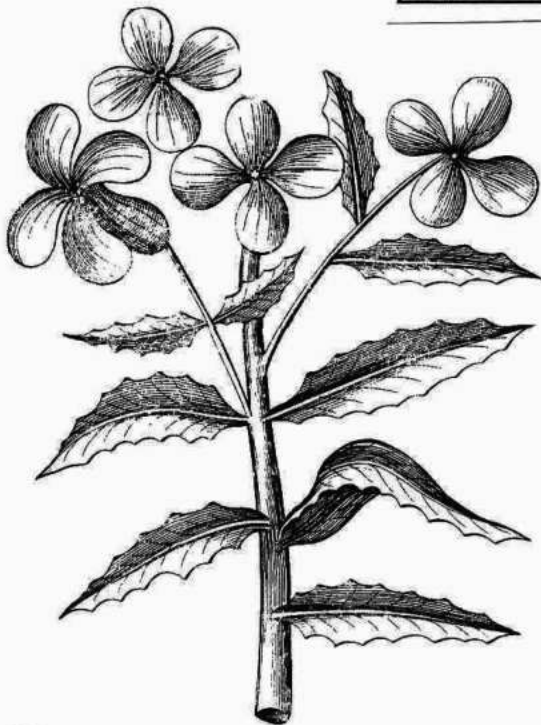


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Later Dates by Appointment
Valerie Tyson 929-6963

From I-40 Exit #263 (New Hope Church Rd), drive west across
Old NC 86 to Borland Rd. Turn right and continue 1.3 miles to
nursery on left. 929-6963

**TWIN
STREAMS**



The Back Page....

Chairman's Comments by Richard Hartlage

As summer comes to a close and we count our blessings that August, so far at least, has been more tolerable than July, our thoughts turn to more varied work in the garden than just dragging a water hose. The Chapter is stronger than ever and we have an exciting year planned speakers from both coasts. We are planning our usual fall seedling sale at our next meeting on September 18, 1993 and we are also adding another seedling sale for members in the spring at our annual spring picnic on Saturday, April 23, 1994 at Norris Post's garden in Creedmoor. The spring picnic is being held a month earlier next year so that some of you can attend the annual ARGS national meeting in Asheville (May 6-8, 1994). There is talk of organizing a chapter trip to the Asheville meeting. What are your thoughts and interests? Let us know.

We need more people to help with the various aspects of running the chapter and organizing the meetings. Will you help? If the chapter is going to continue to provide all that it does to each of you, then you need to pitch in now and again. For example, we need two people now to organize refreshments for each of the chapter meetings at the Totten Center for the coming year. Ruth Lee and Joan Wall have done a fine job over the past years. But they want to sit back and enjoy the speakers this year. Will you volunteer? If interested, please call Norman Beal (our chapter vice-chairman at 231-2167).

I hope you will participate in our chapter fall seedling sale on September 18. Remember you must be a paid member to participate in the chapter seedling sale. Renew your membership now. See the clip-and-cut form on the back of this page of the newsletter. You are urged to mail in your membership renewal now rather than wait for the "rush" at check-in time.

Refreshments for the September meeting are to be provided by members whose last name begin with letters I through N.

At our October meeting refreshments should be provided by members whose name begins with O through Z.

I would like to say that I will see you all at our September 18, 1993 chapter meeting. However, I will be visiting gardens in Scotland and southern England at that time. So I hope to see you at our October 16 chapter meeting.

Cheers and good gardening.

Bobby J. Ward
American Rock Garden Society
Piedmont Chapter Newsletter Editor
930 Wimbledon Drive
Raleigh, NC 27609-4356
USA



Nicotiana glauca Sancta Indorum

First Class Mail

Mailed August 31, 1993